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**Translingualism: Breaking the Language Policies and Politics in Composition**

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**Pedagogy and Protecting Cultural Identities of International Students**

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(TITLE)

BY

Md. Fahad Hossain

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
Master of Arts in English

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

**SUMMER 2020**

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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## Abstract

This thesis explores the debates and conversations relating to a translingual pedagogical approach that helps preserve the cultural and ethnic identities of international students who take college composition courses in universities across the United States of America. Since domination of English in teaching, learning, and research in the United States of America is prevalent, this thesis explores much talked pedagogical approach – a translingual approach – in college composition that intends to protect the cultural and ethnic identities of international students studying in universities across the country. The translingual orientation in composition pedagogy is constantly adding new conversations to teaching of writing to the multilingual or international students in US academia. Beginning with descriptions of what has been done by English monolingual pedagogical approach, the thesis further discusses some crucial issues such as preserving of cultural and ethnic identities of international students, efforts to establish a standard in English language policy in composition classes and its resistance, scholarly conversations about establishing a feasible translingual approach, and debates for and against a translingual pedagogy. It also replicates the most advocated strategy – the translation assignment – to bring translingual approach in teaching writing. In doing so, this thesis adds new insights to ongoing conversations on the nature of translingual pedagogical approach in composition classes.

*Key Words: Translingualism, Language Policy, Composition Studies, and Monolingualism*

Dedication

For the two most beautiful women in my life – my mother and my wife – who sacrificed a lot to  
get me here

and

For Professor Enamul Haque – a mentor who taught me to never give up

and

Professor Rezaul Karim Siddiquee – a mentor who taught me to stand upright and rebel

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I am also grateful to Dr. Terri A. Fredrick and Dr. Robin L. Murray for their valuable suggestions and support throughout the process. Their comments and suggestions helped me a lot to navigate my ideas as the writing went on.

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**Introduction:**

In Spring-2019, I was tutoring an international student from Nepal in Eastern Illinois University's Writing Center when I first became aware of the monolingual expectation of composition classes in the USA. The student I was working with needed help with one of her papers for her composition class (ENG 1002). After looking at the assignment sheet provided by the instructor and then at her paper, I understood that her instructor wanted her to write on a topic that has a US-based social context, and the assignment sheet suggested that the student follow the standard norms of "Edited American English."

Since I did not take any consent regarding the use of the assignment as an example to my thesis argument from either the students or the instructor, I will just give some hints what the assignment asked the student to write. The assignment asked her to write on racial segregation and social justice. But as there was no mention of any specific social setup, the student assumed that she ought to write from US social perspectives. Her paper showed a significant use of rhetorical devices, but still, she got a poor grade. Now, the problem was not with her articulation or in the use of rhetorical devices properly, rather her poor word choices, poor sentence constructions, inappropriate use of metaphors(!), lack of proper explanation of ideas, and the lack of authorial minuteness. The feedback from the instructor clearly showed a monolingual approach and disregard of the student's cultural and linguistic background where the student's lack of proper knowledge on racial segregation and social injustice among races in the United States have been indirectly identified by the instructor. Hence, this lack reduces the strength of her writing. This evaluation, from a monolingual perspective, can be called justified – knowing the "things" better when someone writes about those things. This incident hit me hard since it felt unjust to assess students' writing from a cultural point of view, which they did not grow up

with. Later the student told me that she could write better if she knew how to transfer her familiar cultural metaphors in English or if the topic was set on her own cultural context. This assessment politics, mostly nourished by the monolingual and colonized attitude of English, discourages students from holding onto their own ethnic and cultural identity, and soon they try to grasp the “standard English” or “Edited American English” to satisfy “the need to develop.”

Reflecting on this encounter, I later realized that many of the college composition courses in the United States (US) give less priority to their intentions of protecting the cultural and ethnic identities of newly admitted international students while they are designed or include assessment criteria to foster culturally relevant pedagogies. While many college composition courses expect international students to learn and respond through writing in “standard English” or what many call “Edited American English” that includes more or less some formulaic sets of rules and regulations developed over decades by the academic professionals, few universities are leading the path towards addressing the preservation of cultural identity of international students through introducing a more inclusive language policies or approaches in writing classes. The sets of rules of writing in standard form become prescriptive when they try to hold the controlling power over borrowing cultural elements from other languages viz., symbols, metaphors, and sentence constructions.

The pedagogical approach that advocates these formulaic instructions tends to teach a certain kind of Americanized version of Standard English writing practices (also encapsulate the American cultural expectations) for international students. This tendency seems harmless as it tries to educate students to use and write an acceptable version of English language that would help them in their future career and professional endeavor. However, the other side of this approach delays and discourages international students negotiability with language barriers.

Even when the composition instructors are educated and trained, intentionally or unintentionally, they get this trend of following this “standard English” formula, which is, at its core, monolingual that only understands its own goal – establishing a standard regardless of students’/learners’ cultural background. This claim might sound somewhat harsh towards the training and education policies of composition instructors, but in reality, most of us can understand the inherent meaning of this claim. The education policies in the USA have adopted some approaches that have been developed over decades by measuring the expectation of the job market, academia, and traditionally established rules. One important aspect of this “Edited American Standard” seeking policy is its monolingual nature, specifically in a cultural context.

This standard, being developed by the monolingual English academics, not only undermines the fluidity and accommodating features of the English language but also devalues the growing power of other languages since the standard English or “Edited American English” discourages language hybridity such as code-mixing, code-switching, and using symbols and metaphors borrowed from other languages unchanged. This attitude of maintaining an “Edited American English” or an acceptable version of Standard English can slow the linguistic diversity of a composition classroom where the colonial attitude of English, mostly political, overshadows the cultural backgrounds of international students. If one meditates on the nature and outcome of such monolingual expectation of English composition classes, one will find that this expectation makes it difficult to nurture linguistic and cultural heritage of international students. In this case, translingualism can offer new opportunities to get out of this monolingual and colonized – one version of English – approach of composition pedagogy.

Translingualism has increasingly become one of the most researched approaches in composition pedagogy. While Translingualism has gradually become an intellectual movement

and has a firm foundation in composition studies during the past two decades, it has tried to welcome ethnic identities specifically by allowing students using metaphors from their mother-tongue, specific words, and “transliteration” instead of using exact standard US English words and terms to render thought processes of students while they write (Horner, et al. 303-304). The concept of translingualism can better be understood if we consider English monolingualism as static, stable, and hegemonized that hinder students of other languages from learning with a coordinated flow with their linguistic and cultural heritage in an English composition classroom setting. Bringing Translingualism in the composition classroom and practicing it will reduce the gap between the learners and the pedagogical approaches through which they are taught. In simple terms, translingual writing pedagogy promotes the acceptance of language differences along with the cultural tools the students bring with their linguistic backgrounds.

Since ethnicity (or racial identity) serves as a form of essentialism in human language, students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds tend to show a natural resistance to the homogenizing approaches of dominant language groups, for instance, toward a monolingual dominance of English (Alveraz, et al. 36). In contrast, a translingual approach advocates the use of language as a dynamic process rather than trying to establish a stable monolingual approach. It also promotes the negotiation between students’ language use and the normative social parameters of discourse, such as policies adopted in English composition writing classes. Even if any scholar or composition instructor thinks that a translingual approach could pollute the core of the English language, he/she forgets the nature of language – the ever-evolving nature of adoption – where it grows by adopting and borrowing elements from other languages that mostly grows in certain cultural atmosphere.

Bringing translingual practice in the composition pedagogy requires welcoming language hybridity – both linguistically and culturally. This language hybridity can start by allowing our international students to use two popular language manipulation strategies – code-switching (the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation) and code meshing (combining two or more dialects) –as they have been the cornerstones of translingual practices in English learners in their composition classes. Despite having many ongoing debates whether code-meshing and code-switching as hybrid forms violate the normative forms of language, which have been traditionally upheld by language experts, using this approach instructors can create productive spaces for students who might struggle with the ideal of “standard” American English, such as international students and generation 1.5 students most of whom are African Americans who speak AAVE. For example, there are many international students from the African region (not born in the United States) and other with different cultural backgrounds who envisage different abstract ideas by translating metaphors of their first language(s) and their translation process involves code-switching and code-meshing.

If composition classes strictly follow the monolingual pedagogical approach, many of those students could lose their cultural heritage. For example, an international student who is forced to follow standard US English while he/she writes will gradually start conceptualizing like white American people who use only English in creating meaning to all phenomena. This very practice will slowly eat up his/her thought patterns, language use, the conceptual mechanism that have been shaped by his/her own culture. Then after a significant period of learning in monolingual English settings, that student’s thought process will become Americanized while he/she remains a non-American. Thus starts the cultural invasion of “Edited American English.” This claim comes from various researches in interdisciplinary studies in

linguistic and cultural interventions. One particular example comes in my mind when I recall the findings and interpretation from a master's thesis written by Yuri Kumagai at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on *The Effects of Culture on Language Learning and Ways of Communication: The Japanese Case*. In her thesis, she shows that when students learn in a different language setting, there occurs some miscommunication between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

I argue that the same thing happens in English composition class settings where international students come with a different linguistic background from many of the instructors who happen to be monolingual English instructor. Kumagai's argument might support my assumptions here when she writes, "...miscommunication is minimized by maximizing conformity. To know English, you must be able to communicate in the language in a manner that native speakers will accept as their own. This view completely excludes the validity of the nonnative speaker's cultural background. Suppressing one's own cultural identity may not appear to be so traumatic, yet because the values of the English language clash with the values of one's own native language, the nonnative speaker may feel compromised" (6). In such cases like this, translingualism can benefit the intentions of composition classes in the USA by creating an opportunity for both international students and their teachers.

Another critical aspect of the translingual approach that needs to be understood is having the idea that language of ethnic students and L2 learners (in this case, international students) have gone through centuries of transformation by cultural contact and colonialism and have made their language already translingual. This transformation has necessitated the mixing of languages, including English, a mixing of cultural resources that define their communicative practices within their community. In this way, the cultural hybridity has grown through a contest

ranging from individual to collective linguistic ideologies that help students retain their ethnic identities in thoughts, imaginative process, and conceptualization. Since composition pedagogy remains an integral part of the socially situated phenomenon, the idea of isolating cultural heritage from learners' vision and perspective might become a bane to teaching composition to other ethnic or L2 students. Again, the translingual pedagogical approach can tend to align itself with the established norms of linguistic justice from a socio-cultural perspective regardless of students' skills in monolingual norms of the English composition curriculum. While scholars of composition pedagogy raise questions regarding the standard evaluative approach in composition pedagogy, they forget to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating a translingual approach in a real scale that would hint the possible alignment of both monolingual and translingual approach in the composition classes. Through exploratory research about the translingual approach in composition pedagogy, this thesis will carefully examine whether attempts to incorporate a translingual approach in composition classes will create a positive learning environment for the non-native such as international students and make them retain their proficiency in their heritage. This research will also evaluate the possibilities toward a translingual inclusive curriculum that advocates a unique evaluative process in composition classes rather than taking a monolingual approach at the end of a course. Keeping all these goals in mind and to reach to a conclusion, I will be replicating one of the most advocated approach to incorporate translingual pedagogy in composition classes – the translation assignment study – to assess whether a meaningful engagement can be achieved to help international students in learning effective writing strategies. This translation assignment strategy will also help us understand if it can address the critical issues such as retaining cultural elements in international students and remove monolingual attachments from a composition class where we have a diverse student community.

## **Defining the terms**

### **Translingualism**

By definition and nature, translingualism is a linguistic ideology that believes “language boundaries are fluctuating and in a constant revision” (Horner, et al. 287). While the translingual approach focuses on “mutual intelligibility,” it prioritizes transforming context over fluency. Unlike the monolingual approach, the translingual approach encourages code-meshing, code-switching, and language hybridity to value transnational connectivity among users. A translingual approach in composition pedagogy advocates for adopting and welcoming cultural heritage in writing by letting them thrive on language hybridity, such as allowing students to borrow relevant words, phrases, metaphors from their own culture into the target language. The most important aspect of the translingual approach in composition lies in breaking the long-standing monolingual hegemony that hinders students from upholding their cultural values while they learn in a “Standard English” atmosphere such as in American school setting. In simple terms, a translingual approach in composition pedagogy renegotiates between boundaries in the language policy and its use in teaching students of other first languages.

### **Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity refers to a concept when an individual shares his/her culture, values, norms, and language with people of the same culture. Language plays a vital role in forming a person’s ethnic identity because language works as a medium of sustaining his/her culture. Unlike race, ethnic identity refers to a collection of traits of a particular cultural group having boundaries to differentiate from other cultural groups. In other words, ethnic identity forms a set of reflexive products based on social, political, and geographical context.

## **Monolingualism**

A monolingual approach in pedagogy encourages the use of a single language for teaching or instructional purpose. Believing that language is static, and defined by fixed terms, monolingualism deems fluency over other languages as an obstacle to the target language (in this case, Standard American English). It also recommends that speakers of other languages should try to achieve the required fluency in the English language for better intelligibility. It also means that Standard English is marked to social identity (Horner, et al. 287). This demarcation sets the environment of a typical American English composition class where students are taught and expected to communicate through Standard American English regardless of their ethnicity or linguistic background. To explain the influences behind the language policy in the US academia, we need to consider the political, social, and cultural instruments since they set the determiners of the policies. Among all the language policies, “English only” policy comes first and then comes the “Edited American English” policy (Marcias 54). Both policies have laid the foundation for a monolingual attitude in composition classes in the US. Also, both of these policies have close ties with national identity and culture. In order to preserve the US culture, monolingual policy in composition classes encourages to maintain a standard which gradually rub off the cultural elements that international students bring with them

## **International Students**

Students from foreign countries who are enrolled for credits in an accredited higher educational institution in the United States on temporary visas are usually called international students. These students hold non-immigrant visas, so their sole purpose of the stay in the United States remains unchanged during their visa period. They are not entitled to do any job outside of

the campus and entitled to hold temporary and part-time work rights inside the campus. By welcoming international students from different countries, higher educational institutions maintain diversities in culture, education, and knowledge. The recent inflow of international students has risen to a significant degree since the quality of education in the United States has created a high value in the home and international job markets. This significant rise in the number of international students has necessitated the modification of educational tools such as syllabi, curriculum, and pedagogical approaches in academia.

### **Code-meshing**

Code-meshing refers to the act of blending local vernacular, colloquial, and other world dialects of English in “Standard Writing English” either in academia or in day-to-day life. The main idea behind code-meshing lies in the intention to show respect to diverse cultural and ethnic people and their languages. It also signifies the embracing of a globalized version of English so that communication becomes easier among certain groups of people whose mother tongue is not English. Code-meshing attaches more to the cultural recognition than to semantic significance. It means people usually code-mesh when they have a sense of freedom and can express their attachment to any particular culture. For example, an African-American student will have a tendency to code-mesh when he writes or speaks to his classmates. But when he does the same to a professor, he will tend to follow the “Standard English.”

### **Code-switching**

Unlike code-meshing, code-switching refers to linguistic choices multilingual people make when they speak or write to any monolingual audience. Multilingual users can use linguistic elements from different languages or different varieties of the same language in a

single conversation. Interestingly, code-switching maintains the consistency in syntax and phonology of each different language or each different variety of the same language. In a broader sense, code-switching refers to switching among dialects, styles, or registers. However, in composition classes in the USA, both of these language choices are indirectly discouraged since the language policy of the academia prefers “Standard American English” where code-meshing and code-switching are seen hybridization of English.

## **Chapter 1: Language, Hybridity, and Translingualism: A Reciprocal Benefit**

By welcoming language hybridity in a socially situated context where cultural elements get priority, Suresh Canagarajah's model of translingual instruction in composition pedagogy enables the instructors to devise such lesson plans that do not avoid or discard any established paradigm of writing courses. Rather, it encourages composition instructors to make a common negotiated platform where international students can learn and produce writings that uphold their cultural and linguistic identities. Hence, their ethnic originality never fades by the dominant established monolingual classroom practices. For example, at the time of designing writing assignment instructors can focus on the cultural aspect of the perception of each ethnic group of students. While developing a writing assignment on racial segregation, instructors can develop a different module for South Asian international students who do not have the same experience and social pattern as American born students. South Asian people have different types of experiences about race, culture, and ethnicity from the American people. In many dominant European countries, as well as in the USA, the color of skin plays a vital role in racial discrimination that leads to other discriminations in jobs, pay-scales, and social status.

In such cases, translingualism focuses on the cultural part of any student studying in the US and helps instructors to develop their course plans, syllabi, writing assignments, and assessment criteria. Only a shift in the politics of language can change that if teachers conceive language as a medium of communication rather than all the aspects that come with it. This does not mean that composition teachers do not think or consider English as an evolving language, rather it means all should believe and conceive the idea of an evolving language and its interaction with other people who speaks other languages. Hence, by designing English

composition courses that focus on the various ethnic groups of students, a complete translingual approach can be incorporated within the pedagogical sphere.

Another significant aspect of the translingual pedagogical approach reminds us that translingualism tries to invoke “attention to matters of purpose and audience, matters inseparable from the cultural context and intercultural negotiation” (Lalicker 52). The core of this argument here posits the necessity of translingualism in a composition class that will not only grade international students based on their class progress or their quality of writing but also enables them to retain and recreate the cultural values they have been upholding for a long time. However, a misconception about the translingual approach in composition pedagogy that often confuses us about the intentionality of language hybridity is that the standard scale of English language might get “polluted” or a stylistic framework of writing will be “de-structured.” This assumption might get strong if we consider what Brian Ray has told us in his reviewed work on Vershawn Ashanti Young, Edward Barrett, Y'Shanda Young Rivera, and Kim Brian Lovejoy’s book *Other People's English: Code-Meshing, Code-Switching, and African American Literacy*. Referring to the book, Ray asserts that there is a wrong assumption among Americans (including educators) is that multilingual speakers who switch between languages and varieties of Englishes “can’t speak either language fluently and [are] using one language to fill in gaps of knowledge from the other” (28, qtd in Ray, 98). It means people consider that mixing of other languages pollutes and destroys “the beauty of American English.” To argue against this misconception, we need to remind ourselves that by redressing cultural tools such as signs, symbols, and metaphors, the standard of English will never be devalued; instead, it will be enriched and fluid. However, people who think that a translingual approach would contaminate the long-established theoretical framework of writing pedagogy, this thesis may make them aware that the goal of education is

not to make all human beings “think alike” or “express alike,” contrarily, to create and nurture diversity. Since the long established monolingual nature of English composition classes will always try to push international students bring to the level of thinking and expressing of native English speaking students by following the established structure of “standard English” or “Edited American English,” translingual approach will help us redesign the writing courses with a new theoretical framework. Evidently, some might ask questions about the translingual pedagogical goals and expectations in classes other than English composition across the academia. A question such as “isn’t it the goal of educating international students to bring on the same level of competence with native English-speaking students in all disciplines?” might surface. What I argue is that though achieving the sole goal of making international student’s better writers in all disciplines through a monolingual pedagogical approach might have proved successful, our students’ negotiability with language barriers declines in a monolingual approach. When we have the opportunity to implement a new approach like translingualism, it might give us the same result with a different mechanism. Since the approach originated from the debate between linguistic diversity and homogeneity, English composition classes should start adopting this approach and other disciplines might adopt it gradually to see what differences it makes in higher education. For this purpose, instructors and scholars need to embrace the possibilities offered by translingualism and develop new criteria for assessment for writing courses and look beyond the colonialist setting of monolingual assessment. The benefits of adopting a translingual approach in composition pedagogy will be more apparent if we try to understand what Jerry Won Lee says:

I use it (translingualism) in an even more capacious sense to encapsulate a broad range of language-oriented scholarship that does not view the blurring and blending of boundaries,

whether boundaries between languages, varieties, dialects, registers, and such, as a defect of an idealized usage, and something to be pathologized and disciplined. (Lee 5)

What Lee means goes hand in hand with the arguments of this thesis. When composition pedagogy advocates, directly or indirectly, for following a monolingual setting for designing a course including its all components (feedback instructions from instructors, suggestions for better writing, grading policies, and instructors' mindset for looking something per the norm of established standard), it dismisses the possibility of the usefulness of cultural tools that international students bring with them. On the other hand, translanguaging "sustains the inequitable social relations and hierarchies" (Lee 7). The problem of monolingualism does not only revolve around the English language but also around the politics and policies behind using it. The monolingual upper-hand policy will always segregate international students from their own culture in the process of getting education in the US, let alone sustain them. A monolingual approach in college composition will always provide advantages to "privileged individuals of a particular linguistic habitus and marginalize those who are not 'from' these privileged geographical locales or social categories" (Lee 7).

If we look at a class as a miniature version of a society, we will see how monolingualism creates divides between native English-speaking students and international students where monolingual policies and standards act like walls between these two student groups. Hence, social justice in a monolingual composition class is never achieved. However, translanguaging offers us a common ground by creating a counter-hegemonic platform where all students are benefitted, and a sense of justice prevails. It does not mean that instructors need to allow as many other languages as the numbers of international students are present in the class. The idea here is that classes can enable all students to write better when they write in a single language, such as

English by welcoming the cultural contexts and linguistic features of other languages in a composition class. At the same time, teachers can refrain themselves from burdening the international students with the rules, regulations, policies, and established framework of Edited American English – a vague, misleading, and one-dimensional definition of English in this globalized era.

The argument of this thesis against monolingual practices and language politics will also get impetus and solidification if we consider Terry Myers Zawacki and Anna Sophia Habib's observations:

Their (international students) concerns suggests to us the need for more explicit attention to language in our teaching, not just a problem for L2 or basic writers but as a rhetorical tool, all students can use to move beyond the formulaic, overly generalized "rules" for academic writing in which they have been schooled over the years and across the secondary and post-secondary curriculum. (651)

Zawacki and Habib's observation points out that a monolingual approach of teaching composition tends to ignore the role of "metalanguage and meta-awareness in the transferability of international students (L2)" (652). As a result, those student writers begin to struggle to satisfy the established standard of English language set by their monolingual instructors, and in the process, their linguistic and cultural heritage that shape their thoughts and ways of expression get disturbed, hegemonized, and colonized by the "Edited American English" paradigm.

Since ethnicity served as a form of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1993, qtd in Alvarez, et all.) in people of the minority groups, their very ethnicity creates their heritage language(s) that work(s) as a firewall against the colonial and homogenizing tendencies of

dominant languages (Alvarez, et al. 32). This need for resisting a dominant language and preserving the heritage language gives shape to the *Translingualism* in language use both in practice and language orientation (Canagarajah 2013). While we understand the force behind the translingual use of dominant languages, the need for promoting it through raising awareness about the nature and function of translingualism among the L2 users of dominant languages calls for attention. The idea behind promoting translingual pedagogy in classrooms comes from the need to make the community (both students and instructors) understand the necessity to preserve linguistic heritage as well as let monolingual users be aware of the linguistic differences people bring when there is an ethnic diversity in the community. Through the introduction of translingual pedagogical approach a movement of enlightenment can be started in a sense that it offers a possibility to understand the dynamic nature of language and a chance to create the negotiated space between language users from culturally diverse background.

### **Translingualism as a Negotiation between Users of Language**

A greater number of U.S. teachers of writing are recognizing the facts that exhibit the limitation of traditional ways of understanding and responding to language use and address the differences that come with international students in comparison to American students. Noted scholars in the field of composition studies have found that English, as the primary language of instruction in composition class, has been gone through several phases of transformation that have given it a multilingual countenance. Although English has a number of varieties such as British, Indian, Asian, South American, the “Standard English” or “Edited American English” language policy of composition classes considers linguistically homogenous situations where all writers, speakers, and readers are expected to use, perceive and process their thoughts following

the “Standard American English” or “Edited American English”. This expectation subtly forces all parties – student writers and instructors to exclude all other language variations and differences in writing assignments though in-class discussions, group works, and critical reading could address those variations. But translanguaging, on the other hand, considers differences in English language use not as a deviation or error, rather “resources for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening” (Horner, et al. 303).

Since translanguaging essentially raises some basic questions regarding the nature and purpose of this emerging concept, people should know ‘the differences’ in language that advocates of translanguaging have been vocal about. Horner et al. comes with a set of questions that come in people’s mind:

- a) What does the difference in English language mean?
- b) How will it function rhetorically and communicatively?
- c) For whom, under what conditions, and how (303-304)?

To answer these questions, they have tried to define the translanguaging approach in composition studies not from a prescriptivist’s points of views rather an experimentalist’s points of views. They opine that to fully understand the translanguaging approach we need to recognize that “the formation and definition of language and language differences are fluid” (Horner, et al. 304). In other words, if we want to see the language differences or varieties as fluids, we need to accept that differences are to be “preserved, developed, and utilized” (304). For example, instructors of composition should see varieties of English language not from the angle of accuracy (correct or incorrect), rather see them as raw minerals that should be preserved through

a negotiated platform. Now, questions will rise – how do we create this negotiation? The sought answer cannot be found in any concrete shape. It means translanguaging tells us about an approach or an attitude that initiates a respectful mindset to accept linguistic variation within and across English language(s). To explain it in better words, we can say that translanguaging asks about writers and their writings, not about writers' conformity to the standard of language.

In composition classes, a translanguaging approach tries to show what writers are doing with their language and why they are doing it. There is a common misconception among some of us that if a written piece does not go along with the Edited American English norms or Standard American English, it lacks “something”. When we try to conceptualize this missing aesthetic portion of writing, we try to find lack in any of these: unfamiliar metaphors that need correction, diction and style that need revision and should be fit according to SAE(Standard American English), and vocabulary choices. These concepts of “incorrect” writings encourages teachers to prescribe guidelines that results in international students and L2 writers wanting to exclude the language differences they bring with them. This reason of international students wanting to write like Americans might have a semblance of *Stockholm Syndrome* because by establishing a standard “Edited American English” has gained some popularity in real life. Also, who does not want to achieve the “standard” when the teachers prefer it? This is another *dark beauty* of “Edited American English” that lures international students. In other words, the reason behind all these is nothing but a political reality that has been nurtured for a long time in the name of “correct” aka “Standard American English” or “Edited American English.” Again, translanguaging neither denies the gap between the actual practices in instruction nor does it encourage instructors to force students to conform to the politically dominant standard of

English. It creates a middle ground where teachers and students reach at a mutually understandable ground to combat the political realities originated from a long tradition.

In case of maintaining the rhetorical features of writing, translanguaging does not invalidate the structured pattern of English language and how the rhetoric works, rather encourages readers to have patience and respect for the difference in language use. While the political realities of (here policies of SAE) SAE insinuate writers to follow through by branding the varieties of other Englishes as “deviant,” translanguaging approach embraces variations, fluidity, and changeability as norms in the existing boundary of English language use(s). When the urge for achieving standard initiates a practice that tries to exclude voices and cultural elements that goes into conflict with what has been long standing (SAE), translanguaging confronts such endeavor. Translanguaging tries to maintain the universal features of rhetoric since these rhetorical features work with the essence of language(s). Though variations of any language have very little to do with universal rhetorical features of writing, prescriptivist standard tries to nullify the act of incorporating any “deviation” terming that it might change the rhetorical features of writing. But this is a myth that needs to be “demystified.”

Translanguaging does not invalidate the need to retain the universal rhetorical features of writing, rather “treats standardized rules as historical codifications of language that inevitably change through dynamic processes of use” (Horner, et al. 305). It means that in a translanguaging composition class writers can negotiate or bring changes to these “standardized rule of English” in accordance with the context of their writings. Translanguaging approach in writing stands against the common philosophy of writing that states students “must learn the standards” and welcomes the variations, recognizes them and thrive on them and helps students grow as writers while they negotiate between what they are taught as standard and what they already have from their

cultural backgrounds. Scholars and advocates of translanguaging like Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur have come up with more concrete definition and purpose of it in extending 1974 CCCC resolution declaring “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” with the following points where translanguaging approach will argue:

- a) to honor the power of all language users to shape language to specific end.
- b) to recognize the linguistic heterogeneity in all user from both United states and other parts of the world.
- c) to confront “English monolingual expectations by researching and teaching how writers can work with and against, not simply within, those expectations. (Horner, et al. 305)

By creating a common ground for communication between the international writing students and their instructors, composition pedagogy can enact the negotiation process where students will not be assessed and mentored with a pointed and dogmatic monolingual approach. While describing some useful strategies, Suresh Canagarajha divides his strategies into four distinct components: *envoicing*, *recontextualization*, *interactional*, and *entextualization* (79). These four components can be the starting points for composition instructors to welcome and enact the translanguaging pedagogical approach while they design the course. *Envoicing*, being the most fascinating of these four components, introduces language hybridity where students can resort to their cultural tools as mobile semiotic devices. These semiotic devices can be from other languages, but after being translated into English, they can create the meaning similar to those semiotic devices available in English. This will unburden international student writers from searching for the exact semiotic device, such as an example that illustrates the idea of being a

victim of atrocity. In short, they can opt for metaphors from their mother tongue and then translate it in English, rather than struggling for an “exact” word in English to create a similar meaning.

The goal of *envoicing* is to create a contact zone where students will be able “to be understood with all their social and cultural particularity” (Canagarajah 80). To activate this *envoicing* in composition classes, writing teachers can create a group-wise assignment sheet depending on each group's cultural context. For example, if a composition class has a group of Brazilian students, a group of Indian students, and the rest being American born students, the instructors can develop three writing assignments that will reflect the cultural context of these three groups. Their assessment rubric and expectation criteria should be different since these three groups represent three different cultures, and their experiences vary as well as their way of writing. In this way, justice can be rendered in evaluating students’ writing.

The second strategy, *recontextualization*, engages students and instructors to make decisions which “frame or footing” will be suitable to create a negotiable platform where students from the diverse linguistic background will use English to create meaning through negotiation. In this case, instructors have to help students to negotiate with language differences to create an appropriate meaning for both the parties – student writers and instructors (Canagarajah 80). For activating this process, both international students and their monolingual instructors need to be comfortable and considerate. However, instructors need to initiate this process first by adopting a flexible attitude toward the meaning-making process of international students since students do not design a course.

*Interaction*, being the third strategy, offers us an opportunity where students negotiate their identity with other people, be it their instructors or their classmates. This strategy is dynamic in nature, where negotiation happens at both ends – the writers (producers of texts) and the readers (instructors). Again, the fourth strategy, *entextualization*, tries to create a mutually reciprocal “production process of text and talk” for voice and intelligibility. Chapter 3 of this thesis will illustrate these two strategies in detail since I consider these two strategies as vital parts of feedback and evaluation to students’ writing.

## Chapter 2: Translingualism: Implementation, Strategies, and Debates

Incorporating the salient features of translingual approach, instructors can thrive on the use of heterogeneity of genre, register, and homogeneous texts while enacting a collaborative work that facilitates the writing process and classroom activities. While several methods are currently being used by scholars and instructors of composition, teaching students translanguaging through *translation* assignment seems to be one of the most effective methods. Other strategies such as collaborative interpretation and rewriting of a text written in English by any non-native writers, reproducing a cultural text into another target language for monolingual readers, allowing students to use code switching and code-meshing while encouraging them to have the audience awareness in mind are also popular in enacting translingual approach in a composition class. In this chapter, I will explore the most recent and popular approach – *translation* and offer some snapshots of scholarly debates on how educators view translingual approach and its implementation.

### **Translation Assignments and Critical Readings as Instruments to Negotiate Language and Culture**

Since translingual approach in composition studies has prompted various strategies to teach writing in a classroom setting, *translation* assignments have been proven effective to invoke the cultural tools in the writing of multilingual speakers or students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. It invites the curricularizing of a scheme that encourages multilingual or bilingual students in the US to vent their cultural voice(s) through using their own linguistic heritage while keeping their audience awareness in the target language viz., Standard American English. The purpose of using *translation* assignments in a writing class encapsulates the essentialism of (de)politicizing and (de)colonializing of English with a view to legitimization of students’

heritage languages over the dominance of SAE. The greatest benefits of this *translation* method lie in the context of a learner-centered pedagogy that prepares international students' journey among different versions of the same language (such as English) while they use their first language as the vessel. Translation assignments ask students to translate texts from their first language to the target language while they learn to negotiate for *replicating* the meaning understandable to any monolingual English reader.

When our international students are asked to reproduce any English texts from their understanding, they usually follow and use the outline that was long established by other monolingual scholars. They do this not because they are necessarily instructed, but because they have nothing before them where they can have a chance to negotiate. But when they are asked to transfer the knowledge from their first language to the target language, they have a scope to negotiate. Hence, translation assignments can foster analytical and metalinguistic skills in international students. It also encourages international students to reflect on how they negotiate between cultural barriers to represent meaning in English, the process they follow during the translation phase, the linguistic tools they use, and elements they bring from their own cultural upbringing. Offering translation assignments to our international students, we can aim to find the pedagogical gap between translanguaging and monolingual teaching strategies. Thus, it will also help the writing teachers to rethink and reimagine the intersections between languages where students must negotiate. However, before jumping into any conclusion from the theoretical promise of translation assignments in enacting translanguaging pedagogical approach in composition, it is better to learn what the scholar(s) have found in their experiments in translation assignments in real classrooms.

As most of the scholars who favor *translation* method as an effective tool to enact translingual approach used the same techniques and tools more or less, I think one example of translation strategy will suffice to have an understanding of how it works. Dr. Nancy Bou Ayash experimented with a combined method of translation assignments and discussion on closed reading from selected texts for teaching her international composition students where she tried to observe the efficacy of translation assignments and close reading as tools to incorporate the translingual approach. Her ultimate goal for this experiment was to get the (re)appraisal of translation and close reading strategy as ways forward to meaning making activity. Advocating the arguments put forwarded by Bruce Horner and Laura Tetreault (2016), she posits that translation assignments encourage international students to develop a translingual orientation and help them understand the intercultural relations where negotiation occurs (Ayash 141). The catch in this method lies largely in the uptake of the students. When teachers ask international students to work toward a critical translation from their first language to the target language (such as Standard American English), they learn to engage themselves actively with the complex negotiations of language differences in writing. They also become aware of the variables that help or hinder the process of transferring of knowledge and meaning making. In her effort to prove that translation assignments can open new vistas of translingual strategies in composition studies she asserts, “I argue that translingual activism for teaching English in the writing classroom as constantly and inevitably operating in translation can provide a condition of possibility for intervening in and opening up much-needed explorations of the kind of present-day postmonolingual tensions FYW students are constantly coming to terms with ” (142). Her compelling arguments have convinced me to toy around with this idea of translation assignments in the composition class that I taught in Spring- 2020 since I had two international students in my

class. Before reflecting what happened in my class, I want to discuss a bit more about Dr. Ayash's translation assignment strategies.

In her book chapter, Dr. Ayash gives us three types of translation assignments that can activate translanguaging in writing classes. For our better understanding about the constructs of her translation assignments and their goals, I want to replicate her models as I have found.

#### **ASSIGNMENT 1 : ( RE)WRITING ACADEMIC TENSIONS**

Using their language and literacy profile as a chance to revisit, think through, and continue the work already begun of identifying language and cultural resources valuable to meaning-making and social relations, *writers-translators*:

- locate tension-filled moments in academic work where perceptions about the institutionally-defined and sanctioned “ways of using English” in writing seem to constrain and stand in the way of effectively mobilizing resources and expressing intended meanings and relations.
- explore and experiment with a range of possible alternative *translations*.
- showcase personal annotations of previous work along with its *translation(s)*

#### **ASSIGNMENT 2 : WRITER - TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTARY**

*Writers-translators* offer a detailed retrospective insight into critical points of decision-making:

- reasons for selecting to *translate* and cull specific word(s), phrase(s), sentence(s), or entire passage(s) while intentionally leaving out others.
- alternative ways of *translating* the existing elements chosen.
- what to selectively retain, omit, add to, substitute, rearrange, recast, or alter from their main written texts.
- intended social and rhetorical effects on various elements of their writing (e.g. organization, meaning [both explicit and implicit], authorial presence and voice, inter-textual links, [counter]argumentation, supporting evidence).
- the uncertainties and messes of planning and executing their *translations* as new writings and how exactly those were navigated and handled.

**ASSIGNMENT 3 : MESO - POLITICS OF *TRANSLATION*  
AMID READER EXPECTATIONS**

Retracing previous steps, writers-*translators* explore the following set of questions:

- What specific role(s) did they want what kind of readers to adopt as they read their *translation(s)*?
- What local framing strategies did they opt for (or intentionally withhold) in order to signal (or not) such desired role(s)? When adopted, where in the text, and crucially, why did they position these frames?
- What parts of their *translations* did they deliberately choose to elaborate on for the sake of successful negotiation and mutual intelligibility?
- Alternatively, what parts of their *translations* did they expect their readers to fill in or struggle with? To what specific purpose(s)? And at what cost(s)?
- What was their sense of the specific nature of the language-ideological orientations and social positioning(s) informing each of these individual rhetorical choices as well as their readers' expectations and interpretations?

(Ayash147)

Through these three experimental translation assignments, Dr. Ayash tried to engage her international students, most of whom were Chinese students, to achieve these following outcomes in her First Year Writing course:

- a) negotiating and experimenting with a wide range of options when working across diverse practices with language, not for correctness, accuracy, and quality writing but for rhetorical effectiveness in conveying intended meaning(s) and function(s), and
- b) demonstrating rhetorical awareness and responsiveness in creating texts through articulating, assessing, and acting on understandings of the impact of specific choices and decisions.

In her experiments with *tranlanguaging* with the international students, Dr. Ayash tried to develop students' "rhetorical and metalinguistic awareness" where "the first half of the course focused explicitly on the complexity and heterogeneity of culture, English, and other vibrant languages and the imagined boundaries separating them" ( Ayash 148). She started the course with close reading of some texts translated in English from Chinese to facilitate in-class

discussions. She further elaborated how she advanced toward raising an awareness among her Chinese international students about language differences, meaning making, popular American imagination, and problematic assumptions tied to hybridity and fluidity of language usage to “non-mainstream sociocultural identities” ( Ayash 149). After doing these close readings from translated texts, she introduced texts written by authors who have been regarded as the universal “norm” for all writers such as British literacy scholar and educator Roz Ivanič and American essayist Henry David Thoreau. Ayash’s teaching strategies helped her to achieve internalization of international students’ understanding of negotiated space and meaning making process as they learn. Her own reflections on those class discussions will clarify her goals and achievement –

Our talk around this wide variety of texts was not focused on their lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical peculiarities but rather on the kinds of transversality they accomplish, that is, the complex meanings and relations that are being borne by specific practices, and on the cultural politics of academic and social life (at local and [trans]national levels) enabling and disrupting these intended meanings and relations and the uptakes necessary to secure them. (Ayash 149)

The systematic arrangement of her course and how she conducted it show us that within the established practices of composition pedagogy one can embrace and introduce translingual practices without harming what is aspired – the development of writers. By exploring Dr. Ayash’s methods of translingual practice, I intend to show that even composition instructors can work toward the development of international students’ writing while facilitating the necessary uptake their students need.

To support Dr. Ayash's close reading strategy with materials brought from writers of other language that have been translated along with popular American writers, I would like to refer to John Trimbur's discussion in his article "Translingualism and close reading". Drawing a long discussion on historical background on how close reading has evolved as a tool to facilitate basic writers' (including writers with a different first language) developmental phase, Trimbur explains how the close reading strategies devised by the "Pitt school – consisting of Bartholomae, Anthony Petrosky, Mariolina Salvatori, Nicholas Coles, Susan Wall, and others could facilitate a monolithic learning mechanism only because they emphasized on "standardization" and the "politics of style." Agreeing with Trimbur's point, I argue that though Bartholomae contributed in the approaches of Horner, he (Bartholomae) partly stuck with the idea of "standard English." Bartholomae's close reading strategy was not faulty. Rather, his assessment that had a tag called "standardization" made it more non-translingual. Trimbur expresses his solidarity with Horner and Lu's translingual conventions:

To see writing as always taking place translingually, as Horner and Lu do, is to remove the conceptual grounds that once ostensibly separated a clearly knowable linguistic mainstream from the margins as the inevitable target of writing instruction, replacing the unidirectionality of monolingualism with the recognition that we are all - students, teachers, literary writers constantly negotiating multiple languages, conventions of writing, and linguistic loyalties. (226)

The whole point of bringing Trimbur's discussion is to show that Dr. Ayash used the same technique and materials as Bartholomae did, but with different goals and judgements.

## **Translingualism: Looking Beyond Genre Fixation**

Another interesting and compelling perspective of how translingual approach can be incorporated by looking beyond genre fixation has been offered by Anis Bawarshi in his article titled “Beyond the Genre Fixation: A Translingual Perspective on Genre.” Since teaching composition students through genre has been a long tradition, Bawarshi advocates that translingual teaching can be done by teaching our students genre difference not only by teaching them to write on different genres but also by assessing their performance from a negotiated perspective. Asserting that dominant pedagogical approaches being fixated on genre as “static” objects, he argues that genre fixation makes us preoccupied as a part of “professional enculturation” (Bawarshi 244). The point that he offers is the following:

In our preoccupation with genres as sites of access, we have tended to privilege genres as things that can be made explicit through explication, and we have fixated on trying to figure out which genres are best taught when and where. A translingual perspective suggests that this is not enough. (Bawarshi 244)

Bawarshi’s arguments have made me reconsider the genre pedagogy in new lights. I never thought it this way that genre teaching could actually be seen as a performative act where it enables both students and teachers to closely examine the meanings and linguistic relationship. In other words, genre approach teaches students to challenge “ideological dichotomies” between norms and differences, conventions, and creativity, and wants them to see agency, cognitive ability, and language fluency from a “vertical perspective”. On the contrary, a translingual approach views agency, conventions, and creativity from a “horizontal perspective” in all language uses (Bawarshi 245). What Bawarshi wants to inform us is that instructors should be

aware of the senses that even if genre pedagogy enables their students to have better agency in writing, it is time that they looked beyond their fixated notions.

Keeping alignment with pedagogical expectation in achieving concrete results of a translingual writing approach and raising awareness of genre differences and how it works, Juan C. Guerra asks a very important question that needs scholarly conversation. He asks whether “we want our students to develop a rhetorical sensibility that reflects a critical awareness of language as a contingent and emergent, rather than a standardized and static, practice” (Guerra 228). To answer his question and find a way toward embracing translingual approach in writing pedagogy, he comes with a strategy where he frames pedagogical approaches “as a continuum with monolingual/ monocultural approach at one end, a multilingual/multicultural approach in the middle, and a translingual approach at the end.” Interestingly, I started teaching my ENG 1001G over Spring – 2020 following this method although I did not come across this strategy until the second week of March when I read his article. Starting to teach a class with genre and then gradually moving toward a translingual/transcultural approach, we can invite our international students to practice the convention “under different conditions” and the uptake will confront them with differences where they will negotiate meaning, intentions, audience awareness, and grow a “tolerance for difference.”

### **Translingualism: Some Arguments and Counterarguments**

There are some counter positions against the use of translingualism in a classroom setting. For example, Scott Lyons considers that code-meshing, which is one of the features of translingual writing, is a hybrid form of language that can distort the long-established linguistic structure of a dominant language and also can contaminate the “mutually assured separatism”

(102). Some other scholars like Lyons also believe that translingual writing pedagogy may lead students of other languages to lose their proficiency in their heritage languages.

However, I need to make clear that though translingual pedagogy advocates code-meshing and code-switching that can raise some degree of concerns among the language specialists, can also ignite scholarly investigations and myriad of opportunities for improvisation and ways to implement it in the actual classroom teaching. To have a clear idea, we need to go beyond the traditional language ideologies that define languages as monolithic systems and present them as sets of codes. For example, we need to understand the end results of code-meshing and code-switching in comparison to translingualism. Code-meshing and code-switching try to establish the view that language is discreet and bound objects where “translingualism is an ongoing effort to disabuse any analysis of such distinctions and sheds light on processes and practices people engage during their signifying moments beyond the product or form of their language” (Alvarez, et al. 32). Since nations and communities have been historically going through different phases of cultural mutations during different colonial establishments, we can consider ethnic identities and heritage language as already translingual. Hence, the perception of translingualism, as raised by Lyons, being a threat to heritage language can be refuted. Alvarez, et al. explained in their arguments that translingualism cannot be considered a threat to the heritage language:

To consider this possibility, we must treat ideology in the post-Marxian sense, not as false consciousness but as enabling social interpretations and practices. These language ideologies shape how certain translingual practices index specific ethnic identities and constitute heritage languages through sedimented language use through time and space. Individuals can work within communally defined notions of heritage to sustain traditional

notions of heritage but also choose to redefine and reconfigure what constitutes ethnicity through their own language practices. In this way, our focus is on the sustainability of ethnic and group affiliations as situated within particular contexts in relation to dominant ideologies and is specifically based on how students can and do situate their multilingual and multicultural writing experiences. (33)

In light of their arguments, I can surmise that the act of translingual practice among the international students or students of other first languages creates a productive platform for them to channel their bilinguality and biculturality to an emerging hybrid ethnic identity. When this hybridity prevails due to the practice of translingualism in a composition class, students feel the pressure of translating their ideas into the monolingual vessel (Standard American English or Edited American English). These activities ultimately give the impetus to achieve a sustaining pedagogical practice because “monolingual beliefs can never really capture bilingual production, the making of the translingual, and multicultural text itself” (Alvarez, et al. 38).

Another counterargument to translingual approach in writing pedagogy is offered by Paul Kei Matsuda where he suggests us not to be very quick in giving all our hearts to practice translingualism since it is still in growing process in “the womb of scholarly” conversation. Matsuda, being very meticulous, does not reject the idea of translingualism outright. While he welcomes the idea of translingualism with an open mind, he wants us to be very cautious about the “yet unknown” nature and shape of translingual approach and its theoretical framework. One particular observation he makes regarding the acceptance and incorporation of translingual writing practice is the following:

I am uneasy about the term translingual writing because, as the enthusiasm for this new and evolving intellectual endeavor continues to grow, the notion of translingual writing seems to be *uncritically accepted and celebrated*. (Matsuda 578)

Matsuda's observation has some valid reasons such as translingual approach is still in experimental phase, has no visible outline for pragmatic application, and can exacerbate "linguistic tourism". Hence, according to his claim, it does not have any concrete theoretical framework. He further argues that by inflating the term (translingual writing) scholars and teachers might overextend this concept and make it "vulnerable." Matsuda's arguments revolve round translingual writing's "rhetorical access – intentional and unintentional – that has helped establish the intellectual movement. I do not directly oppose his points since he developed his opposing views not because this is a pedagogical approach that cannot be implemented in composition classrooms, but because the concept is still getting its shape. However, I disagree on another important observation where he asserts that those who have been disinterested in language issues "seem eager to incorporate translingual writing into their theoretical and pedagogical practice" (Matsuda 479). Since translingualism originates from linguistic and cultural perspectives, it is highly unlikely that people who have previously shown disinterest suddenly become interested in a particular language related pedagogical approach. His assumption might be correct in smaller group of neophytes, but in broader sense his assumption is not always true in case of seasoned scholars. Moreover, a new concept always draws some fan followers from the academia. However, I do acknowledge his concern about how some scholars might show excessive interest in translingualism due to its recent "valorized status", not for its intellectual value. Though I stand in favor of translingual approach in composition pedagogy, I too share some concerns about people's rushing toward it to implement and expect some solid

results. In the growing debate whether translingual approach should be incorporated into our regular composition classrooms, Matsuda raises some important questions that accelerate a healthy conversation about the adoption of translingual pedagogy. A more solid theoretical framework of translingual pedagogy will rise from such conversations that drive misconceptions away and people will welcome an emerging concept not because it is new, but because it is tested. While we have had some glimpses of what translingual approach is and does and how it is implemented by researchers in composition pedagogy, chapter 3 of this thesis will try to talk about the actual mini-study that I conducted in my composition class in Spring – 2020 with two of my international students from China to adopt a translingual approach. I will also reflect on the efficacy of the translingual approach from a composition instructor's point of view.

### Chapter 3: Translingual Approach: A Mini-study

After carefully considering the pros and cons of Dr. Ayash's model, I wanted to try it in my composition class in Spring – 2020 since I had two international students in my class. They are Chinese students holding F-1 visas. I would have tried Dr. Ayash's model in Fall -2019, but I did not have any international student in my composition class that semester. As I fortunately got two international students this semester, I did not want to miss the opportunity. Since I do not have a wide range of international students to work in groups, I had to come up with smaller in-class translation assignments for these two Chinese students and use these in-class assignments in building my informal mini-study for this thesis. Though I wanted to cater bigger translation assignments for them, I refrained myself from doing that thinking that would put me in a very disadvantageous situation when their works are assessed along with other native English-speaking students doing a different types of writing assignments. Hence, I thought that I would have them do small in-class translation assignments worth of 10 points while all other classmates of them were doing another in-class writing (rhetorical analysis of a speech) worth of 10 points.

#### The In-Class Translation Assignment

For this assignment, I gave my students a very short translation assignment with some degree of freedom to play with the language. But I reminded them about the audience awareness. They were asked to translate from Chinese text to English where they should keep the meaning same. This translation assignment has enacted Canagrajah's *envoicing* and *retextualization* phases of translingual approach. Later in the evaluation phase, we will see how the other two phases – *interaction* and *entextualization* – play their roles in effective evaluative process. A sample in-class translation assignment that I developed for my two international students is given below:

**In-class Writing Assignment - 1 (Translation)****Total time:** 50 minutes for translation (from Chinese to English)

20 minutes for reflection

**Total points:** 10**Task:**

1) For this assignment, you will translate the first page of *Journey to the West* (西遊記) written by Cheng'en Wu. You can use any cultural term, or you can use any Chinese word if you like. But you should try to translate those culture specific terms in simple English so that your intended audience (who only knows English) can have clear idea about the story. You should negotiate any syntactic or stylistic features of Chinese language with English. You have the freedom to translate using any sentence structure that you see fit for making the translation understandable and meaningful.

2) A short reflective writing on your translation process. 1 or 2 paragraph(s) will do.

**Purpose:** This in-class translation task will put you in positions where you need to negotiate with linguistic barriers while you translate from Chinese to English. Tensions and struggles will try to hinder your process of translation. But it will bring forth the significant aspects of your English using skills as you transfer information and knowledge from your mother tongue to the target language. English, being your target language, will always ask you to follow some prescriptive and structured rules that can make your translation process difficult. Hence, the ultimate purpose of this task is to make you negotiate among differences of these two languages.

Links to the html version of the book>>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/23962/pg23962-images.html>

Since I did not want to be prescriptive and directive in every bit, I did not articulate my expectations for their first in-class translation task. I wanted to see what they came up with. When they got their hands on the assignment, they asked me about the reflective writing. I told them that they could evaluate their translation from critical points, its effectiveness, the hurdles they would face, the points of negotiations, and barriers in transferring meanings. I was able to make them do only three in-class translation assignment before spring break. I planned to do two more after the spring break, but unfortunately it did not happen due to the cancelation of face-to-face classes for COVID-19 outbreak. The first two translation assignments asked them to translate Chinese texts to English where the third one asked them to write a simplified version of a more sophisticated English text. The goal of the third assignment was to see how they use their language negotiating skills when they explore in the same linguistic sphere.

### **Performance Observation from the First Two Assignments (Chinese to English):**

To better understand my students' performance in these tasks, I developed simple codebook entries. After they submitted each task, I made a simple codebook entry that helped me to write observations later. Below are the three codebook entries:

#### **Codebook Entry – 1: Translation (Chinese to English)**

| Students  | Translation   | Negotiation   | Student's self-reflection after translation   |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| Student A | 1) used almost literal translation method<br>2) used some Chinese words with English meaning within parenthesis | tried to make the narratives and dialogues meaningful and | 1) hurdles with finding the exact English words to transfer meaning from Chinese to English |

|           |  |   |  |
|-----------|--|---|--|
|           | <p>3) used 3 Chinese cultural word without their explanation in English</p>  | <p>understandable as good as possible</p>   | <p>2) hurdles with maintaining the tone of the original text in the translated text.</p> <p>3) struggled with transferring cultural metaphors</p>  |
| Student B | <p>1) used mixing of transliteration and code-switching process</p> <p>2) retained some original Chinese words</p> <p>3) used descriptive words within parenthesis to explain cultural words</p> | <p>tried to make a smooth transition from Chinese to English by maintaining the meaning making process understandable</p> | <p>1) struggled in maintaining the syntactic structures due to shifts in grammatical structures</p> <p>2) believed that some sentences have changed their inherent meaning in the target language</p> <p>3) struggled with insufficient vocabulary shortage in the target language</p> |

**Codebook Entry – 2: Translation (Chinese to English)**

| Students  | Translation   | Negotiation   | Student's self-reflection after translation   |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| Student A | <p>1) maintained literal translation similar to the first translation task</p> <p>2) retained original Chinese words where idiomatic expressions found</p> <p>3) tried to breakdown the meanings of some compound words to make them understandable</p> | <p>1) tried to negotiate at grammatical and syntactic level</p> <p>2) tried to negotiate at meaning making process</p> <p>3) tried to make transitions smoother than the first time</p> | <p>1) hurdles with meaning transfer</p> <p>2) struggled with idiomatic expressions and their transfers into target language</p> |
| Student B | <p>1) tried to maintain transliteration process, but reduced code-switching</p> <p>2) did not retain any Chinese word</p> <p>3) used descriptive words within parenthesis to explain cultural words</p>   | <p>tried to make decisions with words having multiple meanings</p>  | <p>1) grammatical problems encountered</p> <p>2) struggled with multiple meanings in the target language</p>                    |

**Codebook Entry – 3: English to English (Simplified version of English from sophisticated English Text)**

| Students  | Translation   | Negotiation  | Student's self-reflection after translation  |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| Student A | 1) used summarizing and paraphrasing techniques<br>2) used simple words instead of difficult and pedantic words<br>3) could maintain the meanings               | negotiated with syntax, style, and tone                              | 1) satisfied with the translation process since finding synonyms was easy to work with<br>2) no need to take extra care about tone and inherent meaning  |
| Student B | 1) mostly used paraphrasing techniques<br>2) used more intelligible synonyms<br>3) shortened the long sentences though messages of the source text were missing | tried to achieve sentence level clarity, focus, and inherent meaning | 1) negotiation was easier since both primary and target language were the same<br>2) could work in ease and without having any issues to take extra care |

**Analysis of the Codebook Entries**

My intention behind these translation assignments does not lie neither in the achievement of the students nor the quality of my students' translation skills. I tried to bring a pedagogical intervention to see how well my students could identify the linguistic differences and how they made the negotiation happen in real time. By analyzing the codebook entries, I will also try to find if there is any gradual development in my international students' negotiation skills and what

they tell us about those students' metacognitive development about cultural negotiations in a linguistic level. Since both of these international students are male, I will be using the pronoun(s) he/him/his throughout my entire analysis when I refer to them individually.

### **Analysis of Codebook Entry – 1:**

The first codebook entry shows us that both of the students have approached the source text (Chinese) differently and their translation processes have taken different routes as they have tried to transfer meaning and knowledge into the target language. Student A has approached with a literal translation method which is a common tendency among many translators because it focuses more on meaning making and transferring of information without investing much attention to symbols, metaphors, and tone(s). Although student A uses literal translation method, he has tried to create meaning as best as he can. It seems that he has struggled with some particular Chinese words and their exact counterparts in English. For example, he has kept the Chinese word 五蟲 meaning “five insects” since it is a cultural expression for “five types of fames” and there is no exact word in English that can replicate its meaning. Later, he explains this in his own words where the target readers can understand that the author is actually talking about the Monkey King's (one of the central characters of the story) attitude toward five types of fame. I have realized that student A tries to negotiate between the boundaries of meaning transfer. It does not matter whether student A cannot really find an exact counterpart word in English or not, what really matters that he has tried to explain the word through his own explanation by rewriting the source text. He also acknowledges in his reflection that in the process of recreating the story in English something might be missing such as a piece of information from a whole sentence that loosely played its part to make the whole meaning of a particular sentence. This explains why he has been struggling to maintain the tone of the original

text in his translated work. Perhaps that missing part of the sentence holds the tone of the sentence.

On the other hand, student B has tried translating the source texts by mixing of transliteration and code-switching. For instance, he uses the transliteration of the word 开始 (means “begin”) six times. The transliteration of the word 开始 is “Kāishǐ”. He also retains some original Chinese words with descriptive explanations. In his translation process, student B tries to achieve smoothness by trying to keep the end product understandable. His transliteration adds a great variety to the English version of the story that gives me a different feeling while reading it. Though it is a fascinating read, I have found that he has struggled a lot with sentence structures. Sometimes he jumps from complex to simple structure too frequently. He mentions these struggles in his reflection too. I believe that his efforts in developing a smooth transition between transliteration and code-switching have made it difficult to achieve a well-balanced variety of sentence structures. While going over his reflection on his translation, I have found that he emphasizes three major struggles viz., maintaining the syntactic structures of standard American English, changing of inherent meaning of sentences while transferring them to the target language, and facing shortage of words that can replicate cultural phenomena. His reflection creates a scope for me to contemplate on the barriers of knowledge transfer in international students in an American composition classroom setting. Even if the mother tongue of both of these students is Chinese, their self-reflection on translation task from their mother tongue to English shows us the struggle they have gone through during the process. I am not saying that the monolingual composition instructors are not aware of these struggles. Rather, using translation tasks as a scope to enact a translingual learning environment makes classroom teaching and learning easier to embrace and foster culturally-sustaining pedagogies. Analyses of

the other codebook entries (2 & 3) will shade more light on how translation assignments will help translanguaging in composition classes.

### **Analysis of Codebook Entry - 2**

The second codebook entry shows that both of the students have tried to get out of the obstacles they have faced in the first task. In the second translation task from the same source, student A has become selective in retaining Chinese words unlike the first task. He retains Chinese words/phrases where he does not find the exact words/phrases in English to transfer the meanings. His negotiations in a grammatical level and meaning making process also show significant progress. Though he faces difficulties in meaning transfer process, he finds a new way to solve this problem. He uses simple synonyms of difficult English counterparts of many Chinese words to make the translated text more understandable. Sometimes he writes an extra sentence to clarify the context of the previous sentence. This technique has made his translation a bit long, but makes the text easy to understand. Also, his transition is smoother this time. Breaking the long phrases in simple short phrases and writing a few extra sentences have pushed his negotiation skills in a metacognitive level. This clearly shows a development in his composition skills that I have expected.

Similarly, a clear sign of development is found in student B's translation process. He tries to maintain the transliteration process for the second time. However, this time he reduces the code-switching. The most noticeable aspect of his second translation is that he has not retained any Chinese words or phrases in their original form. Instead, he has used descriptive words more and more this time to make his translation work more understandable. His negotiation this time happens with the decision of choosing the more simple words that can replicate the meaning of the original Chinese words though sometimes the inherent meaning

might get little lost in the meaning. For example, he chooses the word “turn” to mean “move over” for transferring the meaning of 搬過來 (Bān guòlái). Though his main struggles are morphological, he acknowledges his struggles with the grammatical problems lying in the effects of the words he chooses. This awareness not only brings him closer to the realization of language barriers but also gives him a sense of the mechanisms of how semantic differences play their roles in knowledge and information transfer from one language to another. What I have realized from the outcome of this second translation task is that the translation assignments can make our international students reconsider their positions in a cultural perspective where they need to act like arbiters between the differences of languages. This task also makes our international students more and more aware of the conventions of target language(s) which in this case “Standard American English” aka “Edited American English.” Translation tasks as a part of translingual approach also confronts our international students with not only the conventions of EAE but also the audience expectations that ultimately give a push to make them better writers.

### **Analysis of Codebook Entry – 3**

The third translation assignment (from sophisticated English text to simplified English) shows that both of the students have tried to negotiate on syntactic and rhetorical level. Student A tries to follow the summarizing technique and his hurdles are mostly on morphological level. Though his translation shows that he has faced with some setback to maintain the stylistic features and also the tone, he has chosen to ignore them. I realize that this “deliberate ignorance” is due to his awareness of the audience. Perhaps he has assumed that the monolingual readers will get the whole picture when they read the end product (his translated work). He has not clarified this in his after-translation reflection. I think his expression of satisfaction in the

reflective writing comes from an awareness of the linguistic ability of the target audience (monolingual readers).

On the other hand, student B has mostly followed paraphrasing technique with a mind toward sentence level clarity. He also uses a lot of synonyms instead of retaining more formal and pedantic words and phrases. Interestingly, this time he replaces long sentences with short sentences being forgetful about losing inherent messages from the source text. This is another example of “deliberate ignorance” of audience awareness. Later when I asked them about this, both of them gave me the same answer, “We thought the readers would have understood.” This is a very interesting find. It means when speakers of other languages try to translate from English to English, they consciously ignore many aspects of meaning making process thinking that the target audience whose first language is English will get the meaning anyway. The negotiation does not happen in its full form. This proves, to some extent, that speakers of other languages become fully engaged and aware when transferring meaning and knowledge from their mother tongue to another language. This is true in case of English too.

### **My Observations from This Mini Study**

I assigned these translation works as class works so that those two Chinese international students do not feel extra pressure like they feel with other longer writing assignment. They were allowed to use all the resources they could find on the internet. From the code-book entries and my teaching journal, I tried to evaluate the outcomes that I got from their works. The first task was challenging to them – to some extent – in a sense they did not go through any rigorous translation assignments for a long time. For this reason, their negotiation skills did not develop in any advanced level. But when they did the first in-class translation, they became more comfortable with the second. Their language skills, negotiation skills, and transition making

skills did not show significant challenge and promise toward development in the third task (English to English) as they had to maneuver between the same linguistic parameters.

Making international students do translation work with self-reflection as a part of the composition process allows them to reach out to an interpretive frame for encountering, recognizing, and interrogating the languages' ideological tension and cultural conflicts in writing. These activities not only set the rhetorical features in comparison to cultural devices of languages but also show them how to negotiate when any differences arise between languages they use in writing. But teaching through a monolingual writing approach and shaping the avenues of their thoughts do not pose any challenge that can push their boundaries and help them grow.

### **Limitations of the Mini Study**

The biggest limitation of this mini study was that I had only two international students. Moreover, the study would have given me more diverse results to work with if I had more international students from other foreign countries. I also consider the time of the mini study as a crucial one. Hence, it would be more data worthy if I had more time and more semesters to do it. The outcome of the mini study would have been more credible if more data were available to examine the post-monolingual tension, contradictions, and negotiations in comparison to linguistic features and semiotic resources of students' first language and Standard American English. Also, a more dominant intervention would have given me different results if the number of international students and the duration of the experiment were more than what I could manage. Again, the unprecedented closer of face-to-face classes due to COVID -19 puts me in a difficult situation and I could not have any peer-group translation project where American and

international students would have worked together. This would have given me more space to work in comparison with the outcome of American students and international students. However, this mini-study showed me some promise in the sense that critical translation method could introduce translingual transition in traditional composition classes, we need to continue these types of study more and more to have a full-fledged understanding of the strategy so that we can develop our syllabi to enable international students and free them off from the reductive treatments and reifications of monolingual dominance of Standard American English.

### **Translingual Approach in Feedback to and Evaluation of International Students' Writing:**

Keeping in mind that the sole purpose of translation assignments and their assessments are not to assess international students' writing based on their grammatical correctness or their adherence to any fixed standard of English or to evaluate the correctness of their translated works, instructors need to facilitate a pedagogical strategy that makes students face the differences and negotiate to reach at an understandable expressive mode. But as instructors, we need to evaluate their efforts toward their learning process at the end of the day. International students' translation choices stand out clearly when their choices are placed against their peers. These differences come out of group works and peer discussions that lead to the linguistic and cultural analyses. In this case, self-reflective narratives written by international students after each translation work and peer discussion also usher a way to investigate more deeply into the mechanisms of language negotiation and knowledge transferability. Every self-reflective narrative pushes the writers to articulate and explain their linguistic and rhetorical choices. In the process of doing it, they can build a way to analyze and become aware about the audience, and conceive the need to clarify their positions, concepts, and choices to their audience. This activity refers to *recontextualization* strategy advocated by Canagrajah.

Believing that time and labor are well worthy of their efforts toward students' development, writing teachers try to comment on and give feedback to their students' papers that ultimately create a dialogic platform and provide critical pieces of information that enable students to produce better writing. In a translingual atmosphere, instructors' comments and feedback facilitate students' thought process toward negotiation choices, audience awareness, linguistic differences, and critical decisions to address and overcome linguistic differences. Feedback to their work, whether it is individual translation project or group wise translation project, helps them to re-assess their linguistic and rhetorical choices. While constructive comments can facilitate a great learning environment, non-faciliatory generic comments can dissuade students to re-think and revise to better their translanguaging skills. Numerous studies have been conducted to find out the best possible ways to give constructive comments and feedback to students' writings that instructors could use uniformly to help improve students' writing process. Here constructive feedback does not mean any prescriptivist response to students' writings. Debatably, teachers with diverse backgrounds have come up with a wide range of strategies that have a propensity to fall victim to non-faciliatory feedback. Different disciplines have different strategies and methods that could lead to institution-wide confusion and discrepancies. These discrepancies influence the context and methods of instructors' feedback style, and sometimes teachers become frustrated when they see their efforts not coming to fruition. These discrepancies and complexities cause pitfalls that obstruct constructive feedback and hamper the real goal of instructors' responses to students' writings. In solving this problem, interactional and entextualizing strategies suggested by Canagrajah can be productive. In each of my feedback to the translation task, I tried to make my comments and feedback in such a way that does not violate my students' freedom of linguistic choices. What I focused more

during the feedback to the translation tasks of my students is that they clung to their goal such as audience awareness, transferring of meaning and knowledge in an intelligible manner, and achieving negotiability.

Again, the first concerns of an instructor while he/she provides feedback to students' papers lie in the number of drafts they need to read, assess, and give feedback about. This load determines how an instructor is going to formulate his responses and how well he delivers those responses on students' papers. Instructors tend to adopt shortcuts when the number of drafts is too high, and this very attitude engenders a very bad teaching scenario, which Richard Haswell calls 'poor teaching' (2). Adopting shortcuts will not only discourage students from looking beyond mere marginal comments and symbols but also encourage them to turn a blind eye to that feedback in the first place. In the case of international students, this narrows the possibilities of doing justice to their writing while instructors evaluate their papers. Here adopting the *interactional* strategy of translingualism can offer opportunities to reduce the miscommunication and misunderstanding of both the parties – international students and their instructors. While many of the composition teachers tend to be monolingual, they need to take extra caution and need to do some extra work to initiate this stage of teaching. Since there will always be a cultural gap between the international student writers and their monolingual instructors for having their perceptions and understanding through totally different cultural settings and devices, *interactional* strategies can bring down the wall of miscommunication and misunderstanding in terms of the rhetorical and socially situated phenomenon. Interactional strategies help “to negotiate identity and power and help to convey performative meanings, negotiate disagreements, or influence of opinions” (Canagarajah 83).

However, when composition teachers are too tight with their time and load, they are compelled to adopt various shortcuts. This tendency comes with a perilous cycle that begets discrepancies while commenting on various types of student papers from weak papers to strong ones and from native English speakers' papers to international students' papers. Teachers sometimes follow shortcuts to achieve uniformity in their commentary, which raises questions of quality of feedback. Both native and International students need detailed comments and feedback to their works, while a strong and native speaker might revise better with minimal commentary. This uniform and inflexible response system create an authoritative tone, in other words prescriptivist tone, that can make students understand that their voices have less important than what their teachers desire (Zamel 81). This is the loophole that renders injustice to international students' assessment. If instructors' suggestions and directions overshadow students' voices, the real goal of making writers will fail in the process. Students will write to please the teachers and only cherish a good grade, which is never expected in education. This problem can be sorted out if we embrace a translingual process where efforts and completions are more valued than the end product. I am not arguing against evaluating the end products – the final writing that international students come up with. Rather, suggest an approach that balances the scales of assessment of international students' work.

While instructors view student writing as a product, not as a process, they tend to comment on what has been produced. This is where translingual pedagogical intervention is most needed. This very monolingual notion makes teachers come up with comments that do not take international students' intentionality into account or 'the process of composing' (Slattry 334). If instructors consider drafts as final products, their comments will also show their color.

Comments should always facilitate an opportunity to negotiate at the meaning making field in

composition classes. Moreover, students need to face challenges and teachers' comments can simultaneously challenge their thoughts and encourage them to overcome those challenges by rethinking their ideas. For example, *entextualization* strategy can help instructors to address the production process of texts and intelligibility (Canagarajah 84). It will enable the instructors to monitor the produced texts of international student writers properly and help them to direct their students in "meaning encoding practices in contact zone" (Canagarajah 84).

Most often, instructors forget that there are power dynamics between them and the students, and these power dynamics create particular walls of *ego of knowledge* regardless of the ethnicity of the students. This *ego of knowledge* makes our students, both international and native speakers, take our critical comments negatively. To avoid this type of situation and misunderstanding, teachers of writing can increase their *interactional* strategy through positive comments. However, some papers sometimes make it difficult for instructors to write positive comments. But still, as the enablers of students, teachers need to find some positive approach toward their students' papers.

I try to focus on various aspects of the content of my students' paper while I critique their writing. I usually opt for marginal comments about mechanics, while I write elaborate comments at the end of the paper discussing contents, ideas, organization, and language negotiation skills. I also like the letter format where instructors respond to students' writing like a personal letter, which has a personal touch to increase the interactional phase between my students and me. This strategy can be applied to both English-speaking students and international students simultaneously. When students get this kind of response from their instructors, their psychology tells them that their instructors are giving them personal attention. This definitely boosts their confidence and helps to build rapport between these two parties. In a translingual pedagogical

setting, when international students see that their instructors are trying to understand the linguistic differences and their struggles to overcome it, they become aware of the audience reaction to their produced texts.

Acknowledging the fact that sometimes instructors become disturbed when their students do not understand their comments, or their revised papers do not clearly reflect the expectations of their instructors. This is another dilemma that originates from linguistic and rhetorical barriers created by language differences. For example, most of the international students conceive the meaning of their instructors' comments through an internal translation from English into their mother tongue first. This back and forth internal translation might give rise to some confusions and misunderstanding. In this scenario, an international student gets a double judgment for his/her mistakes, firstly, for not being able to follow the monolingual expectations of the instructor properly, and secondly, for not being able to fulfill the expected linguistic expertise in diction, style, and formats. Ironically, while developing an evaluative scale or rubric, most of the composition instructors take more or less monolingual stance. Hence, all the efforts, talks, and research go in vain at the end only to justify a standard, monolingual evaluative process. What I mean, even if the instructors welcome a translingual perspective in their classroom, is that international students are ultimately and typically measured by a monolingual approach to some degree.

By rejecting a language policy which is both dominating and discriminatory, the translingual approach suggests changes in language policy in composition classrooms such as changing the curricula and assessment techniques, welcoming diversity in language, addressing issues related to language difference to understand better and nurture diverse student bodies. Incorporating the translingual approach in composition pedagogy also necessitates hiring

teachers who speak multiple languages and training them to evolve as they progress toward their professional achievement, such as mentoring the composition students and research to bring new mechanisms to modify the existing practices in teaching writing. This is high time we thought about this and develop an evaluative scale that would embrace the translingual approach in writing pedagogy for enabling international students' writing through developing new evaluative scales that would not force students to cling to standard US English. Otherwise, all the talks and efforts will produce no concrete outcome in the pedagogical practices in composition classes.

By honoring international students' language differences and implementing novel strategies far from monolingual stances, composition pedagogies can incorporate at least two approaches – a) recognition of international students' "linguistic heterogeneity," and b) not demanding students' "conformity to monolingual expectations" (Inoue 120). A critical observation in this regard that Inoue makes that aligns with this paper's argument is that to implement the translingual approaches successfully in composition pedagogy, "student needs power in the program" (121). International students cannot feel the burden of systematic oppression that comes from a monolingual assessment scale that follows a Standard English. Since instructors need a scale to grade the writings of all international students, they should come with a scale that does justice to them. Otherwise, the level playing field will never be created, and as a result, the oppression of monolingual assessment will go on.

### **Problems in responding to difference in language in composition classes**

There are two systems of responses in most of the composition classes viz., traditional approach and eradicationist approach. The first one, traditional approach, seeks to remove differences keeping the aim to correcting the language of the writers forcing them to conform "the universal notational and syntactic conventions that we name Standard Written English (or

alternatively, Edited American English)” (Horner, et al. 306). This system of response to writers’ work poses several problems such as – a) ignoring important dissimilarities between world Englishes and written practices in English in academia, b) ignoring shifts in notational and syntactic conventions, c) ignoring readers’ acceptance of the writings where they identify particular language practices, d) and devaluing writers’ powers to adapt and comply to the dominant language conventions ( Horner, et. al 306).

Although the second type of response to students’ writing shows a tolerance to language differences and allows students to have their rights to their languages, it has some problems too such as – a) codification problems while considering the fluctuation of language practices, b) problems in overlooking the interaction among different sets of language use, c) recognition problems while comparing language practices with any fixed linguistic frame, and d) failure to address and acknowledge the power relations between “appropriate” and “inappropriate.” Again, there are some obvious cultural differences that need attention such as, “connections” and “logical development.” The most difficult problem that I think is the idea of logical and thorough development in writing. This varies from culture to culture. What is logical in American academia might not be logical in Indian or Pakistani culture. So, the problems of linguistic differences and interventions do not solely depend on language navigation skills. That is why when a monolingual English instructor writes, “This paragraph is not logical,” might seem meaningless to an international student. Some international students might put emphasis on the beauty of language when their instructor might expect more focused and direct connection between the language and the inferences they make. These are just some examples of the dilemma that monolingual instructors need to deal with in evaluation phase. Personally, as a composition instructor at EIU I often faced questions like this, “What do you mean by this

comment?” when the same comment is easily understood by my American students. This type of problem is not originated from language differences, rather from cultural training. I realize that this problem happens due to the codification barriers that exist between cultures. To sort these types of problems in evaluation and feedback phases, we need to be more welcoming to the cultural differences that our international students bring with them. I do not claim that adopting a translingual approach will drive away all the problems from our composition classes overnight. But at least it will start a new way to see and address problems between instructors and international students.

## Chapter 4: Translanguaging the Composition Class

In a globalized and growing multilingual world, to encourage following a standard while varieties hold the beauty of any language is authoritative in nature. If a composition class can comprise of students from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds, expecting a standard is just telling everyone to climb the same tree. This particular realization reminds me of an allegory well known in our Bangladeshi folk culture. One day the lion, the king of the jungle, died due to illness. So, the jungle community gathered to choose a new king. Sadly, there was not a second lion in the jungle, and the tiger was opposed by an elephant. The other animals including the fox, the fish in the pond, the squirrel, and the raven also wanted to run for the throne of a king. An old man lived on the edge of the jungle, and they all went to him to choose a fair selection process. They wanted the old man to devise the same test so that it could be fair. The old man told them that whoever can climb the nearest tree first will be the king. The test is the same for everyone since they wanted it that way. The squirrel, being the fastest and skilled in climbing, earned the throne. Obviously, the other animals saw the squirrel unfit to rule. This is what happens when we try to achieve standard in a diversified classroom.

This little anecdote might raise questions like, “Should we let all the students write as they want using their own languages when the composition class is in English” or, “Should we aspire for a standard?” Answers to these questions are relative to the circumstances and the need for reimagining of American composition classes. To better understand, we need to see what translanguaging suggests us to do. The translanguaging approach to writing pedagogy should be conceived as a theoretical means through which international students can be taught more effectively in composition classes while students have a scope to nurture their linguistic and cultural heritage. The negotiation model suggested by Canagarajah and his successors is the

practical application model for translingual approach. If we confuse with the theoretical concept with practical models, we are sure to invite frustration. Without a proper understanding of the concept and its practicality can make instructors guilty of embracing the translingual approach.

The opposing ideas to a translingual practice originate mainly from the vastness, instability, the newly formed conceptual non-linearity of the approach. Scholars who are still in doubt about the efficacy of translingualism think that it does not have any legitimate power that can produce and transfer knowledge from one language to another. Interestingly, this might refer to the failure of our evaluation and assessment process in composition classes. Composition classes are not all about the end product – the writings of our students. The development of our international students' writings should not be assessed with a linear standardized scale when development can happen from means. This problem with evaluation and assessment also rises from the power structure between students and instructors. In a translingual classroom setting, the roles of students and teachers are much less hierarchical when it comes to evaluation. For example, I did not impose my suggestions while I gave feedback in my Chinese students' translation work. I did not provide any linear and directive feedback. If I had provided such feedback, it might place me in the upper position in the hierarchy. As a result, the whole idea of translingualism would have been destroyed at the end.

Now, questions might surface, “What exactly a translingual assessment and feedback look like?” To answer this question, I will suggest looking beyond the standard rubric based assessment. There is no translingual rubric. Having a rubric in the first place will diminish the idea of translingualism and establish a standard. Not having a rubric does not mean that we cannot evaluate our international students' writing. We have to consider multiple layers of factors that are linguistically and culturally influenced. Interestingly, many will try to avoid the

fuss because it will take too much time. On the other hand, rubric-based assessment makes evaluation easy. But ease does not render justice that I have been talking about. It might render justice to American students but not to the international students.

While talking about the classroom assessment, we need to reconsider the classroom as an initial site for writing assessment where the main idea of assessment is to concretize the assessment procedure and make it visible to both teachers and the students. It should be more of a negotiating platform than of a court room. I mean a translingual assessment should not be by the code of rules where we usually compartmentalize our students' writing to grade their works. In this regard, I suggest that writing teachers can adopt a "participatory culture" in assessing international students' writing that would help teachers to implement translingual pedagogical approach in composition classes. In addition to this "participatory assessment", instructors can bring socially constructed theories such as theories of knowing, writing, and holistic evaluation strategies in a diversified classroom. These theories can help us understand our curriculum, our target student community, and their needs. We also have to consider modes of teaching and learning while we evaluate our international students' work.

From a spacio-temporal perspective, we can see that language and language users are better understood when we consider the process as dynamic not as static. A translingual process always advocates the assessment process as a dynamic one. I mean when we assess the works of international students by following a translingual approach, we will have to consider social, cultural, and structural properties of language use. Since English is a product of ongoing language practice within (native speakers) and outside of the community (world Englishes), the assessment criteria should be flexible depending on the socially suited communication atmosphere. It means writing teachers should not strictly impose the long established "practice"

in writing assessment for international students. I argue that we should think assessment as a marker for progress not as a marker for achieved perfection. In short, I believe that a translingual assessment should work toward giving meaning to students' efforts, straggles, competence, and progress. In this way, through a translingual pedagogical approach and assessment we can enable our students in having agency over the cultural tools they bring in their writing classes.

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