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"Nameless, Faceless People": How Other Teachers' Expectations Influence Our Pedagogy

Brooke R. Schreiber and Dorothy Worden

As second language (L2) writing teacher educators and researchers, we have seen how powerful the image of an unsympathetic future audience for students' writing is in teachers' responses to language difference. In this essay, we trace how beliefs about these future audiences influence the pedagogical decision-making of two L2 writing instructors: Amy, an experienced teacher, believes students should draw on their multiple languages as resources for writing but ultimately encourages students to be selective in the use of accented writing. In comparison, Sergei, like many novice teachers, focuses heavily on correcting surface level mechanics to prepare students for a business writing community he perceives as intolerant of grammatical errors. The result is that these teachers, struggling to work ethically within first year writing as a "service course," adopt teaching practices that do not fully align with their own beliefs or reflect best practices in the field. We discuss how teachers might articulate and reflect on their own beliefs in light of current research studies from the fields of writing across the curriculum (WAC) and business writing, and what teacher educators and WPAs can do to support such reflection.

In a scene no doubt familiar to many teacher educators, we are standing in front of a master's level class on writing pedagogy, leading a carefully prepared discussion of how to choose errors to respond to in the writing of L2 students. We draw on the best practices in our discipline to build a case for selective error correction—that is, for correcting only those errors that impede comprehension. As our explanation concludes, a student in the back of the classroom raises her hand. "I agree with all this stuff, personally," she says, "but my students will have to write for other teachers, and we can't expect *them* to be so understanding."

The above anecdote, representative of many interactions we have had as educators of writing instructors, illustrates just how powerful the image of unsympathetic future audiences can be. As writing teachers, we have often grappled with the pressure to accommodate what one of our research participants called the "nameless, faceless people" that her students would later encounter across the university. In our work as teacher educators and researchers, we have seen how this pressure can limit teachers' engagement with the best practices in the field. Like the teacher described by Paul Kei Matsuda, who worries about

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being too "lenient" with an L2 student's grammatical errors because "his biology teacher isn't going to be as forgiving," many writing faculty struggle with deep-seated worries about what faculty from other departments might think (142). This trope emerges in teachers' discourse with such regularity that it seemed to us valuable to investigate this set of beliefs and its effects on teachers' decision-making practices regarding language differences in the classroom.

This investigation seems particularly important given the rise of interest in practical ways to implement "linguistically inclusive approaches to writing pedagogy" that promote the agency of multilingual students (Shapiro et al. 32). As Daniel Bommarito and Emily Cooney describe, implementing a teaching approach that interrogates monolingual norms demands from teachers an "ongoing, self-reflexive attention" to their own entrenched linguistic ideologies and to ways those ideologies shape interactions with students in and outside of class (43). We suggest that one vital component of "the complex and time-consuming process of dissolving monolingual tendencies" among teachers is to interrogate teachers' beliefs about the relationship between their teaching and the expectations of their students' future audiences (40).

In this essay, we begin with a brief overview of best practices from L2 writing studies for responding to "non-standard" English in writing classrooms and describe how teachers' beliefs can impact their response to those best practices, in particular beliefs about the institutional positioning of fyw. We then examine the beliefs of two L2 writing instructors, Amy and Sergei[1], whose pedagogical choices are influenced by the imagined reactions of students' future readers in two distinct ways. Our goal in this essay is to illustrate what we see as an overlooked barrier to the implementation of linguistically inclusive teaching practices and to offer suggestions for how teachers and those who work closely with them can begin to deconstruct this barrier.

Best Practices and Teacher Beliefs

After many years of research and debate, the field of L2 writing developed a set of broadly agreed-upon best practices for responding to L2 students' writing, including selective rather than comprehensive error correction, and a tolerance for written accent where it does not impede communication (Ferris; Ferris and Hedgcock). These strategies, Matsuda suggests, can be usefully written into programmatic policy by WPAs, which alleviates part of the struggle of individual instructors to determine ethical practices. Undergirding these pedagogical methods is not only language-learning research but also a set of attitudes toward linguistic diversity which are explicitly spelled out in documents such as the Students' Right to Their Own Language (SRTOL) resolution and the "CCCC Statement of Second Language Writing and Writers." At their core, these documents promote recognition of the increasing di-

versity of students in higher education and appreciation for the language differences that students bring into the classroom, with the understanding that pedagogy must be adapted to the needs of a changing student population.

Particularly in the field's recent translingual turn, multilingualism and language difference are viewed not as a deficit but as the norm and as a productive resource for meaning-making. Teachers, in response, might encourage students to use their multiple languages or codes at various stages of the composing process from brainstorming and research to final drafts, provide code-meshed or dialectal models for students' writing, expose the constructed nature of language standards, take a stance of negotiation toward error, and promote learner agency around linguistic choices (cf., Canagarajah, "The Place of World Englishes," "Translingual Practice"; Horner et al.; Shapiro et al.).

When it comes to how teachers take up these best practices and principles, however, the research is somewhat less positive, showing that teachers often focus extensively on local grammatical errors over issues of content and tend to mark errors comprehensively rather than selectively (Furneaux et al.; Junquiera and Payant; Montgomery and Baker). Likewise, Christine Tardy found in a survey of the faculty in her department that more than half of the instructors never invited students to use other languages in their writing process, and that many teachers "have a limited set of strategies for supporting multilingual writers," likely due to the low level of formal training for working with multilingual students (646). As Bommarito and Cooney suggest, "dislodging monolingual norms pervading our classrooms" demands that teachers as well as students "accept an entirely new view of literacy, one that rejects the notion of a standard, abstract ideal English" (45), and this is neither a simple nor straightforward process.

More troubling is the fact that even when teachers agree with the best practices of the field, their teaching often conflicts with these beliefs (Lee; Montgomery and Baker, "Error Correction," "Ten Mismatches"). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, a commonly cited reason for these mismatches is that institutional contexts do not permit teachers to put their beliefs about language difference into practice as a result of restrictive curricula, high-stakes grammar-focused exams, and pressure from colleagues, administrators, and even students themselves (Lee, "Ten Mismatches"; Reichelt; You). In the U.S., we typically do not have standardized national curricula or (in most cases) high-stakes exams at the university level. Instead, we have the pressure of what Marjorie Roemer et al. call "the demoted status of the composition course as a service activity" (377). In this model, fyw classes for L2 students are often framed as "mere service courses, nothing more than staging areas before the real work of college literacy striving to train students primarily to

accommodate themselves to the demands of others in their courses and in this country" (Leki 4).

The sense of responsibility teachers feel to prepare students for future audiences is by no means unfounded. As Daniel Cole points out, writing instructors are often held accountable in the eyes of their colleagues for the state of students' grammar, and conversations with faculty in other disciplines can be rife with "subtext concerning the 'inadequacies' . . . of first year composition" (7). This "service orientation" to the class can create considerable anxiety for writing teachers struggling to assess second language writers ethically, especially given the gate-keeping function of a writing course required for advancement or graduation. When teachers feel responsible for preparing students for other university audiences, they may well draw heavily from beliefs and practices informed by Standard English ideology. As Tardy notes,

> Perhaps the belief that poses the most significant challenge for composition scholars wanting to move toward a multilingual paradigm of FYW is that Standard English is preferred in academic and professional writing and should therefore be the focus of FYW courses. (648)

What is clear from the literature on language difference and fyw is that despite the circulation of best practices and principles, the specter of academic and other audiences who will harshly judge students' accented writing looms large in teachers' minds. In the following section, we trace how this image of the unsympathetic future audience plays out in the teaching of two in-service L2 writing instructors, affecting their thinking about their responsibilities to the students, and ultimately making them less open to best practices in the field and to WPA-mandated policies grounded in those best practices. These teachers' cases are drawn from two separate studies conducted in the same institutional context. Although the trope of the unsympathetic future audience was not the original focus of either study, it emerged strongly in the discourse of both instructors as they spoke about their pedagogical choices.

The Experienced Teacher: Amy

As a graduate teaching assistant, Amy participated in a study Brooke conducted on students' reactions to the use of texts written in World Englishes in the first-year L2 writing classroom. During the study, Amy assigned readings from two World English texts, Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Soza Boy* and Juno Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and asked students to submit questions about the readings before class. Brooke recorded the resulting class discus-

sions of these texts and then interviewed Amy about her pedagogical beliefs, goals for the course, and response to the class discussion.

At the time of the study, Amy was in the first year of a PhD program in Applied Linguistics. A native speaker of English, Amy had also studied Japanese, Spanish, and German. She earned her undergraduate degree in English literature and creative writing, and she held a master's degree in TESOL. Amy was already an experienced ESL instructor across multiple contexts, having taught two years in Japan, a summer in Mexico, and two years of ESL composition in the United States.

During the interview, other professors' presumed expectations of her students' writing emerged as a driving force in Amy's pedagogical decision-making. When asked to define the main goal of her course, Amy described how she felt herself to be facing a dilemma around the purpose of the class:

Brooke: What are your goals for this class? What would you like students to get out of it ideally?

Amy: Yeah (laughs) that's hard. That's something I really struggle with . . . what is the purpose of a class like this? Is it really a service class? Is it preparing students to write in the academy or university, or is it really its own standalone course to develop critical thinking skills and critical writing skills?

Ultimately, Amy decided, the most important thing for her students to gain from her course is not grammatical perfection but the ability to find resources and produce texts independently, to be "self-sufficient" writers in classes in their disciplines. She wanted to make sure students have "the tools or the skills to do what they need to do to survive and succeed in these other classes," though she notes that she has "no idea what's going on in [other classes] and…how [students] are being perceived" there. In other words, the expectations of "the academy" for her students were extremely important for Amy, yet they were also vague.

As a student of English and linguistics, like many teachers of writing, Amy reported that she had little experience writing in other disciplines, and it was through her teaching and teacher training that her understanding of what other professors might expect in writing had primarily been formed:

> I feel like it's been handed down to me by other mentors or professors that I've worked with . . . saying oh, professors in the content fields, this is what they say and this is what they think and we're doing a disservice if we don't prepare [the students] in this way. So I feel this intense pressure, and I feel this influence from these nameless faceless people who have this agenda that I don't know what it is…

Amy's teaching goals have been profoundly shaped by the expectations of "these nameless faceless people," and the success or failure of her work as an instructor is directly tied to how well her students live up to those expectations once they leave her class. If students do not write in English according to those imagined expectations, she has done her students "a disservice." Aiming to make sure her students are able to "survive and succeed" in their classes in an American university means for Amy that, in addition to other rhetorical skills, students need to produce Standard Written English (SWE) because, otherwise, faculty in other disciplines will not be able to understand them. As she reported, "So many students have come to me and said my professors say they can't understand my work…they just say the grammar's too bad." Feedback from her students about their experiences writing in the disciplines has given Amy the impression that while other faculty appreciate her L2 students' ideas and input, they are unwilling to work with nonstandard grammar. Thus, she feels that the onus is on her to prepare students for this critical audience.

Amy's own ambition in her class is to promote students' sense of their linguistic differences as a resource, so that students know "they aren't less than [other students] because they're not American"—an orientation to linguistic difference as a deficit which she perceives as prominent in the academy broadly. It is the desire to counteract this deficit orientation combined with the felt need to prepare her students for an unsympathetic audience that shapes Amy's pedagogy.

As she discussed the World English texts with her students in class, she emphasized what she later called a "balancing act" between using non-standard English that expresses a cultural identity and adhering to expectations of American academic writing. She asks students to consider when and how much they can safely experiment with the types of non-standard grammar and code-mixing evident in the two readings. At the end of the class discussion, a few students commented that the way the authors "interpret their culture and views into their writing styles" could be a helpful model for the students in the class to "write in our own ways" and to "express ourselves." Amy responded by asking the students to consider the rhetorical appropriateness of this choice:

Amy: Ok, do you think you can do that for every academic article you write here at [university]?

Students: [shake heads]

Amy: No. Some of your professors might not (laughs), might not enjoy that.

While Amy concluded the discussion by reinforcing that students' cultures are "something special you bring to the table as writers," it's clear that this is held in check by other professors' potential expectations for SWE. As Amy pointed out in her interview, when she gives the two World English texts to her students in her writing class, "I'm presenting this essay to [the students] as good writing, model writing, but when [they] go write a chemistry lab report this is no longer good or model writing." In other words, because Amy believes that those other academic audiences, represented by the imagined reader of the "lab report," are unwilling to negotiate with linguistic difference, students must learn to accommodate—this is rhetorical savviness. As Amy strives to empower students to be successful in the university, she is ever mindful of that unsympathetic future audience.

The Novice Teacher: Sergei

I (Dorothy) got to know Sergei in the context of a larger study on the development of pedagogical content knowledge among first-time teachers of L2 academic writing. In terms of his language background, Sergei told me that in addition to his native language of English, he spoke some Italian and had studied elementary French in school. Additionally, he had picked up some basic German and Korean during his time serving in the U.S. military. Sergei was in his final year of a TESOL master's program, a degree he had undertaken after retiring from his career as an agricultural consultant. Though the semester of the study was Sergei's first experience teaching L2 writing, he had previous experience teaching public speaking at an academic summer camp for international high school students along with many seminars and training courses in his previous career.

I followed Sergei and three other novice teachers of L2 writing through their first semester of teaching in the same fyw program. I interviewed each teacher six times over the course of the semester, video-recorded their teaching of one of the four required assigments in the class, and conducted three teaching reflection interviews during the focus paper unit. Like Amy, Sergei was keenly aware of the expectations of his students' future readers, both potential professors and employers, and his beliefs about these audiences strongly influenced how he addressed language differences in the classroom.

As he spoke about the role of grammar instruction in the writing class, Sergei described himself as "in between" two perspectives on grammar correction, which he referred to as "descriptivists" and "prescriptivists." He associated the descriptivist view with "what linguists say" about how different "varieties of English are, you know, that have good structure." He also associated this view with the perspective of the ESL writing program and the program director in particular who, he reported, "has said we don't have to correct grammar"

(Interview 1). In contrast, Sergei described the prescriptivist view as the belief that "if you're going to learn English you learn it properly, use the grammar properly, [and] learn the pronunciation as best as you can." Sergei associated prescriptivism with his students' future teachers and employers, explaining that, "in order to get a good job there's a certain minimum level of English pronunciation and understanding that a person needs to develop" (Interview 1). For Sergei, being stuck "between" these two sets of beliefs about grammar caused him a great deal of consternation and internal debate. This struggle is most clearly articulated in Sergei's comments regarding how much he should factor grammatical accuracy into his grading:

> The thing I struggle with is they're going to have to work in an American academic community. Am I doing them an injustice if I don't show them what their problems are, and how to correct them? And if I give them a B+ or an A- [on a paper] with horrible grammar, what's that going to do to them in the future, when they're writing? (Interview 2)

Sergei frames his concern about grading grammar in terms of his obligation to prepare his students for the reality of writing for a hazy future audience who would not be so forgiving regarding grammatical errors.

Sergei's sense of obligation to prepare his students for this future intolerant audience by attending to Standard English grammar puts him into conflict with programmatic policy. The actual policy allowed for some attention to grammar, but also encouraged instructors to limit in-class grammar lessons to short, targeted activities and to use written feedback to "focus on writing problems rather than grammar problems, and encourage students to notice, identify, correct, and seek help for their individual mistakes and problems" rather than correcting every grammatical error in students' drafts (Instructor Handbook). Sergei, however, interpreted this policy to be a blanket prohibition against grammar instruction. While Sergei verbally agreed to abide by this policy, in practice he devoted significant attention to grammar in classroom teaching and while commenting on his students' drafts, during which he particularly focused on stereotypical L2 errors such as misused prepositions, subject-verb agreement, and omitted articles. In justifying these instructional practices, which he knew to be subverting the intended curriculum, Sergei referred again and again to the need to prepare his students for future, more unforgiving audiences. For example, when describing his decision to provide grammatical corrections on his students' rough drafts, Sergei again referenced the conflict between a descriptive approach to grammar and his obligation to prepare his students for future audiences:

> I understand there are different varieties of English and there are different grammar rules, different words, but I also believe there is a . . . I don't know whether I can [or] I should call it standard or not, maybe standard with quotation marks around it, that implies you have a good grasp of English language for work purposes. And when I see a journal article that has bad grammar in it I lose just a little bit of respect for that writer or for that editor. (Teaching Reflection 2)

While Sergei frames his desire to focus on grammar in terms of preparing students "for work purposes," his comment at the end about his loss of respect of published writers on the basis of their poor grammar indicates that at least some of his desire to focus on grammar is based on Sergei's own intolerance for errors, which he projects onto the supposedly prescriptive beliefs of imagined future readers to justify his error correction practices.

Throughout the semester, Sergei continued to devote significant time in class to teaching grammar and commented extensively on grammatical errors in his students' drafts, disregarding the curricular policies that encouraged him to focus primarily on content and structure. Still, at the end of the semester, Sergei noted that he had seen little improvement in his students' grammar, particularly their use of articles, explaining that he "saw improvement in parts of their papers but not [the] whole paper. There was nobody who ever had a completely perfect one with articles" (Interview 5). Because Sergei saw his role as preparing students for future intolerant readers, those errors that were most obvious received the greatest attention, and his goal became the production of grammatically "perfect" papers. Sergei was disappointed in the lack of grammatical development he saw in his students' writing, but he maintained his focus on grammar as a key element of the class and justified his decision on the basis of his students' future audiences. He explained in his final interview that his goals for his students included the following:

> I want the sentence structure to be good. I want the grammar to be good. I don't necessarily want you to enjoy writing it, but I want you to be happy with it, and your boss to be happy with it, or your supervisor, or your email companion, or your instructor. I want it to be the kind of paper that they are happy with and that will help you get along in the world. (Interview 5)

Sergei's mental image of his students' future audiences and particularly those in positions of social and economic power over the students (e.g., boss, supervisor, instructor), along with his own lingering language biases, shaped his instructional goals and lead him to continue to focus extensively on stig-

matizing grammatical errors even though his pedagogical practices were not effective in achieving his goals.

The Effects of the "Nameless, Faceless People"

Amy and Sergei represent two types of teachers: Amy is an experienced language teacher who believes strongly that she has a responsibility to promote positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity, while Sergei is a novice teacher whose attitudes toward linguistic diversity were conflicted as a result of an uncomfortable tension between his own experiences in the business world and the best practices of the field. Yet for both teachers, as for many of the L2 writing teachers we have worked with, the image of their students' future readers profoundly influenced their decision-making.

For both teachers, grammatical "perfection"—defined as absence of markedly foreign language features—was not an attainable goal for a one-semester course. However, for Sergei perfection simply defined good writing, and for Amy control over SWE meant survival in the face of linguistic bias. The students' written accents, for these teachers, made the students vulnerable to future criticism, so that, for Sergei especially, what marked their writing as foreign became a potential threat teachers should help them to avoid. Preparing students to meet the expectations of these "prescriptivist" audiences came to define success or failure: If they as teachers do not adequately prepare students to meet the demands of those future audiences, they feel they have done their students a "disservice" or an "injustice." Their concern was not motivated by the effect that their students' future errors would have on their own reputations as teachers but rather sprang from their deeply held beliefs about the purpose of their course, sense of professional ethics, and feelings of responsibility toward their students.

Ultimately, for both Amy and Sergei, the trope of the unforgiving future audience shaped the way they engaged with language difference in the classroom and, in Sergei's case, limited his ability and willingness to align with best practices of the field. For Amy, the image of the "nameless, faceless" professors and their unknown "agendas" hovered over her class discussion of World English texts, and ultimately she advises students to play it safe by experimenting with nonstandard language and codemixing only in the places to which they have traditionally been relegated—creative and personal writing—precisely because other professors "may not enjoy" language difference (Canagarajah, "The Place of World Englishes"). In Sergei's case, this trope permitted him to leave unexamined his own linguistic preferences and biases, which Ilona Leki says "disturb" teachers, and ascribe them to a distant audience of others. This allowed Sergei to remain "in between" the "prescriptive" and "descriptive"

views, verbally assenting to one language ideology when communicating with the program director but practicing another ideology in the classroom.

For Amy, the understanding of how those "nameless, faceless" professors will respond to her students' writing emerges from both her own experiences as a teacher and those of her mentors. For Sergei, the perception that future professors and employers would judge his students' grammar errors harshly was partially based on his own experiences in the business world and was also a reflection of his own lingering biases against such errors, biases he knew to be stigmatized in the scholarly field he was joining. These observations suggest that the origins of such beliefs, hinted at here, represent an important question that future research should address, if policies aimed at creating linguistically inclusive classrooms are to be fully implemented.

We would like to close with some recommendations for both writing instructors and those who work closely with instructors that we believe can help to combat the negative effect of this trope on teachers' practices. While linguistically inclusive policies at the programmatic level are important, both to give novice teachers a place to start and to encourage a new departmental culture (Matsuda), our experiences with Amy and Sergei show us that we must uncover and address teachers' deep-seated beliefs if these policies are to be effective.

Put a Face to the "Faceless Professors"

For Amy, the hazy, unknown nature of her students' future audiences added significantly to her own anxiety and led her to assume a conservative approach to language difference in spite of her own beliefs. One way to help teachers deal with these "nameless, faceless" professors, then, is to put names and faces to them by exposing teachers to research on the actual attitudes and beliefs of professors and employers.

Such research has not always found the intolerant beliefs and practices that Amy and Sergei seem to expect. In her longitudinal study of the literacy experiences of four English L2 undergraduates, Leki found that professors in the disciplines were not "unduly worried" about grammatical correctness in student writing (254). Even when faculty report that they highly value SWE, professors tend to be more tolerant of grammatical inconsistencies in L2 students' writing, which they see as evidence of their still-developing English proficiency, than they are toward errors in L1 students' writing (Ives et al.; Leki; Wolfe). Such varying judgements of L2 and L1 writing errors have also been found among employers (see Wolfe et al.). The faculty Terry Zawaki and Anna Habib interviewed in their study on faculty attitudes about language difference reported that they tended to be troubled by those errors which af-

fected their ability to assess students' knowledge of course content, rather than simply wanting unaccented writing.

Moreover, the professors who took a strict stance toward language errors reported doing so not as a result of their own beliefs but out of a sense of obligation to prepare students for other "actual or perceived" stakeholders, including future professors and bosses. As one participant in Zawacki and Habib's study put it, "Personally, you know, I think that those mistakes are part of what makes the world so interesting. I don't see those as flaws. However, I worry for the students that that will prohibit them from succeeding in the [major] and the field" (197). Similar to Amy and Sergei, some instructors outside of composition are motivated by appeasing students' future (supposedly intolerant) audiences—a point that we believe merits additional future research.

We do not wish to imply here that linguistic intolerance does not exist. Anecdotal evidence from Amy's experiences, our own insights as teachers and teacher educators, and the literature tell us that intolerance is a reality in students' lives (see, for example, Cole). Students will certainly encounter audiences in gatekeeping positions, including faculty members on our own campuses, who will be unwilling to negotiate with linguistic difference, and these encounters can have profound consequences, as seen in the case of the Bulgarian student whose professor decided not to write a letter of recommendation for her graduate school application because of her accented English (Ives et al.). However, the research we have reviewed suggests that the problem is not as insurmountable as it often appears. As Cole points out, "the true grammar discrepancy between writing faculty and professors in the disciplines is more one of proportion" (18).

In addition to reading what research says about the attitudes of disciplinary faculty and employers, teachers might also conduct independent interviews with faculty across the curriculum as part of faculty development or a practicum (see Ives et al. or Zawacki and Habib for models of these sorts of interviews), exposing teachers to a wider range of actual audience expectations in their own institutional contexts. Our own experiences interacting with faculty across the disciplines through a campus center for teaching excellence (Worden et al.) enabled us to view faculty not as shadowy judges but as well-meaning partners in students' literacy education, and we encourage other teachers to seek out opportunities for this kind of sustained engagement, where possible.

Provide Ongoing Opportunities for Teacher Reflection

As Bommarito found in his own teaching, teachers need to contend with their intuitive emotional responses to nonstandard language, a process which entails "self-critique, an openness to the possibility of harboring a tacit monolingual ideology, and an openness to changing it" (49). We argue that a key

part of this reflection should be ongoing opportunities to externalize and reflect on teachers' underlying beliefs about language differences as they relate to the purpose of fyw, beliefs about future readers, and responsibilities to students. One way to prompt such reflection might be to provide some of the research described above and ask teachers to respond to it, considering how it does (or does not) match their own experiences. Moreover, we would argue that such reflection should not be relegated only to the teaching practicum but should be an ongoing, iterative process that includes in-service teachers and their current teaching experiences.

Acknowledge the Reality of Standard Language Ideologies

Like Leki, we believe that fyw courses should not exist merely to serve other institutional stakeholders but are in themselves important sites for learning and thinking. Yet, we also

> take seriously the responsibility heaved on us by the institutional demand that all undergraduate students take first year writing courses. The students in these writing courses have the right to expect that their work in the writing courses will somehow contribute to their academic success. (Leki 4)

Amy and Sergei were both deeply aware of this responsibility toward their students and feared that failing to insist on SWE would be a "disservice" to their students as they moved on to the wider university. We believe that teachers should absolutely be concerned with the benefits to students in taking the course; however, in order for this concern not to become paralyzing, teachers must figure out a way to acknowledge the reality of standard language ideologies, which are real and do affect students, while simultaneously working to promote a more accepting attitude toward language difference. Instructors often feel a deep ethical responsibility to their students to provide feedback on language errors. Rather than ignoring this felt need, teachers should have tools at their disposal to give such feedback in better ways. For example, Ferris and Hedgcock provide a heuristic for selecting errors to correct when responding to student writing: These are errors that may impede successful communication, frequently repeated errors, and those associated with explainable grammatical rules. In other words, teachers might look for patterns of grammatical errors which interfere with reader understanding, such as incorrect word use, rather than correcting errors which mark writing as non-native, such as making mistakes with articles and prepositions (for more details see Ferris; Ferris and Hedgcock; Matsuda). We would add that we should make every attempt to rely on research to identify which errors

actually trouble students' future audiences, rather than focusing on the errors that are easiest to identify or the ones most often marked as "foreign." For example, Wolfe et al. found that pragmatic errors such as an informal address or an overly direct request in emails to business people were generally more bothersome than marked L2 errors such as omitted articles.

In addition, we recommend including curricular activities and assignments that teach students how to recognize situations of linguistic tension or discrimination they are likely to face, such as being essentialized or overlooked because of accented speech or writing and feeling afraid to take the floor in class discussion. Students could then investigate strategies for overcoming these challenges, including how to access institutional anti-discrimination resources and how to advocate for themselves with authority figures. As Leki writes,

> Using [students'] developing literacy skills as tools to work toward analyzing such situations, including their hidden ideological dimensions, and developing possible solutions communally not only honors their intellect and experience but also might make L2 writing classes be remembered for more than only the use of the comma. (285)

By teaching such strategies, we help students take a more active role in shaping their readers' attitudes, rather than just being accommodating to them. This is one more way to promote student agency (Shapiro et al.) and work toward a more linguistically inclusive academic culture generally.

Conclusion

For teachers, the "nameless, faceless people" that they imagine reading their students' future work can have a significant impact on their responses to language differences in the classroom. In responding to their vague conceptions of these potentially narrow-minded unknown readers, writing instructors may adopt teaching practices that do not reflect best practices in the field or even their own beliefs. It's important to acknowledge that teachers are responding to a deeply felt sense of responsibility toward their students. These beliefs seem to be so resistant to change because they are grounded in a sense of social justice, a desire to give students access to the codes of power that will make them successful in the university and beyond. Our goal as teachers and teacher educators is to improve writing education for L2 students by promoting inclusive language policies and practices. In order for these practices to take root, it is essential to grapple directly with our underlying beliefs about the purposes of our classes and our role in the larger university. Only then can we begin to make lasting change.

Notes

1. Pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

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