Writing Instruction for English Learners in a Translingual Classroom

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Abstract

The authors review three different strands of work on English writing research and instruction, working to harmonize them into a coherent translingual approach to teaching writing in the postsecondary EFL/EIL/ESL writing classroom. Five principles from English composition research (now often called writing studies) describe the fundamental knowledge base; next, the work of researchers specifically in the writing of L2 speakers provides a contrasting perspective; and finally, recent translingual scholarship usefully complicates the other two. The paper then offers two sample writing lessons that demonstrate an approach to writing pedagogy triangulating these three bodies of knowledge.

Keyword*s*: composition, EFL, EIL, ESL, L2 writing, TESOL, translingualism, writing instruction, writing studies

Introduction

> *[English language learners] see learning to write well in English, or in some variety of it, as a way up and perhaps a way out. Coming as they often do from rich traditions of literacy . . . they are also familiar with the aesthetic and intellectual rewards of writing and reading.*
> —Bruce & Rafoth (2016)

What Bruce and Rafoth describe above represents a challenge and a conundrum for postsecondary writing programs in the U.S., where Bruce and Rafoth teach, even when those programs include teachers with experience teaching ESL. Traditional ESL writing instruction, like much L2 instruction, appears to proceed from a de facto deficit model expressed through a monolingual approach. The colonialist impulse of monolingual pedagogy has been well-discussed in the literature, so here we will point out only that such an approach imagines students as functionally illiterate and inexperienced, at the same time as it cuts them off from the powerful language resources of their home language. The "rich traditions of literacy" at their command are *a priori* ruled out of bounds, inaccessible, in the classroom.

For EIL teachers, the challenge takes a unique form. Depending on their institution, international teachers may be expected to bracket their own variety of English in order to give instruction in the "standard English" of countries where the language is considered native. However, as Li has recently pointed out, to be more successful, an English user should learn and practice a strong awareness of multiple English varieties. "[T]eaching from an EIL paradigm needs to focus on facilitating intercultural communicative competence in multilingual and multicultural contexts, rather than mastery of an idealized "standard English" and its associated cultural norms" (Li, 2017, p. 251).

Below, we explore this problem as it applies to instruction in writing. We do so by triangulating the knowledge base of composition theory with that of L2 writing instruction and with the growing literature on translingualism. We find where these three lines of vision intersect and, from that point of focus, we develop two writing lessons that exemplify an alternative approach to L2 writing pedagogy, one that harmonizes these three bodies of knowledge.

What is agreed in writing studies

Scholarship in writing studies (still predominantly a U.S. discipline) has established a number of consensus points regarding the activity of writing. These are described in recent work as "threshold concepts" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) and five of them are considered to represent major core understandings that define the discipline. We summarize the five concepts below, but, for ease of reference, here they are in a single list.

1. Writing is a social and rhetorical activity
2. Writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms
3. Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies
4. All writers have more to learn
5. Writing is always a cognitive activity

Much the same could be said of language study, and transcending all, one can see the consensus that not just writing, but literacy itself is socially constructed, multimodal, and situational.

1. Writing is a social and rhetorical activity

Writing scholars have virtual unanimity on the view that all manner of writing is best understood as social and rhetorical. This idea is counter-intuitive to many students and even to many teachers. In the lore of non-specialists, writing is essentially a matter of transcribing thoughts that appear in the mind. The focus of this traditional understanding is on the finished product of writing, which should be fixed in a form that meets a conventional standard of grammatical/mechanical correctness. Writing is considered a straightforward skill, even a basic one. This is not how writing scholars and researchers see writing.

Since the mid-twentieth century, research in writing has shown writing to be far more nuanced and flexible—a fundamentally social and fundamentally rhetorical activity. Just as speaking connects one person to another in a relation with a purpose, writing also addresses an audience, and the writer aims to influence that audience. Whether writing a newsy email to a friend, a contract for a realtor, an article for a journal, or a poem to a loved one, the writer is seeking to engage another human being and to move them in some way. "Writers are engaged in the work of making meaning for particular audiences and purposes, and writers are always connected to other people" (Roozen, 2015, p. 17). Even writing for oneself is dialogic: in this case, the "reader" may be only a projection of the self, but the writer addresses that reader and hopes to influence them.

The social dimension of writing goes even deeper than connecting with an audience, because a writer also engages with antecedents and sources. Words get their meanings from how they are used by other people in other situations, and those mean-

ings change as we employ them in new situations. In this way, we are always "writing back" to others and contributing to the long-term, dynamic process of making language. In regard to academic genres, Harris (2006) suggests that *all* writing can be seen as *re*writing; in this, he is expressing what writing scholars have established throughout a wide range of work: that writing is always necessarily dialogic—i.e., social and rhetorical.

2. Writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms

The concept of genre is familiar to literacy, communication, and language scholars. In every instance of communication resides the question of how each interlocutor interprets both the communicative *situation* and the *form* of the communication itself. Is my friend telling a joke or a story? Are they asking me for a favor? Are they opening a long conversation, or do they mean just to acknowledge me with a passing greeting? If I don't have time for conversation, what form should my response take? These are questions of genre.

Martin (2009), as a linguist, points out that genre is not so much a choice of form as a semantic choice responding to a social context; genre is one of the many ways in which people use language to live. In context, form itself conveys meaning. Scholarship on genre in writing studies takes a similarly functional and social perspective. Generally, writing is understood to address its audience through recognizable gestures associated with defined audiences (different disciplines, for example) and with situations for which the reader would find the writing appropriate. A book report, for example, will not do when a research report is expected. Bazerman (2015) grounds his perspective of genre in the familiar concept of rhetorical situation. "Awareness of rhetorical situation . . . helps us to put in focus what we can accomplish in a situation, how we can accomplish it, and what the stakes are" (Bazerman, 2015, p. 36). This is what Bawarshi (2003) means when he argues that the force of genre does more than package its content; the genre actually constructs or "invents" the writer for the moment.

Unfortunately, students and teachers are often over-specific in their approach to genre in writing instruction, and they tend to reify artificial conventions into obligatory gestures and formalities. Such is the case with the century-old North American "five-paragraph theme," a genre of writing that is by all accounts functional literally nowhere but in U.S. secondary schools. In contrast, the focus of current genre scholarship is on the diversity of the forms of discourse. For writing scholars, the point of bringing students to understand genre is not to help them build a repertoire of formal conventions that match particular school assignments. Instead, they want students to internalize the concept of rhetorical situation, and to develop an awareness of genre as a functional way to think about invention in writing and about how they might present or invent themselves through text for different rhetorical situations.

3. Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies

This idea is familiar to literacy, language, and writing scholars via sociocultural theory. To learn a language is to gain membership in a social group. Membership in a social group confers an identity. With the constructed discourse of a group comes a constructed way of seeing the world—an ideology—because our discourse both provides and constrains what is possible for us to see, say, and think. In this manner, language builds ideological schema from which learners operate. Accordingly, through writing

as through speaking, we exercise our ideologies and identities. At the same time, although "instances of language use do not exist independently from cultures and their ideologies" (Scott, 2015, p. 48), they are not frozen or fossilized there. Subsequent languaging enlarges what is known to the learner, and growth occurs.

Although familiar and research-based, this social view of language does run counter to the commonsense of non-specialist publics, including education policymakers, teachers, and even many scholars in non-humanities disciplines. The misconception that there is a single correct usage, a standard language, or a general academic discourse seems persuasive to many, and probably most, language users inside and outside the academy assume language to be a neutral, transparent, unsituated conveyance for thought. Writing (like speaking) seems a general skill that one can master with a little instruction and self-discipline.

According to writing researchers, what is missed in the logic of standards is that a standard itself is a convention, and it, too, represents an ideology. To linguists, this too is a familiar concept, and many EIL teachers are more than keenly aware that to impose a language standard on a student also imposes an ideology and an identity—a point sometimes missed by education policymakers. This imposition may or may not harm a student, but it does suggest the need to affirm and respect the student's bond with the home language (Kim & Tatar, 2017). Whether or not the teacher chooses to attend to this in the manner that we do in the lessons below, the point is that in teaching writing, it is useful to understand the ideological and identity dynamics of language use.

4. All writers have more to learn

With this fourth threshold concept, composition researchers take it as a given that all writers, not just student writers or L2 writers, can continue to develop. This is partly a function of human cognition—learning never truly ends. But it is also a function of the physical world. We communicate with real physical human beings, and every authentic writing situation is different, making different demands on genre, discourse, lexicon, register, and pragmatics. Consequently, "there is no such thing as 'writing in general' and no one lesson about writing that can make writing good in all contexts" (Rose, 2015, p. 60). Instead, one learns over a long period how to select appropriate strategies for new writing situations. A more experienced writer may be better at this than a novice writer, but no single writer can hope to achieve terminal proficiency, a level of mastery where development is fully achieved, is a fiction.

A related problem is the traditional benchmark for L2 proficiency: the idealized native speaker. Called the "native speaker fallacy" by Phillipson (1992) and "native-speakerism" by Holliday (2006), this ideal, of course, privileges prestige varieties thought to exemplify a universal target proficiency; it neglects international Englishes altogether and ignores even the range of Englishes spoken *within* countries where English is considered "native."

Not just a social issue, the native-speaker benchmark presents a logical problem, too. L1 speakers are granted *proficient* or *mastery* status categorically as natives to the language (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1999), in spite of the vast range of language competence represented among actual living native speakers. As translingual theorists point out, all speakers learn language in a zone where multiple linguistic traditions and conventions are in contact.

There are both many models and no perfectly homogeneous linguistic community in which one could become the ideal "native speaker" with full mastery of their

language. This reality is what the fourth threshold concept in writing is about: coming to grips with variation, all writers can progress.

5. Writing is always a cognitive activity

If writing is a social and a rhetorical gesture that requires the individual to choose and judge and build a strategy, then it obviously also requires cognition. Here the exterior social world meets the interior physical world of the human brain. A number of empirical studies in the 1970s and 1980s established that writing performance is inflected by such interior states as anxiety, shifting attention, idiosyncratic choices, identity configurations, and others (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Perl, 1979). It was through cognitive studies that writing scholars began to challenge the conventional view that poor student performance was related to mental or cultural deficits. From these studies, the field saw the need to turn toward the explanatory value of social and rhetorical theories of the composing process.

Cognitive research today adds the important point that a two-way influence between writing and cognition exists; not only does how we think influence how we write, but how we write can influence how we think—cognitive states, such as memory, attention, goal-setting, and others are affected by writing. Dryer (2015) takes this further: "[T]here is now substantial evidence that composing practices measurably influence . . . psychosocial and even *physiological* phenomena (stress and anxiety levels, recovery from trauma, immunological response, pain sensitivity, postoperative recovery, etc.)" (p. 73, emphasis original).

As part of this return to an interest in cognition, some writing scholars emphasize the value of teaching *meta*cognition, which can help students attend to important issues that transcend writing situations (e.g., genre, discourse community) and to learn to transfer and adapt writing strategies from one context to another. Dryer (2015) points to a convergence between a focus on the social in writing research and the refreshed interest in cognitive research: "The writing process is supported by a single system—the writer's internal mind-brain interacting with the external environment" (Berninger & Winn, 2006, as cited in Dryer, 2015, p. 74).

What is agreed in second language writing studies

We find a great deal of epistemological common ground between the threshold concepts in English composition studies and many accepted concepts among second language writing scholars, but there are important differences, as well. For example, although the majority of composition scholars identify with humanities research and methods, scholars of L2 writing have emerged primarily from the field of linguistics, especially applied linguistics. In their book-length review of research on L2 writing in English, Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2008) write that "This historical allegiance has resulted in . . . a more practical, less theoretical collective turn of mind, tending to nudge the field away from more ideological considerations" (p. 61).

Indeed, as a collective, English compositionists have been very much occupied with ideological considerations. Employed predominantly by U.S. public institutions, they argue that it is a civic obligation to advance social justice in the classroom (Condon, 2012). In contrast, scholars of L2 writing, possibly because they identify with a more transnational focus and constituency, generally hesitate to use the classroom to advance civic agendas associated with North American sociopolitical presuppositions. "[B]urning ideological issues in the U.S. . . . may simply be irrelevant to many inter-

nationals. In addition, . . . for those teaching abroad, discussion of ideological issues may [carry] social sanctions or even security risks" (Leki et al., 2008, p. 61).

Still, despite having followed "a different path" (Matsuda, 1999), research in L2 writing reveals operational understandings that have much in common with the threshold concepts in the field of writing studies discussed above. Fundamentally, like their L1 colleagues, L2 writing researchers conceive of writing as a social and rhetorical activity. L2 writing scholars also engage with the subject of identity work. Work in multi-literacies and in translingualism specifically is bringing "expanding circle English" (Kachru, 1992) to the attention of the field of L1 writing studies and is building a case for greater attention to the voices, competencies, and identities of multilingual English learners (Canagarajah, 2010; Young & Martinez, 2011).

In addition to a general difference regarding sociopolitical agendas, L2 writing instruction departs from English composition in two notable areas.

Differences in perspective: the role of writing in education

First, although literacy itself is valued in cultures around the world, writing—as a subject of instruction—is not seen everywhere as meriting the attention that it is given in the United States. Reichelt (2011) describes at some length the problematics of directly importing U.S. writing pedagogy to the English classroom elsewhere. She references Hargan's study of American EFL teachers in Italy who emphasized American-style academic essays with their Italian students. "Essay writing is not a key feature of the Italian educational system, where oral examinations and oral reports are much more common. When students write their research projects in English, it is their *first academic research writing experience* in any language" (Reichelt, 2011, p. 15, emphasis added). In countries where a tradition of writing instruction does exist, it may be focused more on close reading of literary texts, as it is in Germany (Reichelt, 2011). For a different sort of example, in China, rhetorical traditions stand in clear opposition to American-style academic argument writing (Wang, 2011).

While these international examples confirm that writing always enacts identities and ideologies, it is amusing that they do so at the expense of American-style writing instruction. Accordingly, L2 writing scholars advise writing teachers in non-U.S. settings to examine their presuppositions about instruction, classroom facilities, resources, time for instruction, class size, and other contextual matters—even about the importance of writing instruction. Like writing itself, instruction always exists within a context, and it is not always the American context.

Differences in perspective: Defining core values

Secondly, it seems fair to say that L2 writing instruction differs from L1 English writing studies in its fundamental orientation toward theory. Instead of looking for disciplinary consensus around core theory concepts, L2 writing prefers to define itself in pedagogy. Leki et al. appear almost deliberately ambiguous on the question of the conceptual foundations of L2 writing research. These authors want to defer theoretical consensus, preferring to see the field as practical, local, eclectic, and pedagogically focused. "Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to identify *foundational concepts* that have aspired to provide a single, guiding basis *on which to organize L2 writing curricula* comprehensively" (Leki et al., 2008, p. 72, emphasis added). If by this they mean that there is no universal or universalizing *approach to teaching* L2 writing, then we would agree. But regarding foundational concepts, there is certainly a high

degree of congruence among scholars on *the activity* of writing—and these surely do inform L2 writing curricula.

Leki et al. point in particular to three prominent theoretical orientations that emerge from L2 writing research, and they reveal significant overlap with the threshold concepts above. To condense and clarify their descriptions, we can see them this way (cf. Leki et al., 2008, pp. 74–75):

1. *sociocultural theory explains the roles of instruction*—e.g., in tutoring contexts, in dialogue journals, written reflections, and other activities that require collaboration;
2. *theories of language socialization explain how students develop language identities* through writing and through their experience of a wide range of social relations inside and outside of school; and
3. digital technologies have expanded how we understand literacy, so that today it includes *multimodal forms of literate activity*.

Here we can see no serious conflict between the more general research base developed among compositionists and the more specialized interests of scholars in L2 writing. Research in L2 writing brings a deeper cross-cultural perspective to writing instruction than one sees in the U.S.-centric field of composition. Beyond this, however, their differences amount to a question of emphasis or focus. With the recent (and still emergent) work in translingualism, we find even more complication, and it is useful complication.

Translingualism and writing

Translingualism, as a particular conception of multilingualism, emerges from research in critical applied linguistics. It argues that all speakers inhabit contact zones where languages continuously interact and language users negotiate linguistically across language boundaries. One could argue that this insight is implied already in the study of contact languages (cf. Kachru 1992), but translingualism appears to amplify it into an overt critique of several well-established and conventional ideas.

For example, more than has been done before, it challenges the position in sociocultural theory that languages are more or less stable and more or less discrete from each other, such that certain cognitive processes are mediated almost only through a speaker's first language (cf. Lantolf, 2011). Translingualism would argue that multilingual individuals draw constantly upon all their languages at once as an integrated semiotic repertoire. As Macaro (2005, p. 65) points out, there is neurological evidence that this is so. Consequently, translingual theory challenges the monolingual lore of coordinate organization in the brain and "language interference" that drives the pedagogy of target-language-only classrooms, and it further represents a critique of the "native speaker" discussed above, who speaks one ideal uncontaminated language in a homogeneous environment (cf. Chomsky, 1986). On the contrary, translingual theory posits that language is inherently responsive to influence, and that the supposed boundaries between languages are permeable—a concept perfectly obvious to EIL instructors. In a manner of speaking, translingualism implies that "language" is one, and to speak of "languages" is only to point to general regions in a vast sphere of multi-language.

When they approach writing instruction, translingual scholars advocate bilingual, metacognitive, and meta-rhetorical approaches, suggesting that teachers should

think of a student's multiple languages as resources, not as distractions or deficits. (See, for one example, Canagarajah, 2017). Students should apply their prior linguistic and cultural knowledge strategically as they acquire a new language, negotiate meaning, invent, and learn.

Scholars in L2 writing itself have no quarrel with the translingual theory of language—and certainly no objection to its critique of monolingualist traditions in language education. But L2 writing scholars argue strongly that translingualism is an area of study very different from L2 writing and they caution against conflating the two areas (Atkinson et al., 2015). They feel that there is in translingual theory—which is an expansive idea—a tendency to subsume other fields and specialties. Translingual scholarship, they remind us, is not the same as L2 writing scholarship, and applied linguistics does not generally take up the subject of composition. How teachers understand the two is a crucial matter with implications for the very multilingual students with whom both fields are occupied.

What does translingual L2 writing instruction look like in practice?

This tension between L2 writing and translingualism makes one wonder whether it is possible to build a persuasive practice that draws from both. What would L2 writing instruction look like if one could integrate principles from accepted writing theory (L1 and L2) with principles from translingual theory (including the challenge to monolingualist teaching)? Harmonizing the two appears to be one of the emerging riddles of scholarship in this area, and, consequently, not a great deal of work has yet been published on it.

As a starting point, however, Horner (2016) offers the key intuition that translingual teaching inherently encourages reflection and cognitive transfer in the student. This is an important pedagogical advantage (cf. threshold concept five). An L2 writing teacher with a translingual perspective, Horner argues, will see "all language practice as action-reflection rather than . . . action about which one may or may not reflect" (Horner, 2016, p. 107). Teaching L2 writing in this way both affirms the student's L1, authorizing her/his language variety as a resource for learning to write in L2, and automatically invokes reflection and transfer. This is a significant and liberating shift in approach for writing instruction.

Secondly, since, in the translingual conception, all speakers are constantly (unconsciously and in tiny ways) transforming language, a translingual practice of writing instruction would adopt "an orientation of acceptance of *variability as the norm*, and a *concern with communicative effectivenes*s rather than with conformity to standards of correctness" (Horner, 2016, p. 122, emphasis added).

Although this position would raise concerns among teachers and policymakers who hold traditional views of correctness ("native-speakerism"), what it implies for teaching is both ethically vital and fully congruent with both an EIL and a communicative orientation to language instruction. Translingual teaching presupposes in the teacher a disposition of humility toward language and of patience toward students, compatible with the communicative emphasis on collaboration, negotiation of meaning, and communicative effectiveness. Instead of the error-averse instruction of traditional approaches, a translingual orientation takes an encouraging stance toward the ambiguity, miscues, and unconventional collocations that inevitably arise in the L2 classroom. The faith of the instructor is in the understanding that variation in language is the real standard, that language learning is a long-term process, and that negotiation of meaning—not enforcing a correctness defined by "native speaker" stand-

ards—is the goal.

Writing for an audience of elementary and secondary educators, García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) capture these general principles and dispositions in three key pedagogical ideas: *stance, design,* and *shifts.* They position each of these in relation to what they call the dynamic translanguaging *corriente*—the current or flow in the classroom—and they outline how they use these key terms:

- A translanguaging *stance* sees the bilingual child's complex language repertoire as a resource, never as a deficit. . . .
- [F]lexible *design* is the pedagogical core of the translanguaging classroom, and it allows teachers and students to address all content . . . in equitable ways for all students, particularly bilingual students, who are often marginalized in mainstream classrooms and schools. . . .
- *[S]hifts* are the many moment-by-moment decisions that teachers make all the time. They reflect the teacher's flexibility and willingness to change the course of the lesson and assessment, as well as the language use planned for it, to release and support students' voices.

(García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017, p. xiii, emphasis added.)

Two sample writing lessons

The following writing lessons aim to take account of the principles reviewed above from the contrasting worlds of research in L1 writing, L2 writing, and translingual theory, while developing writing activities for adult English language learners. The lessons model a positive stance toward variability in language and other values that Li (2017) identifies for reconceiving TESOL teacher preparation under a pluricentric paradigm. This reconception may be most important for teachers who are from the U.S. (as we authors are), where the ideology of "native-speakerism" may be most difficult to dislodge. "While full-fledged implementations of EIL may take time, a crucial step toward preparing teachers to move away from the native-speakerism model is to focus on developing knowledge and raising awareness of their personal attitudes toward English dialects and cultures" (Li, 2017, p. 255). The lessons below are designed to offer teachers ways to initiate within themselves and their students the useful sort of personal exploration that Li recommends here. We see the lessons as compatible with Li's approach (p. 259) to promoting key goals of the EIL classroom in TESOL teacher preparation: developing awareness of and sensitivity to differences across varieties of English, along with respect for other languages that each learner may have.

In this way, the lessons also advance a reimagining of competence in English like that called for by Mahboob (2017). By encouraging a conception of language as variable and dynamic, and by letting go of dependence on the ideal native speaker, we aim to enact something like Mahboob's Dynamic Approach to Language Proficiency (DALP). "DALP posits that being proficient in a language implies that one has the ability to select, adapt, negotiate and use a range of linguistic resources that are appropriate in that context and which are not dependent on native speaker norms" (Mahboob, 2017, p 3). What Mahboob describes here for EIL instruction is very much a rhetorical perspective, fully and fundamentally compatible with the threshold concepts we summarized above from writing studies.

Accordingly, these lessons enact the idea of a social core to writing that drives both communicative language teaching and the above theory positions: the lessons

invoke an authentic audience; they depend on rhetorical situations that create the need for negotiation with an interlocutor; they are knowledge-making activities that develop conceptual, cultural, or linguistic knowledge. Taking the pro-translanguage stance of Li, as well as García et al., they also invite students to engage openly with their L1, treating it as a language learning resource through code-switching, comparative analysis, and reflection.

Although every writing moment inevitably assumes a unique rhetorical situation, teaching writing should also systematically exploit key principles of learning theory. Both of the lessons below use general structures based on Read's well-known "IMSCI" approach to writing instruction (e.g., Read, 2010). These structures (*I*nquiry, *M*odeling, *S*hared practice, *C*ollaboration, *I*ndependence) are versatile enough for many different teaching moments, yet they are consistent, so that students will be able to internalize a predictable, non-threatening pattern across lessons.

In both lessons, we open with the teacher previewing potentially new vocabulary or cultural content, and activating student background knowledge. Then the teacher models the task that the students will do later. Modeling is followed by shared/collaborative practice between the teacher and the whole class, before students begin working collaboratively in pairs or small groups. This consistent frame will reduce student anxiety and build confidence, and the gradual process that moves through familiar instructional phases will function to build from the student's level of competence (what is known), through the Vygotskian zone of proximal development, to consolidate a new level of competence (what is *not* known).

Throughout, in accord with translingual thought, the teacher takes advantage of opportunities to elicit student thoughts about language, vocabulary, rhetorical situation, etc., especially the differences in English from the ways of expression in their L1.

Narrative writing lesson: Finding the story in a music video

The following writing lesson is intended for adult intermediate-low English language learners. Its purpose is to provide practice for the student in generating a brief, simple narrative based on a video story, and to stimulate discussion of personal responses in small and large groups. For the teacher, possible additional applications would include either assessment or teaching of vocabulary, grammar, or cultural competence.

Writing takes time. We have developed this lesson for a 50-minute class period, based on a particular music video. For a different class period, a longer video or a shorter one—for example a television commercial—may be preferable, depending on students' language level and comfort with writing.

Introduction

Music videos offer opportunities for several different kinds of writing, whether narrative, descriptive, critical, interpretive, or simply responsive. Videos exist for all genres of music, and many commercial videos made for popular songs include a visual narrative that enacts or imagines a drama suggested by the lyrics of the song. This lesson assumes the use of the official music video of the popular song "Bendita tu luz," by the Mexican rock group, Maná (Maná, 2006). The video is available gratis on YouTube at this address and others https://youtu.be/44kityInDvM. In the four-minute video, a visual narrative of a budding Western-style romance is enacted, although the lyrics of the song itself are not narrative at all.

An English-language music video could be used here, and certainly in the

course of a whole term, one would expect to use several kinds of videos in English. But a non-English video offers advantages, too. First, the purpose here is to respond to the *visual* narrative. The lyrics are not narrative, and if they were sung in English, the students might focus on "getting the words" or might allow their personal response to be confused by or over-determined by the lyrics. Secondly, it supports an international or transnational tone in the instruction, symbolizing that this is not an English-only classroom and that all languages are respected.

Modeling and shared practice

After playing approximately 30 seconds of the video, the teacher stops to identify the video (i.e., the group, song title, etc.) as well as to acknowledge that it is not in English. The teacher then draws attention to the visual narrative that has begun to unfold, and solicits preliminary student comments on that narrative—especially descriptions of the characters, the setting, and any actions that have occurred so far. The teacher explains that the class will be writing a brief narrative in English describing the drama they will see in the video, mentioning also that the class will view the video more than once, and that individual students or groups will have the chance to present their written narratives. The teacher solicits predictions from the students regarding what may or may not occur in the video, as a way to stimulate engagement and other affective dimensions.

At this point, the teacher restarts the video, and stops it at the same point. On the board or chart paper or other technology, the teacher models note-taking. This could take many forms (e.g., columns, lists, etc.) but the teacher should avoid modeling too much structure; "languaging" aloud, the teacher simply demonstrates writing short accessible words and phrases: e.g., woman swimming, singers, blue sky, street. For some students, this will be culturally uncomfortable; therefore, free, impressionistic, even messy note-taking should be clearly authorized.

After playing the next 30 seconds of the video, the teacher asks the students for help in taking notes, by telling, in words or whole phrases, what they noticed in the video. The teacher simply records the students' contributions, taking the occasional moment to explain unfamiliar vocabulary or structures.

Collaborative and independent writing

Responding to student preference, the teacher then plays the video either in full or in 30-second segments, as the students in pairs take notes in English. The teacher should ultimately play the video in full one last time, so students can review the notes they have written.

The classroom should be noisy with talk as pairs discuss their notes and begin to shape them into a coherent narrative. It doesn't matter how the pairs organize the work between them, but the teacher should circulate, encouraging those students who are more reticent to contribute as fully as possible.

From their notes, each pair of students will write a short paragraph to share with classmates (in a later class period). The writing will narrate the video's visual drama *as they understood or interpreted it* from the music video.

Persuasive writing lesson: What's love got to do with it?

This writing lesson is intended for adult advanced English language learners. Its purpose is to provide practice for the student in collaborative writing of brief persuasions—written arguments—from personal background knowledge, but with support-

ing logic, for the purpose of stimulating discussion in small and large groups.

As such, the lesson will work within both presentational (writing, speaking) and interpretive (viewing, listening) modes, and will provide opportunities for the interpersonal mode, as well. In addition, the lesson involves multimodal work—in this case, viewing/listening to an interview video.

For the teacher, possible additional applications of this lesson would include individual dynamic assessment, or vocabulary, grammar, and/or cultural instruction.

Introduction

> *I have a relationship now to three languages: the Bengali of my family, the English of my education, and Italian. And I think Italian is the only language I have really loved.*
>
> —Jhumpa Lahiri (Wallner, 2016)

Jhumpa Lahiri, an award-winning English language novelist, has recently brought a fascinating translingual issue to the attention of the world by learning Italian as an adult and then abruptly abandoning English for her published writing. Her most recent work, *In Altre Parole*, explores her passion for the Italian language, and in several interviews, she has discussed her experience of discovering this passion. The video *Jhumpa Lahiri: In other words* (Wallner, 2016) includes portions of such interviews, along with comments from Lahiri's colleagues and students.

The video is the centerpiece of this writing lesson, and offers a rich opportunity for L2 students to consider their own relationship to the languages they know and are learning.

Modeling and shared practice

To activate student background knowledge about their own multilingualism, the teacher plays the six-minute video, *Jhumpa Lahiri: In other words,* sponsored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and available on YouTube: https://youtu.be/ITshhsEq-tc. The video offers a brief biography of Lahiri before focusing on her decision to leave the English language behind, at least in her writing.

Before viewing, the teacher makes clear a purpose—for example, a theme to which the students should pay special attention. This purpose may vary depending on the local needs or interests of the students, but the video is broad enough to support a discussion along several different paths. For example, students might listen especially to comments made by Lahiri or others in the video about being

- a "language exile"
- a "language orphan"

and to consider these questions:

- why would Lahiri feel that way?
- when have I felt that way?
- why would learning a new language change that feeling for her?

Before playing the video, the teacher models note-taking via brief phrases on the board. This should be done in such a way as not to overdetermine the students' own note-taking; the point is to be sure that students feel they have permission to write in short, incomplete thoughts—which may not be customary in some cultures.

Vocabulary in this video should not be a problem for advanced students, but the teacher should pause the video at 1:40 to check students' comprehension, given the speed of the English, the different voices, and other complicating factors, and to allow

students time to catch up with their note-taking. If they feel they have missed something important, the teacher should begin the video again at a point negotiated with the students. The teacher should advise the students that in certain places after 1:40 Lahiri will sometimes be speaking or reading in Italian.

The teacher should also allow students to interrupt the video with requests to replay sections as needed. A student interruption can be a good thing; it is (usually) meaningful and communicative. In a flexible translanguaging pedagogy, the point of the instruction is not for students to master a certain content or to get "right answers," but to be sure that students are communicating in the target language any meaningful content. Thus, by simply expressing the felt need to rewind a video and to negotiate where to start it over, a student may advance as much in learning the target language as they would from any set of comprehension questions based on the content of the video itself.

Again, at the end of the video, the teacher should allow time for questions and brief replays of selected moments. At the same time, and throughout the activity, the teacher should be sure that students understand that their task is not to take down verbatim what has been said on the video, but rather to notice and understand what they feel are the most important ideas and comments made by various speakers in the video.

After viewing the video, the teacher should again take the role of model. On the board or via some other medium, the teacher should generate—with students' input—several ideas from the video. At least two of these should express some personal experience of language learning by the teacher. Thinking aloud, the teacher should circle three ideas generated and tag them in some manner as major or supporting points. The teacher's think-aloud might sound like this:

> "So, in the video, when one student said [X], I thought that was very interesting. I am going to make that my number one point." [Teacher marks 1 beside the relevant line on the board.]
>
> "I had the same experience myself when I was learning [language], as I say here in my notes; so I'm going to make that idea my number two." [Teacher marks 2 beside the related idea.]
>
> "Now, [student] just said something that made a lot of sense to me, and it really ties 1 and 2 together. So I'm going to put that last." [Teacher marks "last" beside the relevant idea.]
>
> "I know what's going to come first and I know what's going to come last. And in here, between number 2 and my last line, I'm going to add some of these other ideas in the list—if they work. I don't need to use them all. If I get two or three more, I'll be doing great.
>
> "But first I'm going to write numbers 1 and 2 in a more complete way. Then I'll see what comes next."

Collaborative and independent writing

With a partner, students return to the questions in the original prompt and discuss what they feel are reasonable answers. They should be encouraged to relate their own personal experience as language learners to the experience and feelings expressed by Jhumpa Lahiri and students in the video. Taking notes as they converse with their partners, students are engaging in invention and prewriting.

Independently, students should begin to shape and organize their thoughts into a coherent written draft as the teacher modeled, and to do so separately from their partner. Although they may agree completely with their partner on what is important in

the video, students may need to be reminded that ultimately the task is an individual one; they will need to write at least a paragraph from their own point of view. The teacher may find it useful to remove the model as a way to encourage students not to simply repeat what the teacher has written, but instead to look to their own notes. This is a feature of writing in *inner circle* English-speaking cultures, but the teacher may or may not wish to make it important in any given lesson. Collaborative writing is both very useful for learning and is increasingly accepted even in individualistic English-speaking cultures.

Conclusion

Research in the three areas under study here—L1 English composition studies, L2 writing studies, and translingualism—is rich with complication and possibility. From the point of view of the EIL classroom, however, while we see *contrast* among these areas, we need not see a great deal of *conflict*. Specifically, one could argue that these contrasting strands of practice can be harmonized around a finite set of principles that translate well into instruction and integrate well with what Li calls an EIL paradigm.

All three of these areas view writing as epistemic and valuable for how it can support and enable cognitive transfer across instructional tasks. Scholars across these areas of research would also agree that authentic writing is communicative and social. They would rule out instruction that asks students to write for inauthentic audiences or simply to demonstrate mastery of language forms or conventions. Students can certainly perform in this manner, but to do so does not advance them in either the learning of English or their facility with writing itself.

Researchers would agree that authentic writing will always be purposive and functional, directed toward a task. Writing to reproduce a memorized "right answer" is not useful. Decontextualized grammar exercises are not useful. Writing in the classroom should be as much as possible directed toward student interest rather than toward teacherly or programmatic convenience. Student-chosen writing topics, or topics that at least inspire some affective investment in the student writer, are more effective.

Ultimately, the pedagogical emphases of García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) show a good deal of promise postsecondary EIL writing instruction. If teachers take a stance of respect toward the intellectual resources of multilingual students, design their classroom in ways that are flexible and integrative, and remain ready to shift their instruction as the needs of their group or their individual students emerge in the classroom, they will find themselves better able to keep the negotiation of meaning and authentic communication foremost. This is the approach to writing instruction that, in our view, integrates best with the EIL paradigm for TESOL teacher preparation that Li proposes and at the same time harmonizes best with research in writing on all three of the research strands we have presented here.

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