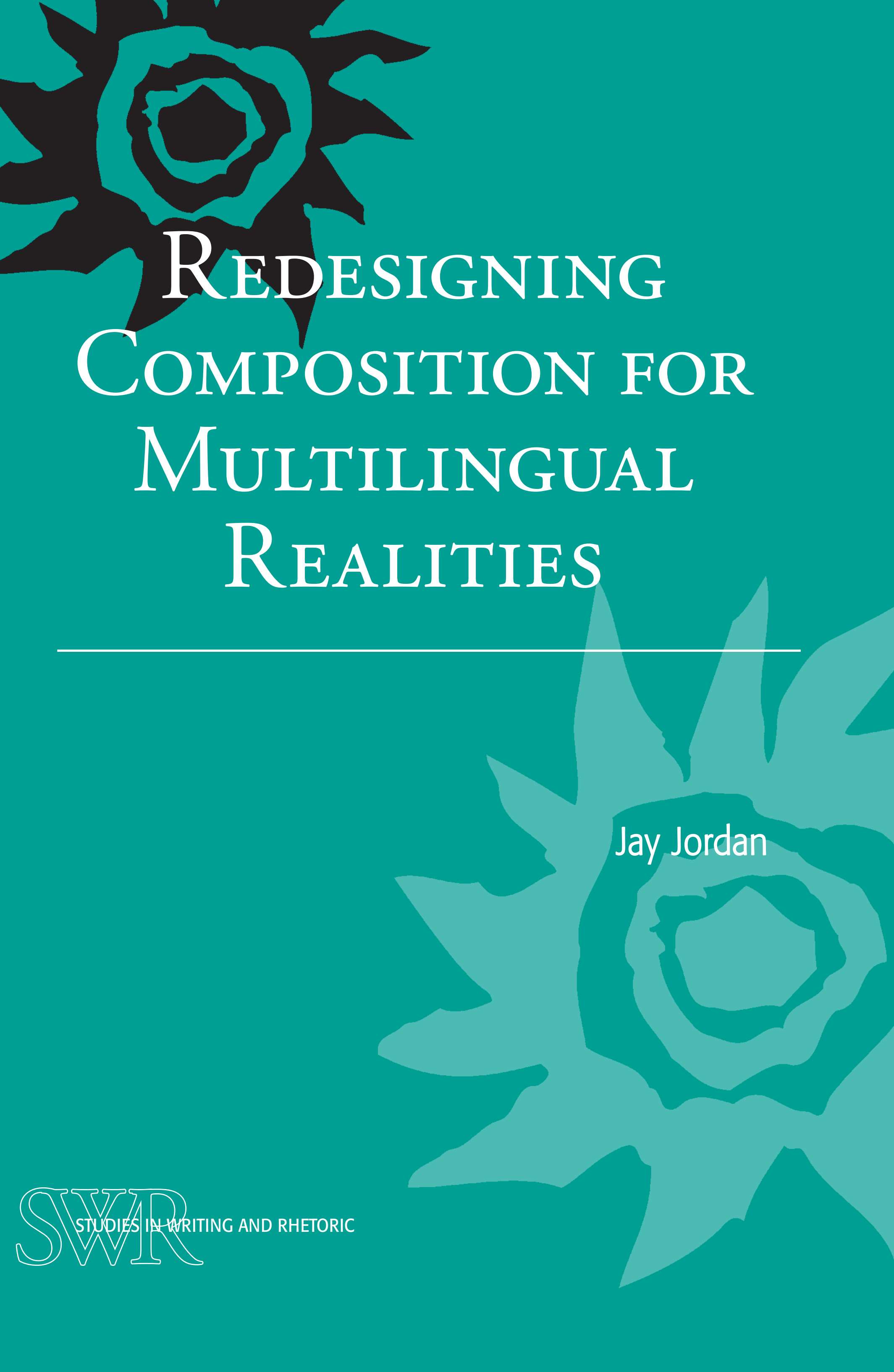

Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities

Jay Jordan

SWR
STUDIES IN WRITING AND RHETORIC

Portions of Chapter 1 appeared previously in "Feminist Composition Pedagogies in ESL Tutoring," *Gender and English Language Learners*, ed. Bonny Norton and Aneta Pavlenko (Alexandria: TESOL, 2004, 43–56). Portions of Chapter 2 appeared previously in "Second Language Users and Emerging English Designs," *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 381, W310–W329, and in "Dell Hymes, Kenneth Burke's 'Identification,' and the Birth of Sociolinguistics," *Rhetoric Review* 24.3 (2009): 264–79. This material is reprinted here by permission from TESOL, Inc.; NCTE; and Taylor & Francis Ltd, http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals, respectively.

Staff Editor: Bonny Graham
Interior Design: Mary Rohrer
Cover Design: Mary Rohrer and Lynn Weckhorst

NCTE Stock Number: 39660

Copyright © 2012 by the Conference on College Composition and Communication of the National Council of Teachers of English.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the copyright holder. Printed in the United States of America.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

Every effort has been made to provide current URLs and email addresses, but because of the rapidly changing nature of the Web, some sites and addresses may no longer be accessible.

Publication partially funded by a subvention grant from the Conference on College Composition and Communication of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Jordan, Jay, 1973-
Redesigning composition for multilingual realities / Jay Jordan.
p. cm. — (CCCC studies in writing & rhetoric)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8141-3966-0 (pbk.)
1. English language—Composition and exercises—Study and teaching (Higher)—Foreign speakers. 2. English language—Rhetoric—Study and teaching. I. Title.
PE1404.J66 2012
808'.0428—dc23

2012013107

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Introduction: Coming to Terms with “English” “Users” in “Composition” 1

1. Compensation: Fixin’ What Ain’t Broke 25
2. Competence: Learning from “Learners” 50
3. Composition: Outdated Assumptions to New Architectonics 85
4. Composing Intercultural Relationships 117

Works Cited 143

Index 157

Author 165

PREFACE

DOUBTLESS MANY BOOKS START IN some way with Peace Corps service. Mine did. Even though my own service as an English as a second language (ESL) teacher in a teacher training college in Poland was relatively short, it taught me about being a language learner in a place where you have to rely for the most part on your second language for daily life. The only other people in the city my former wife, Stefanie, and I lived in who knew English were fellow teachers, and they didn't moonlight in the grocery store, the market, the train station, the bus station, or the post office. So we resorted to our "survival Polish" whenever we weren't at school or in our apartment. We had great Polish teachers during the three months of training before we settled into our assignment, but that three months wasn't quite enough to bridge the distance between our southern English and Polish, a heavily Slavic tongue. We could order tickets to Warsaw, and we could pick out bread and other essentials in our local store, but we needed our dictionaries, declension tables, and advance planning before we felt confident enough to navigate something like "Could I have a quarter kilo of your best kiełbasa, please?" As often as not, the Poles we spoke to responded to our efforts with amusement, surprise, or annoyance. During the twentieth century, many Poles immigrated to the United States, so it hadn't occurred to the Poles in our town that Americans would come to Poland, even though we were probably the fifth pair of Peace Corps volunteers to live in that town. So most people probably didn't assume we were Polish-as-a-second-language speakers. They just thought we were slow Poles.

I had tacked up in our kitchen numerous charts that showed how to decline several classes of Polish nouns and adjectives. If I got into a sticky grammatical situation over the phone, I could easily take a step or two into the kitchen, find the right chart, track down the right ending, and put it on the word I needed—right about the time the person at the other end of the phone gave up. We knew a lot about Polish grammar, actually—more than our Polish friends. More than the people who worked in the shops along our walk to school. More even than Lech Wałęsa, who is infamous among his countryfolk for his ability to botch their beloved language. But we got little if any credit for our language competence. Our friends laughed at my declension charts, albeit good-naturedly. Shopkeepers and bus drivers would often feign misunderstanding about products or names of cities until we pronounced them exactly right. Stefanie said that learning and using Polish was like having a bad boyfriend (or girlfriend): When things went well, you were really, really happy, and you kept coming back. When things went badly, they were horribly, horribly wrong.

I remembered our frustration when we returned to the United States. I won't say that I immediately became more patient with the English language learners who were fast becoming a presence to be reckoned with in North Carolina, our home state. But I recall having flashbacks while I stood in line at a motor vehicles office in Charlotte behind several Spanish speakers trying to get licenses. Some of the facial expressions of the attendant behind the counter looked familiar. I remembered our frustration again when Stefanie and I went to Penn State. Her teaching in the Intensive English Program and in pronunciation courses for the Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies put both of us in contact with English language learners from all over. Mostly graduate students, these people were living thousands of miles from spouses and children; were building second careers; were learning to refine English as their third, fourth, or fifth languages. Some were already working for large international companies. A few had their own patents. Whereas Stefanie and I had developed some grammatical competence in Polish, these international students had competencies in English and in other languages I could only guess at. The problem was that they were given relatively few opportunities to display them. Their well-meaning advisors sent them to the writing center and sometimes to basic writing courses. The undergraduates these students taught complained about their accents and even, at times, that they didn't seem to know English at all. Their attempts to cram their experience and knowledge into one language—and a carefully policed one at that—inevitably prompted them to rework, invent, make do.

This book is an attempt not only to honor the courage of these learners—something I wish I'd had more of in Poland—but also to recognize their work in keeping English alive—that is, not as a resource just for themselves but for all English users. Undoubtedly, they do some of their work unawares. In fact, many language teachers would say that all of it is unintentional, if not "error." But I had had enough experience to know that was not the whole story, and I needed a way to start hearing, reading about, and telling the rest of it.

A lot of people have supported me as I've looked for a way to tell this story. I am deeply grateful to my advisers and mentors at Penn State—Keith Gilyard chief among them. I also owe thanks for the dedication, humanity, probity, and wisdom of Cheryl Glenn, Paula Golombek, Elaine Richardson, Rich Doyle, Karen Johnson, and Jack Selzer. Paul Kei Matsuda was among the first people I met at my first Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) meeting, and he has been characteristically generous with time and advice ever since. And I make special note of numerous colleagues—first-rate scholar-teachers in their own right—who worked in cubicles just like mine but who were never boxed in: Susan Bobb, Antonio Ceraso, Mark Longaker, Vorris Nunley, Jeff Pruchnic, Stephen Schneider, Marika Seigel, and Scott Wible.

Since 2006, I have been fortunate beyond telling to be part of an incredible group of peers in Utah, including Jenny Andrus, Casey Boyle, Tom Huckin, Maureen Mathison, Susan Miller, and Natalie Stillman-Webb. And I have benefited from the support of Stuart Culver and Vince Pecora, who in their capacity as successive department chairs have consistently advocated for me as I have sought release time and funding. I acknowledge the substantial support of the University of Utah's Department of English, University Writing Program, and College of Humanities.

As this project was completing its evolution into an actual book, Joe Harris, Bruce Horner, and Morris Young generously, astutely, and patiently guided it and me via email, phone conversations, and face-to-face meetings in hurried conference corridors. And Kurt Austin and other NCTE staff did their peerless production work with characteristic efficiency and calm.

I must also recognize the teachers and students of composition who have allowed me to watch, listen to, record, and write about their important work. I cannot name them here, but I hope I have honored their efforts. There is no way for a researcher not to impose her or his own agenda on a work like this, but with their help, I have sought a balance.

And last and most important, my family and closest friends. Phyllis and Terry Jordan have called me "Professor" for as long as I can recall, and they were confused when I decided to go to law school. They were relieved when I left, and they were thrilled when I finished a PhD and got a job with it. They continue to support me with calls, letters, visits, and prayers. They have shared that work in recent years with Davis Jordan and Stefanie Rehn. Stefanie and I no longer have a relationship "on paper," but there's no way I could imagine *not* knowing her. And there's no way I could thank her enough for Davis, the son we share, who reminds me to look to the future every day.

Introduction: Coming to Terms with "English" "Users" in "Composition"

> Polish was my first language, but English is my first language.
>
> —Student in ENGL 015, Section 64, Penn State University, Fall Semester 2004

> If not "student," what term defines a more desirable situation?
>
> —Vivian Cook

THIS BOOK IS NOT JUST FOR TEACHERS of multilingual students. Rather, it assumes that multilingualism is a daily reality for *all* students—all language users—whether they themselves use more than one language or whether they interact with others in settings of multiple language contact. Doubtless, some teachers will believe they and/or their students fall into neither category: more than one teacher has told me that the sea of phenotypically similar faces greeting them when they enter their writing classrooms is clear evidence that linguistic diversity happens somewhere else.

In fact, it happens everywhere—even (especially) where English is spoken. In his 2006 Braddock Award–winning article, Suresh Canagarajah, himself no stranger to the movements of English within and across national borders, notes that the spread of English is by no means unidirectional. While it is true that the privileged varieties of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand have had significant impacts on global English-language teaching, media, and other cultural phenomena, less-privileged and more apparently "local" varieties have increasing global purchase:

> Often it is CNN that carries the diverse Englishes of reporters, politicians, and informants—not to mention musicians and film stars—into the houses of the most reclusive middle class families in the West. Furthermore, diaspora communities have brought their Englishes physically to the neighborhoods and doorsteps of American families. If they are not working with multilingual people in their offices or studying with them in schools, Anglo Americans are exposed to WE [World Englishes] in other ways. The new work order involves an international network of production, marketing, and business relationships. . . . At its most intense, the Internet presents a forum where varieties of English mingle freely. ("Place" 590)

And, of course, the composition classroom is on this list as well. Positioned as it often is at the entry point to tertiary education across the United States, composition enrolls hundreds of thousands of students who bring with them the effects of the complex evolution of English that Canagarajah details. While my Polish American student quoted in the chapter-opening epigraph perhaps most succinctly summarizes what it means to encounter multilingualism in homes, schools, and workplaces, his statement presents a problem with many of the terms some English users deploy to describe it. Calling some English users *first language* or *native* and calling others *second language* cannot account for this student's experience: as he demonstrated to me in the assignment that contained this sentence and in other ways during the semester he spent in my course, he was aware both of his high level of English competence and of his ongoing immersion in a multilingual family of immigrants for whom Polish still held considerable power.

For at least forty years, the field of composition has wrestled with the impact of multilingualism, and owing to cross-influences of applied linguistics, second language writing, and sociolinguistics—perhaps most visible in the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" resolution (Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC]) and its subsequent revisions—it has developed ways to theorize this impact. Especially in recent years, scholars at the intersections of the several fields have called attention to gaps between knowledge about multilingualism and practices that would put that knowledge to work in writing instruction. In 1999, Paul Kei Matsuda pointed to a mismatch between multilingual students' movements through composition courses and the institutional and disciplinary boundaries that had solidified between putatively "first" and "second" language writing teaching and research ("Composition"). In ensuing years, relevant conversations across disciplines have increased, as evinced by well-attended interest sections, panels, and workshops at major conferences (especially Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL] and CCCC) and by collaborative publications (see, for example, Bean et al.; Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier-Hooper). These conversations have recently prompted the production of a collaboratively written statement in *College English* (signed on to by, at press time, fifty additional scholars) calling for broadly "translingual" approaches to writing instruction—a statement backed by a list of references that would look just as comfortable in the pages of an applied linguistics journal (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur).

But the important moment of multilingual awareness in composition that this statement represents does not obscure the uncertainty about *how* to make composition more multi- or even translingual. Composition instructors often read scholarly articles with a view toward Monday morning, when students and instructors file back into classrooms to write, revise, and respond. The questions that Horner and his colleagues anticipate ("Does translingualism mean there's no such thing as error?," "Where can I go for help?") are common and understandable ones. Canagarajah concludes his essay on pluralization in composition by admitting his own uncertainty: "I must confess," he says, "that I am myself unsure how to practice what I preach. Throughout my life, I have been so disciplined about censoring even the slightest traces of Sri Lankan English in my own academic writing that it is difficult to bring them into the text now" ("Place" 613). While more and more scholars and teachers of writing are demonstrating a willingness to question assumptions about language—and the role of English in particular

—we also realize that those questions lead to practical problems ranging from the disciplinary locations of writing all the way to how to read a sentence in a student's draft that shows the presence of Polish or Tamil.

This book, then, represents an attempt to bridge where we have been as scholars and teachers of writing in (inevitably and increasingly) multilingual settings to where we are now to what we could be doing to reorient composition as a field and a set of practices. It represents an attempt to take seriously the charges to advance cross-disciplinary understandings of multilingualism and to develop specific pedagogical approaches to it—both of which charges point to a need to, as the title suggests, "redesign" composition. The book draws from applied linguistics, literacy studies, foreign language teaching, rhetoric, second language acquisition, and, of course, composition past and present to attend to what multilingual students and their monolingual peers and teachers are doing and can do. It does not provide a list of pedagogical prescriptions, but it is instead intended to encourage teachers to think and rethink their approaches from their classrooms' and institutions' multilingual realities outward.

ORIENTING TO MULTILINGUALISM IN COMPOSITION

Of all the growing data about English as a second language (ESL) students in the United States, perhaps the most striking "fact" is that no one has a clear idea about how many there are. Because student visas are easy to count, statistics for international students are often cited, and they suggest that more than 670,000 international students were studying in US colleges and universities during the 2008–09 school year (Institute of International Education). But not all international students are ESL students, and many US citizens and permanent residents are ESL users (Harklau, Losey, and Siegal; Roberge, Siegal, and Harklau). This statistical uncertainty translates into a practical uncertainty about who ESL students are, where they are, and how they may best be educated in US contexts.

Regardless of this uncertainty and of the clear institutional divisions that persist between the fields of "mainstream" comp and ESL comp/applied linguistics, there is shared historical confidence in the literature of both fields about what students should be doing, and for whom. Even though both fields are characterized by major differences in teaching philosophies, research methodologies, geographic locations, and political investments, to name a few, the implicit and explicit goals of composition teaching involving ESL students ultimately center on the idea that ESL students should, to the extent that they are able, successfully negotiate entry into English-language communities whose discursive makeup is determined and arbitrated by monolingual native speakers of English.

But this assumption is problematic at best, given the sheer numbers of nonnative English speakers in the United States and abroad—including many areas of substantial US market interest, interaction, and penetration. As Suresh Canagarajah ("Place") and David Crystal have noted, the number of nonnative English speakers surpassed the number of native speakers by the late 1970s, and the non-native-speaking population is expected to represent a supermajority of total English speakers within fifty years. Of course, numbers alone do not translate to authority: the crucial issue for teachers, learners, and all users of language is, as it has always been, the relative power of those who speak and write certain varieties instead of others.

It is no accident that the teaching of writing in the United States gained a secure foothold during the post–American Revolution period of national consolidation and that college-level writing became a nearly universal requirement within a few years after the Civil War. As authoritative histories of composition teaching tell us (see, for example, Berlin, *Rhetoric*, *Writing*; Connors; Crowley; Murphy), both times were marked by a felt need to distribute literacy and other skills necessary to build the American economy while at the same time preserving class distinctions among a growing population by means of enshrining privileged varieties of English. And much of the subsequent history of composition teaching has sustained this dual purpose of preparing as many as possible for entry-level literacy while standing guard at the gate of more belletristic or otherwise fashionable language use. The teaching of writing to

ESL students has arisen from a more overtly pragmatic tradition based on second language writing's direct inheritance from applied linguistics, inheritor in turn of structuralist assumptions about the nature of language use that assume face-to-face communication among equally "competent" speakers of a shared language (Blanton; Matsuda, "Second Language"; Pennycook, "Disinventing," "Myth"; Pratt). Such a premise, which has existed in ESL composition teaching up to the present in many curricula, has located writing in a causally connected skill set, in which the supposedly passive activities of listening and reading necessarily precede speaking, which necessarily precedes writing. Writing, standing at the end of this skill set, was supposed to represent a culmination activity in which language learners of supposedly now native or near-native fluency and accuracy would represent and record their proficiency on the page, demonstrating the ability to convey a message as clearly as possible for their native-speaking arbiters.

The problem with both traditions is that neither attempt to issue passports to incoming speakers or writers is defensible or sustainable. Even a little observation reveals that colleges, universities, the business world, and other contexts that ESL students inhabit do not look or sound the way explicit English-only language policies, No Child Left Behind legislation, and many composition textbooks believe they do. Despite renewed calls (especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and in the wake of massive job losses during the post-2008 economic downturn) for tightening immigration controls and visa requirements and protecting American jobs and values, prevailing logics of global market capitalism are dictating that diversity works well for business. As several commentators have noted (Berlin, *Rhetoric*, *Writing*; Fairclough; Gee, Hull, and Lankshear), the shift from heavily industrial assembly-line production to service economy–oriented "just-in-time" production, coupled with increasingly rapid international communications, means that businesses are looking for more and better ways to connect to potential customers across a wide geographic area.

These shifts mean that speakers and writers of English as a second language are increasingly considered target consumers for expanding goods and services and increasingly viewed as representatives of the kinds of cultural and linguistic differences that marketers want to capture and leverage, even as these speakers and writers are still consistently positioned by educational administrators and teachers as students *only*. This mismatch points to the need to reconceptualize "ESL students" as fully competent English *users* (cf. Cook, "Competence," "Going Beyond"; Lu, "Essay," "Professing") who have much to teach other users of English as the language continues to grow through global uses and modifications. Specifically, for composition as a whole, the growing presence and power of these English users presents an opportunity to question and reorient fieldwide assessments of the relations among diverse English users and how those relations undergird standards by which successful communication is judged.

RECOMPOSING TERMS

Admittedly, there is considerable slippage in the preceding pages of this introduction. In discussing the relationship of multilingual language users to the fields of "mainstream" and second language composition, I referred to them variously as students, speakers, writers, and users. In addition, I frequently conflated the terms *composition* and *writing,* and I sometimes truncated the term *composition* to *comp.* Finally, while I consistently used the label "English" to refer to the language that is used—with varying degrees of proficiency, comfort, and idiosyncratic, idiomatic, and regional divergences—by upwards of 1.5 billion people (Graddol), I do not mean to suggest that that language is anything like stable or easily labeled. In this section, then, I clarify how I see these terms used, suggest how I think they should be used, and point to how their use in connection with other key terms gives this book both its focus and shape.

English

An early twentieth-century pledge, issued by the National Council of Teachers of English, clearly conveys what would appear to most contemporary compositionists an inexcusably facile—not to say outright objectionable—view of the relationship between privileged varieties of English and students of English:

> I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag. I love my country's language. I promise
>
> 1. That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.
> 2. That I will say a good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "un-hum" and "nup-um" or a foreign "ya" or "yeah" and "nope."
> 3. That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud rough tones, by enunciating distinctly, and by speaking pleasantly, clearly, and sincerely.
> 4. That I will learn to articulate correctly as many words as possible throughout the year.
>
> (qtd. in Delpit and Dowdy 29)

More than the connections to efficiency that James A. Berlin discusses in his historical work, and more than the privileging of belletrism that Elizabethada A.Wright and S. Michael Halloran notice, this list is an ideological statement about the connection between English, schooling, and national character. It is allied with a tradition of schooling in the United States that has sought to equate English-language proficiency—specifically, proficiency in forms of English standardized by successive waves of policies aimed at consolidating a national identity—with good citizenship.

Composition can look to a long history of critiquing this connection. Many criticisms arose out of compelling sociolinguistic research that burgeoned during the 1960s and early 1970s and that saw its culmination in the field of composition in the 1974 passage of the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" (SRTOL) resolution by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The resolution's background document recognized that the various social movements of the previous decade deserved more attention in educational policymaking (1). Specifically, it called attention to the challenges to language education posed by the increasing stature and power of traditionally underrepresented groups. In one prescient passage, the authors note that "today's students will be tomorrow's employers. . . . English teachers who feel they are bound to accommodate the linguistic prejudices of current employers perpetuate a system that is unfair to both students who have job skills and to the employers who need them" (14). Against the background of increasing cultural and linguistic uncertainty that the SRTOL acknowledges, the authors propose numerous pedagogical directions for those English teachers, many of whom (if they read it—see Richardson 14) would have no doubt felt unmoored by the argument that teaching a particular standard made less and less sense and that the handbooks they relied on (and still do to a large extent, if publishers are any barometer) were rapidly obsolescing.

In short, then, SRTOL is a document that reflects an infusion of nonprescriptivist sociolinguistic thinking about the relationships English language dialects have with one another and the relationships their different speakers *should* have with the dialects they use. By taking the position that students' dialects acquired before their schooling are systematic, and that they provide students and their teachers with firm bases for language teaching, SRTOL marks the emergence in composition of what Keith Gilyard has termed *bidialectalist* thinking about language variety in colleges and universities (*Let's Flip* 70). On the one hand, such thinking indicates a clear break from conceptions of students' language as deficient and from conceptions of colleges and universities as proving grounds established in part to eradicate differences in language and culture. While this mode of thinking persists in the popular work of, for instance, William Bennett, Linda Chavez, Dinesh D'Souza, and E. D. Hirsch Jr., many language educators—including many in the field of composition—have consistently argued that such a position is ethically and pragmatically suspect.

On the other hand, the bidialectalist position is itself suspect because of the specific relationship it often envisions between so-called home varieties of English and Edited American English (EAE), as well as the sense of clear division among these varieties it perpetuates. In one section, titled "How Does Dialect Affect Employability?," the SRTOL authors recommend that teachers "stress the difference between the spoken forms of American English and

EAE" (CCCC 14). On its face, this suggestion makes sense given the often wide disparities between spoken and written forms of any language and given the relatively conservative formal nature of writing. But later in the same section, the document advises teachers that they should "begin [their] work in composition with [students with diverse 'home' varieties] by making them feel confident that their writing, in whatever dialect, makes sense and is important to us. . . . Then students will be in a much stronger position to consider the rhetorical choices that lead to statements written in EAE" (14–15). Rather than merely a statement about the "differences" between home (oral) and standardized (written) varieties, this is an *evaluative* statement about the relative value and scope of students' varieties and the Variety (with a capital *V*) that is welcome at work and in other public settings. In this view, English-language instruction, while shedding many overt judgments about "deficiency" and the superior quality of EAE, retains the teleological assumption that EAE is—at the very least, pragmatically speaking—*the* form to be acquired by "different" students.

While the approach to English varieties informed by SRTOL was (and still is) ahead of its time, the goal of bringing nonstandard varieties into English classrooms was intended, as reflected by the SRTOL document's preoccupation with "making [students] feel confident" (CCCC 15), to ease students' transitions into apparently more appropriate language forms. In her later-published 1972 presentation at the TESOL conference, Carol Reed led off by assuring her audience that the Brooklyn College students enrolled in an experimental Standard English as a second dialect course were receiving instruction in "Standard English writing skills" within the regular English composition framework (289). Helping students become more comfortable with academic analysis of their home varieties was necessary, Reed argued, to help them understand the sources of their standardized English errors (namely, interference from Black English Vernacular) and assimilate into the academic English community they were, supposedly, "downright eager" to join (292).

Yet the nature of "English" in academies, workplaces, and other communities is now, as it has always been, in flux—a reality that challenges the idea of clear boundaries between “academic,” “home,” “standard,” “second language,” and other English varieties. While it is true, as David Crystal reports, that nearly 95 percent of the US population speaks English (118), it is definitely *not* true that all those speak English *natively*. The US Census Bureau indicates that more than 55 million Americans of school age or older speak at least one language other than English at home. Statistics like this one, combined with others that show consistent increases in Latino and Asian population groups, have fueled recurring legislative attempts to establish English as the official language of the United States. Many critics of such legislation, including Crystal, point out that the English-language ship has sailed—that the saturation of English in the United States and in a growing number of countries in what Braj Kachru has called the “outer” and “expanding” circles of global English-language spread indicates that English has, in fact, solidified itself as a large-scale lingua franca.

But whose English it is is becoming an ever more open question. Disruptions between *both* oral and written forms of English among different English speakers have special significance for the interface between monolingual native-speaking students, second language students, and the academic institutions that bring them together. And a growing number of scholars are questioning the relevance of the native English user model in composition. Drawing on Crystal’s descriptive work, Sandra McKay lays out a pedagogy based on teaching “English as an international language,” which includes a reassessment of written rhetorical competence based on the idea that readers in so-called inner-circle countries (Kachru) need to assume more responsibility for working to understand texts produced by writers in “periphery” areas (McKay 77–78). In fact, Robert E. Land Jr. and Catherine Whitley articulate a belief that nonnative writers of English have much to teach monolingual readers about how to be more “reader responsible” (Hinds). More squarely in the field of composition, Bruce Horner and John Trimbur argue that writing teachers should “develop an internationalist perspective” while asking critical questions about which Englishes they teach and in what service (624). And, most recently, Horner, Trimbur, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and a growing list of researchers and teachers have signed on to a statement calling for "translingual" approaches to writing that explicitly extend the scope and mission of the Students' Right resolution. In their view, contexts for English use are fluidly changing locally, nationally, and globally, and users' ways of acting with and on language should be understood not only as rights but also as resources (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur).

Users

In spite of years of descriptive linguistic research indicating that even so-called native speakers of languages continue to learn their language as they encounter new "Discourses" (Gee), it would be difficult to find native speakers of English described as "students" of the language beyond primary school in anything but specialized linguistic, literary, or rhetorical study. It is the putatively nonnative speakers who are the students, invited around the world to join the growing English-speaking community but, more often than not, kept at arm's length as novice community members.

However, a view of English that stresses its development as a function of change and not just of spread reveals that more people are learners of English than they realize and that the stakes of learning English are quite high for everyone. Language learning, then, is less a matter of shifting to an appreciably standard variety and more a matter of maintaining skills in the face of language as a living construct. As Vivian Cook notes in one of the epigraphs to this introduction, such a view clearly challenges the traditional theoretical and pedagogical preeminence of the native speaker, and it also challenges the traditional valence of the term *student.* If native speakers cannot hold the kind of power that many language educators and policymakers assume they hold, and if that takes away the benchmark against which "students" are always already held, then what term works better to describe them?

Cook proposes *user*. He outlines what he terms second language speakers' *multicompetence*—abilities connected to those speakers' negotiations between their first and second languages that are not present in the minds of monolingual native speakers. Cook reminds readers that multilingualism is much more common than monolingualism and that maintaining focus on monolinguals is much like attempting "a description of juggling based on a person who can throw one ball in the air and catch it, rather than on a description of a person who can handle two or more balls at the same time" ("Competence" 67). In an essay more specific to pedagogical concerns, he accepts as uncontroversial the argument that the native speaker is and always will be a native speaker by historical fact of birth, or by what Norman Davies has called the "bio-developmental definition" (Cook, "Going Beyond" 186). The problem, though, comes in where language teaching assumes that native proficiency is, in fact, *the* goal for nonnatives. An additional problem is the assumption that nonnative speakers, to the extent that they do not emulate the linguistic competencies of native speakers, are failed language learners. While Cook does not specifically address the implications of teaching "students" to a standard forever out of reach, he does recognize the unclear boundary between "student" and "user." After all, if teaching language learners to a monolingual standard that is at best impractical and at worst unethical must be abandoned, that does not mean that an alternative immediately presents itself. So what is the final state of a second language learner's learning?

As Yuet-Sim D. Chiang and Mary Schmida note, the answer to this question may have as much to do with the learner's motivation as with her or his relative distance from a monolingual standard: thus, *user,* a term that implies not only more agency but also more ability. Cook proposes a notion of competence based on the idea that any language user who uses two or more languages has cognitive faculties "qualitatively different from those of the monolingual native speaker" ("Going Beyond" 191). While it would be a stretch to characterize Cook's argument as making the claim that second language users have *stronger* language faculties than do monolingual speakers, it is fair to claim some advantages. For instance, Cook notes psycholinguistic experiments that indicate second language users can detect sentences that are rendered in translation with more accuracy than monolinguals can. In addition, bilingual children are more sensitive to grammatical properties of their first languages than many monolinguals are. And, of course, second language users are apt to code-switch—a particularly effective intercultural rhetorical strategy unavailable in the same way to monolinguals.

Ultimately, however, Cook's "user" is still a "speaker," which makes sense for a large number of second language and foreign language courses,[1] in which speaking is the predominant activity. Min-Zhan Lu provides a connection to composition. While Lu does not reference Cook, she does invoke the language "user" as a figure who deploys linguistic choices deliberatively—that is, a figure who considers her or his choices in the light not only of past standardization and tradition but also, crucially, of future opportunities:

> I have in mind the work students perform in both reproducing and reshaping standardized rules of language in the process of using them; retooling the tools one is given to achieve one's ends; and more specifically, retooling the tools according to not only one's sense of what the world is but also what the world ought to be. ("Composition's" 193)

Introducing *ought* into such a perspective on what diverse language users do is an explicit response to more traditional views of what language ought to be and of what students should learn about language. Rather than students' replicating (via whatever pedagogy) accepted forms that can be easily recorded in handbooks, Lu has in mind a richer depiction of language drawn from her reading of Toni Morrison's 1993 Nobel acceptance speech. In that address, Morrison rejects censored language as dead and embraces as alive language that "limn[s] the actual, imagined, and possible lives of its speakers, readers, and writers" (qtd. in Lu, "Essay" 20). Here is a view of symbolic production at once multimodal and forward-thinking—one that cannot help but anticipate how English is spreading *and changing*.

The shift from *student* (especially *ESL student*) to *user*, then, is one that foregrounds uncertainties in the future of the spread of

English as it changes and is changed by diverse local conditions. It also foregrounds the role that *all* users—whether teachers or students, center or periphery—have in deploying their own, deliberative uses of language. As I discuss in later chapters, this shift has specific ramifications within and beyond traditional composition courses, where these different users and their often divergent uses intersect, often with very high stakes.

Composition

Diverse English users interact frequently in many settings, of course, but the composition course as a "gatekeeper" to further study in nearly all disciplines, as well as its location at the point of entry into the intellectual and social environments of colleges and universities, brings such interactions and their outcomes into relief. In the context of adult (returning) students in the United Kingdom, Roz Ivanič has argued for the importance of studying "crucial moments in discourse" that occur at such interfaces:

> [These students] have not had a smooth, uninterrupted path through the education system like regular undergraduates, so what is demanded of them is unlikely to "come naturally." Returning to study represents a turning-point in their lives, when other adult commitments and experiences—other social worlds—are juxtaposed with the academic world. In such circumstances, they are caught up in conflicting social pressures when writing. Whatever aspect of writing we are interested in is therefore likely to be thrown into sharp focus by studying these writers. (5–6)

In fact, *all* students experience jangling juxtapositions of academic and social worlds, with nonnative users of English often feeling them most keenly as they negotiate familial, cultural, and academic demands, often in at least two languages. So while I question the dichotomy Ivanič establishes here, I agree that studying students at this interface can clarify the points at which what "comes naturally" for them meshes (or not) with what is being asked of them, as well as clarify moments in which what students already know should be more valued.

As overall enrollment in US colleges and universities in the early twentieth century increased, second language (L2) users also began attending in increasing numbers alongside their native-English-speaking peers.[2] And since composition had become a required course at many colleges and universities by this time, increasing enrollment overall of second language speakers meant more second language students in composition. As teachers and administrators took notice, they began to explore what the presence of those students meant. The 1950s saw a surge of interest at the CCCC Annual Convention in second language writing issues, but this "mainstream" interest began to taper as the field of L2 composition began to emerge with scholar-teachers who were interested in pursuing their own paths to professionalization—largely through venues like the University of Michigan's English Language Institute that existed outside the purview of CCCC. This separate professional development led to the mid-1960s establishment of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages as a separate conference and, more broadly, to what Paul Kei Matsuda has called the "disciplinary division of labor" in composition studies, which has seen the evolution of separate pedagogical and research traditions, literatures, and departments devoted to mainstream and to L2 composition ("Composition").

Initial efforts to create second language writing pedagogies borrowed heavily from structuralist and behaviorist assumptions about language learning—namely, that writing was basically recorded speech and was thus teachable via methods designed for speaking, and that writing was best taught through a series of carefully controlled practice sessions. As Linda Lonon Blanton observes in her personal history of development as an L2 writing teacher, most of her colleagues throughout the 1960s and 1970s believed that language learning effectively started over in a second language, which meant that language learners needed to begin at the beginning—with listening and speaking, not reading and writing. There was, Blanton observes, no sense of transfer of literacy skills. This view would be challenged most directly and (in)famously by linguist Robert Kaplan. Kaplan, heavily influenced by both Francis

Christensen's generative model of paragraph writing and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that tied specific linguistic practices to specific cultures, argued that paragraph structures reflected student writers' first cultural and language influences. The field of contrastive rhetoric, which developed largely on the basis of Kaplan's work, has attempted to articulate textually based differences in the writing of first language and second language students in the forty years since Kaplan's study was published (Connor, "Changing," *Contrastive*, "New Directions"; Kaplan, "Contrastive," "Cultural," "What"; Kubota; Kubota and Lehner; Leki, "Cross-Talk"; Matsuda, "Contrastive"; Panetta).

Alongside the growth of contrastive rhetoric as an explanation for second language students' compositions, other approaches have developed that reflect L2 composition scholars' and teachers' complex relationship with mainstream composition studies. While L2 composition and applied linguistics continue to focus more on textual features of students' writing than mainstream composition does, it has nonetheless also been influenced by the growth of the process approach. Vivian Zamel is credited with introducing process-oriented thinking to the L2 context: she argued in a 1976 essay that second language writers were not as different from native-English-speaking writers as many teachers believed, and so they could stand to benefit from similar approaches. While responses to the introduction of the process approach in L2 composition have varied, many scholars have come to question direct applications of mainstream process-related pedagogies because of their concerns about significant differences among L2 students that, they believe, necessitate more directive writing pedagogies (see Silva). More forcefully, however, teachers invested in the idea that writing classrooms should prepare students to enter academic and professional communities have argued that process approaches are impractical, if not unethical (Horowitz; also see Johns, *Text*; Johns and Dudley-Evans). These advocates of "English for academic purposes" (EAP) have, in turn, been criticized for relying on a pragmatism that allegedly puts them in service of supposedly more established academic disciplines and supposedly fixed professional discourse communities (Benesch; Canagarajah, “Negotiating”; Pennycook, “Vulgar”). For these critics, EAP’s strong pragmatic bent begs the question for whom/for what students are writing. EAP practitioners have fired back that considerations of ideology crowd out other important topics and practices in classrooms that, after all, should be about *writing* (see Johns, “Too Much”). Dana Ferris and John S. Hedgcock, in their widely circulating guide, *Teaching ESL Composition*, are explicit in stating that the goal of the second language writing teacher should be to organize student discourse in accord with established generic conventions, using the presence of native-English-speaking students if necessary and if available in order to bring L2 students into fully literate English-using communities.

Given EAP’s often intense focus on preparing students to enter academic and professional communities, advocates of more process-oriented, student-centered, discovery-based writing pedagogies appear to stand in sharp contrast. Joan Carson has noted the different evolutions of second language acquisition (SLA) research and of second language composition. She observes that SLA—especially since the development of communicative language teaching approaches—has primarily diachronic concerns, whereas L2 composition (and language teaching generally) has primarily focused on synchronic relationships between writers, readers, texts, and rhetorical or other exigencies for writing in particular situations (also see Raimes). “Writing to learn” may be seen as a corrective to this focus, which accounts for Raimes’s definition of error as “windows into the mind” or evidence of language development rather than immediate nonconformance with standards or discursive requirements. Teachers abiding by such developmental approaches respond—implicitly and explicitly—to EAP and other firmly reader- or genre-centric pedagogies by stressing writing as an evolving process of negotiation in which the writer’s abilities and needs must be taken seriously.

However, many of the assumptions that underlie this approach seem quite similar to those underlying EAP and other pedagogies that stress the development of academic writing skills. Much as articulations of bidialectalist pedagogies in mainstream composition stress teachers' need to make writers more comfortable with the ultimate project of learning and using standardized forms, similar articulations for L2 students leave little doubt about what is supposed to be learned by the end of the course. Ann Raimes, in extending her discussion of the developmental implications of "errors," wants to encourage students to write to communicate however they can, but she worries about "fossilization" among students whose errors are not promptly corrected, ignoring the evidence she herself offers of students' errors actually increasing with explicit correction and grammar instruction.

Even if ready characterizations of acceptably academic or standardized English can be offered to students—a claim called into question by professional writers in several fields (see Schroeder, Fox, and Bizzell)—a few scholars are asking whether such language is the most powerful for diverse learners anyway. While they disagree on the role of race in students' selection of "target" languages, Lynn Goldstein and Awad El Karim M. Ibrahim have observed high school situations in which, for social reasons at least, second language students feel compelled to acquire nonprivileged varieties, especially variations of African American and Afro-Canadian English. It is not difficult, given schools' generally conservative view of language, to imagine educational responses to such tendencies. In fact, strong responses have appeared in the United States in the wake of the 1979 *King v. Ann Arbor* case, which mandated recognition of African American schoolchildren's English varieties; in the Oakland School Board's resolution on the use of Ebonics in teaching; and in repeated legislative attempts at state and national levels to limit the scope of bilingual education (Valdés). These latest "crises" connect worries about students' actual or perceived distance from standardized forms with concerns about the substantial demographic shifts that threaten to make monolingual native English speakers the minority—a concern that will continue to position composition as a politically contentious practice.

As I hope to demonstrate, critiques of specific kinds of composition are not reason enough to abolish either the course or the requirement, even though those arguments seem to return again and again (Connors; Crowley; Leki, "Challenge"). As Keith Gilyard has argued about "basic writing" courses,

> If we do not ask if there is a need for required composition but, rather, if there is a need to teach critical language awareness, of which producing text is a central part, whenever we can command sites to do so, I cannot fathom how the radically inclined can answer in the negative. ("Basic," 38)

Composition commands a great number of sites in colleges and universities across the United States. Increasingly, those sites enroll students whose varying experiences with English and with other languages in and outside the country pose serious critical questions about what "English" does and can do. It makes pragmatic sense to ask what role such a course can play as English-language practices continue to evolve. And it makes equally good pragmatic sense to assume that an ambitious project of teaching "critical language awareness" cannot end in traditional composition classrooms. As I will argue, the project entails broadening "composition" to take fuller account of negotiations among partners who may represent very different backgrounds with, uses for, and goals in English.

OVERVIEW

With this beginning terminological work as a basis, I now turn to an outline of successive chapters, which continue my focus on terms and how they limit and potentially open directions for the compositions of English users in the contemporary US college and university. While my focus to this point has been on terms that actually appear in connection with the teaching and theorizing of composition, I explore in upcoming chapters the effects of additional terms that do not necessarily appear but that, I believe, are invoked by the relatively limited deployment of my initial terms. Specifically, I focus on the truncation of the term *composition* to *comp*—a common enough occurrence in literature, teaching, and conversations at conventions and in seminars and hallways where teaching and thinking about teaching happens. I frame successive chapters using other "comps" that multilingual English users frequently encounter in composition. They are taught quite clearly that they will have to demonstrate broad *competence* with particular, powerful varieties of English to succeed in US colleges and universities and in a world increasingly saturated by English; ensure that their readers and listeners can quickly and easily *comprehend* each syllable they express; and *compensate* for perceived "deficiencies" (or, in more progressive terms, "differences") relative to standardized English.

I should state that I do not intend to argue that the term *composition* is etymologically related to these three additional "comp" terms. And I do not claim that scholars and teachers who regularly use the term *comp* consciously intend to invoke these other terms. Rather, I intend for these terms to frame the several passes I make through the current state of composition in an attempt to triangulate the field's position with respect to multilingual English users. I am not interested in attempting an exhaustive study of the profession using mutually exclusive categories to frame my overview; I am interested instead in borrowing the limited perspectives that several relevant terms give me to open a conversation about what role culturally and linguistically diverse students can play—other, that is, than the role of the always-needy always-student.

In Chapter 1, "Compensation: Fixin' What Ain't Broke," I address the term *compensation* and its significance for second language users in the US academy. Once multilingual users pass tests of comprehensibility and enter mainstream composition courses, they are frequently expected to make up the perceived "difference" or "deficiency" between their performance and that of native-English-speaking students. This compensatory work is usually outsourced to other administrative units that act, in Stephen North's words, as "fix-it shops" to provide short-term solutions when composition instructors are unprepared or uncomfortable addressing apparent deviations from formal norms. Just as the truncated term *comp* serves multiple conceptual duties, "fixing" multilingual users also takes on more sinister conceptual baggage to the extent that these students are "fixed" or interpellated into their institutionally attributed identities as language learners—an act based on a set of assumptions and practices that can overdetermine their relationships with teachers and other students (Ibrahim).

Chapter 2, “Competence: Learning from ‘Learners’,” turns to empirical research on diverse multilingual English users’ symbolic repertoires as they emerged in composition courses at three universities. These repertoires demonstrate kinds of competence that composition and related fields are only recently recognizing as disruptive of traditional notions of competent language use. *Competence* is perhaps the most common, most historically significant, and most problematic term that diverse multilingual English users encounter. This chapter argues that the diverse skills of negotiation that so-called English language learners often demonstrate position them as models of competence for changing symbolic practices rather than the always-different always-students that many designations, such as “ESL,” consider them. Leveraging these competencies will require a shift from the identification, isolation, and containment that has characterized “multicultural” curricula to a “viral” model that integrates lived experiences of cultural and linguistic diversity into curricula at large (Gee). I further argue that first-year composition courses are ideal sites to begin such a shift, since they already position students at a liminal moment in their own language and social development (Ivanič).

Chapter 3, “Composition: Outdated Assumptions to New Architectonics,” reports on data collected from my observations of interactions between native-English-speaking and non-native-English-speaking students in a piloted “intercultural” composition course. The chapter focuses on the challenges both instructors and students faced as well as the ways students combined the competencies I note in Chapter 2. It is informed by broad definitions of *composition* that draw on Kenneth Burke’s notion of composition as an architectonic for an era of material and symbolic uncertainty (*Permanence*), Keith Gilyard’s articulation of composition as a site for “critical language awareness” (“Basic Writing”), and the New London Group’s and Richard Kern’s discussion of composing as “re-designing” based on “available designs.”

Chapter 4, “Composing Intercultural Relationships,” suggests specific directions for intercultural composition pedagogy, drawing on largely European models of “intercultural communicative competence" in foreign language learning. Although shifting from clear targets for competence to emerging methods for successful intercultural communication poses real challenges for teachers, I argue that foundations already exist for enlarging composition's scope. And I argue that the payoff for all language users—all *composers*—is great.

NOTES

1. Language teachers conventionally distinguish between teaching a "foreign language," or a language that is not widely used in communities just outside the classroom, and teaching a "second language," or a language in which students find themselves immersed even outside the classroom. The distinction is also conventionally synonymous with the difference in the World Englishes paradigm between "outer circle" countries (the United States, United Kingdom, British Commonwealth countries, and former British colonies) and "expanding circle" countries (China, Japan, Germany, and other countries in which English is a lingua franca but not as pervasive as a language of everyday communication).

2. I do not recapitulate here the history of "mainstream" composition since the late nineteenth century. See Berlin, *Rhetoric, Writing*; Brereton; Connors; Crowley; Murphy; Wright and Halloran.

COMPOSITION / PEDAGOGY / MULTILINGUALISM / ESL

> Jay Jordan draws expertly on a broad array of scholarship and on richly detailed studies of his own experience as a teacher to help compositionists better understand the contemporary realities of multilingualism and how to make productive use of those realities in their own work. He makes the persuasive case that all of us can, and need to, learn to recognize ourselves and act as *students* of language and writing, and his book shows us how we might do so.
>
> —Bruce Horner, University of Louisville

> Jay Jordan challenges us to recognize that "English Only" ideology still underlies much of US writing instruction and to rethink how a shift toward a multilingual framework of language practice can inform the teaching and learning of writing. Perhaps most critically, Jordan provides a complex portrait of the multiple uses and interactions of diverse languages, writing practices, and composition pedagogy.
>
> —Morris Young, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Redesigning Composition for Multilingual Realities argues that students of English as a second language, rather than always being novice English language learners, often provide models for language uses as English continues to spread and change as an international lingua franca. Starting from the premise that "multilingualism is a daily reality for all students—all language users," Jay Jordan proceeds to both complicate and enrich the responsibilities of the composition classroom as it attempts to accommodate and instruct a diversity of students in the practices of academic writing. But as Jordan admits, theory is one thing; practical efforts to implement multilingual and even translingual approaches to writing instruction are another. Through a combination of historical survey, meta-analytical critique of existing literature, and naturalistic classroom research, Jordan's study points to new directions for composition theory and pedagogy that more fully account for the presence and role of multilingual writers.

JAY JORDAN is assistant professor in the Department of English and the University Writing Program at the University of Utah.

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION/
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
1111 W. KENYON ROAD
URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801-1096
800-369-6283 OR 217-328-3870
WWW.NCTE.ORG/CCCC

ISBN 978-0-8141-3966-0
90000
9 780814 139660

Printed in the United States of America