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# Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy: A Case Study Exploration of a New Orientation for U.S. Composition

Melissa E. Lee

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STUDENT-CENTERED ENGLISHES PEDAGOGY:  
A CASE STUDY EXPLORATION OF A NEW ORIENTATION  
FOR U.S. COMPOSITION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2017

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Title: Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy: A Case Study Exploration of a New Orientation for U.S. Composition

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This study addresses the language diversity in twenty-first century U.S. college composition classrooms by arguing that composition theory and pedagogy should expand beyond the prescriptive conflation of “the English language” and “Standard American English.” Within the overarching discourses about three major constructs—Humanizing Pedagogy (Bartolomé, 1994), the World Englishes ethos (e.g. Bolton, Graddol, & Meierkord, 2011; Bolton & B. Kachru, 2006), and the harm reduction model (e.g. Denning, 2000; Tatarsky, 1998, 2002, 2003)—the first research question was addressed:

- (1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

Chapter Two, the literature review, constructs a response to this first research question by theorizing *Student Centered Englishes Pedagogy* (SCEP): five principles that shape a “World Englishes unit” which can be taught in the beginning of any semester-length college composition class.

A qualitative case study methodology allowed for exploration of the effects of the SCEP principles as experienced by five former students who had experienced the World Englishes unit. The second of the two research questions drove the case study:

(2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?

Data was collected via questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, participants' additional correspondence with the researcher, and the researcher journal.

Five themes emerged from the data through implementation of qualitative content analysis (QCA): (1) Language Awareness as Affecting Social Connections, (2) Language Awareness as Promoting Personal Growth, (3) Language Awareness as Promoting and Problematizing Critical Thinking, (4) Language Awareness as Promoting Cultural Sensitivity, and (5) Language Awareness as Catalyst for Social Change.

Developing an understanding of the relationships between the literature that informed the principles of SCEP, the five principles themselves, and the five themes that emerged from the data led to various implications for teaching, curriculum development, professional development, and future research projects that can continue to address the goal of merging the fields of U.S. college composition and World Englishes.

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## PROLOGUE

The research process that my dissertation represents began, essentially, during my first year of teaching first-year composition as an adjunct—before I had even considered applying for the doctoral program at IUP. As I taught several sections of composition that first year, I started to become aware of a deep and pervasive problem. My teaching, in some ways, didn't seem to be working effectively for all of my students. In every class, it seemed, there were a number of students who did not seem to think it important to try to learn how to avoid the recurrent patterns of “errors” that I observed in their papers: lower-level grammar and spelling “mistakes” which, being patterns, I thought should be easy to learn how to avoid.

It wasn't only one specific demographic of students who demonstrated this ostensible lack of interest in working harder to get out of these patterns of errors. But certain students' seeming lack of interest worried me more than others: the students whose patterns of errors seemed—through my observation in both my teaching and in the media—to be most often associated with people of color. And when it was students of color who would make these particular errors that I knew were already racially stigmatized, I was especially troubled. They already faced enough racism-engendered obstacles in this country because of their skin color; to think their written and spoken language would elicit even more oppression in the professional world genuinely agonized me. I would thus increase my prescriptive insistence that they work on avoiding such mistakes.

An example of one such error that seemed to appear most often was the addition of an “s” on the end of the possessive pronoun “mine.” “The sweatshirt was mines,” they would write or say. Again and again I would say in class and in one-on-one conferences,

“You *have* to stop putting the ‘s’ onto the end of that word. It’s *mine*. The sweatshirt is *mine*. ‘Mines’ *isn’t a word*.”

I tried to make them care as much as I did about polishing their writing as well as speech so that it represented the “Standard English” that I had always assumed *was* English.

But more often than not, what I would see was a gradual retreat. Said students’ writing would get more tentative, less adventurous and assertive, and their verbal class participation would diminish to the point of silence.

In short, I surmised through observation that these students were experiencing some kind of harm in my classroom, and it seemed as if this harm was being inflicted by my teaching—but I couldn’t, for the life of me, understand what I was doing wrong.

Then, upon beginning my classes in IUP’s Composition and TESOL doctoral program, I learned about World Englishes.

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Learning that descriptive linguists had been studying, for several decades, the phenomenon that became known as the World Englishes paradigm changed my entire perspective on reality. I realized how I had carelessly conflated my expectations that students learn to *write* in SAE with expectations that they learn to *speak* in SAE: both ultimately impossible endeavors, especially speaking, since English is a living language—always changing, always growing, never completely static and fixed, even if codified in handbooks for given time periods. I realized that those recurrent patterns of “errors” weren’t errors at all, but markers of other Englishes that had been codified in dictionaries that I had simply never heard of before. I realized how I had been harming students. By telling so many students that their words “weren’t words,” I was telling them that no matter what they

might write or say, I wasn't going to be able to understand them. This uncritically prescriptive teaching wasn't just silencing such students—it was dehumanizing them. My perception of reality thus refined, and influenced also by memories of the harm reduction model, a framework for addressing drug addiction that is used in both public health and psychotherapy and which I had encountered during a previous era of my life spent working in the homeless shelters of Seattle and San Francisco, I came to think of the negative effects that I had unwittingly perpetrated against students as “linguistic harms.”

I developed a fervent belief: that the root cause of linguistic harm was uncritically prescriptive teaching that did not acknowledge WEs, but instead treated the construct of “Standard English” as if it were the *only* English. This belief became a theory: that raising students' language awareness, specifically their awareness of WEs, bore a consistently inverse relationship to reduced risk that students would experience linguistic harm in my classroom or elsewhere. This theory became the basis upon which I created and began teaching what I called my “World Englishes unit” in every section of first-year composition that I taught from then on, beginning in Spring 2012. For the first few semesters, anecdotal evidence from students who self-reported experiencing positive effects provided me with enough justification to feel that I should continue teaching the WEs unit. However, eventually, I wanted to move beyond anecdotal support, and explore the credibility of my assumptions in a more formalized academic mode. My dissertation's first research question emerged as a result of this desire.

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The first research question directed the trajectory of my literature review: *In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World*

*Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?* I collected data in the form of published scholarly literature representing three major constructs: (1) critical pedagogy, with a focus on Bartolomé's idea of humanizing pedagogy; (2) the World Englishes paradigm, with a focus on composition theory and pedagogy that I identified as inspired by the World Englishes ethos; and (3) the harm reduction model, with a focus on harm reduction approaches in public health and psychotherapy for drug addicted populations. I applied qualitative content analysis as I journeyed through this literature, and observed the emergence of several sets of analogous concepts: pairs of premises that formed parallel strands in the composition literature inspired by the World Englishes ethos and the literature about the harm reduction model. I interpreted these sets of analogous concepts as a foundation upon which to theorize the collection of five principles that I named, at that time, *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy: SCEP*. Chapters One and Two of my dissertation acted as the canvas upon which these five principles were created. The five principles are first delineated at the end of Chapter Two, and framed as a set of guidelines for shaping a four-week World Englishes unit that can be taught in the beginning of a semester of first-year college composition.

Because my teaching of the WEs unit had always been motivated so directly by a harm reductionist orientation, I considered the five principles of SCEP as having shaped my various incarnations of the World Englishes unit from the beginning even though I hadn't documented them explicitly until writing the first two chapters of my dissertation. Thus, quite a multitude of former students had already accumulated by the time I formulated the second research question, wishing to formally explore the effectiveness of the SCEP principles: *How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language*

*awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?* I designed a qualitative, exploratory case study as a means of addressing this second research question. I again applied qualitative content analysis as a strategy for discerning themes across the data I collected from the participants. The findings are the five themes presented in Chapter Four.

The contents of the fifth, final chapter represent a synthesis of the five principles of SCEP, the five themes that emerged from the participants' data, and the literature. More specifically: Each SCEP principle, when implemented in the classroom, was identified as having elicited data that corresponded with at least one of the five themes. Considering how a theme manifested in the classroom as a result of implementation of a specific SCEP principle against the backdrop of the literature led to further insights about other possible effects that might be brought forth by the principle. Most notably, my reflections on the participants' data and the emergent themes ended up problematizing my initial core assumption about language awareness and linguistic harm. I discovered, to my chagrin, that the relationship was not as reliably inverse as I had believed for so long. This complication was scrutinized during my dissertation defense. I did not remain chagrined, however, because my committee helped me understand that I can be proud of having made discoveries through my teaching and research that disprove theories I had believed for such a long time.

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Finally, I should share that the case study findings and the synthesizing process had already led me, by the time of the defense, to decide that *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy* was not as appropriate a name as I thought it would be when I first chose it. In

the Final Reflections section at the end of Chapter Five, I change the name to *Humanizing Englishes Pedagogy*, and discuss my reasoning and various implications of this shift. My choice not to go back through the dissertation and substitute this new name from the beginning is intentional: to do so would mask the reality that it was extensive reflection that led to the name change. During my defense, my committee and I agreed that composing this Prologue would be a helpful way of forecasting the somewhat peculiar trajectory chronicled in the subsequent five chapters. Composing this prologue after finishing the final chapter is also apropos in that it represents a final reflective interaction between me and the study with which I have already been engaged in dialogue for so long.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This study addresses the language diversity in contemporary U.S. college composition classrooms by arguing for an expanded theoretical and pedagogical framework grounded not in the traditional assumption of a single English, but in the reality of World Englishes (WEs). In support of this theoretical and pedagogical purpose, the study theorizes *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy* (SCEP): five principles that can shape a four-week “World Englishes unit” that can be taught at the beginning of a fifteen-week semester. A qualitative case study methodology explores the effectiveness of the principles of SCEP by allowing for an investigation of the perceptions of several former students who experienced such a WEs unit.

#### **Background of the Study: Awakening to WEs**

Exposure to the World Englishes<sup>1</sup> paradigm as a doctoral student, after several years of teaching first-year composition from a prescriptive standpoint, awakened me to a seemingly paradoxical challenge. On one hand, I am employed in an English and Humanities department that, at least in name, endorses the “myth of linguistic homogeneity”: “the tacit and widespread acceptance of the dominant image of composition students as native speakers [and writers] of a privileged variety of English” (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638). On the other hand, WEs opened my eyes to the linguistic reality represented by the

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, my usage of the construct of (World) Englishes is grounded in the conceptualization outlined by Kachru and Smith (1985): “The [English] language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard or in its localized forms” (Kachru & Smith, 1985, p. 210). Based on this conceptualization, I use the construct of WEs in three ways that it is important to clarify here: (1) I use it to account for lingua franca usages of English; (2) I broach the living nature of English through the lens of the WEs paradigm; and (3) I consider texts that discuss the multiplicity of Englishes yet which do not specifically reference WEs as nevertheless inspired by the “World Englishes ethos” (Bolton, Graddol, & Meierkord, 2011, p. 459; Bolton & Kachru, 2006, p. 290-291). Further discussion takes place in Chapter 2.

demography of my typical “English 101” classroom, a space accurately described by Preto-Bay and Hansen (2006) as “a microcosm of the U.S. population: in the same class one can find any combination of native-born, international, refugee, permanent resident, and naturalized students” (p. 40). In other words, I awoke to the reality that my “English 101” classrooms are actually characterized by Englishes.

The epistemological transformation that began with my discovery of WEs represented the dawning of my awareness of “the cultural and linguistic mismatch between higher education and the nontraditional (by virtue of Color or class) students who [are] making their imprint upon the academic landscape for the first time in history” (Smitherman, 2003, p. 19). My awareness of this mismatch has led me toward greater understanding of a phenomenon that used to baffle me: the reality that, as Canagarajah (2006) observed, “minority students are reluctant to hold back their Englishes even for temporary reasons” (p. 597). Since discovering WEs scholars’ explanations of the ties between language and social identity, my students’ reluctance to code-switch<sup>2</sup> into the standard American English (SAE) that my own educational experiences had led me to think they were “supposed” to use in school at last made explicit sense. A truth that I had only known instinctually became visible: “To use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to mimic[,] not speak. It means,” for example, “‘acting white’ for...African-American students and ‘putting a show’ for Sri Lankan students” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 597). Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, and Lovejoy

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<sup>2</sup> In this dissertation, my references to the concept of code-switching are informed by the definition provided by Blom and Gumperz (1972): changing linguistic codes based on “change[s] in participants and/or strategies” (p. 409). Further discussion takes place in Chapter 2.

(2013) have underscored the psychosocial negativity of being branded as “acting White” with their explanation that this epithet can be one of the “costs of code-switching” (p. 68). I now realize the injustice that I unwittingly perpetrated against students whose Englishes were delegitimized in the uncritically prescriptive framework that used to shape my teaching. If students were silent, it was because my teaching had silenced them.

As I delved further into my study of WEs, I encountered another complication in the challenge posed by my professional task of teaching English in an Englishes environment. When I became aware of the spread (rather than distribution) of English(es) across the globe (Widdowson, 1997, p. 139-140), and then of the statistical reality that “English is not the language of the UK or USA anymore” (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006, p. 202), I realized the logic of Lu and Horner’s (2011) perspective that teachers should not continue to “pretend that our work concerns only a population of English monolinguals residing in the developed sphere of white Americans” (p. 102). In our globalizing world, the English supposedly used by “the developed sphere of white Americans” is not the only English with which twenty-first century college graduates would benefit from becoming more familiar. The negative consequences that can arise from a lack of exposure to WEs can extend even to groups such as the Students of the New Global Elite (SONGEs), who do come to American universities focused on developing their fluency in the forms of English that carry global prestige (Vandrick, 2011). Even the economically and politically privileged can be underserved by the framework disparaged by Young, Martinez, and Naviaux (2011) in their allegation that “[i]t is undeniable: students are *not* currently exposed to a range of dialects in classrooms where English is studied” (p. xxii).

Lastly, as my interest in WEs led me to the broadest of theoretical levels, I learned that like all languages that are still in use, English is a living language: it changes with its users' contextual needs (Lu, 2004, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011). Moreover, there is no "central control" on any national or international level that determines what English *is* or *is not*; neither is there any system that can measure or regulate changes in the language. Instead, "[c]hange comes about by mechanisms we do not fully understand" (Gupta, 2006, p. 98). This knowledge rendered it impossible that I continue teaching in a framework that presupposes a single English with unchanging standards regarding what is "correct" and what is not. Instead, the understanding that I impart to students must align with the reality described by Rubdy and Saraceni (2006): "English [is] a hybrid...multinational language that constitutes diverse norms and systems, represented by the global community of English speakers.... [T]his global system constitutes the varieties that are already in existence in postcolonial communities, and develops from within" (p. 209). My awareness of the limitations imposed on students in composition settings not infused with the WEs ethos thus came to full fruition.

I am under no illusions that U.S. composition practitioners should abandon the traditional aim of assisting students toward heightened comfort levels with "the written language of power and prestige" (Elbow, 2000, p. 323) as its forms are prescribed in handbooks that have long been used in writing classrooms across the U.S. I also share Elbow's (1999) perspective that students' search for copy-editing assistance represents the development of the life skills of "responsibility, diligence, and self-management" (p. 369). Furthermore, I respect Matsuda's (2013) cautionary observation that not all U.S. composition instructors who wish to address the language diversity in our classrooms are

particularly equipped—by personal experience with language diversity or by language-related educational credentials—to do so (p. 131). Fourth, it is also important to remember that the very act of arguing for, let alone imposing a new paradigm may be seen as colonizing, even though one’s purpose may be antithetical to such an ethos. Finally, as Kumashiro (2000) has warned, there is no guarantee that raising students’ awareness of “the Other” (here, Englishes that are not SAE) means that any of them will internalize the legitimacy of that Other, or that culturally and linguistically privileged students’ experience of the “self-Other binary” (with the “self” as “normal”) will be broken down, or that, even if these habituated mental constructs *are* broken down, an initiative to work for systemic transformation will follow (p. 35). In circumstances such as this last, awareness can engender a state of “crisis” or “paralysis” in students (p. 38) who become at once “‘unstuck’ (distanced from the ways they have always thought, no longer so complicit with oppression) and ‘stuck’ (intellectually paralyzed so that they need to work through feelings and thoughts before moving on with the more ‘academic’ part of a lesson)” (p. 44). One should bear these concerns in mind even when appreciating results such as those reported by Wetzl (2013), whose quantitative attitudinal study of how first-year composition students reacted to texts written in World Englishes resulted in statistically significant support for the assumption that an inclusion of WEs “can initiate the process of promoting linguistic acceptance” while engendering “increased awareness of linguistic diversity” (p. 222).

While an array of reasons to exercise caution when advocating for a paradigm shift do exist, and the findings of individual studies such as Wetzl’s should be understood as such, the limitations that uncritically prescriptive teaching can impose upon students from *all* backgrounds remain real, and deserve critical attention. The purview of U.S.

composition must widen to include explicit attention to the WEs paradigm. Such a broadening of scope should be conceptualized, overall, as enhancing students' language awareness, or "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning...[and] a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn and use them" (Association for Language Awareness, 2012).

In sum, this dissertation represents my appreciation of Seargeant's (2010) perspective: "Whereas in everyday scenarios a certain vagueness about the scope of reference of a term such as 'English' need not be a problem...such a strategy is unsatisfactory for scientific discourse" (p. 98). I argue that such a strategy is also unsatisfactory for a first-year college composition course. A new approach is needed which allows even inexperienced instructors to continue U.S. composition's traditional task of encouraging students' development of fluency in SAE, but within an expanded purview dedicated to raising their language awareness, specifically in relation to the English language, its users, and their language choices. In its emphasis on developing language awareness, this expanded framework should minimize the potential for students to experience the negative effects they might otherwise encounter in settings that privilege SAE.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the clarity of my own awareness that U.S. composition must move toward greater recognition of the "mismatch" between traditional cultural and linguistic norms and the new norms that have developed as new demographics have populated American higher education, composition is still characterized by prescriptive teaching in many places (Gubele, 2015; Katz, Scott, & Hadjioannou, 2009; Young, et al., 2011; Young, et al., 2013).

This reality is belied by the plenitude and accelerating nature of scholarly conversation about the importance of addressing language diversity. In fact, so many possibilities for how best to address language diversity in composition classrooms have been put forth in the literature that it can be difficult for those of us who do wish to embrace our students' language variations to know which approach we should take. Matsuda (2013) has accounted for this explosion of interest in "language issues" by claiming that it represents a "linguistic turn" in the field of U.S. composition: a widespread, though not ubiquitous, interest in "integrat[ing] language issues into the mainstream discourse of U.S. college composition" (p. 129).

According to Matsuda (2013), the current linguistic turn in U.S. composition is occurring in response to intensifying linguistic diversity in colleges and universities which, "devastated by economic crises and having depleted local would-be student population[s], try to make ends meet by recruiting students from other countries" (p. 131). In the context of these pressures, many contemporary compositionists are participating in the linguistic turn, even though, as I have noted, many of us have had few real-life experiences with language diversity or linguistics education (p. 131). This has made for a field-wide scholarly and pedagogical environment characterized by burgeoning and yet often uninformed enthusiasm, a "new frontier" that Matsuda has wryly described as "the Wild West" (p. 132). This theoretical and pedagogical space is filled with new—or rediscovered and often renamed—concepts and terms, such as the translingual approach to writing and writing pedagogy, "hybrid" and "alternative" discourses, WEs, code-meshing, and so on (p. 132). Indeed, my need, in the preceding pages, to clarify what I mean by "WEs" and "code-

switching” evidences the lack of uniformity that characterizes much of the current atmosphere of U.S. composition studies.

Matsuda (2014) has expanded that this enthusiastic yet disorganized contemporary atmosphere is problematic because teachers can be tempted to embrace a mode of “linguistic tourism” in which new approaches are ineffectively implemented and can actually lead to uncomfortable classroom events and interactions (p. 482). In Spring 2012, the first semester that I ventured beyond my prescriptive training in an attempt to address the multiplicity of Englishes, I actually bumbled through the very awkward instance that Matsuda has described in a hypothetical scenario: “[I]magine someone who grew up speaking the dominant variety of English trying to speak African-American English; the result would likely be embarrassing, if not offensive” (p. 483). I remain unspeakably thankful to report that the collective response to my inept linguistic gyration was a resounding guffaw rather than affronted glares or self-consciously averted gazes. My increasing exposure to WEs in the years since this misadventure has helped me to avoid other, similar occurrences, but I have never forgotten the lesson that I blushing learned that day: even the most well-intended enthusiasm can pose more potential for harm than good, when applied without an adequate sense of direction.

Perhaps it is teachers’ intimidation, developed through similar failures undertaken as “linguistic tourists” (Matsuda, 2014, p. 482), which accounts for the continued pervasiveness of prescriptive teaching that recognizes SAE as the only variety of English appropriate for the school context. After all, as Gubele (2015) has pointed out, “[f]ormulaic writing is easier to teach” (p. 5), and Canagarajah has observed, “Unfortunately, many pedagogical grammars adopt a prescriptive and conservative approach to language—partly

motivated by convenience” (Rubdy & Saracini, 2006, p. 211). Alternatively, the continued prevalence of prescriptive teaching may be a reflection of many first-year composition instructors’ lack of training in responding to students’ writing. As Gubele has also acknowledged, at her own university, many graduate-level English Education majors receive no training in responding to student writing until after they have begun student-teaching as first-year composition instructors; therefore, naturally, they call upon their own, oftentimes outdated, experiences in undergraduate composition for guidance when first beginning to grade their students’ writing (p. 6-7). My own experience as a first-time instructor of composition at Marquette University, required for the teaching assistantship that funded my pursuit of my master’s degree there, was similar—except that I did not even have personal experiences in undergraduate composition to draw upon when I began grading my students’ papers, since I had tested out of that class when I pursued my bachelor’s degree at Le Moyne College. Thus, in my first years as a composition instructor, I leaned back on my *high school* experiences to inform my grading. As my doctoral colleagues can attest, this experience is not at all unusual. A third possibility may be that teachers who experience epistemological transformations such as mine may nevertheless experience a sensation akin to the state of “crisis” that Kumashiro (2000) observed in students (p. 38, 44). It is one thing to discover, abstractedly and on one’s own, the instability of a construct previously assumed to be constant and fixed; it is quite another to try to figure out how to teach in ways that allow for students to experience the same discovery while also fulfilling administrative mandates such as assessment of particular knowledge and skills. Kumashiro noted, in fact, that “[t]he recognition that they can neither know what students learn nor control how

students act based on what they learn, leads many teachers to feel paralyzed...and [to] do whatever they can to maintain a sense of control” (p. 39).

No matter the reason for the continued prevalence of prescriptive teaching in U.S. composition, this problem must be addressed, because as Bizzell (2002) identified, “academic discourse is the language of a community, [and thus] at any given time its most standard or widely accepted features reflect *the cultural preferences of the most powerful people in the community* [emphasis added]” (p. 1). This means that uncritically prescriptive teaching which does not acknowledge WEs and thereby does not allow students and teachers to co-construct heightened language awareness merely reproduces traditional hierarchies and the marginalizing forces they embody. Also, as I have noted, not exposing students to WEs imposes limitations on their abilities to participate with maximal effectiveness in rapidly globalizing social, economic, and political networks, not to mention their overall awareness that English is a living language. I posit, again, that a fresh approach is needed which allows even instructors with little experience in linguistically diverse settings and minimal experience with language-related education to continue U.S. composition’s tradition of promoting students’ fluency in SAE, but within a widened framework that raises their (language) awareness of WEs. This expanded framework should thereby diminish the potential for students to experience the negative effects they may have experienced in other contexts where SAE is uncritically prescribed. I have come to understand such negative effects as *linguistic harms*.

In order to underscore the importance of devising a simple, readily practicable approach to integrating WEs into the contemporary composition curriculum, an approach

that allows teachers to maintain a focus on SAE but with reduced potential for students to experience linguistic harm, I now focus more closely on the phenomenon of linguistic harm.

### **Linguistic Harm**

As I have noted, composition pedagogy that does not acknowledge the reality of WEs poses several overarching problems. First, it can lend itself to a systemic ignoring of language variation, which can in turn prompt teachers to disregard the relationships between our students' languages and social identities. Second, it means that even culturally and linguistically privileged students are not being prepared for maximally effective participation in globalizing social, economic, and political networks. Third, it represents a pervasive elision of the basic linguistic fact that all languages that remain in use are always changing. Overall, composition pedagogy that does not expose students to WEs diminishes opportunities for students and teachers to co-construct language awareness, specifically in relation to the English language, its users, and their language choices. However, developing an even deeper understanding of linguistic harm must begin with an explanation of standard language ideology, the system of flawed logic that undergirds the myth of linguistic homogeneity and the modality of prescriptivism, and which has shaped U.S. college composition and dominant perspectives on language diversity in the U.S., in general.

The construct of standard language ideology has been defined by many, but Lippi-Green's (2012) definition is most succinct:

a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class. (p. 67)

As Adger, Wolfram, and Christian (2007) elaborated, standard language ideology is characterized by four assumptions: “nonstandard” forms of any language are “deformed versions of the standard,” “[t]hey have no grammar or are structurally haphazard,” “[t]hey are responsible for the putative decline of the standard variety,” and “[t]hey are spoken only by less educated or lower class people” (p. 10-11). As implied, perceptions shaped by standard language ideology preclude, from the start, a view of supposedly nonstandard forms as legitimate languages that are standard and correct in their own right. People whose spoken or written language practices do not fall within the purview of the dominantly perceived standard suffer the harm of marginalization, if not silencing, because “[l]anguage...is more than a tool for communication of facts between two or more persons. It is the most salient way we have of establishing and advertising our social identities.” As such, “[language] is more complex and meaningful than any single fact about our bodies” (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 3).

Young (2011) issued a call to action amidst a discussion of psychosocial harms that can be engendered in composition settings shaped by standard language ideology, while underscoring his argument by participating in a tradition of code-meshed<sup>3</sup> academic writing initiated by Smitherman (1977):

See, people be mo plurilingual than we wanna recognize.... What I want to argue right now is that we need to enlarge our perspective about what good writin is and how good writin can look at work, at home, and at school. The narrow, prescriptive lens be messin writers and readers all the way up, cuz we all been taught to respect

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<sup>3</sup> Code-meshing has been defined by Young, et al. (2011) as “blend[ing] accents, dialects, and varieties of English with school-based, academic, professional, and public Englishes” (p. xxi). Code-meshing will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter.

the dominant way to write, even if we don't, or can't, or won't ever write that one way ourselves. That be hegemony. Internalized oppression. Linguistic self-hate.

(p. 65)

In other words, Young argued, when standard language ideology motivates composition instructors to teach prescriptively, conveying to students that there is only one real, correct variety of English, students who cannot or do not want to communicate in these so-called correct forms are made to feel unwelcome to use and further cultivate the linguistic resources with which they do feel most comfortable. Furthermore, they can suffer the harm of internalizing the negative attitudes toward their languages that seem to pervade the teachers' prescriptions. It has in fact been recorded that already-marginalized students who have been taught that their mother tongues are "incorrect" (or worse, not languages at all) have eventually expressed resentment toward their languages and by extension, themselves (Richardson, 2004, p. 161). Following this, it is also understood by applied linguists that "[w]hen an individual is asked to reject their own language, we are asking them to drop allegiances to the people and places that define them" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66). If a teacher's negative attitude toward a student's undervalued variety of English does *not* cause the student to drop allegiances to his or her home, the alternative can be that the student drops the academic pursuit instead. Young, et al. (2013) have clarified why this can occur:

The fact that the use of undervalued English rises during adolescence suggests that there may be a relationship between teacher language attitudes and the tendency for students to drop out of school. Negative attitudes toward undervalued English might have a greater impact on students during this age when language variation comes to play a central role in the formation of individual identity. (p. 34)

The manner in which standard language ideology can give rise to linguistic harms even among students fluent in SAE is also rooted in the idea of the limited awareness it causes. As I have noted, if students are not exposed to WEs, they can suffer the harm of being unequipped to participate effectively in globalized social, economic, and political networks. Rusty Barrett, one of the authors of Young, et al. (2013), has provided an example of a situation in which he observed such a lack of linguistic preparation imposing real limitations upon people. In Barrett's past work at a soup kitchen in Chicago, a health inspector who spoke only African-American English needed to see a certification document without which the soup kitchen would be forced to shut down. The nun who was in charge of the kitchen, a speaker of only Indian English, could not understand what the health inspector was asking for. Likewise, the health inspector could not understand much of the nun's English. Barrett ended up translating for both of them, which led to the nun's eventual exclamation, "You are translating from English to English!" Barrett's reflection on this situation further supports the idea that a limited language awareness characterized by lack of exposure to WEs can equate to a legitimate debilitation:

Although everyone involved was a native English speaker, differences in grammar and pronunciation made it difficult for communication to proceed without someone working as a translator. In this particular instance, my knowledge of Standard English was not particularly useful. I was only able to translate because I had studied other dialects and had experiences dealing with speakers of both Indian English and African American English. As globalization continues and people who speak radically different varieties of English come together more and more

frequently, this type of dialect contact is becoming more and more common. (p. 48-49)

Barrett's example reinforces the notion that a U.S. composition framework shaped by standard language ideology and which thereby does not raise students' awareness of WEs can underserve even those students who do embrace composition's traditional privileging of SAE. An example provided by Seidlhofer (2009) further underscores this point, and pertains to a setting that would perhaps be more applicable to the more privileged circumstances such as those enjoyed by SONGEs (Vandrick, 2011). Referencing an instance in which a Danish Foreign Minister's English was criticized as exemplifying only "moderate proficiency" when he referred to an important treaty that had been finalized in Edinburgh as the "*so-called* [emphasis added] Edinburgh agreement," Seidlhofer posed the rhetorical question, "[W]hich 'English' is it that Danish politicians use with 'moderate proficiency'?" Then, a more extended reflection:

[N]ative-speaker language use is not particularly relevant here: the Danish Foreign Minister is not a native speaker of English [ENL], and he was not speaking on behalf of ENL speakers, nor presumably to ENL speakers. He was using English as a lingua franca in the way he often has occasion to use it, with interlocutors who use it the same way. And it is very likely indeed that such interlocutors would understand very well what he (presumably) meant by *so-called*, i.e. "the agreement called the Edinburgh agreement," especially since many European languages have an analogous expression which can be used with the same two meanings (German *sogenannt*, Italian *cosiddetto*, etc.). (p. 136-137)

Here, Seidlhofer has further illustrated the reasoning for claims pointing to the limiting

nature of U.S. composition pedagogy that does not help students develop greater capacity for the skill of “rhetorical listening” (Ratcliffe, 1999), which Lu and Horner (2011) have described as “ways of listening that, instead of producing misunderstanding, allow for the possibility of cooperation by showing honor and respect to all those speaking” (p. 109). Canagarajah has often invoked the concept of rhetorical listening in discussing teaching strategies that address hermeneutic challenges associated with code-meshing (2011, p. 278; 2012; 2013a, p. 5; 2013b, p. 131). Rhetorical listening, according to Canagarajah (2013b), “encourages [students] to move out of self-centeredness in assuming only their norms as relevant, and try to understand the diverse cultural values and logics that inform texts...[and thus] engage in the cultural contexts from which they emanate” (p. 131-132).

Lastly, standard language ideology obscures the reality that English is a living language. Uncritically prescriptive teaching that omits this basic linguistic fact can engender forms of linguistic harm that can be experienced by students across demographic backgrounds. When students are not made aware that notions of correctness are pluralcentric and vary across time, they are consigned to a paradoxical positionality in which it is impossible to build authentic confidence. Aspiring to embody a set of standards that does not actually exist means that one is doomed to feel perpetually inadequate. Within a system that promotes such an aspiration, even students who have not experienced the linguistic disenfranchisement that accompanies cultural marginalization can fear expressing themselves; there is always and inescapably a possibility that an “incorrect” form may emerge from their mouths or pens. Young, et al. (2011) have used the term “linguistic anxiety” to describe a reticence to speak or write that arises from fear of being perceived as incorrect and therefore stereotypically unintelligent (p. xxiv). As such, linguistic anxiety

can be considered a product of “stereotype threat”: “a social-psychological predicament” in which a person is afraid to express him- or herself in some way for fear of confirming as a self-characteristic some negative stereotype about his or her group (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797; Richardson, 2004, p. 163; Young, 2007, p. 120; Young, 2011, p. 65).

In sum, standard language ideology can be considered the underlying cause of all manifestations of linguistic harm that are addressed in this dissertation research. In a pedagogy shaped by these forces:

- (1) Students who cannot or do not want to communicate in forms popularly supposed to be standard and thereby correct are made to feel unwelcome to use and further cultivate the linguistic resources with which they do feel most adept (Young, 2011, p. 65);
- (2) Students can internalize the negative attitudes toward their languages that appear to be infused in their teachers’ prescriptions (Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65);
- (3) These internalized negative attitudes can in turn engender a sense of inner conflict between a student’s home and school languages (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 55; Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65);
- (4) This sense of inner conflict may prompt students to relinquish the academic pursuit entirely (Young, et al., 2013, p. 34);
- (5) Students emerge from the educational process unequipped to participate with maximal effectiveness in globalized social, economic, and political networks (Young, et al., 2013, p. 48-49);
- (6) Because English is a living language (Lu, 2004; Lu, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011) and it

is thus impossible for anyone's speech or writing to embody universal "correctness" (Gupta, 2006, p. 95-99), any student can experience linguistic anxiety (Young, et al., 2011, p. xxiv), a fear of speaking or writing that can arise from stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797; Richardson, 2004, p. 163; Young, 2007, p. 120; Young, 2011, p. 65).

Ultimately, and to reiterate, standard language ideology and its associated assumptions are modalities which by nature diminish the quality of students' and teachers' co-construction of language awareness. When composition instruction is shaped by standard language ideology and pervaded by the myth of the linguistic homogeneity, it is occurring in a top-down, uncritically prescriptive environment. Such an environment elides the possibility of a dialogical pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2012; Lee, 2013, p. 317) in which students and teachers can co-construct heightened levels of awareness about the English language, its users, and their language choices. As I have observed throughout the semesters in which I *have* sought to raise students' language awareness by involving WEs in my pedagogy, and as Wetzl (2013) has reported without invoking the concept of linguistic harm explicitly, the heightening of such awareness can begin to subvert the forces that give rise to the linguistic harms I have discussed.

I will now explain how I developed a theoretical and pedagogical solution to the problems examined in the preceding pages. It is this idea that I offer to the larger community of U.S. composition specialists as a possible means by which we may chart a path through the space Matsuda (2013) has called the "Wild West," the "new frontier" that characterizes contemporary U.S. composition studies (p. 128).

### **Addressing the Problem: Introduction to Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy**

To chart a path through the “new frontier” (Matsuda, 2013, p. 128) that lies between the uncritically prescriptive framework in which I used to teach and the reality of the many Englishes in my classrooms, I developed an expanded theoretical and pedagogical framework. This framework allows me to maintain a focus on assisting students in developing fluency in SAE, but within the larger purview represented by WEs, and with my special attention to the maintenance of my classroom as a space where linguistic harms are unlikely to be experienced by students as they develop heightened comfort levels in SAE. I conceptualized this harm-focused, expanded approach within the larger theoretical framework represented by Bartolomé’s (1994) *Humanizing Pedagogy*, a derivation of Freire’s *Critical Pedagogy* (1970). In my approach’s recognition of the “diversity, pluricentricity, inclusivity, variability, functionality, and equality” of the world’s Englishes (Proshina, 2014, p. 7), and in its conception of (World) English(es) as a system defined as a “multinational language with a heterogeneous and hybrid grammatical system that accommodates the features of local varieties” (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006, p. 201), it is also informed by the construct of the World Englishes ethos (Bolton, et al., 2011, p. 459; Bolton & Kachru, 2006, p. 290-291). Lastly, because I wished to develop a pedagogical orientation specifically dedicated to reducing the potential for my students to experience linguistic harm, I based my approach’s pedagogical guidelines on the principles of a framework that I encountered during past work in the social services sector: the harm reduction model (Denning, 2000; Kayser & Broers, 2012; Marlatt, Larimer, & Witkiewitz, 2012; Riley, Sawka, Conley, Hewitt, Mitic, Poulin, Room, Single, & Topp, 1999; Tatarsky, 1998, 2002, 2003; Tatarsky & Kellogg, 2010; Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010; Van Nuys, 2008).

As will be discussed at more length in the literature review, the harm reduction approach was conceived in a setting much like the “new frontier” described by Matsuda (2013): an environment in which the array and extent of people’s needs could not be met within the traditional framework. Because not all needs could be addressed within the traditional framework, the priority became the reduction of harms associated with those needs. Harm reduction is meant to be implemented with objectivity and neutrality, and is founded upon an ultimate respect for the individual’s choices. As such, applying harm reduction does *not* equate to an expectation that the service-seeking individuals cease the behaviors that can lead to harm; rather, it assists individuals in developing greater awareness of how to manage such behaviors and thereby develop greater senses of self-efficacy. Furthermore, and also parallel with descriptivist values, practitioners of harm reduction do not prescribe generalized, fixed courses of action to service-seeking individuals, but rather exercise an “experimental attitude...that evolves as goals are pursued” (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 111). Lastly, the harm reduction model is never meant to be a permanent remedy to a problem, but rather a placeholder that can facilitate the continued functioning of individuals and systems while more sustainable strategies can be developed. In all of these ways, harm reduction aligns with Kumashiro’s (2000) argument that teachers interested in anti-oppressive education should not try to “*move to a better place*,” but rather we should simply try “*to move*”:

Although we do not want to *be* (the same), we also do not want to *be better* (since any utopian vision would simply be a different and foretold way *to be*, and thus, a different way to be stuck in a reified sameness); rather, we want to *constantly become*, we want difference, change, newness. (p. 46)

As I have adapted the harm reduction model for application in my composition classes, I call it *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy*, or SCEP.

To elaborate: SCEP is composed of five principles that act together to shape a four-week “World Englishes unit” which can begin the larger fifteen-week semester of a first-year composition class. The principles of SCEP are the simple, readily practicable guidelines for which I have called. These guidelines constitute an approach that even inexperienced composition instructors can implement *now* in order to integrate WEs into their pedagogies, a shift which thereby reduces the potential for students to experience forms of linguistic harm that can otherwise be involved in the acquisition of SAE. As I have noted, in a classroom space in which the potential for linguistic harms is diminished, students and teachers can more effectively co-construct heightened levels of language awareness. Since growth in language awareness can diminish the potential for linguistic harms to occur, SCEP should be understood ultimately as a framework that can catalyze an intrapersonal transformation that continues even after the WEs unit has ended.

Figure 1, below, provides a pictorial representation of the theoretical and pedagogical constructs that inform SCEP.

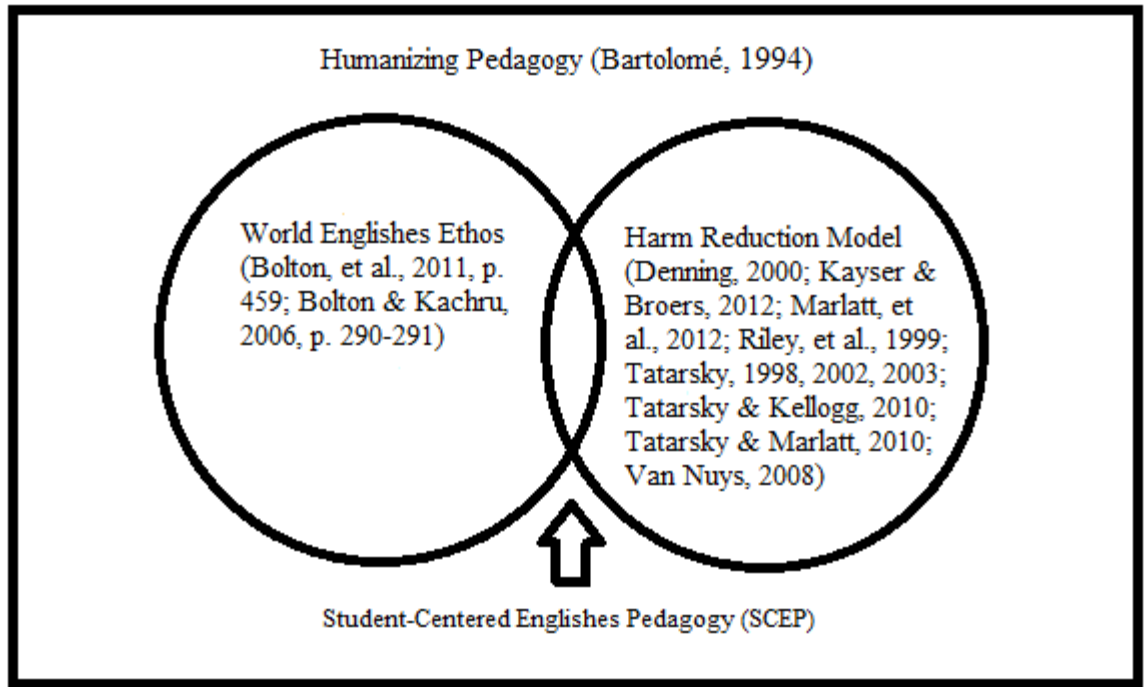


Figure 1. Theoretical and pedagogical constructs that inform SCEP.

As I have implied, I have taught my WEs unit shaped by the harm reduction-based principles of SCEP in my first-year composition classes for several years now. Before embarking upon this dissertation research project, I had surmised that SCEP “works,” based upon my own observations of students’ progress throughout each semester and upon consistently positive student evaluations submitted at the end of every semester. However, I had never actually documented, in writing, the principles of SCEP or their theoretical underpinnings. Likewise, I had never undertaken a formal study involving a methodological approach designed to explore SCEP’s effectiveness. Below begins an overview of the research design that I finally constructed in my desire to formalize the theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological value of SCEP.

## **Overview of Research Design**

In this section, I first explain the purposes and research questions that drive the study. Second, I describe the research context. Third, I offer a basic outline of the study's methodological approach, which is fully delineated in Chapter Three. Lastly, I discuss my positionality as the researcher.

### **Purposes and Research Questions**

The theoretical and pedagogical purpose of this study was to explore how the harm reduction model can inform U.S. composition theory and pedagogy in an attempt to facilitate the integration of WEs in a simple yet organized approach. This approach minimizes the potential for linguistic harm by heightening students' language awareness, specifically in regard to the English language, its users, and their language choices. This theoretical and pedagogical purpose shaped the first of the two research questions addressed by the study:

- (1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

My theorizing of SCEP, the process that gave shape to the literature review, constituted the response to the first research question.

The methodological purpose of this study was to explore five of my former English 101 students' perceptions of their language awareness after having been exposed to the WEs paradigm through my WEs unit shaped by the principles of SCEP. The methodological purpose of this study was fulfilled by the implementation of a qualitative case study approach. My methodological purpose shaped the second research question:

- (2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?

### **Research Context**

The research context was Northern New York State University<sup>4</sup>, hereafter referred to as NNYSU. Since the study investigated the experiences of former rather than current students, not all of the participants were still enrolled at NNYSU at the time of data collection. Nevertheless, it is important to describe NNYSU as the research site, because such a description provides an overall context in which the participants' cultural and linguistic experiences can be more deeply understood. Furthermore, a description of NNYSU provides another representation of my rationale for conducting my study at this site.

Developing an accurate portrait of the cultural and linguistic lives of NNYSU students first requires a basic understanding of the university's surroundings. NNYSU is located in Lilyville<sup>5</sup>, New York, a rural village set amidst farmland, eighteen miles south of the Canadian border and fifteen miles north from the Adirondack Park, northern New York's six-million acre mountain range and forest preserve. According to the 2013 census, the village of Lilyville had a population of 6,714 ("Lilyville [village], New York"), a number which does not reflect the year-round streams of tourists on their way to the cities of southeastern Canada, the hikers traveling to and from the mountains, or the student populations of NNYSU and Lilyville's private liberal arts institution, James Peabody

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<sup>4</sup> A pseudonym.

<sup>5</sup> A pseudonym.

University<sup>6</sup>. The cultural and linguistic diversity carried into the area by these visiting populations somewhat offsets the relative lack of diversity that characterizes the permanent population of Lilyville, which is predominantly middle-class and white, with SAE as the most prevalent variety of written English. However, as of the time I conducted this study, I had observed that the many NNYSU students who did not venture from the campus on a regular basis did not seem to possess a consistent awareness of the culturally and linguistically diverse elements that I observed from the vantage point of my residence in the village. This lack of awareness, or at least the lack of consistent awareness, that I observed among the student body is important to highlight in the context of this study. It is important insofar as it could have lent itself to some students' perceptions of negative contextual attitudes that, if internalized, could have acted as impediments to the students' engagement with the academic pursuit that motivated their enrollment at NNYSU in the first place. Furthermore, students' lack of engagement with the surrounding context meant that they were not being exposed to the cultural and linguistic diversity that *was* present in the context. Such exposure might otherwise have led to their development of language awareness that could have counterbalanced linguistic harms caused by their internalization of negative contextual attitudes they perceived.

NNYSU, itself, is somewhat more culturally and linguistically diverse than the surrounding context. Undergraduates enrolled in NNYSU's twenty-three bachelor's degrees, twenty-two associate's degrees, and seven professional certificate programs come from thirty-two states and seventeen different countries, including England, Russia, Japan, China, Croatia, the Caribbean Islands, and Canada ("About Lilyville"). In 2012, the student

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<sup>6</sup> A pseudonym.

body numbered 3,788; information from the years subsequent to 2012 was not available at the time that this study was conducted. In 2012, the majority of students identified as white (67%); twelve percent of students self-identified as Black, non-Hispanic (12%); seven percent self-identified as Hispanic (7%); one percent identified as Asian (or Pacific Islander before 2010) (1%); two percent identified as Native American (2%); and one percent identified as multiracial (1%). Five percent of students did not report their ethnicity or race (5%), and five percent of students self-identified as international (5%) (“Selected Demographics 2004-2012”). As this demographic breakdown suggests, there is indeed more diversity on the campus of NNYSU than there is in Lilyville itself. Following this, while I have observed that some students seem to perceive, on campus, the same sorts of negative attitudes that they perceive off campus, the potency of these perceptions has always struck me as proportionately weakened.

These proportionately less powerful perceptions carry over to first-year composition classes directly. This is because almost all students who enroll at NNYSU are mainstreamed into the university’s first-year composition course, Expository Writing (English 101). A very few exceptions to this requirement are noted in Chapter Three. Despite, however, that students do not as commonly perceive negative attitudes on campus, a final observation that I must make about NNYSU as a research site reveals why I was so driven to raise students’ awareness of WEs and to carry out my research study in this location. This reason was that the diversity that characterizes the student population, minor as it is, nevertheless far outpaces our students’ levels of intercultural sensitivity. A brief anecdote about a moment in which this pervasive lack became clear to me illustrates why the mission represented by this study was so important.

One spring evening several years ago, I arrived at the classroom in which the weekly meeting for NNYSU's LGBT+ student club, for which I am the faculty advisor, was being held. As I waited for the meeting to begin, one young man—a local, Caucasian, self-identified bisexual, and traditionally-aged undergraduate—arrived and quickly started describing to the two other local, Caucasian students who were present a brief event that had happened on his walk across campus. “I was going across the quad,” he remarked matter-of-factly, “when I saw a crowd of kids from the city [a common euphemism among much of the NNYSU population for students of African-American and Caribbean-American descent whose permanent dwellings are in the New York City area]. They were coming around the corner of the library. They were being so loud and they were talking the way *they talk*. I can never understand what they're saying and I'm always afraid they're gonna harass me if I say 'hi'—so I walked around the long way to get here.” There was no animosity in his voice as he related this occurrence. He might as well have been commenting on the weather. But, considering his words from my critical standpoint as a student of WEs, I heard a cultural narrative being told: the archetypal story, motivated by the assumptions of standard language ideology, of cultural and linguistic differences slashing seemingly irreconcilable spaces between people. The divide, in this case, struck me as all the more poignant because this young man was himself a member of a traditionally marginalized population. Furthermore, this young man's experience suggests stereotype threat at work, and in a form not typically described in the literature. When Steele and Aronson (1995), Richardson (2004), Young (2007), and Young (2011) have described stereotype threat at work, they have focused on how it can influence African-American individuals. This young man's

intimidation suggests how assumptions misguidedly based on stereotypes can threaten a Caucasian individual into avoidance and anxious silence.

### **Methodological Approach**

I chose to pursue qualitative, exploratory case study (Yin, 2002) as my methodological approach, because it would allow for each participant's individual voice to be privileged, while establishing a space for data to emerge for discovery and consideration. My hope was that each participant would provide me with multiple sources of data that would in turn allow me to build a well-rounded understanding and an accurate depiction of the participant's perceptions of his or her language awareness after exposure to the WEs paradigm through my WEs unit shaped by the principles of SCEP.

As I explain more explicitly in Chapter Three, I recruited participants with the participant recruitment email (Appendix A) and then obtained their signed informed consent forms (Appendix B). All five participants were assigned pseudonyms.

The first source of data that I collected was a questionnaire (Appendix C). The second source of data was a semi-structured phone or Skype interview, for which I created an initial protocol that featured one set of questions to ask all of the participants. I obtained approval of the questionnaire and the initial semi-structured interview protocol from the Institutional Review Boards at both Indiana University of Pennsylvania and NNYSU before distributing these to the participants. After I had received the five participants' completed questionnaires, I added personalized questions to each participant's interview script based upon his or her responses on the questionnaire. All five of the participants' personalized semi-structured interview scripts are included as Appendix D. All five interviews were audio-recorded using a recorder purchased especially for this dissertation research, and for

which IRB approval had also been rendered beforehand from both IUP and NNYSU.

Additional sources of data were correspondence that transpired between me and each participant and the contents of my research journal, in which I documented important discoveries and realizations during the research process. Artifacts that the participants had retained from their experiences in the WEs unit and might have wished to share with me during the study could also have become data sources, but none of the participants chose to share class artifacts with me for this purpose.

Once I completed the data collection period, I transcribed the five participants' audio-recorded interviews. Then, I applied the strategy of qualitative content analysis (QCA) to the participants' questionnaire responses and interview transcripts, to discern emergent themes. QCA is a descriptive method that I deemed an appropriate data analytic approach, since my study's methodological purpose was to *explore* the participants' perceptions in an attempt to discover whether SCEP had been effective in its goal of raising students' language awareness. Since QCA "is more about summarising what is there in the data, and less about looking at [the] data in new ways or creating theory" (Schreier, 2012, p. 41), this strategy ensured that I maintained the study's purely exploratory purpose.

### **Researcher Positionality**

The fact that my positionality as the researcher was simultaneously my positionality as the participants' former instructor posed possible benefits as well as liabilities. One benefit, I felt, was that having engaged in at least fifteen weeks of a pedagogical relationship with the participants enhanced my ability to understand and interpret their experiences. Another benefit, I suspect, was that the five former students who volunteered to participate in the study provided me with levels of investment greater than that which would have been

put forth by participants who did not know me. This second benefit might also have acted as a limitation, however. Because of the position of authority that I occupied in the classes that the participants took from me—despite the bottom-up approach that characterized their WEs units—it might have been that some of them felt that they should respond to my questions in ways that did not accurately represent their experiences. Therefore, in an effort to maintain the credibility of my research, I employed a process of member checking in which I invited each participant to review any material that was generated in regard to him or her throughout the study. Member checking enhanced the credibility of the study as well, by helping me to build “thick description,” or an exhaustive portrayal of “[a] case’s own issues, contexts, and interpretations” (Stake, 2000, p. 439).

Now, having provided a basic outline of my study’s research design, I transition toward the conclusion of this introductory chapter by offering several reflections on the significance of this project.

### **Significance of the Study**

First, this study was a continuation of the journey I began chronicling in Lee (2014), in which I recorded my initial work regarding “my shift from teaching ‘English,’ the very idea of which implies the simply inaccurate supposition that there is only one ‘real,’ grammatically and syntactically organized variety of English, to teaching within a (World) Englishes conceptual framework” (p. 314). With this dissertation research study, as with my 2014 article, I have responded to the invitation implied by Canagarajah (2006): “[T]he place of World Englishes in composition...is only a statement of intent, not a celebration of accomplishment” (p. 613; as cited in Lee, 2014, p. 315).

Second, this study also responded to a more recent call, issued by Matsuda (2013),

for composition specialists to address the “huge void in the knowledge of language issues in U.S. college composition” (p. 130) by moving beyond tradition to develop “[a] broader, more balanced framework for conceptualizing language” (p. 132). In its presentation of the framework of SCEP to the academic community, and through the attention it gave to the experiences of the five former students who participated in the case study, this dissertation research responded to Matsuda’s call by contributing to the existing body of ideas for how U.S. composition instructors can widen the purview of our practice to more effectively meet the real needs and desires of students in contemporary classrooms and in a globalizing world.

Third, with this study, I also accepted invitations issued by Wolfram (2008) and Kumashiro (2000). I have seen for myself the accuracy of Wolfram’s (2008) assertion that “[l]anguage can be used as a tool of social oppression, and linguists can apply their knowledge to address some of the linguistic manifestations of social subordination” (p. 188). In understanding Wolfram’s message that social injustice can play out in the realm of language, and because I also wished to heed Kumashiro’s (2000) request for educational researchers to “look beyond” our fields for ideas that can be adapted in efforts to counteract the forces of social oppression that can harm students when they play out in educational settings, I borrowed the principles of the harm reduction model for the purpose of “[b]roadening the ways we conceptualize the dynamics of oppression, the processes of teaching and learning, and even the purposes of schooling” (p. 25-26).

Ultimately, I believe that the challenge I continue to negotiate daily in my first-year composition classrooms, as it represents a challenge faced by many of my colleagues across the United States, represents in turn an exigency that must be addressed without further

delay. This exigency must be addressed because the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in our classrooms is a reflection of the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in the U.S. If the activities in the U.S. college composition classroom are to engage students in ways that can genuinely enhance the quality of their lives, we must theorize and enact pedagogies that explicitly acknowledge the situation recognized by Alim and Smitherman (2012):

We have a far more developed conversation on race than on language. For example, whether we agreed or disagreed with Attorney General Eric Holder when he famously said that we are “a nation of cowards when it comes to race,” we were able to engage the dialogue. But when was the last time you heard anyone say that we are a nation of cowards when it comes to language? Unlike race, we have no national public dialogue on language that recognizes it as a site of cultural struggle. [And yet the truth is that language plays a] central role in positioning each of us and the groups that we belong to along the social hierarchy [that] lies largely beneath the average American’s consciousness. (p. 3)

I would only add that I hope for this dissertation to move the public dialogue beyond the American scope emphasized by Alim and Smitherman. My study of WEs has taught me that all Englishes are sites of cultural struggle. In our rapidly interconnecting world, this is a reality that affects everyone.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter One has served as an introduction to my research by (1) describing the background of the study, (2) discussing the problematic situations that inspired the study, (3) introducing the new theoretical and pedagogical framework proposed by the study, (4)

outlining the study's methodological approach, and (5) forecasting the significance of the study.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, serves dual purposes: as a review of the literature that informed this dissertation research, it is also the forum in which I build my response to the study's first research question, and thus culminates in the five principles of SCEP. As such, Chapter Two establishes the theoretical and pedagogical foundation upon which the study's methodological approach, a qualitative case study, is presented in Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents the case study participants' data and emergent themes. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the relationship between the themes and the five principles of SCEP, as well as implications for future teaching and research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As I discussed in the introductory chapter, this dissertation research represents the culmination of several years of scholarly and pedagogical experiences that led me to believe in the importance of widening the purview of U.S. composition beyond the traditional parameters inspired by the “myth of linguistic homogeneity” (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638). For several years now, I have begun teaching every section of first-year composition with a four-week “World Englishes unit” designed in accordance with the values infused in *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy* (SCEP), a set of principles that I developed by combining elements of three major constructs: Humanizing Pedagogy (Bartolomé, 1994), a derivation of Freire’s Critical Pedagogy (1970); the World Englishes ethos (Bolton, et al., 2011, p. 459; Bolton & B. Kachru, 2006, p. 290-291); and the harm reduction model (Denning, 2000; Kayser & Broers, 2012; Marlatt, et al., 2012; Riley, et al., 1999; Tatarsky, 1998, 2002, 2003; Tatarsky & Kellogg, 2010; Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010; Van Nuys, 2008). While my crafting of every incarnation of my WEs unit has always been guided by the values infused in the SCEP principles, and while positive feedback from students has led me to surmise that my approach to crafting the WEs unit has always “worked,” I had never formally documented the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of SCEP until I decided to do so as a part of this dissertation research. My desire to undertake this project of documentation shaped my first research question:

In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

This literature review chapter is dedicated to my documentation of the theoretical and pedagogical elements of SCEP. As such, the contents of this chapter constitute a response to

the first research question. The contents of this chapter also act as theoretical and pedagogical scaffolding for the study's methodology, which is the focus of Chapter Three.

### **Chapter Outline**

I begin this chapter by expanding upon the introductory chapter's initial discussion of the three major constructs that inform SCEP, which are, again, Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy, the WEs ethos, and the harm reduction model. Following my discussion of these three constructs, I turn to the task of supporting my premise that the harm reduction model can be used to support the integration of the WEs paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom. For this more detailed classroom inquiry, I aligned and analyzed several sets of analogous concepts that I observed to be recurrent motifs in the literature on harm reduction and composition literature inspired by the WEs ethos. My analysis of the features of each pair of concepts which render the concepts analogous to one another led to the emergence of common themes that became the groundwork upon which I developed the five principles of SCEP in the third section of this chapter.

### **Major Constructs That Inform SCEP**

#### **Humanizing Pedagogy**

Bartolomé's (1994) Humanizing Pedagogy, a derivation of Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1970), was the overarching theoretical construct within which I conceptualized SCEP. While the WEs ethos and the harm reduction model also represent theory-driven constructs, and while my thinking has been influenced by other theoretical frameworks that represent critical pedagogical values at work, such as Kumashiro's (2000) post-structuralist approach to anti-oppressive education, I used the framework embodied by Bartolomé's construct for its unique combination of features, which will be discussed herein.

The feature of Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy that most guided my conceptualization of SCEP is the rejection of any "one size fits all" approach to teaching students from historically marginalized groups. Reyes (1992) provided the original articulation of the "one size fits all" assumption that Bartolomé critiques:

[It is] similar to the "one size fits all" marketing concept that would have buyers believe that there is an average or ideal size among men and women.... Those who market "one size fits all" products suggest that if the article of clothing is not a good fit, the fault is not with the design of the garment, but those who are too fat, too skinny, too tall, too short, or too high-waisted. (p. 435; as cited in Bartolomé, 1994, p. 339)

Bartolomé claimed that a "one size fits all" approach to teaching equates to "robbing students of their culture, language, history, and values," an elision that amounts to the reduction of students to "the status of subhumans who need to be rescued from their 'savage' selves." Instead of pursuing any sort of "one size fits all" pedagogy, and echoing Freire (1970, p. 67), Bartolomé proposed that creating educational spaces in which students are treated as *subjects* rather than *objects* is a more effective approach to teaching than the use of one particular pedagogical methodology (p. 341).

This privileging of the student's subjectivity constitutes the foundation upon which any student-centered pedagogy is built, and SCEP follows suit. Regarding SCEP's goal of prompting the co-construction of language awareness, I know from experience that it is only when students feel genuinely welcome to explore their own unique interests and qualities that they become truly interested in dialoguing with other students (let alone me) about *their* interests and characteristics. In other words, the co-construction of language awareness can

happen only when students are invited to participate in authentically student-centered dialogical interaction with others. Thus, SCEP borrows Bartolomé's rejection of a "one size fits all" approach that diminishes opportunities for such student-centered dialogical interaction to occur.

While the rejection of a "one size fits all" method is the primary feature of Humanizing Pedagogy that informs SCEP, several other features of this theoretical framework are also influential. The first of these is Bartolomé's conviction that teachers' critical political awareness is as or more important than content expertise, because we must be prepared to teach students to critically examine their own places in the sociopolitical context both inside and outside the school. Bartolomé posited, "I believe that the students, once accustomed to the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship in the classroom, will come to expect respectful treatment and authentic estimation in other contexts" (p. 342). This belief aligns with an assumption articulated by Young, et al. (2013). Acknowledging that knowledge of SAE cannot guarantee that racially marginalized students will be protected from harms caused by standard language ideology outside school, they argued that "teaching Standard English must be combined with education in language awareness that addresses forms of language prejudice" (p. 36). If the educational process includes a heightening in language awareness that by nature cuts through standard language ideology, the students will be better equipped to respond assertively rather than defensively to prejudice they may encounter later in their lives (p. 36). While I acknowledge, in alignment with Kumashiro (2000), that teachers may never really know whether students really learn or are "moved by" what the teachers attempt to teach (p. 38), I still believe in the sense of empowerment that can accompany enhanced understanding of potential future obstacles,

because I have witnessed evidence of such an internal transformation in some students.

Thus, the privileging of critical political awareness advocated by Bartolomé (and Young, et al. [2013]) is a foundational theoretical point in which SCEP is grounded.

The third feature of Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy that has influenced SCEP is Bartolomé's contention that teachers should approach the conveyance of new knowledge to students by recognizing and building upon students' existing knowledge bases (p. 344). I perceive this to be a theoretical prefiguring of code-meshing. In fact, Young, et al. (2013) identified code-meshing as an "additive approach to multidialectical education" (p. 37). In other words, code-meshing involves the construction of new knowledge (in the form of Englishes with which students are unfamiliar) atop students' existing knowledge bases (forms of English with which students *are* familiar). Young, et al. (2013) have claimed that "[b]y fostering the use of multiple varieties of English [some of which the students already possess], the code-meshing approach can be beneficial to students both in teaching self-respect and in fostering the ability to communicate across a wider range of social contexts" (p. 51). This is not to imply that all students are forced to code-mesh in a classroom shaped by the principles of SCEP. Some students may belong to discourse communities that "need to be validated or left alone" (Matsuda, 2013, p. 132). Similarly, code-meshing may also be unappealing to students whose sociolinguistic experiences and perceptions are shaped by a modality of "*naturalized* double consciousness," which presupposes that one's languages *should* be kept apart (Milson-Whyte, 2013, p. 121-122). Additionally, code-meshing may prove an unnecessary challenge for those who have trouble differentiating and switching between codes (p. 120). These last two admonitions may represent the reasoning behind Canagarajah's (2013a) critical observation that "[i]f code-meshing draws attention to

difference, the translingual orientation also emphasizes difference-in-similarity” (p. 4). In other words, and in sum, highlighting differences between individuals and their languages through code-meshing activities can be a valuable and helpful approach, but may not always be the primary way that an instructor implements Bartolomé’s premise that new knowledge should be connected with students’ existing knowledge bases.

A fourth feature that defines the construct of Humanizing Pedagogy and which in turn informs SCEP is Bartolomé’s premise that “[l]earning is not a one-way undertaking” (p. 344). In other words, genuinely effective educational experiences entail that the teacher be willing to learn from his or her students. The most obvious way that this theoretical concept informs my implementation of SCEP is that, as an English user who is not fluent in many of the varieties of English used by my students, I *rely* upon my students’ willingness to share conventions of their varieties with me as well as each other. One of the students’ favorite activities during the WEs unit is a game that I call “Stump the Teacher,” during which I invite them to flummox me with all of the words, phrases, and mechanical constructions from varieties with which I am not familiar. On a more serious note, the practice of dialogical pedagogy promoted by Canagarajah (2012) and which I supported throughout Lee (2014) may be seen as an embodiment of Bartolomé’s two-way learning process. It is through my inquiry of a student, or a student’s inquiry of another student, “What does this mean?” or “What were you doing here?” (Canagarajah, 2012; Lee, 2013, p. 317) that the most engaging co-construction of language awareness occurs. This simple game also embodies a vision Canagarajah promoted in the 2006 interview with Rubdy and Saraceni: “We don’t have to teach each and every variety of English in the world”; instead, “we should teach in terms of a *repertoire* of language competence,” with the goals of developing

students' "sensitivity" toward diverse language varieties and reorienting students toward "issues of 'process' rather than 'product'" (p. 209-210). This is a vision of a classroom space where the students and teacher hear, speak, and write with each other in order to co-construct language awareness and a common repertoire of language competence. This vision epitomizes Bartolomé's argument that "learning is not a one-way undertaking," and is one way that SCEP offers opportunities to develop habits of rhetorical listening (Ratcliffe, 1999).

A final element of Bartolomé's framework that has informed SCEP represents the point at which Bartolomé's framework diverges from its Freirean roots. This is also the feature that drew my attention most forcefully as I considered theoretical frameworks compatible with my particular purposes and context. While Humanizing Pedagogy promotes the principle that the teacher must be willing to learn from the students, Bartolomé also clarified that teachers nevertheless have the responsibility to provide students with particular academic knowledge and skills: "It is important not to link teacher respect and use of student knowledge and language bases with a laissez-faire attitude toward teaching" (p. 345). Later, she further clarified that "[t]he teacher is the authority, with all the resulting responsibilities that entails [even though] it is not necessary for the teacher to become authoritarian in order to challenge the students intellectually" (p. 346).

It is important that I conclude this discussion of Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy on this particular note, because Bartolomé's identification of this final feature acts as a lens through which the parameters of my positionality as a teacher may be seen most distinctly. While my conceptualization of SCEP borrows several important elements of Bartolomé's construct that signify its roots in Freirean liberation pedagogy, I am still the instructor in a

larger top-down institutional framework. Though I take a descriptive approach when grading students' work during the WEs unit, I cannot escape the inherently prescriptive position that I occupy as the individual who assigns the grades in the first place. Thus, the language awareness that I hope students will build within the SCEP framework represents only an *initial* stage in their development of critical consciousness (*conscientização*): an awareness of social, political, and economic inequities that comes to full fruition only when people take action against these inequities (Freire, 1970, p. 109). Nevertheless, echoing again Bartolomé's hope that students will emerge from her pedagogies more habituated to expect humanizing treatment in other contexts, I hope that exposure to WEs through the framework of SCEP will at least catalyze in my students the type of elevated awareness outlined by Shor (1992):

With critical consciousness, students are better able to see any subject as a thing in itself whose parts influence each other, as something related to and conditioned by other dimensions in the curriculum and society, as something with a historical context, and as something related to the students' personal context. (p. 128)

In the context of composition, the English language itself can be such a subject: an application that marks my transition to the second major construct that informs SCEP.

### **The World Englishes Ethos**

In its association of language with matters of (in)justice, the construct of Humanizing Pedagogy overlaps with this second construct that informs SCEP. According to Bolton and B. Kachru (2006), "The world Englishes ethos...involves a number of key attitudes and beliefs that include support for linguistic and racial diversity, support for endangered languages and cultures, support for gender equality, and support for equality of opportunity

in education” (p. 290-291). Bolton, et al. (2011) expanded on this, explaining that the “world Englishes ethos” represents a paradigm that is “not merely concerned with ‘the English language’ as a linguistic system,” but is in fact more often associated with “a wide range of other topics, ranging from bilingual creativity, languages in contact, language and globalization to language policies, the dynamics of multilingual societies, applied linguistics, and language education” (p. 459). In the “broadly humanist view” (Bolton & B. Kachru, 2006, p. 291) signified by this array of concerns, the WEs ethos clearly shares many of the general values that are embedded in Humanizing Pedagogy. However, developing a deeper understanding of the WEs ethos and how it informs SCEP requires a more detailed exploration of the basic premise about the English language that I have borrowed from B. Kachru and Smith (1985) for the purpose of this dissertation research: “The [English] language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard or in its localized forms” (p. 210).

First, it is important to clarify that the understanding of WEs that is embedded in SCEP is based first and foremost on B. Kachru and Smith’s (1985) basic assertion itself—what I will call the principle of ownership, that English belongs to those who use it—and *not* B. Kachru’s three-circle model of World Englishes (1992, p. 356). The overarching construct of WEs, represented by the WEs ethos, is often mistakenly conflated with B. Kachru’s three-circle model. This is problematic because the limitations imposed by the inadequate elements of the three-circle model prevent recognition of the great virtue of the overarching construct of WEs: again, its principle of ownership. Y. Kachru and Smith (2008) have addressed this elision: “[I]n all [the] controversies and debates[,] what gets lost is the crucial point about the nature of language as an integral part of human knowledge....

English as a field of knowledge now belongs to those who know it and use it” (p. 180). B. Kachru (1992) has himself expanded and further clarified this principle of ownership:

The term [WEs] itself symbolizes the functional and form variations, divergent sociolinguistic contexts, ranges and varieties of English in creativity, and various types of acculturation.... This concept emphasizes “WE-ness” and not the dichotomy between *us* and *them* (the native and non-native users). (p. 2)

In sum, the overarching construct of World Englishes and the ethos that is enspirited in it are grounded in a premise that the three-circle model does not adequately represent: the principle that English belongs to those who use it, which means that all users of Englishes, across both codified and uncoded varieties, regardless of positioning in any type of “native”/“non-native” hierarchy, are to be seen as equally *capable* of using and negotiating the language to its fullest communicative potential. Their usages will reflect their backgrounds and attitudes, with elements of hybridity and variability, but their usages are to be honored as their own. Conflating the WEs ethos with B. Kachru’s three-circle model, or discarding WEs entirely, as some advocates of the translingual framework promote, means that users of English do not get to *own* their own Englishes.

While it is thus important to look past the three-circle model in order to appreciate the merits in WEs, a discussion of the three-circle model’s other two chief limitations (besides its appearance of denying the principle of ownership to users of English outside the Inner Circle) can function as a doorway through which to gain a better understanding of the expansive scope that is *actually* represented by WEs. The second great limitation of the three-circle model is that it does not offer a reliable representation of various users’

proficiencies in English, while the third major shortcoming is the three-circle model's spatial rather than temporal-spatial orientation.

Regarding the inaccurate representation of users' various proficiencies, Jenkins (2009) has offered the reminder that "[a] native speaker may have limited vocabulary and low grammatical competence while the reverse may be true of a non-native speaker" (p. 20). The implications of basing assumptions upon such a limited representation are encapsulated in a rhetorical question posed by Gupta (2006): "[W]ho would you prefer to edit your writing: a non-native speaker of English who is Professor of English at an Indian (or a Belgian) university, or a monolingual Brit who left school with no qualification at the age of 15?" (p. 99). It is true that B. Kachru's three-circle model does not account for such variations in proficiency. But noting this limitation in the three-circle model is less important than pointing out the *larger* concept that can be considered if we widen our understanding of WEs: the idea that the WEs ethos attributes ownership to *both* of the users of English in Gupta's hypothetical scenario, regardless of their different levels of proficiency. Viewing both users through such a democratizing lens poses profound implications for the composition classroom. Raising students' awareness of the possibility of viewing both users through such a lens can be understood as one of the goals of SCEP.

The third great limitation of the three-circle model is similarly undeniable, but may also be positioned as a base from which to launch a counter-claim. This third limitation of the three-circle model is that it did not predict and thus cannot account for contemporary advances in communication, travel, and internet technology. It is founded upon a spatial orientation, based in geography and history "rather than on the way speakers currently identify with and use English" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 20). Canagarajah (2013b) has elaborated

on this seemingly legitimate critique, while exemplifying the common conflation of the three-circle model with WEs (which he also confusingly refers to in the singular):

Despite its radical outcome of achieving acceptance for newly emerging varieties of English, WE doesn't go far enough in pluralizing English or reflecting the dynamic changes in communicative practices. The construction of this model in terms of nation-states ignores many currently existing and still evolving varieties of English. The move to posit a community to anchor each variety is perhaps a gesture in the direction of the monolingualist orientation. (2013b, p. 58)

In other words, since “WE” (i.e. B. Kachru's three-circle model) is rooted in the nation-state, it cannot account for “diverse [subcultural] varieties within the nation-state,” “transnational varieties” made possible by technological advances and the internet, or pidgins and creoles. Y. Kachru and Smith (2008) have actually refuted most of these criticisms:

The claims that studies in world Englishes prefer an “elitist” approach that includes idealized “national” Englishes and that it ignores pidgins, creoles, and so-called “substandard” dialects are based on misconceptions and unfamiliarity with the breadth of studies in the field.... Human societies have always preferred certain languages over others as markers of various kinds of status—religious, social, political, functional—and standardization has always played a key role in education. What is needed is the approach of world Englishes that does not devalue any variation. It attempts to study the functions of varieties in their contexts and how they empower their users to realize certain goals. (p. 182)

Even more recently, Proshina (2014) made several observations about the WEs paradigm

that also seem to contradict Canagarajah's criticisms. She has noted that "Kachru and his supporters" include social varieties that exist as "dynamic cline[s]" (p. 2)—which contradicts the claim that WEs ignores varieties that are still evolving. She also highlighted the Kachruvian premise that communicative success depends more upon mutual intelligibility rather than prescriptive notions of correctness (p. 4)—a position that, in its departure from privileging prescriptivism, seems also to conflict with the criticism that WEs focuses too much on situating varieties "in terms of one set of norms or another" (Canagarajah, 2013b, p. 59). However, regardless of whether one accepts Y. Kachru and Smith's points of refutation or Proshina's interpretations, the fact remains that Canagarajah represents many other scholars who seem to *assume* that the three-circle model represents all of the important principles of WEs. Thus, one feels compelled to acknowledge that criticisms of the spatial orientation of B. Kachru's three-circle model are valid: the three-circle model *is* outdated, seemingly inadequate to the task of accounting for various elements of modern day travel and communication as it treats languages and language varieties as "discrete, self-evident entities belonging to set territories, such as the nation, school, or home" (Lu & Horner, 2013, p. 27). Instead, it is important to develop a translingual understanding, which approaches language in a temporal-spatial reality, and is represented in Canagarajah's (2013b) argument that "[i]t is better to 'treat contact and practice as more primary and varieties as always emergent and changing at diverse levels of localization'" (p. 59).

With that said, it is now time for me to introduce what may be the most controversial argument that I posit in this dissertation: While I support arguments for translingualism to become an important modality in the U.S. composition classroom, I posit simultaneously

that there is value, and even necessity in retaining the capability of understanding Englishes pluralistically. I argue that one can harbor both understandings at once: one of the miracles of the human brain. SCEP is in fact grounded in the idea that this seemingly paradoxical set of lenses can function in complementary partnership.

First, retaining and teaching a pluralistic understanding offers students a chance to investigate their language backgrounds and even be proud of their linguistic heritage (Jones, 2011; Lee, 2014, p. 321; Young, et al., 2013, p. 3). For example, as I noted in Lee (2014), I have observed some AAE users *claiming* the language explicitly after learning of its origin as a form of linguistic rebellion during the era of African-American enslavement (p. 321). (It is also important to remember, however, that perspectives on AAE “run the gamut” among African-Americans [Young, et al., 2013, p. 57].)

Secondly, and even more crucially, discussing (or consciously implementing) practices such as code-meshing and code-switching is not possible without invoking, and thus reifying to an extent, the concept of distinct varieties. Even the simpler task of explaining to students that prescriptivist notions of “correctness” eventually break down (Moss & Walters, 1993, p. 422)—a lesson that seems essential to carrying out a translingual pedagogy—cannot be carried out without a frame of reference defined by distinct varieties. In short, it is very difficult to talk about language, let alone an overarching theoretical approach to understanding and negotiating language, without using words like “code,” “variety,” “dialect,” and the like. Discussions of translingualism are thus inherently paradoxical insofar as they require us to recognize as *real* concepts which the philosophical assumptions intrinsic to the discussion hold to be *imaginary*. Thus, retaining the language

necessary to talk about the English language, its users, and their language choices is not only valuable but arguably necessary. We cannot discard WEs.

One last point must be made before I discuss some more explicit pedagogical applications of the WEs ethos that are carried out in a classroom space shaped by SCEP. This point addresses my argument, forecasted in the introductory chapter, that the construct of WEs can be used to account for lingua franca usages as well as the concept that English is a living language. Clarifying these additional functions of the WEs ethos matters, because as I depicted in the introductory chapter, the epistemological transformation that eventually inspired this dissertation occurred as I became exposed to more and more forms, contexts, and conceptualizations of English. I was not exposed to the construct of World Englishes only by way of the work of Braj Kachru. I believe it is important to offer students the opportunity to experience a similarly powerful expansion in understanding. However, in a pedagogical environment such as first-year composition, in which learning the greater complexities of the English language and its users cannot be the sole learning objective, a certain amount of soundly reasoned abbreviation can and must occur. Rather than limit the education to the parameters set by B. Kachru's three-circle model, I argue for teaching this umbrella application of WEs. This is the umbrella application that is signified in, for example, Seidlhofer's (2001) assertion that ELF usages should be considered "analogous, to, say, 'Nigerian English' and 'English English'" (p. 152). Lastly, I also support the argument that contemporary U.S. composition instructors bear an ethical responsibility to familiarize students with as many varieties of English as possible (Lu & Horner, 2011, p. 101-102; Rubdy & Saracini, 2006, p. 210; Young, 2011, p. 63; Young, et al., 2011, p. xxi). Raising students' awareness of Englishes that exist in ELF form, and discussions of the hybridity

and variability that characterize the construct of ELF, is one way of ensuring their preparedness for participating in globalizing economic, social, and political networks.

In sum, throughout the preceding pages, a theoretical understanding of the construct of the WEs ethos has emerged. This theoretical understanding developed as I differentiated the WEs ethos from the Kachruvian three-circle model of WEs, as I responded to the common criticisms of the three-circles model, and through my analysis of the similarities and differences between the construct of WEs and the construct of translingualism. This is the expanded (and expansive) scope that is embedded in the framework of SCEP, and which is therefore imparted to students in a classroom shaped by the principles of SCEP. I shift, now, to a discussion of some of the ways that this theoretically expanded scope becomes embodied in my pedagogy. I use Proshina's (2014) enumeration of the key principles of WEs—"diversity, pluricentricity, inclusivity, variability, functionality, and equality" (p. 7)—to focus and guide this next segment.

First, the "Stump the Teacher" activity begins to demonstrate the inherent diversity of English by allowing opportunities to discuss lectal concepts such as dialect, idiolect, idiom, and even register. Then, listening to audio clips depicting WEs speakers pronouncing the same words but with different prosodic and segmental features (the phonological elements associated with the notion of "accent") can further illustrate the principle of diversity, as well as the principle of variability. Once their awareness is prompted, students easily recognize the reality observed by Greenfield (2011): "[N]o two people in this world speak in exactly the same way" (p. 41). With this realization, students become more prepared to enter the more abstract realm of relativity in language. To introduce students to this higher level of linguistic abstraction, pedagogy can present the

information that linguists attribute no specific meaning to the term “accent,” since an accent can only be understood and described in relation to another accent (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 44-45). Students can also grapple with the *international* reality that there is no standard accent, since, when most speakers ask how to pronounce an unfamiliar word, they “map the answer onto their own accent” (Gupta, 2006, p. 97). Additionally, all of these activities that ease students into this more abstract realm of language awareness begin to introduce the concept that English is a living language.

Greenfield’s (2011) explanation of the variations on “acceptable” spellings, pronunciations, and redundancies can further develop students’ understanding of the principle of variability, while also providing an opportunity to introduce the concept of pluricentricity—as well as language prejudice. For example, “color” and “colour” are both acceptable in SAE, while the African-American English “talkin” rather than SAE’s “talking” is not. Likewise, “comfortable” is often pronounced “comfterble” among SAE users, while the common AAE pronunciation “aks” rather than “ask” is disparaged. A bit more complicatedly, the multiple (and thereby redundant) markers of plurality in SAE’s “She has *five* daughters” exemplifies a “rule,” while the common AAE construction “She has five daughter” is deemed unacceptable by SAE; meanwhile, SAE ignores its own “rule” when it comes to negation: the non-redundant “You *can’t* tell me anything” is acceptable in SAE whereas the redundancy of the common AAE construction “You *can’t* tell me *nothing*” is unacceptable according to SAE. The potential objection that SAE’s rules of negation are consistent in and of themselves is refuted by Greenfield’s observation that inconsistencies in SAE can exist on a deeper level. For example, the redundant “*No*, you *can’t* do that” is conventional in SAE while the non-redundant Hawaiian Creole English construction “You

*no* can do that” is rejected by SAE despite its “conformity to the supposed rule of singular negation” (p. 43-44). As students become increasingly aware of these types of inconsistencies, their previous assumptions of a homogeneous and monocentric English begin to disintegrate.

To further develop students’ understanding of the pluricentric nature of English, and to assist them in understanding the concept of functionality, Lu’s (2004) discussion of the “Chinglish” term “money collecting toilet,” translated as “public restroom” in SAE, can be useful. In Beijing, Lu has explained, American tourists seeking public restrooms are sometimes confused by signs that advertise money collecting toilets. At times, tourists have suggested to Beijing authorities that signs pointing to money collecting toilets be reworded so as to clarify the function of these toilets for tourists unfamiliar with Chinglish. However, the phrase “money collecting toilet” more accurately represents the lived experiences of Beijing public toilet workers. These workers, who are employed by the city government but whose compensation is based upon the funds that their worksites generate, are not concerned with the public-private dichotomy that is so foundational to Western culture. Rather, their focus is on whether their worksites generate enough profit for them to survive. In other words, the name “money collecting toilet” signifies the functionality of these mechanisms in the workers’ lives; the label “public restroom” does not. Lu’s overall argument is that if the city government of Beijing were to mandate, in response to the urging of American tourists, that all signs that say “money collecting toilet” be changed to “public restroom,” the sociocultural realities of the public toilet workers would, essentially, be erased (p. 22). After exposure to this example that Lu has provided, many students seem to possess greater appreciation for Lu’s warning that real political, economic, and social oppression can occur

when English users are unwelcome to use the language to “limn [their] actual, imagined, and possible lives” (p. 20). Also, an initial exposure to the pluricentricity and functionality of English through the lens of this simple example opens the opportunity to delve into a topic that can be more contentious: the development of AAE. I return to Smitherman (2000) to familiarize students with the story of AAE’s origins:

Africans in enslavement were forced to use English—their version of English, that is—as a common language because the slaver’s practice was to mix Africans from different ethnic-linguistic groups in order to foil communication and rebellion. However, enslaved Africans stepped up to the challenge and made English work for them by creating a new language using the English language vocabulary. This counter-language was formed by using alternate, and sometimes oppositional, meanings to English words. It was a coded language that allowed them to talk about Black business publicly and even to talk about ole massa himself right in front of his face. (p. 25-26)

Besides further illustrating how English has been appropriated and adapted to fulfill different functions, this piece of Smitherman’s work exemplifies code-meshing. As for casting AAE in a pluralicentric light, as well as simultaneously calling upon students’ capability to understand English(es) from the translingual standpoint, I emphasize one additional passage from this same text:

Contrary to what many assume, the language within the African American community goes beyond mere slang, encompassing words and phrases that are common to generations, social classes, and both males and females. True, Black slang is Black Language, but all Black Language is not Black slang. (And what is

Black slang today often becomes mainstream American English tomorrow.) Black Language is much more inclusive and expansive than the label “slang” suggests. For one thing, slang refers to language that is transitory and that is generally used by only one group, such as teenagers’ slang or musicians’ slang. African American Language, however, has a lexical core of words and phrases that are fairly stable over time and are familiar and/or used by all groups in the Black community. (p. 2)

The above passage does what Canagarajah would say is impossible: it is inspired by the WEs ethos insofar as it pluralistically names different Englishes and associates the lexical core of AAE (AAL in Smitherman’s lexicon) with one community, while it simultaneously exemplifies a translingual understanding of AAE’s inherent hybridity by differentiating between the more stable elements of the variety (or language, in Smitherman’s terms) and the more localized and transitory slang elements. Finally, one last opportunity afforded by a discussion of these passages penned by Smitherman is that they allow for further consideration of the phenomenon of language prejudice. For students who are not AAE users, such a discussion, relatively more informed though it is, does not always lead to a deep understanding of the injustice of code-switching. However, it is a start. As Smitherman (2003) has stated, it is important to raise awareness of legitimacy of so-called nonstandard varieties “wherever one ha[s] a shot at being effective” (p. 18).

Lastly, as students progress through such pedagogical activities designed to raise their awareness of the diversity, variability, pluricentricity, and functionality that characterizes the world’s Englishes, I have observed in many cases that their understanding of the principles of inclusivity and equality develops naturally. Gradually, they realize the paradox that my exposure to WEs had unveiled to me: the concept of English is in fact inclusive of

many Englishes, many with their own rules, conventions, and standard forms. Likewise, many students begin to demonstrate an awareness that all usages of English bear equal existential value. When I present the demographic revelation that native users of English “lost their majority in the 1970s” (Graddol, 1999, p. 58; as cited in Canagarajah, 2006, p. 588), I tend to witness even greater numbers of students demonstrating heightened awareness of the implications of Canagarajah’s wry quip:

At its most shocking, this gives the audacity for multilingual speakers of English to challenge the traditional language norms and standards of the “native speaker” communities. My fellow villagers in Sri Lanka would say, “Who the hell is worrying about the rules-schools of the Queen’s English, man?” (p. 589)

It is difficult for standard language ideology and its uncritical prescriptivism to maintain their power when the traditional model of “standard” itself breaks down. This shift, inspired by the WEs ethos, is the ultimate contribution that this construct offers to SCEP.

### **The Harm Reduction Model**

This third and final construct that informs SCEP should also be understood as a framework that can engender such a fundamental shift in perspective. As I explained in the introductory chapter, the harm reduction approach was developed in a setting much like the “new frontier” that, according to Matsuda (2013), characterizes the field of U.S. composition studies at present. As in many contemporary composition classrooms, in the setting in which harm reduction was conceived, the array and magnitude of people’s needs could not be met within the traditional framework. Because not all needs could be addressed, the priority became the reduction of harms associated with those needs. It is important to re-emphasize that the reduction of harm does *not* depend on the service-seeking

populations' cessation of behaviors that can lead to harm; rather, applying a harm reduction approach involves raising individuals' awareness of how to manage such behaviors, which can in turn lead to enhanced senses of self-efficacy. It is also important to remember that harm reduction practitioners employ what may be considered descriptivist values in exercising an "experimental attitude...that evolves as goals are pursued" (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 111). Lastly, as also noted in the previous chapter, harm reduction was conceptualized as a *temporary* mode of approaching an overwhelmingly problematic situation while more effective strategies can be devised. I elaborate, now, on this initial sketch of harm reduction.

The harm reduction approach was first developed in the Netherlands during the 1980s HIV epidemic caused largely by injection drug users' sharing of contaminated needles (Denning, 2006, p. 33; Tatarsky, 2002, p. 22-23). Public health workers determined that because many of the drug users demonstrated unwillingness or inability to stop engaging in the drug use, strategies of health care must focus on reducing users' risk of HIV infection and transmission to others. Thus, workers embarked upon a large-scale campaign to distribute clean needles among the drug-using population (Riley, et al., 1999, p. 3). This revolutionary public health campaign represented a shifting of focus from the drug users themselves to the negative consequences of their drug use. In this type of adjustment, a harm reduction approach allows practitioners to "meet people where they are" (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 9; Tatarsky, 2003, p. 249). The harm reduction model "accepts that abstinence may be the best outcome for many but relaxes the emphasis on abstinence as the only acceptable goal and criterion of success" (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 10). In such a transformed, bottom-up framework, success is redefined as "any movement in the direction of positive change," and

practitioners are motivated by the ultimate conviction that “[p]eople have the right to make their own choices in life” (Denning, 2006, p. 25).

In keeping with the theme that each of the constructs that informs SCEP overlaps with the others in certain ways while each also offers an irreplaceable element, the harm reduction model clearly shares with Humanizing Pedagogy and the WEs ethos a rejection of the modality of prescriptivism in favor of an inclusive attitude toward diversity and different forms of functionality. In fact, Tatarsky (2002) explained that all harm reduction practice is grounded in the premise that “any one-size-fits-all approach is doomed to fail with the majority of clients” (p. 20). Of course, this condemnation of “one size fits all” echoes Reyes’ (1992) and Bartolomé’s (1994) negative perspectives on “one size fits all” approaches to teaching students in populations they identify as minorities. However, the harm reduction model expands upon the rejection of “one size fits all” that is embedded in the framework of Humanizing Pedagogy. Rather than limiting its applicability to historically marginalized populations, harm reduction contributes to SCEP its emphasis on the reduction of harms in *anyone’s* life. Since its original formation, the harm reduction approach has been applied in a diverse array of settings, included but not limited to family planning, smoking cessation programs, psychotherapy (Denning, 2006, p. 33), the Olympic games’ anti-doping movement (Kayser & Broers, 2012), and designated driving (Tatarsky, 2003, p. 249). In each setting, the practitioner assists the client in identifying harms that can be caused by certain behaviors. The practitioner and the client co-construct strategies that allow the client to continue to engage in the behaviors that he or she is unwilling or unable to stop, but in ways that reduce the potential for him or her to experience further harm as a result of these behaviors. The general principle is that it is more realistic and respectful to

widen the purview of characteristics that define a setting than to impose limitations that pose more potential for harm than good.

By way of concluding this discussion of the third major construct that informs SCEP, I recap that it is the wide applicability and, even more importantly, the specific focus on the reduction of harms that constitute the harm reduction model's unique contributions to SCEP. The more specific elements that harm reduction offers to SCEP, the ten principles of harm reduction psychotherapy (Denning, 2000), appear in the final section of this chapter, immediately preceding their synthesis into the five principles of SCEP.

I now transition to the next major section of this literature review, in which I align and analyze several sets of analogous concepts that appear recurrently in harm reduction literature and literature inspired by the WEs ethos. In pursuing this second function of this literature review, I build support for my premise that the harm reduction model can be used to support the integration of WEs into the contemporary composition classroom. My analysis of the features of each pair of concepts that render the concepts analogous to one another leads to the emergence of themes that become the foundation upon which I develop the five principles of SCEP in the final section.

### **Harm Reduction and the WEs Ethos: Alignment and Analysis of Analogous Concepts**

#### **Set #1: The Importance of Performing Needs Analyses**

The pair of analogous concepts that this first section examines pertain to what happens *after* practitioners of harm reduction and WEs-inspired composition become aware of the harms that individuals experience in the traditional frameworks within which services have been provided (or not). More specifically, literature from both arenas reveals the shared motif that, following their respective awakenings, practitioners demonstrate an

inclination to perform needs analyses. The purpose of these needs analyses is to provide data upon which the practitioners can then reflect critically and exhaustively, a process intended to set the stage for a solution to be developed which diminishes the potential for further harms to be experienced by the service-seeking individuals, while thereby increasing the potential for improvements to occur in their lives.

A bit more historical information on harm reduction can channel my introduction of the topic of needs analyses in this field. As mentioned previously, harm reduction was born during the HIV epidemic that swept through the Netherlands in the mid-1980s, a consequence of the frequency with which injection drug users shared contaminated needles. It gradually became clear that the current public health system was unequipped to provide the array of services necessary to assist all of the users in extricating themselves from their drug dependencies. Further, not all users *wanted* to stop, despite the harms they experienced in connection with their drug use. This complex reality prompted public health workers to begin performing needs analyses in their respective areas, investigations that “extend[ed] beyond the immediate interests of users to include broader community and societal interests” (Riley, et al., 1999, p. 2). The needs analyses provided data for critical reflection, eventually prompting the sector’s distribution of clean needles as a second-best strategy of care (p. 3). In other words, a harm reduction approach, as precipitated by a needs analysis, is not necessarily viewed as a permanent remedy for problems. Rather, it functions as a temporary means of maintaining relative stability and structure in the social fabric of an environment while more permanent solutions can be developed.

The inclination to perform needs analyses following an awakening to harms engendered by traditional frameworks is shared, as I have noted, by contemporary

compositionists whose literature reflects the WEs ethos at work. Often, the importance of performing needs analyses is emphasized by the very titles of works: “Assessing the Needs of Linguistically Diverse First-Year Students” (Friedrich, 2006), “‘Eye’ Learners and ‘Ear’ Learners: Identifying the Language Needs of International Student and U.S. Resident Writers” (Reid, 2011), and “Preparing for the Tipping Point: Designing Writing Programs to Meet the Needs of the Changing Population” (Preto-Bay & Hansen, 2006) are examples.

To more closely examine one such text, Preto-Bay and Hansen (2006) specifically advocated that twenty-first century composition program directors perform needs analyses in respect to their departments’ abilities to effectively serve increasingly diverse contemporary student populations. These populations are comprised of native-born English users; international students studying in the U.S. on student visas and for whom English is not an L1; refugees, permanent residents, and naturalized students whose L1s also may not be English (p. 38-40). As it is neither realistic nor respectful to continue teaching in a framework defined by monolingual, monocultural norms (p. 46), needs analyses must take into account philosophical assumptions that guide instruction, the books and other materials used in teacher preparation courses, teacher selection and training, and program location itself (p. 51-52). In the same spirit of critical reflectivity demonstrated by harm reduction practitioners, Preto-Bay and Hansen foresaw a “tipping point” akin to the public health sector’s experience of becoming unable to meet all of people’s health needs as the array and magnitude of those needs grew. Like many other composition practitioners inspired by the WEs ethos, Preto-Bay and Hansen concluded with a call to action:

When enough teachers face enough students for whom present methods of instruction and present materials and methods of teacher development are

inadequate, the tipping point will be programwide, then nationwide. We believe that we will be wise to seize the initiative and begin preparing now for the realities that, if they are not here yet, certainly lie just ahead. (p. 53)

In sum, three shared characteristics emerge from this first section's alignment and analysis of the analogous nature of harm reductionists' and WEs-oriented compositionists' emphasis on the importance of performing needs analyses:

- (1) People possess characteristics (in these cases, drug habits and forms of English) that they are unwilling or unable to abandon, despite the harms that can be associated with these characteristics;
- (2) Refusing to provide services to people who are unwilling or unable to abandon these characteristics is unrealistic, disrespectful, and sometimes unsafe;
- (3) When "tipping points" in the ability of traditional approaches to meet people's needs occur or are foreseen by service providers, the performance of needs analyses can produce data for critical reflection on possible alternative courses of action.

## **Set #2: Traditional Frameworks as Spaces That Mask Individuals' Differences, Prohibit Authentic Freedom of Choice, and Elide Historical Truths**

In this second section, I revisit the introductory chapter's discussion of the three general problems that can be caused by uncritically prescriptive composition pedagogy that does not acknowledge WEs: such pedagogy creates a space in which students' differences are ignored, students are prohibited from exercising authentic freedom of choice, and certain crucial historical are discounted if not rendered invisible. As it happens, various harm reductionists have observed the same three problems in their own areas' traditional

approaches to addressing people's needs. I begin again with harm reduction. For a sense of continuity, I also continue to follow the drug-related thread established in the preceding section, though it bears restating that the harm reduction model has been applied in many other types of settings beyond this sphere.

The harm reduction model was adopted by the U.S. public health sector shortly after its development in Europe. The public health and psychotherapeutic practitioners who spearheaded the implementation of harm reduction in the U.S. considered it a humanizing alternative to the top-down, prescriptive "zero-tolerance" abstinence framework that began with President Nixon's 1971 initiation of the "War on Drugs" (Van Nuys, 2008, para. 8). In the abstinence framework (which is still the norm in many places), in order for people to receive services, they must first meet a prerequisite of sobriety. Harm reduction practitioners understand that in reality, it is all but impossible for many substance users to achieve sobriety on their own. This is especially the case among homeless and mentally ill individuals, for whom substances function as coping mechanisms without which survival can be impossible (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009, para. 3-4).

Denning (2000) offered a description of the zero-tolerance abstinence framework while outlining the inverted power structure represented by harm reduction:

Our response [to drug use] in the United States has been one of fear, coercive treatments, and punitive measures. One cannot ignore this reality or remove a sociopolitical perspective from any drug and alcohol treatment approach without turning it into just another in a series of techniques to be applied in uniform settings without attendance to individual differences. The practice of Harm Reduction requires a significant shift in perspective, one that allows that the client is, in fact, a

consumer requesting assistance with self-defined problems. This “bottom up”...treatment paradigm demands that the therapist respect the choices a person might make and offer help when these choices result in harm, without demanding that the client make changes that only the therapist (or society) wants. (p. xviii-xix)

In other words, the traditional zero-tolerance framework that has characterized treatments for drug use in the U.S. can cause a number of injustices to be suffered by already-marginalized populations. For one, it ignores differences that exist among drug-using individuals, unique characteristics that can bear strong influence on the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of treatments. Second, its top-down orientation disempowers people because it does not allow them genuine freedom of choice. Third, it does not acknowledge the reality that “what society wants” is an unstable construct. In reality, the impulse to alter one’s perception of reality has in fact played a part in human existence throughout recorded history. Cultures throughout time have used mind-altering substances to alter the consciousness for the purposes of pleasure, religious experience, relief from pain, and escape from reality (Denning, 2000, p. 13). Mind-altering substances have “assist[ed] people in self-medicating,” “defend[ing] against overwhelming affect states,” regulating self-esteem, supporting “interpersonal effectiveness,” and “tranquiliz[ing] the harsh inner critic ( the ‘superego’ ) to allow temporary experiences of pleasure unavailable while sober” (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 25).

A second setting in which harm reduction has been proposed as more realistic, respectful, and reasonable approach is the Olympic games. More specifically, Kayser and Broers (2012) have argued that a harm reduction approach should be adopted in relation to the “anti-doping” movement associated with the Olympics. Their contention was that the

World Anti-Doping Agency's "zero-tolerance" approach, which began in 1999, constitutes a "war on doping" that is doomed to fail as Nixon's "war on drugs" has failed (p. 1).

Admittedly, an idealized "black and white," "all-or-nothing" framework is appealing in its simplicity; however, such a framework simply does not represent the lived experiences of athletes (p. 3, 8).

To support their argument in favor of a harm reduction approach rather than the zero-tolerance framework, Kayser and Broers (2012) posited a sequence of points designed to collectively deconstruct the assumption that the human experience can ever be understood or governed by strictly prescribed "norms." First, they suggested that athletic competitions should never really be considered as occurring on a level playing field, given the congenital differences between athletes (p. 5). Second, responding to zero-tolerance proponents' claim that doping "threaten[s] the health of the athlete," they asserted that "[t]he protection of the health of the athlete argument is paternalistic and neglects the health hazards of sport itself while the distinction of avoidable and unavoidable risk is flawed" (p. 5). They noted, third, that uncertainty prevails in relation to which sorts of actions deviate from the intrinsic "spirit of the sport" (p. 5). Fourth, no formal doctrine mandating that Olympic athletes must present themselves as role models has ever existed; therefore, presupposing that Olympic athletes should (want) to avoid mechanisms that can improve their performance, just to fulfill others' expectations, is a fallacy (p. 5). Next, they outlined several common imperfections with testing procedures, which further complicate the notion that prescribed standards even can be enforced (p. 2-4). Finally, they pointed out that in many societies, physical and mental enhancement have always been norms, and sometimes even expectations; thus, forbidding athletes to use performance enhancing substances seems

contradictory to historical reality (p. 4). Overall, a recurrent theme throughout Kayser and Broers' article was the incompatibility between anti-doping policies' myth of an "idealized 'perfect' human" (p. 5) versus the innate imperfection of human nature (p. 8). Another recurrent point was that a harm reduction approach may not lead to the perfect solution (p. 7), but "harsh repression has repeatedly been shown to induce more harm to society than it prevents" (p. 6). In sum, Kayser and Broers' argument for the adoption of harm reduction in the sphere of the Olympics suggested that they, like advocates of harm reduction in the public health and psychotherapeutic sectors, perceived traditional frameworks as top-down, prescriptive spaces that mask individuals' differences, prohibit authentic freedom of choice, and elide certain historical truths.

Interestingly, the phrase "zero-tolerance" has also appeared in literature that discusses the teaching of writing. In statements written by writing teachers enrolled in a preservice education class, Ball and Muhammad (2003) observed a theme they came to identify as a "'zero-tolerance' attitude" toward forms of English perceived as nonstandard. A sample statement from one teacher in the class illustrates this zero-tolerance mentality:

[I believe that] for now in our society, people are not only judged by the color of their skin but also classified by the way they speak. The richest, most intelligent and generous person in our country would be ridiculed if he/she did not speak Standard English. (as cited in Ball and Muhammad, 2003, p. 76)

According to Ball and Muhammad, the zero-tolerance attitude exemplified by the above statement is characterized by three misconceptions: "that there is a uniform standard English that has been reduced to a set of consistent rules," "that these 'correct,' consistent rules should be followed by all American English speakers," and "that this mythical standard

English must be safeguarded by everyone connected with its use, particularly classroom teachers” (p. 77). As with the prescriptive zero-tolerance attitude characterized by the traditional abstinence framework in the realm of drug use treatment, no allowance is made for the possibility that individuals may not be interested or even able to conform to so-called standard rules about what is acceptable. Moreover, this zero-tolerance perception seems blind to what may be called the historical truth that English is a living language: its composition is always changing in accordance with users’ contextual needs (Lu, 2004; Lu, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011). In neglecting to acknowledge this historical reality, this pedagogical zero-tolerance attitude also parallels the mentality to which the same name has been attributed in the harm reduction literature.

Moving beyond these contemplations of the zero-tolerance construct, literature that has criticized the “English Only” movement in both the U.S. and abroad has also identified traditional, prescriptive settings as spaces that ignore people’s differences, diminish opportunities for autonomy, and disregard if not erase various historical realities. Horner and Trimbur are two who have commented extensively on the large-scale blindness to linguistic reality engendered historically and presently by English Only (Horner, 2001; Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Trimbur, 2010).

Horner (2001) defined “English Only” as equating to the view that “[i]t takes a single language to produce and maintain a single, undivided nation; every place for a language and every language in its place” (p. 746). In this particular article, Horner focused on the English Only-born irony that the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s (1974) manifesto, *Students’ Right to Their Own Language*, did not actually account for any other languages besides English (p. 741-742). This paradoxical

elision certainly represents the masking of individuals' differences that is criticized by harm reduction proponents and WEs-oriented composition instructors. However, as Trimbur (2010) has more recently explained, the beginnings of English Only can be traced to a much more distant point in U.S. history.

The English Only movement was inspired, according to Trimbur (2010), during the original formation of the U.S. colonies, in the Founding Fathers' "non-institutional stance" toward a national language policy (p. 21). In refusing to establish English as the official national language, the Founding Fathers *appeared* to embrace the values of linguistic tolerance; however, this ostensibly neutral, "laissez-faire" language policy in actuality masked the state's usage of English as a tool to establish and maintain control over those who did not speak it (much less write it) (p. 25). For example, Jefferson used English as a tool in this way in his appointment of William C. C. Claiborne, a monolingual English user, as governor over the newly-purchased, mostly French-speaking Louisiana territories (p. 25). Immediately after his appointment, Claiborne announced an "English Only" policy regarding matters of government, effectively sidelining the majority of the territories' residents (p. 25). Assessing this type of maneuver as it recurred in relation to people of other language backgrounds who came or were brought to live in the American colonies, including victims of the circum-Atlantic slave trade, Trimbur expressed critical disquiet:

The issue here is not simply Anglo-Saxon hegemony in linguistic memory but the relentless monolingualism of American linguistic culture, the strategies by which English is meant to replace and silence other languages. This unidirectional monolingualism has been codified in the view that African American English is a faulty derivative of U.S. English and in melting-pot ideologies as a "natural"

language shift to the use of English only (with consequent loss of mother tongue)...  
(p. 37)

Besides lamenting the English Only movement's delegitimizing and silencing of other languages, Trimbur's critique also clarifies that the English Only construct imposes limitations not only on other languages, but also on marginalized Englishes.

A last angle from which to observe the tendency of traditional language-related frameworks to impose the problems broached in this section is provided by another segment of Horner and Trimbur's discussion of English Only. This time focusing on English Only as the "tacit language policy of unidirectional monolingualism" that gained momentum in the American educational system in the late nineteenth century, Horner and Trimbur (2002) investigated the process by which U.S. college composition class came to be classified as "English class" at all—for the word "composition" is not, after all, synonymous with "English."

According to Horner and Trimbur (2002), this conflation of the constructs of composition studies and English class occurred through a process which saw the modern languages (French, German, Spanish, and Italian) begin to be studied only as national literatures, while writing instruction began to be conducted solely in English (p. 596-597). Several interconnected assumptions caused this privileging of English in the educational system to seem "inevitable" (p. 603). However, one of these assumptions seems, to me, to have exerted particular influence in the formation of traditional composition as a space that prohibits teachers from recognizing students' differences, offering them choices that can capitalize on unique attributes, or observing historical truths. This one assumption was that since the United States was located at such a geographic distance from the European

countries where the modern languages were used most prevalently, most Americans had no practical need to acquire fluency in languages other than English. This assumption, Horner and Trimbur alleged, fueled a large-scale sense of “American exceptionalism,” a “xenophobic ethos” that disregarded the reality that the modern languages—and many others—had been present in this country throughout its history (p. 606-607). As with the national founders’ tacit exploitation of the lack of an official language policy, the American academy’s tacit disregard of language diversity that is represented by the still-common conflation of composition with English creates spaces in which many elements of linguistic reality are overlooked. Furthermore, I would argue that the xenophobic ethos toward non-SAE varieties can promote the same sort of fear and coercive treatment that Denning (2000) has ascribed to the traditional abstinence framework (p. xviii-xix). Indeed, Young, et al. (2013) have observed such fear toward language difference:

The dominant language ideology in the United States emphasizes monolingualism. We tend to be deeply suspicious of people speaking languages other than English; we also tend to have negative attitudes toward people speaking undervalued varieties of English. Indeed, it is common for Americans to become suspicious when hearing people speak another language.... Are they talking about us? Are they plotting something? (p. 27)

Thus concludes this second section’s alignment and analysis of analogous features that I have observed in the literature on the harm reduction model and WEs-inspired composition literature. Four themes have emerged:

- (1) In drug abuse treatment settings, athletic competitions, and in the composition classroom, frameworks characterized by a zero-tolerance mentality equate to spaces in which people's physical and mental differences are ignored, which means in turn that they are not invited to use and further develop their unique personal resources;
- (2) Such zero-tolerance frameworks further disempower individuals because they prohibit authentic freedom of choice;
- (3) Such zero-tolerance frameworks elide crucial historical truths about the topics that each field focuses upon (that is, mind-altering substances, health, athletics, and language). Such elisions prohibit the development of the senses of groundedness and confidence that might otherwise develop with an accurate understanding of history;
- (4) Such zero-tolerance frameworks can engender fear, suspicion, and prejudice toward those perceived as different.

### **Set #3: The Power of Negative Contextual Attitudes**

While the power of negative contextual attitudes in both the harm reduction literature and WEs-inspired composition literature has been noted already, the array of harms that can be caused by students' and clients' internalization of others' negative attitudes suggests that this topic be showcased in a segment of its own. Thus, this section aligns and analyzes this third motif that has appeared across the literature.

In literature that promotes a harm reduction approach to psychotherapeutic treatment for drug use, the point is emphasized that the pervasive disdain that U.S. society bears toward drug users can actually become internalized by the drug users: a psychological

phenomenon whereby the drug users come to believe others' assumptions of their inferiority. Tatarsky (2003) explained the psychological phenomenon of internalized negativity:

[Harm Reduction] recognizes that much of the harm associated with substance use is due to the tendency in our society to deal with substance users in stigmatizing, devaluing, coercive, and punitive ways. Since these negative attitudes are ubiquitous in our culture, they may exist not only in treatment providers, but also in the substance users themselves. [...] [I]nsidiously, these negative attitudes are often internalized by substance users themselves and can find expression in self-sabotage of efforts to change. (p. 251)

In other words, when a drug user is surrounded by voices castigating him or her as unfit for inclusion in more empowered echelons of society, the user can inadvertently further disempower him- or herself by making choices that actually do render him or her less self-efficacious.

Denning (2000) observed the power of negative contextual attitudes from a different vantage point. In discussing the phenomenon of countertransference, a process traditionally understood as one in which “unresolved pathological elements” within the therapist are projected onto the patient, Denning posited an alternative view: “countertransference is increasingly viewed as a window into the feelings and experiences of...patients” (p. 14). She then expanded upon this view by theorizing its potential implications in more detail:

It is certainly useful, and may even be accurate, to read our reactions to patients as indications of their internal life, but we are also feeling the internalized stigma they feel because of societal attitudes toward drug users. Our feelings of disgust or fear,

or helplessness, then, may represent more than just the patients' internal associations or our own attitudes. We may be joining patients in a mutual display of society's attitudes toward them. (p. 14-15)

If this assumption is accurate, the idea of the harm that a person can experience through his or her internalization of the negative perceptions of others enters a new layer of complexity. As could happen with a teacher toward a student, if a therapeutic practitioner inadvertently demonstrates a disparaging opinion toward an individual in his or her charge—even if this opinion is somehow only a reflection of the way the individual feels about him- or herself—additional psychological injury can befall the individual.

A concrete example of disempowerment seemingly self-inflicted by drug users who internalized perspectives they perceived as negative was observed in a study by Cole, Michailidou, Jerome, and Sumnall (2005). Their study is connected thematically with the literature on harm reduction, though it did not explicitly situate itself as such. The study focused on the psychological experiences of ecstasy users who succumbed to stereotype threat before taking tests designed to evaluate their cognitive abilities. Before the test, half of the participants (17 ecstasy users and 17 non-users) each received an information sheet that reported a strong relationship between ecstasy use and reduced cognitive capacity to retain information (p. 520). The other half of the participants (17 ecstasy users and 17 non-users) received sheets which reported that there is no serious evidence that supports such a link (p. 520). All participants then took the test (p. 520). The results of the study revealed that the ecstasy users who had been primed, before the test, with the information that ecstasy use causes cognitive deficiencies performed worse on the test than the ecstasy users who had not been primed with this information (p. 523). These results suggested to the researchers

that the individuals in the former group had experienced stereotype threat (p. 523). In other words, the ecstasy users who had been primed with information that suggested that their drug activities had diminished their cognitive capacities seemed to have internalized this “negative attitude,” thus reifying the intellectual inferiority that they had at first only assumed. The complex interplay of biology, psychology, and social context that is represented by these ecstasy users’ experiences is actually the sole focus of one of Denning’s (2000) ten principles of harm reduction psychotherapy: “Drug addiction is a biopsychosocial phenomenon” (p. 7).

Observations of this phenomenon wherein individuals experience psychological and even physical harm by internalizing negative attitudes in their social contexts have also been made, as forecasted, in the realm of language. For one, the “internalized oppression” and “linguistic self-hate” identified by Young (2011, p. 65) are forces arguably as insidious as the harms described by Tatarsky (2003) and Cole, et al. (2005). But specific examples of these language-related biopsychosocial interplays abound in the literature. The following excerpt from an autobiographical narrative written by a user of AAE, documented by Lippi-Green (2012), depicts one example of socially-influenced psychological self-harm:

When I was fourteen the mother of a white teammate on the YMCA swimming team would—in a nice but insistent way—correct my grammar when I lapsed into the Black English I’d grown up speaking in the neighborhood. She would require that my verbs and pronouns agree, that I put the “g” on my “ings,” and that I say “that” instead of “dat.” She absolutely abhorred double negatives, and her face would screw up in pain at the sound of one. But her corrections also tapped my racial vulnerability. I felt racial shame at this white woman’s fastidious concern with my

language. It was as though she was saying that the Black part of me was not good enough, would not do.... (p. 206)

In sum, as can occur in drug treatment settings, when individuals perceive negative contextual attitudes toward their languages—no matter the forms these attitudes take—these social forces can become internalized as psychological forces that exert negative influence on self-perception.

Another manifestation of an internalized sense that one is linguistically inferior can be a sense of *superiority* that one assumes after having *chosen* to assimilate to the norms of a dominant culture. Jones (2011) included an autobiographical anecdote about his experience voluntarily separating himself from his native Appalachian English:

When I was in high school, an older friend who had left our town returned home with college classes under his belt.

“What are you doing tomorrow night?” he asked me one afternoon.

“I have a soccer match at Poke,” I replied.

“At *PolK*?” he asked, emphasizing the *l* I’d disregarded.

*Poke*, I repeated softly inside my mouth. I’d never thought of the *l* before. It didn’t exist: I’d always said what everyone else said, what seemed right.

But after that day I made a conscious choice to always pronounce the word phonetically. I had inside information from the outside world, and I began to feel a hint of superiority in saying it correctly when those around me were saying “Poke.”

I even teased my mom when she said “Poke County.” (p. 194)

Jones’ criticism of his own mother for using a pronunciation from their family’s native variety of English can be understood as a form of socially-influenced psychological

linguistic harm. I posit that his criticism represents the sense of inner conflict to which Lippi-Green has alluded with the assertion that “[w]hen an individual is asked to reject their own language, we are asking them to drop allegiances to the people and places that define them” (2012, p. 66).

I focus on one last phenomenon as representative of an internalized sense of linguistic inferiority. This linguistic phenomenon moves beyond the others that I have discussed, in that it involves physical, tangible consequences. The medical procedure in which children’s frenula are cut in hopes that they will be more capable of producing sounds characteristic of American English has become increasingly popular across Asian countries in recent years (Lu, 2010, p. 42-44; Lu, 2011, p. 99-100). In reaction to this practice, Lu (2010) has expressed a multivalent dismay that echoes Horner’s and Trimbur’s condemnation of the English Only mentality:

When shown photographs attached to such reports..., the first reaction of most readers, myself included, is “Yuck! Gross!” While such images still invoke an involuntary shudder in me, I am increasingly convinced [that] the “popularity” of tongue surgery in “developing” countries [is] intricately informed by what we in “developed” countries do and do not do when addressing our own and our students’ ambivalence toward English Only rulings. (p. 43)

In sum, while “racial shame” and alienation from one’s family’s language are serious psychosocial harms that can arise from an internalization of negative contextual attitudes, it is when people feel compelled to alter their very physical structure in hopes of conforming to a different set of standards that we see internalized oppression in its most corporeal form.

Thus concludes my alignment and analysis of a third set of analogous concepts from harm reduction literature and composition literature infused with the WEs ethos. Three more shared themes have emerged from this section's undertaking:

- (1) When individuals in either arena perceive negative attitudes in their surroundings to be directed at them, no matter the form these attitudes take, the individuals may internalize these negative attitudes: a process wherein social forces exert influence on psychological forces, reifying what were originally only perceptions;
- (2) In both the harm reduction realm and the realm of writing pedagogy, the psychosocial transformation represented by the internalization of negative contextual attitudes can be further complicated by voluntary or involuntary physical changes, a three-force interplay that may be understood through the lens provided by Denning's (2000) compound adjective "biopsychosocial";
- (3) Individuals in both drug use-related settings and education settings can experience stereotype threat and the other psychological barriers it can engender.

#### **Set #4: Harms Engendered by Uncritically Prescriptive Frameworks**

In this fourth section, I utilize a table structure for my paralleling and analyzing of concepts. This section is also unique in that it presents very little new information; rather, its main function is as a "review" aimed at reinforcing an understanding that I have only loosely conveyed thus far. More specifically, in this current section, I revisit the list form in which I initially presented the linguistic harms in Chapter One, and, corresponding to every linguistic harm, I present what I perceive to be an analogous drug-related harm. (Though I have emphasized that harm reduction is applicable in settings not specifically focused on

drug use, for the sake of the brief review that this section is intended to offer, I limit the alignment to only drug-related harms.) With this table, I further support my premise that the harm reduction model can be used to support the integration of the WEs paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom. Following the table are several general pedagogical implications that its contents suggest.

Table 1

*Analogous Concepts: Linguistic Harms and Drug-Related Harms Experienced in*

*Uncritically Prescriptive Frameworks*

Linguistic Harm	Drug-Related Harm
Students who cannot or do not want to communicate in forms popularly supposed to be standard and thereby correct are made to feel unwelcome to use and further cultivate the linguistic resources with which they do feel most adept (Young, 2011, p. 65).	Drug users who cannot or do not want to adhere to behaviors popularly supposed to be standard and correct are discouraged from utilizing and practicing personal characteristics that could help them remain “alive and healthy” (Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010, p. 118), self-efficacious members of society (Denning, 2000, p. 9-10).
Students can internalize the negative attitudes toward their languages that appear to be infused in their teachers’ prescriptions (Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65).	“Since these negative attitudes are ubiquitous in our culture, they may exist not only in treatment providers, but also in the substance users themselves” (Tatarsky, 2003, p. 251).
These internalized negative attitudes can in turn engender a sense of inner conflict between a student’s home and school languages (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 55; Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65).	These internalized negative attitudes can engender a sense of “ambivalence” stemming from the fact that the drug use does offer some benefits to the users’ lives (Marlatt, et al., 2012, p. 49).
This sense of inner conflict may prompt students to relinquish the academic pursuit entirely (Young, et al., 2013, p. 34).	The sense of inner conflict that can be engendered by the internalization of negative contextual attitudes can act “insidiously...find[ing] expression in self-sabotage of efforts to change” (Tatarsky, 2003, p. 251).
Students emerge from the educational process unequipped to participate with maximal effectiveness in globalized social, economic, and political networks (Young, et al., 2013, p. 48-49).	Drug users are frequently excluded from treatment processes entirely, and incarcerated instead. They often emerge from incarceration with their drug-related problems exacerbated (Van Nuys, 2008, par. 3). Thus, they reenter their freedom unequipped to participate effectively in various interpersonal networks.
Because English is a living language (Lu, 2004; Lu, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011) and it is thus impossible for anyone’s speech or writing to embody universal “correctness” (Gupta, 2006, p. 95-99), any student can experience linguistic anxiety (Young, et al., 2011, p. xxiv), a fear of speaking or writing that can arise from stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797; Richardson, 2004, p. 163; Young, 2007, p. 120; Young, 2011, p. 65).	Because “what society wants” is an unstable construct (Denning, 2000, p. 13; Tatarsky, 2002, p. 25), and because complete avoidance of all forms of physical and mental enhancement is a mythical ideal (Kayser & Broers, 2012, p. 5; Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010, p. 120), expecting any individual to pursue complete abstinence from substances leads to counterproductively punitive treatment (Kayser & Broers, 2012, p. 3; Van Nuys, 2008, para. 3). Substance-using individuals who internalize what may be called a zero-tolerance-inspired deficit perspective can experience cognitively debilitating anxiety that arises from stereotype threat (Cole, et al., 2005, p. 518).

In sum, Table 1 demonstrates an understanding that had been only loosely communicated beforehand. This crucial understanding is that the concept of linguistic harm, as I have defined it in this project, may be considered analogous to the concept of drug-related harm (and other forms of harm that can be targeted by the harm reduction model). This thematic parallel is the foundation upon which my ultimate argument—that harm reduction can act as a vehicle for transporting WEs into the U.S. composition classroom—is built. A list of the most essential general pedagogical implications of the harm reduction approach can further underscore the significance of the similarities distilled in Table 1:

- (1) When applied in the composition classroom, harm reduction manifests as an ultimate respect for every language user’s choices, because “[p]eople have the right to make their own choices in life” (Denning, 2006, p. 25);
- (2) When applying a harm reduction approach, teachers do not prescribe fixed courses of action, but instead exercise an “experimental attitude...that evolves as goals are pursued” (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 111), thus “meet[ing] people where they are” (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 9; Tatarsky, 2003, p. 249);
- (3) Contrary to what may be assumed at first glance, the harm reduction model does *not* require that the service-seeking individual avoid the behaviors that can be connected with harm (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 10); therefore, applying harm reduction in the composition classroom does *not* mean that students are expected to avoid language-related behaviors that can be associated with linguistic harm. Instead, harm reduction practitioners in composition, like harm reductionists in other settings, assist students in developing greater awareness of options for managing their language use in ways that can lead to enhanced senses of self-efficacy.

I now transition to the fifth and final segment of this section of the chapter. This fifth segment is dedicated to a further exploration of the third pedagogical implication above: the transformative power of heightened awareness.

#### **Set #5: The Transformative Power of Heightened Awareness**

This fifth and final section departs from the harm-centeredness of the four preceding sections. Instead, the analogous concepts that receive the focus in this final section are solution-oriented. This solution-oriented content acts as a logical transition to the capstone project of this chapter: the development of the five principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy.

More specifically, this fifth section highlights the power of heightened awareness in effecting positive change in people's lives. In literature that discusses the harm reduction model, I have encountered the argument that developing in self-awareness is the most effective means of reducing the potential for further drug-related harms to occur in one's life. Likewise, I have noted already that in composition literature representative of the WEs ethos at work, I have observed the argument that increased language awareness acts as the most effective defense against linguistic harm.

I continue the pattern of beginning with harm reduction by first citing Tatarsky's (2002) explanation of the process that can free a drug user from the biopsychosocial cycle in which she has been entrapped, and the cycle of harms that she has experienced in her entrapment:

To disengage from [the cycle], one must be able to become aware of how it plays out and watch it compassionately with some distance.... [O]ften before it is possible to

work on making changes in oneself, it is necessary to first develop the capacity to observe oneself more fully. (p. 227)

Later, Tatarsky expanded that “[a]s the client becomes aware of these meaningful elements—the feelings, needs, desires, and wishes that compose the desire to use a drug—this opens up the possibility of making different decisions in relation to those desires and feelings” (p. 228). In another article, Tatarsky and Kellogg (2010) expanded further:

Three key capacities support the process of changing: curiosity, self-reflective awareness, and affect tolerance. Curiosity about one’s suffering motivates self-awareness and self-inquiry. Self-awareness enables the exploration of moment-to-moment experience such that connections can be made between perceived events, thoughts, feelings, impulses, and choices. (p. 126)

In all, these commentaries present the idea that an inverse relationship exists between increased self-awareness and the potential for harmful influences to overcome a person’s mental health and sense of self.

This theme of the inverse relationship between heightened self-awareness and the disempowering nature of drug dependency has been mirrored in composition literature that promotes the development of language awareness as a force that can diminish the potential for further linguistic harms to occur in students’ lives. This is the dominant argument promoted by Young, et al. (2013), who have argued that if the teaching of standard English is combined with education designed to raise students’ language awareness and their ability to recognize previously veiled forms of language prejudice, they will emerge from the educational process better equipped to respond assertively rather than defensively toward discriminatory treatment they may experience in the future (p. 36). Likewise, the value of

heightened language awareness is the premise that has motivated all exposés of standard language ideology (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007, p. 10-11; Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 67; Young, 2011, p. 65) and the myth of linguistic homogeneity (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638). It is also the argument that has fueled all critiques aimed at raising awareness of the negative implications of zero-tolerance and English Only attitudes toward language variation (Ball & Muhammad, 2003, p. 76-77; Horner, 2001; Horner & Trimbur, 2002, 2010; Trimbur, 2010). All advocates of code-meshing are also essentially promoting the raising of language awareness as a means of counteracting the harms that can be experienced when it is lacking (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011, 2012; Lee, 2014; Lu & Horner, 2011; Young, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013; Young, et al., 2011; Young, et al., 2013). All of these voices act together to promote a crystallized understanding of the crucial prioritizing of language awareness that is infused in the framework of SCEP.

It cannot be emphasized enough that in my identification of the parallel between the empowerment that accompanies a heightening in a drug user's self-awareness and the empowerment that can accompany a heightening in a student's language awareness, I am *not* suggesting that the student's heightened language awareness should entail his pursuit of "abstinence" from the forms of English with which he feels most comfortable. That is not how the reduction of linguistic harms is achieved in the SCEP framework. It is not necessarily how the reduction of harms is achieved in drug-related settings, either, as I noted earlier in this chapter: "Harm reduction accepts that abstinence *may* be the best outcome for many but *relaxes* the emphasis on abstinence as the only acceptable goal and criterion of success" (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 10, emphasis added). Rather, applying a harm reduction approach in composition shapes the classroom into a space where linguistic harms are less

likely to be experienced by students because the emphasis is on language awareness as a mechanism that can buoy students up from disempowerment, *not* on the reduction of any particular language practices at all.

As a way of exemplifying the transformative power of heightened language awareness, I conclude with an examination of the modality of pedagogical prescriptivism itself. Exposing students to the descriptivist-prescriptivist dichotomy is one of the first tasks that I undertake during the World Englishes unit. While the following interrogation of pedagogical prescriptivism is more complex than the approach I take with students, it leads to the same outcome: the revelation that it is in the exercise of prescriptivism that the traditional framework of U.S. composition actually breaks down.

To begin, Young, et al. (2011) briefly encapsulated a prescriptive approach to the teaching of “English” in a hypothetical exclamation—“These are the rules; learn how to follow them!”—before elaborating with the following explanation:

[T]he prescriptive model is one that usually values only one mode of English, often referred to as Standard English. It often stems from ideas that support English-only laws; that stigmatize world languages, dialects, and accents associated with certain people and render them illegal; and that alienate too many students from language education. Prescriptive teaching (talk and write only one way outside the home) dashes desire in too many people who want to learn to communicate effectively. (p. xxi)

Clearly, some linguists’ perspectives on prescriptivism have been highly charged by emotive reactions to the standard language ideology that undergirds prescriptivist inclinations and gives rise to negative stereotyping and linguistic anxiety. In fact, Lippi-Green (2012) placed

prescriptivists and linguists in an irreconcilable dichotomy, claiming that linguists' knowledge will likely always be "outgunned" by prescriptivists' assumptions (p. 22).

Other explanations of prescriptivism, however, have not been so impassioned or illustratively depicted. Moss and Walters (1993) provided a more neutral definition of the prescriptivist perspective:

[T]he *prescriptive standard*...corresponds to the written variety the rules of which are inscribed in handbooks of the sort that are used in writing classes. Most of the marks that are made in the margins of student papers—frag, dm, split inf., diction—represent efforts to get students to respect, use, and internalize the rules of this prescriptive standard. (p. 422)

Of course, an over-preoccupation with students' adherence, or lack thereof, to prescriptive rules can result in the "stultifying error-hunt" that Connors (1985) called the obsession with "lower-order" issues, a force that he blamed for transforming the "noble" ancient Greek and Roman tradition of rhetoric into the "narrow concern for convention on the most basic levels" that he claimed constituted contemporary composition (p. 61). Though this indictment of an excessive focus on errors was presented more than two decades ago, the corpus of scholarly publications focused on the topic of error that has accumulated since that time suggests that a significant strand of U.S. composition has indeed concentrated on prescriptive concerns with mechanical correctness (e.g. Connors & Lunsford, 1988; Elbow, 1999).

It is in the context of this "stultifying error-hunt" (Connors, 1985, p. 61) that prescriptivism breaks down, a weakness that has been exploited by those of us who wish to expand the purview of our discipline to include the values and principles of the WEs ethos.

Moss and Walters (1993) described the weak points of a prescriptive approach to teaching and evaluating language:

[H]andbooks differ, and pronouncements about usage change. Most important, careful readers frequently find “violations” of these prescriptive rules in the speaking of the socially, politically, and economically powerful and in written texts such as the *New York Times*, textbooks, and professional journals. In other words, teachers of writing ultimately must acknowledge that these speakers and writers do not seem to be following the sets of rules inscribed in the handbooks used in our classes. (p. 422)

Indeed, Young (2011) acknowledged that very inconsistency as a crucial point of support for his argument that U.S. composition must expand to include the teaching of all varieties of English. As evidence to illustrate his point, Young named former President George W. Bush and former Alaska governor Sarah Palin as extremely visible figures with “a questionable handle of standard grammar and rhetoric” who nevertheless attained the highest of sociopolitical statuses (p. 66). But while Young’s (2011) point was powerful, Moss and Walters (1993) went on to express an even stronger point about the fallibility of prescriptivism:

Additionally, those of us with prescriptive tendencies should acknowledge that many of the students who currently suffer our marginal comments are soon likely to wield far more economic, social, or political power than we ever will; consequently, their speaking and writing will help determine the descriptive standard [from which the next incarnation of prescribed standards will arise] for the coming generation. (p. 422)

This last admonition in fact represents the overarching academic and sociopolitical background that inspired and shaped this dissertation. This reminder of the reality that our current students will create the standards of the future underscores how important it is for teachers and scholars of U.S. composition to theorize and enact pedagogies that promote the descriptivist values embodied in the WEs ethos rather than prescriptivist assumptions that lead backwards to xenophobia and other forms of prejudice.

In conclusion, this fifth and final segment has discussed the premise that an inverse relationship exists between heightened awareness and the potential for harms to occur. This premise appears throughout the literature on harm reduction and composition literature inspired by the WEs ethos. Three final themes emerge from this discussion:

- (1) The heightening of the type of awareness privileged in each field shifts a person to a more detached vantage point, from which he or she may gain a broader understanding of the connections—or lack thereof—between the various forces that have shaped his or her intra- and interpersonal perceptions and choices;
- (2) The heightening of the type of awareness privileged in each field can diminish anxiety and other debilitating emotions a person may have experienced in past positionalities characterized by a less integrated understanding of reality;
- (3) In counteracting the disempowerment that be caused by *lack* of awareness, the heightening of each type of awareness can lead to an increase in a person's sense of self-efficacy.

Thus concludes the lengthiest project undertaken in this chapter. Through my systematic alignment and analysis of five sets of analogous concepts from the areas of harm reduction and composition inspired by the WEs ethos, I have argued in support of my

premise that the harm reduction model can be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary U.S. composition classroom. The common themes that have emerged from my project of alignment and analysis act as further support for my premise that a harm reduction approach can be implemented in a composition setting. I now transition to the capstone endeavor of this chapter: the development of the five principles of SCEP.

### **Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy**

This final section begins with my presentation of Denning's ten principles of harm reduction psychotherapy (2000, p. 6-11), from which I have synthesized the five principles of SCEP. My presentation of each of Denning's ten principles is accompanied by a brief elaboration on the principle's meaning. In a second—and last—segment, I detail the synthesizing process that resulted in each of the five SCEP principles.

#### **Harm Reduction Psychotherapy: The Ten Principles**

**Principle #1:** “First, do no harm” (Denning, 2000, p. 6-7). This principle represents harm reduction practitioners' belief that treatment should never cause more harm to the drug user than the drug user was already experiencing when he or she began the treatment. For example, in settings not governed by harm reduction, the common way of dealing with users of illegal substances is incarceration. Unfortunately, incarcerating someone who already has a drug problem often has a more deleterious effect on the person's ability to work toward a more stable quality of life.

**Principle #2:** “Drug addiction is a biopsychosocial phenomenon” (Denning, 2000, p. 7). This principle accounts for the biological, psychological, and social forces that influence drug addiction. Denning has explained, “A person must have several different forces acting

on him or her to create the conditions necessary for a serious and persistent drug problem” (p. 7). Since these three forces are always interrelated, attempts to address them singly are generally ineffective.

**Principle #3:** “Drug use is initially adaptive” (Dennings, 2000, p. 7). This principle signifies harm reduction practitioners’ acknowledgement that all drug use is initially beneficial to the drug user in some way.

**Principle #4:** “There is no inevitable progression from use to dependence” (Denning, 2000, p. 7-8). With this principle, harm reduction acknowledges the “extremely heterogeneous” community of drug users (p. 7). Drug users can range, for example, from “[o]ne time curiosity seekers, people who seek regular escape from life stresses, [or] stable working people who use mind-altering substances to relax and enjoy social interactions” (p. 8).

**Principle #5:** “[Every person has] [t]he right to sensitive treatment” (Denning, 2000, p. 8). This premise signifies harm reduction practitioners’ perspective that people who voluntarily seek treatment for drug use should be offered treatment that “is respectful of *their* assessment of their own problems and needs” (p. 8).

**Principle #6:** “[The practitioner must help the client with] [d]evelopment of a needs hierarchy” (Denning, 2000, p. 9). A Needs Hierarchy is a list of needs that the drug user arranges in accordance with his or her priorities. For example, someone may think that his lack of childcare is the primary cause of stress in his life, rather than alcohol consumption. Denning has explained, “Even though the alcohol might contribute to or cause the stated problem, from the client’s point of view, there are other pressing problems” (p. 9).

**Principle #7:** “Active users can and do participate in treatment” (Denning, 2000, p. 9). This principle represents the harm reduction model’s acceptance that continued substance use may occur during the treatment. More importantly, this principle also represents harm reduction’s acknowledgement that some people may remain, throughout their lives, uninterested or unable to stop engaging in substance use.

**Principle #8:** “Success is related to self-efficacy” (Denning, 2000, p. 9-10). This principle speaks to harm reduction practitioners’ redefinition of success. Instead of considering successful outcomes through the lens of preconceived notions that may or may not bear any relation to a drug user’s reality, the practitioner considers a treatment successful when the drug user demonstrates a heightened belief in his or her ability to achieve self-defined goals.

**Principle #9:** “[The practitioner must respect] [t]he client’s unique relationship with each drug used” (Denning, 2000, p. 10). With this principle, harm reduction accounts for the uniqueness of every drug user’s experience. The complex interplay between the pharmacology of every drug, the personality and physiological traits of the consumer, and the contexts in which the drug user uses the drugs ensures that no person’s experience with drugs is exactly the same as any other person’s experience.

**Principle #10:** “Any reduction in drug-related harm is a step in the right direction” (Denning, 2000, p. 11). This last principle represents the harm reduction model’s ultimate goal of “creat[ing] a treatment that will ultimately free the person from the problem” (p. 11). In other words, besides manifesting in an increased sense of self-efficacy, success is conceived in the harm reduction framework as any diminishment in the drug user’s experience of drug-related harm.

Having outlined the ten principles of harm reduction psychotherapy, I now move to the final section, in which I submit and summarize the five principles of SCEP. My summary of each principle is purely theoretical, since I have already outlined a multitude of pedagogical applications in both the introductory chapter and the preceding sections of this literature review chapter.

### **SCEP: The Five Principles**

**Principle #1:** *The classroom should be a space where linguistic harms are unlikely to occur.* This first principle is adapted directly from Denning’s first principle, “First, do no harm.” The linguistic harms to which this principle alludes are those defined in the Chapter One’s “Linguistic Harm” section, which are revisited in this literature review’s table of linguistic harms and their corresponding drug-related harms.

**Principle #2:** *The teacher understands that all language users’ experiences and choices are unique, and prompts students toward greater appreciation of their own Englishes.* This second principle is synthesized from the two of Denning’s principles that I see as privileging the inherent uniqueness of every person: her fourth principle, which accounts for the heterogeneity of the drug-using population; and her ninth principle, which reflects the practitioner’s understanding of that no drug user’s experience is precisely the same as any other drug user’s experience.

**Principle #3:** *The teacher welcomes other Englishes in the composition experience and places the final decision for how (much) to use them in the students’ hands.* Principle #3 is synthesized from Denning’s three principles that focus on the importance of respecting the drug user’s perception of reality. These three principles are her fifth and sixth, which each reflect harm reduction practitioners’ acceptance of clients’ assessments of their own

needs, and the seventh, which signifies the harm reduction model's understanding that drug use may remain a permanent part of a person's life.

**Principle #4:** *The teacher understands, and leads the student to understand, that language use is affected by biological, psychological, and social forces.* This principle is adapted from Denning's second and third principles, which each promote the understanding that drug use always occurs in spaces characterized by intersecting biological, psychological, and social influences. It is important to note that in both Denning's understanding and in the context of SCEP, the concept of "social forces" encompasses political influences on language use.

**Principle #5:** *Any increased sense of language awareness constitutes success.* This fifth principle is synthesized from Denning's eighth and tenth principles, which illuminate from different vantage points the harm reduction model's (re)definition of success. The extended premise that underlies this last SCEP principle is that since there is an inverse relationship between the reduction of linguistic harms and the enhancement of language awareness, then naturally, the final principle should be dedicated specifically to the raising of students' language awareness.

Thus concludes the current chapter's third major section, in which I presented Denning's (2006) ten principles of harm reduction psychotherapy, from which I then synthesized the five principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy. In presenting Denning's ten principles first, my portrayal of the construct of harm reduction became complete, which in turn allowed my culminating presentation of the five principles of SCEP to come to full fruition.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I pursued dual aims. I reviewed literature from the fields of critical pedagogy, U.S. composition studies, linguistics research, and World Englishes as a means of raising awareness of the importance of addressing the language diversity in many contemporary U.S. composition classrooms. I also completed the project of theorizing Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy (SCEP), the theoretical and pedagogical framework that I have developed as my own approach to addressing the language diversity—more specifically, the diversity of Englishes—in my classes. In fulfillment of this more focused aim, this chapter also reviewed literature that discusses the social service sector’s harm reduction model. In this chapter’s theorizing of SCEP, it responded to the study’s first research question:

In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

This chapter’s development of SCEP also acts as theoretical and pedagogical scaffolding for the study’s methodology, to which I now turn.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodological component of this dissertation. However, before I discuss qualitative research and the case study method that I have chosen to employ, I revisit the theoretical and pedagogical awakening process that preceded my development of the case study methodology. Then, I explain my justifications for conducting qualitative research and more specifically, a case study approach. Following these justifications, in a section dedicated to describing the study context, I provide an overview of the focal course, a description of the pool of potential participants, a summary of my participant recruitment methods, and then brief introductions to the five former students who became my study's five focal participants. Next, I explain the study's data sources, collection methods, and analytic procedures. Following these explanations, I address ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness. Finally, I provide a brief chapter summary and a short introduction to the contents of the next chapter.

#### **Awakening Process Revisited**

As depicted in the introductory chapter, this project grew out of a theoretical and pedagogical awakening that I experienced as I became increasingly familiar with the World Englishes paradigm and its implications for my teaching of composition, which is called English 101 at NNYSU. When my eyes were opened to the reality that the prescriptive approach I had taken in my first years of teaching English 101 actually represented the influence of the “myth of linguistic homogeneity” (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638), I began to understand the limitations that had been imposed on students in that framework. I realized that my prescriptive orientation had blinded me to the multiplicity of Englishes among my

students, which in turn caused me to disregard the relationships between their languages and social identities (Canagarajah, 2006; Young, et al., 2013). I then discovered that not exposing students to WEs impeded their preparation for maximally effective participation in globalizing social, economic, and political networks (Lu & Horner, 2011; Young, et al., 2011; Young, et al., 2013). Finally, I became conscious of the living nature of English (Lu, 2004, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011), which equates ultimately to the idea that SAE is a mythical construct (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 55-65). Above all, I realized that my uncritically prescriptive pedagogical approach had impeded my students' development of language awareness, a force that could have subverted the linguistic harms they experienced in my class and elsewhere (Adger, et al., 2007; Kinloch, 2009; Wetzl, 2013; Wolfram, 2008; Young, et al., 2011; Young, et al., 2013).

Because my studies of WEs led me toward a deeper understanding of the linguistic harms I had inadvertently caused my students to experience, and because both my pedagogical observations and scholarly reading taught me the inverse relationship that exists between language awareness and the potential for linguistic harms to occur, I developed a revised theoretical and pedagogical orientation for my composition classes. My revised approach has allowed me to maintain a focus on developing students' comfort levels in navigating SAE, but within an expanded scope that situates SAE as only one among the multitude of World Englishes. Even more importantly, my new approach allows me to focus particularly on maintaining my classroom as a space where the potential for students to experience linguistic harm is minimized. I developed my approach, which I call Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy (SCEP), within the larger theoretical framework represented by Bartolomé's (1994) Humanizing Pedagogy, a derivation of Critical Pedagogy (Freire,

1970). Within the theoretical framework of Humanizing Pedagogy, I negotiated the values and principles that define two other constructs: the World Englishes ethos (Bolton & Kachru, 2006, p. 290-291; Bolton, et al., 2011, p. 459) and the harm reduction model (Denning, 2000; Marlatt, et al., 2012; Riley, et al., 1999; Tatarsky, 1998, 2002, 2003; Tatarsky & Kellogg, 2010; Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010; Van Nuys, 2008). The five principles of SCEP that emerged shape the four-week “World Englishes unit” with which I have begun the fifteen weeks of every semester’s English 101 class since Spring 2012.

Though I had long surmised that the orientation promoted by SCEP was effective in its overall purpose of reducing the potential for students to experience linguistic harms during their building of greater fluency in SAE, I had never actually documented, in writing, the principles of SCEP or their theoretical underpinnings—until now. Likewise, until now, I had never undertaken a formal study involving a methodological approach designed to explore SCEP’s effectiveness. With that said, the theoretical and pedagogical purpose of this study was to explore how the harm reduction model could inform U.S. composition theory and pedagogy in an attempt to facilitate the integration of WEs in a simple yet organized approach. This theoretical and pedagogical purpose shaped the first of this study’s two research questions:

- (1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

Chapter Two, the literature review, was dedicated to the process of theorizing SCEP. In its fulfillment of this goal, the second chapter constituted my response to the study’s first research question. This study’s methodological purpose—to explore five of my former English 101 students’ perceptions of their language awareness after exposure to the WEs

paradigm through my WEs unit shaped by the principles of SCEP—shaped the study’s second research question:

- (2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?

The qualitative case study approach that I employed as a methodological approach allowed me to build a response to this second research question.

Ultimately, my fulfillment of the theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological purposes of this study will acts as my contribution to the existing body of ideas for how U.S. composition instructors can widen the purview of our practice to more effectively meet the real needs and desires of students in contemporary classrooms and a globalizing world.

Now that I have revisited the theoretical and pedagogical scaffolding that has led to this methodology chapter, I turn to my justification for conducting qualitative research.

### **Justification for Conducting Qualitative Research**

Grounded in a constructivist epistemological perspective, qualitative research is an activity that is situated in the world with its observer, and “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). In other words, within the constructivist worldview, reality is socially constructed, which means that multiple interpretations of the same event can exist, sometimes in conflict with each other. As Mertens (2010) discussed, “constructivist researchers...[reject] the notion that there is an objective reality that can be known and [take] the stance that the researcher’s goal is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge” (p. 18). The social constructivist tradition of qualitative

research was crucial to this study in that the study was designed to respect the existence of multiple realities by privileging and exploring each individual participant's experiences and interpretations, or emic perspectives. Underscoring the usefulness of case studies for privileging the individual's uniqueness, Janesick (2000) asserted that "the value of the case study is its uniqueness," and that a consequence of a case study's intrinsic uniqueness is that "reliability in the traditional sense of replicability is pointless" (p. 394). Janesick concluded that researchers should "get on with the discussion of powerful statements from carefully done, rigorous long-term studies that uncover the meaning of events in individuals' lives" (p. 394).

A qualitative approach also allows for crystallization of data, an essential element of sound research practice that features diversity of the nature represented by the purposes and participants in this study. As a radical constructivist, my epistemological perspective is that true transformation can only occur when we recognize that every individual's experience of reality is different and intrinsically valuable. Ontologically, the individual's experience is as real as, and as equal in value to, every other person's experience. These beliefs align me with those who "recognize that there are far more than 'three sides' from which to approach the world," as Richardson (2000, p. 934), a proponent of crystallization in qualitative research, described. Helpfully, Richardson went on:

Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of "validity"...and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know. (p. 934)

Studies in which data has been crystallized therefore offer themselves as texts that, as Ellingson (2008) explained, “often...reflect several contrasting ways of knowing” (p. 10). To that end, I collected several different forms of empirical data, knowing that the multiple data sources would further complicate and illustrate complexities embedded in the participants’ experiences. These data sources are explicated in the “Data Sources” section.

### **Justification for Case Study Approach**

This qualitative case study was exploratory in nature. Specifically, the approach allowed for an authentic personal and pedagogical relationship between the researcher (me) and each participant, thus ensuring that each individual voice could be privileged, and setting the stage for data to emerge for discovery and examination. Also, Yin (2002) explained that exploratory case studies are those with “what” and “how” research questions (p. 7). My study’s first research question exemplified a “what” question; likewise, the second research question was a “how” question.

This case was undertaken for its intrinsic value as a collection of emic perspectives which are valuable because they exist, not because they must be compared with others outside the purview of the case. Stake (2000) considered comparison, which is often the aim of quantitative and evaluation case studies, as an obstacle to focusing on the innate value of any case involved in the comparison (p. 444). Stake asserted, “Potential for learning [from the individuality of a particular case] is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Isn’t it better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case?” (p. 446). Stake also stated, “The purpose of a case report is not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (p. 448).

## **The Study Context**

### **Research Site**

The research site for this study was the State University of New York at Lilyville (NNYSU). As I noted in the introductory chapter's more concise discussion of the research site, while all of the participants had at some point been a part of NNYSU's campus, not all of them had remained in Lilyville by the time I collected data from them. However, it is still important to provide a background on NNYSU as a research site. It is important because providing this information can establish a sense of the setting in which the study participants had been immersed when they were in their respective NNYSU English 101 classes. As a qualitative researcher, I believe that it is important to include the participants' original social context in the descriptive component of the case, in agreement with Yin (2002): "you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions" (p. 13). In this methodology chapter, I move beyond the first chapter's initial discussion of the research site, with a data-driven rather than anecdotal focus on language-related demographical elements.

To revisit the basic demographical information that I provided in the introductory chapter, in 2012, the student body numbered 3,788. (Information from the years subsequent to 2012 was not available at the time that this methodology chapter was constructed.) In 2012, while the majority of students still identified as white (67%); twelve percent of students self-identified as Black, non-Hispanic (12%); seven percent self-identified as Hispanic (7%); one percent identified as Asian (or Pacific Islander before 2010) (1%); two percent identified as Native American (2%); and one percent identified as multiracial (1%).

Five percent of students did not report their ethnicity or race (5%), and five percent of students self-identified as international (5%).

While the ethnicity, race, and geographic diversity have been documented so closely, language diversity has not been explicitly addressed by the administration. The campus home page has provided the following information, which is the only material that might be said to represent a variety of Englishes:

- Diverse mix of races, ethnicities and backgrounds represented in the student body, adding a unique and rich cultural learning experience;
- International students from England, Russia, Japan, China, the Caribbean Islands and the nearby provinces of Canada. (“Student Enrollment,” 2014)

While the connection between a person’s ethnic, racial, geographic background and his or her spoken and written forms of English cannot be predicted with complete reliability, it is possible to construct a chart (Fig. 2) which may *suggest* the diversity of Englishes amidst NNYSU’s student body. Given the mainstreaming process that determines the makeup of every section of English 101, Figure 2 can also suggest the demographic makeup of the typical classroom at this site.

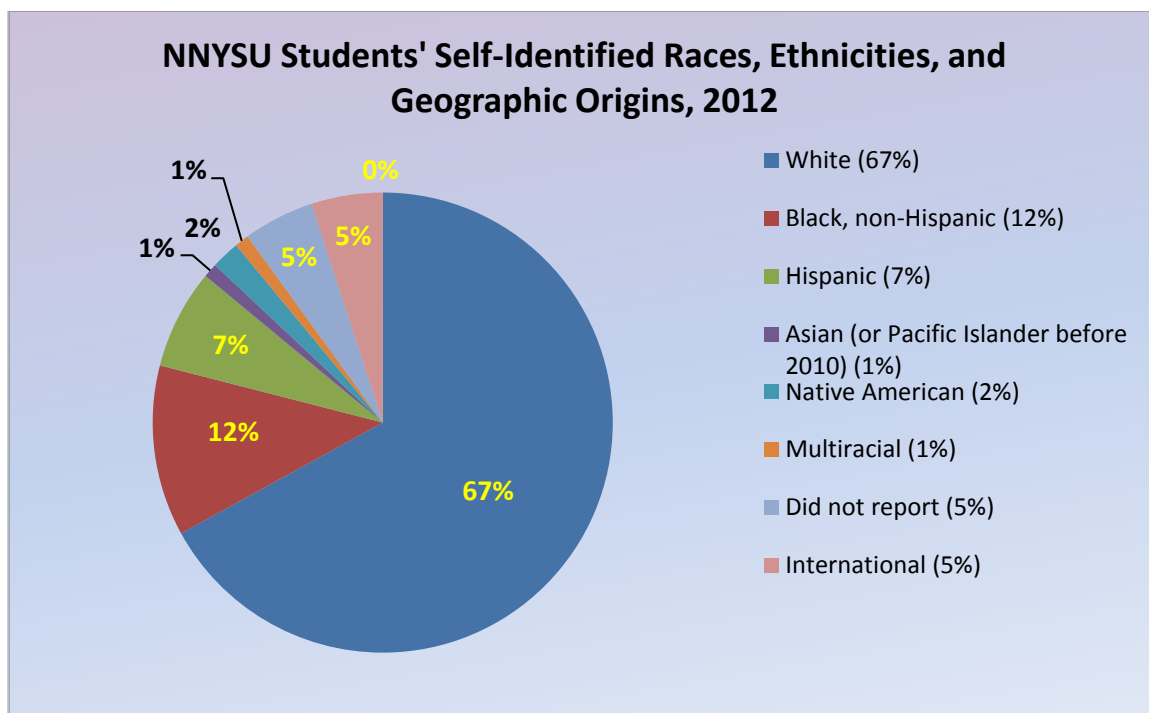


Figure 2. NNYSU students' self-identified races, ethnicities, and geographic origins, 2012.

## Focal Course

In keeping with my belief in the importance of establishing the participants' original social context, portraying a clear picture of the typical English 101 course at NNYSU requires not only a description of English 101 itself, but some background information about how students are placed in the course. English 101 is described in this "Focal Course" section and the placement information is described in the subsequent "Overview of Participant Pool" section.

A description of the focal course is as follows: English 101, or Expository Writing, is the first-year composition course that is required of all students who attend NNYSU, except for those few students who specifically request its equivalent, English 102 (Oral and Written Expression), instead. NNYSU's course catalogue describes English 101 in the following terms:

Expository Writing is designed to help the student communicate more effectively through writing various forms of expository prose; i.e. nonfiction writing that informs. These skills will be taught: gathering information, organizing information, recognizing audience and adapting information to specific audiences, and editing and rewriting techniques. Also included are an orientation to the College library and an introduction to basic research skills. This course is an alternate to Oral and Written Expression (ENGL 102). Students cannot take both. Classes are sometimes conducted in individualized and self-paced tutorial sessions. Three hours lecture per week. (“English/Humanities,” 2016)

All sections of English 101 and 102 are capped at 25 students.

It is important to note that the English faculty members at NNYSU are given nearly complete freedom to craft our courses in ways that most suit our interests. Our syllabi must demonstrate that we meet the requirements set by the English 101 course description and the Student Learning Outcomes mandated by the SUNY system (which encompasses sixty-three other colleges and universities), but the ways that each of us chooses to meet those requirements are left to us to devise. This is how my creation and inclusion of the WEs unit in my sections of English 101 arose.

### **Overview of Participant Pool**

From the pool of 205 former undergraduate students who had taken one of my English 101 classes that included my WEs unit, five became the focal participants in my case study. The methods by which these five participants were recruited are detailed in the next subsection (“Methods of Participant Selection”), but first, background information

about how these participants were placed in the English 101 course that they took from me is as follows.

At NNYSU, placement is determined during the summer before one's freshman year. This placement procedure applies to almost all students, except for a small group discussed in the next paragraph. All students except those in the aforementioned small group are required to take the College Board's Accuplacer test when they come to their summer orientation session preceding their entrance as freshmen. The Accuplacer, defined on the College Board's Web site as "a suite of tests that determines [the student's] knowledge in math, reading and writing as [the student] prepare[s] to enroll in college-level courses," is comprised of test questions that are each based on the student's response to previous questions. The questions either increase or decrease in difficulty depending on how the student responds. The Accuplacer test is untimed. The student's results are revealed as soon as the test is finished, and the results are used to channel the student into English 101 or NNYSU's two equivalents of Basic Writing courses: English 097 (Introduction to Academic Reading and Writing) or English 098 (Basic Writing). If a student has been placed into English 097 or English 098, he or she must successfully complete that course before enrolling in English 101. It should also be noted that NNYSU offers no specialized section of English 101 for English Language Learners (ELLs) or speaker/writers of World Englishes; as previously noted, all students are mainstreamed into the course. The only specialized treatment that some ELLs and World Englishes users receive may be placement into English 097 or 098.

The situation in which students enroll in English 101 without taking the Accuplacer test is the following. Every Fall semester, NNYSU offers one section of English 101 in a

“Distance Learning” format to advanced area high school students whose schools have partnered with NNYSU’s Distance Learning network. The “DL” network accommodates students who have successfully completed all of the English courses offered in their high schools. These high school students participate via television monitors in a special classroom in which on-campus students also participate. All students have full view of each other and of the instructor at all times. Thus, although the high school students are each surrounded by the social contexts of their high schools, they are also able to be immersed in NNYSU’s context with the help of the technology involved in the Distance Learning program. I taught Distance Learning sections of English 101 in Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, and Fall 2016. It is important to note that I taught these Distance Learning sections because one of the former students who volunteered to become a participant in my study (Ruby) was in my Fall 2012 Distance Learning section.

### **Method of Participant Selection**

Since this was a qualitative study in which my aim was to build understanding through exploration of the experiences of individuals in a specific group, my initial sampling strategy was purposive. Guarte and Barrios (2006) defined purposive sampling as “a random selection of sampling units within the segment of the population with the most information on the characteristic of interest” (p. 277). Then, I implemented a convenience sampling strategy to recruit specific participants. Convenience sampling is defined by Mertens (2010) as a strategy in which “the persons participating in the study were chosen because they were readily available” (p. 325).

My initial strategy, the purpose sampling strategy, began with a recruitment email (Appendix A; the equivalent of a participant recruitment letter) to all of the 205 former

students who had experienced my WEs unit. To contact the former students, I used the email addresses that are stored in NNYSU's closed-source online database that stores all current and former students' contact information. Some of these prospective participants had not yet completed their degrees, and some were no longer enrolled at NNYSU; however, all of them were completely finished with my class. That is, all of the former students whom I contacted as prospective participants had already received final grades for English 101 on their transcripts. To the fifteen former students who responded affirmatively to the recruitment email, I sent via postal mail a paper copy of the study's informed consent form (Appendix B), with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Included with the informed consent form was the study's first data source, an initial questionnaire (Appendix C). The first five former students whose signed informed consent forms and questionnaires I received back via postal mail became the participants in the study; this is where the convenience sampling strategy came into play. In what follows, I introduce these five individuals who became the focal participants for this study. Their identities are protected by their chosen pseudonyms.

### **Focal Participants**

The information that I have provided in this section was shared voluntarily by the participants during the data collection process, which was summarized in the "Methodological Approach" section of Chapter One and is explicated in more detail in the forthcoming "Data Sources" and "Data Collection Methods" sections of this current chapter. (Each participant self-identified his or her age, gender, race/ethnicity, and the semester that he or she took my English 101 course on Part 1 of the questionnaire. Everything else in

each's participant's segment was mentioned by the participant during his or her interview, or in correspondence with me.)

**Ana.** My first participant was Ana, who was 22 years old during this study's period of data collection. Ana's self-identified gender is female, and her self-identified race/ethnicity is Latina. At the time of data collection, Ana had not yet graduated from NNYSU, but was looking forward to soon finishing her bachelor's degree in Homeland Security. Though she lived in Lilyville during every Fall and Spring semester, and became unusually integrated into the local community through her many hours per week spent working at a local gas station, my data collection occurred during the summer (of 2016), so she was currently living in her home neighborhood in Upper Manhattan, in New York City, and enjoying her employment at the observation desk in Rockefeller Center. Ana self-identified as a bilingual, fluent speaker of Spanish and English. She clarified, further, that the particular variety of Spanish she is most familiar with has been influenced by her parents' native tongue, Dominican Spanish: both of her parents are from the Dominican Republic. She stated that she has noticed distinct differences between Dominican Spanish and the varieties of Spanish that she has encountered in her travels to both Spain and Mexico, as well as the varieties she has encountered among Argentinian and Venezuelan tourists through her job at Rockefeller Center. Ana was a student in one of the sections of English 101 that I taught in the Fall 2012 semester. She became a student of mine again when she took my Spring 2014 section of English 215: Multiculturalism in American Literature. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

**Ruby.** My study's second participant was Ruby, who was 20 years old at the time of data collection. Ruby's self-identified gender is female, and she self-identified her

race/ethnicity as Caucasian. As noted at the end of the “Overview of Participant Pool” section, Ruby was the one participant who took my English 101 class when she was a high school student, through NNYSU’s Distance Learning network. She took the class during her sophomore year, in the Distance Learning classroom at her small hometown high school in Hammond, NY, which is located approximately 45 miles to the southwest of Lilyville. Upon Ruby’s graduation from high school, she began pursuing a bachelor’s degree in biology at Elmira College in Elmira, New York. Ruby self-identified as a speaker of “the standard English for the North Country<sup>7</sup>” and expressed tentative familiarity with Spanish, having taken Spanish classes in school from seventh through eleventh grade. Besides being my student in the Distance Learning section of English 101 that I taught during the Fall 2012 semester, Ruby was also my student in the Distance Learning section of English 209: Approaches to Literature, in the Spring 2013 semester. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016)

**Kobe.** The third former student of mine who became a participant in my study was Kobe, also 20 years old at the time of data collection. Kobe’s self-identified gender is male, and his self-identified race/ethnicity is African-American. At the time of data collection, Kobe had not yet graduated from NNYSU with his intended Bachelor’s Degree in Technology (B. Tech) in Criminal Justice: Law Enforcement Leadership, and was living and working, for the summer, at home: an area of Queens, New York that he described as a “predominantly African-American community.” Kobe self-identified as a lifelong speaker of Network Standard English and Black English, which he learned simultaneously as a child. He also explained that while he had been born in the U.S., his parents are from Guyana and Panama, and that he had also “dabbled with Spanish English” at times, though he “never

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<sup>7</sup> A common nickname for the northernmost swath of New York State that stretches from the eastern shore of Lake Ontario to the western shore of Lake Champlain.

took it to any extremes.” Kobe took my English 101 course in the Fall 2013 semester.

(Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

**Enlightened!.** My fourth participant was Enlightened!, who was 59 years of age at the time of data collection. Enlightened! self-identified her gender as female and her race/ethnicity as white/U.S. citizen. She had not, at any time, been enrolled as a full-time student at NNYSU, and had no intentions of pursuing that path. Rather, she took my class as a part-time student, as one step toward completion of four college courses required for a state-level certification related to her job as Activities Coordinator for the large nursing home and assisted living complex in Lilyville. Originally from a small town in New Jersey, Enlightened! moved to upstate New York in her 20s, and has lived in several small towns around the North Country since then. She self-identified as a native speaker of English, and as monolingual, though she has had some small measure of direct contact with Dutch and Spanish in her life: Dutch through a set of relatives from the Netherlands, and Spanish through her required language classes in high school. She also recalled that she composed her literacy narrative essay, the culminating project in the World Englishes unit, about her literacy in the “language of music,” specifically the expressive styles of Christian gospel music that she has enjoyed exploring after having been raised in what she described as a “conservative, traditional religious background” that did not allow for passionate expression through worship music. Enlightened! was my student in one of the English 101 sections that I taught during the Fall 2015 semester. (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016)

**Amber.** The fifth participant in my case study was Amber, age 18 at the time she contributed data to the study. Amber self-identified her gender as female, and her race/ethnicity as Native American. At the time of data collection, Amber had just completed

her freshman year in the Health and Fitness associate's degree program at NNYSU, and was in the process of transferring to Malone Community College<sup>8</sup>, a SUNY institution in Rochester, New York, in hopes of enjoying more stimulating opportunities in collegiate lacrosse than she had experienced as a member of NNYSU's team. Amber's home (where she was raised) is Akwesasne: a Mohawk Nation territory that straddles the international border between Canada and the United States. On the Canadian side (or rather, the side containing the land claimed by the Canadian government), the territory also straddles the boundary separating the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. On the U.S. side (or rather, the side that contains the land claimed by the U.S. government), the territory overlaps with a small ribbon of land that stretches across the northern part of New York State only. Amber self-identified as a bilingual, fluent speaker of Mohawk and English. She attended Mohawk immersion school through her pre-teens, and only began learning English in seventh and eighth grade, in order to attend high school. She also understands the Tuscarora language somewhat when listening to it, along with a few words of Lakota. Amber was a student of mine in the section of English 101 that I taught during the Spring 2016 semester.

(Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

These five focal participants shared a rich array of perceptions and perspectives with me throughout the course of my data collection process. In doing so, they each contributed to the case study a body of data that I analyzed in my hopes of gaining an understanding of whether the principles of SCEP had been an effective means of prompting the development of their language awareness and thereby reducing the potential for them to experience linguistic harm. I turn now to the data sources and collection methods.

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<sup>8</sup> A pseudonym.

## **Data Sources**

In order to explore the experiences of the case study's five participants—Ana, Ruby, Kobe, Enlightened!, and Amber—I planned to crystallize the following data sources that would be generated or shared during my data collection process: (1) an initial questionnaire (Appendix C), (2) a semi-structured phone or Skype interview (Appendix D), (3) the participants' correspondence with me, (4) any artifacts that the participants still possessed from the WEs unit that they wished to share with me, and (5) my research journal. This collection of items is similar to the collection by Janesick (2000) of data in the form of students' journal entries, haiku, and letters exchanged between members of the study; I share Janesick's outlook that "[w]hat we see when we view a crystal...depends on how we view it, how we hold it up to the light or not" (p. 392). My perspective on the importance of a careful crystallization process is also aligned with that of Denzin and Lincoln (2005), who held that qualitative research practices transform the world because they turn "objective reality," which is beyond our reach if it exists at all, into a series of representations (p. 5).

As it turned out, none of the participants ended up sharing artifacts from the class, and none of my correspondence with them ended up eliciting material that would have been useful for analysis. Thus, only the first, second, and fifth data sources listed above were used; that is, the data collected for crystallization ended up coming only from the questionnaires, the interviews, and my research journal.

I conclude this section with Table 2, which revisits the study's research questions, summarizes the information that I needed in order to address the questions, and lists my (originally intended) methods of data collection.

Table 2

*Overview of Information Needed*

Research Question	Information Needed	Data Collection Methods
(1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?	Harm reduction practitioners' explanations of the harm reduction model; U.S. composition teacher-scholars' perspectives on the merging of composition's traditional, prescriptive framework with the WEs framework	Scholarly Publications Personal Pedagogical Experiences
(2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?	Former undergraduate student participants' perceptions of their language awareness, specifically in regard to the English language, its users, and their language choices	Initial Questionnaire Semi-Structured Phone or Skype Interview Participants' Correspondence Artifacts Research Journal

**Data Collection Methods****Initial Questionnaire**

Mertens (2010) defined a questionnaire as useful for obtaining a lot of information from people in a nonthreatening manner, and a helpful means of providing a baseline of knowledge so that the researcher can develop more informed interview questions (p. 352). The questionnaire for this study (Appendix C) was developed using the points for formatting a questionnaire presented by Mertens (2010, p. 190). Questionnaires were distributed after approval was secured from the Institutional Review Boards of both Indiana University of Pennsylvania and NNYSU. My method of distributing the questionnaire to each individual was to include it in the envelope in which I mailed the informed consent form to each

individual who responded affirmatively to the recruitment email. Each of said individuals used the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I provided to mail the completed questionnaire back to me along with the signed informed consent form.

The questionnaire itself was divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire asked the participant to give the pseudonym he or she had chosen for the study, and then asked the participant to self-identify his or her age, gender, race/ethnicity, and the semester that he or she took the class that included the World Englishes unit. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of seven questions that invited more extensive written responses. These questions were inspired, in general, by the second research question. More specifically, each of these questions was designed to explore the effectiveness of one of the five principles of SCEP:

- Corresponding with Principle #1, “The classroom should be a space where linguistic harms are unlikely to occur,” the first question (Question #6) created an opportunity for me to explore how the World Englishes unit affected the student’s understanding of the concept of linguistic harm.
- Corresponding with Principle #2, “The teacher understands that all language users’ experiences and choices are unique, and prompts students toward greater appreciation of their own Englishes,” the second question (Question #7) was designed to allow me to explore how the WEs unit influenced the participant’s understanding and appreciation for his or her own English(es), as well as those of others.
- Corresponding with Principle #3, “The teacher welcomes other Englishes in the composition experience and places the final decision for how (much) to use them in

the students' hands," the third question (Question #8) was intended to provide me with a way to explore whether the participant indeed felt welcome to use his or her English(es) in the classroom.

- Three questions corresponded with Principle #4, "The teacher understands, and leads the student to understand, that language use is affected by biological, psychological, and social forces." The first in this sequence (Question #9) provided a way for me to explore how the WEs unit affected the participant's understanding that biological forces can affect language use, the second in the sequence (Question #10) allowed me to explore how the WEs unit affected the participant's understanding that psychological forces can affect language use, and the third in the sequence (Question #11) created a way for me to explore how the WEs unit affected the participant's understanding of the influence that social context can exert upon language use.
- Corresponding with Principle #5, "Any increased sense of language awareness constitutes success," the final question on the questionnaire (Question #12) created an opportunity for me to explore whether the participant experienced growth in language awareness as a result of experiencing the WEs unit.

While it is true that what the participants know *now* may have influenced how they recalled and recounted experiences they had before the WEs unit, my preparation for the follow-up interview included careful consideration of all of the contents of each participant's questionnaire. I therefore crafted interview questions that prompted the participant to probe his or her memory very closely in an effort to distinguish past impressions from knowledge developed in the meantime.

### **Semi-Structured Interview**

Yin (2002) explained that interviews are some of the most important sources of case study information (p. 89), and that the researcher has “two jobs”: “(a) to follow your own line of inquiry, as reflected by your case study protocol, and (b) to ask your actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of your line of inquiry” (p. 90). The purpose of interviewing the participants after they completed the questionnaire was to establish a space to ask questions about the contents of the questionnaire, probing further into the participants’ experiences, thereby enriching the quality of the data obtained from the questionnaires while providing the study another form of data for crystallization. The protocol for this semi-structured interview is included in Appendix D.

Mertens (2010) explained that most interviews in qualitative studies follow unstructured or “minimally structured” formats (p. 370). Accordingly, each interview was a semi-structured, focused interview (Yin, 2002, p. 90) guided by a particular set of questions that did not need to be covered in a particular order, and in which I as the interviewer was able to follow “topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray” from the guiding questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, p. 1). With each participant, the interview consisted of open-ended questions that I derived from my reading and reflection upon the participant’s responses on the questionnaire.

Lastly, while the interviews were intended to offer the participants what Cohen and Crabtree (2006) expressed as “the freedom to express their views in their own terms” (p. 2), the main purpose of the interviews was to explore the interviewees’ perceptions, in the interests of discovering whether transformation had occurred as a result of exposure to the World Englishes paradigm through the WEs unit.

## **Participants' Correspondence**

Yin (2002) stated that the essential function of such documents as the participants' correspondence with me is "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 87).

## **Artifacts**

While the main sources of data were to have been (and turned out to be) the questionnaire, the semi-structured phone or Skype interview, my research journal, and participants' correspondence with me, participants' artifacts could also have constituted a data source. To further develop my understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions, I also would have collected as data any artifacts that the participants might have retained from the WEs unit, if they had wished to share such items with me. Regarding cultural artifacts produced in the past, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have explained that in artifacts, researchers may discover "important meanings about the human shape of lived cultures" (p. 635). While Denzin and Lincoln were referring to artifacts produced in the past and whose creators are no longer present for researchers to talk with, the idea that material artifacts can convey perceptions and understandings developed by their creators could have been relevant to this study. If participants had looked back at artifacts they created during the WEs unit, they might have gained greater insight into ways that their language awareness had been affected by the WEs unit. Likewise, if I had been given the opportunity to examine a participant's artifacts from the class, I would have had the opportunity to compare and contrast the understandings conveyed by the artifacts with the understandings represented in the participant's responses on the questionnaire and during the interview. In fact, Hodder (2000) has argued that "material traces of behavior give an important and

different insight from that provided by any number of questionnaires. ‘What people say’ is often very different from ‘what people do’” (p. 705). Lastly, it is important to mention that I informed the participants that if they chose not to submit artifacts to me, they need not fear any negative repercussions on their participation in the study.

### **Research Journal**

I maintained a research journal throughout my data collection and analysis process, to record important events and provide a space for my reflections during the research process. Borg (2001) affirmed that “by documenting and reflecting on their experience, [research] writers benefit from an enhanced awareness of themselves as people and as professionals” (p. 156). Borg provided an example in which a research journal was kept for four years during the course of a project; at the end of the process, the researcher realized that the journal itself could be analyzed as data (p. 158). In my research journal, thus, I recorded important events, as well as major realizations and reflections which transpired during the course of my research. And, as I had hoped, my research journal did indeed engender ideas and insights that provided further shape to the study.

### **Data Analytic Procedures**

After I finished collecting the data, I transcribed the five interviews from the audio format in which I had recorded them to written transcripts that would be more conducive to close visual examination. In this transcription process, I also ensured that any accidental utterances of participants’ real names were replaced by their chosen pseudonyms. These five interview transcripts, the five completed questionnaires, and the contents of my research journal became the lens through which I was then able to explore the participants’

perceptions of how the WEs unit, as shaped by the principles of SCEP, affected their language awareness.

In discussing qualitative empirical research data collection and analysis, Yin (2003) emphasized the importance of considering the general analytic strategies that the case study researcher can employ:

[A]ll empirical research studies, including case studies, have a “story” to tell. The story differs from a fictional account because it embraces your data, but it remains a story because it must have a beginning, end, and middle. The needed analytic strategy is your guide to crafting this story, and only rarely will your data do the crafting for you. (p. 130)

The general analytic strategies that Yin outlined were “relying on theoretical propositions,” “thinking about rival explanations,” and “developing a case description” (p. 130-134).

Because I wanted to be careful to maintain the exploratory nature of the study, I employed a variation of the strategy of relying on theoretical propositions: my analysis was guided by the methodological purpose of the study. Mertens (2010) has explained how and why this variation may be adopted:

Propositions are statements akin to hypotheses that state why you think you might observe a specific behavior or relationship. All case studies may not lend themselves to the statement of propositions, especially if they are exploratory. However...the researcher should be able to state the purpose (in lieu of the propositions) of the study and the criteria by which an explanation will be judged successful. (p. 234)

The methodological purpose of the study was to explore my five former English 101 students’ perceptions of how the WEs unit, as shaped by the principles of SCEP, affected

their language awareness. Therefore, the standard by which I judged each of my explanations successful was whether or not it reflected the participant's explicit attention to his or her own language awareness, as affected by the WEs unit.

I coded the data using qualitative content analysis. I created the main categories of the coding frame in both data-driven and concept-driven ways, with the concepts being reflections of the study's methodological purpose. As I discerned and recorded themes that emerged across the data sources, I charted patterns of codes and code combinations, while maintaining continuous attention to the accuracy with which the concepts represented by the codes reflected the contextual meaning of the retrieved words and phrases (Yin, 2014, p. 127-128). My focus was on summarizing "what is there" in the data (rather than looking at the data in new ways or creating theories) while maintaining the focus on the concepts. Schreier (2012) corroborated the validity of this plan by reporting that deductive, concept-driven categorization is common in qualitative content analysis (QCA) (p. 41).

Another definition of QCA is that it is a specific approach that can be used to analyze text data that seeks to "[g]o beyond merely counting words" to studying language closely so that it can be divided up into categories shaped by the values of similar meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Hsieh and Shannon considered content analysis a method of research "for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (p. 1278).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Stake (2000) explained that “[q]ualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world”; as such, qualitative researchers should strive to adhere to contextual norms of etiquette and ethics (p. 447). I understand that cultivating, maintaining, and executing an ethical sensibility is a crucial part of what it means to participate honorably in both research and teaching responsibilities. Therefore, to uphold ethical considerations, I constructed and submitted applications to both NNYSU’s and Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Institutional Research Boards, and obtained approvals from each, before recruiting my study’s participants. Secondly, I procured the informed consent of each of my study’s participants before collecting any data from them. Thirdly, I maintained the participants’ confidentiality by using pseudonyms for each. Fourthly, I informed the participants that they may read, and dialogue with me about, any of the data that I collected from them. Fifthly, all materials related to the study have been kept in safe, locked locations. Lastly, all data will be retained for at least three years, in accordance with federal law.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Ellingson (2008) pointed out that crystallizing a text requires a serious effort at “reflexive consideration,” that is, a conscious and critical self-awareness regarding how one’s positionality and epistemological perspectives affect one’s perceptions (p. 12). In other words, along with the lenses provided by Humanizing Pedagogy, the WEs ethos, and the harm reduction model, my own subjectivity constituted a lens. When digesting and crystallizing the data, I strove to never forget that there are implications of my belief, notwithstanding that it was experientially born, in the power of the pedagogical orientation that I have theorized. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) reminded, behind any labels for activities that take place in qualitative research is the “personal biography” of the researcher,

who is situated simultaneously in a particular class, gender, race, culture, and ethnicity (p. 18). “Any gaze is always filtered through [these] lenses,” Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 19) asserted. My experiences as both a social worker and a teacher, and my disposition to feel passionate about issues of social justice, inevitably affected my gaze and thus my place in the crystallization process. In other words, throughout my research, I tried to exercise conscientious cognizance that “[t]here are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of—and between—the observer and the observed” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined and described the study design and its details. Following my revisiting of the theoretical and pedagogical awakening that precipitated my development of the study’s methodology, the following methodological aspects were presented: (1) my justification for conducting qualitative research; (2) my justification for implementing a case study approach; and (3) my description of the study context, in which I included an overview of the focal course, an overview of the participant pool, a synopsis of the methods by which the five focal participants were actually selected, and then a brief introduction to each of them. Then, I provided (4) an overview of the study’s data sources, (5) a more detailed explanation of these data collection methods, and (6) an account of the analytic procedure that I applied to the data. Finally, I presented (7) a summary of my ethical considerations, and (8) a brief reflection on issues of trustworthiness. I now turn to the next chapter, Chapter Four, in which I present the five main themes that emerged from the data that was generated during the case study’s data collection process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PARTICIPANTS' DATA AND EMERGENT THEMES

In continuation of this study's aim of developing a meaningful contribution to the existing body of ideas for how contemporary U.S. college composition instructors can address the unprecedented language diversity in our classrooms, this fourth chapter focuses on presenting the themes that emerged from the data that was generated during the case study's data collection process. First, however—similarly to how I began the first three chapters—I revisit the sequence of theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological steps that led to the particular point in this dissertation research that is represented by this current chapter. Next, in the form of Table 3, titled *The Five Case Study Participants' Profiles*, I provide a brief review of the basic demographic information about each of the five participants: a distillation of the biographical information I provided in Chapter Three's "Focal Participants" section. Following Table 3's review of the participants' demographic information, I present the five significant themes that emerged from the data during my application of qualitative content analysis. Presented with each theme are the excerpts from the participants' data that I determined as manifesting the theme, along with my interpretation of each excerpt and my explanation of how I consider it related to the theme. In each theme's section, the participants' data appears in the order that the participants are listed in Table 3. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief review of its contents and a brief introduction to the final chapter.

#### **How We Got Here: Theoretical, Pedagogical, and Methodological Steps Revisited**

As iterated in the preceding three chapters, several years of scholarly and pedagogical experiences instilled in me the conviction that it is necessary to widen the

purview of U.S. college composition so that we move from the flawed and harmful set of assumptions embodied by the traditional expression “English class” to a more reality-based conceptualization perhaps best represented by the moniker “Englishes class.” This conviction shaped my thinking and my teaching, increasingly, to the point that it eventually prompted my formulation of the theoretical and pedagogical purpose, and then the methodological purpose, of this dissertation research.

The theoretical and pedagogical purpose was to explore how the harm reduction model, which I encountered in a past career in the social services sector, could inform U.S. composition theory and pedagogy for the purpose of integrating the World Englishes paradigm in a simple yet organized approach—an approach which could minimize the potential for students to experience what I call *linguistic harm* by heightening their language awareness, specifically in relation to the English language, its users, and their language choices. (Refer to the “Linguistic Harm” section in Chapter One for my explanation of linguistic harm.) I had been using the harm reductionist orientation, in general, to guide much of my teaching and scholarship for some time before applying it explicitly in the context of this study. With that said, my theoretical and pedagogical purpose shaped my articulation of the first of the study’s two research questions:

- (1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

This first research question was “answered” in Chapter Two, the literature review, through my multi-step theorizing and then articulating of the collection of five principles that I have named Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy (SCEP):

- Principle #1: The classroom should be a space where linguistic harms are unlikely to occur.
- Principle #2: The teacher understands that all language users' experiences and choices are unique, and prompts students toward greater appreciation of their own Englishes.
- Principle #3: The teacher welcomes other Englishes in the composition experience and places the final decision for how (much) to use them in the students' hands.
- Principle #4: The teacher understands, and leads the student to understand, that language use is affected by biological, psychological, and social forces.
- Principle #5: Any increased sense of language awareness constitutes success.

The five principles of SCEP constitute not only the culmination of my response to the first research question, but also give explicit expression to the general orientation that characterized my teaching of the four-week "World Englishes unit" in the beginning of every section of first-year composition, or English 101, since Spring 2012. As such, the principles can be considered a collective representation of the theoretical and pedagogical foundation upon which the study's methodological purpose arose.

The methodological purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of five of my former English 101 students in efforts to find out how they believed their language awareness had been affected by the WEs unit. My hope was to discover whether the SCEP framework could be effective in its ultimate goal of raising the students' language awareness, and if it had been effective, how so. This methodological purpose shaped the second research question:

- (2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?

To address this second research question, I designed the qualitative case study outlined in Chapter Three. The five former students who became the focal participants were different from each other in nearly every conceivable way, a characteristic of this case study that could have borne certain limitations—such as rendering it endless—if my methodological purpose had been other than to study the case for its intrinsic value. However, as it was, the diverse combination of emic perspectives shared by these five individuals offered me rich territory that I could explore for evidence of the effectiveness of SCEP.

### **Participant Profiles**

The following table offers a brief review of the personal demographic information that each participant in the case study provided in Part 1 of his or her questionnaire. This table is intended to function only as a recap of the more extensive introduction that each participant was afforded in Chapter Three's "Focal Participants" section.

Table 3

*The Five Case Study Participants' Profiles*

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age at Time of Data Collection	Self-Identified Gender	Self-Identified Race/ Ethnicity	Semester English 101 Taken
ANA	22	Female	Latina	Fall 2012
RUBY	20	Female	Caucasian	Fall 2012
KOBE	20	Male	African American	Fall 2013
ENLIGHTENED!	59	Female	White/U.S. Citizen	Fall 2015
AMBER	18	Female	Native American	Spring 2016

**Presentation of Themes and Participant Data Excerpts**

In this section, I present the five themes that emerged most saliently from the data that I collected from each of the five focal participants. The participants contributed a rich array of data to the study, in the form of perceptions and perspectives about how the WEs unit had affected their language awareness. Per the methodological plan that I presented in Chapter Three, I employed the data analytic procedure of qualitative content analysis to each participant's commentary in his or her respective questionnaire and interview transcript: I studied each of these data sources thoroughly, exploring for evidence of conscious development of language awareness, and coding common themes that manifested across some, or in some cases, all of the participants' contributions. Although language awareness can be developed both consciously and unconsciously, I limited my search to evidence of conscious development, to remain consistent with the focus expressed in the (second) research question: that is, the focus on participants' demonstrations of the metacognitive ability to perceive developments in their own language awareness.

Perhaps because I chose to refine my search in this way, to focus on metacognitive awareness, not all of the themes emerged with the same level of salience in each participant's data. I decided that in order for content to warrant being excerpted from any participant's data and included in this chapter as evidence of a theme, the content had to display the theme with salience dramatic enough as to be unequivocal. Because not every participant's data evidenced all five themes so indisputably, not all themes' sections include data from each participant. As I note in the "Future Research Directions" section of Chapter Five, a future study might focus on this same body of data and these same five emergent themes, but include content from all five participants in each theme's section, content in which the theme *may* be interpreted as present, but more obliquely.

As stated, five themes emerged, albeit to varying extents across the participants' data, through my application of QCA. Each theme is presented with the excerpts from the particular participants' data that I discerned as evidencing the theme unequivocally, and each excerpt is accompanied by my interpretation of it as well as my explanation of how I see it related to the theme. Per theme, the participants' data is presented and interpreted in the order presented in Table 3.

### **Theme #1: Language Awareness as Affecting Social Connections**

Within the participants' questionnaire responses and interviews, the first theme that I interpreted as evident was that growth in language awareness can affect one's sense of connection with other people. This theme emerged most noticeably and indisputably in data contributed by Kobe and Amber. In deciding how to articulate this theme, I chose the rather neutral verb "affect" because it was able to account for the variety of effects I interpreted Kobe and Amber as having experienced. More specifically, it seemed to me that both Kobe

and Amber experienced enhancement in their senses of connection with other people as a result of heightened language awareness, but at the same time, their heightened language awareness may have undermined their senses of worth within those connections.

**Kobe.** For Kobe, the development of language awareness during and after the WEs unit came across as strongly related to developments in his social comfort level on campus, inside and outside of class, and especially in cross-racial interactions. In the very beginning of his interview, he indicated that he had arrived at NNYSU unprepared to interact with people from so many different backgrounds who communicate in so many different dialects, because—as I also noted in my introduction of Kobe in the “Focal Participants” section of Chapter Three—he was raised in a mainly African-American environment and was “used to speaking in what is referred to as Black English” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). He recounted a time that a group of white friends taught him the word “chmacked,” which means being under the influence of alcohol and drugs simultaneously, and which he specified having only ever heard used by white people, not black or Hispanic people: “I sometimes see, um, interracial friendships where people who use the term and black students are unfamiliar with the term—and they’ll ask, ya know, ‘What does that mean?’” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). After he had repeated, several times, his association of “chmacked” with white people, I decided to ask him if anyone had ever looked at him strangely when he said it. He replied, “Uh, yeah, actually a few times like ‘What are you saying?’ They look at me kinda weird, the white community; they’re like ‘Wait what did you say?’ It’s like a eyebrow raiser” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). When I then asked him if he meant that they were looking at him with confusion, or as if they were giving him negative feedback, he responded to the contrary:

No, no, no negative feedback. It's all positive. I feel like it makes them more comfortable. Because of where I'm located at school, it's not—there are—there aren't that many African-American students that attend so—maybe they want to, um, learn more about us. And I feel like using their dialect is a way of easily connecting with them. So, that's probably why there wasn't any negative feedback. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

One possible interpretation of Kobe's response, here, is that in its dichotomizing of "them" versus "us," it illustrated his perception that a barrier—some kind of gap characterized by lack of familiarity with each other—existed between the white students and the African-American students on campus. He positioned the African-American group, with himself as its representative, as the "outsider" group and numerical minority, who—despite being an object of curiosity to the larger group—apparently bore the responsibility of figuring out how to make the social overtures that could facilitate the building of a bridge over the cultural gap. When I asked him if he could recap how his remarks about "chmacked" related to the World Englishes unit, he replied as follows:

If I hadn't had the World Englishes unit—I certainly—I don't think I would be as open to learn—because the different dialects that people use are—I generally think that this course has, you know, broadened my horizons about these different dialects and—well, because—it's primarily because, you know, where I'm from is a predominantly African-American community.... So I'm so used to speaking in what is referred to as Black English.... So this course definitely opened my mind and—and now I feel comfortable using terminology that's really from different races,

cultures, et cetera.... So this—this course definitely had influence on me comfortably using that term. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

What Kobe may have meant by the above statements is that the unit had suggested to him that nobody owns any particular dialect of English: a fact that had hitherto been inaccessible to him simply because he had not yet been in a social or educational position in which he might have been exposed to it. It might have been that this revelation relieved him of a measure of the stress inherent in being part of the group whose responsibility it was to find ways of connecting socially with the other group. He might, in other words, have learned or surmised during the WEs unit that he could borrow if not appropriate terminology that he had once perceived to be owned by a group in which he was not a member. According to this interpretation, before the WEs unit, he might well have assumed such borrowing or appropriation to be socially inappropriate, facilitating only social *disconnectedness*; however, the WEs unit may have helped him to see the borrowing or appropriation of forms he had associated with other Englishes as a possible resource for building social connections.

On the other hand, two aspects of the above sections of Kobe's interview transcript can be interpreted as potentially evidencing a less-than-uplifting development related to language awareness. The "us/them" dichotomy in the first excerpted section is one such aspect. His labeling of some terminology as "really from different races, cultures, et cetera" (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016) in the second section is the other aspect. What these pieces may indicate is that Kobe emerged from the World Englishes unit with the impression that different Englishes should be conceived as entirely separate from each other. This is indeed one of the criticisms that has been leveled at the pluralizing of the term "English" by some

proponents of the translingual model: pluralizing the singular noun “English” *seems*, at face value, to point to the same process of total duplication that is signified by the pluralizing of other nouns. As I pointed out in Chapter Two, however, those who make this assumption about the World Englishes paradigm have made the mistake of conflating it with B. Kachru’s outdated three-circle model (1992). In any event, while believing Englishes to be entirely separate, discrete entities is not the same as believing that varieties are owned by particular groups, believing that the plural connotes the separateness of varieties seems similarly fraught with potential for undermining a person’s sense of worthiness to use an unfamiliar variety in attempt to experience social connection. In other words, if this interpretation were to be accurate, my attempt to raise Kobe’s language awareness by introducing him to WEs might also have inadvertently raised his potential for experiencing linguistic harm.

Kobe returned to the subject of language awareness heightening students’ social comfort levels a second time during his interview, while expressing support for my welcoming of different Englishes into the classroom via reading assignments that introduced students to code-meshed writing, and writing assignments that invited students to experiment with code-meshing themselves. More specifically, this second instance occurred as he elaborated on the definition of code-meshing that he had articulated in writing on the questionnaire. He began his verbal elaboration as follows:

It’s a way...to introduce new languages to students who may have not already, um—it’s a way to broaden their learning environment. It’s—you know, spice it up. You know, students are more comfortable in their own skin—or with their own tongue, I would say. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

Immediately observable, here, is Kobe's implication that some students have not been exposed to certain linguistic forms thus far in their lives, because their default "learning environment" has been characterized by a lack of linguistic broadness (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). This group of students, he seems to have been suggesting, could benefit from being exposed to new forms insofar as this exposure could make their learning experience more stimulating. Next, he expressed his awareness that there are *also* students who have been made uncomfortable by the lack of linguistic diversity in these same learning environments—insofar as it has been *their* "tongue[s]"—the forms of language in which they are most comfortable communicating—that have been excluded (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). His reason for presenting his opinions about the benefits of code-meshing activities for each of these groups so closely together soon became clear:

I feel like [reading and writing assignments involving code-meshing] makes students more coherent—and aware of the other languages that do exist. And I feel that if all students were—well, we can't all be on the same page—but just all alert, and aware of the different languages. It makes students more coherent with each other.... It makes them more comfortable around each other. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

What it seems that Kobe may have meant, here, is that he had developed the opinion that exposing *all* students to heretofore unfamiliar forms of language, through reading and writing activities involving code-meshing, can enhance and even establish new social connections among them. In pointing out that such exposure can make students more coherent with each other, he may have been alluding to times that he learned new terms during code-meshing activities, new words and phrases that literally did render him more coherent to certain peers—or vice versa. In any case, in the above excerpt, I interpret Kobe

as conveying the strong impression that raising students' language awareness equates to alerting them to the existence and the legitimacy of difference—and that this is perhaps the most reasonable and realistic way of at least beginning to heighten the social comfort level of students in college settings.

**Amber.** For Amber, too, developing language awareness seemed to lend itself to a heightened sense of connection with other people—while simultaneously creating possibilities for her to experience harmful effects. Amber identified her increased sense of social connection as the discovery that she was not the only person who had ever felt an inexplicable sense of isolation, and of being antagonized by unidentified forces, in relation to her language use.

The first time I interpreted this theme as manifesting in the data that Amber contributed to the study was in her response to Question #12 on the questionnaire, which asked, “How would you say your language awareness was affected by your experiences during the World Englishes unit?” Amber’s response to this question began, “I believe it has affected greatly because I hadn’t understood or known that I wasn’t alone in a struggle I couldn’t point out” (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016). Here, Amber seems to be expressing that prior to the WEs unit, Amber had felt or sensed that she had long been involved, involuntarily, in some sort of conflict related to her use of language—but had believed that she was the only one who occupied this uncomfortable position. The quoted sentence seems to indicate that Amber perceived the WEs unit as having given rise to her discovery that she was *not* the only one. This discovery seems to have rendered her sense of social alienation less acute.

However, other interpretations can be made. For example, an element of the same questionnaire response that complicates the first interpretation is Amber's choice to continue to describe her experience as a "struggle": this word choice may suggest that acquiring the knowledge that she wasn't alone did nothing to alleviate the harmful effects of being involved in an unwanted struggle in the first place. Indeed, having the features of the struggle defined more clearly by information imparted during the WEs unit does seem as if it could have made Amber's discontent feel even more onerous. This possible interpretation echoes a theme that has wended its way through American literary history. An agonizing passage from the literacy narrative of Frederick Douglass, one of the texts I include in the WEs unit, comes to mind:

As I read and contemplated the subject [of slavery], behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. (1845, p. 35)

While Douglass's narrative and Amber's commentary depict different forms of language awareness having been developed, the commonality that may be intuited between their stories seems worthy of consideration. Both individuals, members of severely marginalized groups, developed their respective forms of language awareness and thereby gained access to information about the wider world—information which posed the potential for their oppressed condition to feel even more cruel and unjust. While creating the possibility for such a painful sensation to be experienced by my students was the last thing I ever intended for the WEs unit to accomplish, this discovery of the possibility that raising students'

language awareness might recast their current realities as more oppressive seems an invaluable insight to have gleaned from the data.

A section from Amber's interview that evidenced the theme of language awareness affecting social connections carried the potential, in my opinion, for the same ambivalent interpretation to be made. In this section, her comments again seemed to convey, at face value, a sensation of feeling less alone in an embattled position as a result of heightened language awareness. Her mother, she told me, had decided one year to pull all of her older siblings out of the Mohawk immersion school that Amber herself had eventually attended, and enroll them in an English-speaking school so that they could become comfortable with English before they reached high school (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). Amber recounted what happened during that endeavor:

[T]hat didn't work out, because they tried to say that they had, um, speech impediments, so she took them back out. She put 'em back into, um, Mohawk immersion schools—and, I don't know—it's always just been something my mom's really been hard on us about, is keeping our language, because she says if we can't speak with our tongue, then we can't—be who we are. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

Assuming that it had been some among the school's faculty who had made the claim about her siblings' speech impediments, I inquired as to the specifics of the teachers' justifications. Amber responded that it had been because her siblings "couldn't pronounce certain words," and then specified further: "our *R*s are different, I guess" (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). When I then asked if the WEs unit had affected her perspective on these past events, Amber expanded on what she had written in response to Question #12 on the questionnaire:

[I]t affected it in a sense that it made me realize that it wasn't just, like, my family that had these pro—issues, or problems, and it was mainly, like, anybody else that spoke in a different language...and...it made me realize...they're not just the only people that feel that way, or that go through these things. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

A positive interpretation of Amber's meaning in the above excerpt is that the increase in language awareness that she had experienced during the WEs unit had not only established in her the new understanding that she had expressed in response to Question #12 on the questionnaire: that she was not the only one who had been experiencing a struggle she had intuited but not been able to define (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016). The WEs unit had also provided her with information that allowed her to actually distinguish a defining feature—that is, having a home language that is not SAE—of a large group that had been experiencing the same struggle. According to this interpretation, the increase in language awareness that Amber experienced during the WEs unit ended up revealing to her that she is a part of a community, a network of social connections in which she might cultivate a fulfilling sense of solidarity.

As implied, however, a more negative interpretation of these most recent statements can be made as well: that Amber's newfound awareness of the prevalence of language prejudice may have lent itself to more acute suffering, a more desolate sense of entrapment in a status quo that does not value her presence and so negatively affects her sense of worth in relation to other people. This interpretation is underscored by Amber's phraseology in explaining to me that her siblings "couldn't pronounce certain words" (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). The judgment that her siblings had speech impediments was rendered by the L1

English-speaking administrators at the school, and yet her phraseology makes it seem that she internalized the administrators' perception as her own reality: took on the perspective that not only were her siblings simply unable to produce phonological correctness, but that the words themselves were property owned only by the L1 English-speaking administrators, insofar as they were the ones who got to determine how they should be pronounced. Thus, this second section of the data contributed by Amber seems to suggest the same possibility revealed by the first section discussed: raising a student's language awareness does not, contrary to my original assumption, necessarily lend itself directly or only to a reduction in potential for linguistic harm to be experienced.

In sum, two of the five participants who took part in this qualitative case study perceived that the World Englishes unit, as shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy, had raised their language awareness in ways that affected social connections in their lives. For Kobe, the heightening in language awareness led him to feel more comfortable and competent in social interactions on campus, especially those involving racial diversity, outside as well as inside the classroom (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). However, my usage of the World Englishes paradigm as the key construct for raising the students' awareness of the reality that exists beyond the narrow parameters of uncritical prescriptivism may have also given rise to a misunderstanding on Kobe's part. This misunderstanding, that pluralizing the word "English" indicates separateness of varieties, could become the type of point of confusion that engenders the linguistic harm of linguistic anxiety, by undermining his sense of confidence and worth as a possible user of unfamiliar Englishes in the future. For Amber, the heightening in language awareness included her major discovery that she had never actually been as isolated as she had

assumed, in sensing throughout her life that she was struggling against some antagonistic force related to language use (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016; Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). However, similarly to the less positive interpretation of Kobe's statements related to this first theme, Amber's newfound awareness may also have made her feel disempowered, less worthy or even capable of experiencing connection with other people. In conclusion, analyzing these sections in Kobe's and Amber's data which evidenced the theme that language awareness can affect social connections led me to discover complications in my original assumption that raising students' language awareness automatically reduces their potential for experiencing linguistic harm, and vice versa. Even in situations where my assumption seems to have been validated, other consequences can emerge, less uplifting effects that future pedagogical activities during the WEs unit can and should address.

## **Theme #2: Language Awareness as Promoting Personal Growth**

The second theme that emerged most saliently and unequivocally from several of the participants' questionnaire responses and interviews was that language awareness can promote personal growth. To frame a working definition of personal growth for this chapter, I borrow Maslow's (1962) concept of the journey toward self-actualization.

According to Maslow (1962), every human being is born with an "essential inner nature," a biological "raw material" that generally resists change—though as "raw" it should be also be understood as such, since it "very quickly starts growing into a self as it meets the world outside and begins to have transactions with it" (p. 35). That is, direct as well as indirect interactions with other people, and the events that ensue from these interactions, shape the individual's "inner nature" and influence its growth trajectory as well as growth

rate. Barring the type of existential catastrophe that could cause one's inner nature to vanish or perish, it is driven to grow toward selfhood by a "dynamic force of its own," in a process oriented toward the achievement of an ultimate state of "self-actualization" (p. 35).

That achieving a state of self-actualization requires a journey of growth—also referred to by Maslow as "the quest for one's identity" (p. 35)—means that a person's adult self is an accumulated collection of the person's inborn traits plus the characteristics that have been generated by these traits' interactions with the world as the person had moved through it:

Life is a continual series of choices for the individual in which *a* main determinant of choice is the person as he already is (including his goals for himself, his courage or fear, his feeling of responsibility, his ego-strength or "will power," etc.). (p. 36, emphasis added)

To put this another way, according to Maslow, the self that an individual comes to possess should be considered almost entirely "a creation of the person himself"—insofar as "[e]very person is, in part, 'his own project,' and makes himself" (p. 36).

As for the final phase of any given person's process of growth toward self-actualization, a state of "psychological health" is the ideal end (p. 36). Maslow provided some alternate terms for this final state: "self-fulfillment," "emotional maturity," "individuation," "productiveness," and of course "self-actualization" (p. 36). Even though I have come to believe, in alignment with Maslow, that very few people actually reach a state of full-fledged self-actualization (p. 39), I still found it important to honor as evidence of personal growth the expressions of greater self-knowledge, self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-confidence that I found in several of my participants' data.

Thus, and in sum, my definition of personal growth is grounded in Maslow's theory of self-actualization: Personal growth equates to "the process of *becoming* a person"—as opposed to "*being* a person"—and transpires under pressure from one's will, or aspiration, to grow past or beyond one's perceived limitations (p. 40). As Maslow articulated, the journey of personal growth may not always be referenced in an entirely positive and painless light, as it often involves some measure of discomfort:

Growth has not only rewards and pleasures but also many intrinsic pains, and always will have. Each step forward is a step into the unfamiliar and is possibly dangerous.... Growth forward is in spite of these losses and therefore requires courage and strength in the individual, as well as protection, permission and encouragement from the environment, especially for the child. (p. 42)

In other words, while one's aspiration to experience personal growth is motivated by a desire to achieve a sense of personal fulfillment, the growth process itself is not always immediately gratifying. The aspiration to experience authentic personal growth cannot come to fruition unless it manifests in the seeking of challenges that promote learning and discovery, and in the exercise of placing oneself in positions that test one's core principles and biases. As Maslow asserted, "We learn...about our own strengths and limits by overcoming difficulties, by straining ourselves to the utmost, by meeting challenge, even by failing. [However][,] [t]here can be great enjoyment in a great struggle, and this can displace fear" (p. 39).

In my application of qualitative content analysis to the participants' questionnaire responses and interview transcripts, I observed instances in data contributed by Ana, Enlightened!, and Amber in which they articulated perceptions that I interpreted as

indicating, beyond dispute, that the WEs unit had heightened their language awareness in ways that in turn promoted their personal growth.

**Ana.** The theme that language awareness can promote personal growth was first displayed in the data collected from Ana in a segment of her interview in which she described a language-related struggle she had experienced while working her part-time job at a downtown gas station during her years spent at college in upstate New York. In the beginning of her time spent in this employment position, the store's manager had drawn attention to Ana's pronunciation of the verb "ask" as "axe," and had informed her, while laughing, that "axe" was the "wrong" pronunciation (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). Ana explained to me that before experiencing the WEs unit in English 101, being corrected by her manager in this way prompted her to become, in her words, "very annoyed"; it felt to her as if he were "just making fun of me, not trying to help me" (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). The WEs unit, however, provided her with opportunities to build new knowledge which, according to her, helped her to grow beyond her initial inclination to become mired in her own emotional reaction:

After taking the class, it's like—um—whether he was making fun of me or not, I now take that with consideration. "Well, thank you; you opened my eyes!"—or, um—you know.... I'm pronouncing it wrong, or I'm pronouncing it right, depending on where I'm living.... It's all environment. Everyone says and does things completely different, um, depending on where they're—where they're living, and where, you know—where they're at at the moment.... So...I don't get annoyed anymore. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

As for how I might interpret this set of statements, they seem to me to suggest that the language awareness Ana developed during the WEs unit helped her gain freedom from the self-protective yet limiting emotional response that had previously shackled her, prohibiting her from growing into a more resilient employee, one who can handle criticism posed less than constructively: an unfortunate norm in the employment realm. More specifically, this excerpt seems to suggest that Ana's exposure to the descriptivist orientation inherent to the WEs ethos effectively taught her that just because her pronunciation of "ask" was considered "wrong" by *one* audience in *one* environment didn't mean that it was "wrong," period. To put this potential interpretation yet another way, internalizing this lesson in descriptivism seems to have empowered Ana: In learning that she actually had a choice to make, a choice between options that are each considered legitimate and correct, albeit in different environments, she seems to have developed some new level of resilience in terms of self-respect—a stronger ability to maintain a baseline level of self-respect no matter *which* choice she would end up making in any given interaction. As I noted in my synopsis of Maslow's (1962) concept of self-actualization, the ideal final phase of anyone's process of personal growth is a state of psychological health (p. 36). Experiencing growth in self-respect is, to be sure, a meaningful step along the way to reaching a state of psychological health.

The theme of language awareness promoting personal growth emerged a second time during Ana's interview, as she continued to share reflections on the pronunciation of "ask" versus "axe." In these continued reflections, Ana shared another explanation of how the WEs unit had engendered in her a higher threshold of tolerance for criticism, as well as

additional insights that I see as depicting further personal growth in the form of openness to new experiences and different, potentially unfamiliar perspectives:

I appreciate [being “corrected”] in the sense, um—that—like, I’m getting a more—I have a better understanding of how they view things. So it—it helps me keep that open mind. So, um—because I only had my own, um—my own interpretation of everything—and that was “axe.” I was...like, “Screw anybody who told me different!” By them telling me...I was wrong or right, it gave me that—hmm—it helped me realize that there is more. Other people do—do expect—um, different things. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

What I interpret as most significant in the excerpt above is a continuation of Ana’s expression of active interest in growing beyond the limitations imposed by a former belief. In the passage, Ana has depicted herself as having journeyed from her initial position of entrapment behind the blinders of her own emotional reaction to a more informed and critically self-aware position in which she appears able not only to acknowledge the social actuality that different settings contain different discourse conventions, but to appreciate being reminded of this. In sum, I see Ana’s explicit display of interest in personal growth as an excellent example of Maslow’s (1962) proposition that “[e]very person is, in part, ‘his own project,’ and makes himself” (p. 36).

**Enlightened!.** I discerned evidence that the WEs unit’s goal of raising language awareness had ended up promoting personal growth for Enlightened!, as well. The first point that I believe is worth noting in terms of Enlightened!’s personal growth trajectory is its magnitude. My comprehension and opinion of the magnitude of Enlightened!’s language awareness-engendered personal growth journey began when I discovered her response to

Question #12 on the questionnaire, which asked the participants to explain how their language awareness was affected by the WEs unit. In partial response to this inquiry, Enlightened! shared the following reflections:

Learning more about cultural differences, the differing languages of fields/discourses, [and] rhetorical listening have all had positive effects on how I communicate my thoughts/facts and how I listen and embrace diversity.... English 101 was an excellent experience for me since I was in a position to be in a “minority situation.” I was the oldest in the class, [and] felt...(at first) inferior to the youthful students who had a vast array of knowledge, diversity and computer skills.

(Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016)

This set of reflections contains two details that I interpret as working together and, in doing so, revealing the magnitude of the personal growth that Enlightened! experienced as a result of the language awareness that I believe she began developing during the WEs unit. The first detail in the above excerpt that I interpret as significant in this regard is Enlightened!’s statement that she felt “(at first) inferior” when the course (and the WEs unit) began, because she was the oldest student in the class, had not been in school for several decades and therefore felt out of practice in terms of study skills and technological literacy, and was in a position of racial minority as one of the only white students in the class (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). Experiencing this multifaceted sense of inferiority as a starting point, but nevertheless enrolling in and beginning the course, seems an apt representation of Maslow’s (1962) statement that “[e]ach step forward is a step into the unfamiliar and is possibly dangerous” and that “[g]rowth forward...therefore requires courage and strength in the individual” (p. 42). Then, the second detail that I interpret as significant is that she

chose to frame her response to the question about how her language awareness was affected by *the WEs unit* not with a reference to the WEs unit itself, but to the entirety of the course (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). The WEs unit comprised only the first four weeks of the fifteen-week course. The explicitness with which Enlightened! identified that she *began* with a feeling of inferiority implies that she grew out of, or beyond, that feeling. This implication, combined with her implication that the entirety of English 101, not just the WEs unit, had affected her language awareness favorably, suggests to me that neither the language awareness nor the personal growth it engendered stopped at the end of the WEs unit. Instead, it seems that Enlightened!’s language awareness and resultant personal growth continued as she was exposed to the rest of the contents of English 101 *and* continued to learn more effective communication techniques by interacting with the diversity amongst her fellow students in the class. While there were two other participants—Ana and Amber—whose data I interpreted as containing evidence that *the WEs unit* had heightened their language awareness in ways that promoted their personal growth, only Enlightened! indicated that her language awareness continued to grow, and continued to promote personal growth, as she experienced *all* of English 101.

Evidence that language awareness had promoted personal growth in more precise ways emerged, as well, in other parts of the data contributed by Enlightened! For example, part of Enlightened!’s response to Question #7 on the questionnaire suggested to me that reading Amy Tan’s (1990) literacy narrative essay “Mother Tongue,” and specifically discussing the experiences of Tan’s mother (hereafter referred to as Mrs. Tan), had facilitated personal growth in Enlightened! insofar as it had invited her to make a conscious

choice to move beyond a certain common prescriptive assumption. The following excerpted passage suggests that Enlightened! had indeed made such a choice:

Reading “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan was an excellent assignment that expressed “non-Chinese” barriers of understanding the language of Amy’s mother. She was, in no way, unintelligent as the reader just might interpret. This did bring to my attention that we may need to truly listen more carefully and ask “what is it that you are communicating....” It is important that open ended questions are being asked for clarity. (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016)

Here Enlightened! began by making a reference to Mrs. Tan, who has been victim to language discrimination many times in the U.S. because many people assume her unintelligent or incompetent based on how she speaks. However, Tan does an excellent job of demonstrating her mother’s intelligence and competence, composing a vivid portrait that proves the verity of her assertion that Mrs. Tan’s “expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands” (1990, para. 6). Thus, I interpret it as significant that Enlightened! phrased the first and second sentences in the above excerpt the way that she did. In my opinion, it is clear that she accepted the sociolinguistic premise that it is the “non-Chinese” who erect the barriers, and that any reader’s or listener’s perception that Mrs. Tan may lack intelligence is merely an interpretation colored by prejudicial attitudes. This sociolinguistic tendency of mistakenly assuming speech patterns can reliably mark intelligence is highlighted in the CCCC’s *Students’ Right to Their Own Language*:

Differences in dialects derive from events in the history of the communities using the language, not from supposed differences in intelligence or physiology.... [W]hen speakers of a dialect of American English claim not to understand speakers of

another dialect of the same language, the impediments are likely to be attitudinal.

What is really the speaker's resistance to any unfamiliar form may be interpreted as the speaker's fault...[f]or example, an unfamiliar speech rhythm and resulting pronunciation while ignoring the content of the message. When asked to respond to the content, they may be unable to do so and may accuse the speaker of being impossible to understand. (1974, p. 6)

Even though the above passage in *STROL* refers to prejudices held by speakers of American English dialects toward each other and not prejudices held by L1 English speakers toward L2 English speakers such as Mrs. Tan, the fact that Mrs. Tan is able to be understood by *any* L1 English speakers means that her English bears more of the features expected by L1 speakers than not—which makes negative assumptions about her intelligence as unjust as *STROL* contends that they are when harbored by native speakers against each other. Thus, *STROL*'s strong implication of the prevalence of this misguided tendency to assume speech patterns can automatically indicate intelligence casts Enlightened!'s statement indicating her disagreement with this tendency into relief as a *choice* she made as her language awareness increased. In terms that refer more directly to Maslow's thinking, it was Enlightened!'s *choice* to exercise the will power necessary for growing beyond the belief she had held previous to the WEs unit—that “broken English” signifies a lack of intelligence—and I interpret this choice as evidence of personal growth in keeping with Maslow's (1962) assertion: “Life is a continual series of choices for the individual in which a main determinant of choice is the person as he already is” (p. 36). That is, in my interpretation, Enlightened!'s decision to accept as factual Amy Tan's assertion regarding her mother's

intelligence evidenced personal growth insofar as it reflected a choice made in favor of growing beyond “the person [s]he already [was]” (Maslow, 1962, p. 36).

A second form of personal growth is evidenced, in my opinion, specifically in the third and fourth sentences of the same excerpted passage: “This did bring to my attention that we may need to truly listen more carefully and ask ‘what is it that you are communicating....’ It is important that open ended questions are being asked for clarity” (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). In these two final sentences, I discern the realization that it is not only acceptable, but a sign of intelligence and respect, to ask questions if one doesn’t understand what an interlocutor has tried to communicate. Becoming more willing to ask questions for clarification is crucial for growth of any kind, but some remarks Enlightened! shared during her interview revealed that asking questions had not always been something she felt comfortable doing in the past.

The first instance in Enlightened!’s interview in which she provided an actual example of how the WEs unit had helped her become more comfortable asking questions was when our conversation turned to the topic of how she communicates with the people she supervises in her workplace:

Now, I’m more inquisitive. I’m more at ease with saying, “I don’t quite understand” [and] “This is what I’m hearing; is this what you mean?” And I find that I’ve taken that on. I seriously have taken that on. Because, um, you know, sometimes in the workplace, um, people will say things because, ah, because they’ve got an emotional attachment to whatever they’re trying to express, but...asking those questions—I’ve become more in tune. I—I’m trying to be better at communicating. And I feel that I’m making more of an effort of it.... (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016)

Firstly, I found it notable that the heightening in language awareness Enlightened! seemed to have experienced in the classroom, and the personal growth that I interpreted as emergent from it, translated to the completely different setting of her workplace. This is similar to what happened for Ana. In my estimation, these transfers provided additional support for my interpretation that the personal growth actually did occur. Secondly, in turn notable was Enlightened!'s discernment that being more comfortable and willing to ask questions allowed her to communicate more effectively with her subordinates. This enhancement in her communication skill seems likely to have made her a better supervisor, and is also interesting on another account. It suggests that her newfound language awareness might have promoted personal growth in two different, in fact opposite directions: communicating with those to whom she felt *inferior* (that is, her fellow students in English 101), and communicating with those to whom she is, in the professional context, *superior*. Lastly, also significant—on two levels—was her expression of newfound awareness that becoming better at asking questions can be useful especially in circumstances in which her subordinates have “an emotional attachment to whatever they’re trying to express” (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). In reporting *this* new awareness, Enlightened! demonstrated understanding of the fourth SCEP principle: “[L]anguage use is affected by biological, psychological, and social forces.” (In my conceptualization of SCEP, the construct of an individual’s “psychological forces” encompasses how the individual’s thoughts may be influenced by his or her emotions.)

A final instance in which Enlightened! stated explicitly that the WEs unit had raised her language awareness in ways that promoted personal growth occurred when she again referenced the topic of her workplace. This time, she was explaining the aspects of her job

that require her to learn and remember a lot of different terminologies pertaining to federal and state services for the elderly and disabled. As she described how challenging it can be to follow discourse filled with these terminologies in some leadership meetings, she admitted that before the World Englishes unit, “Sometimes I wouldn’t ask for…clarification, ‘cause I wouldn’t want to look like an idiot” (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). She also stated, “I wouldn’t tell people I didn’t know something. Now I’m not afraid to do that” (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). I interpret these statements as further evidence that the heightening in language awareness that began amidst Enlightened!’s studies during the WEs unit promoted her personal growth. More specifically, it seems that the WEs unit provided Enlightened! with learning opportunities that raised her language awareness in ways that, in turn, enhanced her sense of self-confidence. This building of her self-confidence occurred as she learned that it is acceptable to admit when she does not understand what someone has tried to communicate; that it is a sign of interest and intelligence, not an insult or a mark of ineptitude, to ask questions for clarification; and that there is no inevitable correlation between a person’s use of language and his or her intelligence. According to this interpretation, by accepting and acting upon these discoveries, Enlightened! demonstrated active engagement with her own journey of personal growth. In Maslow’s (1962) terms, this dynamic engagement equates to “the process of becoming a person” (p. 40).

**Amber.** Passages in the data that Amber contributed to the study suggested to me that language awareness promoted personal growth for her, as well. The first time I interpreted this theme as emerging in Amber’s data was in part of her response to Question #12 on the questionnaire. In explaining how the WEs unit had affected her language awareness, she indicated that the unit’s lessons about the connections between language,

personal identity and cultural identity had led to a burst of identification with her linguistic heritage and a new esteem for its current incarnations, as she encountered them in her surroundings:

I have become aware of language in a much more aware way and I just find it beautiful when I come across it and I have never loved my language and my speech and tongue more when it was clear at how important language can be to our own identity. (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016)

I interpret these statements as indicating that the WEs unit's goal of heightening students' language awareness manifested for Amber as a heightening in her appreciation for her literacy in her L1, the Mohawk language. However, the development of her appreciation was not quite so straightforward as that: an interpretation I posit based upon Amber's usage of the plural possessive pronoun "our" rather than the singular possessive pronoun "my" in the final phrase of the excerpt. While being literate in the Mohawk language is an attribute of Amber's *personal* identity—as underscored in her usage of the singular pronoun "I" throughout the majority of the excerpt—her increase in appreciation for being literate in Mohawk seems to have been engendered when she became more aware of the role that the Mohawk language has played in keeping the Mohawk *cultural* identity, "our" identity, alive. This interpretation is reinforced, in my opinion, by the presence of the other sentiment she expressed about the Mohawk language in the same excerpted passage: her remark that she "find[s] it beautiful when [she] come[s] across it" (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016). I presume this statement was a reference to instances in which she had seen Mohawk written or heard it spoken by other people who identify as Mohawk. All in all, I see Amber's multivalent increase in appreciation for being literate in her L1 as a manifestation of

personal growth in that it reflects, in relation to both her personal identity and cultural identity, a burst of growth in self-acceptance: a crucial constituent of psychological health, according to Maslow (1962, p. 36).

The theme that language awareness can promote personal growth emerged a second time in the data contributed by Amber. This second instance occurred during Amber's interview, perhaps unsurprisingly, when I referred *back* to her response to Question #12 on the questionnaire, and asked if she would be willing to clarify what she had meant in the first clause: "I have become aware of language in a much more aware way" (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016). I asked whether she could give me a specific example that could illustrate what she meant by this. In response to my request, she shared the following reflection about how the WEs unit affected the way she perceives and behaves toward the Mohawk children in her midst:

I notice it more with little kids.... The way our kids speak—you know—whether they have a stutter or not—it's because of the confusion of, um—the languages they speak because we're—we're almost forced to speak English to them, but then we're trying to teach them a whole 'nother language as well.... It's almost being hypocritical in a sense because—'cause as much as we want them to learn our language, they—they struggle to—to—to learn the language that's common. And the—the language that all their friends speak. So, um—I guess being aware is that, um, when I hear—when I hear...my nieces and nephews talk and they—they either have a stutter or they have a lisp where they say something different—I—I really, um, stop myself. Completely stop myself from saying anything because I think it's beautiful.... I've learned to appreciate their tongue—in a completely different way

than I would've when—when I was—ya know—before your class. Because I would've been like, “Oh, that's not how you say it; you say it this way....” You know, I would've corrected them. So, I guess I—I—I've become more, um, compassionate. Because of the class. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

My interpretation of this passage is that it is a powerful representation of personal growth on Amber's part, because it demonstrates multifaceted emotional development. As previously noted, Maslow (1962) offered the term “emotional maturity” as an alternate for “self-actualization” (p. 36). Several specific details in the passage represent evidence of this form of personal growth that transpired in Amber as a result of her new knowledge and insight gained from the WEs unit.

Firstly, in reference to Amber's statement that “it's almost being hypocritical” for the adults in her family group to have submitted to the pressure to communicate largely in English while still expecting the children to learn Mohawk (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)—it takes courage, and a relinquishment of pride, to admit that one has committed any form of hypocrisy. It seems to me that in taking responsibility for some degree of hypocrisy, Amber exercised her capacities for courage and humility in ways that align with Maslow's (1962) contention that “[g]rowth forward is in spite of these losses and therefore requires courage and strength in the individual” (p. 42). Secondly, as my own teaching experience has taught me, it takes another form of self-discipline to refrain from “correcting” someone's speech. I imagine that this is especially true in a case such as Amber's, in which there is a vested interest—in this case, in keeping the Mohawk culture alive through its language. If the WEs unit did indeed raise Amber's language awareness in ways that inclined her to begin exercising the self-restraint necessary to “[c]ompletely stop [her]self from saying anything”

corrective when she hears her nieces and nephews utter Mohawk sounds unconventionally (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016), Amber has typified Maslow's (1962) implication that personal growth is a process in which "[w]e learn...about our own strengths and limits by overcoming difficulties, by straining ourselves to the utmost..." (p. 39). Thirdly, perhaps the most significant evidence of personal growth was Amber's statement that she has become "more compassionate" toward the children, in relation to their language-learning processes (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). I interpret Amber's development of greater compassion towards the children as the most significant evidence of her personal growth because of Maslow's great emphasis on the importance of cultivating and maintaining safe and nurturing environments for children. The remainder of the passage I most recently quoted from Maslow (1962) reflects this emphasis: "Growth forward...requires courage and strength in the individual, *as well as protection, permission and encouragement from the environment, especially for the child*" (Maslow, 1962, p. 42, emphasis added). Elsewhere, Maslow also asserted that "[i]t is necessary, in order for children to grow well, that adults have enough trust in them and in the natural processes of growth, i.e. not interfere too much, not *make* them grow, or force them into predetermined designs..." (1962, p. 39). In other words, challenging oneself to explore the limits of one's emotional capabilities in the context of adult interactions can be a noteworthy element of personal growth. However, by allowing herself to experience the vulnerability required for feeling greater compassion for children—and exerting the self-restraint that it takes to refrain from offering prescriptive feedback when she witnesses "mistakes" made by young language learners—constitutes maximally meaningful personal growth, in Maslow's terms, because it demonstrates

dedication to making personal growth possible for the descendants, those with more time to live in this world, to make their way in it.

In sum, three of the five participants in this study expressed metacognitive awareness that the World Englishes unit they experienced in the beginning of their respective sections of English 101 functioned to raise their language awareness in ways that I, in turn, interpret as having promoted their personal growth. For Ana, heightened language awareness seemed to bring on a new level of resilience when she was faced with less-than-constructively-delivered criticism about certain elements of her language use (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). For Enlightened!, the increase in language awareness in turn seemed to have increased her self-confidence as a student in the class, as she learned various reasons that it is not only acceptable but advisable to ask questions for clarification when she does not understand what someone has tried to communicate (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016; Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). I interpreted this form of personal growth as having occurred not only while she was explicitly exposed to the World Englishes paradigm during the WEs unit, but throughout the remainder of English 101, as she continued to apply the WEs unit's lessons in rhetorical listening (Ratcliffe, 1999) while learning the course's subsequent content as well as navigating communicative interactions with the diverse group of students who were her peers in the class (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016; Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). Also, some of Enlightened!'s statements about her work environment suggested that the newfound confidence which heightened language awareness offered her lent itself to an unprecedented sense of empowerment in various workplace settings (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). Finally, for Amber, heightened language awareness lent itself to a new sense of appreciation for her L1, the Mohawk language, and

her literacy in it (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/18/2016; Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). This new sense of appreciation in turn allowed for personal growth in the form of increases in self-awareness, self-discipline, and compassion toward the children in her life who struggled while trying to learn Mohawk themselves (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/18/2016; Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016).

### **Theme #3: Language Awareness as Promoting and Problematizing Critical Thinking**

The third theme I observed in the participants' contributions to the data pool was that language awareness can lend itself to the development of critical thinking skills, but that these newfound critical thinking skills can then sometimes give rise to unforeseen problems. For my purposes in this chapter, I borrow the understanding of critical thinking that is provided on the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and published in 2009. "VALUE," which stands for "Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education," began in 2007 as a "campus-based, faculty developed assessment approach" and has been promoted since then as a part of the AACU's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative ("VALUE FAQs," 2017). At NNYSU, all Institutional Student Learning Outcomes that involve critical thinking draw upon the understanding established in the AACU's Critical Thinking VALUE rubric. The main definition of critical thinking that is posted at the top of the rubric is "a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion" (AACU, 2009). In my interpretations and analyses of the participants' data, I also make references to more specific aspects of critical thinking that are found within the "Capstone" column of the rubric itself. I discerned critical thinking that had been promoted by language awareness as unequivocally

present in data collected from all five participants. I realized a potentially problematic effect of critical thinking born of language awareness when reflecting on data contributed by one participant, Enlightened!

**Ana.** Evidence that the WEs unit had heightened Ana's language awareness and, in turn, promoted her critical thinking emerged in a sequence of anecdotes and comments that demonstrated growth in her ability to acknowledge and consider multiple perspectives simultaneously, even if she disagreed with some of these perspectives, or disapproved of how they were delivered. This form of critical thinking first appeared in Ana's response to Question #6 on the questionnaire, which asked the participants to explain what they would say or do, after having experienced the WEs unit, if an English teacher were to say to them or to another student in their presence, "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won't insult my ears" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66).

In response to this question, Ana wrote the following:

After reading this statement my first reaction was wow! Coming from a background where english is not many of my families first language I can kind of understand why you (meaning the hypothetical english teacher) would not want the student to talk a certain way because it may be hard to understand them. However by saying "speak that dialect of yours someplace where it wont insult my ears" is just wrong. Everyone has their own way of communicating and for some it may be slang and for others it might be "proper english." (Questionnaire, Ana, 7/18/2016)

Ana's written response demonstrated that the language awareness she had developed as a result of the WEs unit had promoted critical thinking insofar as it evidenced a measure of consideration toward the teacher's prescriptive perspective, even while conveying some

disapproval of it from a descriptive perspective. Prescriptivism and descriptivism are by nature diametrically opposed modalities. Expressing some degree of acceptance of the teacher's prescriptivist opinion that speaking in a different dialect of English is inappropriate because it is difficult to understand while simultaneously embracing the descriptivist principle that discourse conventions are relative across discourse communities means that Ana had developed the ability to hold two competing perspectives in her mind at once: a key feature of the type of "comprehensive exploration of issues [and] ideas" (AACU, 2009) involved in critical thinking.

The theme that language awareness can promote critical thinking emerged a second time in the data collected from Ana. Again, she indicated that the WEs unit had enhanced her ability to consider the legitimacy of multiple language-related perspectives simultaneously. This second instance occurred during a segment of her interview in which she again focused on the phenomenon of judgment—this time, not an instructor casting judgment on a student's language use, but rather, *her* casting of judgment upon some of the language used by her friends from home, and vice versa. The segment of the interview that is captured in the following excerpt contains Ana's testimony about how the WEs unit affected her ability to understand and handle various judgments that had been exchanged within her friend group regarding the usage of slang:

They still talk with [my home community's] slang a lot more than me.... So when I come visit, I'm like wow.... When I came back to Lilyville, before taking your class, um, during my first—like—my first year, I—it would be like them judging me as well as me judging them at the same time, about the same exact thing.... I was so used to talking the way how everyone else in Lilyville spoke, because I was there for

so long...I picked up “wicked” and stuff like that. [Since experiencing the WEs unit,] I have more of an understanding of where they’re coming from or where I’m coming from as well.... Before it was just—I had that—I had the mentality where I was like well, you guys are wrong—like—it’s the way how I would say it. I was very one-sided. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

I interpret Ana’s commentary above as illuminating a heightening in her ability to think critically insofar as it evidenced her development of a more multifaceted understanding regarding her friends’ preferred forms of slang, as well as more flexibility regarding her friends’ opinions on how her own personal lexicon of slang apparently changed after she had spent some time in a different setting. It seems that before the WEs unit, although Ana had witnessed firsthand that different discourse communities possess their own slang expressions, she had not been able to acknowledge that each discourse community has the right to privilege its own slang expressions. This is how I interpret her statement that she had been “very one-sided” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). However, the WEs unit had channeled her cognitive energies so that she became able to transcend that one-dimensional “mentality” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016) to cultivate a new, more critical and more cognitively flexible mentality, or “habit of mind” (AACU, 2009).

**Ruby.** As I explored the data that I collected from Ruby, it became similarly clear that heightened language awareness resulting from the WEs unit had promoted her critical thinking in several different ways. One of the most significant ways was in regard to how attitudes about certain varieties of English can perpetuate, implicitly, certain types of prejudices—racial and socioeconomic prejudices, for example. She made several critical

observations that I perceive as demonstrating her ability to discern this insidious means of perpetuating prejudice.

The first time I noticed this type of discernment in Ruby's data was in her response to Question #10 on the questionnaire, which asked the participants to focus on the fact that a person's language use is influenced by his or her psychological state at any given time, and explain what they would say about the following scenario to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit:

When I was fourteen the mother of a white teammate on the YMCA swimming team would—in a nice but insistent way—correct my grammar when I lapsed into the Black English I'd grown up speaking in the neighborhood. She would require that my verbs and pronouns agree, that I put the "g" on my "ings," and that I say "that" instead of "dat." She absolutely abhorred double negatives, and her face would screw up in pain at the sound of one. But her corrections also tapped my racial vulnerability. I felt racial shame at this white woman's fastidious concern with my language. It was as though she was saying that the Black part of me was not good enough, would not do.... (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 206)

Among other observations Ruby made in her response to the Question #10 prompt, she wrote the following:

It is unfortunate that the author of the excerpt utilizes the word "lapse" to describe use of Black English, his/her native tongue. This single word also hints at the main character's psychological state because it showcases how uneasy she feels in the situation. (Questionnaire, Ruby, 8/2/2016)

What is evidenced in the above segment of Ruby's response is a critical awareness of the metacognitive implications of the author's choice of the verb "lapse." The above segment is the only place in Ruby's response to Question #10 in which she referred to the "main character" in the excerpt as "the author." By alluding to the typically negative connotations of "lapse," and drawing explicit attention to the fact that it was the *author's* word choice, Ruby observed something that even the *author* of the excerpt seems not to have been aware of: that perhaps the psychological harm inflicted by the white mother's persistent "corrections" continues to exert an effect, even now, undiscerned by the author in adulthood. But even if Ruby's assumption about the implications of the author's choice to use "lapse" was inaccurate, her observation still demonstrates an enhanced capacity for perceiving the potential impact of prejudice that may play out through attitudes about language.

During Ruby's interview, I observed the emergence of this same form of critical thinking again. In this second instance, Ruby again demonstrated an enhanced capacity, which she attributed to the WEs unit, for discerning when prejudice may be playing out through implied attitudes about language. This time, she demonstrated an ability to discern and reflect critically on the mainstream media's complicity in excluding, or othering, certain socioeconomic and racial groups, by othering their particular varieties of English. She first recalled a class discussion that had transpired during the WEs unit, about how the television show *Swamp People* sometimes uses subtitles, ostensibly to make it easier for the viewing audience to understand the characters' Cajun English speech. She reflected on how the use of subtitles functions to suggest to viewers that Cajun English is so full of deviations (i.e. "errors") from SAE as to be incomprehensible, which in turn marginalizes the speakers themselves as "illiterate" and thus "ignorant" by popular American standards. Then, she

remarked that she still thinks about “how rude and disrespectful it is to have subtitles when somebody’s speaking English,” while “in reality I’m not probably speaking perfect English, you’re probably not speaking perfect English if we’re talking about Oxford or dictionary-level English, so do we all need subtitles?” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). After this quick demonstration of her critical realization that discourse conventions governing the use of English are in fact social constructs, Ruby shifted to the genre of literary fiction, bringing up *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as an example of a novel that had prompted a similarly critical realization. During her studies of this novel in a high school class that she took the year *after* experiencing the WEs unit with me, she realized that “they really kinda emphasize those differences when they’re—in real life they’re more subtle” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). She proceeded to explain, more specifically, how her insight about the marginalizing effects of the captioning in *Swamp People* had led to a transformation in the way she perceived some of the characters’ speech patterns in Mark Twain’s 1885 novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—that is, these speech patterns as they are written out by the author, *and* as they are read aloud by the narrator of an audiobook she had also listened to at the time. She articulated the following critical observation regarding the author’s and audiobook narrator’s respective choices about to how to portray Jim’s speech versus Huck’s speech:

[T]hey’re both heavily illiterate but [both Twain and the audiobook narrator] make [Jim] sound a little bit more illiterate by the way he speaks compared to, um, Huck—so that even without using subtitles it—kind of—definitely is—there’s the race card coming out in that, and that obviously was more accepted in that time period, but today they haven’t changed how they read the book. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016)

In Ruby's perception, in other words, both Twain's phonetic spelling of the two characters' speech and the audiobook narrator's verbal rendering of their speech function to portray both characters as "heavily illiterate." However, both Twain *and* the audiobook narrator made choices to over-exaggerate certain features of Jim's speech in ways that cause him to come across as "a little bit more illiterate" than his white friend. In "real life," Ruby thought, Jim's speech would not have sounded nearly as different from Huck's speech as Twain chose to write it or as the audiobook narrator pronounced it while reading. With her contention that "there's the race card coming out in that," Ruby indicated that she perceived the differences between Jim's and Huck's speech (as portrayed by both Twain and the audiobook narrator) as othering and thus racially discriminatory toward Jim. Then, with her reference to subtitles, Ruby implied a comparison of this act of othering toward Jim with the form of othering she had observed in *Swamp People's* producers' choice to include subtitles intended to "translate" the Cajun English speakers' speech for the (English-speaking) viewing audience. When I asked her if she could tell me how she would have reacted to Twain's portrayal of Jim's speech, or the audiobook narrator's interpretation of Twain's portrayal, *before* experiencing the WEs unit, she responded with these further reflections: "I think I would have kind of accepted it, and [wouldn't] question what was going on...kind of accepted it like that was the way it is and that's how the book was read" (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). She would not, in other words, have realized that there might be problematic cultural assumptions being transmitted through the text in the ways the characters' speech patterns are distinguished from one another; she had not yet developed the language awareness that later prompted her to ask herself, "Why are they saying this, this way?" (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). According to the AACU Critical Thinking rubric, critical

thinking can be evidenced when “[v]iewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly” and when the assumptions embedded in a context have been analyzed and evaluated (2009). In my interpretation of the data I collected from Ruby, these components of critical thinking—promoted by language awareness she developed during the WEs unit—were evidenced by her questioning of Twain’s and the audiobook narrator’s motives for their depictions of Huck’s and Jim’s speech patterns.

**Kobe.** During Kobe’s interview, he, too, evidenced having developed in critical thinking ability as a result of heightened language awareness. For Kobe, the critical thinking was initialized by his discovery—which he identified having experienced during the WEs unit—that the education he had received in primary and secondary school had not included a certain set of linguistic truths: that Black English is a variety of American English that has actually been codified by descriptive linguists, and that is heard and seen quite prevalently in the U.S. That is, even though he had been surrounded by Black English, growing up, he had never been made aware of its legitimacy as a distinct variety of English until the WEs unit; therefore, he had not recognized it as such (Questionnaire, Kobe, 7/18/2016). Instead, his primary and secondary school teachers identified the Black English forms they heard and saw as simply “unprofessional,” and issued dire yet vague warnings which he had interpreted as objective reality (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). The following excerpts from Kobe’s interview depict the emergence of the critical thinking that had been engendered by his discovery of the legitimacy and prevalence of Black English, and the intertwined realization that his former teachers’ warnings had been inaccurate and inadequate:

[M]y teachers [were] always telling me to pronounce all words “properly”...instead of saying something that would end in “ing,” like “saying”—instead of saying “saying,” we’d say “sayin”...[a]nd they said that that was “unprofessional” and that—and how that wouldn’t be accepted, and you’d be shunned basically. You wouldn’t be accepted by professors [indistinct] the wrong way and you know—you wouldn’t really have any opportunity in the workforce—using that—that dialect.

(Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

In my interpretation, several elements in the above excerpt begin to signify Kobe’s critical thinking about what he had been taught by his primary and secondary school teachers. First, in all of the statements in which he recounted his former teachers’ warnings, he used the type 2 conditional tense. This particular form of the conditional tense “refers to an *unlikely* or *hypothetical* condition and its *probable* result” (“Type 2 Conditional,” n.d., emphasis added). In a sentence that is cast in the type 2 conditional tense, the condition clause (sometimes called the “if” clause) is in the simple past tense, while the main clause (sometimes called the “result” clause) is in the present conditional or present continuous conditional: for example, “If this thing happened, that thing would happen” (“Type 2 Conditional,” n.d.). Kobe’s recountings of his teachers’ warnings each followed this grammatical model. That is, the condition clause is in the simple past tense: “they said that that was unprofessional” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016); meanwhile, each of the main clauses is in the present conditional: “that wouldn’t be accepted,” “you’d be shunned,” “you wouldn’t be accepted,” and “you wouldn’t really have any opportunity in the workforce” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). In casting his former teachers’ warnings in the type 2 conditional, Kobe communicated with his very grammatical choices that he had come to

discover that those teachers' warnings were not based on objective reality, but were, rather, hypothetical—if not unlikely.

The second feature of the above excerpt that I interpret as demonstrating language awareness-induced critical thinking is equally compelling. This time, the critical thinking was evidenced by the way Kobe organized the main concepts he was discussing. More specifically: In this excerpted segment of Kobe's verbal commentary, I interpret the way he organized his recollection itself as functioning not only to depict but to dramatize the inaccurately dichotomized conceptualization that had been impressed upon him by his primary and secondary school teachers. That is to say, with their warnings, well-intended though they may have been, an oppositional relationship, unhelpful in its vagueness, had been set up between two constructs: the construct of "proper-ness" and the construct of "unprofessional-ness" (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). I see Kobe's replication of this dichotomy *while critiquing it* as revealing, in another way, his development of the capacity to comprehend that the teachers' warnings had been based only on their limited impressions. As the dichotomy Kobe presented in the structure of the excerpted passage mimics, the teachers' flawed impressions were that "proper" English is a discrete lexicon of words and pronunciations, and that "unprofessional" English is an entirely separate lexicon of words and pronunciations (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). The implications of this flawed dichotomy are also flawed, by association: that "proper" and "unprofessional" English share no mutual linguistic property, that they never occupy the same space, and that the "proper" variety is the only variety that appears in any kind of academic or professional setting.

With all of that said, indeed, when I asked explicitly Kobe if his former teachers' admonitions had borne out—that is, whether he had actually witnessed or experienced, in

college or in the jobs he had held after high school, the type of shunning that he had been warned about—he responded, “No, absolutely not” (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). He expanded upon this response with the following:

At NNYSU—well, in English 101—I actually learned that we are all writers who use other language—other dialects—within our writing. So actually, I was surprised to see that—you know, that what they were saying at such a young age wasn’t actually true. You know, there’s really [indistinct] honestly, what I feel is that a lot of students are—not—I don’t wanna say confused—but I feel like they are being misled. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

I perceive Kobe’s first statement in the above excerpt as continued evidence of critical thinking for several reasons. First, it suggests that he did indeed internalize, during or as a result of the WEs unit, what the previous set of excerpted remarks also suggested that he had realized: that there are no fixed boundaries between different varieties of English—that while there are certain words and pronunciations that are more associated with particular social or regional groups, borrowing and appropriation occur all the time. In other words, he had realized—contrary to his primary and secondary school teachers’ warnings—that the boundary between “proper” and “unprofessional” is *not* entirely fixed and unevolving. Furthermore, and as I noted above, he also came to identify the forms that his teachers had called “unprofessional” as, in fact, forms associated with the dialect of Black English. (Because it is certainly not uncommon to hear speakers of *other* Englishes drop the “g” from the end of verbs and gerunds ending in “ing,” it seems worth noting that this is, nevertheless, a form that is prevalently associated with Black English in the literature. A good example of this association is the narrative excerpted in Question #10 on the questionnaire, about the

white mother who would “correct” the Black English grammar of the writer when the writer was a child, “requir[ing] that [the writer’s] verbs and pronouns agree, that [the writer] put the ‘g’ on my ‘ings’ ....” [Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 206]). In my perception, all of these critical realizations accumulated in Kobe to the point at which they finally manifested in the extent of cognitive flexibility that it takes to determine that one’s former teachers had been wrong.

A final aspect of the above excerpt that I find significant is that *writing* is the focus—unlike in the previous excerpt, which only captured remarks in which Kobe had been focusing on speech. What is made evident by this shifted focus is that the WEs unit had dispelled an additional layer of the illusion with which Kobe had emerged from high school. The unit had evidently disillusioned him from the ingrained dichotomy of “proper” versus “professional” not only in relation to speech, but to writing, as well.

Kobe displayed additional evidence of critical thinking promoted by his heightened language awareness in his response to Question #6 on the questionnaire—about the hypothetical teacher’s statement, “I don’t care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won’t insult my ears” (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66)—and in response to a follow-up question about it during his interview. This additional evidence of Kobe’s critical thinking manifested as an enhanced ability to accept the simultaneous existence of competing perspectives. As noted, I observed this same development in the data contributed by Ana. In his response to Question #6 on the questionnaire, Kobe had written, “While I agree that it may be difficult to communitate with an individual or a group of people who share the same dialect, I would think that the teacher was close-minded and bad-mannered” (Questionnaire, Kobe, 7/18/2016). With this statement, Kobe demonstrated the capacity to concede the validity of the teacher’s perspective even while disagreeing with

it and disliking its manner of delivery. During the interview, he elaborated on what he had written in that response:

I feel kind of offended by it. But at the same time, I am aware that even professors, or teachers in general, aren't even aware of the different languages and dialects that people use. So, I would say the teacher is not open-minded, and that the teacher is certainly not a teacher of the World Englishes books, but...I still understand that they are professors that are—aren't aware of the languages.... I mean, you can't [indistinct] because some professors are, are science professors and although they come in contact with all these different languages, still—they don't—they don't understand, in depth, that what these—what the languages actually mean and where they come from.... (Interview, Kobe, 7/18/2016)

With these final statements, Kobe exhibited the awareness that he himself admitted that he had lacked before the World Englishes unit. Even though many if not most contemporary educators come in contact with various dialects and “languages” (by which I believe Kobe still meant dialects of English), they do not recognize them as such, because the World Englishes paradigm is not prevalently discussed in any academic field besides that which has been dedicated to it. Even though his other instructors' lack of education about the legitimacy of other Englishes may lead them to make remarks that he finds offensive *and* realizes are incorrect, the WEs unit evidently helped him develop the critical thinking skills necessary to consider even those perspectives as valid within their own limited scope. His acquiring the capacity to acknowledge simultaneous realities in this way means that the WEs unit promoted his ability to formulate his own “imaginative” perspective after performing three cognitive acts essential to the development of critical thinking: “taking into account the

complexities of an issue,” acknowledging the “[l]imits of [his own] position,” and synthesizing within his own position the points of view held by others (AACU, 2009).

**Enlightened!.** In the data contributed by Enlightened!, too, I observed evidence of critical thinking that had been promoted by heightened language awareness. This evidence of critical thinking emerged in her written response to Question #6 on the questionnaire, as I had also observed on the questionnaires completed by Ana and Kobe. The pertinent section of Enlightened!’s written response to Question #6 was as follows:

I would believe that the teacher lacks knowledge and cultural diversity. The statement may be interpreted by others that the teacher is directly insulting the speaker/student to the manner in which he communicates. If I were to hear this, I might intervene by asking the teacher what he/she did not understand and why it is insulting to his ears. I then might ask the speaker what it is that he may be wishing to express. (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016)

In the above excerpt, several examples of critical thinking promoted by language awareness are at work. First, as I also observed in the reactions of Ana and Kobe, Enlightened! demonstrated the cognitive flexibility required to discern that the instructor is incorrect, or at least close-minded. Then, it seems to me that by expressing the willingness to challenge the instructor to explain his or her reasoning, as well as ask the speaker for clarification, Enlightened! also illustrated an enhanced capacity for language-related problem-solving. I consider these features of Enlightened!’s response to Question #6 as typifying the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric’s provision that a critical thinker is one who is aware that “[v]iewpoints of experts [should be] questioned thoroughly” (AACU, 2009) as one step in the process of making informed decisions for oneself.

One aspect of the above passage from Enlightened!’s questionnaire may be interpreted in a less positive light, however: Enlightened!’s statement that she “might intervene” and not only challenge the teacher’s authority, but go so far as to take over the process of interacting with the student who had been receiving the discriminatory treatment (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). This was the point in Enlightened!’s data that prompted me to add the problematizing element in the title I crafted for the third theme. While it is certainly possible that a student in that position would appreciate being defended by his or her peer, it also seems possible that the student would not want to continue being the center of the classroom’s attention in the way that Enlightened!’s response seems to suggest could happen. And if there were a racial difference between Enlightened! and the other student—or the instructor, for that matter—Enlightened!’s intervention might be seen as white privilege blithely typified: the “white savior” steps in to save the day without checking to see whether the saving was desired, or how the persecuted party would like it to be attempted, if it were. The point here is that this alternate possibility, imagined through reflection on the data, could constitute another complication in my original assumption that raising students’ language awareness always equates to a reduction in potential for linguistic harm to occur. Ironically, Enlightened!’s empathetic inclination to confront language prejudice, now that her language awareness had been raised enough to allow her to identify some occurrences of it, might have caused the persecuted student to experience additional linguistic harm in the form of embarrassment—that is, by being forced to remain in the spotlight, continuing to receive unwanted attention.

The concept of “linguistic tourism” discussed by Matsuda (2014) as a potential pitfall of the translingual model for writing pedagogy (p. 482) offers a pertinent point of

comparison. In reflecting on possible reasons for the last decade's deluge of pedagogical interest in translingualism, Matsuda (2014) posited that "[o]ne obvious possibility is the moral imperative—people are drawn to translingual writing because it is the right thing to do" (p. 480). However, applying it in certain uninformed ways can "mask similarities and might lead to stereotyping" (p. 482). Furthermore, such uncaredful application "reinforces the ethnocentric tendency to impose an etic perspective while missing the opportunity to consider and negotiate with the emic perspective" (p. 482). It is this "reinforcement [of] the ethnocentric tendency to impose an etic perspective" that Enlightened!'s inclination to intervene and take over seems like it could parallel. Thus, akin to the importance of the warning issued by Matsuda (2014) to composition instructors regarding the pitfalls of over-eager, under-prepared implementation of translingual concepts in their pedagogy, it is important to spend time imagining that empathetic students like Enlightened! may be inclined by their very empathy toward linguistic tourism—and inadvertently inflict linguistic harm where they, and I, would expect them to do anything but.

**Amber.** As with Ana, Kobe, and Enlightened!, Amber's written response to Question #6 on the questionnaire also contained evidence of critical thinking ability developed as a result of language awareness gained during the WEs unit. Amber responded to Question #6 as follows:

At first Id be insulted and question and wonder what in her right mind gave her the decency to say such a thing to a student Id try to understand why she thought or said that. I feel as tho I would first of question how it insulted the teacher than defend who I am and where I come from to explain that my english is completely different and because of my dialect as becaues of who I am and my face Id take it as a racial

attack to who I am and the person Ive grown up to know to dimishe my identity and my language that keeps me alive and reminds me of who I am I would stand up for what I know is right. (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016)

First, Amber's reaction suggests the same cognitive flexibility demonstrated by the other three participants who expressed their understanding that the instructor's perception of reality is not objective fact. Second, with her statements that "Id try to understand why she thought or said that" and "I would...question how it insulted the teacher" (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016), Amber has demonstrated problem-solving capability. Third, by identifying the teacher's statement as a "racial attack" (Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016), Amber's response suggested that language awareness can help a person who has been indirectly attacked—through ostensible marginalization of their language, but based in actuality on their race—discern the truth of what had happened. When I asked Amber during her interview how she would have reacted to the teacher's statement before experiencing the World Englishes content in my class, she responded with the following:

I guess if I heard that before your class I probably woulda just sat there and been like, okay. I guess I gotta change the way I talk. Um—I probably wouldn't have said anything. I wouldn't've been—I wouldn't've questioned it. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

In this statement, Amber explicitly acknowledged that prior to the WEs unit, she would not only have remained silent and unaware that there was anything concretely objectionable in the instructor's statement; she would have believed that it was her responsibility to change features of her own English so that it would adhere to the socially constructed discourse conventions demanded by the instructor. According to her, the WEs unit gave rise to the

awareness that in such a scenario, there would in fact have been something to question—something to think critically about.

In conclusion, data contributed by all five participants included content that I interpreted as strongly suggesting that critical thinking had been promoted by language awareness—specifically, forms of language awareness that the participants themselves attributed to information and insights acquired during the WEs unit. According to my interpretations, critical thinking was demonstrated by Ana as an enhanced ability to acknowledge and respect competing language-related perspectives simultaneously (Questionnaire, Ana, 7/18/2016; Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). Ruby’s increased capacity for critical thinking was displayed as a newly developed ability to discern how attitudes toward certain varieties of English can perpetuate racial and socioeconomic prejudices, even if only inadvertently (Questionnaire, Ruby, 8/2/2016; Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). For Kobe, evidence of critical thinking emerged as he explained how the WEs unit had given him the tools to discern the limitedness of his primary and secondary school teachers’ perspectives on what constituted “proper” versus “unprofessional” language (Questionnaire, Kobe, 7/18/2016; Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). Enlightened! and Amber displayed similarly enhanced awareness, in my opinion, as they articulated why and how they would exercise their disagreement with an instructor who demonstrated more explicit prejudice toward a particular dialect of English (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016; Questionnaire, Amber, 7/27/2016; Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). However, Enlightened!’s inclination to intervene and take charge of what she perceived as a harm-causing situation—though this inclination seemed to have been elicited by a sense of empathy born of enhanced language awareness—might be interpreted as a heightened emotional state capable of counteracting

the very same critical thinking capacity in which the inclination had germinated. In this way, Enlightened!’s commentary provided another point of evidence that complicates my original assumption that language awareness and linguistic harm are bound in a completely consistent inverse relationship.

#### **Theme #4: Language Awareness as Promoting Cultural Sensitivity**

A fourth theme that emerged in the data with unequivocal salience was that heightened language awareness can stimulate a person’s development of cultural sensitivity. The term “cultural sensitivity” has been utilized for many years in the health services sector, including among harm reduction proponents, in reference to “the abilities of health providers and/or systems to be aware of the needs and vulnerabilities of different groups of people, with the goal of providing accessible and appropriate care to all” (Denning & Little, 2011, p. 116). In other words, and in extended terms, *possessing* cultural sensitivity in the health care field means acknowledging that every community of patients, and of course every individual within every community, has a set of needs and preferences that is unique—while *exercising* cultural sensitivity means acting upon this acknowledgement, actively welcoming the ubiquity of uniqueness and resultant inevitability of diversity among the patient population.

In light of its usage among harm reductionists in the health care field, “cultural sensitivity” is a logical term to have selected in my efforts to articulate the theme that titles this section. However, much of my reasoning for using this term in the title of my fourth theme derives from a different source of inspiration. Amber, the study’s fifth participant, invoked the term “cultural sensitivity” with inspiringly apt effect during her interview as she applied it in her personal definition of language awareness. (Amber’s definition of language

awareness is quoted in the segment of this theme's section that is specifically ascribed to her, per the organizational pattern I have followed throughout the preceding themes' sections).

With that said: In the context of this study, paraphrased from Amber's usage, "cultural sensitivity" should be taken to mean *an attitude oriented toward understanding, welcoming, and ideally empathizing with different positionalities*. The theme that language awareness can promote cultural sensitivity emerged in data contributed by all five of the participants in the study.

**Ana.** Ana demonstrated during her interview that she had developed cultural sensitivity as a direct result of the heightening in language awareness that she had experienced during the WEs unit. This first evidencing of cultural sensitivity began with a recollection of how her Latina friends from home had chided her for sounding "white" after she had begun spending significant time in Lilyville as a college student (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). Though Ana accepted her friends' right to their collective perspective and endured their chiding without responding aggressively, her own perspective on how she should be viewed and treated differed significantly. She expressed to me that the World Englishes unit had prompted her to the realization and subsequent conviction that "[w]hether they feel like you're speaking white or you're talking ghetto, or anything—like, that stuff makes you *you*. And you should be able to express that" (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). What I interpret Ana to have meant by this is that categories or labels ascribed *by others* to any given individual's discourse style are not necessarily reflective of how that individual understands his or her own identity or discourse style; thus, such categorizing and labeling should not influence how someone expresses him- or herself.

In efforts to illustrate the above point, Ana went on to defend a specific, unique feature of a friend's communication style:

[O]ne of my friends, um, when he talks, he likes to use hand movement. And for other people, it's like, "Whoa, relax!".... [T]here's others that, you know, don't use their hands at all; they just speak. Um, he shouldn't be made not to use his hands because someone else does it. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

With this description and defense of her friend's habit of hand movements, Ana exemplified what she had explained in theoretical terms in the excerpt quoted prior. In distinguishing between his use of language and others' opinions about it, Ana implied to me her understanding that there is a difference, a separation, between how other people feel and think about an individual's language use, and how the individual him- or herself feels and thinks about it. I see this type of distinguishing as an important facet of what it means to be culturally sensitive. While presuming too much difference between oneself and others can lead to exoticization, marginalization and dehumanization, cultural sensitivity entails a comprehension that every individual has a personal identity that does not and should not necessarily bear any relation to the perceptions held by others.

When I asked Ana if she could think of anything that people, in general, could do in order to increase their language awareness in efforts to become as sensitive and welcoming toward others' unique communication styles as she had become, she replied with the following suggestions and reflections:

I would—I would just say, like, speak more to other people. Step out of your comfort zone. Because when I stepped out of my comfort zone, like, living in Lilyville was—is completely different from living in New York City. And I—when

I stepped out, I noticed how I spoke and I also noticed how other people spoke, and like—and just everything. And then also just not in Lilyville, when I did spend time in Spain, I spent three—three weeks there and, um—just—it’s not English; it’s Spanish—but I also feel I still took that in. Maybe that’s what other people couldn’t do and that’s why they judge. Because they are so stuck on the way how—their—their ways. So it’s not about anyone else; it’s about—like—well, “You’re wrong because I do it this way” or “I see things this way.” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016)

With the remarks above, in my opinion, Ana exhibited the overall understanding—born during the WEs unit and reinforced during travels thereafter—that interacting with others, from other cultures and discourse communities, diminishes the tendency toward prescriptivism that can develop when one does *not* expose oneself often enough to discourse conventions that differ from those that govern one’s “comfort zone” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). Exposing oneself to other norms of living and communicating, she seems to have been asserting, makes it so that one doesn’t get “stuck” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016) in the assumption that that there is nothing left to learn, nothing else to try to see a different way or try to understand from a previously unimagined vantage point.

Finally, I see Ana’s encouragement of others to expose themselves to unfamiliar discourse styles for the purpose of forestalling or reversing the tendency toward linguistic provincialism (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016) as an act of cultural sensitivity in itself, insofar as it indicates her understanding and welcoming attitude toward the possibility that other people’s perceptions of reality may grow and transform in ways that become completely unfamiliar to her. That the WEs unit had initiated Ana’s becoming so comfortable with cultural and linguistic difference was further underscored in a final remark that she made

near the end of the interview: “To viewing things differently after that class, I would definitely say I do.... I’m more open...I take it all in. I don’t judge people for what they’re saying. If anything, I try to understand, um, if I don’t understand” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). This self-report of enrichment in Ana’s capacity for encountering unfamiliar discourse features while maintaining an attitude of openness and a willingness to exert extra effort for understanding constitutes a final emergence, which I consider no less noteworthy for its brevity, of the theme that heightened language awareness can stimulate growth in cultural sensitivity.

**Ruby.** The theme of language awareness inducing growth in cultural sensitivity manifested during Ruby’s interview, as well. Evidence of this theme first emerged in a segment of her interview in which Appalachian English had become the topic of focus. In these moments, Ruby explained that the WEs unit had helped her to learn that people’s modes of speaking and writing are not inevitable reflections of their socioeconomic class:

[N]obody ever told me about Black English when I was growing up, or Appalachian English.... I guess growing up that, like, you knew West Virginia or Appalachia was definitely a po—and like a pover—or not pover—impoverished area—but we kinda assume because they’re poor that’s why they spoke that way. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016).

But now, she said, as a result of knowledge built during the WEs unit, she understands that the variety of English used by many of the people of Appalachia is “distinctly their own,” that it “has nothing to do with how much money they make” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). As noted, I interpret these statements as signifying that Ruby had become aware that there no intrinsic relationship between a person’s language and socioeconomic class. In one

particular phrase, “distinctly their own” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016), I also interpreted an additional point of cultural sensitivity having developed: a recognition that at least some people use specific discourse conventions with intentionality, as important identity features—regardless of assumptions made by outsiders, negative or otherwise. In other words, in stating her understanding that Appalachian English is, for many people in Appalachia, “distinctly their own” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016), Ruby seemed to indicate that she had developed the cultural sensitivity that it takes to comprehend the same fact of human existence that Ana had developed the ability to recognize: that categories or labels ascribed *by others* to any given person’s language may or may not reflect how that individual understands his or her own identity or language. This recognition that other people’s norms do not necessarily correspond with one’s own norms is a key feature of what it means to be culturally sensitive. This is also the recognition that the writers of *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* attempted to impart in guidelines such as, “Pride in cultural heritage and linguistic habit patterns need not lead either group to attack the other as they mingle and communicate” (1974, p. 6).

Ruby then moved on from the topic of Appalachian English to explain another point of cultural sensitivity that she had developed as a result of the WEs unit. This second point was that just as people’s language use is not automatically reflective of their socioeconomic status, it is also not necessarily related to education, or “where you’ve gone to school or anything” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). She applied this awareness to her experiences at college:

[W]e have students who even joke about coming to Elmira, and maybe they’re from Boston so it’s not really a big difference, but definitely can pick up on the Boston

accent, and they kinda lose it when they go to school. When they go back home they pick it up, so I mean they're at college so—I don't know it just—it has nothing to do with where we come from or who we are—in stance of like social class or anything. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016).

In sum, Ruby's comments in the above excerpt strongly suggest the growth of cultural sensitivity by showing that she had developed a new capacity for putting aside her former assumptions about the implications of certain forms of English, and replacing such assumptions with an acknowledgement of the existence of positionalities formerly hidden behind her assumptions.

**Kobe.** Kobe, too, exhibited that the heightening in language awareness he had experienced during the WEs unit had in turn enhanced his cultural sensitivity. This theme first emerged in Kobe's response to Question #6 on the questionnaire, in which he stated, "I find it important to remember that the way someone looks, dresses, or speaks isn't a depiction of their talents, efforts, and determination" (Questionnaire, Kobe, 7/18/2016). Kobe's implied disapproval of the formation of assumptions about a person's unseen characteristics based on exterior features is evidence of cultural sensitivity in much the same vein as Ruby illustrated in her acknowledgement of the lack of intrinsic correlation between socioeconomic status or education level and the use of Appalachian English or the presence of various accents among her colleagues. Moreover, Kobe's decision to deliver his statement as an admonition suggests his willingness to act on it. This implied willingness aligns with my working definition of cultural sensitivity in this chapter: an attitude oriented toward understanding and welcoming, if not empathizing with, different positionalities.

Evidence that Kobe had experienced an enhancement in cultural sensitivity as a result of increased language awareness also emerged during his interview. This second emergence occurred when I asked him if he could articulate his personal definition of language awareness as he currently understood it (that is, at the time the interview was being conducted). In response to this request, he offered the following:

I would define it as...just being sensitive to the fact that there are other languages that people use—and that we have to accept them—and try to adapt to them....

Just—just pretty much accept and not discriminate different languages.... And to just be open-minded. (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016)

What I see in the above set of defining statements from Kobe is an emphasis on the importance of challenging oneself to be not only aware, but actively welcoming toward difference. With this emphasis, Kobe's understanding of what it means to possess language awareness appears similar to the understanding that Ana's various comments indicated. However, in going so far as to assert that people with language awareness "*have to accept*" the existence of other languages (Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016, emphasis added), Kobe differentiated his understanding of language awareness rather significantly from Ana's understanding. Ana's heightened language awareness and accompanying increase in cultural sensitivity prompted her toward certain *hopes* and *desires* that various cultural norms could change to accommodate a broader spectrum of linguistic diversity. For Kobe, it appears that developing language awareness means that one acquires an actual *responsibility* to cultivate language-focused cultural sensitivity, on a continual basis. In other words, I interpret Kobe as having developed the perspective that enhanced language awareness *requires* that a person adjust and re-adjust his or her linguistic frame of reference

so that his or her perception of what is “normal” in terms of discourse conventions evolves continually ever after, in perpetuity.

**Enlightened!.** In the data contributed by Enlightened!, as well, evidence emerged that the WEs unit’s heightening of her language awareness had lent itself to growth in her cultural sensitivity. For example, during her interview, amidst a recollection of listening to the diversity of speech patterns and reading different languages on signage while on a layover in transit to Myrtle Beach, Enlightened! stated the following:

We need to be more open-minded, as far as the different cultures. People are not stupid because they can’t come right out and say what they’re thinking.... [W]e need to embrace those differences—we need to ask better questions if we have that lack of understanding.... (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016)

I interpret several aspects in the above excerpt as evidence of enhanced cultural sensitivity on Enlightened!’s part. First, even though she was discussing linguistic diversity at the moment, she nevertheless invoked the concept of “culture” in expressing the importance of exercising open-mindedness (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). Second, and as I also noted in the “Language Awareness as Promoting Personal Growth” section of this chapter, the WEs unit clearly taught Enlightened! the importance of not making assumptions about people’s intelligence based solely upon their use of language. This understanding of the lack of predictable correlation between one’s ability to wield spoken language and the quality or quantity of one’s thoughts is what I see being expressed in her statement that “[p]eople are not stupid because they can’t come right out and say what they’re thinking” (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). Then, with her emphasis on embracing the opportunity to ask questions in efforts to learn about unfamiliar cultural perspectives (Interview,

Enlightened!, 8/8/2016), I see continued evidence that the WEs unit enhanced if not initiated in Enlightened! an inclination to appreciate and seek value in exposure to difference, rather than rejecting it. This form of appreciative and inclusion-oriented curiosity strikes me as aligned with what it means to be culturally sensitive.

Two statements Enlightened! wrote in response to questions on the questionnaire demonstrated growth in cultural sensitivity in the form of newfound openness to the meanings that can be conveyed by paralinguistic cues. First, in her response to Question #7, she wrote, “The use of body mechanics...often give[s] clues as to what is being both said and heard” (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). Second, in her response to Question #8, she noted that “[c]ode-meshing can...take the form of a body language, gestures, and facial expressions” (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016). Acknowledging that language can involve more than simply the spoken and written word revealed that Enlightened! had become more culturally sensitive toward the diversity in communicative modes that characterizes humans’ language use.

During her interview, Enlightened! offered a final set of remarks that solidified my impression that the enhancement in language awareness that she had experienced as a result of the WEs unit had in turn enriched her capacity for cultural sensitivity. Applying values central to the World Englishes ethos to other aspects of her life, Enlightened! expressed the following culturally sensitive sentiments:

I’m really seeing it...even in the...gay community—you know—people have preconceived ideas whether they buy into it or they don’t. But what I feel is that—you know—even in the World Englishes, you can—you can take any facet—I mean who is—who’s anyone to judge anyone for the way that they are or the way that they

feel.... [Y]ou know what, it's all out there and if you're going to insist on living in your tiny little hole, um, in your shelter, um, then you are missing out on a lot of very good, um, knowledge...and relationships.... I [now] embrace the fact that I am less rigid in some of my thoughts. (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016).

In my interpretation, Enlightened!'s admission that learning about WEs had led her to become "less rigid" in her thinking about the LGBT+ community (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016) suggested that heightened language awareness had jolted her overall worldview so that it became significantly less doctrinaire: that is, not as firmly rooted in the inured norms that had heretofore shaped her perception of reality with a completeness that prohibited informed viewing of what is beyond. Moreover, I see Enlightened!'s enthusiastic recommendation that other people emerge from their "hole[s]" and "shelter[s]," as well as her expression of appreciation for the diminishment of her former rigidity (Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016), as aligned with Ana's recommendation that people leave their "comfort zones" to avoid becoming mired in the prescriptivism that seems to be the default mode for many if not most humans (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). In these ways, Enlightened! displayed the welcoming attitude toward difference that is the primary constituent of cultural sensitivity.

**Amber.** As I explained in the introduction to this theme's section, it was Amber's usage of the expression "cultural sensitivity" in her personal definition of language awareness that inspired me to use it as a key term in my articulation of this section's overall theme. Amber shared this personal definition during the interview, when I asked her what the concept of language awareness had come to mean for her in her life, during and after the WEs unit. She responded to this question with the following:

[F]or me it's like—in a sense it's like cultural sensitivity...because for me—like—raising awareness about anything—it's like you're trying to make someone understand and realize where you're coming from and how—how it affects you and how their behavior can or their—their speech—or like, anything they do can affect how you are and like you as an individual.... I mean, even though—even though I spoke two languages, I never thought of someone, um, really saying—ya know—be aware that this person speaks this language so don't—don't say this or don't do that.... (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

I interpret the above statements as presenting an understanding of language awareness that is predicated on an assumption that developing it (that is, language awareness) automatically unleashes growth in cultural sensitivity, and does so with an immediateness that renders the two concepts nearly synonymous. This near-conflation of language awareness with cultural sensitivity is very similar to the understanding that Kobe articulated, except Amber did not cast language awareness as absolutely requiring any action or assuming any new responsibility.

When I asked Amber if she could provide an example of how her heightened language awareness had affected her life since the World Englishes unit, I observed the emergence of a first feature of cultural sensitivity that she had developed. This first example suggested, more specifically, that she had developed a descriptivist perspective on what constitutes “success” in communication: that is, the perspective that communication is successful when interlocutors understand one another, regardless of whether their communication adheres to any particular set of discourse conventions. I see Amber's embodiment of this descriptivist principle as an essential feature of what it means to be

culturally sensitive. A culturally sensitive person respects that the norms, such as discourse conventions, that govern his or her reality are not necessarily the norms that govern the realities of others. Amber's iteration of this first example of how heightened language awareness had influenced her life is as follows:

I guess the way like even—even the way I notice just—just from my traveling over the summer. Going to different reservations, we all speak a certain way, and, um, when someone corrects us on the way we speak—it's kind of insulting—and I guess—I guess being corrected is—isn't okay because it's like there's no right or wrong if you understand that person and what they try to say. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

This set of statements seems to signify that Amber had become able, as a result of heightened language awareness, to apply in her day-to-day life the realization she had experienced on the theoretical level in the classroom: that discourse conventions which govern what is “correct” and what is “incorrect” in any given discourse community are less important than whether interlocutors' meanings are transmitted effectively. If cultural sensitivity is an attitude of willingness to attempt understanding and even empathy for the positionalities of others, Amber's firsthand experience with this descriptivist principle surely corresponds, in my opinion. With this example, it seems to me that Amber demonstrated willingness to put herself in the shoes of another person whom she could imagine feeling a type of pain that she herself had experienced, and moreover, could make a culturally sensitive decision based on insights she had gained through her experience of this empathetic gesture.

At another point during her interview, Amber shared another example, a hypothetical scenario, of how her enhanced language awareness had affected her life. In this second example, I observed not only another incarnation of the descriptivist principle that I identified in the previous paragraph—that success of communication is determined only by the accurate conveyance of meaning—but an additional descriptivist principle playing out, as well. This additional descriptivist tenet was represented in Amber’s recognition that discourse conventions, such as conventions for pronunciation and spelling, vary across discourse communities:

[L]et’s say we’re in a group and someone from the city comes and they’re...listening to our—like our dialogue...and then...if I’m tryna say—like, “three” and...back home they’d say “tree”.... [T]hey’d say—like—what are you trying to say like—like are you trying to say “three”? Or like if someone were to correct me, it’s kind of like okay, like why—why do you need to—like you understood what I was tryna say, right? So.... (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

I interpret the combination of the rhetorical question and the pregnant pause following “So” at the end of the above scenario to have represented the initial descriptivist principle: that is, the premise that communication is successful as long as the people involved in the communicative interaction understand each other’s meanings. The additional descriptivist principle that I see playing out in the above scenario, the precept that discourse conventions tend to vary across discourse communities, in turn varying acceptable pronunciations and spellings, emerged in Amber’s implied acceptance of the fact that “three” and “tree” can mean the same thing—the sum of the digits 1 and 2—in their respective discourse communities.

Later in Amber's interview, evidence of the theme that language awareness can promote cultural sensitivity emerged a final time. In this final excerpted segment, Amber again voiced the aversion to "correcting" people that she had developed as a result of internalizing the descriptivist principles discussed in the previous paragraphs. She also articulated an explicit appreciation for linguistic variation which I see as somewhat reminiscent of the "compassion" she felt she had developed toward the Mohawk children whom she witnessed struggling with pronunciations (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). (See Amber's segment in the "Theme #2: Language Awareness as Promoting Personal Growth" section of this chapter.) I categorized the current segment as evidence of emergent cultural sensitivity rather than evidence of personal growth because Amber did not, in the segment below, mention any evolution in her personal or cultural identity, per se. What follows is the final set of remarks from Amber's interview transcript that I interpret as demonstrating developments in cultural sensitivity that had been engendered by the WEs unit:

I notice [since the WEs unit], like—a lot—like—I had a lot of city friends and—like—I notice—like—they would say certain words and—like—I wasn't aware that I was correcting them.... [L]ike, my friend used to say "eeapple." "Eeapple"—like, emphasize the A. And I'd say "apple." I'm like, "Eat an apple." Like, it's *apple*. Like, I'd—I'd correct her pronunciation. Or, [she]'d say, "a—a—axe"... "axe," instead of "ask." And I would say, "It's 'ask,' not 'axe.'" Like, I don't know—just little things like that.... She didn't—I mean, it didn't really bother her that much, but I just realized it, and I—like—stopped after I did it because then she was talking like me and I was like, no—I don't—like—I don't want you to talk like me. I—I like that you're different. (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016)

In these final comments, Amber identified two specific examples of words whose pronunciations she had considered only from her own habituated frame of reference, prior to the WEs unit. Her admission that she “wasn’t aware that [she] was correcting” her friends when they pronounced these words in ways that did not correspond to Amber’s own preconceived expectations illustrated just how immersed she had been in her own set of discourse norms (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016). However, the WEs unit, it appears, prompted Amber toward the same sort of transformative enhancement in cultural sensitivity that Ana had experienced. That is, Amber evidently became able to differentiate between *her* thoughts and feelings about her friends’ language use and *their* thoughts and feelings about their (own) language use. As I explained in Ana’s segment of this chapter, I see the development of this ability to distinguish between one’s own projected expectations and the actual lived experiences of those upon whom the expectations are projected as an important aspect of what it means to be culturally sensitive. And as I also noted in Ana’s segment, while presuming too vast of a chasm between self and other can lead to the marginalizing and dehumanizing that equates to “othering,” cultural sensitivity entails the comprehension that every individual possesses an identity and, almost always, the right to express it freely, apart from the expectations inherent in labels imposed by others.

In sum, the theme that language awareness can promote cultural sensitivity emerged in data contributed by all five participants in this case study. Ana’s development in cultural sensitivity emerged as she recounted being chided by her friends for sounding “white” and thereafter, prompted by insights developed during the WEs unit, developing a newfound respect for uniqueness in others’ communication styles and a conviction that it is a good idea to travel out of one’s “comfort zone” so as to avoid forgetting that other cultural and

linguistic frames of reference exist (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). Ruby evidenced growth in cultural sensitivity resulting mainly from twin discoveries made during the WEs unit: her discovery of the existence of proud Appalachian English users and her discovery that language use bears no intrinsic correlation to socioeconomic or education status (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). For Kobe, cultural sensitivity as promoted by language awareness became evident not in a recounting of how it had developed, but instead in how he defined language awareness itself, at the time that the data was collected (Questionnaire, Kobe, 7/18/2016; Interview, Kobe, 8/9/2016). Enlightened!'s questionnaire and interview evidenced cultural sensitivity promoted by language awareness in several ways: in an emphasis on the importance of not making assumptions about a person's intelligence based on his or her language use; in an emphasis on the importance of asking questions in order to learn more about unfamiliar cultural perspectives; in statements that indicated a newfound awareness that paralinguistic cues can be meaningful modes of communication; and in an explanation that exposure to WEs had prompted her to become "less rigid" in her thoughts about other concepts, such as sexual orientation (Questionnaire, Enlightened!, 7/14/2016; Interview, Enlightened!, 8/8/2016). Finally, in the data contributed by Amber, evidence emerged which suggested that language awareness had promoted cultural sensitivity, insofar as she demonstrated having internalized two key descriptivist principles as well as a strong willingness to accept linguistic variation she witnessed among her friends (Interview, Amber, 8/12/2016).

#### **Theme #5: Language Awareness as Catalyst for Social Change**

A fifth theme that emerged in the data was that language awareness can be a catalyst for social change. That is to say, in data that had been contributed by two of the

participants, I observed the recurrence of a particular idea: that raising students' language awareness in certain key ways may be a means of effecting positive longer-term changes in social attitudes about language across the United States. This theme emerged in data contributed by Ana and Ruby.

**Ana.** The theme that language awareness can catalyze social change emerged in the data that I collected from Ana—more specifically, during her interview, at the end of the part in which we conversed about her former manager's "correction" of the way she pronounced the verb "axe" (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). I categorized the majority of Ana's commentary about the "axe" issue as evidence of the second theme ("Language Awareness Can Promote Personal Growth") because I felt that most of her comments demonstrated development in her sense of personal identity, specifically in the context of her former employment. As I explained in the Theme #2 section of this chapter, Ana's exposure to the descriptivist orientation during the WEs unit—in which she learned that even though saying "axe" rather than "ask" may be considered "wrong" by *one* audience, according to *one* set of discourse conventions, she was not "wrong" to pronounce it that way, period—had empowered her to become able to accept her manager's "correction" of her pronunciation of "axe" without being burdened by negative emotions such as annoyance (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). In recounting to me this anecdote of gaining freedom from her former inclination to react with annoyance, Ana went so far as to express appreciation for such "correction," explaining that she could now see it as a guide for more effectively navigating the discourse conventions of an unfamiliar environment (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). It was just after this point in her commentary about "axe" that Ana began exhibiting development of a nature that I do not see as falling merely within the purview of personal growth. In the

two excerpted segments of Ana's interview transcript that I focus on in this Theme #5 section, I *do* continue to perceive her interest in growing beyond the constraints of a former belief, a feature that I identify as personal growth—but I also see *more* than interest. I see an enactment of agency, within the very context of the interview itself, which I interpret as Ana's intentional representation of the beginning of a social change that could be much larger and longer-term than its function in that one moment.

The following excerpt from Ana's interview transcript, the first of the two excerpts I interpret as working together to manifest the theme that language awareness can be a catalyst for social change, contains what she went on to say immediately after the expression of appreciation that I interpreted as evidence of personal growth and included as the final excerpt in her portion of the Theme #2 section of this chapter. I interpret Ana's comments in the first excerpt below as the springboard from which the explicit act of agency represented in the second excerpt was launched. In this first excerpted segment, Ana was still talking about her interaction with her former manager. However, she seemed to experience a sort of inner shift, beginning to refer to him as "you," as if she were reliving the interaction with him in her mind as she spoke to me:

I didn't mean it in the sense where, like, I took it and "Thank you, like now I'm on your side"—because I still—I still believe that I was right, in a way. Um—I—I—I *was* right. I didn't mean I'm going to *axe* you, you know. Like, I didn't mean that. So um—but you felt as I did. So like, you—you *thought* I did. And—so like, *you* were wrong for thinking that, because I wasn't trying to hurt nobody. (Interview, Ana, 8/19/16)

Here, I see Ana exercising the ability to distinguish her own perspective from an authority figure's perspective during a disagreement, a cognitive act made possible by the new form of self-assurance she had gained through her discovery of the legitimacy ascribed to her own perspective by others who simply didn't happen to be in the vicinity at the time. But while it was this new species of self-assurance that enabled her to learn to accept "correction" from her manager without feeling burdened by negative emotion, as I interpreted in the excerpts that I focused on in the section of this chapter dedicated to Theme #2, here in *this* excerpt I perceive the self-assurance being put to stronger use. Instead of channeling it as energy for gracefully acquiescing to her manager's perception of reality, here Ana recast the entire scenario, imagining herself enacting the agency necessary to redirect *him* so that he would understand and operate according to *her* perception of reality. I interpret this recasting, though only imagined, as significant. It seems significant to me because it appears that the agency she imagined herself exercising was then carried into the present moment she was actually living. Following her concluding remark in that sequence ("I wasn't trying to hurt nobody" [Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016]), I thanked her for the great amount of energy she had dedicated to articulating her thoughts on that matter, and then I inquired whether I could ask her just one final question before we drew the interview to a close. She responded, "Yes, you can axe me!" and followed this exclamation with a laugh (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). It is this brief set of vocalizations—her exclamation plus the laugh—that constitutes the second of the two excerpts from Ana's interview transcript that I interpret as contributing to the theme that language awareness can catalyze social change.

I interpret Ana's utterance of "axe" rather than "ask" as a manifestation of the theme that language awareness can be a catalyst for social change because it was clear to me, in

that moment, that she was being intentional about pronouncing it that way. Moreover, given the context in which she uttered this pronunciation, her reason for doing so also seems clear to me. I heard it as an agentive act. While my attention would have been drawn to her usage of “axe” in this statement no matter what, because she had never used this pronunciation in conversation with me before, I might have interpreted it as a slip of the tongue if not for the laugh that accompanied it. It was, in my perception, her laugh that delineated her usage of “axe” in that statement as purposeful. She would not have laughed if she had not intended to break from the discourse conventions she knew I expected from her, just as she did not laugh when she said “nobody” rather than “anybody” in the statement “I wasn’t trying to hurt nobody” (Interview, Ana, 8/19/2016). According to my interpretation, in her conscious choice to use the pronunciation of “axe” when conversing with an interlocutor whom she knew was located in an environment where “ask” is most conventional, Ana exhibited that her heightening in language awareness included the knowledge of how discourse conventions might change over time, on a larger scale. The fact of her laughter does not diminish my impression of the significance of her decision to utilize the pronunciation that she knew I wouldn’t be expecting. I might interpret her laughter as suggesting that she felt safe from negative judgment as she made the choice to use the stigmatized pronunciation; however, regardless, in the making of the choice itself, it seems to me that the language awareness that Ana identified as having developed as a result of the WEs unit included the realization that it can be even the most minute mechanisms that act as catalysts capable of emanating longer-term, larger changes.

**Ruby.** Evidence of the theme that language awareness can catalyze social change emerged in Ruby’s data as well. During Ruby’s interview, our conversation turned at one

point to the topic of Black English, as it is addressed by the writer of the narrative excerpted in Question #10 on the questionnaire. After expressing a mixture of frustration and sympathy for that writer's childhood suffering of the "corrections" imposed by the white mother and consequent development of a deep-rooted "racial shame" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 206), Ruby began sharing some of her thoughts about how the English language might be handled differently within the American educational system (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). Her commentary went on to amount, in my interpretation, to a proposal that the education system might be revised with the express purpose of reorienting the collective perception of the young generations, so that larger scale social change can transpire as those generations age into adulthood. More specifically, according to Ruby's thinking, students' attention might be drawn to people's relative open-mindedness toward "error" in *speech*, as a means of beginning a trend of teaching that "correctness" is only a construct. From there, students' perspectives on what constitutes error in *writing* might be able to be transformed, and then gradually carried out into the general populace. While Ruby's thoughts and ideas on this matter were delivered in a nearly continuous stream, I have broken this up into three parts so as to allow for more thoughtful interpretation of the various main points, starting with the following:

I think we still need to have like a centralized—like—like a status quo of like—of like—I mean...maybe making, I don't—I don't know how you would go about this, but—like—a standard of—in a paper you need to have—you need to be able to write better than a first grader's English, but then again like accepting [Black English] in a paper. I don't know how you'd ever go about creating those standards—to actually—in the classroom. But if the—if the message is the same, why—why

alienate people—like—who are—even if we do by maybe slowly incorporating more Englishes which are spoken Englishes—and then slowly work to the written part.

(Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016)

In this first set of comments, I see Ruby having begun to employ her language awareness with intentionality, for the purpose of brainstorming ways to initiate large-scale change in the education system. In an effort to broach the difficult prospect of revising educational curricula to be inclusive of more Englishes, she began by directing her gaze at the precise location where prescriptivists and descriptivists are locked in perpetual struggle. With her comments favoring the concepts of centralization and status quos, she expressed belief in the efficacy of establishing and maintaining standards: the theoretical darling of prescriptivism (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). However, she also voiced a descriptivist perspective with the fragmented yet distinct theme conveyed by the almost-completed rhetorical question, “[I]f the message is the same, why—why alienate people—like—who are...[?]” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). As for the point in time in students’ educational trajectories in which revised curricula might be implemented, her reference to “a first grader’s English” is the only possible indicator (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016). If the minimum goal would be for every student in the U.S. to learn “to write better than a first grader’s English” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016), it would seem that Ruby’s vision entailed that only one variety of English be taught through at least that time, during which students are typically 5-6 years old. Then, with the comment about “slowly incorporating more Englishes which are spoken Englishes—and then slowly work[ing] to the written part” (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016) she began transitioning into her next main concept. So begins the substance of her actual proposal:

Which I think would be harder because people are—well, I think people are—I think are *correcting*, when it comes to papers than when it comes to spoken English.

Like—I probably speak with grammatical errors when I speak, but when I write a paper, it’s all about commas and it’s all about going after the grammar. But those are—those are two different realms. I don’t—I don’t repeat sentences to try to fix the grammatical mistakes; I just let it go. You know? Like, sometimes you speak and you kinda forget those little things, cuz you can’t always talk in your mind before it comes out. But when you write it on paper, that’s when you have time to look, and revise, and revise, and edit again kinda thing. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016)

In this second transcribed passage, I continue to discern Ruby’s language awareness employed at the metacognitive level. Her observations about her own cognitive functioning around the “errors” she commits in speech versus writing suggest serious intellectual investment in the challenge of figuring out how to galvanize the first ripples of societal change. It is also notable to me that Ruby’s brainstorming in this section involved the intentional juxtaposition of the concepts of speech and writing, for the purposes of comparison and contrast: exercises intended to generate additional material for solution-oriented analysis. None of the other four participants in the study addressed the relationship between speaking and writing nearly as explicitly. I interpret Ruby’s willingness to generate such additional material as additional evidence of the theme that language awareness can act as a catalyst for social change. It is such a willingness that one’s language awareness must be infused with, in order for the awareness to transform into action. If Ruby had not developed language awareness in the first place, within the context of the WEs unit, the possibility of her willingness to employ it in the service of social change would never have

existed. Instead, she demonstrated an ability for metacognitive application of her language awareness and what emerged were ideas for how other people's language awareness could be raised, for the overarching aim of transforming reality itself. With that said, in the third and final excerpted passage, Ruby can be seen addressing this lofty prospect with unequivocal, albeit stymied passion:

It's—it's so hard because—I don't know how you'd ever—say what's correct. I think it's kinda changing the perspective on what is correct. Like, do we always need to be correct? Like is there a place that we need to be correct? And there—where—if it's not correct, it's more acceptable?... Culture—and how we—like—you have so many generations when this wasn't—it—it's not gonna happen overnight. It's just like any type—it's more of a social change in a—in a way. It just takes changing people's minds about—like how—and how they think about things. (Interview, Ruby, 8/8/2016)

In this final segment, Ruby reached the apparent limit of her capacity to employ her language awareness for the purpose of imagining alternate linguistic realities. While she was able to name the concept of social change, per se, her actual brainstorming process concluded with the three questions. However, I interpret the ending of a brainstorming process in questions to be further evidence of the theme that language awareness can catalyze social change. Progress can only be initiated when questions are posed.

In sum, I discerned the theme that language awareness can act as a catalyst for social change as manifested in data contributed by two participants in this study: Ana and Ruby. This fifth theme emerged from Ana's data in the form of a set of utterances that I interpret as agentive acts executed within the very setting of her interview with me for the purpose of

demonstrating her metacognitive awareness of how even seemingly miniscule language choices, if strategically placed, can ripple out into large-scale social changes with time. Then, in Ruby's contributions to the data pool, the fifth theme emerged in a sequence of ideas she shared during her interview about how the American education system might be reformed so as to include a wider range of Englishes. In Ruby's vision, large-scale transformation in American attitudes about language could transpire as generations of students carried their new, more inclusive perspectives with them into adulthood, eventually outnumbering and replacing the constituency of the general populace that had espoused the old, limited beliefs.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on presenting the themes that emerged from the data that I collected from my five former undergraduate students who volunteered to be the participants in my case study. However, first, I reviewed the theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological steps that led to the point in my dissertation research that is represented by this fourth chapter. Then, in the "Participant Profiles" section, I provided a brief review of each of the five participants' basic demographic information in Table 3: a condensed version of the longer introduction of each of the participants that I included in the "Focal Participants" section of Chapter Three. Finally, I presented the five significant themes that emerged from the data that I collected from the case study participants: (1) Language Awareness as Affecting Social Connections; (2) Language Awareness as Promoting Personal Growth; (3) Language Awareness as Promoting but Problematizing Critical Thinking; (4) Language Awareness as Promoting Cultural Sensitivity; and (5) Language Awareness as Catalyst for Social Change. With each theme, I presented the data excerpts in

which the theme had emerged, along with my interpretation of each excerpt and my explanation of how each was related to the theme.

I now turn to the final chapter, Chapter Five, in which my main aim is to fulfill the final aspect of the study's methodological purpose by synthesizing the five principles of SCEP, the five themes that emerged from the participants' data, and the literature about the three constructs within which SCEP was conceptualized: Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy, the World Englishes ethos, and the harm reduction model. After this discussion, I explain some implications for teaching, curriculum development, and professional development. Then, I briefly outline some future research directions, and conclude with final reflections.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SYNTHESIS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

This study was inspired by a cascade of revelations: my exposure to the World Englishes paradigm as a doctoral student, my subsequent awakening to the reality that the “English 101” classes that I teach are in actuality characterized by Englishes, and then my decision that the uncritically prescriptive framework within which I had hitherto been teaching these composition classes was likely doing harm to students. My interest in reducing potential for my students to experience the types of phenomena that I came to identify as *linguistic harms* and my interest in welcoming more Englishes into my classroom merged into a theoretical and pedagogical purpose, which in turn shaped the study’s first of two research questions:

- (1) In what ways can the harm reduction model be used to support the integration of the World Englishes paradigm into the contemporary composition classroom?

The five principles that I theorized in Chapter Two, which I identify collectively as *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy* (SCEP), constituted my answer to this first research question. The study’s methodological purpose and second research question were born after I had applied SCEP in my classes for some time and developed increasing curiosity about the specifics of its effects in students’ lives. I thus decided upon the methodological approach outlined in Chapter Three—a qualitative, exploratory case study—for which I formulated the second research question:

- (2) How do the five former undergraduate students perceive their language awareness after having taken a section of a first-year composition course that included a World Englishes unit shaped by the principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy?

The five themes that emerged most saliently and unequivocally from the data that I collected from the case study participants—the focus of Chapter Four—constituted my answer to this second research question.

Overall, this dissertation research offers several contributions to the fields of composition and TESOL. One offering is an account of one teacher's journey of discovery about what can happen when harm reduction principles are applied in composition theory and pedagogy in an effort to connect with students and widen the purview from English to Englishes. It also offers the same teacher's chronicle of further insights and complications discovered through a scholarly case study that explored some of the former students' classroom experiences retrospectively. Finally, it offers the new theoretical and pedagogical orientation itself, a new possibility for discoursing with students. This new orientation, or mode of discourse, is comprised by a combination of the five principles originally theorized to act as general guidelines for shaping a World Englishes unit for composition classes, the additional insights and complications discovered through the case study methodology, and even further insights and unforeseen complexities realized during the dissertation defense in which some of the study's underlying assumptions and results were challenged, and then addressed in a final series of revisions.

## Chapter Outline

The first and main objective of this final chapter is to synthesize three strands: points from the literature that informed the principles of SCEP, the principles themselves, and the themes that emerged from the data that I collected from the case study participants who had experienced SCEP's implementation in the classroom. From this synthesizing process emerges another layer of new knowledge. With that said, this objective has guided me in dividing this chapter into five main segments, each of which corresponds to one of the five principles of SCEP. In each principle's segment, I identify which of the five emergent themes from the participants' data struck me as most aligned with that principle, and discuss how specific pieces of data from which I interpreted each of these themes have educated me further about the effects—some of which were quite unexpected—which can be brought to bear by the principle when it is implemented in the classroom. I also discuss, in each principle's segment, points from the literature about the three constructs that inform SCEP—Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy, the World Englishes ethos, and the harm reduction model—that I see as further informing, or otherwise relevantly related to, the relationship between that principle and the various themes that seem to have been engendered by its implementation. After the project of synthesizing these strands and documenting new insights and ideas that emerge, this final chapter contains three additional segments: a brief discussion of further implications for teaching, curriculum development, and professional development; some of my ideas for future research directions; and my final reflections.

### SCEP Principle #1

The first principle of SCEP is that *the classroom should be a space where linguistic harms are unlikely to occur*. This first principle influences my planning and execution of

the WEs unit in ways that parallel, figuratively speaking, how the principle of harm reduction psychotherapy from which it is derived is applied in the context of drug (ab)use treatment.

As I explained in Chapter Two, the first SCEP principle is adapted directly from Denning's (2000) first principle of harm reduction psychotherapy: "First, do no harm" (p. 6-7). The phraseology of this principle is a manifestation of all harm reduction practitioners' shared conviction that treatment providers should take all possible measures to avoid inflicting more harm upon the service-seeking individual than he or she had been experiencing when the treatment was begun. Understanding the reasoning that motivates this harm reductionist conviction requires consideration of only one piece of information included in Chapter Two and then two particular statistics published only a few months ago. The information from Chapter Two is that incarceration for drug-related offenses is common, even though incarceration for these offenses frequently does not include treatment for addiction: a lack which has been documented as tending to cause addiction problems to be exacerbated (Van Nuys, 2008, par. 3). The recently-published statistics relate to the current recidivism rates of drug abusers incarcerated for drug-related offenses: A 2017 publication issued by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)—an organization designed and run based upon the harm reduction model—has reported that *60 to 80 percent* of drug abusers commit new crimes, typically drug-related crimes, after release from incarceration; moreover, an estimated *95 percent* of said individuals resume abusing drugs after release (NADCP, 2017). Thus, what may be called "uncritically prescriptive" incarceration of drug abusers seems hardly effective as a means of addressing

the inclination to commit drug-related crimes—and it is almost completely ineffective as a means of addressing substance abuse itself.

It should be noted, however, that in pointing out these problems with the common non-harm reductionist approach, I am not implying an assumption that harm reduction can offer the perfect panacea. As I emphasized in my initial explanation of harm reduction in Chapter One and my more extended overview of harm reduction in Chapter Two, harm reduction proponents have never believed that the harm reduction model offers a flawless or permanent panacea for the problematic situations it can be used to address. Rather, harm reduction was originally theorized out of desperation, as a temporary means of preventing or at least slowing the disintegration of the social fabric in places where HIV was running rampant as a result of unhygienic habits stemming from drug addiction. The temporary nature of the “solutions” that can be imagined through a harm reductionist lens has remained a core feature of the model, as has practitioners’ awareness of the potential pitfalls inherent to the model, perhaps most notably the reality that it can perpetuate the root problem—the addiction—even while reducing some of this root problem’s harmful effects.

What this all implies, in terms of my “translation” of the harm reduction model into a pedagogical approach for composition, is that implementing the first principle of SCEP in the context of the WEs unit entails that I tailor my pedagogy in ways that attempt to minimize the possibility of inflicting any more linguistic harm upon each student than he or she had been experiencing in life before my class began. Minimizing the risk of inflicting linguistic harm means that I provide as many opportunities as possible for students’ language awareness to be enhanced, while maintaining the understanding that the opportunities I devise are based only on my predictions formulated from theories, combined

with my assumptions about what has worked for me and other groups of students in the past. As I discussed in the areas of Chapter Four in which I explained complications that I discovered as I analyzed and reflected on the data, I have learned that it is crucial to remain aware that the link between heightened language awareness and reduction in risk of linguistic harm has proven to be less reliable than I originally assumed. Taking care to prioritize this awareness of the incomplete reliability of my core assumption is the best way of priming myself for addressing the unexpected, less-than-positive effects that inevitably occur as every new incarnation of the WEs unit progresses. Maintaining this awareness of the potential for unexpected pitfalls is also consistent with the way harm reductionists operate in the realm of addiction treatment.

The more specific objective I pursue in order to minimize the risk of inflicting linguistic harm is to refrain from “correcting” students’ language when they speak or write.<sup>9</sup> I follow this guideline because I want, as I explained in the “Linguistic Harm” subsection of Chapter One, to avoid causing students who lack a comfort level with so-called “standard” forms to feel that they are “unwelcome to use and further cultivate the linguistic resources with which they do feel most adept.” As can be observed upon perusal of the list of six linguistic harms that I generated in Chapter One, it is only really this first one that the instructor has any measure of direct control over. That is to say, the instructor can strive to make all students feel welcomed, linguistically—but cannot control whether a student

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<sup>9</sup> Of course there are always exceptions, such as moments in class in which someone has attributed a meaning to a word that is so far from the standard American English dictionary definition that I feel that it would do the student more of a disservice not to redirect him or her to the meaning agreed on by all who look to the dictionary as the authority. Even then, though, I do not present my redirection as a decontextualized “correction”; instead, I explain that my critique is based on the meaning as defined by the text that the American populace has agreed to consider a codified record of the parts of the English language that are to be considered “standard American English.” Then, we usually discuss how “the American populace” is in fact only a construct...and so it goes. My thoughts on the importance of contextualizing “corrections” continue in the “Implications for Teaching” section near the end of this final chapter.

internalizes a perceived attitude, decides to drop out of school, experiences linguistic anxiety, and so on.

Of the five themes that emerged from my participants' data, the *first* and *second* themes strike me as most aligned with the first SCEP principle. In other words, I perceive that my implementation of the first SCEP principle in the context of the WEs unit elicited some perceptions from the participants which in turn became the data in which I observed manifestations of these two themes. What this means, even more specifically, is that my efforts to tailor my pedagogy so as to minimize the possibility of inflicting linguistic harm ended up raising some of the participants' language awareness in ways that affected social connections in their lives (Theme #1) and promoted experiences of personal growth (Theme #2).

**SCEP Principle #1 → Theme #1: Attempting to Reduce Risk of Linguistic Harm Can Promote Language Awareness That Can Then Affect Social Connections Both Positively and Negatively**

In terms of connections I observe between SCEP principle #1 and Theme #1, both of the participants whose data I interpreted as evidencing Theme #1—Kobe and Amber—contributed comments in which they explicitly identified their perception that the WEs unit had heightened their language awareness in ways that had affected their senses of connection with other people. I believe that the social connections which were established and enhanced by the newly-developed language awareness may have lent themselves to a diminishment in these participants' risks of experiencing linguistic harm in my class, or elsewhere thereafter. However, in other ways, the newfound language awareness may have

undermined these participants' senses of worth in relation to social connections in both the present and the future.

In Kobe's case, for example, I think his realization that "white people" are not the sole owners of the word "chmacked"—which I first interpreted as possibly equating to a realization that *no* single group owns *any* particular linguistic form—might have increased his social comfort level in ways that in turn diminished the likelihood that he would experience the harm of "emerg[ing] from the educational process unequipped to participate with maximal effectiveness in globalized social, economic, and political networks": the fifth linguistic harm in the list that I generated in Chapter One. If he *had* continued to believe that only certain groups possess the right to use certain forms of English, he may have cut himself off from the possibility of cultivating interpersonal connections that would have helped him to become linguistically versatile in the manner exemplified by Rusty Barrett, the speaker of both African-American English and Indian English whose ability to "translat[e] from English to English" in a Chicago soup kitchen saved the facility from being shut down by a health inspector (Young, et al., 2013, p. 48-49). Instead, if he did in fact realize that it was not only his right to use terms that he had once thought to be the property of groups in which he was not a member, and also realized that using such terms can actually be a resource for building social connections, the likelihood may have increased that Kobe will avail himself of opportunities to continue to build literacy across Englishes. Such continued cultivation of literacy in various Englishes seems likely to promote, in turn, his emergence from the educational process as equipped as possible for participating effectively in such linguistically diverse settings in his future. If this potential outcome were to come to fruition, my implementation of SCEP Principle #1 will have been effective

according to my original assumption (that heightened language awareness reduces risk of linguistic harm).

On a more cosmopolitan level, Kobe's self-identified increased sense of social comfort with the prospect of cultivating literacy in multiple Englishes could in turn facilitate his comfort level in environments where English is used as a *lingua franca*. The ability to navigate situations where ELF usages are a norm is a necessity for anyone who wishes to be a global citizen, as is suggested by the scenario discussed by Seidlhofer (2009) about the Danish Foreign Minister whose usage of the expression "so-called" was misunderstood by an uninformed witness apparently unfamiliar with *lingua franca* usages (p. 136-137). Were Kobe to have continued perceiving certain Englishes as off-limits to him, he may have gone on to suffer linguistic harms arising from misinterpretation or plain unfamiliarity—harms that building literacy in multiple Englishes may otherwise have helped him to circumvent.

However, if the other possible effect of Kobe's heightened language awareness that I imagined in Chapter Four were to have occurred—that is, the possibility that he walked away from the World Englishes unit with the fundamental, theoretical misunderstanding that the pluralizing of the word "English" means that Englishes are somehow entirely separate from each other—then it seems that the increase in his language awareness may have inadvertently increased his risk of experiencing several of the forms of linguistic harm that I listed in Chapter One. For example, if Kobe were to believe that Englishes are separate, discrete entities, this belief might feed into any sort of residual inner conflict he might have retained from his primary and secondary school teachers' exhortations about keeping "unprofessional" forms out of the school setting; in this way, he could experience a form of the third harm in my Chapter One list: "[I]nternalized negative attitudes [toward students']

home languages, which students may assume are implied by uncritically prescriptive teaching] can in turn engender a sense of inner conflict between a student's home and school languages" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 55; Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65). In other words, if Kobe were to have emerged from the WEs unit under the mistaken impression that he was supposed to conceptualize Englishes as separate, discrete entities, he might go back to feeling similar to the way he was made to feel in his earlier years: that there was some dramatic choice to be made about which variety of English to use, every time he left his home. Since such a complete separation of Englishes can only exist on a theoretical level, and would therefore equate to a baffling and therefore stressful quandary to try to navigate in everyday life, the next most obvious linguistic harm Kobe might well experience would be linguistic anxiety (Young, et al., 2011, p. xxiv).

I could continue correlating the linguistic harms described in Chapter One with the possible social implications of a student walking away from the WEs unit with the mistaken impression that linguists' pluralizing of the word "English" means that varieties are to be imagined as totally distinct entities, but it seems safe to say that a potential pitfall of the WEs unit has been unveiled sufficiently enough as to suggest action that might be taken to avoid it: the instructor can take care to ensure that students truly grasp the translingual understanding of WEs. The translingual understanding of WEs, as I explained in Chapter Two, is that language should be approached in a temporal-spatial reality (Lu & Horner, 2013, p. 27): an approach which "treat[s] contact and practice as more primary and varieties as always emergent and changing at diverse levels of localization" (Canagarajah, 2013b, p. 59). In simpler terms, it is the translingual understanding of WEs that is represented by the contention that English is a living language (Lu, 2004, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011)—a

phrasing that has been more palatable for freshmen, in my experiences teaching the WE unit thus far.

As for Amber, as I reflected in Chapter Four, it appears to me that her realization that she had never been completely alone in feeling oppressed by negative attitudes toward her Mohawk L1, and toward her Mohawk-influenced English, may have diminished *her* potential for experiencing different types of linguistic harm. In her case, it seems possible that her discovery that she was part of a larger community of people whose non-English L1s influence their pronunciation of certain English sounds, such as the sound of the letter *R*, might have diminished the likelihood for her to experience the linguistic harms related to internalizing the negative attitudes of others. However, just as harm reduction in the social services realm does not offer perfect solutions for the problems it can be used to address, I am not suggesting that Amber's discovery of her membership in a larger community of people with similar experiences is some panacea. I am simply suggesting that discovering that one is not alone in a particular type of suffering can ameliorate some level of alienation—thus possibly counteracting the forces exerted by additional negative effects caused by the sense of alienation.

On the other hand, such new awareness—of the larger social context involved in one's oppression—might lend itself to the agonizingly helpless sensation akin to that which was recorded by Douglass in the text now known as his literacy narrative: “It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy” (1845, p. 35). Imagining this uncomfortable possibility suggests that future incarnations of the WEs unit would do well to include possible “remedies” in the form of concrete ideas about strategies for taking social action against language prejudice and its harmful effects.

**SCEP Principle #1 → Theme #2: Attempting to Reduce Risk of Linguistic Harm Can Promote Language Awareness, Thereby Allowing for Personal Growth That Can Further Reduce Risk**

In terms of connections I observe between SCEP Principle #1 and Theme #2, Ana's comments revealing the personal growth she had experienced as a result of heightened language awareness lead me to suspect a diminishment in her risk of experiencing linguistic harm, as well. Her story about learning how to react without annoyance to her former manager's "correction" of her pronunciation of "axe" as a result of internalizing the descriptivist principle that different discourse communities have different notions of what is "correct" versus "incorrect" leads me to believe that she will be less likely to experience the second type of linguistic harm in the Chapter One list: that is, the harm of internalizing negative attitudes toward her language use that might be conveyed in similarly decontextualized prescriptive remarks made by others in her future. I posit this suggestion of reduction in risk because it seems to me that learning that "correct" and "incorrect" are only relative terms is another way of saying that Ana developed the ability to discern linguistic reality through the veil of standard language ideology. As I articulated in Chapter One, standard language ideology blinds people to the reality that English is a living language—that standards and discourse conventions are neither universal across space nor unchanging across time (Lu, 2004; Lu, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011). Composition instruction that does not cut through this veil, and instead suggests that there *is* a set of fixed, static norms that students should aspire to master, can prime students to experience "linguistic anxiety" (Young, et al., 2011, p. xxiv) resulting from "stereotype threat": a reticence to self-express arising from a fear of reinforcing some negative stereotype about a group to which

one is perceived to belong (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797; Richardson, 2004, p. 163; Young, 2007, p. 120; Young, 2011, p. 65). The negative stereotype that Ana might have feared reinforcing would probably have been the prevalent assumption that “axe” is merely a flawed and unintelligent variation of “ask,” rather than a legitimate pronunciation codified as a part of African American English (Greenfield, 2011, p. 43-44). However, it seems that the WEs unit *did* succeed in cutting through the veil of standard language ideology for Ana, at least enough to make her cognizant of the socially constructed natures of “correctness” and “incorrectness.” While this cognizance may not render her completely immune from stereotype threat, it seems logical to assume that it could engender a certain sense of remove from the threat. If this does in fact turn out to be the case, Ana’s experience will have aligned with the expectation voiced by Young, et al. (2013) that I referenced in Chapter Two: If the teaching of “Standard English” includes “education in language awareness that addresses forms of language prejudice”—education explicitly designed to cut through the obscuring veil created by standard language ideology—students will emerge better equipped to respond assertively rather than defensively to prejudice they may encounter later in their lives (p. 36).

### **SCEP Principle #2**

The second principle of SCEP is that *the teacher understands that all language users’ experiences and choices are unique, and prompts students toward greater appreciation for their own Englishes*. This second principle influences my planning and implementation of the WEs unit in ways that parallel how the two principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which it is derived are applied in the context of drug (ab)use treatment.

The second SCEP principle is synthesized from Denning's (2000) fourth and ninth principles of harm reduction psychotherapy, as I explained in Chapter Two. The fourth principle holds that "[t]here is no inevitable progression from use to dependence": an acknowledgement of the "extremely heterogeneous" community of people who use mind-altering substances, as well as the heterogeneity among their reasons for doing so (p. 7-8). The ninth principle, "[The practitioner must respect] [t]he client's unique relationship with each drug used," carries a similar emphasis: every drug user's experience is unique, one-of-a-kind, different from every other drug user's experience, because of the unpredictable and complex interplay of each drug's pharmacology; the combination of cognitive, emotional, and physical traits of the drug user; and the context in which any given drug is consumed (p. 10). I considered these two harm reduction psychotherapy principles as logical candidates for synthesis because these are the two that I see as stressing the intrinsic uniqueness of every individual person as well as every individual's personal repertoire of resources for surviving and potentially thriving. I knew these features were essential to account for among the group of principles that would comprise SCEP. In keeping with this recognition, considering the second principle of SCEP as I plan and execute any given incarnation of the WEs unit means that I heed two objectives.

The first objective that SCEP Principle #2 requires me to pursue is spending time reminding myself that all of my students' experiences with language have been unique. That is, no two students come into my class with exactly the same language-learning trajectory, lexicon, knowledge of grammatical conventions, writing competence, comfort level with speaking, history with or even conscious awareness of language prejudice, et cetera. The most basic implication of this is that every single student comes into my class

interpreting the language they encounter and use through a different epistemological lens—sometimes in ways that it is impossible for me to foresee. Bartolomé (1994) spoke to this inevitable diversity when lambasting methodologically-focused “prepackaged curricula” designed to work for students who under-achieve academically, yet which are largely ineffective because they do not take into account the unique sociocultural realities that “shape” the under-achievement (p. 338). Bartolomé identified such pedagogies’ failure to acknowledge students’ experiential and epistemological realities as “a form of dehumanization” (p. 340).

In acknowledgment of this implication—that is, the inevitable experiential and epistemological diversity that populates every one of my classrooms—it is essential that I do things like avoid assuming all students are familiar with all vocabulary I use; explain instructions in multiple ways; and interpret what students say in my own words and then ask them to verify that I have understood their meaning accurately, and vice versa. Oftentimes, even these basic interactions—in which I ask students to explain to me, in their own words, what I had just said—enlighten me of possible (mis)interpretations that I never could have dreamt of on my own. As the semesters pass, and my mental archives of all the ways that students have (mis)interpreted my intended meanings grow, so does my repertoire of alternate ways of both understanding students’ perceptions and articulating my meanings. This type of mutually beneficial interaction embodies that key feature that Bartolomé (1994) attributed to Humanizing Pedagogy: the recognition among all involved that “[l]earning is not a one-way undertaking” (p. 345). As such, these interactions provide opportunities for me *and* the students to practice rhetorical listening (Ratcliffe, 1999), the technique I first discussed in Chapter Two with the help of two borrowed definitions: “ways of listening that,

instead of producing misunderstanding, allow for the possibility of cooperation by showing honor and respect to all those speaking” (Lu & Horner, 2011, p. 109), by inviting all parties involved to “move out of self-centeredness in assuming only their norms as relevant” (Canagarajah, 2013b, p. 131-132). In sum, my consistent attention to the inevitability of experiential and epistemological diversity in every classroom manifests in intertwined emphases: my frequent and explicit acknowledgement that learning cannot be a one-way undertaking, and my focus on encouraging both my own and my students’ capacities for rhetorical listening. With these emphases, I pursue the first of the two objectives embedded in SCEP Principle #2: strengthening my own understanding that each of my students arrives in my class carrying a history of intrinsically unique language experiences.

My second objective when considering the second SCEP principle is to guide students toward awareness of all of the above: toward the understanding that they all possess different language histories, knowledge bases, and thus repertoires of resources. As I explained in Chapter Two when describing my pedagogical implementation of the principle of diversity, the first of the seven key principles that define the WEs paradigm according to Proshina (2014, p. 7), all of my emphasis on the ubiquity of uniqueness begins to reify in students’ minds the verity of Greenfield’s (2011) observation that “no two people in this world speak in exactly the same way” (p. 41). In the context represented by this example, I encourage the students toward greater appreciation for their own particular ways of using the English language.

Of the five themes that emerged from the data, the *second* theme seems to me to have been most directly engendered by the second SCEP principle. In other words, amidst my consideration of all five SCEP principles when planning and executing the WEs unit, I

see my attention to the second principle as having led to effects that align most noticeably with the notion that language awareness can promote personal growth (Theme #2).

**SCEP Principle #2 → Theme #2: Composition Pedagogy That Fosters Students' Appreciation for Their Own Englishes Can Promote Personal Growth**

Data contributed by Amber suggested to me that an effect of my implementation of SCEP Principle #2 in her class's WEs unit was that her language awareness had been raised in ways that promoted her personal growth. In sharing with me that the WEs unit had elicited in her an unprecedented sense of respect for her (and her family's) specific ways of wielding English, but also a much-heightened appreciation for her literacy in her L1, Amber inspired me to assume that applying my understanding that all language users' experiences and choices are unique, and encouraging the students toward greater appreciation for their own Englishes, had promoted an increase in her sense of self-acceptance on both a personal and cultural level. I interpret an increase in self-acceptance as a form of personal growth, for as I indicated in Chapter Four, according to Maslow (1962), experiencing an increase in self-acceptance is a sign of psychological health—and a state of full-fledged psychological health is the ideal final phase of any given person's process of self-actualization, which Maslow otherwise referred to as personal growth (p. 36).

If my assumption is accurate that Amber experienced an increase in self-acceptance, personally and culturally, as a result of the second SCEP principle's implementation, her experience supports my assumption of the principle's usefulness within the overall SCEP framework. However, there is one discrepancy between the principle as I originally formulated it, and Amber's experience with it. The discrepancy: SCEP Principle #2 anticipates students' development of greater appreciation for their *Englishes*; however, while

Amber did express her newfound respect for her English, she spent much more time articulating increased appreciation for her literacy in *Mohawk*. This is an example of an unforeseen interpretation born from a student's specific epistemological perspective, and it causes me to consider widening the scope of SCEP Principle #2 so that it encourages students' appreciation for their L1s, *whatever they may be*, rather than only their Englishes, which may not actually be what they are inclined to appreciate at all. This is a particularly apropos adjustment given Bartolomé's (1994) observation that one of the groups of ethnicities that have not done well, historically, in uncritically prescriptive academic environments is Native Americans (p. 338).

Furthermore, widening the scope of the second SCEP principle so that it focuses on students' L1s, no matter what they may be, rather than only their Englishes, would be a move aligned with two other significant features of Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy. First, it aligns with Bartolomé's aversion to "one size fits all" pedagogical approaches, which can end up "robbing students of their culture, language, history, and values" (1994, p. 341). If, for example, when I received Amber's questionnaire and observed that many of her responses were based on her experiences with Mohawk rather than English(es), I had chosen to disregard her questionnaire and accept in her place another participant who *had* focused only on Englishes, this would have equated to what Bartolomé asserted: I would have robbed Amber of a chance to inform me and the rest of this study's audience more about her culture, language, history, and values (p. 341). Such a move would also treated Amber as *object* rather than *subject* (p. 341; Freire, 1970, p. 67). (Moreover, it would also have violated my IRB-approved sampling strategy: an ethical breach.) The second way that widening the scope of SCEP Principle #2 so that it encourages students' appreciation for

their L1s rather than only their Englishes aligns with Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy is related to Bartolomé's contention that teachers should acknowledge what students already know as a starting point upon which to build new knowledge (p. 344). Applying this premise to Amber's situation would mean I should acknowledge what she already knew—i.e. her L1, Mohawk—as a foundation upon which we would co-construct new knowledge. In Chapter Two, when discussing this particular feature of Humanizing Pedagogy, I interpreted it as a “theoretical prefiguring of code-meshing.” This interpretation would still make sense if SCEP Principle #2 were targeted at the construct of L1s rather than the construct of Englishes, because although code-meshing was defined by Young, et al. (2011) only as “blend[ing] accents, dialects, and varieties of English with school-based, academic, professional, and public Englishes (p. xxi), Canagarajah (2006) used the term to account for communicative acts that mingle not only Englishes but other languages with English(es) (p. 598). Thus, my widening of the scope of SCEP Principle #2 to foster students' appreciation for their L1s, even if their L1s aren't Englishes, would not only be consistent with Bartolomé's thinking; it would also be in line with the ideas promoted by Canagarajah, another linguist whose work has significantly informed my own.

In sum, a new insight emerged from the particular synthesizing process that I pursued in this section. Amber's experiences in the WEs unit have caused me to consider broadening the focus of SCEP Principle #2 to cover not only Englishes but all possible L1s that I might find among any particular batch of students. Considering the features of Humanizing Pedagogy that I have discussed, it seems that revising SCEP Principle #2 in this way would be a logical and humanizing move.

### **SCEP Principle #3**

The third principle of SCEP is that *the teacher welcomes Englishes into the composition experience and places the final decision for how (much) to use them in the students' hands*. This third SCEP principle influences my planning and execution of the WEs unit's actual composition activities in ways that parallel how the three principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which it is synthesized are applied in the context of drug addiction treatment.

As I explained in Chapter Two, the third SCEP principle is synthesized from Denning's (2000) fifth, sixth, and seventh principles of harm reduction psychotherapy. I saw these three principles as logical to combine based on their shared, strong emphasis on respecting the individual drug user's perception of reality. Denning's fifth principle, "[Every person has] [t]he right to sensitive treatment," emphasizes that people who volunteer to participate in treatment should be offered services that are "respectful of *their* assessment of their own problems and needs" (p. 8). Denning's sixth principle, "[The practitioner must help the client with] [d]evelopment of a needs hierarchy," follows up on the previous principle by guiding the practitioner to assist the client in determining and accomplishing his or her priorities: what the client perceives needs to be achieved in order to reach his or her personal understanding of success, in terms of level of substance use (p. 9). The seventh principle, "Active users can and do participate in treatment," requires that practitioners understand and acknowledge that many people who use mind-altering substances continue to use them throughout treatment, and may continue to do so throughout their lives, whether by choice or because they are truly unable to stop (p. 9).

Again, these three principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which SCEP Principle #3 is synthesized privilege the client's perception of reality over the practitioner's,

within the context of the services being sought and provided. That is, even though the client is the service-seeking party and the practitioner is the expert based on his or her formal education in the field, it is still the client's perception of his or her needs and priorities that sets the details of the course of treatment. This is the important feature that carries over through the synthesizing process to the context of the WEs unit: the reminder that the people who participate—that is, the students—are volunteering to sit in my particular section of English 101 in the first place, and thus do not deserve an uncritically prescriptive orientation from me that privileges SAE with no input from them, *or* that forces them to *avoid* forms associated with SAE while composing, if they prefer not to. Rather, I follow the approach explained by Barrett in Young, et al. (2013):

If students in my class were to raise objections [to my welcoming of non-standard Englishes into the composition experience], I would encourage them not to restrict or stigmatize other students' voices, but if the narrower understanding of standard dialect is what they want to emulate, so be it. A teacher and classroom that privilege code-meshing are not prejudiced against the narrower Standard English or those who idealize it. They simply provide the opportunity for others to be heard as well. (p. 129)

In other words, like Barrett, I formulate composition activities during the WEs unit in which students are welcomed to use their own Englishes to the extent that they wish, based on their own perceptions about what will help them experience the most satisfaction during the unit, as well as their own assumptions about the extent to which they will or won't need familiarity with the conventions of written SAE in their futures.

With that said, of the five themes that emerged from the data, it seems to me that the *second* and *third* were most likely to have been effected by my implementation of the third SCEP principle. In other words, my explicit welcoming of all Englishes into the composition experience and my invitation to students to use their own Englishes in assignments to whatever extent they felt was most beneficial for themselves seems to have enhanced language awareness in ways that in turn promoted personal growth (Theme #2) and critical thinking (Theme #3).

**SCEP Principle #3 → Theme #2: Composition Pedagogy That Encourages Students to Own Their Own Englishes Can Promote Personal Growth**

Data that I collected from Amber suggested to me that my application of the third SCEP principle during the WEs unit had affected her language awareness in ways that promoted her personal growth, but differently than how she experienced personal growth as a result of my implementation of SCEP Principle #2. Whereas the personal growth Amber appeared to have experienced as an effect of SCEP Principle #2 manifested in increased self-acceptance in the form of enhanced appreciation for her personal literacy in Mohawk, the personal growth it seemed that she experienced as an effect of SCEP Principle #3 manifested as increased courage, humility, capacity for self-restraint, and compassion—not toward herself, but toward young Mohawk children struggling to develop their own literacy in the Mohawk language. In other words, I perceive a parallel between my application of SCEP Principle #3—my welcoming attitude toward all Englishes in the context of composition activities, an attitude I try to demonstrate by offering students a choice in how (much) they use their own English(es) during composition experiences—with Amber’s self-

identified increase in willingness to allow the children the same freedom to learn in their own fashions: the same sense of choice.

Besides interpreting Amber's learning to pass the freedom of choice to the children as a specific effect of my implementation of SCEP Principle #3, I also see her experience as aligned with some specific themes that I discussed in Chapter Two: themes that I observed in literature about the harm reduction model and in composition literature infused with the WEs ethos. For example, I see in Amber's experience a playing out of the harm reduction model's core philosophy: that respecting the service-seeking individual's humanity means that practitioners must "meet people where they are" rather than requiring them to reach some set of standards that are impossible for them to reach on their own, before providing services (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 9; Tatarsky, 2003, p. 249). The latter approach has often been described as "zero-tolerance" (Van Nuys, 2008, para. 8). The consequence of *not* meeting people where they are in the context of drug addiction and recovery—that is, the consequence of so-called service providers' pursuit of a zero-tolerance approach—is dehumanizing and punitive treatment that tends to further marginalize the drug (ab)using individuals from the possibility of developing into functional members of society.

The phrase "zero-tolerance," applied in a parallel way by Ball and Muhammad (2003) in their article that analyzed several misguided assumptions about the English language made by writing teachers in a preservice education class, is in fact the focus of the other alignment I see between the literature and Amber's experience with the children. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the zero-tolerance approach identified by Ball and Muhammad (2003) is characterized by three misconceptions. The first is that there is "a uniform standard English that has been reduced to a set of consistent rules" (p. 77). This is simply

not true, Ball and Muhammad pointed out, and as I have attempted to underscore through my emphasis on the living nature of English (Lu, 2004, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2011) and the inevitable breakdown of the prescriptivist modality (Greenfield, 2011, p. 43-44; Moss & Walters, 1993, p. 422). The second misconception held by the proponents of the zero-tolerance composition instructors who were interviewed by Ball and Muhammad (2003) is that the so-called “‘correct,’ consistent rules should be followed by all American English speakers” (p. 77). This second notion is misguided because of the chimerical nature of its foundation: again, there is not one set of “correct” or even consistent rules. Furthermore, and as I also emphasized in Chapters One and Two, misconceptions such as this are also unreasonable, unjust, and therefore dehumanizing toward people whose home languages are nonstandard Englishes (or not English at all) (e.g. Canagarajah, 2006, p. 597; Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66; Richardson, 2004, p. 161; Young, 2011, p. 65; Young, et al., 2011, p. xxi; Young, et al., 2013, p. 68). Finally, the third misconception promoted by the zero-tolerance approach to composition pedagogy, according to Ball and Muhammad (2003), is “that this mythical standard English must be safeguarded by everyone connected with its use, particularly classroom teachers” (p. 77). I echo Ball and Muhammad’s assertion that this contention is nonsensical. The reality is that plenty of prestigious Americans use English well outside of “standard” conventions—whether clumsily, Palin-style (Young, 2011, p. 66), or through artful style-shifting, as former President Barack Obama’s oratorical navigations exemplify (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). In sum, the claim that something which does not even exist should not only be safeguarded, but should be safeguarded when even the most powerful and visible people in a culture do not adhere to this expectation, just doesn’t make sense.

With regard to all of the above, it does not seem relevant that Amber's former prescriptive approach with the children was not about safeguarding *English*, but rather *Mohawk*. The point, rather, is that Amber's former practice of pointing out young Mohawk learners' errors, and attempting to suppress them from occurring, may have been well-intended, but was instead arguably akin to the zero-tolerance approach in composition pedagogy described by Ball and Muhammad (2003), as well as the zero-tolerance approach to drug addiction described by Van Nuys (2008). Had Amber continued to apply this uncritically prescriptive approach with the young Mohawk learners in her home community, it seems likely that she would have further marginalized these learners from the prospect of becoming functional Mohawk speakers. Instead, because she learned to meet the children where they were—by exercising the self-restraint and compassion necessary for refraining from “correcting” them when she would witness their divergences from prescribed forms of Mohawk during their language-learning processes—it seems likely that more of them would persist in the language-learning process. In this additional way, I interpret SCEP Principle #3 as having brought about, in Amber, a form of personal growth that equated to a heightening in her awareness of the pros and cons of prescriptivism when in a position that might influence someone *else's* process of personal growth.

**SCEP Principle #3 → Theme #3: Composition Pedagogy That Encourages Students to Own Their Own Englishes Can Promote Critical Thinking**

Some of the data contributed by Kobe suggested that the third SCEP principle's emphasis on choice had specifically affected his language awareness, as it had done for Amber. However, for Amber, the emphasis on choice had promoted personal growth,

whereas in Kobe's case, the emphasis on choice seems to have especially promoted critical thinking.

For Kobe, the third SCEP principle's emphasis on welcoming all Englishes by offering students opportunities to make language-related choices elicited critical thinking in both retrospective and future-oriented senses. He made clear how strongly he had been affected by the overview of various world Englishes that I had provided in the beginning of the WEs unit as a means of introducing the unit's welcoming attitude toward all forms of English. Being informed, by way of this overview, that Black English is a variety of American English which has actually been codified by linguists, and that certain features of his English were in fact features of Black English and not simply slang, evidence of laziness, or lack of professionalism, led him to the retrospective realization that his teachers in primary and secondary school had been incorrect when they labeled those features of his English as the latter and forbade their use in the educational setting. It was based on this retrospective realization of his former teachers' incorrectness that Kobe expressed to me his suspicion that a lot of students as well as teachers are *still* similarly misinformed. That is, that even though most of us are surrounded by various Englishes every day, Englishes that have been studied by descriptive linguists and determined to be rule-governed in their own right, many people do not recognize these as legitimate language varieties deserving of respect, because they have never been pointed out as such. Alternately, perhaps some of those teachers *did* realize the gravity of their labeling of the Black English features as unfit for the academic and professional spheres; perhaps those teachers' castigations represented the sense of helplessness acknowledged by Kumashiro (2000): "The recognition that they can neither know what students learn nor control how students act based on what they learn,

leads many teachers to feel paralyzed...and [to] do whatever they can to maintain a sense of control” (p. 39). After all—as I also pointed out in Chapter One—more than a few courageous voices have admitted, in publications throughout the last decade, that prescriptive approaches to teaching language tend to be less intimidating, easier, and thus more convenient for teachers to pursue (e.g. Gubele, 2015, p. 5; Rubdy & Saracini, 2006, p. 211). Perhaps the WEs unit developed in Kobe the ability to intuit this unfortunately common reality; maybe his supposition that a lot of students are “misled” was motivated by a suspicion that was indeed well-founded: perhaps there *was* some sinister intentionality behind his former teachers’ admonitions.

In any case, what seems very likely with regard to Kobe’s expression of suspicion is that SCEP Principle #3 contributed to its emergence in his mind—enhanced his critical thinking capacity in ways that allowed him to become a more informed observer of the flaws in the modality of language-related prescriptivism itself. Rarely, if ever, is there only one way to accomplish a language-related goal or navigate a difficult language-related situation. However, it seems an inherent trait of humanity to *prescribe*—to claim that particular ways of being in the world are the *only* correct ways of being. The problem is that when one becomes so sunk in a prescriptive orientation, alternate ways of operating are either rendered invisible or witnessed but presumed to be flawed derivations from the standards set by the prescriptive framework. This was exactly my situation when I began teaching composition, for example. As I recounted in the very beginning of Chapter One, I had no idea of the extent to which I was blinded by the “myth of linguistic homogeneity” (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638): My composition classes were full of Englishes, and yet I heard and saw only a few instances of SAE interspersed among multitudes of errors and imperfections. My discovery

of the WEs paradigm, by shattering the prescriptive bubble in which I had existed through that point, unveiled to me the legitimacy, the value, of what had been in front of me the entire time. The third principle of SCEP seems to have nudged Kobe to a similar critical realization about the blinding and deafening effects of prescriptive perceptions of language. How he chooses to channel the empowerment afforded him by this form of critical thinking that may have been brought forth by SCEP Principle #3 will be up to him. My hope is that he will find ways to use it to challenge the racism embedded in the phenomenon identified by Bizzell (2002): “[A]cademic discourse is the language of a community, [and thus] at any given time its most standard or widely accepted features reflect the cultural preferences of the most powerful people in the community” (p. 1).

#### **SCEP Principle #4**

The fourth principle of SCEP is that *the teacher understands, and leads the student to understand, that language use is affected by biological, psychological, and social forces*. This fourth SCEP principle applies to the WEs unit in ways that parallel how the two principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which it is synthesized are applied in the context of drug (ab)use treatment.

As I explained in Chapter Two, it is the second and third principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which the fourth SCEP principle is derived. The second principle of harm reduction psychotherapy, “Drug addiction is a biopsychosocial phenomenon,” points out that in order to become addicted to a drug, a person has inevitably been influenced by an interrelated combination of biological, psychological, and social forces which can rarely be addressed singly (Denning, 2000, p. 7). The third principle, “Drug use is initially adaptive,” reminds the practitioner that all drug use is at least initially

beneficial to the drug user in some way (p. 7). The significant commonality that I see between these two principles, the commonality which led me to consider them logical for synthesis, is their mutual implication that every person's drug use is a result of a combination of biological, psychological, and social influences, none of which should be judged as categorically negative or positive.

The fourth principle of SCEP plays out in the context of the WEs unit in ways that parallel, albeit figuratively, the ways that its synthesized constituents play out in the arena of harm reduction psychotherapy. By this I mean that the fourth principle of SCEP prompts me to find ways of imparting to students several general truths about language use. First, every person's language use is somehow affected by biological forces: aspects of his or her actual, physical body. The example that I use to illustrate this claim for students is the phenomenon I referenced in the questionnaire: the variation in frenula length to which some Korean parents have responded by having their children's frenula snipped so that their spoken English could sound more like SAE (Kyoung-wha, 2003). Second, every person's language use is also affected by psychological forces—his or her mental state—which encompasses emotions, as emotions are shaped by thoughts. The example that I first use with students to exemplify this claim is the one I used in the questionnaire: the anecdote written by the speaker of Black English who recalls feeling “racial shame” when the white mother of a childhood teammate would “correct” the speaker's features of Black English so relentlessly and histrionically (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 206). Third, every person's language use is affected by social forces, or social context. The example that I tend to first cite as evidence supporting this third assertion is the one I used in the questionnaire as well: the recollection shared by the writer whose native tongue is Appalachian English, who realized

upon being confronted by a more “educated” friend that he had pronounced “Polk” as “Poke” only because that was all he had heard in his home social context, not because it was actually spelled without the “l” (Jones, 2011, p. 194). Also important to note, since this is not made explicit in the articulation of the principle, is that studying the influences of social context on a person’s language use can include paying attention to ways that political forces shape the social context. Finally, just like a person’s drug use is at least initially adaptive—as in, it helps the person adapt to the responsibilities he or she needs to accomplish in order to navigate life, and thus bears value to both the person and to society that is much more complicated than a categorical “good” or “bad” descriptor could convey—no biological, psychological, or social forces are categorically good or bad. They simply exist.

Of the five themes that emerged from the data, I see the *third* and *fourth* as most aligned with the fourth SCEP principle. That is to say, in my perception, the WEs unit’s inclusion of lessons which revealed that all language use is influenced by the objective existence of biological, psychological, and social forces ended up increasing some participants’ language awareness in ways that appeared to promote their critical thinking (Theme #3) and their cultural sensitivity (Theme #4).

**SCEP Principle #4 → Theme #3: Raising Students’ Awareness That Language Use Is Affected by Biological, Psychological, and Social Forces Can Promote Critical Thinking**

Ruby’s critical realizations about the possible implications of the subtitles in *Swamp People* and Twain’s and the audiobook narrator’s portrayals of Jim’s speech in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* strike me as aligned with the fourth SCEP principle. In other words, my application, during the WEs unit, of SCEP Principle #4—my emphasis that

language use is always affected by biological, psychological, and social forces—seems to have specifically promoted Ruby’s critical thinking by revealing to her that there is always more than meets the eye or ear when it comes to the parts language plays in people’s lives.

Ruby’s critical thinking about the possible implications of the subtitles in *Swamp People* and the two portrayals of Jim’s speech in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* strikes me as promoted by the fourth SCEP principle, specifically the social component of the principle and the political aspect embedded in the social component. With *Swamp People*, she had come to understand that although the subtitles might help some unfamiliar audiences understand the Cajun English speakers on the show, and that these audiences might be dissuaded from watching the show without the subtitles, the subtitles nevertheless function to marginalize the Cajun English, and by association, its speakers. This marginalization occurs through the subtitles’ implication that the Cajun English speakers are too illiterate and ignorant to be able to communicate in forms that more closely resemble SAE. Ruby seemed to have internalized this social injustice perpetrated by the producers of the show to the extent that she was able to apply this form of critical thinking to herself, in posing to me the rhetorical question about whether *our* speech should be accompanied by subtitles, since *our* speech does not adhere “perfectly” to the socially-constructed conventions of SAE, either. In other words, the fourth SCEP principle’s emphasis that all usages of language are influenced by biological, psychological, and social forces seems to have brought about a more critical awareness in Ruby, such that she became cognizant that even the producers of a television show can perpetrate social injustice, accidentally or on purpose, via the manner in which they choose to present characters’ languages to audiences.

The realizations that Ruby reported experiencing in her commentary about *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* were akin to her realizations experienced in relation to *Swamp People*, except racial injustice entered her analysis when she began discussing Twain's novel. In observing the two portrayals (Twain's written portrayal and the audiobook narrator's spoken rendition) of Jim's speech against the backdrop of her assumption that his speech would not have sounded nearly as different from the white illiterate character's speech as either portrayal made it come across, she made clear her suspicion that social and political prejudices might have influenced Twain and even the more contemporary audiobook narrator, prompting each to portray the differences in the over-emphasized way that he did.

All in all, I perceive Ruby's particular forms of growth in critical thinking ability that align with the fourth principle of SCEP as representing her development in *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, a crucial feature in critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, p. 109). As I discussed in Chapter Two, the importance of developing critical consciousness is captured in Shor's (1992) statement that when students develop this form of awareness, they become more equipped for discerning that any subject is comprised of interrelated parts that exert forces upon each other, and which is "related to and conditioned by other dimensions in the curriculum and society, [is] something with a historical context, and [is] something related to the students' personal context" (p. 109). Ruby's critical realizations about *Swamp People* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* suggested to me that the heightening in language awareness she seems to have experienced in response to SCEP Principle #4 prompted her discernment of the social and political contexts from which certain choices were made by the creators—and the ways these choices may shape the perceptions of audiences.

**SCEP Principle #4 → Theme #4: Raising Students’ Awareness That Language Use Is Affected by Biological, Psychological, and Social Forces Can Enhance Cultural Sensitivity**

Data contributed by Ruby as well as Enlightened! suggested to me that my implementation of SCEP Principle #4 could also induce growth in students’ cultural sensitivity. That is, the fourth SCEP principle’s focus on the importance of imparting to students that language use is always influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and social forces seems that it may have elicited, in both Ruby and Enlightened!, enhancements in cultural sensitivity.

It was not necessarily by sharing with me her realization that the use of Appalachian English doesn’t reflect economic poverty or lower social class that Ruby evidenced having developed cultural sensitivity in response to SCEP Principle #4. Rather, I interpreted the influence of SCEP Principle #4 in her observation that Appalachian English is, for its users, “distinctly their own”: an important feature of social identity, a variety of English defined by discourse conventions that in many cases are intentionally perpetuated with pride, regardless of assumptions made by people such as Ruby who have formed opinions without being informed by actual membership in that discourse community.

One way of understanding Ruby’s display of growth in cultural sensitivity as effected by SCEP Principle #4 is to interpret her words, “distinctly their own,” as indicating that she had internalized the WEs ethos’ “principle of ownership.” I coined this term in Chapter Two as a way of encapsulating what I consider to be the most essential premise associated with the World Englishes ethos: B. Kachru and Smith’s (1985) assertion that

“[t]he English language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard or localized forms” (p. 210). I interpret Ruby’s acknowledgement that Appalachian English is, for those who use it, “distinctly their own,” as suggesting her recognition that the features of Appalachian English which she initially assumed were symptoms of poverty-induced ignorance are in instead reflections of the backgrounds and attitudes embraced by its users—reflections, in other words, of Appalachian English users’ pride in the variety they associate with their cultural heritage. In this way, it seems that Ruby took to heart the WEs ethos’ principle of ownership as it manifested through my application of SCEP Principle #4 during the particular incarnation of the WEs unit that she experienced.

In asserting the importance of distinguishing the WEs ethos from B. Kachru’s three-circle model of World English (1992, p. 356) in the same section of Chapter Two, I concluded with a final statement alluding to the importance of embracing the principle of ownership: that *not* embracing it (as a composition instructor, in my case) “means that users of English do not get to *own* their own Englishes.” In my positionality as a composition instructor, not understanding the principle of ownership is what caused my historic bafflement in response to, as Canagarajah (2006) put it, “minority students’...reluctan[ce] to hold back their own Englishes even for temporary reasons” (p. 597). As I lamented in Chapter One, not knowing enough to recognize the legitimacy of Englishes whose sounds and shapes did not adhere to conventions I associated with SAE lent itself to an uncritically prescriptive pedagogical approach that marginalized and silenced some of the students who may have most yearned to be heard. In Ruby’s case as a student in a diverse college environment, not embracing the principle of ownership explicitly would not necessarily

silence peers whose Englishes did not fall within the range of forms she associated with academic prestige; however, it might inhibit her from accessing opportunities to build cross-cultural relationships that contemporary colleges and universities strive to provide for students. Such inhibition is arguably similar to a force that harm reduction practitioners seek to mitigate in the realm of drug addiction treatment, as well. When people in the non-drug (ab)using population—including treatment providers—make it evident that they do not respect a drug (ab)user’s right to “own” his or her own perceptions and choices, the drug (ab)user can hardly be expected to want to build relationships with such individuals. And so interpersonal divisions can be created and perpetuated, in the realms of both drug addiction treatment and language. The fourth SCEP principle’s seeming instrumentality in prompting Ruby’s acknowledgement of the WEs ethos’ principle of ownership might thus have initiated effects that emanate far beyond the realm of language use.

As for how I see SCEP Principle #4 having elicited Enlightened!’s demonstration of increased cultural sensitivity, I discern this alignment in her reflection about listening to people in the airport while recalling the revelation she had experienced during the WEs unit, about how people’s communication styles do not necessarily reflect their level of intelligence. It seems to me that the WEs unit’s emphasis on the inevitability of biological, psychological, and social forces affecting every individual’s language use may have inspired the development in cultural sensitivity that I observe in Enlightened!’s statement about the lack of correlation between intelligence and expressive ability. Perhaps it was being in the almost ethereally multicultural space of an airport, with its ever-shifting sights, sounds, and norms of human behavior, that finally forced her to make a connection between concrete reality and what she had learned in theory during the WEs unit: that what we think we see

and hear from the outside of another person does not necessarily bear any relationship to what is on the inside. She did not mention, in that particular segment of her interview, how affected she had been by, for example, Amy Tan's depiction of her mother's struggles with disdainful and dehumanizing treatment by American English speakers who assumed that her "broken English" signaled intellectual inferiority. However, the level of compassionate attention that Enlightened! expressed toward Mrs. Tan on her questionnaire suggests this connection. Also, it seems to me that whether she realized it or not, Enlightened! was quite literally employing rhetorical listening there in the airport. In my opinion, Ratcliffe (1999) articulated exactly what Enlightened! was doing that day as she watched and listened:

Perhaps through listening we can avail ourselves with more possibilities for inventing arguments that bring differences together, for hearing differences as harmony or even as discordant notes (in which case, at least, differences are discernible). Admittedly, we cannot hear everything at once (the din would no doubt madden us), yet we can listen to the harmony and/or discordant notes, knowing that more than meets the eye lies before us. (p. 203)

Interestingly, that it took Enlightened! a trip out of her home area to be able to become so genuinely enlightened by the harmonies and discordances caused by the airport's confluence of Englishes speaks to the logic in her fellow case study participant Ana's advice for people to get out of their "comfort zones." It seems not coincidental that this advice from Ana was offered during the segment of her interview in which I identified the theme of enhanced cultural sensitivity being displayed the most saliently.

Finally, Enlightened!'s airport epiphany also suggests an internalization of the injustice represented by the prescriptivist "one size fits all" concept, which I often invoke

during the WEs unit as a way of helping students make personal connections with the implications of SCEP Principle #4. As discussed in Chapter Two, I have observed this “one size fits all” motif in literature about all three of the major constructs that inform SCEP. Students tend to relate most readily to the way the phrase is used in Bartolomé’s explanation of Humanizing Pedagogy, specifically in the passage excerpted from Reyes (1992), in which the exclusionary clothing-related “one size fits all” concept is likened to exclusionary pedagogies that do not acknowledge the diverse cultural backgrounds of historically marginalized populations (p. 435; as cited in Bartolomé, 1994, p. 339). The phrase also appears in harm reduction literature, for example, in an assertion made by Tatarsky (2002): “any one-size-fits-all approach is doomed to fail with the majority of clients” (p. 20). Finally, I also discovered an instance in composition literature infused with the WEs ethos, amidst a reflection offered by Barrett in Young, et al. (2013): “[A] one-size-fits-all approach may be efficient but is hardly adequate for meeting the needs of our diverse students and our diverse culture” (p. 129). Given the alignment between this descriptivist motif found in all three constructs informing SCEP and the descriptivist values connoted by Enlightened!’s acknowledgement that no one’s language style, no matter how different from her own, can be a reliable indicator of intelligence, it thus seems even more reasonable to interpret her culturally sensitive insights in the airport as having been at least somewhat motivated by my implementation of the fourth principle of SCEP during her WEs unit.

### **SCEP Principle #5**

The fifth principle of SCEP is that *any increased sense of language awareness constitutes success*. As with the other four SCEP principles, this final principle applies in the context of the WEs unit in ways that parallel, figuratively speaking, the ways the

principles of harm reduction psychotherapy from which it is synthesized apply in the context of drug (ab)use treatment.

The fifth SCEP principle is synthesized from Denning's (2000) eighth and tenth principles, as I explained in Chapter Two. Denning's eighth principle avers that "[s]uccess is related to self-efficacy" (p. 9-10) and her ninth principle is that "[a]ny reduction in drug-related harm is a step in the right direction" (p. 11). The idea that "[s]uccess is related to self-efficacy" means that the determination of whether the treatment has been successful is not up to the practitioner, but rather the client—whether he or she has developed a belief in his or her ability to achieve self-defined goals. The premise that "[a]ny reduction in drug-related harm is a step in the right direction" also privileges the subjectivity of the client over the practitioner, in terms of determining success. It means that if the client considers the treatment to have been successful, then all involved parties should consider it successful. This premise carries even if positive effects (gauged as such by the client) are experienced by the client in increments that seem insignificant to bystanders. Their insignificance may only exist in the eyes of the bystander; in the lived experience of the client, they may be monumental.

The main elements in the eighth and tenth principles of harm reduction psychotherapy, as they are highlighted above, are translated through the synthesizing process and manifest as SCEP Principle #5. The first point to understand is that it is the service-seeking individual—i.e. the student—whose jurisdiction it is to decide whether the "treatment"—i.e. the teaching—has been a success. In turn, "success" means any enhancement in language awareness. In other words, at the end of any given WEs unit, I am not the one who determines whether the WEs unit was a success for any individual student.

Success, in this conceptualization, cannot be objectively measured. It does not necessarily have anything to do with the grades a student earned during the unit. Rather, a student's decision about whether or not the WEs unit was "successful" depends upon his or her subjective perception of the effects engendered by the WEs unit in relation to his or her language awareness.

With all of that said, obviously, all five themes that emerged from the data may be seen as aligned with the fifth principle of SCEP. This is because my implementation of SCEP Principle #5 during any given WEs unit equated to my emphasizing that any student's perception of increased language awareness brought about by the unit's activities meant that the student had achieved success. Since all five themes that emerged from the data turned out to be statements grounded in the *presupposition* that the participants had experienced increases in their language awareness, it is clear that all five themes emerged as a result of my implementation of the fifth principle. Thus, in this final principle's section, while I continue the organizational pattern I followed throughout the first four principles' sections, it is not necessary for me to include references to specific participants' experiences that demonstrate how each theme was effected by the principle. Instead, in this final principle's section, I briefly discuss some ways that each of the five themes can be seen as constituting success in the lives of the participants, according to the literature that informed this study itself.

#### **SCEP Principle #5 → Theme #1: Raising Students' Language Awareness in Ways That Affect Social Connections Can Equate to Success**

The fact that some participants' language awareness was raised in ways that enhanced and even established social connections in their lives can be said to equate to

success in light of Maslow's theory about how human beings reach a state of self-actualization. As I noted in Chapter Four, Maslow (1962) contended that an individual's progress in the self-actualizing process is in part contingent upon "protection, permission and encouragement from the environment"—particularly for a child (p. 42). Possessing a sense of connection with other human beings is one way that a person can feel protected, permitted, and encouraged by his or her environment. Also, while I do not see my students as children, *per se*, most of them are still young adults in a crucial stage of cognitive and emotional development. Therefore, I consider Maslow's addendum about the extra importance of social support for children to be relevant for inclusion in this brief explanation of how increased connectedness with other human beings constitutes a form of success for the participants.

**SCEP Principle #5 → Theme #2: Raising Students' Language Awareness in Ways That Promote Personal Growth Can Equate to Success**

The enhancement of some participants' language awareness in ways that promoted their personal growth can be said to equate to success for those participants within the framework of Maslow's self-actualizing process, as well. Whereas Theme #1's articulation equates to the idea that language awareness can promote *one* of the elements required for an individual to progress toward a self-actualized state, and while I asserted in the previous section that the achievement of this *one* element represents a form of success for the participants, Theme #2's articulation translates to the assertion that experiencing an increase in language awareness and resultant personal growth constitutes the very embodiment of success. In other words, the establishment and enhancement of social connections can represent one small type of success—the achievement of *one* element in Maslow's theory

about what is required for self-actualization—whereas the overall experience of personal growth can be interpreted as representing success in and of itself, insofar as the term “personal growth” epitomizes Maslow’s conception of the very process of self-actualization.

The enhancement of some participants’ language awareness and their resultant experiences of personal growth also equates to a form of success within the framework of Humanizing Pedagogy. As I discussed in Chapter Two as well as earlier in this current chapter, Bartolomé’s most basic argument for Humanizing Pedagogy was that its opposite, a “one size fits all” approach to teaching, is equivalent to “robbing students of their culture, language, history, and values,” and ends up “reducing students to the status of subhumans who need to be rescued from their ‘savage’ selves” (p. 341). Humanizing Pedagogy, on the contrary, humanizes. In its very nature, Bartolomé’s construct promotes personal growth, by promoting awareness in each student of his or her inherent *right* to personhood. Since Humanizing Pedagogy is the overall theoretical framework within which the five principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy are theorized, it follows that a student’s growth in awareness of his or her right to personhood—i.e. personal growth—can be considered a representation of success.

**SCEP Principle #5 → Theme #3: Raising Students’ Language Awareness in Ways That Promote Critical Thinking Can Equate to Success**

All participants’ language awareness was raised in ways that promoted their critical thinking; this in turn may be understood as their achievement of another form of success. Development in a student’s critical thinking ability may be seen as a marker of success through many lenses. Freirean critical pedagogy, from which Bartolomé’s Humanizing Pedagogy was derived, is of course one such lens. As I indicated in Chapter Two and again

earlier in this current chapter, supporters of the various incarnations of Freire's critical pedagogy (e.g. Bartolomé and Shor) have esteemed the idea of *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, as a state of being in which one has developed enough awareness of social, political, and economic power structures to be able to imagine how to take action against them: to enact agency in relation to them (Freire, 1970, p. 109). This goal of promoting, in students' lives, forms of critical thinking which might prompt transition from object-hood to subject-hood—to again echo both Freire (1970, p. 109) and Bartolomé (1994, p. 341)—has been eloquently expressed by Greenfield (2011), another supporter of critical pedagogy whose thinking informed SCEP:

In addition to giving all students as many language tools as possible, teachers and tutors should ultimately be concerned with helping them develop a critical consciousness of the effects of their choices at an individual and institutional level, and—most importantly—cultivating in them a sense of agency in combating, linguistically and otherwise, the injustices they encounter along the way....

[S]tudents' choices about language use [should ideally be] based on their own critical thinking, not on the instructors' personal biases. (p. 58)

In other words, according to Greenfield (2011), practitioners of critical composition pedagogy should not only teach skills directly pertinent to the act of composing, as if composing any form of communication ever really occurs in a vacuum outside of reality. Instead, instructors of composition should teach in ways that attempt to promote students' critical thinking, specifically about how they might use their composition skills to participate more actively *in* their realities.

When considered within the definitional parameters set by the above assemblage of articulations from Freire, Shor, Bartolomé, and Greenfield, the enhanced critical thinking ability exhibited by all of the study participants as emergent from their increased language awareness means that they all achieved success. In other words, if evidence of enhanced critical thinking ability equates to success—which it does, according to the proponents of critical pedagogy whose thinking gave shape to SCEP—then each of my five case study participants was successful. In turn, their successes represent effects engendered by my implementation of SCEP Principle #5.

**SCEP Principle #5 → Theme #4: Raising Students’ Language Awareness in Ways That Promote Cultural Sensitivity Can Equate to Success**

Developments in cultural sensitivity resulting from heightened language awareness can be understood as successes, as well. More specifically, the increases in participants’ language awareness which in turn promoted cultural sensitivity can be considered as equating to success within the harm reduction model’s understanding of what constitutes success. Explaining what I mean by this is most effectively accomplished by showing how the concepts of cultural sensitivity and harm reduction are themselves aligned as particular ontological orientations.

The definition of “cultural sensitivity” that I crafted and articulated in Chapter Four, based upon Amber’s invocation of the concept during her interview, is “an attitude oriented toward understanding, welcoming, and ideally empathizing with different positionalities.” In other words, according to the definition upon which I based all of my interpretations in the Theme #4 section of Chapter Four, to be culturally sensitive means to cultivate and exercise a standpoint that is oriented toward acceptance of unfamiliarity and difference. The

concept of cultural sensitivity, by this definition, is harm reductionist to its core. Being culturally sensitive means, as it were, that one “meet[s] people where they are” (Tatarsky, 2002, p. 9; Tatarsky, 2003, p. 249)—even if said people’s existences seem to bear no resemblance to one’s own, even if the cultural norms that appear to prescribe the thoughts and behaviors of the unfamiliar parties seem to have originated on a different planet than the norms that have prescribed the features of one’s own ontological trajectory.

Meanwhile, Denning (2000) offered one harm reductionist definition of success already cited elsewhere in this chapter: “Any reduction in drug-related harm is a step in the right direction” (p. 11). However, an alternate definition provided in the same text, a definition that I last quoted in Chapter Two, is more easily applicable for my purposes here because it does not mention drugs explicitly. This alternate definition of success is that it is “any movement in the direction of positive change”—with the change being determined positive by the service-seeking individual, not the practitioner (p. 25). This definition of success differs from more traditional definitions of success insofar as it is determined subjectively by the individual experiencing it, rather than objectively via measurements prescribed by someone else.

The participants’ increases in cultural sensitivity which were begotten by their increases in language awareness equate to successes, according to the latter harm reductionist definition of success quoted above, insofar as their developments in cultural sensitivity were subjectively identified and deemed positive by the participants themselves. Thus, Theme #4, in representing a form of success achieved by all of the participants, demonstrates in turn a significant effect, and the effectiveness, of SCEP Principle #5.

**SCEP Principle #5 → Theme #5: Raising Students’ Language Awareness in Ways That Inspire Action for Social Change Can Equate to Success**

Finally, developing the understanding that language awareness can catalyze social change can also be interpreted as success. A participant’s development of such an understanding equates to the achievement of success according to definitions of success found in the literature associated with all three of the constructs that informed SCEP most directly: Humanizing Pedagogy, the World Englishes ethos, and the harm reduction model. Specifically, all three of these constructs propound that a significant indication of success is when an individual expresses a sense of agency: an awareness of his or her power to act independently in the world, and the exercise of this power in the making of choices. Developing the understanding that one’s heightened language awareness can be a tool for catalyzing social change—or that playing a role in the raising of *others’* language awareness can be a means of potentially catalyzing social change—suggests growth in one’s sense of agency. To account with additional specificity for how such growth in one’s sense of agency can be considered a success, I draw upon an understanding of success that is woven into the WEs ethos.

The particular understanding of success within which the development of a sense of linguistic agency can be categorized is what I referred to in Chapter Two as “the Kachruvian premise that communicative success depends more upon mutual intelligibility rather than prescribed notions of correctness.” My wording in that location is in fact paraphrased from Proshina’s (2014) statement celebrating what she sees as a “revolutionary idea” offered by WEs to the fields of linguistics and pedagogy: “the idea of dynamic functionality prevalence over a static prescriptive approach...[which] means a shift from correctness to

appropriateness as didactic principles of language teaching” (p. 4). Scholars and teachers who support the WEs paradigm, Proshina recounted, “have argued that the communicative function and its successful implementation is much more important than an ideally correct verbalization of a thought” (p. 4). Success in communication, in these terms, depends upon the interlocutors’ mutual comprehension of each other’s meanings, not upon “perfect” adherence to prescribed conventions. In Chapter Four, when discussing some of the data contributed by Amber, I referred to this tenet as a primary feature of the descriptivist orientation toward language use.

The reason that the development of a sense of agency in terms of one’s capacity for catalyzing language-related social change can be considered a success according to the definition of success that Proshina (2014) described WEs as offering the fields of linguistics and pedagogy is that it takes a sense of agency for a person to believe that he or she is capable of communicating successfully in the types of translingual interactions where this version of success is the norm. For example, if I don’t believe that I possess the linguistic resources and flexibility to be able to effectively navigate communicative interactions with users of Englishes that are unfamiliar with my ears and eyes, I lack a sense of agency; I lack belief that I can act agentively in such a scenario. Lacking this belief in my ability to enact agency and thereby accomplish effective communication means that I either remain among the familiar sounds and sights of the Englishes of my home or attempt going out into the unfamiliar Englishes of the world only to wither from the self-inflicted paralysis of self-reified powerlessness. Neither of these prospects seem as if they would feel like successes.

In conclusion, the participants who contributed the data from which Theme #5 emerged—that is, the participants who demonstrated that they had developed an

understanding that language awareness can be a means of catalyzing social change—may be interpreted as having achieved a form of success in response to my implementation of SCEP Principle #5. Specifically, their development of a sense of linguistic agency aligns with the notion of success provided in Proshina’s (2014) concept of mutual intelligibility as communicative effectiveness.

### **Implications for Teaching, Curriculum Development, and Professional Development**

In what follows, I outline implications of this study in the areas of teaching, curriculum development, and professional development.

#### **Implications for Teaching**

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from this dissertation research, in relation to the teaching of U.S. college composition, is perhaps the most basic. The concept of “teaching composition class” should not be conflated with the concept of “teaching English class.” Unfortunately, this conflation occurs in all American colleges and universities that still use the designator “ENGL” (or some similar variation) to code their composition classes. This administrative conflation belies the presence of the various *Englishes* that populate most if not all contemporary U.S. classrooms, and thus perpetuates the myth of linguistic homogeneity (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638) as well as standard language ideology (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 67). However, the good news is that there is a way of addressing this problem which would not be terribly difficult to implement in the classroom, regardless of whether administrations can be persuaded of the negative implications of misleading course designators. Composition pedagogy can simply include more *context*.

One way of specifying what I mean by this encouragement of more context is to advise that when responding to student work, and students’ use of language in general,

composition instructors should avoid labeling what they see and hear with decontextualized and dichotomizing descriptors such as “correct” and “incorrect,” “right” and “wrong,” “good” and “bad,” and the like. An example of this type of uncritically prescriptive labeling would be Ana’s former manager’s over-simplified proclamation that “axe” was the “wrong” pronunciation. (While this particular incident occurred outside of the classroom context, uninformed castigation of the pronunciation “axe” is notoriously common in education.) Without contextualizing his label of “wrong” by also including the information that it was only the “wrong” pronunciation according to the standards of the discourse community that (he presumed) patronized that particular gas station, Ana’s manager only succeeded in evoking a negative emotional response in Ana: not a helpful effect for her *or* for the work environment. And I would go so far as to say that her emotional response of annoyance represented a best case scenario. Her annoyance did not overwhelm her to the extent that she stopped going to work. Other, similar situations—in which people have been told that their words and pronunciations, which have functioned effectively for them in their home discourse communities throughout their whole lives, are nevertheless somehow “wrong”—have not gone so well.

A prime example of this more unfortunate type of case was the situation with Amber’s siblings, whose Mohawk-influenced pronunciation of the letter *R* was labeled a “speech impediment” by the English-speaking school’s officials, prompting her mother to pull them out of that school entirely. She pulled them out of school in order to protect them from the type of outcome depicted in Young’s (2011) call for composition instructors to exercise more explicit recognition toward forms mislabeled as non-forms by the

decontextualizing and dichotomizing which can be perpetrated by uncritical prescriptivism, not only in the composition-teaching community but among the public, at large:

See, people be mo plurilingual than we wanna recognize.... What I want to argue right now is that we need to enlarge our perspective about what good writin is and how good writin can look at work, at home, and at school. The narrow, prescriptive lens be messin writers and readers all the way up, cuz we all been taught to respect the dominant way to write, even if we don't, or can't, or won't ever write that one way ourselves. That be hegemony. Internalized oppression. Linguistic self-hate. (p. 65)

The key word in Young's statement above, in terms of its connection to this study's implications for U.S. composition instruction going forward, is "recognize." Knowledge that I co-constructed with my case study participants and built through my explorations in the literature have inspired my belief that it would behoove *all* students involved in U.S. college composition if instructors were to move beyond the "narrow, prescriptive lens" represented by labels such as "correct" and "incorrect." Instead, we should strive to *recognize* the larger picture: that it is not only more accurate and helpful, but more humanizing, to include context around our feedback.

### **Implications for Curriculum Development**

Related to the notion of providing more contextualizing information in feedback given to students, an implication for curriculum development involves the timing of composition instructors' introduction of the WEs paradigm to students. It is essential to place the WEs unit in the very beginning of the semester. Conducting the WEs unit in the first three or four weeks that begin a semester sets a particular tone for the remainder of the

semester. Experiencing the WEs unit in the beginning of the semester positions students so that they can perceive the rest of the semester's activities, no matter how prescriptive, through the "broadly humanist view" represented by the WEs ethos (Bolton & B. Kachru, 2006, p. 291). That is to say, if the students are exposed to WEs in the beginning, they are thus given enough overall contextual information to be able to understand that the prescriptions they encounter later in the semester do not define the parameters of reality. They will not, in other words, be limited by the illusion that "Standard English" is "the only English," even if the very next unit after the WEs unit involves the most prescriptive forms they have yet encountered: for example, *résumés* and cover letters, which I often teach in a brief "Employment Literacy" unit directly following the WEs unit, for its attention-maintaining whiplash effect.

In posing the above suggestion for curriculum development—that is, that composition curricula begin including WEs units as a matter of course, and that these units be very noticeably presented as the material which initiates students into all the other composition-related activities of the semester—it is important that I emphasize the importance of not trying to do too much. An over-zealous approach that exposes freshmen to levels of scholarly literature which they have not yet been trained to read effectively could dissuade them from much more in the way of educational opportunity than what they could encounter in one semester of composition. It is thus not necessary (and would probably be terrifying) to define, for college freshmen, the World Englishes paradigm using descriptions such as that which I quoted in Chapter One, when I first mentioned WEs: "[a] multinational language with a heterogeneous and hybrid grammatical system that accommodates the features of local varieties" (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006, p. 201). Instead, an infusion of the

WEs ethos can be accomplished in the beginning of any semester-length first-year composition course as long as students internalize the descriptivist orientation conveyed less complicatedly by Y. Kachru and Smith (2008): “What is needed is the approach of world Englishes that does not devalue any variation. It attempts to study the functions of varieties in their contexts and how they empower their users to realize certain goals” (p. 182). As long as a composition curriculum integrates the WEs ethos effectively enough so that more than a few students emerge on the other end with this more egalitarian view toward English(es) that has been expressed by Y. Kachru and Smith, the inclusion of WEs in the curriculum should be considered worthwhile.

### **Implications for Professional Development**

A final implication which must be discussed is how composition instructors unfamiliar with WEs can be trained and taught enough about this area of study so that they may become able to conduct their WEs units effectively. It may be reassuring if I begin my outlining of these implications for professional development by re-stating a crucial premise: teaching a World Englishes unit, if one uses the five principles of Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy as the key reference points, does *not* entail the teaching of any varieties of English in which an instructor is not already well-versed. Rather, as I stated in Chapter Two, I simply support the argument that contemporary instructors of U.S. college composition bear an ethical responsibility to *familiarize* students with as many Englishes as possible (Lu & Horner, 2011, p. 101-102; Rubdy & Saracini, 2006, p. 210; Young, 2011, p. 63; Young, et al., 2011, p. xxi). In other words, no professional development activities would require composition instructors to become proficient users of additional Englishes.

What *should* be emphasized by professional development activities is that implementing the SCEP principles means implementing a harm reductionist orientation, which has hitherto been missing from American education—at least by that name. The involvement of the harm reduction model seems likely to attract even the skeptics of WEs, because the harm reduction model’s primary objective—i.e. SCEP’s primary objective—is in fact aligned with what is arguably the most significant objective of every college and university administration in the United States: retention. Overall, the point from this research study which should be emphasized most heartily in professional development contexts is the sentiment expressed so pervasively by all five of my case study participants that it came across as a presupposition, not even something that anyone delineated explicitly. This shared sentiment was that experiencing a heightening in language awareness equated to achieving multiple forms of success.

### **Future Research Directions**

A further research project that could emerge from this study would be based on an inquiry posed rather often by students who have experienced my WEs unit throughout the years: Why didn’t anyone tell us about this stuff before? A more analytical phrasing of this question would be needed in order for it to translate into a research question, but the implication of the question is clear. Many college students find the study of WEs, at least when they undertake such study from the vantage point afforded by the SCEP framework, both fascinating and enlightening—because it renders visible certain aspects of their daily realities that had been in front of them the entire time, affecting their lives in multitudinous yet unrecognized ways. Indeed, why have the American primary and secondary education systems neglected to expose American youth to WEs? A related question to pursue would

attempt to ascertain the actual age at which it would be best to introduce young people to WEs.

Another potential opportunity for future research could be the one mentioned in the beginning of Chapter Four. Whereas in this study's presentation of participants' data and emergent themes, not all of the participants' data was represented explicitly in each theme's section, a future study might focus on the same collection of data and the same five themes, but include content from all five participants' contributions to the data pool in each theme's section. Including data that requires more nuanced interpretation may further problematize the dichotomizing relationship between language awareness and linguistic harm, which could lead to additional valuable findings.

### **Final Reflections**

Human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot...be reduced to either verbalism or activism.

—Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970

As noted in the beginning of this chapter and throughout this work, the major theoretical and pedagogical contribution that this dissertation research offers to the fields of Composition and TESOL is the new orientation represented by the five principles I named collectively as *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy*. I derived this new theoretical and pedagogical model by synthesizing features of three major constructs: Bartolomé's Humanizing Pedagogy, a derivation of Freirean critical pedagogy; the World Englishes ethos; and the social services sector's harm reduction model.

It was at some point during the initial years of my research process, those that were spent trying out my ideas in the classroom guided by a mixture of the harm reductionist intuition that had carried over from the previous era of my life and the knowledge I was beginning to gain from exploring the actual scholarly literature about the three constructs, that I decided upon the “Student-Centered” part of the name. “Student-Centered” seemed right at that time because it seemed the most pointed way of expressing the anti-prescriptivist ethos that impassions me, and which I wanted to be connoted as noticeably as possible for people first encountering my ideas. But this was all before designing and carrying out the methodology, and the newly informed reflections that ensued.

As I pursued the methodological component of this research—the data collection period in which I reconnected, delightedly, with the five former students who volunteered to be my case study participants, and then the data analysis—I began to feel differently about the term “Student-Centered.” It is true that I have been motivated, this entire time, by my passion for shaping pedagogy in ways that try to “meet students where they are.” And it is of course true that student-centeredness guided my data analysis period. When I first began the writing of Chapter Four and came face-to-face with the task of transcribing specific excerpts from my participants’ written responses on their questionnaires, I mindlessly wrote “[sic.]” after every “error”—until the realization crashed into me that this action was the very antithesis of student-centeredness, not to mention the WEs ethos and the similarly aligned concepts in the other key constructs. I thus went back and deleted all of these prescriptivist intrusions, humbled by the renewed awareness that such an inclination had evidently remained in me: some vestigial remnant hidden beneath the epistemological layers that had accumulated since the revelatory turning point marked by my discovery of WEs. I

also realized at that point that it was important to keep intact my participants' voices while transcribing their interviews, by retaining their stutters, repetitions, fragmented clauses, and other traits of spoken language that are conventionally edited out of interview transcripts. So I did.

But the unforeseen nature of these methodological considerations had by that point jostled into visibility the ontological and epistemological incongruence of another choice that I had first made at some point in the very beginning of my writing of this dissertation, and yet failed to think deeply about until now. A final collection of implications thereby tumbled out: implications which have led me to an unexpected supposition about the name I have hitherto ascribed to the five principles that are my theoretical and pedagogical contribution to Composition and TESOL.

This other choice that I had made, and am so struck by having failed to consider in depth until now, may seem minor to those who do not also reside in the positionality that I occupy. This positionality is located at a specific ontological and epistemological intersection: Along with my deep commitment to finishing this dissertation so that I can share with the academic community my unique perspective formed through my investment in merging the fields of World Englishes and U.S. college composition, I am also steeped academically in the field of gender and sexuality studies, with vested interest stemming from personal membership in the LGBT+ community. Through my immersion in the latter two ways of being and knowing, I have become acutely conscious of the problems posed for individuals who are othered by the gender binary: the classification of gender as well as physical sex into two discrete, static, opposite constructs over-simplistically referred to as "masculinity" and "femininity." These two poles exclude and ignore the existence of many

identities, including but not limited to those of many transgender individuals, others who identify elsewhere on the spectrum of gender fluidity, and intersex individuals. Given my multi-valent sense of solidarity with these identities, the choice that I report having made is not minor to me.

This choice to which I refer is focused on the grammatical constructs that I have always been taught to refer to as “pronoun-antecedent agreement” and “pronoun-antecedent disagreement.” As of the present time, the English language contains no conventionally-accepted third-person singular personal pronoun that can be used, in a sentence, to refer back to an antecedent representing the identity of a non-binary individual. While it has become common to hear in *speech* the plural pronoun “they” used in reference to a singular human antecedent, it is still considered largely unconventional to do so in writing.<sup>10</sup> Those of us associated closely with LGBT+ issues have been troubled by this grammatical erasure of identity for a long time. Nevertheless, in this dissertation, every time I wrote a sentence about a hypothetical scenario involving a single student and included a sequence like “*a student who feels othered by negative attitudes toward his or her English,*” I felt obligated to adhere to the grammatical convention considered correct by the APA Publication Manual. I felt obligated, and thus followed this prescribed grammatical convention, even though I knew this meant that I was reifying and re-reifying the gender binary—thus repeatedly, if hypothetically, othering any individual who identifies somewhere between or outside the two poles of gender and sex identity that this binary model falsely dichotomizes.

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<sup>10</sup> Only a few months ago, the Associated Press announced that its updated print edition published on May 31, 2017 would permit AP journalists to use “they” as a singular pronoun “in limited cases,” as a long-awaited response to “years of questions among copy editors, reporters and editors about the use of language specifically about people who are non-binary and don’t use gendered pronouns” (Hare, 2017).

It was spending such time considering the actual humanity of my case study participants, even though none of them happened to identify as non-binary, which pushed me to finally realize: It isn't simply hypothetical individuals whose identities I have othered and erased every time I have written "his or her." I realize now that if I mean for this dissertation research to actually apply to students' lives, then it is actual students whose identities I have othered and erased. In choosing to abide by the traditional "his or her" convention expected of me as a writer of a doctoral dissertation that is supposed to be formatted according to APA style, my small but many decisions to reinforce the gender binary mean that I have not lived out my supposed commitment to the student-centered orientation. In choosing to enact my agency to follow grammatical convention, I have in fact failed to advocate for the identities of some of my most vulnerable students.

Realizing the gravity of this hypocrisy has pointed me toward a definitive opinion that "'Student-Centered' Englishes Pedagogy" is not, in fact, "purely" student-centered enough to go by that name. Just as I feel I must leave all of my grammatical choices as they are, allowing this text that I have created to perpetuate the status quo in the interests of at last finishing this multi-year project, so I must at times ask my own students to abide within prescribed rules—obviously during the other units that I teach after the WEs unit, but also during the WEs unit itself. For example, I still have to assess some of the students' work during the WEs unit quantitatively, and I am still the one who calls the shots, at the end of the day, in terms of classroom management. Even more significantly, incoming freshmen do not know what they are getting into when enrolling in my particular sections of composition. Those who enroll in my classes have no idea that they will experience my still-unconventional WEs unit, which only I teach, out of the many composition instructors

at NNYSU, and which perhaps they might opt out of, given the opportunity to make their own decision. All of these factors put me in the role of the ultimate power-holder even though I have striven to shape the WEs unit into a student-centered space in every other conceivable way.

With all of that said: I did not foresee the emergence of this inclination, here at the end of the line, to change the name of the central framework of principles that I have spent the last several years developing. However, it seems that my theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological activities have never stopped shaping and reshaping each other as each became ever more informed by the others, in a process quite unexpectedly in line with Freire's vision of theory and practice, reflection and action: praxis. I thus find myself inclined to revise the name of the framework I have until now referred to solely as "Student-Centered' Englishes Pedagogy." It is not that I wish for the changed name to signal a total turn away from the idea of student-centeredness. It simply seems more accurate to forecast more explicitly the importance of Bartolomé's contributions: the unavoidable aspect that "[t]he teacher is [still] the authority, with all the resulting responsibilities that entails" (1994, p. 346)—and the emphasis on the pedagogy's humanizing potential. This latter emphasis would also function as an allusion to the type of dilemma that I faced when realizing that the dehumanizing effects of my language choices were being masked by my use of the term "student-centered." With these considerations in mind, I find myself moving toward renaming my creation *Humanizing Englishes Pedagogy*.

Attributing the name "Humanizing Englishes Pedagogy" to the five principles that I have through this point identified collectively as "Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy" would not, as I have stated, indicate a total discarding of the student-centered inclination.

My students will always share in certain decision-making processes; I never lecture for more than two or three minutes without inviting input and dialogue from them; I strive to get to know each student as an individual so that I can be maximally sensitive to the background and personality of each. Moreover, my classrooms will always be student-centered insofar as I find it an honor, the trust bestowed upon me by the students who continue showing up day after day, handing over to me their impressionability, their malleability, allowing themselves to become vulnerable to the possibility that their minds and hearts may be changed by the new knowledge we build together. I will not betray the honor of being entrusted with such responsibility: my highest priority will continue being the creation and maintenance of pedagogical spaces where students can feel safe in the assurance that I recognize and respect their personhood. However, I am still expected to pursue the goal made explicit in my employment contract: the teaching of writing skills and conventions that can empower and enhance the quality of the students' lives. And in this paradigm—in which I am being hired to act as the authority, the one who is ultimately responsible for knowing and teaching *the rules*, the parameters of the status quo—complete student-centeredness is an incompatible concept, World Englishes unit or not. It is this unavoidable point which renders “student-centered” inauthentic as a descriptor for the five principles I developed, and makes Bartolomé's construct, with its concession about the authority ultimately being held by the teacher, more appropriate to invoke.

As it is my aversion to inauthenticity which has caused me to turn away from the descriptor “student-centered,” it is my embrace of authenticity that I see as reflected in the replacement term “humanizing.” To have completed and submitted this dissertation without acknowledging my failure to advocate for some of my most vulnerable students, the non-

binary individuals for whom “his or her” offers no ontological recognition, would have made for a simpler, neater ending—and yet an inauthentic one. I have come to believe, with the help of insights gained as I pursued the methodological aspect of this study, that the most humanizing pedagogy for college composition classes happens when an instructor is totally authentic with the students about the socially constructed reasons that they are in the class in the first place. For example, college composition students deserve to be taught explicitly about the many Englishes that exist, instead of being informed about only the fraction of linguistic reality that exists within the prescriptive parameters traditionally taught in the primary and secondary schools that make up the American education system. They deserve to be seen as epistemologically mature enough to be led to the deepest fault line that lies between the prescriptive and descriptive modalities; they deserve to be informed about the historical, social, and political reasons that this fault line exists; and they deserve to be told that they will have a choice about what to do with this new knowledge—this higher echelon of language awareness—once they depart my classroom. A humanizing Englishes pedagogy teaches students to follow prescribed norms, but teaches also about those whom these norms leave out.

It is also my aversion to inauthenticity, my preference for authenticity, which has helped me to at last acknowledge that the relationship between language awareness and reduction of linguistic harm is not as reliably inverse as I had insisted it could be for the first several years that I worked on this dissertation research. I admit, finally, that I had for a long time inadvertently romanticized harm reduction because I was afraid that its fallibilities would be exploited and made out to be irreconcilable problems, insurmountable obstacles that would foil my plan to use its principles as a vehicle for bringing World Englishes into

composition. What I have discovered, upon acknowledging the complications explicitly to the committee that challenged me and implicitly to the students whose lived experiences have revealed them to me, is that facing the inevitable messiness of reality and figuring out how to navigate it together can be humanizing for all of us. A humanizing Englishes pedagogy is simultaneously student-centered and teacher-centered, insofar as it is as important for the teacher to learn from the students as it is for the students to learn from the teacher: it is important for both students and teacher to be invited to see each other as human.

Finally, Humanizing Englishes Pedagogy, unlike Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy, represents a new kind of discourse that can characterize the entirety of a semester of composition—rather than only acting as a label for a collection of five principles that govern one four-week unit. That is to say, Humanizing Englishes Pedagogy is able to (and indeed must) *include* the WEs unit as governed by the five principles theorized in Chapter Two of this study—but it should be understood as a more all-encompassing construct: the source of that force which, in the “Implications for Curriculum Development” section, I identified as setting “a particular tone” for the rest of the semester following the WEs unit.

I find, in conclusion, that I am even more impassioned by my topic than I was on Day One. This is because, as I believe I have illustrated in these last few pages of my reflections, I have ended up experiencing, myself, the type of heightening in language awareness that I hope for my students to experience. This has been a humbling, heartening, and ultimately humanizing experience, insofar as it seems that although this dissertation research is now finished, my journey of discovery continues: it “consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world” (Freire, 1970, p. 125).

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## Appendix A

### Participant Recruitment Email

Dear Former Students,

I hope that this email finds you happy and healthy. I am emailing you because I would like to invite you to participate in the research study that I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation. My study is titled *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy: A Case Study Exploration of a New Orientation for U.S. Composition*. My study is based on the World Englishes unit that you experienced during the English 101 course that you took from me.

If you would like to participate in my study, I would like to ask you some questions about how you were affected (or not) by the World Englishes unit. It is okay if you no longer have any of the work you produced during the World Englishes unit. Your participation in my study would only consist of five obligations:

1. Responding to this email;
2. Filling out an informed consent form that I will mail to you;
3. Filling out a questionnaire that will be enclosed in the same envelope with the informed consent form;
4. Sending the informed consent form and your questionnaire back to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I will include with the form and the questionnaire;
5. Giving me just a few more minutes of your time for a phone interview.

Of course, you are under no obligation to participate in my study. If you do participate, your participation will not affect the grade you earned in my class. Also, I am sorry to say that there is no monetary benefit for participating.

Please email me back if you are interested in learning more about my study and/or if you would like to participate. I do hope to hear from you.

Have a wonderful day!

Melissa E. Lee (your former NNYSU English 101 instructor)

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You have received this form in the mail because you told me that you would like to participate in my doctoral dissertation research study. This is the informed consent form that I told you I would be sending you when we last communicated via email. After you read through this form, if you would still like to participate in my study, please follow the instructions at the end. They will tell you how to proceed.

As I explained in the initial email, my research study is based on the World Englishes unit that you experienced during the English 101 class you took from me. I would be grateful for the opportunity to inquire about your perceptions during and after the World Englishes unit. You would share these perceptions in the questionnaire that I have included with this form, and during a 30- to 60-minute phone interview that we would schedule for a time that agrees with both of our schedules. The interview would be recorded so that I could type out our conversation and study it to understand your experience.

It is important for you to understand that if you participate in this study, no information that you share with me will be given to NNYSU, even if you are still enrolled there. Furthermore, all of the materials that you submit to me, including any correspondence that we exchange during the course of your participation in my study, will be kept in a locked desk that only I have the key to. Lastly, as I explained in my initial email, you will receive no monetary compensation for participating.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are still free to choose whether or not to participate. If you still choose to participate, you may quit at any time by notifying the project director (my dissertation advisor) or the researcher (me), using the contact information below. All collected information about you will be destroyed if you decide to stop participating in the study.

Finally, if you participate, you will be able to see all collected information about you. I will ask you to read my writing about the information that I collected from you. If you do not think my writing about you accurately reflects the information that you gave me, revisions will be made.

Now, if you would still like to participate in my study, please sign your name and date on the lines on the back of this form. Please also include your phone number so that I will be able to call you when it comes time for our interview. Then, please fill out the questionnaire that I have included with this form. When you are finished, place this signed form and your questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have included, and send it all back to me!

My sincere thanks,  
*Melissa Elliott Lee*

Ph.D. Candidate, Indiana University of Pennsylvania Composition & TESOL program  
Assistant Professor, Northern New York State University

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Project Director

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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (phone: 724-357-7730) and the Northern New York State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (phone: 315-386-7620).

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VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this consent form to keep in my possession.

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Melissa Elliott Lee

Investigator

March 30, 2015

Date

## Appendix C

### Initial Questionnaire

If you are reading this questionnaire, you have accepted my invitation to participate in my doctoral dissertation research study titled *Student-Centered Englishes Pedagogy: A Case Study Exploration of a New Orientation for U.S. Composition*. You have affirmed your willingness to participate by responding to my initial email invitation, and you have signed, dated, and sent back to me the informed consent form.

The information that you provide on this questionnaire is completely confidential and will be used exclusively for the purpose of my dissertation research. I will keep your completed questionnaire in a secure location.

Please respond to as many of the 12 questions on this questionnaire as you can. Please write your responses into the response boxes provided. Feel free to attach additional sheets of paper if you need more space. There is no limit to the length of a response; please feel free to share anything that comes to mind as you think about a question. Please do not worry if you do not remember a lot about the World Englishes unit; you may have taken the English 101 course with me several semesters ago. I am simply interested in your memories and current thoughts, whatever they may be.

#### **PART 1:**

1. Pseudonym that you have chosen for the study:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Race/Ethnicity:
5. Semester that you took English 101 from me (please check one):
  - ☐ Spring 2012
  - ☐ Fall 2012
  - ☐ Spring 2013
  - ☐ Fall 2013
  - ☐ Spring 2014
  - ☐ Fall 2014
  - ☐ Spring 2015
  - ☐ Fall 2015
  - ☐ Spring 2016

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**PART 2:**

6. Please read the following statement uttered by a hypothetical English teacher to a student. Then, please respond to the question beneath the statement.

**“I don’t care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours  
someplace where it won’t insult my ears.”**

(Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66)

Now that you have experienced the World Englishes unit, what would you think (or do) if a teacher were to say this to a student in your presence (or if the teacher were to say it to you)?

7. The major assignment of the World Englishes unit was the literacy narrative, or the story of how you became literate in *a particular language* (such as English, Spanish, or Jamaican Creole), *a variety of a language* (such as African-American English, Appalachian English, or Singaporean English), or *a specialized vocabulary* (such as the “language of soccer,” the “language of clarinet players,” the “language of gaming,” or the “language of traffic/driving”). You had the choice to write your literacy narrative or create it digitally.

How would you explain the purpose of the literacy narrative assignment to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit?

8. During the World Englishes unit, you learned about the communicative strategy called *code-meshing*. The scholar who coined the term “code-meshing” is named Dr. Vershawn Young. Young’s definition of code-meshing in writing or speech is when a person “meshes,” or intermingles, words and phrases from different languages, dialects, styles, and/or registers together in a way that most accurately reflects what the person *means*. In fact, Young states that code-meshing is “more in line with how people actually speak and write anyway” (2007, p. 7). Below is an excerpt from a published scholarly article that was written in code-meshed language. Please read the excerpt, and then respond to the question beneath it.

**Among many of the hip hop generation there is a mandate to “represent,” which means to display one’s skill and knowledge or express one’s home identity in any given social situation. Some of my students “represent” in my writing classroom through dress—oversized clothing, baseball caps, doo rags, and bling—and attitude—laid back, non-committal, and unimpressed. When my students “represent,” they see themselves as embracing their identities and cultures in the midst of academia, as playas in the college game rather than the game of college playin’ them.**

(McCrary, 2005, p. 72)

If you had to explain the purpose of including code-meshing activities in the World Englishes unit to someone who had not experienced the unit, what would you say?

9. In the World Englishes unit, you learned about how a person's language use is partially influenced by his or her *biological*, or physical, make-up. Please read the following excerpt from a 2003 newspaper article, and then respond to the question beneath the excerpt.

## **Accent Axed with a Snip**

**By Kim Kyoung-wha**

**19 Oct. 2003**

**It's a simple if gruesome procedure...chop a centimeter or so off your tongue to become a fluent English speaker**

**That is the hope that recently drove one mother to take her six-year-old son for surgery aimed at ridding him of his Korean accent when speaking the language of choice in global business.**

**Driven by a desire to give their kids an edge in an increasingly competitive society, a surprising number of South Koreans have turned to the knife in a seemingly drastic bid to help their offspring perfect their English.**

**"Those who have a short frenulum (a strap of tissue linking the tongue to the floor of the mouth) can face problems pronouncing some characters due to a disturbance in lateral movements of the tongue," said Bae Jung-ho, an oral surgeon at Seoul's Yonsei Severance Hospital, who operated on the six-year-old last month.**

**Bae said that he had received many inquiries about the operation, mostly for children aged between 12 months and 10 years.**

Focusing on the idea that a person's language use is partially influenced by his or her biological make-up, what would you say about this newspaper article to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit?

10. In the World Englishes unit, you also learned about how a person's language use is also influenced by his or her *psychological*, or mental, state at any given time. Please read the following excerpt from an autobiographical narrative written by a speaker/writer of African-American English (sometimes called Black English), and then respond to the questions beneath the excerpt.

**When I was fourteen the mother of a white teammate on the YMCA swimming team would—in a nice but insistent way—correct my grammar when I lapsed into the Black English I'd grown up speaking in the neighborhood. She would require that my verbs and pronouns agree, that I put the "g" on my "ings," and that I say "that" instead of "dat." She absolutely abhorred double negatives, and her face would screw up in pain at the sound of one. But her corrections also tapped my racial vulnerability. I felt racial shame at this white woman's fastidious concern with my language. It was as though she was saying that the Black part of me was not good enough, would not do....**

(Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 206)

Focusing on the idea that a person's language use is also influenced by his or her psychological state at any given time, what would you say about the scenario depicted in the excerpt to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit?

11. In the World Englishes unit, you also learned about how a person's language choices are influenced by his or her *social context*, or the people in his or her surroundings, at any given time. Please read the following excerpt from an autobiographical narrative written by a speaker/writer of Appalachian English, and then respond to the questions beneath the excerpt.

**When I was in high school, an older friend who had left our town returned home with college classes under his belt.**

**"What are you doing tomorrow night?" he asked me one afternoon.**

**"I have a soccer match at Poke," I replied.**

**"At *PoLK*?" he asked, emphasizing the *l* I'd disregarded.**

***Poke*, I repeated softly inside my mouth. I'd never thought of the *l* before. It didn't exist: I'd always said what everyone else said, what seemed right.**

**But after that day I made a conscious choice to always pronounce the word phonetically. I had inside information from the outside world, and I began to feel a hint of superiority in saying it correctly when those around me were saying "Poke." I even teased my mom when she said "Poke County."**

(Jones, 2011, p. 194)

Focusing on the idea that a person's language use is also influenced by his or her social context, what would you say about this scenario to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit?

12. The ultimate goal of the World Englishes unit was to help you to develop in *language awareness*, or “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use.” Language awareness issues include “exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about language, a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn them and use them.”

(Association for Language Awareness)

How would you say your language awareness was affected by your experiences during the World Englishes unit?

## Appendix D

### Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

#### *Script for before the interview:*

Hi, \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

#### *Questions:*

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
  2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
  3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.
- **The remainder of the interview questions will be tailored to each participant, based upon what he/she wrote on the questionnaire.**

***Script for after the interview:***

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?

## Individual Participant Interview Script: Ana

### *Script for before the interview:*

Hi, ANA. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

### *Questions:*

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.

- 
4. I'd like to talk about your response to Question #6, the question that asked you to explain what you would think or do if you witnessed a teacher say to a student (or you), "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect someplace where it won't insult my ears." You wrote: *After reading this statement my first reaction was wow! Coming from a background where english is not many of my families first lanuage I can kind of understand why you (meaning the hypothetical english teacher) would not want the student to talk a certain way because it may be*

*hard to understand them. However by saying “speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won’t insult my ears” is just wrong. Everyone has their own way of communicating and for some it may be slang and for others it might be “proper english.”* How does your reaction to this hypothetical scenario compare/contrast with how you would have reacted to it *before* experiencing the WEs unit?

5. I don’t think I understand what you were trying to say in your response to Question #7. Question #7 asked you how you would explain the literacy narrative assignment to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit. You wrote: *The literacy narrative assignment is an array of languages and the purpose of the assignment is to get a better understanding of these dialects.*

(a) Can you elaborate a little more about what you meant here?

(b) What do you feel that you, personally, got out of the literacy narrative assignment?

6. I’m intrigued by a particular word you used to describe code-meshed language, in your response to Question #8. You wrote: *When people speak to one another they don’t speak with filter they just say it how it is and that is what I feel code meshing represents.* “Filter” is the word that intrigues me. How did you come up with that word?

7. Your response to Question #9 includes a couple of details that I’d like to ask you to elaborate on, if you would. Question #9 was the one that asked you what you would say about the frenulum surgery to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit. I’ll quote your whole response, since I have more than one question about it: *A person’s language use is partially influenced by his or her biological makeup. This newspaper article talks about how Korean’s go to the extreme of chopping a centimeter off their tongue in order to speak fluent english. Some people have problems pronouncing certain words in english due to their tongue and where they are from. My mother for example is from dominican Republic and she speaks and understand both english and Spanish however there are certain words that she cannot pronounce correctly because of her Spanish background. I personally don’t see anything wrong with it.*

(a) What did you mean by “problems” (third sentence)?

(b) I’m so glad you mentioned your mother’s experience! I’m just wondering if you could elaborate a bit on how you see her experience as similar to the experiences of those with shorter frenula. I’m asking because the frenulum issue is a matter of *biology*—a person’s physical body. But you attributed your mom’s difficulty to “her Spanish background.” What does this have to do with biology?

(c) I’m curious about the last part of your response. You stated that “there are

certain words that she cannot pronounce correctly”...but then you stated that you “don’t see anything wrong with” her pronunciation. If there’s nothing wrong with it, then why did you call it incorrect?

8. You come across as being pretty hard on yourself in your response to Question #10. I must admit that the opinions you seemed to be expressing in this response caught me off guard, because they seem to disagree with other statements you have made on this questionnaire. For example, you described the way you speak with your New York City friends in rather self-demeaning terms: *the way I was speaking wasnt necessarily proper or professional or even lady like*. Then, you even went so far as to judge yourself mentally immature! You wrote: *Mentally I was immature and in a way did and said what I felt was cool not smart, which is exactly how I sounded. Although I knew that how I was speaking wasnt professional I was mentally immature to even care when I should’ve*. I am curious about why you expressed such a negative perspective about your home language practices, since you have expressed the opposite elsewhere, such as when you said in your response to Question #9 that you don’t see anything wrong with your mom’s Spanish-influenced English.
9. Your response to Question #11 was interesting. Question #11 was the one about the Appalachian English speaker who decided to stop using the Appalachian English pronunciation of a certain town name, “Poke,” in favor of the phonetic pronunciation (“Polk”) used by what he calls the “outside world.” You wrote: *I got so into this that I kind of answered this question on the other page. While reading this scenario I laughed and thought back when I first moved to Lilyville, NY and got a job at Nice n Easy my coworkers and managers would make fun of me when I would say certain things. (I cant remember exactly what I would say but when I figure it out I would definitely tell you)*.
  - (a) Have you remembered any specific things that you would say?
  - (b) How did you *feel* when your Nice ‘n’ Easy co-workers and managers made fun of you when you would say certain things?
  - (c) Did your feelings about your co-workers making fun of you change at all after you experienced the WEs unit?
10. I’d like to ask a couple of questions about your response to Question #12, which asked you how you’d say your language awareness was affected by your experiences during the World Englishes unit. In response, you wrote: *My language awareness was definitely affected by my experience during the World Englishes unit and after that as well. I have been more aware of the way I talk as well as the way others around me talk*.
  - (a) What did you mean by “I have been more aware of the way I talk as well as the way others around me talk”?

- (b) Why wouldn't anyone want to listen to you talk about things you learned in my class?
11. I noticed that you focused on *speaking* in a lot of your responses. I'm curious...did you have an intentional reason for focusing on speaking, only, and not writing? If so, what was the reason?
  12. Do you think your own language characteristics affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  13. Do you think your age affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  14. Do you think your gender affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  15. Do you think your race/ethnicity affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

***Script for after the interview:***

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?

## Individual Participant Interview Script: *Ruby*

### ***Script for before the interview:***

Hi, **RUBY**. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

### ***Questions:***

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.

- 
4. I found your response to Question #6 to be "wise beyond your years," as the saying goes. Question #6 was the one that asked what you would think or do if you heard a teacher say to a student (or you), "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won't insult my ears." In response, you wrote: *I would have felt ashamed and embarrassed if a teacher were to say this to me. Without even giving me the chance to speak and trying to listen to what I have to say, the teacher has labeled me. The teacher has labeled me as an outsider, a black sheep of sorts. It seems as if the teacher cannot be bothered to listen to a*

*different dialect even when I might have something valuable to say. I cannot contribute to the conversation because I speak a different dialect. My words might be the same, yet s/he will not listen to me simply because I speak with a different tongue.*

*I would like to think that I would have approached the teacher and explained how hurtful his/her words were, and the situation would have improved immediately. However, I have come to realize these past few years that once people reach a certain age, it is difficult for them to change their ways. Even if the classroom situation did not improve like I had hoped at the initial conversation, I would have had the peace of mind knowing that I faced the challenge head on and did not let the teacher overpower me. Maybe if I kept reminding him/her how the words continued to negatively impact me, it would have ended eventually.*

My question here is, could you tell me how your current reaction to that scenario compares/contrasts with how you would have reacted *before* experiencing the World Englishes unit?

5. In your response to Question #7, the question that asked how you would explain the purpose of the literacy narrative assignment to someone who hadn't experienced the World Englishes unit, you wrote: *A literacy narrative is one-of-a-kind because each person becomes literate in a unique, but equally beautiful and awe-inspiring way.* "Awe-inspiring" is a strong phrase! Why awe-inspiring?
6. In your response to Question #8, which asked you how you would explain the purpose of code-meshing to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit, you wrote: *Code-meshing activities are important components of the World Englishes unit because it is crucial to be aware of code-meshing in a world where cultures are becoming more intertwined, and thus languages are too. Familiarity with code-meshing enables one to understand why someone is not following the typical constraints of language and to be more accepting of this practice.* What did you mean by "typical constraints of language"?
7. Now that you have a sense of what "code-meshing" means, do you see code-meshing happening, in speech and/or writing, in your day-to-day life today?
8. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about your response to Question #9, the question that asked what you would say about the newspaper article on frenulum surgery to someone who hadn't experienced the World Englishes unit. The question asked you to consider, specifically, the idea that a person's language use is partially influenced by his/her biological make-up. You responded with the following: *The newspaper article not only illustrates the idolization of the English language, but also the idolization of an accent-free English language in global business. Oral features are modified in order to provide the best chance at eliminating their native accents. It is incredibly sad that linguistic body modifications occur to ultimately gain an edge over another person in the global job market. Accents should be*

*cherished because they illustrate culture and diversity; instead, they are being rid of in the name of global competition.*

- (a) What is “accent-free English”?
  - (b) How did you come up with the word “idolization”? I’m interested because it creates a pretty powerful metaphor in both of the statements where you use it.
  - (c) What did you mean by “idolization of the English language”?
  - (d) What did you mean by “Accents should be cherished because they illustrate culture and diversity”?
  - (e) How did you feel about different “accents” from different parts of the world before the World Englishes unit?
9. Your response to Question #10, the question about the white, Standard American English-speaking mother who “corrected” the Black English-speaking narrator, caught my attention for a couple of reasons. The part that most caught my attention was the second sentence, in which you wrote: *It seems as if the mother could not stand to listen to someone who did not speak grammatically correct English, even though the basic message articulated in Black English was the same.*
- (a) What did you mean by “grammatically correct English,” in this part?
  - (b) If, as you say, the “basic message articulated in Black English was the same” as if it had been articulated in the white mother’s variety of English, what *is* the difference between Black English and the white mother’s variety of English? In other words, why differentiate between the two Englishes?
  - (c) Before the World Englishes unit, what did you think when you heard Black English spoken or saw it written?
10. I have one additional question about your response to Question #10. In your last sentence of that response, you wrote: *I wish the mother had let the main character speak in his/her most natural tongue because in the end, s/he was still speaking English, not French or Spanish.* My question for you is, in what ways did the World Englishes unit help you understand where English stops and French and/or Spanish begins?
11. I’d like to chat for a moment about your response to Question #11. Question #11 was the one about the Appalachian English speaker who decided to stop using the Appalachian English pronunciation of a certain town name, “Poke,” in favor of the phonetic pronunciation (“Polk”) used by what he calls the “outside world.” You wrote:

*The scenario highlights the development of a linguistic hierarchy. Even though generations have forgone the “l” sound, making the silent “l” a feature of Appalachian English, the two characters see “college” English as superior to their native Appalachian English on the basis of “l” pronunciation, or lack thereof. However, the pronunciation of “l” is a taboo in Appalachian English. Therefore, it is difficult to determine who is actually “correct.” I do not think there is one correct answer because pronunciation does not change the context of the word or the sentence as a whole.*

*It is unfortunate that the writer decides to make fun of his/her mother for not pronouncing the letter “l” because she must have experienced the same feelings of unfamiliarity s/he did when talking with the older college friend.*

- (a) Can you talk to me a little more about what you meant by “linguistic hierarchy”?
  - (b) What did you mean by “taboo” when you stated that “the pronunciation of ‘l’ is a taboo in Appalachian English”?
12. In your response to Question #12, which asked you (to recap, basically) how your language awareness was affected by your experiences during the World Englishes unit, you said that when you watch television or walk around campus now, you “listen a little more intently and cherish the opportunity to experience new languages different from [your] own.” Can you give me a specific example that illustrates some linguistic discovery you’ve made by paying extra attention in this way?
  13. I noticed that you focused on *speaking* in a lot of your responses. I’m curious...did you have an intentional reason for focusing on speaking, only, and not writing? If so, what was the reason?
  14. Do you think your own language characteristics affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  15. Do you think your age affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  16. Do you think your gender affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
  17. Do you think your race/ethnicity affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

***Script for after the interview:***

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?

## Individual Participant Interview Script: *Kobe*

### *Script for before the interview:*

Hi, **KOBE**. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

### *Questions:*

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.

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4. I'd like to talk about Question #6 on the questionnaire for a minute or two. Question #6 asked you to read a statement that might be uttered by an English teacher to a student (possibly you), and then explain what you would think or do after hearing such a statement. The statement was "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won't insult my ears." Your response was wonderfully detailed. Here's what you wrote, to refresh your memory: *While I agree that it may be difficult to communicate with an individual or a group of people who share the same dialect, I would think that the teacher was close-minded and*

*bad-mannered. I'd certainly take offense to it because in today's world, those who speak in the language that is exclusive to where they were raised or have adapted to, regardless of their skin color, may not be taken seriously in professional environments or environments that shun out dissimilar crowds. Discrimination is not tolerable in any infrastructure that the world presents, especially when it comes to way that people speak. I find it important to remember that the way someone looks, dresses, or speaks isn't a depiction of their talents, efforts, and determination.*

- (a) How does your current reaction to this hypothetical teacher's statement compare/contrast with the way you would have reacted before you experienced the WEs unit?
  - (b) You wrote of discrimination, a powerful term to invoke today. Have you had experiences with language discrimination?
5. I wonder if you'd give me some clarification on something you wrote in response to Question #7 on the questionnaire. Question #7 asked you how you would explain the purpose of the literacy narrative assignment to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit. In response, you wrote the following: *This assignment can be defined as an exercise to show how people who come from different regions of the world develop their formal and informal vocabularies. This exercise invites students to different cultures and provides them information on different ethnic backgrounds through digital and written outlets. This can be important for students, because in such a diverse setting, such as college, students who aren't familiar with the specialized vocabulary and language that is introduced to them are granted the opportunity to learn through effectively communication and a willingness to learn.*
- (a) Could you clarify what you meant in the last sentence—specifically, “the opportunity to learn through effectively communication and a willingness to learn”?
  - (b) What would you say you learned from the literacy narrative assignment (from composing your own literacy narrative, and/or from reading/listening to/watching those composed by other people)?
6. Now I have a couple of questions about what you wrote in response to Question #8 on the questionnaire. Question #8 was about the practice of *code-meshing*: when a person meshes, or intermingles, words and phrases from different languages, dialects, styles, and/or registers together in a way that most accurately reflect what the person *means*. The question asked you how you would explain the purpose of code-meshing activities to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit. You responded: *The purpose is to spice up the learning environment while introducing new information to those who aren't familiar with the different styles, dialects, and languages. As McCrary's piece is intended to do, it gives insight into the hip-hop fashion and how it has impacted students to dress. So, the way that an artist presents his music, on any platform, (but primarily the way he/she speaks) can strongly influence a group of people. A literary piece constructed with both the*

*network standard mixed with dialect derived from different parts of the world can also influence students to speak and write the same way.*

- (a) My first question is...what did you mean by “spice up”?
  - (b) How do you think you would have reacted to the code-meshing while reading McCrary’s code-meshed scholarly article *before* the WEs unit?
  - (c) I’m also curious about your emphasis on how code-meshing “influences” students. I’m curious because it has never been my intent for anyone’s code-meshing to “influence” students to speak or write in the *same way* as any *one* other person. Could you speak to this for a moment?
7. You made such an interesting point in the third sentence of your response to Question #9. Here is the whole thing, to refresh both of our memories: *I personally feel that the procedure is brutal and unnecessary. Language use is primarily associated with where an individual has been residing for the majority of his/her life. America, which is an obviously diverse nation has seen a massive amount of different languages, so it is easy for foreigners to find a group of people who are culturally and ethically similar, thus making survival in America a bit easier. As for those who desire to learn English, becoming a fluent speaker doesn’t really have much to do with conducting surgery. Learning a language takes time and willingness.* My question is: Is it necessary, in your opinion, for all people in the U.S. to be able to speak and write English? Why or why not?
8. I’m intrigued by your reaction to the scenario presented in Question #10, about the white mother who “corrected” the black narrator’s grammar. The question asked you to consider the idea that a person’s language use is partially influenced by his or her psychological state at any given time, and explain what you would say about the scenario to someone who had not experienced the World Englishes unit. You wrote: *As far as how an individual’s psychological and mental state influences an individual’s speech, I would agree that it can be difficult to shift gears when those who speak anything other than the network standard English. In other words, an individual may be so used to speaking in their own language that they forget how to alter their dialect, styles, and languages to appropriately communicate with members of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In the scenario, the African-American girl felt that she wasn’t good enough, which should never be the case especially when she was understood by the mother of the white teammate. While the mother was looking out for the black girl’s best interest, it is important to be sensitive to the fact that Black English exists and that it isn’t widely acknowledged.* It’s clear that you acknowledge the existence of Black English as its own distinct variety of the English language. But, I’m curious about where your feelings about Black English go from there.
- (a) In your opinion, is the term “Black English” specific enough?

- (b) In the second sentence, you asserted that “an individual may be so used to speaking in their own language that they forget how to alter their dialect, styles, and languages to appropriately communicate with members of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.” What did you mean by “appropriately communicate”?
  - (c) Should Black English(es) be taught in schools and used alongside SAE in the academic, business, and public spheres (as another Standard American English, basically)?
  - (d) How does your current reaction to this scenario compare/contrast with the way you would have reacted before you experienced the WEs unit?
9. I’d like to chat for a moment about your response to Question #11. Question #11 was the one about the Appalachian English speaker who decided to stop using the Appalachian English pronunciation of a certain town name, “Poke,” in favor of the phonetic pronunciation (“Polk”) used by what he calls the “outside world.” You wrote: *Prior to entering the World Englishes Unit (if intending on doing so) remembering that people who come from different places may experience conflict when coming in contact with those of different regions of the world is important. Also, when people move away from their regions and enter college and other professional outlets, change is inevitable, in terms of language and style. Although it isn’t wrong to pronounce something “improperly” making sure that things are said and written to appeal to the network standard English is important when coming in physical, verbal, and electronic contact with individuals because it prepares you for social contact with those in a professional setting.* Can you unravel that last sentence a little more for me? If it isn’t wrong to pronounce something differently than others might pronounce it, then why do you say that is it important to make sure that it is “said and written to appeal to the network standard English”?
10. I noticed that you focused on *speaking* in a lot of your responses. I’m curious...did you have an intentional reason for focusing on speaking, only, and not writing? If so, what was the reason?
11. Do you think your own language characteristics affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
12. Do you think your age affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
13. Do you think your gender affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
14. Do you think your race/ethnicity affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

***Script for after the interview:***

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?

## Individual Participant Interview Script: *Enlightened!*

### *Script for before the interview:*

Hi, **ENLIGHTENED!**. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

### *Questions:*

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.

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4. I'd like to ask you a question about a tiny little choice you made in your response to Question #6, the question that asked what you would think or do if you witnessed a teacher say to another student (or you), "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won't insult my ears." In the last part of your response, you wrote the following: *In English 101, I experienced a diverse culture of students and didn't always understand the "language."* Why did you put "language" in quotation marks?

5. How does your reaction to Question #6's scenario compare/contrast with how you would have reacted to it before experiencing the WEs unit?
6. I'd like to talk about a couple of things you wrote in your response to Question #7. Question #7 was the one that asked you how you would explain the literacy narrative assignment to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit.
  - (a) In the second sentence of your response to Question #7, you wrote: *Reading Mother Tongue by Amy Tan was an excellent assignment that expressed "non-Chinese" barriers of understanding the language of Amy's mother.* What did you mean by "barriers" in this case?
  - (b) In the second paragraph of your response to Question #7, you asserted: *English speaking people need to use less slang.* Why?
7. You observed, in your response to Question #8, that code-meshing can include body language, gestures, and facial expressions. I don't recall ever actually saying this in class. What led you to make this connection?
8. I noticed that you repeated, several times, how important it is to ask questions for clarification when you don't understand what someone is trying to say (or write). Being able to ask such questions depends, of course, on people having access to each other.
  - (a) I'm wondering how you approach communicative situations where you *can't* ask for clarification (for example, listening to a recording of someone, or reading something that someone wrote, but having no way to contact that person to communicate).
  - (b) How does your response to (a) compare/contrast with how you would have responded before experiencing the WEs unit?
9. In regard to your response to Question #9, if I may ask, how does your "anatomy make [pronouncing Dutch words] next to impossible"?
10. I was interested to see your mention of Malcolm X's literacy narrative in your response to Question #11, but I am not sure of the connection you were trying to make. Can you clarify?
11. In the second paragraph of your response to Question #12, you wrote: *I have become better prepared and equipped to speak formal English in the workplace.* What did you mean by "formal English"?
12. I noticed that you focused on *speaking* in a lot of your responses. I'm curious...did you have an intentional reason for focusing on speaking, only, and not writing? If so,

what was the reason?

13. Do you think your own language characteristics affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
14. Do you think your age affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
15. Do you think your gender affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?
16. Do you think your race/ethnicity affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

***Script for after the interview:***

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?

## Individual Participant Interview Script: *Amber*

### ***Script for before the interview:***

Hi, **AMBER**. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This interview is an important part of the research project that I am conducting for my dissertation. Everything that you choose to share with me today will be treated with respect and appreciation by me as well as by my superiors who will be evaluating my work.

Since you experienced the World Englishes unit that I taught in the section of English 101 that you took with me, and since you were kind enough to fill out the questionnaire, you already have some insight into what my project is about. I am trying to develop a new way of teaching English 101, a way that uses concepts from the World Englishes framework to increase the class's effectiveness at helping students develop a greater sense of language awareness, which means not only knowledge of how languages work, but insight into why people learn and use languages in the ways that they do.

All of the information that you have given me already, and the information that you give me today, will be kept confidential; in any publications that do arise from this study, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Nevertheless, you are free to keep to yourself any information that you feel uncomfortable divulging.

Are you ready to start?

### ***Questions:***

1. How have you been doing since we were in the class together?
2. I am interested in finding out how many different languages and/or how many varieties of English you have been around in your life, and whether you think that your speech and/or or writing has been influenced by these other languages or varieties of English. Can you tell me a little bit about this aspect of your linguistic background?
3. Please tell me more about how you are currently understanding and/or experiencing your language awareness in your personal life, and in your educational experiences, since the World Englishes unit.

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4. The passion in many of your responses to the questionnaire questions really struck me. Your response to Question #6 was a good example. Question #6 was the one that asked you to explain what you would think or do if you heard a teacher utter a certain statement to another student (or you). The statement was "I don't care about the color of your skin, but speak that dialect of yours someplace where it won't insult my ears." You responded with the following: *At first I'd be insulted and question and*

*wonder what in her right mind gave her the decency to say such a thing to a student I'd try to understand why she thought or said that. I feel as tho I would first of question how it insulted the teacher than defend who I am and where I come from to explain that my english is completely different and because of my dialect as becauses of who I am and my face I'd take it as a racial attack to who I am and the person I've grown up to know to dimishe my identity and my language that keeps me alive and reminds me of who I am I would stand up for what I know is right.*

- (a) I want to make sure I understand exactly what you meant when you wrote that it would “diminish [your] identity” to be forbidden to use your language, because (in your words) “my language keeps me alive and reminds me of who I am.” Which of your languages were you referring to in this part of your response?
  - (b) Could you talk to me a little more about your reasoning for identifying the teacher’s statement as a “racial attack”?
  - (c) How does your current reaction to this hypothetical teacher’s statement compare/contrast with the way you would have reacted before you experienced the WEs unit?
5. I wonder if you could elaborate on a couple of the things you wrote in response to Question #8. Question #8 was the one that asked you how you would explain the purpose of code-meshing activities to a person who had not experienced the WEs unit. You wrote: *The main purpose and objective [for?] [are?] are especially if its narrative writing code meshing is perfect [interact?] your trying to [one?] + the reader to understand what it is that person sounds like or what ethnic background they come from its more [the?] little detail that explains who a person is and how they sounds or the way they talk.*
- (a) Just so I can make sure that I’m not missing anything, could you restate what you were trying to get across here?
  - (b) You said that code-meshing is “perfect” for narrative writing. Could you say a little more about that?
  - (c) Do you think code-meshing is (or could be) applicable to other kinds of writing that could be assigned in school?
6. I was very struck by the violent imagery in your response to Question #9, the question that asked how you would address the topic of frenulum surgery to someone who had not experienced the WEs unit. I’m specifically referring to the part where you wrote: *to me thats like ripping someones tongue of and stripping and dehumanizing that individual of their language and culture.*
- (a) The passionate language you used makes me want to ask you whether you have

personally experienced language discrimination in your life. Can you tell me a story about a time that you have experienced this type of discrimination?

(b) Does your passion about this speech-related matter extend to writing?

7. I'd like to ask you a question about something you wrote in your response to Question #10, the question about the white mother who "corrected" the Black English-speaking narrator's grammar. You stated: *I believe that it is mentally damaging for one to correct another.*

(a) I'm wondering how your belief on this matter applies to school—specifically "English class" settings like English 101. Even more specifically...how do you think English teachers (me, for example) should evaluate students' writing, in terms of situations like this, where the writing doesn't always follow the conventions of "Standard" American English?

(b) How does your current reaction to this scenario compare/contrast with the way you would have reacted before you experienced the WEs unit?

8. In your response to Question #12, you expressed that the World Englishes unit had a really positive effect on you. You wrote: *I believe it has affected greatly because I hadn't understood or known that I wasn't alone in a struggle I couldn't point out I have become aware of language in a much more aware way and I just find it beautiful when I come across it and I have never loved my language and my speech and tongue more when it was clear at how important language can be to our own identity.* What did you mean by "I have become aware of language in a much more aware way"?

9. I noticed that you focused on *speaking* in a lot of your responses. I'm curious...did you have an intentional reason for focusing on speaking, only, and not writing? If so, what was the reason?

10. Do you think your own language characteristics affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

11. Do you think your age affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

12. Do you think your gender affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

13. Do you think your race/ethnicity affected your perceptions of the WEs unit, and what you took away from it?

*Script for after the interview:*

We are finished! Thank you so much, again, for agreeing to take the time for this interview today. Do you have any questions for me right now?

[Respond to questions if the participant has any.]

If you think of a question that you would like to ask me after we part today, please do not hesitate to email me at [leem@lilyville.edu](mailto:leem@lilyville.edu).

I do not think that I will need to contact you for any clarification of information, but if I do, will I be able to reach you at the email you provided?