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Testing Acceptance of Language Difference in Academia: Perceptions in a First-Year Composition Classroom

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TESTING ACCEPTANCE OF LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE IN ACADEMIA: PERCEPTIONS IN A FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

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In response to Bawarshi's collective call for educators to be "more responsive and responsible users and teachers of English," and motivated by the research of Michelle Hall Kells, I argue that it is necessary for educators to introduce first-year writing students to the historical and sociopolitical aspects of language use in academia through implementing lessons that focus on facets of language diversity. After describing a lesson plan focused on language diversity, I then analyze student feedback using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis as a lens. I also discuss the results of a Likert scale implemented during the three-phase study. Student responses indicate they are not familiar and uncertain about the concept of language diversity in academia, yet they also indicate a sincere desire to learn more about the topic. Therefore, a critical introduction to this topic will prepare students to become better writers and readers throughout their college careers.

DEDICATION

The completion of my thesis would not have been possible without the love and support of my entire family: my sister Roxanne, my brother Michael, my sister Grace as well as the memory of my late father Juan Rodriguez. To my loves, Lauren, Ryann, Lucas and Riley, los quiero mucho. I especially dedicate this work to my mother Librada Rodriguez who in her youth was not afforded with the opportunity to pursue an education. However, her knowledge, strong work ethic, compassion and kindness towards others rival the qualities of any summa cum laude graduate. Finally, I thank Jesus Christ for always guiding me and giving me strength, especially during these tough past few years.

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Pa mi gente del Valle, ¡Sí, se puede!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A significant moment occurred during my first year of teaching (Fall 2016) that will forever remind me of why it is important for students to learn about the concept of language diversity at the earliest time possible. I remember standing in front of the small class of first-year composition (FYC) students and explaining one assignment or another when one of my students, a smart but unsure Latina responded to one of my statements by answering, "neta miss?" Upon saying the words, she quickly cupped her hands over her mouth and apologized for what she had said as if she had cursed in front of the class. The other students looked at one another as if something had gone wrong and they did not know how to handle it. I smiled and nodded at her as I continued to talk about the assignment and a wave of calm quickly spread throughout the classroom. She was using the word "neta," a Spanish slang word most often used to express "truth," to ask me if what I was explaining about the assignment was indeed true. Her action and the other students' reactions indicate, not surprisingly, that students carry certain misguided beliefs about language use in academia.

While students speak non-standard discourses with one another all the time inside and outside of the classroom, the cause for concern for my student was that she had addressed me—someone who represented the academic sphere—using non-standard language. Later in the semester as we discussed Gloria Anzaldua's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," the students

eagerly discussed Anzaldua's choice of words, as these words are often used in their communities. During this discussion students were able to understand that using discourses other than standards (whether spoken or written) is not grounds for discipline and is not reserved for outside of the academic sphere. If I had criticized my student's choice of words in front of the other students, I would have been sending the message that academic spaces do not allow for non-standard usages. If I had not introduced the students to Anzaldua's (or Malea Powell's) scholarly work (which incorporates language diversity) and provided them with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on her choice of words, I would have been sending the message that academic writing tends to value mostly standard compositions. If I was a monolingual speaker, unfamiliar with the word and told her to try to "remember classroom rules" without investigating the situation, I would have been sending the message that other dialects and/or discourses are not at the top of language hierarchies, and therefore not important.

However, because of my encounter with language diversity in a first-year graduate course, I was able to learn about different aspects of the concept, specifically "[. . .] the close relationship between issues of language and literacy and the social, cultural, and political implications" (Ball and Muhammad 82) of language use. Yet, my first encounter with language diversity was met with many questions. During that first-year course, the weekly articles that centered on language diversity in regards to the U.S. educational system were leaving me perplexed. For one, as a second generation Mexican-American whose first language is English, I was unsure as to why I had never come across anything similar, and two, I wondered about what students whose first language was not English would think of the topic. Throughout my undergraduate studies in anthropology, I had never come across anything in relation to the concept of language diversity in relation to power (perhaps aside from Sapir, Whorf and Weber's

work to certain extents). Not even in sociology classes, where issues of social justice and social inequalities were frequently discussed, did language issues appear. The readings from my graduate course left me asking such questions as, *why am I just learning about this*? *How could have coming across this knowledge earlier in my educational path helped me with my identity and confidence as a writer*? As well as *how can we change the field of composition studies in regards to language diversity if we are not involving students at all levels of these important discussions*?

One of the readings I read that semester by Michelle Hall Kells titled, "Leveling the Linguistic Playing Field in First-Year Composition" focuses on bilingual (English-dominant) students' language attitudes and perceptions of linguistic identity, in an attempt to illustrate the "kinds of issues most linguistically diverse students encounter" when they try to connect both of their language identities (132-134). Her study consisted of two phases; the first phase included a survey intended to measure "the social messages about language that writing students have adopted" (135) and had 195 respondents while the second phase of her study included 177. In an attempt to understand if whether or not poor retention rates (at the investigation site) were due to "linguistic insecurity," the second phase of her study involved "an experimental syllabus informed by sociolinguistics and local political history" (138). Kells believes understanding students' attitudes towards language, the languages they speak as well as those they want to learn are integral to their ability to break away from the "preconceived notions about the social value of their languages" (132). This reading caught my attention for many reasons. First, I was intrigued by the results of her research conducted in 1996-1997, and secondly I was eager to frame my study similar to hers, but my research would focus on student perspectives of language use in academic classrooms, specifically the composition classroom in order to understand how

the academy might perpetuate these preconceived notions. Twenty years after she conducted her study, I was eager to find out if whether the "conflicted attitudinal domain" for bilinguals (136) was still present in the 21st century.

With its predominantly Latino population, the Rio Grande Valley located at the southernmost tip of Texas is an interesting geographic location in which to learn more about language diversity since a majority of the population speaks multiple languages as well as hybrids. Listening to the various discourses used throughout the Valley is just as interesting as listening to those found throughout the entire United States. However, most residents who grew up in this region during the middle of the twentieth century recall stories of linguistic discrimination that often shaped their perceptions of language through adulthood. Even though the region was (and still is) predominantly Latino, assimilation was forced upon many students, even to the point where physical punishment was used in the classrooms for those who spoke "other" non-prestige languages (Guerra, Emerging 15).

Language ideologies like other ideologies are certainly difficulty to change since they have been molded for quite some time; however, the task is not impossible. Approximately seven years before I enrolled in rhetoric and composition graduate courses, I had negative views about the place of language diversity in academia. As a younger student, I harbored negative thoughts towards the use of Tex-Mex (a mestizaje of blended English and Spanish words often encountered in border areas) since, as part of mainstream education, we are all too often introduced to and pushed to "master" standard languages. Therefore, the idea that blended languages can be used in academia is a not only a foreign concept for students, but also an unacceptable one.

Since 2008 I have worked for a junior college that serves mostly Latino students. However before teaching, a majority of my time at the college was spent working in the student affairs and enrollment department assisting first-time and returning college students. Most of the staff in the department were born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley and were therefore familiar with, and able to speak Tex-Mex. While I was part of that group, my belief then was that Tex-Mex should not be used in an academic setting at all because it reflected an uneducated and therefore unprofessional image. While most of the Tex-Mex dialogue I encountered was between staff members, at times to my dismay, some staff members spoke Tex-Mex with the students. As the years passed, and my co-workers and I forged closer relationships, I slowly found myself using Tex-Mex in the workplace sans the negative attitude towards it.

Following the graduate class discussions I was able to reflect on, and understand why I had such an initial attitude towards specific discourses. In "Understanding the Rhetorical Value of *Tejano* Codeswitching," also by Michelle Halls Kells, she states, "[h]istorical, political, cultural, and economic factors influence choices about self-representation through language in implicit and often unconscious ways" (25). At the time I did not have the historical, political, cultural, or economic background knowledge in order to understand how language varieties work in social spaces. My co-workers, however, seemed to understand the cultural factor better than I did, and perhaps in the unconscious way Kells mentions. Partaking in codeswitching she says "demands trust" because it "reduce[s] protective boundaries and relinquish[es] caution about protecting one's social position and esteem" (33). Compared to my co-workers, I was more concerned about the language and the esteem that I had connected to it.

There is plenty of scholarship that deals with the discussion of language difference in academia; in general it is thoughtful and provocative and provides historical background on the

issue, yet it fails to consistently provide a student perspective on a matter that mostly affects students who are not yet members of the academic community. A little over a decade has passed since Anis Bawarshi collectively called for educators to be more responsive and responsible teachers of English in his article "Taking Up Language Differences in Composition" and almost forty-four years since Geneva Smitherman asked, "English teacher, why you be doing the thangs you don't do?" in the similarly titled article from 1972. In response to the rapidly changing population of college students who bring to the classroom a variety of discourses and Englishes, these scholars are urging educators and future educators to understand the way in which discussing and implementing language diversity assignments in the classroom can help students comfortably and effectively portray their voices in writing. Aside from that, language diversity curriculums enable students to ask questions concerning language beliefs and perceptions and perhaps even challenge the often-misguided beliefs.

In order to accomplish this, it is necessary for educators to incorporate critical pedagogies that embrace language diversity as well as present the social inequalities that can stem from language hierarchies. In addition to introducing new pedagogies, scholarship that discusses language difference should also be integrated into first-year curricula so that students can become involved in the discussions that are working to affect the future of composition studies. Simply introducing first-year writing students to this complex topic allows them to become familiar as well as involved with ongoing discussions and theories surrounding language diversity. As a result, students can become better critical writers and readers (Guerra, Cultivating Transcultural 298-299) and gain a desire to stop the cycle of social inequality that views academic discourse as the dominant discourse.

In order for students to become aware of the social inequalities that stem from the use of dominant language in academia, they need to be introduced to the topic at the earliest possible level. Therefore, it is the responsibility of first-year composition educators to incorporate critical pedagogies about language diversity. Such critical pedagogies will discuss the history and important concepts surrounding language diversity, and will allow for students to have knowledge of multiple ideologies regarding language. In response to Bawarshi's collective call and encouraged by Kells' study, I created a general lesson on language diversity for first-year writing students in order to measure the extent of its acceptance by mono and multilingual students in an academic setting. Throughout this study my main research questions focused on:

- Will a lesson in language diversity affect student perspectives on language use in academia? and
- To what extent will students become aware of power structures related to language due to the lesson?

These questions are integral for my overall aim of helping students understand the connections between language and power. Moreover, the study allows me to incorporate the comments, questions and/or concerns of these students in hopes that more research can center on student perspectives and not just on scholarly perspectives.

Before discussing the components of the lesson, the literature review in Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the historical background of language in the United States, as well as the relationship between language and race as seen in the academy and the sociocultural relationship of the two. This context will help the reader understand why writing instructors and scholars should continue important conversations pertaining to language diversity in the composition classroom by integrating student perspectives. The chapter ends with a brief

discussion of the pedagogical implications of language diversity and the observation that students' perspectives are not highlighted enough.

Chapter 3 focuses on the design of the study, which includes an explanation of each research instrument and the roles they played in the study. This is followed by an introduction to Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is the model that provides a lens for my data analysis in Chapter 4 and one that centers on the overlap between language, ideology and power. After a review of this model, I discuss the coding and organization of the pre-survey responses as well as the responses from the post-lesson questionnaire and final questionnaire.

Chapter 4 begins with an examination of the findings from the pre-survey questions and transitions into the analysis of the participants' responses using Fairclough's model of CDA. I then review the three dimensions of the model (discourse practice, text and sociocultural practice) in relation to different aspects of the study. Since many students had similar perspectives in regards to the given questions, I categorized student responses using emergent themes found within the samples of written text. The chapter ends with an analysis of the Likert scale statistical results before closing with a summary of the findings.

The final chapter explains the implications for future research and describes the limitations of the study so that other researchers may enhance and build from this work. Chapter 5 also includes a section discussing the implications for teaching first-year composition and provides sample assignments for instructors to build off of as well. My aim is to, like Kells, provoke questions about the significance of learning about language diversity in the composition classroom in order for others to explore and answer these questions through reflection and

discussion, because ultimately “critical language practice fosters student development” and allows for “[a]ffirmed, critically informed students” (Leveling 147).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steve Lamos' article, "Language, Literacy, and the Institutional Dynamics of Racism: Late-1960s Writing Instruction for 'High-Risk' African American Undergraduate Students at One Predominantly White University" is a must read piece for anyone interested in learning about the complexity of language difference, specifically in regards to the link between language and power in academia. The notion of false impressions as change should be foregrounded in the composition classroom in order for all students to recognize the importance of discussing and reflecting on issues that most-often affect marginalized students. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to maintain difficult conversations about the link between race, language and identity inside the classroom so that students may realize and understand the reasoning behind different language ideologies and how it affects their everyday lives.

I define language diversity as the inclusion and validation of all languages and dialects that people use in their everyday lives. Much of the contention surrounding acceptance of its use can be observed in academia, since historically, institutions of higher education have focused primarily on Standard English. According to the online Merriam-Webster dictionary (American), Standard English is defined as

> The English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal

> speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood. (Standard English)

While a critique of this sole definition may be enough for another study, this chapter briefly traces the history of Standard English in the United States as well as in academia. In "English Only and College Composition," Bruce Horner and John Trimbur call for those in the field to understand that a tacit language policy in academia has had a steady monolinguistic history that many of us have failed to explore. For this reason they seek to "…examine the sense of inevitability that makes it so difficult to imagine writing instruction in any other language other than English" (595). Given that today colleges and universities serve a variety of students, each with their own linguistic backgrounds, the authors want those in the field to critically examine the intentional or unintentional neglect of students' various language practices. Is it due to these tacit language policies? A brief examination of the relationship between language and race both inside and outside of the classroom provides necessary context for this study as it informs the literature surrounding the push for critical pedagogies.

Brief History of English Language in the U.S. and in Academia

Throughout different periods of the nation's growth, there have been times when bilingualism has been tolerated and more times when monolingualism has been preferred. There has not been one steady flow of promoting English only in the United States, as some might believe. However, as Sandra Del Valle explains, most often the push for bilingualism is done for a specific purpose, mainly to benefit government agendas and/or to promote a seemingly diverse nation (9).

English Language in the United States

In her book *Language Rights and the Law in the United States: Finding Our Voices*, Del Valle provides an in-depth view of the legal status of minority language rights in the United States. She argues that historically the nation's "policies on language have been practical, assimilation-oriented and tolerant only to the extent necessary" (9). Language policy has not focused on the interest of diverse groups; rather it tends to focus on the country as a nation.

Public education history classes have illustrated (though some may argue not enough) the appalling struggles that Native Americans endured in regards to their overall rights as citizens of this nation. The nineteenth century provides us with many accounts of attempts to eradicate American Indian culture. Oftentimes we forget that many Native languages have been completely erased from history. Del Valle states, "Native Americans have the disheartening distinction of being the first victims of US xenophobic language and educational policies: policies that reflected the deep contempt with which Native American culture, language, customs, indeed entire way of life, were held" (275). Because Native Americans were different from the white settlers in so many ways, this xenophobia, the unreasonable fear or hatred of those who are different, became evident through the many policies that hindered and sought to eliminate their culture. Through targeting their languages, the settlers were able to contain the mobility of Native Americans and essentially this led to the demise and death of many of their languages along with parts of their culture. Linguistic hegemony was at play and "[i]ndeed, by referring to the Indians themselves as 'barbarous' and 'barbarians' ... the English and other Europeans in effect branded the Indians as inferior on the basis of their language" (Dussias qtd. in Del Valle 278).

However while this occurred, some states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania were enjoying

multilingualism—supported by the state—because a powerful language minority, the Germans, held positions in government therefore, "[t]his led to a panoply of language tolerant policies including the public support of bilingual and minority language schools in some of these states" (Del Valle 10). The Germans, white-skinned Europeans, were by no means subjected to what Native Americans had to endure. One of the lawmakers at the time, Delegate Heister stated,

> The German population can have instruction in the German language, if they desire it. They constitute about one-third of the wealth and population of this state, and the legislature, in which body they have themselves their due portion of representatives, will not undertake to exclude them from having instruction in their own language, if they desire to receive it through that medium. (qtd. in Del Valle 12)

Since Native Americans did not contribute to the *economic wealth* that the German population did, their rights, which included language use, were neglected and they were not given the same benefits as the Germans, a group from outside the country, essentially Others. However while the Germans seemingly had these linguistic permissions, they were mainly granted "out of the basic need of the American occupation to establish sovereignty in the annexed territories" (Trimbur 25-26) and therefore these permissions were not granted out of linguistic tolerance. Through this, one can observe how dominant languages and power, specifically economic power, are connected.

English Language in Academia

In the late eighteenth century, shortly after universities abolished entrance requirements in classical languages, the new century saw the formation of the first-year writing course as a response to the poorly written English of entering students (Horner and Trimbur, 598). Horner and Trimbur state that by the end of the nineteenth century, English was already a distinguished part of the curriculum and because of this, other modern languages were pushed aside, and although they were used for reference, they were not treated as living languages (602). During

this time students who were learning Spanish, or any other modern language, would probably be encouraged to acquire the language and "perfect" the acquisition, however it is likely that they were not able to use the language in actual everyday conversation and especially not in academia. This separation of languages marked the start of the weight that would increasingly be placed on being able to speak and write "proper" English in American educational institutions.

Students were no longer required to be educated in multiple languages (which would today label them as multilingual) since studying the classics was seen as feminine as well as nonintellectual (603) and only valuable as a tool for helping students "master" English (605). These newly reformed language policies filtered the social identities of U.S. Americans as English speakers, privileged written English for language use, and mapped the pedagogical and curricular development of language toward the command of written English (607). Those who were labeled as foreigners during this time were beginning to see the value that was placed on a language different from that of their native tongues and surely felt obligated to comply with the status quo. However, even though these foreigners may have been eager to acquire English, they still carried their native languages with them and were therefore not transforming into monolingual English students, but multilingual ones.

Race and Language Diversity

Twentieth century America maintained these sentiments towards the use of "proper" English. In *The English-Only Question An Official Language for Americans?* Dennis Baron mentions how "Good English" campaigns from the 1920's freely blamed foreigners for contaminating English and even went as far as to create oaths for children such as this one created by the Chicago Woman's Club American Speech Committee:

I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag. I love my country's language. I promise:

1. That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllables of words.
2. That I will say a good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "um-hum" and "nup-um" or a foreign "ya" or "yeh" and "nope." (155)

This example of linguistic discrimination portrays the racist views that society had about those who spoke non-prestige forms of English. Furthermore, the history of Standard English in academia is directly connected to cultural capital since language has been used as a way of keeping those who are "different" out of these historically prestige spaces. The aforementioned Lamos article touches upon the effects of white mainstream language and its practices in regards to early high-risk programs. He mentions the "Educational Opportunity Program" (EOP) at a predominantly white Illinois university in the late 1960's and discusses how they have historically served as some of the "few institutionally sanctioned spaces in which connections between race, power, language, and literacy have been openly discussed, even if such distinctions have not always led to actual institutional reform and change" (69). Institutional reform and change certainly takes much time and effort, however these efforts can be accelerated when tacit practices are examined and important conversations are maintained.

Being able to trace and observe the role of power in academia allows for critical examinations of why and how these power structures are in place. In " 'The American Way': Resisting the Empire of Force and Color-Blind Racism," Aja Y. Martinez argues that those who hold power have the ability to "color" the views of those who do not hold power (586).

Historically and many would argue even now, White males have controlled the politics behind many systems, be they economic or academic. Because of this history, much rhetoric can be traced back to these roots, yet there still remains an unspoken or "tacit" understanding of compliance. Those who have unjustly enforced Standard English in order to maintain power over those who are marginalized have been able to transfer this power to the English language. The negative effects are observable in the aforementioned accounts of the Native Americans and reach all the way to students today (though not as obvious) thus adding to the "color-blind" or tacit sense of racism.

Most writing courses teach students about conforming to expectations and conventions, and generally, students in FYC courses learn that their writing is done for specific audiences and purposes. Proponents of language diversity certainly do not want to rid the academy of conventions, rather they want students to understand how language is used and can be used in different contexts so they can meaningfully contribute to various situations they will encounter inside and outside of academia. Some students may go through their entire academic careers feeling like they have to *mimic* work that is socially expected of them and never encounter the idea that different varieties of English are valued and can be rightly used in academia. Furthermore, language diversity proponents are not asking students to constantly write in mixed languages or discourses, again, they want students to understand how language can be used when contexts call for certain writing, and to value multiple discourses. In "The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourse" Lisa Delpit explains James Paul Gee's view in which he believes that not all discourses are equal. He argues that some are socially dominant because they allow access to economic success (153). Del Valle's account of the Native Americans, who did not contribute to the "economic wealth" as the Germans did, is reflected in the value placed on Standard English

today since it continues to be tied to economic prosperity. Moreover, Delpit mentions that students who acquire a dominant discourse "need not mean that one must reject one's home identity and values, for discourses are not static, but are shaped" (163). The teachers discussed in this article, "reminded their students to "to transform dominant discourses for liberatory purposes" (162). Discourses are used in different contexts therefore knowing and using multiple discourses is much more beneficial for students learning to write for multiple audiences.

Paul K. Matsuda touches further on perceived language hierarchies by again revisiting the history of English in college composition and discussing how today's teachers are faced with the problems that arise in teaching students who are no longer majority "native" English speakers. However, Matsuda's main concern is *why* this issue has not been a leading topic of discussion, especially amongst those in higher education. He points out that composition classes have largely been in existence to separate language difference from those who speak academic English since the use of assessment practices for placement gives "disproportionate weight to language differences" due to grammatical errors even if the composition is highly developed (Myth 642). Rather than addressing these issues in the classroom, Matsuda believes most composition teachers are quick to chalk up language diversity as inadequate preparation that needs to be dealt with elsewhere (Myth 642). However, in discussing the thought out language diversity practices of Suresh Canagarjah's students in "Negotiating Translingual Literacy: An Enactment," Matsuda also believes, "the practice [Canagarajah] describes cannot be directly applied to classrooms where students are less multilingual, less sensitive to language differences, or less metalinguistically aware" (Lure 482). For this reason, promoting language diversity at an early stage in a student's academic career influences students to become more multilingual, more sensitive to language differences, and more metalinguistically aware.

Language Diversity and Pedagogy

In "Taking Up Language Difference in Composition," Anis Bawarshi informs readers of the notion of uptakes, which he defines as ideological passages that allow us to connect meanings between the coordinated activity of different systems (653). His introduction to the essays in the July 2006 issue of *College English* proclaims the urgency for educators to intervene in these uptakes in order to create "more responsive and responsible users of English" (656). He is calling for educators to be more aware of the multiple identities and languages that students bring with them to the classrooms in order to become and produce these responsive and responsible users of English. This echoes Suresh Canagarajah's sentiment of the place of World Englishes (WE) in academia. Canagarajah mentions that in around thirty years or so, it is predicted that multilingual users of English will outnumber the "native" speakers by millions, therefore it is important to initiate the long but important process of pluralizing composition *now* (588). He states, "Rather than simply *joining* a speech community, students should learn to *shuttle* between communities in contextually relevant ways. To meet these objectives, we should perceive "error" as the learner's active negotiation and exploration of choice and possibilities" (593). Instead of chastising those who cannot speak or write "perfectly," he believes teachers should choose to see dialects, accents, and world Englishes as resources to help students learn more about communication and language in general.

Juan C. Guerra focuses on the need to develop a cultural ecology model for students so that they are able to relate to and create different forms of writing depending on their audiences. In his article, "Focus on Policy: Cultivating Transcultural Citizenship: A Writing Across Communities Model," he places emphasis on the need to focus on what students *bring* to the classroom from their respective backgrounds, since this knowledge will eventually help them to

become transcultural or global citizens. Ideas such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and WAC 2.0 have been integral in trying to form cohesiveness amongst faculty from all disciplines. Guerra's article also discusses the official world of the school and classroom and how it should blend with the unofficial world of home and community so that students may be able to move effortlessly between both worlds.

Geneva Smitherman reinforces this idea in her article, *CCCC Role in the Struggle for Language Rights* by mentioning scholar Leonard Greenbaum's piece in saying it, "predicts an Orwellian nightmare for those seeking to suppress African American speech and other language varieties" (16). We would essentially be like factory workers watching the same products pass us by on conveyor belts, as there would be no richness in our learning if we did not veer off this line to appreciate the works and discourses of others. Policies such as the National Language Policy have moved beyond the Students' Rights to their Own Language campaign to offer all nationalities a right to their own language. This has also encouraged people to take part in and enhance their bilingualism in order to "be prepared for citizenship in a global, multicultural society (Smitherman 32). By no means have language rights controversies been resolved; there is still a lot of work to do and attitudes to change. Therefore reading and sharing articles that examine diversity enables us to observe how thought processes are influenced (however slight for some) so that we can see the different sides of these complicated issues.

While all of the authors provide great insight into the history and theoretical background of language diversity as a concept, they tend to focus on writing about the problem, and less on concrete ways of promoting language diversity as a concept amongst those entering the academy as first-year scholars. Prominent language diversity advocate, Michelle Hall Kells' essay, "Leveling the Linguistic Playing Field in First-Year Composition," underlines two key terms to

remember when imbibing language difference: awareness and attitudes. Just as Smitherman's article calls for changes in attitudes, Kells stresses that reflecting on these terms is not only important for students, but educators as well. Her focus in this essay involved foregrounding students' language attitudes and beliefs about their own language, however there is no direct discussion about how students perceive the concept of language difference in regards to educational institutions. She also defines multiple attitudinal tendencies including what she calls "linguistic shame" which is "the phenomenon of denigrating one's language"; "English bias" or "the tendency to elevate English over other codes"; "language myth adherence" "the belief in the inherent superiority and purity of one language over another"; and "dialect misconception," the belief that nonstandard language varieties are the result of corruptions of the standard language" (136). While my study is influenced by hers, I aim to build upon her research at a slightly different angle, focusing on the perspectives of FYC students and their level of acceptance towards language diversity in academia, as well as their take on existing scholarship**.**

Such readings promote a critical guidance that embraces language diversity and introduces first-year students to such an important and complex topic. The earlier this introduction occurs, the better chance we—those who are pushing for a more global approach in composition studies—have in changing the way others view academic discourse in composition and in general. Students can choose to fertilize their new seeds of awareness and allow their ideologies to either bloom or wither. However composition educators must be willing to provide these seeds and not be daunted by seemingly inherent language beliefs.

Using Norman Fairclough's notion of critical language awareness (CLA) as a guide in defining critical pedagogy, *I* define critical pedagogies as those that discuss the history and highlight important concepts surrounding language diversity, as well as those opposed to it, in

order to allow for students to have knowledge of multiple ideologies regarding language. Through critical pedagogies students will be able to see a glimpse of the history and understand the competing ideologies that hinder a globalization of composition.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

During my graduate studies, I learned about language diversity as a concept in ways I had not done before, and my awareness and attitude toward language diversity issues unquestionably matured. Therefore, I was sure that if someone like myself, a native English speaker who once possessed negative thoughts on language diversity could have a change of attitude, then certainly the attitudes and perspectives of first-year composition students would change through early awareness. In order to answer my research questions, it was necessary for me (like Kells) to be in direct contact with the student population whose perceptions I was seeking to interpret. Therefore, I designed a study similar to hers, however, I sought to measure the degree to which students felt negativity toward using languages that deviate from the standard (in academia), but to *also* introduce them to the history behind Standard English use in the academy and other relevant concepts in order for them to gain this early awareness.

Aside from my interest in student perceptions of language diversity in academia, I sought to discover whether a short lesson centered on key points about language diversity would have any impact on student beliefs about language and language use in academia. Therefore, I created such a lesson that would allow me to present on the topic as well as obtain direct feedback of the material covered. The qualitative approach allowed me to gather and interpret student perceptions, while the quantitative approach allowed for measuring any change that

occurred in their perceptions before and after the lesson. This chapter discusses the research methodology, as well as the research methods that were part of this project.

Research Design

In the spring of 2016, I was able to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in order to begin my research with First-Year Composition (FYC) students at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Upon approval, I set out to find willing instructors who were able to "lend" me their class time for my research. With the help of Dr. Colin Charlton, chair of the Writing and Language Studies Department, an email was sent out to recruit FYC instructors. Two instructors reached out and I was able to secure three FYC classes and immediately began my study.

The Students

Only the students who chose to sign a waiver of consent participated in this study. Time 1 had fifty-two participants, Time 2 had forty and Time 3 had thirty-eight. There were no incentives given and students were free to withdraw from the study at any time. While a majority of the students who participated in this study were Latino/as, not all were. The participants were between the ages of 18-47.

Research Instruments

My IRB approved research instruments consisted of a pre-survey, initial questionnaire, lesson plan handout, follow up questionnaire and a final questionnaire. When designing the study and research instruments, I had no previous teaching experience, and even less pedagogical training. However, I knew that the "lesson" I was designing had to encompass critical readings and information that allowed students to see language diversity from as many angles as possible.

Although my aim was for these students to also be advocates for a new normal in composition studies, I did not want the lesson to seem biased since I wanted to hear and read their most genuine responses to the issues that even the most dedicated scholars are still tackling today.

Pre-Survey

The six-question pre-survey (see Appendix A) was created in order to obtain background information on the language habits of the participants. The survey requested the participants' age, gender, ethnicity, major and place of birth in order to help analyze and organize the texts once all of the coded research instruments were received. Aside from the first question (Which city/area did you grow up in?) the remaining five questions dealt with language practices and allowed for participants to fill in their own answers if a multiple choice answer was not applicable. The survey was distributed during Time 1 of the study.

Initial Questionnaire

The next research instrument (see Appendix B) was also distributed during Time 1 (a week before the lesson occurred) and it consisted of four short-answer questions that allowed students to discuss their views on language diversity, the writing process, Standard English and the academy, and their place in the academy. The fifth question allowed students to assess the effectiveness of a fictional writing sample that was written using non-standard English. The last section of the initial questionnaire was a 6-point Likert scale with ten questions regarding Standard English and the practice/incorporation of language diversity in the academic classroom. The reason for the 6-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, strongly agree) rather than the standard 5-point scale (which would allow for a neutral position) allows the researcher to bypass the participants' neutral position on the issues

and therefore provides a better understanding of how well the students understood the concept of language diversity and any changes of their views (Gwinner, Infosurv 2). Since the initial and final questionnaires are identical, the data allows for analysis of the pre-lesson and post lesson responses, and the results of the Likert scale analysis (found on all questionnaires) will provide the quantitative results that will measure any changes in perspectives from pre-lesson, after lesson and two weeks post lesson.

Lesson Plan Handout

The four-page lesson plan handout (see Appendix C) was designed to introduce FYC students to language diversity as a concept. Importantly, different perspectives on language diversity were represented by the lesson plan in order for students to decide which perspective they most related to. Even though students may have sensed my view of the issue of language diversity in the classroom by reading the required IRB consent form at the beginning of each lesson, I still tried to make sure that the lesson plan was not completely biased.

After consenting participants completed the pre-survey and initial questionnaire, they were given snippets of three works/pieces that discussed language diversity and the academy. The aforementioned piece "Leveling the Linguistic Playing Field in First-Year Composition" by Michelle Hall Kells, "English-Only and Standard English Ideologies in the U.S." by Terrene G. Wiley and Marguerite Lukes, and "Developing Critical Pedagogy for Basic Writing at a CUNY Community College" by Caroline Pari comprised the three required readings for the participants. These readings were chosen in order for the students to have a better understanding of the concept of language diversity prior to the lesson and discussion.

On the day of the lesson students were required to have read the article snippets in order to participate in discussion throughout the lesson. The lesson plan handout began with a

definition of language diversity: using different languages, language blends, and/or dialects to communicate by means of reading, writing, or speaking. The definition was followed by an explanation of what prescriptivism and descriptivism means for the writing classroom/student. The Wiley and Lukes article was then discussed since it examines the role of language ideologies in regards to language policy in the academy as well as the conflicting position that English instructors face in trying to teach students about language diversity (descriptivism) while simultaneously preparing them for the expectations that are required of the mostly standard English academy (prescriptivism).

Students then watched a short video clip from the 2005 PBS documentary *Do You Speak American?* over the origins of Standard English in order for them to encounter some of the history behind it. The video was then followed by a discussion on academic English and the students' difficulties (if any) with academic writing. The videos shown throughout the lesson expand upon concepts and assist students with analyzing their thoughts on the discussions. Kells and Pari's articles were then discussed since in "Leveling" Kells states, "Leveling the playing field of the college writing classroom is not possible until we confront the linguistic chauvinism and prescriptivism inherent in our roles as teachers of so-called standard American English (a prestige variety of English, among many)" (131). Students were asked to discuss the connections they were making between the videos and the readings and were encouraged to write down their thoughts. From Pari's article, students were able to hear about another language outside of Standard English, that of Ebonics. In analyzing the writing of one of her students, Pari notes, "This writer felt that Ebonics oppressed African-Americans by associating them with a less prestigious form of English, one that was ridiculed and devalued in society" (29). This article provided the students with an opportunity to hear about language diversity from another

perspective, one that did not center on Tex-Mex. Moreover, students were able to refer back to the definition of language diversity and understand that it does not necessarily involve two separate languages but can be found in varieties of English.

Next, the lesson transitions to a second video from *Do You Speak American?* on blending academic Englishes with world Englishes in which young minority students learn to translate their home languages into mainstream American English. After briefly discussing the video, students discuss the snippet from Geneva Smitherman's "English Teacher, Why You Be Doing the Thangs You Don't Do?" The snippet was incorporated into the lesson because it allows students to observe translingualism in action. Smitherman writes, "The rationale is that this world is one in which Black kids must master the prestige dialect if they are to partake of that socio-economic mobility for which America is world renowned—an argument which linguist James Sledd, for one, has completely devastated" (59). Smitherman uses Ebonics in the piece alongside Standard English to show that languages can be intertwined and effective at the same time. For example she writes,

> [l]et me say right from the bell, this piece is not to be taken as an indictment of ALL English teachers in inner-city Black schools, for there are, to be sure, a few brave, enlightened souls who are doing an excellent job in the ghetto. To them, I say: just keep on keepin' on. But to those others, that whole heap of English teachers who be castigating Black students for using a "nonstandard" dialect—I say: the question in the title is directed to you, and if the shoe fit, put it on. (59)

This snippet, which comes from a 1972 publication, was also chosen in order for students to recognize that the issues of language diversity in academia are by no means new; scholars have been working to promote awareness and change in the field for over forty years.

The last video from the *Do You Speak American?* documentary focuses on language profiling. While students may already be familiar with racial profiling, some may not be aware that this profiling occurs with language as well. After the video, students engage in a

conversation about language hierarchies. This provides context for the next discussion that centers on the Students' Rights to Their Own Language (SRTOL) statement. Again, students are able to see that the push for language diversity has been an ongoing process and that in order to dismantle language hierarchies, statements such as SRTOL were created so that others could see the value in multiple patterns and varieties of language.

Aside from Smitherman's excerpt earlier in the lesson, students are given two other examples of authors who have used language diversity in their work. Gloria Anzaldua's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* provide excellent examples of language diversity in action—one scholarly and one literature. Students are able to observe the weaving from English to Spanish in Anzaldua's work, and a Southern English dialect in Lee's work. Had both authors been required to write in Standard English, there would be less substance to their work and many would not be able to connect to the work on a personal level. Students are given the opportunity to "translate" both excerpts to Standard English and to discuss the effectiveness of the before and after.

The handout ends with a critical reminder for students to reflect on, one that comes from Kells' study. The words "attitudes" and "awareness" are followed by the reminder to always be *aware* of the language of others while refraining from having a negative *attitude* towards those who are not familiar with one's speaking and writing. This is the important takeaway that I want students to grasp and therefore these words are brightly shown in larger font than the rest of the work on the handout.

Follow Up Questionnaire

The follow up questionnaire (see Appendix D), distributed immediately after the lesson, is comprised of nine questions and ends with the ten-question Likert scale (as with pre, and final

questionnaires). Questions 4-8 are directly tied to the reading snippets while questions 1-3 ask students to define language diversity or discuss thoughts on academic English or encounters with language diversity. Question nine asks students to think about language diversity in terms of current events and through a social justice/inequality lens.

Final Questionnaire

As previously mentioned, the final questionnaire and the initial questionnaire are identical (Appendix A). Students have the chance to answer questions with an informed understanding once the lesson takes place. However, unlike the follow-up questionnaire, this instrument is distributed two weeks after the lesson in order to determine whether important concepts have remained with the participants. Therefore if students responded to the follow-up questionnaire with answers they felt were expected of them, this final questionnaire gives them a chance to think about the topic/issues outside of the classroom and respond (perhaps after some outside research) in a way that is most aligned with their beliefs.

Critical Discourse Analysis as a Lens for Investigation

Many lenses were considered for analyzing the data such as Homi Bhaba's Third Space Theory and Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed as a framework. However Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis provides the best lens for answering my research questions since it focuses on three dimensions of language use that help to analyze my data and produce additional research questions (Janks 341). According to *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, by Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seeks to analyze language's involvement in everyday contemporary capitalist society (1). Therefore CDA provides an effective lens for understanding the many ways that language, ideology and power

intersect as well as for "explor[ing] the links between language use and social practice" (Phillips and Jørgensen 69). CDA is also "intended to generate critical social research, [. . .] that contributes to the rectification of injustice and inequality in society" (Phillips and Jørgensen 77). Fairclough's approach to CDA connects to how I observe standard language use in the academy: part of a cycle from that involves institutions, educators and students.

Those familiar with Critical Discourse Analysis know that there are different methods of analyzing texts. Norman Fairclough "takes sociology, social semiotics, and [Systematic Functional Linguistics] as the theoretical and linguistic foundation of his studies; Ruth Wodak places discourses into the historical context (including society and politics), [and] [Teun A.] van Dijk places particular emphasis on text linguistics and cognitive linguistics [. . .]" (Liu and Guo 1077). These three practitioners and pioneers of CDA are a few among the growing number of scholars who have embraced this type of discourse analysis and whose methods tend to overlap to some degree. James Paul Gee argues that no one method is "right" and "[n]o set of research tools and no theory belongs to a single person, no matter how much academic style and our own egos sometimes tempt us to write that way" (10-11). Therefore while my analysis focuses on Fairclough's approach, the theories he draws from are not entirely his so subsequently I may also draw from other theories and/or methods.

In *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis Theory and Method*, Gee skillfully discusses the various aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis. He defines what he calls "social goods" as "anything some people in a society want and value" (5). In our current U.S. society, in terms of language, people want to be able to speak well enough to communicate with others and in turn profit from this communication through employment (whether through Standard English or other languages). However, historically, in terms of value, U.S. society has valued being able to speak

and write Standard English according to the norms of the academy (K-12/higher education institutions). Gee asserts, "When we speak or write, we always risk being seen as a 'winner' or 'loser' in a given game or practice" (7). Moreover, he mentions a society "can [also] speak or write so as to accept others as 'winners' or 'losers' in the game or practice in which we are engaged" (7). Oftentimes it is challenging and even uncomfortable for some to change the rules of the "game" or practices in order to enable the most people to benefit from social goods, because doing so has the potential to shift power structures.

There are many criticisms aimed at critical discourse analysis. Some critics believe that CDA practitioners like Marxist social scientists "judge and [. . .] prescribe" thus their "critical" position comes from evaluating society and prescribing what they feel is "appropriate" (Breeze 496). However, if observed through a more positive perspective, CDA practitioners do this in order to challenge often-dated standards in order to allow wider/broader access to "social goods." Others "feel that the respectability of CDA entails a contradiction of the critical enterprise itself, or that its new-found status alongside other conventional disciplines is likely to close the door on the reflexivity that is an integral part of its critical agenda" (Billig cited in Breeze 493). Furthermore "[. . .] the meaning of texts is partly created in processes of interpretation" and "[t]exts have several meaning potentials that may contradict one another, and are open to several

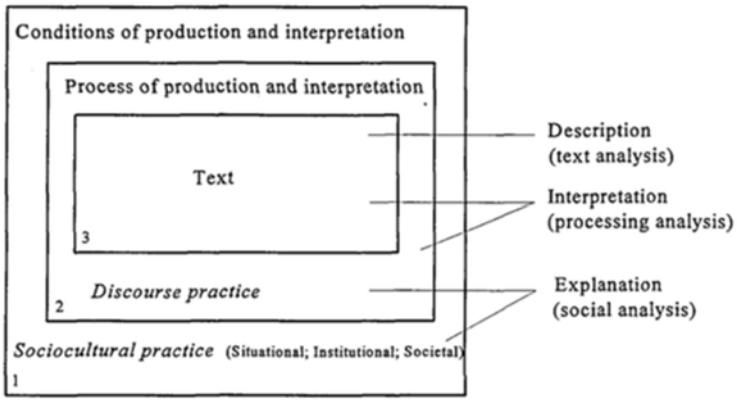

Figure 1 Fairclough's Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

different interpretations" (Phillips and Jorgensen 75). In analyzing participant responses, I am interpreting the text using Critical Discourse Analysis while also viewing the text through my understanding of language diversity; someone else might interpret the same text as something entirely different and that is okay.

Fairclough's method focuses on text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis (Janks 329). These dimensions are listed in Figure 1 as Text, Discourse Practice, and Sociocultural Practice respectively. This method "provides multiple points of analytical entry" that are "mutually explanatory" (329). For this reason it is not necessary to begin in any particular order rather, the researcher can begin with the dimension that best relates to his/her research question. Janks provides a helpful analogy for understanding these three dimensions by describing them as boxes nesting within one another. She states, "[t]his three dimensional image enables one to understand that an analytic move to examine a single box necessarily breaks the interdependence between the boxes and requires subsequent moves which re-insert that box into its interconnected place" (330). Therefore we cannot analyze texts without understanding how they relate to discursive and sociocultural practices. Discursive practices involve "the production and consumption of texts" while engaging with "speech, writing, visual image or a combination of these" (the text) is a social practice (Phillips and Jorgensen 68). Chapter 4 discusses how each of these dimensions applies to the textual analysis.

Coding

Pre-Survey

The fifty-two pre-surveys that resulted from the three classes were individually reviewed and tallies of answers were documented. The class tallies were then combined into one set and charted (see Figures 2-5).

Follow-Up Questionnaire

For each of the nine questions of the post-lesson questionnaire I read through the students' responses and wrote down answers that had the potential to be analyzed using CDA as a lens. In other words, I did not notate answers along the lines of "I agree/disagree" or "I think it's important" because those answers do not provide much content to analyze. I notated all answers that provided an explanation rather than just answered the question in a few words.

As previously mentioned, there are many critiques about CDA. Some critics claim it mainly focuses on the "largely negative nature of the body of work produced within the field [. . .], and call for critical scholars to pay more attention to positive or potentially transformative uses of discourse (Martin cited in Breeze 494). For this reason, I made sure to include student responses that include this positive use of discourse.

Using one dry-erase board to keep track of individual questions and responses, I carefully reviewed each card from the first of nine notecard stacks and wrote down specific words or phrases that carried positive or negative connotations (based on context of question) such as "barriers," "professional," "racist," and "accept." At the end of each of these words or phrases I used the plus or minus symbol to notate whether the student's reply as a whole was positive (+) or negative (-) again depending on the context of the question. For answers that were impartial, I used both symbols (+-) after the response to indicate a neutral position. I made sure to take a

photograph of the dry-erase board after I reviewed all of the cards in each stack in order to go back and review the information.

After all nine stacks had been reviewed I used the symbols to divide the responses into negative, neutral, and positive categories. I reviewed each of the nine photographs and proceeded to only write down the words that came from overall negative responses. I then grouped these words into categories or themes that best represented these words. From the fourteen bullets on the negative board I observed four categories: Barriers, Ineffective, Safeguard (standard English), and Unprofessional. After completing the same process for the nine bullets on the neutral board I was able to observe the category: Unprofessional, which shortly I will discuss why I made this into a separate category. From the twenty-one bullets on the positive board, the two categories that emerged were Respect and Racism. Keep in mind that the categorized words come from different questions so this of course does not mean racism is positive, rather the students' answer as a whole were positive in regards to the specific question.

In the following chapter I analyze the responses from all of the categories, placing the neutral responses after the negative category since they share a theme.

Likert Scale

In order to compile the data from the three phases of the study, I created an Excel file and vertically entered the information of each of the participants from the initial meeting, namely the information from the pre-surveys (student code, age, gender, ethnicity, major, place of birth). I made sure to color code each of the three classes so as to help me keep track of the information as well as for ease of reference. I then entered the ten questions found on the Likert scale on the horizontal cells, repeating them as to account for Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. These entries were also color coded for ease of reference. Next, I carefully went through the Likert scales from

the pre-lesson questionnaires and entered marks for each student. The six-point scale required an entry of numbers ranging from one through six. I repeated this step for the post-lesson questionnaire as well as the final questionnaire. However once completed, in order to run the all the item numbers without interfering with the average score, I had to flip the negative items. The number entries for questions three to eight were flipped in a separate Excel file and this file was used to run the data.

The lesson I created provides first-year composition students with a basic critical introduction to larger problems of language and power and helps them to understand the need for creating change in composition studies. Since language affects most professions, if not all, the students we teach will highly benefit from this early introduction as they will be able to transfer their knowledge into different aspects of their lives.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Understanding the attitudes that students have in regards to language use in academia and why they have these attitudes is essential for dismantling misguided language beliefs and changing how educators use the composition classroom. In order to make sense of any changes in student perspectives based on the data collected, this chapter is divided into four sections for clarity. First, I discuss specifics from the pre-survey as it was completed before the lesson and serves as an introduction to the participants of this study. Next, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a lens, I focus on four themes that emerged from the third question posed on the initial (pre-lesson) and final (post-lesson) questionnaire, as they were identical. While all five questions posed on the initial and final questionnaire provide insight on student perspectives, the third question zeros in on language use in the academy; therefore I focus on this question as it best aligns with my main research questions. I then analyze relevant text produced by the post-lesson questionnaire and the seven themes that emerged from that data. Lastly I discuss the results from the three identical Likert scales that were administered during each phase of data collection.

Pre-Survey Findings

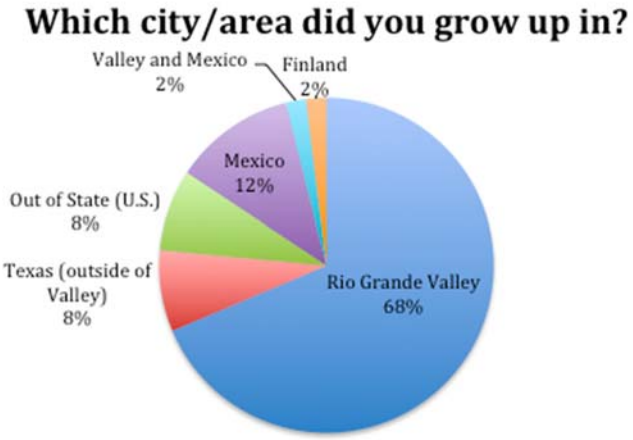

Figure 2 Pre-Survey Question 1

The pre-survey functioned as an instrument that introduced me to the students' life histories in regards to language and their feelings about language use (see Appendix 1). All of the fifty-two students that participated during Time 1 responded either partially or completely to the questions on the pre-survey and initial questionnaire. In order to get a better understanding of the participants' background, the first question on the pre-survey asked for the city or area the participant grew up in (see Figure 2). Most of the participants were brought up in the Rio Grande Valley, as thirty-five of them listed cities in the Valley as the area in which they grew up. Due to the Valley's location and close proximity to the Mexican border, it is easy to understand why most of the students are bilingual/multilingual. Six students grew up in Mexico, four students were raised outside of the Valley in non-border Texas cities; four were raised in the U.S. outside of Texas, one student grew up in Mexico and the Valley, one student grew up outside of the United States, and one student did not respond.

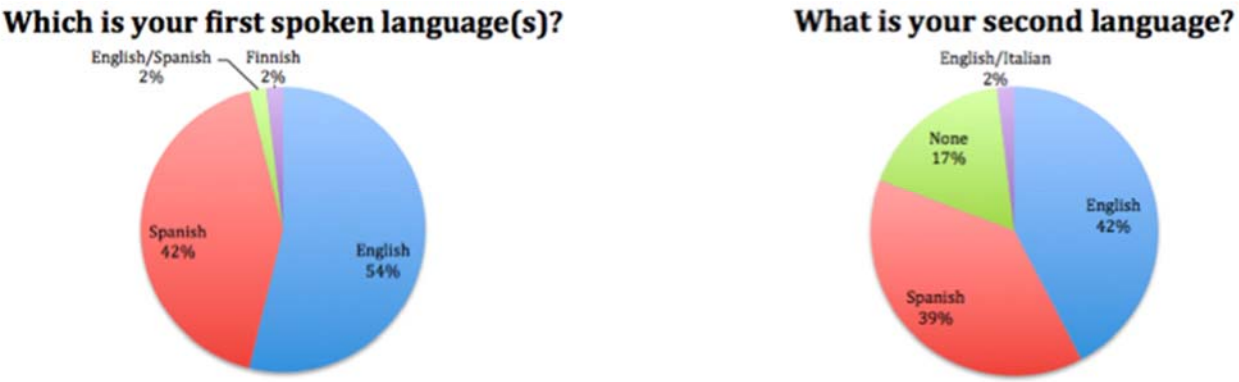

Figure 3 Pre-Survey Questions 2 and 3

The data indicates English is the first language for more than half (twenty-eight) of these students while Spanish accounts for the first language of twenty-two students. One student chose English and Spanish as a first language while one student's first language is Finnish. Although many students indicated Spanish as a second language, it is interesting to observe that only one student listed English and Spanish as first languages. Given that the majority of the participants were raised in the Rio Grande Valley and perhaps learned both languages simultaneously, the idea of standard or "correct" languages may have factored into their answers—an idea stemming from misguided language beliefs.

Twenty-two of the participants speak English as a second language, twenty chose Spanish as their L2, nine students chose none, and one student listed English and Italian as first languages (see Figure 3).

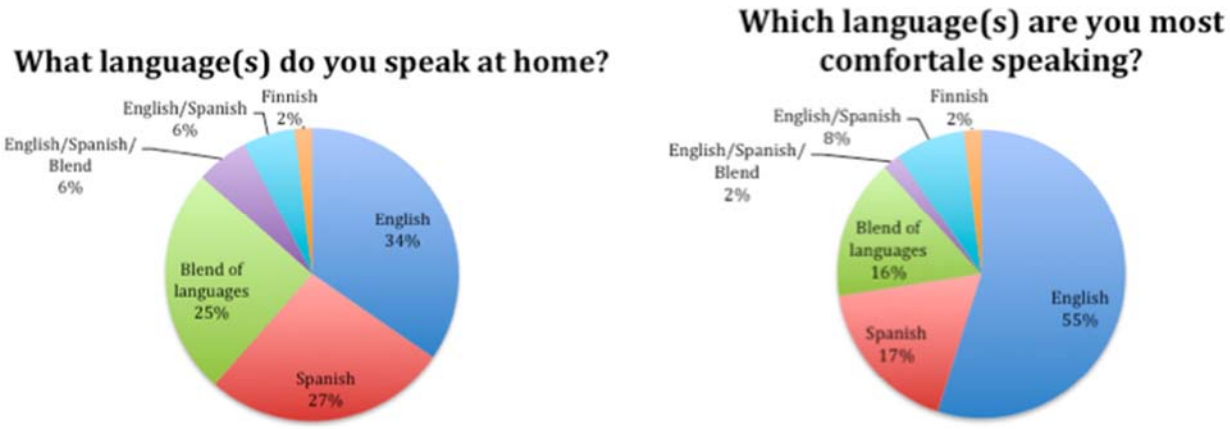

Figure 4 Pre-Survey Questions 4 and 5

Knowing which language or languages are used outside of academia is important for understanding how students' language ideologies are maintained. Eighteen of the participants chose English as the language they speak at home; fourteen speak Spanish at home; thirteen speak a blend of languages (not specifically stated); three students chose English, Spanish, and

blend; three chose English and Spanish, and one student wrote Finnish as the language spoken at home.

While most of the students who participated shared that they engage in some sort of bilingual/multilingual communication, English seems to be the language that most students (twenty-eight) are comfortable speaking. Nine students feel most comfortable speaking Spanish; eight are comfortable with a blend of languages (again languages were not specifically stated); four students listed English and Spanish separately (not a blend); one student listed English, Spanish and Blend; and one student listed Finnish. Notice the question does not indicate a specific place for using language as in "Which language(s) are you most comfortable speaking in class/at home/with friends/etc.?" I posed the question this way in order to observe which language(s) students are most comfortable speaking overall. Again, students chose the standard options, even when presented with the opportunity to choose "blend" or to write their own choice of language (see Figure 4). While standard languages may very well be the preferred languages of choice for some students, other students may refrain from listing non-standard varieties due to preconceived notions about language use in academia.

As for the last question of the pre-survey dealing with language learning, most students (seventeen students) listed multiple languages (two or more) that they would like to learn. The most popular stand-alone language students are

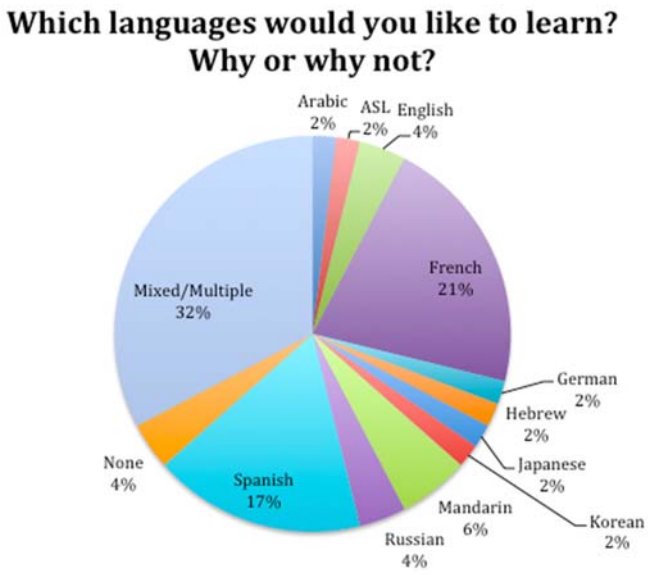

Figure 5 Pre-Survey Question 6

interested in learning is French (eleven students), with Spanish closely following (nine students). Below are some of the responses as to why the participants are interested in learning these languages. Also included are the responses from the two students who surprisingly answered "none."

For the most part, students are interested in learning French because they find the language appealing or they plan to visit France in the future. Those who want to learn Spanish are well aware that the Rio Grande Valley is multilingual, therefore knowing Spanish will help them communicate with others. I was surprised to see that two students listed "none" as their answer mainly because 1. I was sure each student would be interested in adding to their language reserves, and 2. before investigating the answers to the other questions, I was concerned these students might be monolingual English speakers who were not interested in being multilingual or perhaps not interested in the lesson I had prepared and was excited to share. However after reviewing their replies to the pre-lesson questions (one student even explains her reason in the response), it is evident both students learned English as their second language and are perhaps still trying to manage its nuances without another language interfering in the process.

French

"I would like to learn French because I've always liked the accent to it. I think."

"French because it is very common on campus and I heard it isn't that hard to learn."

"French because I found it interesting and one day I want to go to Paris and be able to understand everyone."

"French, because I believe it is an amazing language. The way it flows & it's way of slurs & to know when one day I grow to become part of a France Medical Hospital."

"French because it sounds cool/seductive/sexy."

“I have always been interested in French because I would like to go to Paris.”

“French, to know the language of the country I will be visiting.”

Spanish

“Spanish, because it is the popular language of the area I live.”

“I would like to learn Spanish to help me in the future.”

“Spanish because it’s my native language.”

“Spanish because I find it more emotional to speak with people.”

“Spanish because it’s most spoken in this area.”

“Spanish because I would like to speak with my grandma.”

None

“None. Learning English at age of sixteen was not easy and I’m still trying to learn the appropriate grammar.”

“None.” [No explanation]

The six pre-survey questions allowed me to gain a clearer perception of the participants’ possible language beliefs and how these beliefs are tied to their language histories. Most of the fifty-two students who completed the pre-survey and pre-lesson questionnaire are from the Valley and half of them feel most comfortable speaking English. This leads me to question whether choosing English as their preferred language rather than English and Spanish, or English and a blend of languages is due to students’ linguistic insecurities or linguistic preference, both, or something else.

Text Analysis Using Fairclough's Model of CDA

In order to make sense of what language histories tell us about perceptions on language use in the classroom, as well as perceptions on language diversity, we must first dissect and analyze student responses. I have chosen to repeat Figure 1 of the nested boxes discussed in the previous chapter for ease of reference. Beginning with Discourse practice (Fairclough's box 2), I focus on "how the text is produced and how it is consumed" (Phillips and Jørgensen 81). The Text (Fairclough's box 3) I analyze comes from the participants' post-lesson responses. Finally in the sociocultural practice section (Fairclough's box 1), I discuss how the text restates the genres and styles of the discourse practice revealing how it reproduces the existing order of discourse.

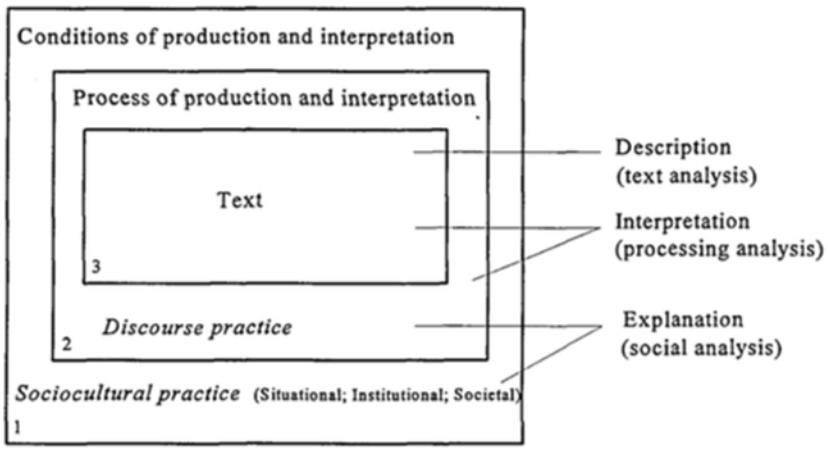

Figure 1 (duplicate)

Discourse Practice

Through the process of lecturing the students about the lesson on language diversity, I was engaged in what Gee calls "practice" or a "socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavor" (17). The university provided the setting for the study and the students were located in university classrooms. Janks states, "as members of a society we are constituted in and by the available discourses . . . that . . .speak through us" (338). Therefore, we draw on discourses from the environments we are in. Discourse practice as defined by Fairclough is "the production, distribution, and consumption of a text" (135). All three of the

reading snippets that provided the information to which students responded to, were taken from academic articles which were carefully written by scholars to reflect the conversations in the field regarding language diversity. The authors of these articles engage in the practice of writing for publication while primarily using academic language. Gee states, "Language and practices 'boot strap' each other into existence in a reciprocal process through time. We cannot have one without the other" (18). Thus, professors tend to draw from academic discourse when lecturing or creating assignments for students, and in turn, students respond using academic discourse or *mimicking* what they consider to be academic discourse. Rarely do students use non-standard languages for academic assignments even when the non-standard language might better express what the student is trying to say to his/her audience or when the student is asked to do so. The reason being is that non-standard or non-prestige varieties of English are not a part of academic discourse practices. Therefore students refrain from using such discourses so as not to "interrupt" implicit classroom norms or the "order of discourse." Fairclough defines the order of discourse as the "totality of discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them" (135). Phillips and Jørgensen expand on this by stating, "[t]he use of discourses and genres as resources in communication is controlled by the order of discourse because the order of discourse constitutes the resources (discourses and genres) that are available" (72). Educational structures such as universities "[shape] and [are] shaped by specific instances of language use (72), thus in this case academic discourse constitutes the order of discourse. The authors use TV news as an example of how both authors and receivers of text apply discourses in the consumption and reproduction of texts. They write,

> TV news is a news genre that can deploy different discourses (e.g. a welfare discourse or a neoliberal discourse) and genres (e.g. a 'hard-news' or a 'soft-news genre). Viewers' familiarity with TV news as a news genre shapes their interpretation and, later on, in discussion with others of the subjects covered by the news, they may draw on the

> discourses and genres that were used, perhaps combining them with other discourses and genres in hybrid forms. (69)

Most college students (like those who participated in the study) are familiar with academic discourse and may draw on this discourse when answering questions such as those posed on the questionnaire. This is similar to what I, as a researcher did when creating the questions asked throughout the lecture (produced text). While I used standard English to compose the questions, I tried not to present the language as sounding "too academic" so that students would feel more at ease when answering questions. For example, I used the words "to what degree" or "how much do you believe" rather than the more academically sounding "to what extent." One could say I changed the process of production of the text (questions) in order to receive a similar style of writing from the students. My aim was for students to feel comfortable using whichever discourse they found most helpful for participating in discussion or responding to the questions. In reading and writing in standard English, the discursive practice or the "process relating to the production and consumption of texts" (Phillips and Jørgensen 68) was in effect.

Text

What does the order of discourse tell us about how students respond to questions focused on challenging its dominance in academia? This section focuses on the students' answers (text), which will be analyzed in relation to the produced text (journal article snippets/language diversity lecture) that were mostly written using the order of discourse: academic English. During the data coding process, the post-lesson questionnaire responses showed participants generally have a positive perspective on language diversity. While I will not list the questions students are responding to as they can be found in the Appendix, I have categorized the

responses based on emerging themes and placed them within an overall attitude of the topic. Therefore, each student is not represented in the text analysis since I chose to represent each theme with a couple of the more eye-opening responses. Phillips and Jorgensen state, " . . . texts . . . construct particular versions of reality, social identities and social relations" (83). Through observing the wording used in student responses, I am able to better understand the social identities of the students and their perspectives on language diversity in academia.

Post-Lesson Questionnaire Themes

Negative.

This section focuses on the four negative themes that emerged from the responses to the nine questions of the post-lesson questionnaire. While this section has the most themes, it does not imply an overall negative view of language diversity, rather there were fourteen negative responses that shared four emergent themes.

Barriers.

When we think of barriers, we most often think of obstructions or restraints, both of which carry negative connotations. Participant 1[1] a twenty-nine year old Hispanic male majoring in computer science defines language diversity using this negative term when he states, "Barriers that define each of us and where we come from." This participant had an overall negative outlook on the potential of language diversity's position in academia and demonstrates this by using the word "barriers." By using a word that evokes images of physical objects that act as obstacles, this student believes only Standard English is appropriate for academic use.

[1] Participants are introduced followed by the identifiers provided on the pre-survey. If identifiers are not listed, the participant has already been mentioned.

Statements such as these are not a surprise, given that most of the time students draw from academic texts that for the most part only use Standard English. Because of this, anything outside of the academic "norm" (order of discourse) is deemed unacceptable or substandard.

When responding to the idea of democracy through language—a concept discussed in one of the assigned articles—this student believes that change is far from occurring: "There are too many different language barriers and hoops to jump through. If we made exceptions for each culture and upbringing the english [sic] language itself would become diluted and watered down." By going against this perceived norm in academia, students tend to gain a negative perspective, which can be observed through the participant's reuse of the word "barriers" as well as "diluted." This student believes allowing the presence of other discourses in the classroom *dilutes* the standards that the English language holds. Instead of seeing other discourses as assets to possess, this participant feels mixed discourses hinder his ability to access social goods therefore barriers are needed to prevent this from occurring. Referring back to Fairclough's order of discourse, this student believes challenging the order is too complicated and therefore not necessary. Fairclough believes "people's discourse is often subjected to constraints that do not emanate from the discursive level but from structural relationships of dependency" such as "class, ethnicity and gender" yet he believes structural domains that are "socially created but inert and hard to change" are sites for the possibility of change (Phillips and Jørgensen 54-55). In other words without a critical introduction to language diversity, students will not be aware of the possibility of changing language perspectives that contribute to the belief of a static order of discourse and that maintain social structures.

Ineffective.

Words such as "complicate," "confuse," and "broken" were used by some of the participants when responding to the post-lesson questions. Therefore the theme that emerged from these words demonstrates that students believe non-standard languages are ineffective. When asked about hearing people speaking something other than Standard English in the classroom, Participant 1 responded, "Ebonics ain't English. Understanding what someone is trying to say with puffed up language is not clear nor effective. Teacher made comments cus [sic] teacher had a point." In analyzing this comment, the irony is that the student is explaining that he believes discourses other than Standard English are ineffective for classroom use, while using words such as "ain't" and "cus." While this student may have been trying to state a point about his perspective on language difference by using slang, his overall response was clearly understood in the context of the question being asked. However, if this was not his intention, his use of a non-standard discourse contradicts his position on language use in the classroom. Aside from their thoughts on hearing other discourses in the classroom, the question also asked students to think about the motivation behind a teacher negatively commenting on a student's speech due to her accent. By stating that the teacher "had a point," this student conveys his belief that students' accents have no place in academia. Kells reminds us that "[e]valuation of speech is an evaluation of the speaker. To judge another's way of speaking is to make evaluations not only about the speaker's race and ethnicity, but intelligence, education, and economic status as well" (Leveling 134). This student's comment aligns with Kells' statement in that we tend to equate a person's ability to speak standard languages with their cultural capital and their *ability* to gain cultural capital. Therefore some students may believe speaking non-standard or non-prestige varieties of English in the classroom or in general may reflect an inability to gain employment.

This is because "we often link the assumptions we make about the people who speak a language to the language itself" (Nero 145).

This evaluation of the speaker is also observed in the response of Participant 2, a nineteen year old Hispanic male majoring in Biology. When asked about students being ashamed of discourses other than academic or Standard English he responded, "I agree that those students should be ashamed. I would feel dumber if Tex-Mex was part of the course material. I want to learn Standard English to better myself for the world." The particular words that stand out in this response are "dumber" and "better myself." Like participant 1, this student believes that discourses other than standard English diminish the quality of classroom instruction and in turn affect the ability to access social goods. This student believes that focusing on Standard English in the academy will allow him to access these goods and will therefore improve his cultural capital or economic status. This student also views non-standard languages as inept or less than and uses "dumber" to convey this belief. He specifically mentions the use of Tex-Mex in the classroom in order to send the message that Tex-Mex is used by dumb people and does not belong in an academic setting. Imagine the number of students who share this belief! It is a belief that is nonetheless communicated in the composition classroom when educators fail to introduce students to the sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic connections tied to language use. Fairclough states,

> [m]uch training in education is oriented to a significant degree towards the use and inculcation of particular discursive practices in educational organizations, more or less explicitly interpreted as an important facet of the inculcation of particular cultural meanings and values, social relationships and identities, and pedagogies. (220)

Critical language awareness, when brought out through pedagogies focused on language diversity can gradually change this negative belief that hinders many students from pursuing an education.

Safeguard.

There is still a deeply held belief that language, specifically Standard English, is bound to a set of rules that are fixed. Therefore, students and even some educators continue to view the notion of using language in the classroom that strays from the "norm" as negative. Ball and Muhammad outline three misconceptions about standard and nonstandard English, stating, "[t]he third is that this mythical standard English must be safeguarded by everyone connected with its use, particularly classroom teachers" (77). In this section the participants' perspectives reflect this misconception.

Safeguarding or protecting languages from corruption is evident in the response of Participant 3, a nineteen-year-old Hispanic male majoring in Biology. He states, "I try to write in academic English as much as possible because I think we need to protect the language as much as possible." What exactly does this student believe academic English needs protection from? Extinction? Kells defines *language myth adherence* as an attitudinal tendency that subscribes "to the belief in the inherent superiority and purity of one language over another" (136). Those opposed to standard languages being spoken alongside a variety of discourses usually believe, as Kells mentions, that languages are on a hierarchy. Moreover, Philips and Jørgensen state, ". . . through a process of nation-building, the people of a particular geographical area may begin to feel that they belong to the same group and share conditions and interests irrespective of class barriers" (32). Thus in using the word "we" this student is associating himself with U.S.

monolingual culture, a culture that has historically placed English at the top of language hierarchies. He believes "we" United States citizens or even "we" United States students should protect English at all costs. Motivation to protect prestige or Standard English is "rooted in the desire to maintain power, control, and privilege" (Logan 186) a belief Fairclough would agree with. He writes,

> I think a CLA [critical language awareness] position on the treatment of standard English is that one should teach written standard English for pragmatic reasons, but one should also expose learners to views about standard English, including the critical views [. . .]. And one should raise with the learners the question of whether and why and how dominant rules of 'appropriateness' might be flouted and challenged. (225)

In a similar vein, Participant 4, a forty-seven year old Hispanic male majoring in math states, "I feel that since english [sic] is the priority, students should be more to the United States." This statement falls under Kells' *English bias* attitudinal tendency which "reflects the tendency to elevate English over other [discourses]" (136). In other words this student believes English is the "priority" which must be elevated because the United States is primarily seen as an English speaking country; therefore it is important to safeguard the language so that it does not lose its position or status. Terrence Wiley states, "[a] central tenet of the monolingual ideology is that languages are in competition" yet "there has never been a struggle between languages, but only among their speakers" (67-68). Those who believe English should be safeguarded are likely tying their identities to language. In other words, since this student believes his peers "should be more to the United States" if they fail to do so, then they are not identifying with American culture. Mangelsdorf adds to this by stating, " . . .standard language ideology has also led to the assumption that English-language monolingualism is superior to and somehow more 'American' than speaking other languages (with the exception of studying a 'foreign' language in a school setting)" (117). However, due to our location, we often use a variety of discourses to

communicate in different settings, and many times the English that we use is neither standard nor academic, therefore students should not see this as a problem, rather as a positive since they have the ability to partake in speaking multiple varieties of English.

Unprofessional.

The belief that non-standard languages are unprofessional is common amongst participants who spoke negatively about language diversity and those who were on the fence. Participant 5, a nineteen-year-old Hispanic male majoring in psychology believes that the workforce environment does not value language diversity: "I feel that learning the language primarily spoken in higher job forms is a must, yes students may speak different languages but most employees don't." Here the focus is on "higher job forms" or job prestige, those occupations that carry value in society such as physicians and/or teachers. In order to be able to attain such a profession, this student believes the classroom focus should remain on Standard English. While the overall lesson focused on language diversity, this particular question asked the students how they felt about discourses in the classroom, yet the student chose to address it at the macro level by addressing concerns about employment post higher education. Based on his reply, he believes "higher job forms" do not use or value discourses other than the standard, therefore the topic is not of value for the academic classroom. While this student is thinking of the global sphere he will participate in after college, he fails to recognize the local sphere that he will also participate in as the two intersect (Guerra, Transcultural Citizenship 299). In other words, it is not unusual for students to think about how academic writing classes will prepare them for their future roles in global spheres. However they should also know that the local spheres they will engage in are directly connected to these spheres. For example a physician in training may primarily use Standard English throughout her academic career, yet she may be

called upon to go out and work in communities where Standard English is not the common practice. Therefore, she must be aware of the sociocultural aspects connected to the language of those communities.

Discourses that stray from the standard are seen as unprofessional, as Participant 6, a twenty-one year old Mexican-American male majoring in nursing would agree. “I think that we should just keep the acadamia [sic] and other widely used professional services in the two languages most widely used in America: English and Spanish.” Here the student mentions “English and Spanish” as two separate and static languages that are acceptable for “professional” use. Again we see ties between language and economic prosperity. This question asked students to consider the topic in terms of its historical progress and its potential for the future. Like Participant 3, this student also chose to reply at a macro level focusing his response beyond the classroom walls without recognizing how knowledge of language diversity and different discourses (local sphere) connect to the global sphere. Lessons in language diversity will help students to eventually become what Guerra refers to as “transcultural citizens” who “. . . can and should make use of the prior knowledge and experiences they have accumulated and the rhetorical agility they have developed in the course of negotiating their way across the various communities of practice to which they currently belong, have belonged in the past, and will belong in the future” (299).

Neutral.

The participant responses from this section are similar to the ones mentioned above, however these responses are not entirely negative and are therefore in a separate attitudinal category. This section directly follows the negative attitudinal category only because they share a similar theme.

Unprofessional.

In this attitudinal category students did not take a completely negative or positive stance on the discussion of language diversity in academia. Rather they were uncertain as to their perspectives and perhaps identities as well. Words such as "improper," and "incorrect" are found within the neutral responses. Eleven responses in this section indicate students have mixed feelings on language diversity. Participant 3 mentions, "I grew up in a region where both English and Spanish where [sic] spoken equally, even mixed together, but I am not to [sic] sure how an informal language may help in a formal setting." This student's uncertainty as to how mixed languages can help in a "formal" setting is common among students mainly because language diversity in academia has not been practiced as much as some scholars would like. Therefore, because it is unfamiliar, students are not aware of the possibilities they have when writing. I, like Guerra, want students to "understand that what we [instructors] want . . . is for them to call on the rhetorical sensibilities many of them already possess but put aside because of what they see as a jarring shift in context" (Cultivating a Rhetorical Sensibility 231-232).

The tendency for students to view the classroom space as a "professional setting" aligns with the personal example I shared in Chapter 1. Students often see the classroom largely as an extension of the professional work environment rather than a place for learning from others and their own experiences. This is evident in the response from Participant 4 when discussing non-standard languages: "I don't think it's something to be ashamed about but I do think that they should make the effort to learn/speak proper English in a professional setting." It is necessary for those of us who want to create a new normal for writing classes and beyond to keep in mind that "[a] global perspective on the work of U.S. composition in a world driven by the logic of fast capitalism must address the politics of language practices in scientific, technical, commercial,

legal, and administrative writing" (Lu 54). The writing classroom should be a site for language awareness and discussion of language issues as well as other critical issues, rather than a space that primarily prepares students for future employment by fixating on standards.

Positive.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, one of the criticisms aimed at Critical Discourse Analysis is its tendency to focus on the negative use of discourse. Therefore, in the process of coding the text, I was sure to mark the responses that discussed language diversity in a positive light. Keep in mind the themes highlight the terms that I observed in most of the participants' responses to the nine post-lesson questions so they do not necessarily reflect a positive term. It is also noteworthy that twenty-one of the thirty-seven follow-up responses included terms that reflect a positive view of learning about language diversity.

Racism.

Students were quick to point out instances they felt were racist or could be labeled as racism. The "disparities represented in academia" (Martinez 585) did not go unnoticed by these students and is apparent in the response of Participant 7, an eighteen-year old Hispanic female majoring in Business: "I felt that the teacher was being rude and racist with the comment he gaved [sic] to the student." Her answer was in response to Kells' essay in which one of her student's shares an experience regarding a teacher who gives his student a low grade due to her heavy accent (131). Our university's location near the border assures many of our students have accents, yet even though accents are common here, some (teachers and students) may still think of them as impediments to learning. This student recognizes that is not the case and labels the teacher's assessment as racist. In relation to assessment, Inoue and Poe state racism "is about understanding how unequal or unfair outcomes may be structured into our assessment

technologies and the interpretations that we make from their outcomes" (6). Moreover, without critical language diversity pedagogies some students may find it difficult to reflect on language use in the academy and elsewhere and understand why certain language ideologies exist and how they can be changed.

Addressing the same question, Participant 8 a nineteen-year-old Mexican-American female majoring in nursing responded, "What motivated her was that "standard english" [sic] has been placed on this pedestal as the one and only way to speak due to eurocentric [sic] individuals who will deem ebonics [sic] as informal and uneducated." This student's perspective may have been informed by my lesson or by her previous studies, yet she understands that historically, "[t]he frame of reference and the content of United States education [were] designed to promote knowledge and understanding of the European American by the European American" (Evans cited in Richardson 108). For this reason she speaks of Standard English being placed on a pedestal (or language hierarchy) because of Eurocentric beliefs. It is important for students to understand these historical backgrounds and have conversations that discuss the tacit policies of English monolingualism (Horner and Trimbur 594) in order to do away with viewing non-prestige discourses and the individuals who use them as less than or uneducated.

Respect.

Students believe that learning about language diversity leads to an overall respect for others as well as one's language history. Participant 9 a nineteen-year-old Hispanic female majoring in Rehabilitation Services believes, "Language diversity is important to understand and respect one another." Her answer is in response to a question regarding racial tensions and language diversity. We certainly want students to respect the views and experiences of their peers and this goes for language use as well. However, since "[l]anguage and literacy myths. .

.are so embedded in our practice, so much a part of the fabric of our discipline, they are nearly invisible" (Kells, Leveling 132). Therefore if we want to get rid of these language and literacy myths and help students understand and respect one another, they must have critical introductions to language diversity.

When one of the questions asked students to think about why one might be ashamed of non-prestige discourses, Participant 9 responded, "Student's shouldn't feel ashamed of their native language or accents. If you don't accept yourself, who will?" This was refreshing to read since many students adhere to what Kells calls "linguistic shame" or "a high regard for the language of the elite class and a concomitant low regard for their own" (133). This is apparent in some of the previously analyzed text where non-standard languages are referred to as "dumb," "ineffective," or "unprofessional." Fairclough states, "[i]f problems of language and power are to be seriously tackled, they will be tackled by the people who are directly involved, especially the people who are subject to linguistic forms of domination and manipulation" (221). Linguistic shame will only be removed when instructors and students engage in discussions about why it exists and what can be done to remove it.

Final Questionnaire-Emergent Themes

During the initial stage of data collection, once the pre-surveys were filled out, students answered five questions that ranged in topic from defining language diversity to discussing whether they believe they belong in college (see Appendix 2 for questions). The participants completed the exact questionnaire for the final phase of the study. In this analysis section I will focus on question 3 since it best aligns with my research questions considering it asks for student perceptions on the use of English only in academia as well as their perceptions on the acceptability of non-standard discourses for classroom use. The four themes that emerged from

this question are labeled Balance, Maybe, Follow the Norm and Mostly English. These responses will not be analyzed using CDA as the perspectives are similar to those from the post-lesson questionnaire. The purpose of this section is to reveal the general perspective on question 3 two weeks after the lesson occurred (final questionnaire).

Balance

The participant responses (thirteen) from this theme all lean toward a desire to see a balance in future composition instruction. In other words these students believe there should not be a strict environment of only English in the composition class; they believe learning and writing about (and in) other languages and discourses is just as important. Below are some of the student responses that best capture the sentiment of this theme.

"I believe English should be used in academia but other languages and discourses also. We should be exposed to the different languages in the world to become better people and to know more."

"I don't believe English should be the only language spoken in classes because theirs [sic] always diffent [sic] kind of people and their language."

"Since we live in an area where hispanics [sic] have major population, it is acceptable to use another language from English.

"I don't believe English should be the only language to be used. Other languages should be accepted, they would help writing process."

Maybe

The previous theme shows an overall acceptance for language diversity and English in the classroom, and while the two students in this theme share a similar attitude with their peers, they hesitate to fully embrace the balance. The participants recognize its importance, yet they still hold on to misguided language beliefs, and are not fully convinced of language diversity's place in academia. This theme is labeled maybe because even though these students do not accept an English only approach, they are not sure of how language diversity works in the classroom. Words such as "correctly" and "confusing" show the students' uncertainty about what incorporating language diversity in the composition classroom entails.

"I don't exactly believe that English should be the only language in the academia, however, it is the most important language to know in the United States. Tex-Mex and other mixed languages in my opinion are not very professional. Each language should be spoken correctly."

"I don't believe that only english [sic] should be used in academia. I think that discourses may be a little confusing when used in a classroom."

Follow the Norm

Two weeks after the lesson was delivered I read the following responses and was not too surprised to see that some students still held the belief that non-standard languages do not belong in academia. Baker discusses Dovid Katz' ego defensive function of attitude when he writes, "[f]earing minority language groups being given privileges or greater worth, majority groups may hold negative attitudes towards such minorities to enhance their own self-worth and distinctiveness" (100). The language attitudes of these students indicate that they may not want the status quo (follow the norm) to change otherwise they will lose their distinctiveness in the

academy as primarily Standard English speakers. While not punctuated with exclamation points, some of the responses below sound very firm and direct as observed through words such as "strongly" and "must."

"Keep the language related to where you are studying. You can't go to Mexico, Japan, Germany, Philippines and expect them to stop their way of life for 1 person that can't speak the language of that region."

"I strongly believe the main focus should be learning English."

"I think English should be only used, although I understand there are diff [sic] people in the classroom."

"I feel that only English should be used in academia because it is our nations language and it was how I was taught."

I think if you are from another part of the world, you should understand that you if you want to go to public school, you must learn our language. You're language must be respected, but not accepted. I do not believe in a liberal mindset."[2]

Mostly English

The participant responses in this theme are aligned to the ones found in the maybe theme, however these students lean more towards an English only perspective. These students respect language diversity, yet show a preference for Standard English in the classroom. Therefore they are unlike their Maybe counterparts who question how language diversity would work; rather

[2] Underlined words reflect the student's emphasis

they believe it should likely not be a part of academic instruction. Some words used to express this perspective include “stressed” and “only.”

“I believe only Standard English should be taught however students may use other types are allowed. Standard English is the most widely-accepted language we have.”

“English should be stressed in academia. Discourses should not be encouraged but they should also not be put down.”

“I think English is probably the most common language out there so it should only be used in academia. But it would be nice to put other languages as well.”

Sociocultural Practice

My attempt to change the language and practices (even as slight as they were) throughout the lesson is in line with Antonio Gramsci’s relational aspect of hegemony which “is a notion which deals with the social relations of capitalist production, the understanding being that changing these relations will enable us to go some way towards changing the mode of production itself “ (Mayo 1123). In relation to pedagogy, if educators change how students perceive language use in academia through discussions and assignments, we will ultimately be changing how the field of rhetoric and composition views discursive practices. Bawarshi states, “[. . .] even if writing programs were to institute a language policy that is responsive to language differences, this overt policy will still need to contend with the covert, learned inclinations that manage, execute, and maintain the dominance of unidirectional monolingualism” (Challenges 199). Using Fairclough’s model this would mean changing the discursive practice of the classroom (the production and consumption of texts) is dependent upon changing the sociocultural practices, which includes, how educators and students, perceive the order of

discourse. Phillips and Jørgensen write,

> *Creative* discursive practices in which discourse types are combined in new and complex ways—in new 'interdiscursive mixes'—are both a sign of, and a driving force in, discursive and thereby socio-cultural change. On the other hand, discursive practices in which discourses are mixed in *conventional* ways are indications of, and work towards, the stability of the dominant order of discourse and thereby the dominant social order. (73)

If we perceive non-standard or non-prestige discourses as non-threatening to the order of discourse (academic discourse), and integrate them into the work that is done in the composition classroom, we will construct these interdiscursive mixes, which will lead to new orders of discourse and new sociocultural practices. Fairclough discusses this in terms of neoliberalism when he states, "The key point with respect to socio-economic change is this: it is a matter of change in relations between institutions, and between institutions and the 'lifeworld', which ties economy, governance and culture together in new ways" (Fairclough, Neoliberalism 24-25). Re-examining how we use academic spaces, and challenging the order of discourse is essential in order for students to reject the notion that "the only motivation for learning English is to improve one's career prospects in the capitalist global market" (Lu 44).

While other lenses could have helped me to analyze the text produced by the students, I believe CDA, especially the model provided by Fairclough, thoroughly covers the interconnections of place, text and society. He writes,

> . . .CDA is not just another form of academic analysis. It also has aspirations to take part of those who suffer from linguistic-discursive forms of domination and exploitation. Part of the task is to contribute to the development and spread of a critical awareness of language as a factor in domination … [which] requires the case for text and texture to be made among the general population in educational institutions . . . . (Fairclough, Critical 186)

The lesson I created aids in providing students with this critical awareness of language use in the academy, but needs constant application in order to help them make connections between language ideologies, power and sociocultural implications.

Likert Scale Results

This section discusses the results from the Likert scale that were distributed during each phase of the study. All three Likert scales are identical and ask a series of ten questions with a six-point scale, with 1 indicating, “strongly disagree” and 6 indicating, “strongly agree” (see Table 1). The scores across all Likert scale items were averaged to create a single score for each student. Differences across the three time points were tested for significance using a paired samples t-test. In order to run the statistics, some of the numbers entered on the initial Likert excel sheet had to be flipped. For example, questions 3-7 on the Likert scale ideally call for students to choose 1-3 for “strongly disagree” through “slightly disagree” since these questions portray language diversity in a negative sense. Therefore in order to have a consistent pattern and to run the data for the t-test, I flipped these numbers where a 6 became a 1, 5 became a 2, 4 became a 3 and so on.

Table 1 Averages and Standard Deviations for Likert Questions

	Time One		Time Two		Time Three	
Likert Item	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation
1. I would feel comfortable incorporating language diversity in my writing.	3.9	1.4	4.5	1.2	4.1	1.3
2. Language diversity in writing can help with the writing process.	4.3	1.2	4.3	1.0	4.2	1.2
3. Standard English is the only acceptable language for classroom instruction.	**3.2**	**1.5**	**3.1**	**1.3**	**3.7**	**1.4**
4. Language varieties, such as Tex-Mex or Ebonics, are inferior for academic writing.	**3.4**	**1.5**	**3.0**	**1.5**	**3.8**	**1.3**
5. Tex-Mex, Ebonics or other blended languages should not be used at the university at all.	**2.9**	**1.5**	**2.8**	**1.5**	**3.1**	**1.4**
6. Language diversity is important, but I would rather not practice it in academic classrooms.	**3.7**	**1.5**	**3.5**	**1.6**	**3.4**	**1.3**
7. Standard English will dominate all aspects of media.	**3.5**	**1.4**	**3.5**	**1.5**	**3.5**	**1.4**
8. Standard English will dominate all aspects of academia.	**3.6**	**1.4**	**3.4**	**1.5**	**3.6**	**1.4**
9. Practicing language diversity would help us to be more accepting of those who differ from us.	5	1	5.0	0.9	4.5	1.1
10. Language diversity should be encouraged in first-year college composition courses.	4.4	1.3	4.1	1.1	4.4	1.2

*Bold indicates questions with flipped scores

Table 1 allows us to see any changes in student perceptions based on the individual Likert questions. Tables 2 and 3 only show data from those who completed the Likert during Time 1 and 2 or Time 2 and 3. Table 1 shows the averages and standard deviation for each question during Time 1-3 using the input from all of the students regardless of whether or not they consistently participated. Questions 1,2,9 and 10 would ideally have an average closer to 6, since 6 is the number used to indicate “strongly agree” and these questions present language diversity in a favorable light. In contrast, questions three to eight oppose language diversity, thus the ideal average should be closer to 1. For the most part the averages are closer to the ideal number, and further observation shows interesting movement. Take question five for example (see Figure 6):

Tex-Mex, Ebonics or other blended languages should not be used at the university at all. Again, the ideal average here should be closer to 1 since 1 indicates, "strongly disagree." However, while there is a slight decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 (2.9 to 2.8), Time 2 to Time 3 shows an unfavorable increase (2.8 to 3.1). The same pattern is evident for question 4 although to a greater degree as the average moves from 3.4 to 3.0 and ends at 3.8. This indicates that student perceptions are likely to revert to previous language beliefs if they are not allowed sufficient time for discussions throughout the semester. Students may welcome new concepts and ideas, and may even have slight changes in their perceptions, but these growths are likely to fade if they are not nourished.

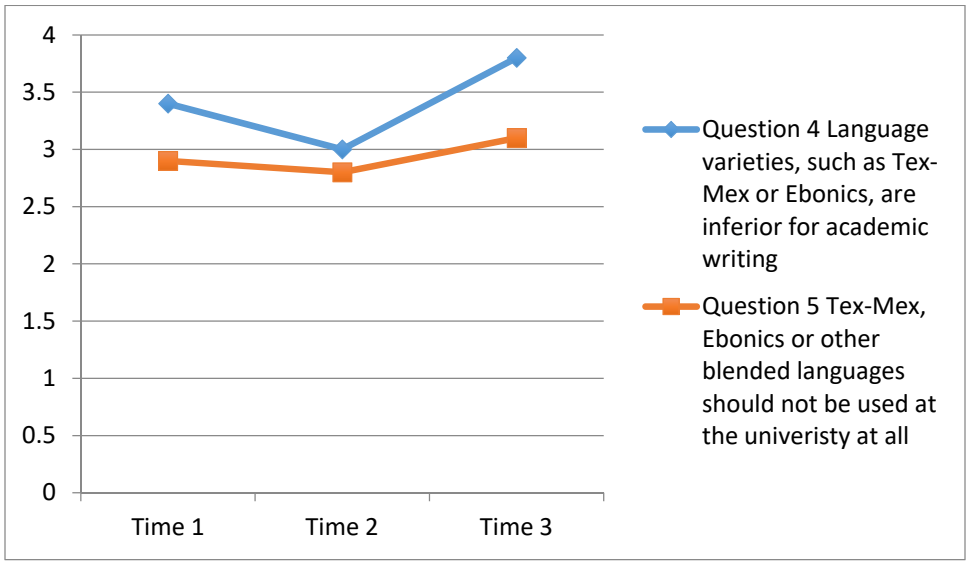

Figure 6 Average Movements for Likert Questions 4 and 5

As for some of the positively worded questions like question 1 (see Figure 7), we can observe a noticeable increase from Time 1 to Time 2 (3.9 to 4.5) however there is also a decrease from Time 2 to Time 3 (4.5 to 4.1). As previously mentioned, the period from Time 1 to Time 2 introduced students to new concepts and they were able to respond to the Likert scale right after

the lesson. Therefore, if students had positive perceptions about language diversity, they were able to reflect these perceptions better as opposed to during Time 3, after two weeks had passed. For question 10, students began mostly with "slightly agree" when posed with the question of whether language diversity should be encouraged in first-year composition courses. Interestingly, the average slightly dipped after Time 2 (4.4 to 4.1) but then rose to the initial average at Time 3 (4.1 to 4.4). During Time 2 (the lesson phase) class discussions were pretty charged as students were likely discussing issues of language and power for the first time. Those who felt uncomfortable with the discussions may have been unsure as to whether language diversity was appropriate or acceptable for the composition classroom, in which case may account for the slight decline.

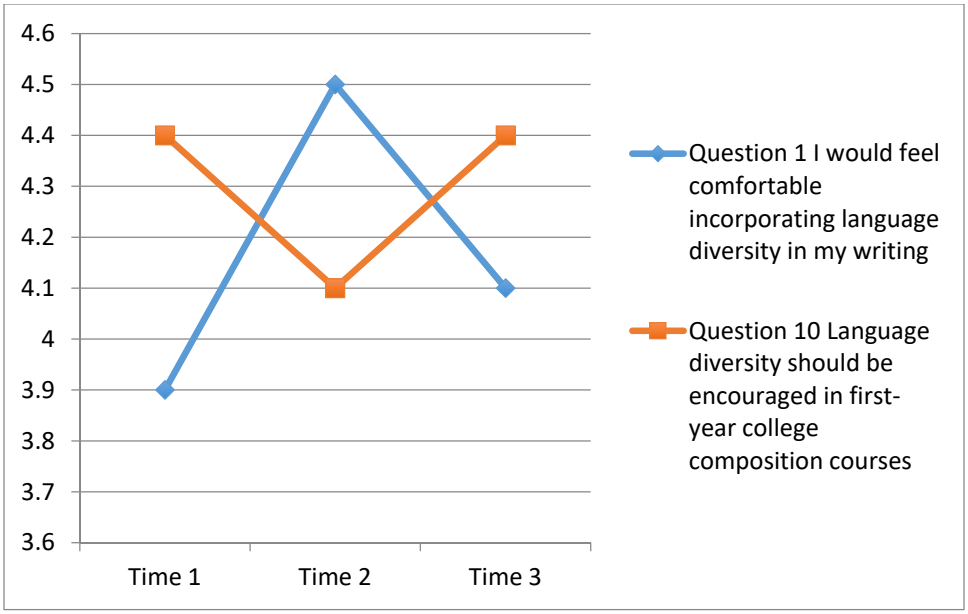

Figure 7 Average Movements for Likert Questions 1 and 10

I would like to note that some of the participants' responses were not aligned with the numbers they chose on the Likert scale suggesting the data may not be entirely accurate. For example, one participant had a very negative take on the mock writing sample they were asked to address

during Time 1, stating, “we are in a college environment, not in the barrio. . .keep your writing professional.” Yet when answering questions 3 and 4 on the Likert scale, the participant chose “strongly disagree” and “slightly agree” for question 5. Some of the possible reasons for this may be that students misunderstood the question due to the wording, or they may have answered hastily. Take question 6 for example, the word “but,” in “language diversity is important, but I would rather not practice it in academic classrooms,” is problematic and may have confused participants. They might have agreed with the first half of the statement and not the latter therefore they may not have known which answer to choose.

The Paired Samples Statistics table indicates the data from Pair 1 is compiled from twenty-four students who participated in Time 1 (or phase 1) as well as Time 2 (phase 2), which is less than half of the number (fifty-two) of participants who responded to the pre-survey and initial questionnaire. Therefore, only numbers from the students who consistently participated from one time frame to the next are calculated. Had all students consistently filled out all three Likert scales, the results might have revealed a different conclusion. Pair 1 (Time 1, Time 2) shows a slight increase in the participants’ responses during the pre-lesson and post-lesson, while Pair 2 and 3 shows a slight decrease in student perceptions. This indicates students may have gained more from the lesson after being introduced to it with little to no prior knowledge on language diversity. The slight decrease from Time 1 to Time 3 may be due to an inability to retain or recall information from the lesson since Time 3 occurred two weeks after Time 2; this may account for the decrease from Time 2 to Time 3 as well.

Table 2 Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Time1	3.9500	24	.88416	.18048
	Time2	4.0583	24	1.01421	.20702
Pair 2	Time1	3.9500	28	.82574	.15605
	Time3	3.8107	28	.69086	.13056
Pair 3	Time2	3.8381	21	.74396	.16235
	Time3	3.8048	21	.73924	.16132

In the far-right section of Table 3 we can observe that zero falls in between the lower and upper interval. “Zero is the null value of the parameter (in this case the difference in means). If a 95% confidence interval include[s] the null value, then there is no statistically meaningful or statistically significant difference between the groups” (Sullivan 108). A quick glance at this section of the table immediately shows there is no significant difference as the null value clearly falls between the lower negative interval and the slightly above zero upper interval. None of the pairings were statistically significant as the p values ranged from .453 to .812.

Table 3 Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Time1 - Time2	-.10833	.69527	.14192	-.40192	.18526
Pair 2	Time1 - Time3	.13929	.76465	.14451	-.15722	.43579
Pair 3	Time2 - Time3	.03333	.63430	.13842	-.25540	.32206

When analyzed as a whole, the results of this study indicate that more research should be focused on student responses in order to understand and respond to the multiple perspectives they have regarding language use in academia. I am certain that introducing students to the issues

surrounding language diversity over an extended time frame will enhance their experiences at the academy and minimize the defensive attitudes that Baker discusses. The discussions that arise from an early introduction will lead them to question their language perspectives and incite further discussion, which is a positive on its own.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research shows how introducing students to language diversity and giving them the opportunity to discuss the complexities of this multifaceted topic is an important step in changing how we use the composition classroom and changing how students view non-standard languages. While the results from the Likert scale do not indicate a significant change in student perspectives from one phase to the next, the written data suggests an exigency for using the much-needed space of the composition classroom for these introductions. Based on the textual data, the participants showed a desire to learn more about the issues connected with this complex topic. Some had questions and uncertainties, but for the most part, the answers from the post-lesson questionnaire were mostly positive in nature. However, these uncertainties should be further justification for the need to introduce students to language diversity at the earliest possible time.

Implications for Future Research

An early introduction in this space provides them with the opportunity to understand, reflect and discuss critical issues. In her remarkable essay "Academic Discourses or Small Boats on a Big Sea," Jacqueline Jones Royster states, "[t]ypically, we have naturalized the academy as an exclusive space with predetermined, preset values and operations that should reign supreme and that can do so without such reflection or negotiation" (26). If we continue to treat the composition classroom as an exclusive space where academic and standard are the only

acceptable discourses, then as educators we limit helping students to draw from multiple resources that they will use in their global and local spheres. Therefore, "[t]he question that remains is whether we will seize the opportunity to chart new, and possibly, different theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical pathways where the openness and fluidity that we know exist have the capacity to flourish" (Royster 29). Are we doing enough to help students understand language in a better way? The quantitative findings would suggest that we are not. Yet, we already have the tools we need (learning from previous scholarship) in order to promote language diversity as the new norm. The missing component is the mindset of whether or not we want this new norm to occur. Royster asserts,

> [i]f a critical goal in literacy instruction, especially in higher education, is to help students forge connections between what they already know as language users and the more that is available to be known, we, along with our students, can explore how to strike good balances across various gaps so that affirmation, empowerment, and ultimately learning are possible. (28)

Therefore it is crucial for us to reflect on our language beliefs and discuss these with students, so as to generate new conversations that also include the sociopolitical factors connected to language diversity.

Moving forward, changes in language attitudes will certainly not occur if students are not aware of language diversity, and students as we know, are the future. As Ball and Muhammad's piece reminds us, even some preservice teachers are still grappling with changing reluctant mindsets. Consequently, if we fail to address such issues "[…] the composition classroom can be a site that implicitly and explicitly sustains the inequalities that linguistic minority students face outside the classroom [and] [n]either heightened awareness nor research alone will level the linguistic playing field. Both are impotent endeavors without critical practice" (Kells, Leveling 146). Kells reminds us that classrooms are not private spaces, they are meant to be used for

continuous growth and learning. Some advocates of linguistic diversity may write heavily about theory, but if there is no practical implementation, we have no way to observe possible transformative pedagogies that take current practice to new levels. We can either use the classroom to sustain language myths, or we can use it to introduce students to new thoughts on language and language use.

As previously mentioned, before I learned about the concept of language diversity, I, like some of the participants in this study, frowned upon those who would speak discourses other than the standards in academia because I did not think it was "proper." However, after being able to ask questions and engage in discussion allowed by the spaces of few graduate classes, I have been able to recognize that individual ideologies place languages on a hierarchy yet these ideologies can be challenged and even changed.

Limitations of the Study

While research limitations are part of all studies, one research goal is to try to minimize the possibility of limitations. Therefore future considerations are also mentioned for some of these restraints. I am more than aware that the participant sample size of my study is not typical in quantitative research. However, I was only able to secure three classes for my research, two classes coming from one of the two instructors who responded to my request. Based on the background information listed by participants, we can observe that most of them are Latina/os. Aside from the small sample size, a diverse sample of participants would also be ideal for future studies since including the perspectives of all students is important in understanding their views on language diversity in the classroom. This population, however, provides a unique insight of border residents who negotiate language diversity on a daily basis and is therefore a strength of this study.

The research instruments were designed to gauge any change in student perspectives, however in retrospect, some of my instruments could have been modified to account for the time I had to conduct the lesson and obtain responses. While the usability of these instruments worked fairly well, the second phase of the study was the most time consuming for students. Therefore the amount of questions on the post-lesson questionnaire could have been lessened in order for students to have more time to reflect, answer questions, and complete the Likert scale.
The questions on the Likert scale could have also been modified in order to better assess how students responded to the lesson. Lessening the amount of questions on the Likert scale could have resulted in better content validity, which in turn, if used with a larger sample size, could have a better external validity.

Another limitation related to the research instrument involves the use of student codes. Students were asked to create a code (numeric, alphabetic, or mixed) that they would use on all of the documents that would be returned to me. Stressing the importance of remembering one's code is crucial for data analysis since it allows for matching of information. I was unable to use some of the written data since no code or identifier was provided and I could not match the student to a previous code based on handwriting alone. Furthermore, some of the students who forgot to notate their codes during phase one used different codes during subsequent phases which also affected my ability to match their responses. As discussed in Chapter 4, only those who participated in the paired timeframes were calculated into the results.

Moving forward I ask that researchers keep these limitations in mind when designing a similar study. I would like to stress that this lesson was a one-day event led by someone other than the students' instructor, yet the conversations and responses that resulted from this study lead me to conclude that educators need to do more to help their students reflect on issues

surrounding language diversity. Perhaps even a whole semester is not enough time to cover the many facets connected to this topic, yet as I have mentioned before, an introduction plants the seed of awareness and helps students to contextualize the reasons behind their language attitudes.

Implications for Teaching First-Year Composition

Since few colleges and universities offer required language diversity classes for future educators (Ball and Muhammad 79), we cannot expect for our students to understand the importance of awareness and attitudes when we ourselves are not reflecting on them. If we believe that only standard languages should be the focus of academic work, we should reflect on why we believe this as well as how this belief affects the multitude of students who effectively make use of the many non-standard languages they know. Therefore, the first step for change is educating futures teachers, whether at the TA, lecturer or professor level. Once they have had an opportunity to reflect on their own awareness and attitude toward language diversity, they can begin to transfer this knowledge to their students through critical pedagogies.

The next step would focus on changing pedagogies to incorporate more readings and lessons that center on a critical understanding of language diversity. As Guerra discussed in "Cultivating Transcultural Citizenship: A Writing Across Communities Model," the use of language in academia not only affects a student's global sphere, but the local as well (299-300). Critical pedagogies would entail teaching students that knowing different discourses can help them to merge their global and local spheres. This would eventually change how students perceive language use in the academy, which in turn can affect how the academy perceives language use in the classroom. Some of the participants in this study were concerned with "perfecting" standard language use since they equated "mastering" language with economical gains. A possible critical assignment would provide students with the opportunity to interview

individuals who are employed in their prospective field of employment. Students would be able to ask questions and discuss their interviewee's everyday use of language as well as their thoughts on language use during the process of preparing for their careers. Through these discussions, students can observe how language is used in the global and local spheres, the fluidity that takes place with using multiple discourses, and the perspectives of those who they regard as "professionals."

Another possible critical assignment would involve students interviewing classmates whose language background is different from their own. In doing so they would be able to discuss the challenges or strengths that come from the degree to which one has "mastered" the standard language, and/or knowing and using multiple discourses. Understanding the struggles and strengths of one another can help us to create changes that benefit not just some, but all. These hypothetical assignments would of course come after an introduction to the concept of language diversity, which would touch on the history of language use in academia as well as the connections between language use and its relation to racism and classism. Again, these assignments will probably not change the beliefs of those who have strong ideologies, however they provide a starting point for discussion and examination.

Having reflected on this study allowed me to think about how I would approach the introduction for future first-year writing classes in a new way. I created a revised lesson (see Appendix E) that includes some of the readings used in the initial lesson, but also new readings that connect language diversity to economics—something that was only briefly touched upon during the initial lesson with one of the video clips from "Do You Speak American?" but nonetheless a critical aspect of the language diversity introduction. The lesson begins by asking students to reflect on their use of language through a language narrative. This gives students an

opportunity to think about the ways in which they use language, as well as its effect on their ability to compose academic assignments. This is similar to the pre-lesson phase of the study, since students answered questions before being introduced to the topic as a concept. Soon after, students are introduced to several readings that focus on different aspects of language diversity. The Students' Rights to their Own Language statement and the Trimbur essay provide students with a historical understanding of language use in the United States and how the field of composition has reacted to it. The essay by Ming-Zhan Lu discusses language use in regards to economics and the extreme measures that some take to "perfect" their use of English. A snippet from the Kells piece was used in the initial lesson, but the revised lesson will incorporate the whole essay in order to better showcase the language attitudes of students. Each of the readings (minus the SRTOL statement) can be broken into two sections in order to provide enough time to discuss and analyze each section over a few weeks. Instead of snippets from different essays, whole essays provide in-depth background. Once the readings and discussions have taken place, students will have a chance to share their language narratives with their peers. In the process of sharing, it will give them a chance to understand the language histories of others and contemplate any difficulties their peer may have had. The Language Narratives 2.0 assignment focuses on revision and asks students to integrate any of the four sources that may enhance or change their language narratives. The last part of the introduction presents the students with an opportunity to create their ideal writing assignment. The reason for this is to see whether or not students will create an assignment that incorporates language diversity given the introduction to the topic. This is similar to the final questionnaire, which aims to determine how much students retain from a critical introduction to language diversity.

The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing developed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators outlines eight habits of mind that are "central to success in college and beyond" (2). Introducing students to language diversity certainly touches upon some of these habits of mind, for instance openness, persistence, flexibility, and meta-cognition. Pedagogies focused on language diversity align with these habits of mind and help students to "examine their own perspectives to find connections with the perspectives of others (openness); "grapple with challenging ideas, texts, processes, or projects" (persistence); "reflect on the choices they make in light of context, purpose, and audience" (flexibility); "reflect on the texts that they have produced in a variety of contexts" and "connect choices they have made in texts to audiences and purposes for which texts are intended" (meta-cognition) (4-5). Furthermore "[. . .] the Framework suggests that writing activities and assignments should be designed with genuine purposes and audiences in mind in order to foster flexibility and rhetorical versatility" (3). Revisiting Guerra's article he reminds us that "[a]s important as it is to acknowledge that all of our students are global citizens in the making, we must not forget that they continue to be local citizens who are profoundly influenced by their ongoing social, cultural, and linguistic experiences in the varied communities in which they live" (Cultivating Transcultural 299-300).

While I am not aware of the pedagogical practices of all those who teach FYC at UT-RGV, I would not be surprised if some instructors are hesitant to add critical language diversity centered pedagogies on top of their already full curriculums, since as Fairclough's method of analysis reminds us, we consume what we produce and vice versa. In other words, since FYC has traditionally focused on the "rules" of academic writing, for the most part, assignments tend to address this aspect of composition with little if any attention to language diversity. A critical introduction to language diversity is important for students to understand how language is used

and can be used in different situations. Often students are introduced to rhetorical choice, a theme connected to that of language diversity. Yet without the background knowledge that comes from the critical language diversity introduction, some students may hesitate to make rhetorical choices that deviate from the norm since they may not be comfortable justifying why they made specific choices. This is definitely a topic for further study. There is no denying that we all want our students to succeed, yet we must reflect on what "success" means in regards to what students are taking away from the composition classroom and in all classes for that matter. Do we want our students to continue carrying misguided language beliefs with them throughout their academic careers and beyond? If we contribute to creating a new normal for the field, we can help our students (and our future educators) contribute to it as well and finally create the change that many scholars have been trying to do for quite some time.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-SURVEY

YOUR CODE: _____

Age: M or F Ethnicity: Major: Place of Birth:

1. Which city/area did you grow up?

2. Which is your first spoken language(s)?
   - O English
   - O French
   - O Mandarin
   - O Spanish
   - O _____

3. What is your second language?
   - O English
   - O French
   - O Mandarin
   - O Spanish
   - O None
   - O _____

4. Which language(s) do you speak at home?
   - O English
   - O French
   - O Mandarin
   - O Spanish
   - O Blend of languages (i.e Spanglish)
   - O _____

5. Which language(s) are you most comfortable speaking?
    - O English
    - O French
    - O Mandarin
    - O Spanish
    - O Blend of languages (i.e Spanglish)
    - O _____

6. Which language(s) would you like to learn? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

YOUR CODE: _____

Age: M or F Ethnicity: Major: Place of Birth:

Language Difference/Diversity Questionnaire

1. You (student) would define language diversity/difference as…

2. Describe your writing process (the mental actions before and during the time spent placing thoughts down on paper/computer). If it applies, why do you hesitate to complete a written assignment?

3. How much do you believe that only English should be used in academia (aside from foreign language classes)? Also, how much do you think discourses (ex. Tex-Mex, Ebonics, Indian English) other than Standard English are acceptable for classroom instruction and materials and why?

4. Why do you feel you belong/don't belong in college? Was it your decision to attend, why or why not?

5. Pretend the following writing sample is from your peer. Please make any necessary comments and/or notations.

The PUENTE program is a great program that offers students the oportunity to have a mentor, counseling, and also community support. Students work together over semesters so that they can feel like a close familia. Peer review and porfolios are esential to the PUENTE program, and they also offer field trips so that students can visit colleges and know whats what for their futures. It's also very community base, because students are expected to give back to their communities and the peeps who need them.

How effective/ineffective is this writing sample for college and why?

6. Give me your opinion about the following statements using the scale below:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would feel comfortable incorporating language diversity in my writing.						
Language diversity in writing can help with the writing process.						
Standard English is the only acceptable language for classroom instruction.						
Language varieties, such as Tex Mex or Ebonics, are inferior for academic writing.						
Tex Mex, Ebonics or other blended languages should not be used at the university at all.						
Language diversity is important, but I would rather not practice it in academic classrooms.						
Standard English will dominate all aspects of media.						
Standard English will dominate all aspects of academia.						
Practicing language diversity would help us to be more accepting of those who differ from us.						
Language diversity should be encouraged in first-year college composition courses.						

APPENDIX C

LESSON PLAN HANDOUT

Background Information

What is language difference you ask?

Language difference, or language diversity, is not just speaking in other languages. It is defined by using different languages, language blends, and/or dialects to communicate by means of reading, writing, or speaking.

Yo! Bonjour! Hola! **HOWDY!**

↑ All can be used as greeting words ↑

Discourse: communication of thought by words in speech or writing; talk; conversation

Prescriptivism/Descriptivism

When we write in the academic setting, we tend to follow rules and guidelines that are picked up from our K-12 education. These rules for grammar tell us how we are *supposed* to write and what is "correct" and "incorrect". This is known as **prescriptivism**.

On the other hand, those who do not agree with strictly following these set rules, fall under the school of thought known as **descriptivism**. While descriptivists do not advocate for an "anything goes" approach, they believe that change is inevitable and therefore language will change as well, however they do not see these changes as either positive or negative, rather inevitable.

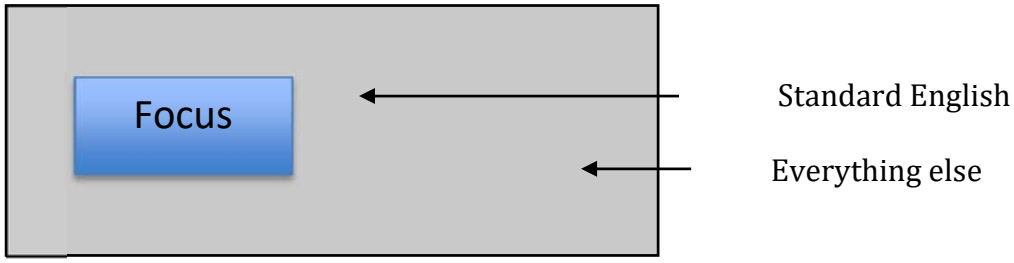
Discuss Wiley and Lukes

Descriptive grammarians ask the question, "What is English (or another language) like--what are its forms and how do they function in various situations?" By contrast, prescriptive grammarians ask "What *should* English be like--what forms should people use and what functions should they serve?"

Source: Finnegan, Edward
http://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/correct/prescriptivism/

What is Standard English? How about academic English?

- Short video on standard English origins
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBXVPerzYqk [Part 1 21:28-24:18]
- Short discussion on academic English
  Academic English aims to express the relationship between ideas. Academic writers aim to be clear and concise so that their audiences can learn about less familiar topics.
  1. Much of student assessment in the composition classroom is based on academic writing. How do you suppose we can balance that with language difference (languages other than academic/Standard English and variations)?



From Moss and Walters 144, 1993. The view of language promulgated by schools. This image is cited by Kim Brian Lovejoy in "Practical Pedagogy for Composition."

The diagram above informs us that schools generally fail to incorporate "everything else" in the classroom. Therefore, we can miss out on a number of learning experiences that come from a variety of discourses.

📖 Discuss Kells and Pari articles 📖

Blending Academic English with "world Englishes"

- Short video on AAVE (or AAL) in the elementary classroom
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBXVPerzYqk [Part 3 10:58-14:45]

  "When you begin to devalue youngsters, and make them feel that who they are doesn't count, then we turn them off from education." -Norma LeMoine

  Does academic instruction and writing devalue people through the use of Standard English? Why or why not?

The following excerpt comes from Geneva Smitherman's article "English teacher, why you be doing the thangs you don't do?" published in *The English Journal* in 1972.

Let me say right from the bell, this piece is not to be taken as an indictment of ALL English teachers in inner-city Black schools, for there are, to be sure, a few brave, enlightened souls who are doing an excellent job in the ghetto. To them, I say: just keep on keepin' on. But to

those others, that whole heap of English teachers who be castigating Black students for using a "nonstandard" dialect—I say: the question in the title is directed to you, and if the shoe fit, put it on. In all fairness, I suppose, one must credit many such correctionist English teachers for the misguided notion that they are readying Black students for the world (read: white America). The rationale is that this world is one in which Black kids must master the prestige dialect if they are to partake of that socio-economic mobility for which America is world renowned—an argument which linguist James Sledd, for one, has completely devastated. And so the student who submits a paper with frequent "I be's" and multiple negatives is forced to "correct," write and rewrite towards the end of achieving a grammatically flawless piece.

1. Considering this article was published almost forty-four years ago, how far do you think writers in composition courses have come? Are the "I be's" that Smitherman mentions now accepted in ENG 1301? Why or why not?
2. When searching through journal databases, have you come across articles written in anything other than Standard English? If so, when? Which database(s), and did it surprise you? Why or why not?

The Hierarchy of Languages

- Short video on linguistic profiling
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBXVPerzYqk [Part 1 39:10-40:45]

Students' Rights to Their Own Language

Because of a perceived language imbalance, in 1974 the Executive Committee of the **Conference on College Composition and Communication** (CCCC) chose to create a statement that supports all students in regards to their languages and dialects.

> We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of Language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

1. In which dialect do you find your own identity and style? Why?
2. Is this statement important to you? Why or why not?

Language difference in action

The following excerpt comes from Gloria Anzaldua's chapter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" in her book, *Borderland/La Frontera, The New Mestiza*. (1987)

If a person, Chicana or Latina, has a low estimation of my native tongue, she also has a low estimation of me. Often with *mexicanas* y *latinas* we'll speak English as a neutral language. Even among Chicanas we tend to speak English at parties or conferences. Yet, at the same time, we're afraid the other will think we're *agringadas* because we don't speak Chicano Spanish. We oppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, vying to be the "real" Chicanas, to speak like Chicanos. There is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience.
A monolingual Chicana whose first language is English or Spanish is just as much a Chicana as one who speaks several variants of Spanish. A Chicana from Michigan or Chicago or Detroit is just as much a Chicana as one from the Southwest. Chicano Spanish is as diverse linguistically as it is regionally.

1. How does Anzaldua's use of language appeal to the audience?
2. Why do you think she used the word "agringadas" as opposed to something like acculturated?
3. Have you read other works by Anzaldua? If so, which and why?

Excerpt from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird (1960)*

Jem said, "He goes out, all right, when it's pitch dark. Miss Stephanie Crawford said she woke up in the middle of the night one time and saw him looking straight through the window at her… said his head was like a skull lookin' at her. Ain't you ever waked up at night and heard him, Dill? He walks like this-" Jem slid his feet through the gravel. "Why do you think Miss Rachel locks up so tight at night? I've seen his tracks in our back yard many a mornin', and one night I heard him scratching on the back screen, but he was gone time Atticus got there."

1. If language difference was not incorporated by the author, do you think the book would have the same appeal?
2. Can anyone take a stab at "translating" the excerpt into Standard English?

Awareness and Attitudes

These are keywords when learning about language diversity. Be *aware* of the language of others, and try not to have a negative *attitude* towards those who are not familiar with your way of speaking/writing.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Pre-Survey/Initial Questionnaire Informed Consent Form

Testing Acceptance of Language Difference in Academia: Perceptions in a First-Year Composition Classroom

Primary Investigator: Crystal Rodriguez, M.A
crystal.rodriguez02@utrgv.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos
alyssa.cavazos@utrgv.edu

Background: Under the advisement of Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos, I, Crystal Rodriguez am conducting a research study on language difference in order to gain an understanding of the first-year student perspective in regards to the concept of language difference in academia. The subsequent data and analysis will allow me to implement pedagogies that will plant awareness of important issues and help students position themselves in a changing academic setting while maintaining their identities. The research will also fulfill the requirements of a Master's degree in English, as it will be presented in a graduate thesis.

Procedure: Total time for this study will be approximately an hour and a half to two hours. Please know that your participation is voluntary. If you consent to participate, you will begin today by creating a personal code consisting of numbers and letters (4-5) which you are advised to remember since you will be using this personal code on all the documents you return to me. Next, you will complete a short survey on language use which will take about five minutes. You will then complete an initial questionnaire which should take around 10-15 minutes. After completing this questionnaire, you will have about a week to read the stapled copy of short article snippets. I will return to your classroom to present a short lesson on language difference that will take approximately 45-60 minutes. The lesson will include free writing, discussion, short videos, and a classroom activity. Immediately following the lesson, you will complete a follow up questionnaire which, like the first, should take around 10-15 minutes. After two weeks, I will return to your classroom to give you a final questionnaire to complete. You should not write your name or any identifying information on the written work I will collect from you, but please remember to write your personal code you create on all of these documents. Your information will be confidential and I will assign pseudonyms when using your responses in my written work. Please be aware that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

Benefits of Participation: There are no direct benefits associated with this study, however you will gain an introduction to conversations in language difference as a first-year composition student which usually does not occur. For this reason your participation is highly important for this study and you will be contributing to many ongoing conversations.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply inform me that you wish to stop, and return the blank or incomplete survey or questionnaires to me.

Anonymity and/or Confidentiality: As previously stated the data I collect from you will be kept confidential. Informed consent forms will be kept separate from any data and I will assign pseudonyms to your documents which will be used when I report this data. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet in room ARHU 207a, my faculty adviser's office and will be destroyed after three years. Copies of the data will be stored in an encrypted portable USB drive in order to protect confidentiality in case it is lost or stolen.

Who to Contact for Research Related Questions: For questions about the research itself, or to report any adverse effects during or following participation, contact the researcher, Crystal Rodriguez at crystal.rodriguez02@utrgv.edu or faculty advisor, Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos at (956) 665-3421.

Who to Contact Regarding Your Rights as a Participant: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at (956) 665-2889 or
irb@utrgv.edu.

Signatures: By signing below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own reference. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age. If you are under 18, please inform the researcher.

_____ ___/____/_____

Participant's Signature Date

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
IRB APPROVED
IRB# 2015-253-11
Expires: 02/12/2017

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Lesson Delivery Informed Consent Form

Testing Acceptance of Language Difference in Academia: Perceptions in a First-Year Composition Classroom

Primary Investigator: Crystal Rodriguez, M.A
crystal.rodriguez02@utrgv.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos
alyssa.cavazos@utrgv.edu

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Procedure: Today I will present a short lesson on language difference that will take approximately 45-60 minutes. The lesson will include free writing, discussion, short video, and a class activity. After the lesson, you will complete a follow up questionnaire which like the first should take around 10-15 minutes. Please remember that your participation is completely voluntary. After two weeks, I will give you a final questionnaire to complete. You should not write your name or any identifying information on any of the written work that I will collect from you today, but please remember to write your personal code you created last time. Your information will be confidential and I will assign pseudonyms when using your comments in my written work. Please be aware that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

Benefits of Participation: There are no direct benefits associated with this study, however you will gain an introduction to conversations in language difference as a first-year composition student which usually does not occur. For this reason your participation is highly important for this study and you will be contributing to many ongoing conversations.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply inform me that you wish to stop, and return the blank or incomplete survey or questionnaires to me.

Anonymity and/or Confidentiality: As previously stated the data I collect from you will be kept confidential. Informed consent forms will be kept separate from any data and I will assign pseudonyms to your documents which will be used when I report this data. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet in room ARHU 207a, my faculty adviser's office and will be destroyed after three years. Copies of the data will be stored in an encrypted portable USB drive in order to protect confidentiality in case it is lost or stolen.

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_____ ____/_____/_____

Participant's Signature Date

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
IRB APPROVED
IRB# 2015-253-11
Expires: 02/12/2017

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Final Questionnaire Informed Consent Form

Testing Acceptance of Language Difference in Academia: Perceptions in a First-Year Composition Classroom

Primary Investigator: Crystal Rodriguez, M.A
crystal.rodriguez02@utrgv.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos
alyssa.cavazos@utrgv.edu

Background: Under the advisement of Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos, I, Crystal Rodriguez am conducting a research study on language difference in order to gain an understanding of the first-year student perspective in regards to the concept of language difference in academia. The subsequent data and analysis will allow me to implement pedagogies that will plant awareness of important issues and help students position themselves in a changing academic setting while maintaining their identities. The research will also fulfill the requirements of a Master's degree in English, as it will be presented in a graduate thesis.

Procedure: Today you will complete a final questionnaire which like the others should take around 10-15 minutes. Please remember that your participation is completely voluntary. You should not write your name or any identifying information on the questionnaire, but please remember to write your personal code you created last time. Your information will be confidential and I will assign pseudonyms when using your comments in my written work. Please be aware that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

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_____ ____/_____/_____

Participant's Signature Date

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
IRB APPROVED
IRB# 2015-253-11
Expires: 02/12/2017

APPENDIX E

NEW LESSON

Introduction to Language Diversity

Language Narratives

Composition classes focus on helping students become better writers. For this reason, I want you to think about your use of language from as far back as you can remember. Do you think your language history affects (whether positive or negative) your ability to compose academic assignments? Why or why not?

- Submit on Blackboard (2 pages-double spaced)

Readings/Discussions (broken into sections)

- Linguistic Memory and the Uneasy Settlement of U.S. English by John Trimbur (History)
- Student's Rights to their Own Language (SRTOL) Statement (History)
- "Living English Work" by Min-Zhan Lu (Language and Economics)
- "Leveling the Linguistic Playing Field in First-Year Composition" by Michelle Hall Kells (Language Attitudes)

**Together these readings provide students with context as to why language misconceptions exist and what has and can be done to combat these misconceptions.
They can be discussed through rhetorical responses or any small project that requires written responses. Instructor will prepare questions or concept maps to help students understand readings.

Sharing Language Narratives

Students will present their narratives to their peers.

Language Narratives 2.0 (focuses on revision)

Now that you have some background information on issues surrounding language diversity, what changes, if any, would you make to your personal narrative and why? What connections can you make between the readings and your changes? If there aren't any, discuss some of the eye-opening statements any of your peers shared. Why did his/her experience surprise you? How would you connect this to any of the readings? What impact did your peers' narrative have on you and why?

Language and the Writing Classroom

1. What does your ideal writing assignment look like? Why do you find it engaging? Use your ideas to create a potential writing assignment. (1 page design, 2 page explanation)
2. Present and discuss your writing assignment. Does it have any connections with language diversity? Why or why not? How does this assignment connect to either one of your language narratives?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Crystal Rodriguez was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley. She received a Bachelor of Arts (2008) and a Master of Arts (2011) degree in Anthropology from the University of Texas-Pan American. In 2010 she travelled to China as part of a cultural immersion program and was able to learn about the country as well as the language. Her interest in language and culture connects two of her favorite subjects: writing and anthropology. In 2017 she received a second Master of Arts degree in English under the Rhetoric, Composition and Literacy Studies track and is currently employed as an English instructor at South Texas College. She can be reached at crys24@icloud.com.