Defining and Addressing Expectations for L2 Writers Across Disciplines

Lindsey Ives  
*University of New Mexico, ivesl@erau.edu*

Tom Pierce  
*Central New Mexico Community College*

Michael Schwartz  
*University of New Mexico*

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Defining and Addressing Expectations for L2 Writers Across Disciplines

The Conference on College Composition and Communication
April 6-9, 2011

Lindsey Ives, University of New Mexico: ivesle@unm.edu
Tom Pierce, Central New Mexico Community College: tpierce@cnm.edu
Michael Schwartz, University of New Mexico: m_schwartz2004@yahoo.com
Student Perspectives

Michael Schwartz, University of New Mexico:

m_schwartz2004@yahoo.com
Context

US College Composition Classroom

Multilingual Writers Linguistic Market

(Bourdieu, 1977)
“…effective writing instruction must enable students to become readers and writers of the genres and the text types associated with the Discourses (Gee, 1996, 1999), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and literacy clubs (Smith, 1988) that they aspire to join. These Discourses include educational, professional, and vocational communities comprising all manner of expert and novice practitioners.”

We must know more about the L2 writer

(Hedgcock, 2005: 600)
Questions

• What is important to multilingual writers and how does this influence their identities as L2 English speakers/writers in an English dominant context?

• How do multilingual writers perceive their participation in the wider academic community and how does their English, particularly written English, interact with participating?
Methodology

- Qualitative Case Study
  - Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - Observations
  - Writing Samples
# Multilingual Writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Begin English</th>
<th>Time in US</th>
<th>Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belita</td>
<td>Guatemalteca</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Non-degree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2 ½ yrs</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dao-Ming</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>30’s</td>
<td>Medicine (U)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>677*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iván</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Business (UG)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 mlnths</td>
<td>--**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Engineering (G)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>590***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melosia</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Education (G)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 ½ yrs</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Com &amp; Jrnl (UG)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun-Mi</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Business (UG)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>473****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Perfect TOEFL-pbt score; ** data not provided; *** converted from IELTS-7.5; **** converted from TOEFL-cbt
Multilingual Writers

• Multilingual Writers have traditionally been conceived of as 1 person with 2 separate language competencies.
  – Resulting Models for Research and Instruction
    • Inference Model \(L_1 \leftrightarrow L_2\)
    • Correlationist Model \(L_1 \rightarrow \leftarrow L_2\)

• Rather let’s consider MLW competence as integrated knowledge, having multiple resources to draw on.
  • Negotiation Model \(L_1 \leftrightarrow L_2\)

(Canagarajah, 2006: 589-590)
Marcus: *To sum up, I guess I could be myself, my “Spanish self”, while I am writing, being totally impervious to the context that I am living here. In fact, if anything, to change my writing, I would have to change my whole personality, because I don't really see them as two different entities.* (Marcus, Identity, 2010)

Natasha: *So, I think in English, but express myself as I would in Russian and it’s really different from English. And it sounds good to me, but for you it would sound not quite right. Just, you know, would hear it and like no we don’t say it like this.* [FG14508 ]

Iván: *Yeah, I told you that this thing happen to me. I write in English but I’m expressing it in Spanish.* [FG14508 ]
Dao-Ming: *Second, about active and passive voice: when I use Microsoft Word to write an article, the tool of grammar check often reminds me that I am using too much passive sentences. At first I didn’t know that in English writing, too much passive structure would sound weak, because in Chinese philosophy, it’s sort of modest gesture. So, to learn English, I not only have to learn the vocabulary, the grammar, but also the English culture and philosophy,* (Dao-Ming, Identity, 2010)

Belita: *The teacher say that if we can- if we want to uh write in another language or something we can do it but I think it’s more difficult to translate. And when I am writing I always put the translator in the computer. Only for be sure that I am using the word that I want.* [BTR4INT4210 ]

Melosia: *I am not just being quiet and waiting that something happen. So grammar, when I am writing my essay are the most challenge because I need to think 4 or 5 times more than just talking. When you talk, just only open the mouth. But when you are writing you need to think uh where r- what are you trying to say find the word who are resemble express your feelings about something more like its more process. It it requires more process for me.* [MNC2INT21110 ]
Communities of Practice

“Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created overtime by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore, to call these kinds of communities, communities of practice.”

(Wenger, 1998: 45)

Trajectories for entering and leaving a community of practice:

• **Peripheral Trajectories:** May never lead to full participation for whatever reason, but contribute to the formation of identity.
• **Inbound Trajectories:** In the process of becoming a member. Identities are vested in future membership.

(ibid:154)
Conflicting Messages

S: Um, but like in my biology lab, the things I cost a lot of score from the vocabulary. Like “a, an, and the.” It was like a have a debate something. Even I don’t know what is have a debate mean. So, I don’t say the “the”. Just say “have a debate” and something like that. And I didn’t put the “the” in front of “have a debate” so I cost loss 2 or 3 points out of 15. That’s a lot.

N: I’m surprised like I talk to the teacher say that I took ESL class so this is going to be a big, step, step for me to take English, um, regular 102 class. So I mentioned that it’s not my first language, and she was XXXX So she grades my paper on a regular basis like everyone else’s.

M: Umh.

N: And she goes I that you’re Russian and it’s not your first language. I know it’s hard but she doesn’t give me any excuses. She uh, critiques my paper as I was American.

M: Umh.
Conflicting Messages con’t

S: Yeah, actually my biology lab TA something they=
I: Yeah and in my case, my teacher say that I’m going to grade this one for a foreign language student. So she grade me as another language.
M: So she has different=
I: Yeah.
M: standards, criteria. But yours doesn’t.
S: Me too.
I: Um.
S: She XXXX “Do more.” Do more than the regular.
M: Do more?
S: Yeah, you have to because you’re a foreigner.
Conflicting Messages con’t

M: Um. Now who says that?
S: The biology TA. [And also] =
M: [Biology].
S: =the lecture teacher too.
M: Okay.
S: You saw my biology class.
M: Yeah.
S: She did everything. But I have to write down every single thing. So I said, “But I don’t understand” but she said “XXXX the XXXX spend more.”

[FG14508]
The reason was and is still is that I feel that I still need to have a complete control or domain of my second language, with things such as essays, circle discussions and debates. Even thought I do not have issues expressing my ideas and saying my points of view. I still believe that I don't want people to think that I lack in knowledge or abilities just because I have a strong accent or I do miscues at the moment that I speak or write. (Melosia, Reflection, 2011)
I definitely have encountered some contempt about my “broken English”, but it didn’t really hurt me, and I am not keeping it in my conscious memory. I know as a new immigrant, my English is good enough, and I know that my English is going to be better and better. (Dao-Ming, My English, 2010)
The curriculum and instructional practice has been a perplexingly overlooked and underrepresented aspect of research on L2 writing (Leki, Cumming, and Silva, cited in Hinkle 2011a, p. 535).

The need for research in comprehensive curriculum design and effective instruction in L2 writing is indisputably great (Hinkle 2011a, p. 535).


Teacher Perspectives

Lindsey Ives, University of New Mexico:
ivesle@unm.edu
College Composition for Multilingual Writers

 Goals:
- Prepare Students to write in disciplines outside of English
- Foreground diverse literacies
- Serve the needs of “ear learners” and “eye learners” without shortchanging either group  (Reid, 1998)
Criticism of Traditional Approaches

Although assignments that emphasize personal expression are often encouraging to students, they can also be damaging because they "do not assist the culturally and linguistically diverse students to understand literacy practices in the world around them" (Johns, 2006: 285).

The process approach "has left composition studies with an archeology and even a psychology of texts, but it has not equally provided a sociology of texts that accounts as fully for their social and socializing presence" (Bawarshi, 2003: 55).
Both-And Opportunity

We must [. . .] challenge the idea that each of us is in only one community at a time, as though discourse communities were so distinct and unchanging that moving among them literally involved crossing a border" (Guerra, 1997: 250)
Class Demographics

- 11 Students Total
- All international students
- Nationalities:
  - One from Bolivia
  - Two from Saudi Arabia
  - Two from Norway
  - One from Sweden
  - One from Russia
  - One from Peru
  - Three from Korea
## Overview of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing Assignment (3-7 pages)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Every 4-5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Stakes Writing Assignment (1-2 pages)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Every 4-5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Memo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>After each Major Writing Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Notebook Entry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Presentation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Grammar Presentation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Low-Stakes Assignment #2: Describe the discourse community for which you will write your review to a classmate interested in joining that community. Your description should focus on:

1) The reason for communication in the group
2) Social positioning/hierarchy within the group
3) Common genres
4) Common conventional patterns and registers that shape those genres
5) What is most important for the classmate to remember if he/she wants to join the community?
Major Assignment #1: Write a review of a book, movie, television show, website, or product for the discourse community that you described in LSA 2. Because you are writing for a specific discourse community, your review should:

1) Discuss a book, movie, television show or product that would be of interest to that community
2) Be based on common values and expectations that characterize that community
3) Be written in a register that you described in LSA 2
Metalanguage

• **Discourse Community:** Any group of people that communicates for a specific purpose. Unlike a speech community, which inherits its members by birth, accident, or adoption, a discourse community recruits its members by persuasion, training, or relevant qualification. (Swales, 1990).

• **Genre:** Ways of writing and speaking that help people interact and work together. They reflect social practice and change over time. (Johnson-Sheehan and Paine, 2010: 2)

• **Register:** A variety of language used for a specific purpose and/or in a specific social setting.

• **Conventional Patterns:** Ways in which written genres are organized differently in different cultures to reflect the expectations of people in those cultures.
Major Assignment #2: Research Report

**Goal:** Research the major or profession that you hope to enter in the future and write a report of your findings

**Audience:** Other undergraduate students who are interested in the major or profession that you are investigating

**Requirements:** Investigate common written and spoken genres; describe values and expectations for written (and perhaps also spoken) discourse

**Format:** IMRad (Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion)
Benefits of the Discourse Community Approach

• Takes advantage of students’ ‘zones of proximal development’ (Russell, 2001)

• Foregrounds language knowledge that students bring to the classroom

• Makes implicit knowledge explicit

• Does not position one discourse as inherently better than another

• Makes the consideration of social expectations part of the writing process
Future Revisions

• Narrow the focus

• Create more activities that reinforce the metaterms

• Change the final Major Assignment

• Span two semesters

• Consider race and ethnicity


Ortmeier-Hooper, C. (2008). English may be my second language, but I'm not 'ESL'. *College Composition and Communication*, 59(3), 389-419.


Administrator Perspectives

Tom Pierce, Central New Mexico Community College:

tpierce@cnm.edu
Although the community college is the bottom tier of a strictly differentiated system of higher education, it plays a central role in granting access to that system.” (Cox, 2009: 2)
The Seventh Circle: Current trends are bringing larger and larger numbers of underprepared students to community colleges. The seventh circle contains students who are the least well prepared to succeed in higher education because they lack basic literacy skills.

*Literacy Level ESL and GED classes
*Tutoring

*Orientation
*MOU’s with other institutions

ESL 0250 ESL Literacy Workshop: Introduces alphabet, phonemic system, basic vocabulary and simple sentences in meaningful, communicative contexts.

ESL 0505 ESL Learning Center: Individualized study and tutoring in English as a Second Language, in the Adult Education Learning.

GEDR 0250 Basic Language Skills I: Explores basic reading and writing strategies using phonics, development of sight vocabulary, and collaborative use of materials in themes relevant to students’ lives.

GEDW 0550 Beginning Writing: Covers basic reading/writing strategies using phonics and sight vocabulary.
The Sixth Circle: Many students come to community college without basic skills in English. In the sixth circle, the focus is on the achievement of basic fluency in written and spoken English.

- ESL Classes
- Conversation groups
- *Resources/achievement coaches
- *Tutoring

The Fifth Circle: Some students may also lack a high school credential, either from the U.S. or their home country. These students may spend time working toward a GED.

- GED Classes
- Tutoring
- *Workshops
- *Resources/ achievement coaches
The Fourth Circle: A small percentage of multilingual writers need only language development. We provide English for speakers of other languages classes designed to prepare advanced ESL students for college level work, with particular emphasis on writing skills.

- ESOL classes
- College Success Experience Classes
- Tutoring

ESOL 0450 Introduction to College English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESOL 0551 Basic Reading/Writing Skills for Speakers of Other Languages
ESOL 0751 Practical Writing for Speakers of Other Languages
ESOL 0951 Essay Writing for Speakers of Other Languages
The Third Circle: A large percentage of entering students will take at least one developmental class at CNM (Math, Reading, English), and many of these students are multilingual students.

- Developmental English Classes
- * College Success Experience Classes
- Tutoring
- * ESOL
- Integration of Developmental and Adult Education

**ENG 0550 - Basic Writing and Reading Skills:** Focuses on basic reading and writing for practical use in school and life.

**ENG 0750 - Practical Writing:** Focuses on writing tasks related to daily life, school and the workplace to achieve a variety of practical and academic goals.

**ENG 0950 - Essay Writing:** Prepares students for first-year college composition by providing practice of the rhetorical and grammatical skills necessary to write purposeful, reader-centered essays.

**CSE- 0650- College Survival:** Introduces students to basic college survival skills.
The Second Circle: Once the developmental level has been passed, students may enter college level writing classes (ENG 1101, 1102).

- College Composition classes
- Tutoring
- College Success Experience Classes

ENG 1101—College Writing: Introduces text-based essay composition.

ENG 1102 – Analytic and Argumentative Writing: Emphasizes analytic and argumentative writing.

CSE 1160- Research Techniques: Assists students in accessing, retrieving, and critically evaluating information in various formats.
The First Circle: Many students plan to complete a bachelors degree, but due to costs, lower class sizes, and other considerations, many will complete an associates degree before transferring to University.

• Articulation agreements between CNM and UNM
• College Success Experience
• Tutoring

CSE- 1120 Career Exploration  Assists students through process of charting and exploring academic and career pathways.
CNM provides drop-in tutoring services six days a week at five different campuses. Opportunities exist for student study groups and ESL conversation groups.

**Academic Coaching and Intervention:** Helps students set academic goals; provides guidance as they develop success strategies to overcome academic difficulties or setbacks; assists students in development of skills in planning, resiliency, and persistence.

**Career and Transition Coaching:** Helps students bridge the gap between where they are now in their careers and where they want to be.
CNM provides a Variety of Integrated resources for students at the introductory level. VIRGIL is an acronym that I use to describe the services we provide to help students navigate the system, and work toward proficiency in English and communicative competence.

**Variety**

**Integrated**

**Resources**

**Given**

**Introductory**

**Levels**

Classes—Tutoring—Academic Coaching—Orientation—CSE
References


Discussion Questions

1. How can we negotiate between responding to what students want and need from instruction and what academic administrators and instructors want from them?

1. How might we revise this survey to garner better feedback about expectations for student writing across the disciplines?

2. How can colleges and universities identify the various MLW populations and how can we track these populations?