DOING (IT) RIGHT: WRITING CENTER CONSULTANTS'
RE-ENTEXTUALIZATION OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT

Public-facing statements about anti-racism and linguistic justice have become common tools for educational organizations to promote values of criticality and openness. Such statements often explicitly reject practices that equate language difference with deficit and continue to harm marginalized groups that speak languages or use pronouns that fall outside of the "mainstream." As with all language policies, enacting such statements is far from straightforward as individual social actors bring to bear their own experiences and interpretations of the policy. Drawing on the methodological framework of nexus analysis and theoretical foundations regarding the re-entextualization of language ideologies, this dissertation examines one US university writing center's language statement as it seeks to decenter English-dominant standard language ideologies and to promote inclusive language practices in the center.

In particular, this study highlights how four writing center consultants interpreted and appropriated the statement in diverse ways. Data sources included documents related to onboarding and training, extended semi-structured interviews about consultants' prior experiences with language difference and consulting practices, audio-recorded observations and field notes of hour-long writing consultations, participant journals, and post-observation reflection interviews. A poststructural, multi-scalar discourse analysis revealed tensions between policy and practice, as well as several profiles of ideological negotiation within the consultants. Discourses valuing competition, excellence, and expertise at the university level came into tension with discourses of relationality and collaboration within the writing center. In response to requests to correct clients' grammar, consultants developed and revised practices that re-entextualized their past experiences with language diversity as well as the center's policies about language. The choices to accept or challenge expertise positioning and agree or refuse to make

direct edits on clients' writing were identified as key moments where consultants (re)created discursive relationships between their actions and institutional discourses about language use.

Educational institutions seeking to support linguistic diversity through such value-laden language policies should also develop reflective and collaborative tools to assist its members in navigating these ideological tensions. The study lends continued support to using language ideology as an invaluable conceptual tool for administrators and educators interested in grappling with complex social problems.

In eternal gratitude to Ann Marie Montgomery

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made learning fun when it was hard, made me feel heard when I felt alone, and shaped my life for the better.

Finally, I owe so much to my family. Mom and Dad, you showed me (and everyone else) what radical love meant long before Ted Lasso made it cool. Gulmira, Emmy, and Sammy (!), you three are my reason to never stop growing and striving. Thank you for keeping all this work stuff in perspective.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The building that houses the writing center's main location is neither one of the campus's oldest nor newest. I approach the faded brick building from the north, crossing the bridge over the river that cuts through campus, and climb up to the third floor. The writing center is at the end of a long hallway of classes, the cinder block walls painted in alternating dark greens and browns. The double doors at the entrance are propped open, and a splash of color and the smell of coffee greet me. There is a coat rack with a modest collection of wacky hats and a feather boa to the left, and a flatscreen TV display mounted at eye level to the right, scrolling through slides about the center's hours, locations, events, and client testimonials. The muted colors of the hallways have given away to a mixture of pastel greens and purples on the walls, accented by a clock made of forks and spoons, and a large area rug swirling with primary colors. The space opens up beyond the entrance, and my eyes are drawn upward to the ceiling tiles, which have been painted by alumni of the center. There are trombones and jeeps and landscape portraits, and I think about what I'll write on my own before I leave. There are nine tables, each with four chairs around them, lit by three large windows on the eastern wall. There is a disco ball hanging roughly in the middle of the room, and the morning light dances off it. It is 9am and the first sessions of the day are getting started. Two writing center consultants have in-person clients, and a third appears to be starting a session on GoogleDocs. I overhear the consultant sitting farthest from the window ask her client, "So, what are we working on today?"

(Reflective memo, September 5, 2022)

Writing Center Consultants as Language Policy Arbiters

This dissertation is a story primarily about writing center consultants and the work they do, both physically and discursively. Writing center consultants occupy a complex relational and interactional space on a university campus, as they tend to be students (both undergraduate and graduate-level) as well as mentors, tutors, or coaches of other students. As hourly or assistantship-based employees, they are subjected to university policies about employment, appropriate conduct, and upholding institutional values. As student-facing writing consultants, they are policy arbiters whose actions contribute to the *de facto* policy landscape, alongside instructors, faculty members, and teaching assistants. What happens in the writing center, especially one that conducts over 1,000 one-on-one consultations each semester, is far from inconsequential.

On a local level, writing center "consultants" across the country meet with "clients[1]" in libraries, classrooms, and basements to talk about writing. They ask questions about the writers' goals, seek to understand each piece's broader context and purpose, discuss the writers' writing process, and offer suggestions to improve clarity, structure, or precision. They are also frequently invited into a writer's personal world and may offer advice or encouragement on a wide range of topics, from overcoming writer's block to deciphering assignment guidelines or instructor feedback, to coping with a medical condition or deciding whether to apply to graduate school. For these reasons, they must be both skilled technicians of writing practices and emotionally intelligent peers who can connect to others on a personal level.

In the writing center I highlight in this study (hereinafter, the Center), the consultants come from a variety of academic and demographic backgrounds. The university itself is a large publicly funded institution in the US Midwest, with over 50,000 students, including international students from over 130 countries. In order to join the Center as employees, undergraduate consultants must take a semester-long for-credit course taught by more experienced writing center consultants and administrators. Meanwhile, graduate student consultants experience an abbreviated onboarding curriculum and peer-mentoring program without a formal coursework component. Both undergraduate and graduate consultants attend day-long orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester and bi-weekly professional development (PD) sessions during the semester. Given this array of trajectories into the center—coupled with the interpersonal dynamics involved—writing center consultation practices vary considerably.

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[1] This writing center purposefully adopts the terms consultants and clients and offers this explanation: "Whereas the concept of *tutoring* suggests instruction, knowledge sharing, and skill development, *consultancy* embodies peer-to-peer collaboration in the teaching and learning process, challenging who is considered an expert in sessions." (Handbook, p. 43, emphasis added)

In addition to the concrete interactions they have with clients, consultants also work on a broader level, one that is more figurative or symbolic. Their actions occur against a backdrop of national conversations about higher education, employment and labor unions, gun violence and regulation, freedom of speech and policies banning critical race theory, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Their on-the-ground actions also reinforce or challenge collectively held standards of "good" writing and "acceptable" language use. They represent the institution's (as an abstract collective entity) commitments (or lack thereof) to learning, progress, and well-being. They serve as micro-models of academic socialization as they simultaneously socialize and are socialized by others into discursive practices. Importantly, consultants regularly interpret and respond to institutional policies that carry social and political value—that is, they do ideological work. What they choose to notice in a piece of writing, the ways they give feedback, and the words they use to negotiate meaning with their clients are reflections and reenactments of language ideologies (i.e., value systems about language) circulating more broadly. In this sense, they are "intermediary agents" or "arbiters" (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2015) situated between language policies and language practices in an institutional setting.

Statement of the Problem

At the writing center I want to tell you about, these two levels—the physical and the discursive—collide and intertwine in myriad ways. The focus of this study centers around a short policy document, which represents one such entanglement. Indeed, the main aim of this study is to untangle and make sense of the discursive threads leading in and the discursive ripples (Ou et al., 2021) emanating from the practices and ideologies that make up this policy process. The

policy is called the "Language Statement" which is found on the Center's website and employee

handbook alongside the center's Vision Statement. It reads, in part:

> We challenge the notion of standard English as the only correct expressive form; respect writers' agency to express themselves in ways most comfortable to them, including their choice of Englishes; support them in advocating for their language practice, [work] with writers to develop multiple literacies, and [promote] diverse understandings of writing.

As a graduate coordinator (and later administrator) in this center, I found the language

statement (reproduced in full in Appendix A) to present a unique challenge to consultants and

clients alike, as it pushed back against the long-held belief that for writing to be good, it should

adhere to what we might call "standard mainstream English" (Canagarajah, 2006). So much of

my prior training and experience as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English

for Academic Purposes (EAP) had centered around scaffolding instruction to meet that supposed

uniform, homogenized, and idealized standard. How were consultants supposed to follow this

policy? Is a language statement even a policy? What were consultants meant to say to the 40% of

the clients visiting the center who identified as multilingual, especially those that explicitly

wanted help "correcting" their grammar? This dissertation is a story about consultants making

sense of their own practice in light of the policies that govern their work.

A Multilayered Toolkit

Educational linguists and language policy (LP) scholars have increasingly taken an

interest in linking globally circulating ideologies to everyday practices (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012;

Ou et al., 2021, Savski, 2023). Making such connections across physical and discursive space

can be challenging methodologically, as the task of disentangling the "layered simultaneity" of

social action (Blommaert, 2005; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) requires researchers to cultivate

the ability to "jump scales" (Blommaert, 2010) from micro to macro without the losing the

reader (or themselves!) in the process. To manage this complexity, I used nexus analysis (Scollon

& Scollon, 2004) as an interdisciplinary "meta-methodology" (Hult, 2010, p. 10) to investigate writing center consultations as they relate to language ideologies and language policies. This methodology acknowledges that any social action sits at the intersection of multiple circulating discourses, including: 1) the lived experiences of the social actors involved, 2) the discourses made relevant in the time and place of the action, and 3) the interpersonal social arrangement of the actors involved. Scollon and Scollon (2004) refer to these, respectively, as the *historical body, discourses in place,* and *interaction order*. I relied on research from education policy studies, composition (writing) studies, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology.

My exploration of language ideologies, policies, and practices in the writing center is anchored in the following analytical frames: 1) the institutional processes that structure coursework and mentorship for new consultants, 2) the discursive construction of the university through communications, policy documents, and writing center professional development materials, 3) the individual previous experiences consultants bring to the center, 4) individual consultants' interpretations of policy documents, 5) individual consultation practices, and 6) reflections about those practices. By maintaining a focus on the social processes of making meaning with language, I aim to shed light on the discursive mechanisms working behind the scenes of our everyday interactions.

This study underscores the view that policies are not "implemented" but rather are *created*, *interpreted*, and *appropriated* by social actors (following Johnson, 2015) amidst the "ideological cacophony" (Johnson, 2007, p. 256) that describes social life. I therefore avoid describing any policy as having intentions of its own and instead view policy documents as "frozen" social actions (Norris, 2004) and "multivoiced" artefacts (Bakhtin, 1981) that are crafted and interpreted by individuals across time and space. In order to investigate the

interaction and impact of language ideologies in the Writing Center, I sought to answer three

research questions:

1. What language ideologies are promoted in the authoritative discourses (including the employee handbook, syllabi from courses required for undergraduate and graduate consultants, professional development workshops, and emails from university administrators) circulating in the Center?
2. What prior experiences with linguistic diversity do four consultants bring with them to their consultations?
3. What language ideologies are constructed in four consultants' writing consultation practices?

The first question is aimed at documenting the *discourses in place* at the time of a

consultation, acknowledging that consultants encounter many other formal and informal policy

documents in addition to the Language Statement. The second question examines four

consultants' *historical bodies* in order to identify the values and experiences that shape their

consulting practices. The third question addresses the *interaction order* by which new meanings

are constructed in the interactional space of a writing center consultation.

Focusing on these connections in a research study has significant implications and social

relevance. Firstly, understanding the interrelation between academic writing, language

ideologies, and language policies helps researchers and educators appreciate the complex

dynamics that shape scholarly communication. This awareness can lead to more inclusive and

culturally responsive approaches to academic writing instruction, acknowledging the diverse

language backgrounds and beliefs of students. Furthermore, research in this area can shed light

on how language policies in educational institutions may inadvertently perpetuate or challenge

existing social hierarchies and power dynamics. This knowledge can inform efforts to create

more equitable and inclusive language policies within educational institutions. Ultimately,

exploring these connections contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, academic

writing, and societal norms are intertwined, offering insights that can lead to positive changes in educational practices and policies.

By answering these questions from the perspective of four writing center consultants, I argue that 1) writing center consultations represent a complex nexus of practice shaped by the discourses circulating in a given place, the personal experiences of the individuals who work there, and the social arrangement enacted between each consultant and client; 2) a focus on language ideologies in instructional spaces makes visible profound issues of power and privilege that should not go ignored in the teaching of writing and the training of writing teachers; and 3) critical pragmatism offers a viable way forward for institutions to meaningfully participate in social justice work.

Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has served to situate the context and research problem of the study, namely the language ideologies (re)constructed through the consulting practices of four writing center consultants at a large public university in the US Midwest. The next chapter unpacks the theoretical foundations of the study, bringing together research on writing center theory and practice, academic literacies, language policy studies, and critical ethnographic discourse analytical methods. The third chapter zooms in to the research site, introducing the reader to focal participants and the methodological tools employed to analyze their experiences prior to working at the writing center. Chapters four, five, and six, in turn, present the answers to the three research questions, each followed by a brief discussion section. Chapter seven synthesizes the three findings chapters together as a nexus of practice and offers several implications of the study, including recommendations for writing center consultants, writing center administrators, and language policy researchers.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

I remember a feeling of surprise at seeing such a strong political statement on a university website. Upon reading the words, "we challenge the notion of a standard English as the only correct expressive form," I instantly felt conflicted. The statement suggested a shared belief about the relational nature of writing and teaching, and I wondered how it related to the ethos of the Center as an organization. As I go through new consultant onboarding, I find myself calling into question so many of my writing teacher practices. How many of my teaching decisions over the past decade were premised on the supremacy of that "standard" English? How many hours had my multilingual students sweated and toiled over doing things according to this standard?

In a recent meeting with an administrator, I shared how I felt like I wanted someone to show me the right way to consult in the Center. She asked me, "Well, what part of the process are you wanting to refine?" And with that, I continued on reflecting on the various areas consulting that I felt less confident in. She named that feeling "consultant guilt", the sense that I should be able to know everything and fix everything. In our conversations, when I pushed and said that I wanted more techniques to use in a tutoring session, she was able to point me to resources in the handbook about agenda setting, rapport building, and reverse outlining. She did not tell me how to consult, even if that was what I was asking for. Asking questions, it seems, is part of the ethos of giving feedback and mentoring in the center.

(Reflective memo, September 30, 2021)

My induction into the Center was somewhat challenging, as I was continually invited examine my assumptions about what it means to write, to teach, and to consult on others' writing. My concern about consulting "right" in the vignette above reflects an ideological tension between practices and values. I see in those words a desire for technical skills needed for consulting, supposedly unencumbered by political ideologies. However, as this dissertation underlines, all practices—even the most apolitical technical skill of proofreading for grammar mistakes—reflect the value systems of the social actors involved. In this chapter, I situate my interest in language ideologies evident in the policies and practices of the Writing Center within broader academic literature. As an interdisciplinary endeavor spanning the fields of applied linguistics, composition studies, and education policy, it is essential to define and operationalize the key terms and constructs that form the basis of this study. After defining key terms, I organize the chapter into three main parts, each of which serves as a lens through which I investigate this

research problem: language ideologies in language policy research, standard language ideology and social justice in the writing center, and nexus analysis as multi-scalar language policy research.

Operationalizing Key Terms

The following pairs of key terms highlight trends about their use in various academic disciplines as well as important distinctions between them. These definitions reflect ontological and epistemological stances that inform the design and execution of the study.

Literacy and Literacy Practices

While literacy can be understood simply as the ability to read and write, the term has come to encompass much more of the context and social purposes attached to those seemingly individual processes. UNESCO (2023, para. 2) defines literacy as "a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world" a definition which reflects how reading and writing are means to make sense in complex social interactions. Lea and Street (1998) and others in the New Literacy Studies movement (e.g., Barton, Hamilton & Ivanič, 2000; Gee, 2015 [1996]; Street, 1984) described literacy not as a single capacity, but as a pluralized collection of "literacies" or "literacy practices" that are always embedded within social systems, and therefore often experienced as being in conflict and flux. Street (1995) challenged the "autonomous" model of literacy as a context-neutral skill, arguing that literacy is ideological in nature and called researchers to examine "how the assertion of authority and the allocation of participants to specific roles and relationships are inscribed within particular literacy events" (p. 123).

This broader, pluralized definition results in a pluralistic view that making meaning with language need not involve reading and writing, and that populations previously described against

an "academic" monolingual norm as "illiterate" in reality engage in rich and diverse literacy practices. Literacy is therefore a social practice (Gee, 2015 [1996]; Horner, 2013; Street, 1995) which is then best understood by observing individuals engaging in related actions in real time and attending to the dynamics of power and privilege reinscribed therein.

Writing and Social Practice

Definitions of writing have similarly moved beyond traditional emphasis on the combined cognitive and technical process of *composing text*. Writing studies scholars (e.g., Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) commonly include several additional layers that recognize writing as a deeply social activity. In everyday life, writing is a means to communicate an idea across time and space, whether via text message, email, or birthday card, and therefore requires rhetorical awareness of the text's purpose and audience. In academic spaces, writing takes on an even larger role, as it is routinely used as a tool for reflection and meta-cognition, a mechanism to perform disciplinary knowledge and membership, and a proxy for the assignment and negotiation of social worth, economic capital, and identity positions (Curry, 2016). An academic literacies orientation to academic writing examines the "assumptions about the nature and value of academic writing conventions for participation in knowledge creation" (Lillis, 2019, p. 2). For these reasons, I view writing and its teaching primarily as social practices imbued with contextual purposes, motives, and constraints.

Discourse and Ideology

The term *discourse* is commonly defined as language in use (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1999). Blommaert (2005) uses the phrase "contextualized language" (p. 235) to emphasize that discourse does not refer solely to the texts, but in the context of meaning around the use of language. In this study, I adopt Scollon and Scollon's (2004, p. 2) view of discourse as "the use

of language to accomplish some action in the social world," emphasizing the intimate connection between language and doing things in the real world. Mediated discourse analysis (Jones & Norris, 2005) reflects this definition and describes inquiry into the production and negotiation of meaning including both language use and social actions, mediated by written or spoken text, gestures, or material objects.

Discourse has also been theorized more broadly as a social system of practices that facilitate the (re)production of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1971), bringing it into contact with a neighboring concept, *ideology*. I define ideology as an orientation to social norms and valued practices associated with a given group (Montgomery et al., 2024). Ideologies about language, for example, can be considered "regimes of value" (Gal & Irvine, 2019, p. 14), and are themselves discourses through which shared understandings about acceptable and unacceptable language use are communicated. Ideologies are both "structurating practices and…dynamic, scalar phenomena" (Spitzmüller et al., 2021, p. 1) that organize social life. As a theoretical construct, ideology mediates the relationship between language, identities, and social structures and illuminates sites of contested values, norms, and expectations within and across groups of people (Montgomery et al., 2024). In other words, ideological discourse matters greatly, both as a signal of the power dynamics between two interlocutors and as a vehicle by which those power dynamics are enacted.

Standard Language Ideology and Heteroglossia

Language ideologies depend on and reflect value statements (e.g., good/bad) about language practices that reflect the desired norm for a community. As such, they are often enacted through markers of affinity group membership (e.g., us/them) (Gal & Irvine, 2019; van Dijk, 2006). They are often described as collectively held discourse stances (de Jong, 2013), biases

(Ortega, 2019), or orientations (Bou Ayash, 2019) towards language. Language ideologies range from monoglossic/monolingual (Lippi-Green, 2012; Woolard, 2020) to heteroglossic/multilingual (Bakhtin, 1981; Blackledge & Creese, 2014) and are reflective of societal views of language as a vehicle to linguistic and cultural assimilation or pluralism, respectively (de Jong, 2013). Historically, academic spaces have been shown to assume monolingual norms (Canagarajah, 2006; Lippi-Green, 2012) and have been reluctant to reflect the "real multilingualism" of students and teachers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2014, p. 242). As part of a multilingual turn (May, 2019), applied linguists are increasingly championing a heteroglossic view of language (Canagarajah, 2006; Pennycook, 2022). In broad terms, a heteroglossic view of language reflects a bottom-up, asset-based view of language learners.

Neoliberalism and Social Justice

Neoliberalism is an economic theory that maintains that free trade is more beneficial for a society than government regulation, and where "the state seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur" (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 315). In education, the discourse of neoliberalism has been associated with a shift toward privatization, auditing processes, standardized testing, and credentialism (Bernstein et al., 2020; Piller & Cho, 2013). Critical applied linguists (e.g., De Costa et al., 2020a) frequently challenge neoliberal logic on the basis that it exacerbates inequalities in society.

Social justice, on the other hand, is a political ideology that seeks to eliminate social and economic discrimination and disadvantage that results from one's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or age (Piller, 2016). A social justice agenda in applied linguistics centers fairness by examining power imbalances related to those identity categories and seeks to promote equitable multilingualism in educational spaces (Ortega, 2019). While not necessarily

antithetical ideological orientations, discourses related to neoliberalism and social justice are often in competition (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2020; de Jong, 2013).

Structuralist and Poststructuralist Orientations to Discourse and Ideology

I approach the task of discourse analysis with a poststructuralist epistemology, which Angermuller (2020) describes as rooted in reflexive, antiessentialist, and posthumanist theory and centrally focused on the intersection of language, power, and subjectivity. As she writes, "poststructuralism invites us to theorize the way in which structures are made and unmade in discursive practices without giving up a critical reflexive take on the question of power and inequality" (p. 242). As a set of attitudes, poststructuralism stems from Derrida's deconstructivism, Barthes's insistence on the plurality of textual meaning, and Foucault's attention to the construction and maintenance of power through discourse (Crick, 2016). At its core, this means that discursive practices are constitutive of the social, a view which contrasts with a structuralist tendency (even within critical discourse studies) to view power and inequality as a tidy opposition between oppressors on top and oppressed below. A poststructuralist view of language ideologies recognizes that the linkages between language and political structures in society are characterized by "partiality, contestability, instability, and mutability" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 10). In other words, we should not expect to capture a language ideology in its entirety or to find unanimous consensus about what we find.

Blommaert (2005) argued that structuralist views of ideology are cognitive/ideational in nature, and view ideologies as "received wisdom" contained in discourse (p. 161). In contrast, a poststructuralist framing is material in nature and emphasizes the "the particular social formations, instruments of power, and institutional frames within which particular sets of ideas are promulgated" (p. 161). Extending a bit further, a poststructuralist conception of higher

education challenges the view of any institution as a monolithic gatekeeper of what counts as knowledge. Moreover, it coincides with increased attention to naming and combating institutional racism, sexism, ableism, and other social injustices (Baker-Bell, 2020; Dolmage, 2017; Piller, 2016; Schreiber et al., 2022). Higher education policies, including a writing center's language policy, represent potential sites of ideological negotiation where social injustices can be identified and remedied.

Ideological Orientations in Language Policy Research

The study of language policy has long included both a look at the policy texts that direct individuals' actions and the actual practices and ideologies relevant to the policy context (for extended histories, see Gazzola et al., 2023; Johnson, 2018; Tollefson & Pérez-Milans, 2018). Consider Spolsky's (1978, p. viii) foundational description of educational linguistics, a subfield of applied linguistics concerned with language policy and instruction in educational settings:

> Educational linguistics starts with the assessment of a child's communicative competence on entering school and throughout his or her career, includes the analysis of societal goals for communicative competence, and embraces the whole range of activities undertaken by an educational system to bring its pupils' linguistic repertoires into closer accord with those expected by society. It thus is concerned with the processes used to bring about change, whether to suppress, enrich, alter the use of, or add, one or more styles, dialects, varieties, or languages.

Evident in this description is the recognition that the study of language policy in educational settings is multifaceted and includes three broad-strokes components: the management of languages, often within a formal institution like a university; the language practices of individuals associated with this institution; and language ideologies, which exert an influence on how people employ language(s) and manage language usage (see Figure 1, adapted from Spolsky, 2004). Such a description also reflects an underlying structuralist view where the power to assess is located in the hands of the educational linguist, and the direction of influence is 'downward' to change "pupils' linguistic repertoires" rather than 'outward' to engage in social

activism and societal change. In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the conceptual framework that informed this study of language ideology negotiation in response to a writing center's language policy.

Figure 1

Spolsky's (2004) Three-Part Framework of Language Policy
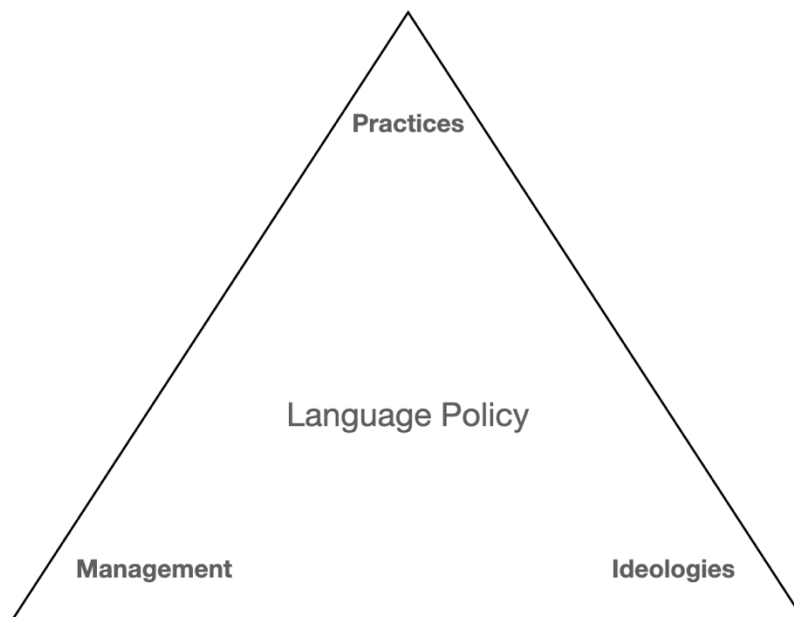
Discursive Approaches to Language Policy

Early LP scholars focused primarily on language planning activities which were explicitly normative, such as "preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers" (Haugen, 1959, p. 8), and saw language policy as the solving of problems (Johnson, 2018). Tollefson and Pérez-Milans (2018) describe the formative years of LP research to be "a practical objective science" (p. 5) that was grounded in objectivist, positivist presumptions about language and was narrowly defined in service of national language

corpus and status planning. In particular, early scholarship about language policy and planning

reflected the view that:

> Languages have reality apart from their speakers; sociolinguistic categories such as *language, dialect, diglossia,* and *national identity* have fixed meanings and clear boundaries; and there is a direct link between language and identity that places the individual speaker neatly in ethnic and national categories.

(Tollefson & Pérez-Milans, 2018, p. 6)

In this way, early LP prioritized identification and quantification of national-level goals related to

language learning, bilingualism, economic development, and political stability.

Over the subsequent decades (1970s-1990s) LP scholars (like scholars in the New

Literacy Studies movement) were influenced by postmodern and critical theories, and the field

expanded to include investigations into the ways language reproduced social inequality (Ricento,

2006). For example, Fishman (1966, 1980) sought to reframe the discourse around bilingual

education from *shifting* language use to the dominant language in society to *maintaining* the

languages and linguistic rights of speakers of minoritized languages. At the turn of the 21st

century, language policies were theorized as representing implementational and ideological

spaces (Hornberger, 2002, 2005), and more attention was given to the interplay between structure

and agency across ecological levels of society (Johnson, 2007). Responding to the concurrent

reconceptualization of language policies as fluid, polycentric, and dynamic (Blommaert et al.,

2005; Blommaert, 2010), new methodologies gained popularity as researchers explored language

practices as *de facto* language policies that operate at multiple scales like the layers of an onion

(Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; see also Hult, 2016). Cooper (1989, p. 98) defined the newly

broadened focus of language planning (what we now call language policy) to include: "What

actors attempt to influence what behaviours of which people for what ends under what conditions

by what means through what decision-making process with what effect." In response, LP

scholars have increasingly relied on narrative inquiry, conversation analysis, and ethnography to describe the processes by which policies are constructed, interpreted, and appropriated by social actors (Johnson, 2015), commonly referred to as policy arbiters (Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Van Raemdonck et al., 2023).

Figure 2

Johnson and Johnson's (2015) LP Funnel Model of LP Arbiters
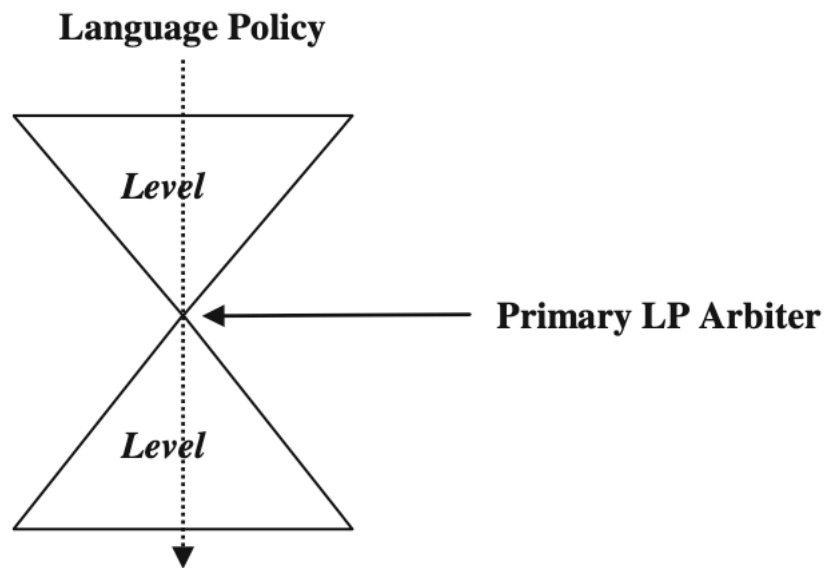
Policy arbiters are defined broadly as the social actors that engage with a language policy text after its creation (Johnson & Johnson, 2015). Bonacina-Pugh's (2012) distinction between policy as declared, perceived, and practiced acknowledge such dynamic complexity as *de facto* policy implementation can vary from person to person along with their individual perceptions and practices. Johnson and Johnson's (2015) framework, highlighted in Figure 2, focuses primarily on policy arbiters with formal roles as policy implementers at the policymaking or administrative levels (sometimes referred to as street-level bureaucrats, following Lipsky, 1980), such as a writing center director or coordinator who monitors and evaluates consultants' work. However, this policy arbiter framework still views language policy processes primarily as linear

and top-down, with several key individuals holding the lion's share of agentive decision-making power (Randez, 2023). A more distributed, delocalized understanding of institutional power would recognize many more LP arbiters, as well as the multidirectionality of social influence. In many cases, writing consultants, like teachers, must decide for themselves how to relate to their clients, what to notice or ignore in a piece of writing, and how to deliver feedback. Importantly, research has frequently documented gaps between declared and perceived LP (e.g., Creese & Blackledge, 2011), and the clear visions often articulated at larger scales often gets murkier at each scale moving inward toward instantiated actions and practices (Van Raemdonck et al., 2023).

The current LP landscape is no longer characterized by large-scale quantitative studies, nor by a close analysis of policy texts, but by the examination of language policy *in situ*, as both experienced and constituted by social actors. For example, a review of the latest three issues of the journal *Language Policy* reflects broad interests including family language policy, community-based language advocacy, and the effects of language policies on teachers and students in diverse settings. And although there exist a considerable range of contexts under the LP umbrella, ethnographically oriented researchers share the common aim of understanding "the discursive organization of institutions with the main goal of describing the links between local practices, institutional orders, and wider socioeconomic processes of change" (Pérez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018, p. 732). In a broad sense, they adhere to a poststructuralist conceptualization of power as distributed and the subjective nature of meaning. When language-in-education policies (like syllabi and textbooks) are examined, they are often seen as ideological artifacts (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015) that represent "frozen" social actions (Norris, 2004) rather than context-free units of meaning that can be analyzed objectively.

One common target of scholarly criticism is neoliberal ideology, which has proliferated in recent decades (Block et al., 2012). As it pertains broadly to education, neoliberalism has contributed to the privatization of education, formerly treated as a public good, and now turning students into customers with preference given to "those who can pay the bills" (Mintz, 2021, p. 84). Applied linguists often examine the role of language in reproducing orientations toward social values. Piller and Cho (2013) illustrated how neoliberalism, a diffuse ideological orientation, becomes instantiated through language policy. The authors documented how numerous structural processes related to instruction and assessment of English language in South Korea linked language proficiency to competition in social life, including where one works or whom they marry. Critical LP scholars have increasingly challenged the hegemony of neoliberal logic as it quietly undergirds processes at various scales worldwide. They have done so by drawing attention to macro-level processes including proliferation of English as a medium of instruction in schools and universities worldwide to imperatives to compete in a global knowledge economy (De Costa et al., 2020a), meso-level decisions to adoption of the state seals of biliteracy initiative, which seeks to credentialize bilingualism in the US (Schwedhelm & King, 2020), and the micro-level ways school principals prioritize marketing and branding strategies while talking about their dual language programs (Bernstein et al., 2020), or how neoliberal managerial practices become coupled with teachers' desire to care for their students (Pereira, 2018). The scholarly focus on ideology, which Hornberger in 2006 referred to as an "emerging emphasis" (p. 34) has solidified as a core concern in LP research.

From Textuality to Indexicality and Multi-Scalar Re-Entextualization

Johnson (2018) argues that, given the heterogeneity and multifariousness inherent in the interpretation of appropriation of educational policy by arbiters like teachers and administrators,

LP research requires a combination of textual, discourse, and ethnographic methodologies to understand policy actions in a context. Policy, argue Fishman (1972), Schiffman (1996) and Ball (2006), is more about discourse than texts (see also Hult, 2016). To bridge the gap between policy-as-text and policy-as-discourse, I draw on theoretical conceptualizations within linguistic anthropology including indexicality and (re)entextualization.

Indexicality is a core concept that underscores much research on language ideologies, as highlighted in Kroskrity's (2010, p. 192) definition of linguistic ideologies: "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers…rationalizations [that] are typically multiple, context-bound, and necessarily constructed from the sociocultural experience of the speaker." Indexicality in this sense is the process by which a sign (linguistic or otherwise) signals or points to meaning within its own context (Silverstein, 2003). To identify such signs within written and spoken discourse, Wortham and Reyes (2021) present a methodological process of identifying, configuring, and construing *indexical signs*—those lexical items that "presuppose or create aspects of context" (p. 12) by pointing to shared meaning established in some aspect outside the speech event itself.

Drawing heavily on the work of Michael Silverstein (1992, 1993) and Asif Agha (2007), Wortham and Reyes (2021) argue that discourse performs social action by *contextualizing* relevant background information, establishing certain aspects as stable and identifiable through a process of *entextualization*. As meaning travels across contexts and groups of people, it is subsequently *recontextualized* into *registers*, defined as "a model of discursive behavior that links signs—ways of speaking or behaving—with evaluative typifications about people" (Wortham & Reyes, 2021, p. 19). To illustrate using the context of a writing center, a writing consultant might add the following comment to a multilingual client's piece of writing: "This

sentence is a little bit confusing because it seems to contradict what you're actually trying to say" (Melanie, observation data, 4.11.23). *Context* is established through the shared understanding that "this sentence" refers to the one highlighted on the screen, and that the consultant is seeking to understand the text but cannot because it is "confusing". When the consultant says of that same client, "that might not be easy for him […] maybe because he's a second language learner" (Melanie, interview data, 4.11.23), the label "second language learner" is *recontextualized* from prior uses and made relevant in a new situation. Meanwhile, issues related to accuracy and feedback become *entextualized* (i.e., stable and recognizable) as important domains in a consultation. Moreover, we begin to create a mental image of the participants in the interaction. The consultant is *enregistered* as the arbiter of clarity and knower of grammatical accuracy, while the client is similarly construed as deficient in "standard" English. Through these processes, social action is instantiated through a recognizable pattern of indexical signs.

Because language ideologies are enacted socially through value statements about peoples' language use, two classes of indexicals are central in this study: *personal deictics* and *evaluative indexicals*. Personal deictics are often pronouns like I, me, you, or they, which can be helpful to identify how speakers alternately differentiate between themselves and others (us vs. them) or signal alignment with those in the conversation (we vs. you). For this reason, attention to pronoun use is a key element in positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1999; Kayı-Aydar, 2019), which I expand on in later chapters. Evaluative indexicals, in turn, characterize and evaluate the people and practices in our speech, often as nouns or adjectives that assign a value (often implicitly) to the object being described. Wortham and Reyes (2021) point to the differing connotations that are enacted by referring to a group of students as a "class" or a "crowd" or describing another person as "assertive" as opposed to "aggressive". The words "confusing",

"easy," and "second language learner" in the example above are evaluative indexicals. The connotations associated with the words we use are, importantly, not objective or inherent in the ideas being expressed, but rather are indicative of a shared and emergent meaning that is being constructed (or subsequently solidified or challenged) in speech. This dynamic and fluid understanding of meaning making corresponds with a poststructuralist, material orientation toward ideology.

In broad terms, indexicals point to established and emerging meanings outside of the communicative event and clue us in to how individuals see and experience the world and how they use discourse to create or change associations between ideas. Within this vein, Savski (2023) argues the importance of focusing on the active process of (re)entextualization over recontextualization. The latter refers to "the creation of intertextual and dialogical relationships through the transfer of specific elements of a given text to another context" (Savski, 2020, p. 529), reflecting a structuralist-leaning view of meanings being translated more or less intact across spatiotemporal borders. Meanwhile, the former more explicitly emphasizes the active process by which policy texts are continually reborn—transformed, even—as different social actors use the policy for their own agendas (for more discussion of the two terms, see Krzyżanowski, 2016). Figure 3 illustrates how the process of (re)entextualization underscores links across various scales, including the mediation of actions into practices, the production of meaning across local and global scales, and the negotiation of individual and institutional ownership of a "declared" policy text (Shohamy, 2006).

Figure 3

(Re)entexualization of Language Policy
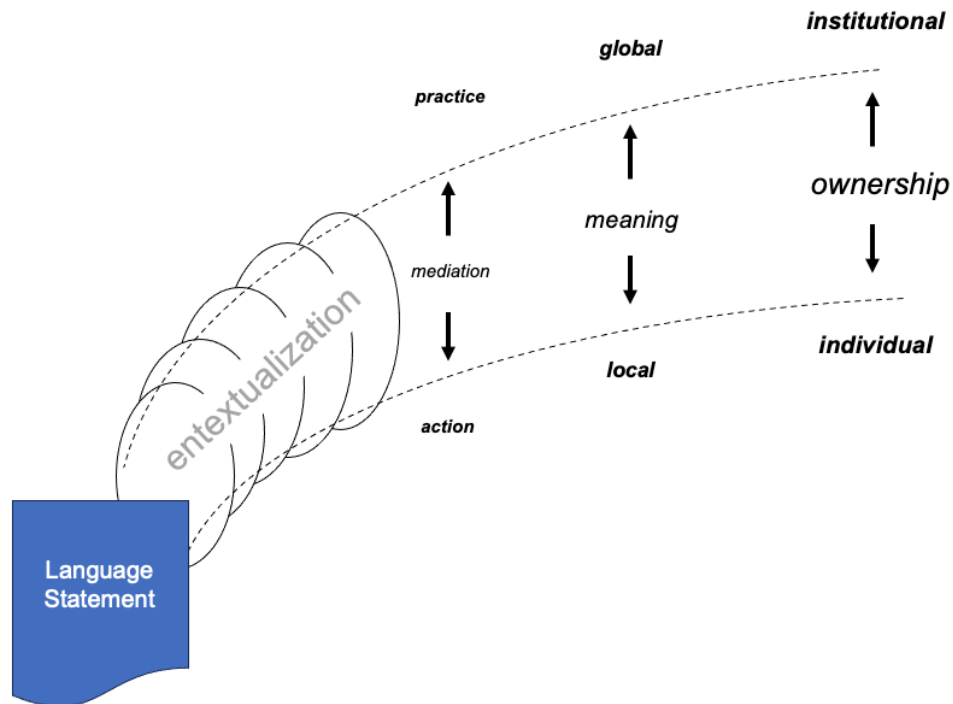
Note. The arrows indicate tensions. Adapted from Savski (2023).

This approach to discourse analysis acknowledges the tension-filled discursive construction of social life and reflects a poststructural orientation that rejects simple dichotomies and easy labels when examining issues of power, control, agency, and knowledge (Anderson & Holloway, 2020; Angermuller, 2020; Baxter, 2016; Gal & Irvine, 2019). As I explain in more detail in the following chapter, a close examination of evaluative indexicals and personal deictics across policy texts, interviews, and observations aligns with this action-oriented view of policy (re)entextualization, as it reveals how individual consultants align with or distance themselves from certain language practices and people.

Re(in)voking the Standard in Writing Center Policy and Practice

Critical scholars in applied linguistics and composition studies alike directly challenge the supposed neutrality and objectivity of a "standard" English, arguing instead that notions of "correct" and "ideal" language are socially constructed and tied to privileged positions of race, gender, educational attainment, and geography (Kubota, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012; Rosa & Flores, 2021). Words like "standard", "mainstream", and "academic" language practices therefore often encode those practices of white, male, educated, western speakers. Because language ideologies are "colonially and institutionally structured" (Rosa & Flores, 2021, p. 1164), institutional policies promoting multilingualism may continue to unwittingly reinforce the "deep roots" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 62) of monolingual ideologies. For example, when a course instructor encourages a multilingual writer to visit the writing center, they may view themself as supporting or accommodating multilingualism but in fact are reflecting and reenacting the dominance of monolingual English (see also Schreiber et al., 2022).

Writing centers themselves occupy a unique institutional space, as they are at once peripheral to the core function of the university's primary function of granting academic degrees and central to the vision of providing all students the necessary resources for success (McKinney, 2013; Greenfield, 2019). They have been described as liminal spaces (Camarillo, 2019; Denny & Towle, 2017) that mediate the border between the formal academy and the diverse, unindoctrinated student body. Writing center scholarship in the US context has highlighted the imperative to move beyond its colonial roots (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999; Boquet, 1999) and to include in consultant training intersectional identity politics (Denny, 2010), antiracist pedagogy (Condon, 2007; Young, 2011), and to recognize and engage the ideological tensions that characterize writing center work (Greenfield, 2019).

Writing center consultations, in turn, vary considerably, although several familiar maxims and pedagogical foundations are recognized in writing center scholarship. For example, most centers adopt some form of non-directive questioning, following Bruffee's (1984) emphasis on the power of conversation as "they [consultants] talk through the writer's understanding of the subject" (p. 645), which supports a belief that the writers (not the consultants) should be "doing all the work" (Brooks, 1991). They also commonly invoke, perhaps more than any other, North's (1984) mantra that the aim of the writing center is to "produce better writers, not better writing" (p. 438), emphasizing the personal connections consultants needed to develop in order to work collaboratively with writers. More recently, writing center consultations have been described as situated sociocultural events that demand critical flexibility as consultants make challenging decisions about when to oscillate between higher order and lower order concerns, how to connect praise and criticism, and whether to voice their personal judgements of the writing situation (Friedrich, 2014). As I discuss in the next section, these foundational assumptions are being reconsidered and revised.

Languages and Tension in the Writing Center: A Brief History

To understand the role language ideology should play in consultant training, we first need to examine the role it has played in writing center research over the years. I scanned two flagship writing center journals, *Writing Lab Newsletter* (since renamed *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship)* and the *Writing Center Journal* (*WCJ*) from their respective establishments in 1977 and 1980 to today. Ideology plays an implicit role in all writing center practices but may not be addressed directly, or may be called by other names, such as worldviews, discourses, or narratives. I therefore focused on how consulting (commonly referred to as tutoring) practices were characterized in the research.

Writing centers were originally conceived as Writing Labs dedicated to developing expertise around the *what* of writing instruction. Early issues of *WLN* (1977-1980) created a venue for scholars and administrators to share resources about tutoring and training. In 1977, for example, the WLN newsletters included short blurbs where members offered their recommendations for the texts that best help teach sentence structure, described their Labs (e.g., providing "basic writing instruction for underprepared students," Jonz, 1977, p. 2), and shared strategies for getting faculty onboard, for example by demonstrating for them a peer tutoring session and maintaining a faculty-referral system. Evident in these early texts is a shared view of writing as a system of rules to be learned, and students as deficient, underprepared, and in need of oversight.

Coinciding with the creation of the National Writing Centers Association in 1982, more robust literature emerged that described the aim and process of peer consultant training. In these years, consultants were described as "junior or senior English majors who write well themselves and have good intuitive knowledge of grammar, mechanics, and essay technique" (Podis, 1980, p. 70). Consultants were trained in correcting single sentences taken out of student writing samples, writing "objective" analytical reports about a piece's strengths and weaknesses, and identifying and communicating to students "the first step towards revision and improvement". Borrowing from Rancière's (1991) "myth of pedagogy", we might identify here an ideology of explication, where consultants are positioned as experts with knowledge of a standard language.

By the end of the 1980s, scholars began to point out the importance of more diverse knowledge bases, as most consultants were English majors lacking expertise in the various disciplines represented by the university. For example, Scanlon (1986) argued that WCs should recruit consultants from all university departments, and that training should include theories

about how discourse features change across disciplines. Writing centers began to include more diverse disciplinary knowledge but did not yet critically examine the issue of power and authority in consultations (Boquet, 1999). Standard language ideologies were therefore broadened but not challenged.

An important shift can be seen when scholars like Trimbur (1987), Lunsford (1991), and Hemmeter (1994) began to problematize the notion of "peer tutor" and, drawing on poststructural scholars like Derrida, recognized that issues of power, knowledge, and hierarchy led to tensions and contradictions in the Center (see also Moore, 2021). Trimbur (1987) described how tutors, contrary to earlier claims of their being located outside traditional teaching models, are fully wrapped up in acting out institutional roles of gatekeeping, correctness, and control. Lunsford (1991) makes the case that by taking *collaboration* as a guiding theory of peer consultation, writing centers might begin to deconstruct the traditions of power and control that have defined educational practices in the US. Articles in the 1990s reflect this shift in titles such as "The Writing Center Conference and the Textuality of Power" (Joyner, 1991) and "Live and On Stage: Writing Center Stories and Tutorial Authority" (Hemmeter, 1994).

Through the 1990s and early 2000s, efforts to dismantle a deficit-support model of WCs continued, but when it came to language difference, "ESL" or "non-native" students are still often lumped into monolithic descriptions (as in Powers, 1993). For example, Murray (2003) describes one center's debate over which grammar reference book to make accessible to their consultants, based in part by how "ESL" writers were collectively positioned, either as problems or as human agents. In this era, the privileged status of standard English remained largely unexamined (e.g., Cogie et al., 1999).

In the last ten years, writing studies research has continued to shift towards understanding writing and writing instruction as 1) socially constructed through interactions, 2) multiply defined and experienced, and 3) discursively constitutive of hierarchical systems of value and power (Bou Ayash, 2019; Friedrich, 2014; Kerschbaum, 2014). The recent surge of attention to linguistic diversity and social justice mirrors that in applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2022) and applied sociolinguistics (Piller, 2016). Moore (2021) suggests that the field has entered an emerging Activist Period in writing centers, as reflected in *Writing Center Journal's* 40th anniversary double issue, which prominently featured articles on race, sexual orientation, religion, and emotional labor (Bromley et al., 2021). Similarly, recent critiques have challenged the commodification and export of writing centers as neocolonial tools (Hotson & Bell, 2022), illustrating how a poststructural, equity-minded field of writing studies is continuing to wrestle with these exigencies (Greenfield, 2019; Martinez, 2020).

As part of this shift, consultant training has subsequently centered more and more on the *who* and *how* of a writing consultation by attending to relationality, belonging, empathy, the preservation of writer agency, and the critical examination of feedback practices (Brooks-Gillies, 2018; Howard, 2023). As a result, long-held practices of non-directive questioning as the central pedagogical move of consultants are being reconsidered (Camarillo, 2019; Dixon, 2017; Eckstein, 2019).

Similar to the dichotomization of directive/non-directive consulting, the categorization of grammar as a lower order concern in a writing center has gained critical attention. Consultants are often trained to attend to higher order concerns (or HOCs), such as those related to a strong thesis statement, organization, use of evidence, and audience awareness (e.g., "Writing Center Triage", n.d.). Writer concerns related to word choice, sentence grammar, and formatting are

considered lower order concerns (LOCs), despite the fact that these issues might be high priority for the writers seeking support in the center. Although this heuristic aims to prevent consultants from getting mired by cosmetic issues while ignoring the larger meaning of the text, it may put consultants in a paradoxical position, especially if the center purports to be "student-centered". As Sloan (2013, para. 4) mused, "Can we prioritize higher-order concerns and a holistic, nondirective approach – even as students explicitly request something else – and rightly call ourselves 'student-centered'?" Dixon (2017) similarly argued that student-centered consulting may at times be directive, although it can leave consultants feeling guilty for deviating from accepted writing center practices.

Other scholars have documented the value of sentence-level correction. Phillips (2013) argued that sentence-level accuracy can be the main barrier for many multilingual graduate writers to overcome to fully participate in an academic and professional discourse community. Rafoth (2016), in a plenary speech at the annual conference of the *International Writing Center Association*, argued that the field's concerns about solo-authorship and "making clients do the work" are misplaced and are holding writing centers back from being spaces of creative production and innovation. These examples serve to highlight the challenge of building consensus around a set of best practices consultants might use when consulting about grammar.

Finally, writing center scholarship continues at times to oversimplify writers and consultants, despite an increase in research that explores how consultants might continually seek to mediate and negotiate meaning with writers who are different from them (e.g., Friedrich, 2014; Greenfield, 2019; Petit, 1996). For example, Mackiewicz & Gasior (2021) treat native speakers and non-native speakers two knowable, dichotomous groups. As they write in their conclusion, "we will increase the effectiveness of ESL conferencing only when we understand,

accept, and respond to the differences between the needs of ESL and native-speaking writers" (p. 46-47). Such dichotomies reinforce views that students are needy and that by categorizing them, we can develop separate strategies to teach different groups. This reasoning transforms the *who* of writing consultations into a *what*. People, especially those who speak languages other than English, are positioned as problems to solve.

Language Statements as Symbolic Institutional Policies

One way writing center and university administrators problematize and resist the monolingual language ideologies that have long characterized academic spaces and notions of academic writing (Dobinson & Mercieca, 2020; Flores, 2020) is through public statements on organizational websites, handbooks, and promotional material. Language statements like the one described at the writing center in this study are part of larger trend of education policies aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on US campuses. I define language statements as public-facing documents, meant to visibly acknowledge and raise awareness of a social problem (linguistic oppression) as well as to collectively commit to future action (e.g., linguistic diversity/justice) (see also Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022; Fields, 2021). Language statements are an example of a hortatory policy tool that "relies on the sheer power of argument and persuasion" (Honig, 2006, p. 13). Such symbolic policy statements are often used as part of a suite of policy implementation tools (together with accountability measures) and become more prominent in dispersed or "loose" policy contexts like US education policy (Honig, 2006).

These policies, reports, statements, and plans related to DEI and social justice acknowledge the importance of linguistic diversity and multiculturalism. However, DEI initiatives have been criticized for paying lip service to institutional reform without enacting meaningful structural change that would result in linguistic justice for minoritized speakers of

English (Baker-Bell, 2020; Schreiber et al., 2022). Debates like these are couched within a broader conversation of language and power, and the ways that everyday discourses are constitutive of wider circulating value systems—or ideologies—that consider language diversity a problem to solve, a resource to leverage, or a right to ensure (Hult & Hornberger, 2016; Ruiz, 1984).

To illustrate, efforts at the national and state levels to enshrine English as the "official" language—over half of US states have such a law—involve contentious debates about the role of language in society (Flowers, 2024). For example, the most recent bill introduced in the US House of Representatives is called the English Language Unity Act and seeks "to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language" (GovInfo, 2023). Proponents of such laws argue that making English the official language would help unify the nation and offer immigrants a stronger motivation to gain financial security. Opponents point out that the majority status of the English language is not under threat and that such laws disadvantage native languages and immigrants alike by ignoring the multilingual reality of many communities (Winton, 2018). The former promote assimilationist and monolingual language ideologies; the latter, pluralist, multilingual ideologies (de Jong, 2013). In this way, language policies (i.e., formal or informal policies that promote one or another ideological stance about language) simultaneously point to, or index, wider circulating discourses about language and participate in shaping local practices.

Aguilar-Smith et al. (2022) trace the lineage of writing center language statements to the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC or 4Cs) 1972 resolution entitled Students' Right to their Own Language (SRTOL), which similarly called for the protection and celebration of language variation in college writing classrooms (Committee,

1975). The statement affirmed students' right to "whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style" and highlighted the close link between language and identity (p. 710). In the committee's 1975 commentary and annotation on the statement they further describe the rationale behind the landmark language statement:

> We need to discover whether our attitudes toward "educated English" are based on some inherent superiority of the dialect itself or on the social prestige of those who use it. We need to ask ourselves whether our rejection of students who do not adopt the dialect most familiar to us is based on any real merit in our dialect or whether we are actually rejecting the students themselves, rejecting them because of their racial, social, and cultural origins. (p. 710)

This resolution was a watershed moment for academic communities to begin making explicit statements on their commitments to linguistic inclusion and, later, linguistic justice (Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022; Wible, 2006). In the years following its publication, the statement was revised and accompanied in processes of educating and distributing research to English composition teachers (NCTE, 2023). It has also been cited in the creation and implementation of curricular materials (Bruch & Marbeck, 2005; Wible, 2006) and writing center professional development materials (Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022). However, in policy design terms, the statement is not a policy mandate, not even for the 25,000 members of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the professional organization overseeing CCCC (Flowers, 2019). The initiative was not funded in any coordinated national way, resulting in a highly decentralized g of policy agents.

Wible's (2006) case study of one research group's attempts to translate the resolution into classroom pedagogy demonstrates the challenge of promoting linguistic justice against dominant political interests. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Language Curriculum Research Group (LCRG) at Brooklyn College created a course and accompanying textbook to support Black and Puerto Rican students in using "standardized English dialect". As Wible summarizes:

Over a five-year period, the LCRG received financial support as well as professional legitimacy from prestigious Ford Foundation grants totaling over $250,000. Because of charged political and educational discourses of the mid-1970s, however, publishers shied away from adopting the group's textbook manuscript. By not publishing, the LCRG and its project perished. Indeed, few present-day scholars and even fewer of the group's contemporaries have cited the LCRG's work, a fact that has only reinforced assumptions that the "Students' Right" theory did not usefully inform teachers' practices. (p. 444)

One of the challenges of hortatory policy tools is the lack of clear principal-agent relationships, in this case between CCCC and the university departments it seeks to influence. Milward and Provan (2003) argue that "network management involves creating incentives for cooperation, designing efficient relational contracts and creating institutional structures with clear principal–agent relationships" (p. 15). The LCRG were rogue agents acting without a principal's authority or support, which resulted in a lack of ability to persuade publishers to take a political risk on their project. Second, one key to effective coalition building is the role of "boundary spanners" who interact with various organizations and can create hub-and-spoke or spider-web networks (Wohlstetter et al., 2015). CCCC may be a hub of intellectual activity in the field of composition but does not have formal connections to departments across the country, preventing a hub-and-spoke network. Nor did the LCRG have strong relational ties to other advocacy groups, lobbies, or lawmakers, which limited its ability to build coalition and enact concrete pedagogies rooted in SRTOL. Rather than participating in a spider-web network, the LCRG was an isolated actor without sufficient resources or political momentum to enact widespread change. This is a cautionary case that highlights the limits of symbolic policy tools.

Language statements may also draw negative publicity, as Fields (2021) chronicled through the public discourse surrounding the creation of statements on anti-racism at writing centers in Kansas and Washington. Nevertheless, language statements are increasingly common. My own review of 15 writing centers at public universities in the US Midwest and Northeast revealed that over half include a statement about the respect for linguistic diversity, either within

their mission statement or as a separate statement. In general, they challenge the idea of a single standard of "correct" English and recognize the tension writers face between expressing themselves in their own voice and meeting audience demands. However, they differ considerably on their stance toward consulting practices. To illustrate, consider Table 1, which presents excerpts from two writing center websites with language statements.

Table 1

Comparing Two Writing Center Language Statements

University A: Language and Diversity	University B: Linguistic Justice
At [our] Writing Center, we work with students not only from all disciplines and fields of study, but from diverse backgrounds…	[Our] Writing Center is committed to an asset-based perspective on writers and writing, one that views diversity as a distinct advantage and linguistic strength.
Academic writing is inherently exclusive, to the detriment of anyone lacking facility in standard, academic English. It is not a variety of language that everyone has access to, and therefore it can silence the voices of those from non-privileged backgrounds.	The U.S. educational system has often positioned language difference as deficit and segregated students of diverse language backgrounds into remedial tracks. These concepts of linguistic purity have roots in nationalist and white supremacist ideals.
Because of the diversity of our student, faculty, and staff population, we strive to help writers improve in ways that take into account their various educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.	We must honor the agency of writers by affirming their right to make important decisions about voice and intent.
Balancing audience needs with student improvement, we strive to help writers express themselves in their own voices.	We must do everything we can to dismantle oppressive ideologies by valuing and cultivating writers' diverse linguistic assets.
So what about grammar? Because of these concerns and the nature of our educational philosophy, *we do not edit or proofread*. Editing and proofreading assume that one answer is the correct answer, without taking into account diversity within the English language.	Because of our mission to support student success, tutors may feel pressured to help students conform to such standards without critiquing them; or they may believe that literacy instruction serves only to "improve" student writing and therefore is purely benevolent. We recognize the value of writing in the registers of power as well as the ways that literacy standards have been weaponized against communities that have been historically oppressed.
Instead, in order to help writers become more proficient in expressing themselves, we train our consultants to identify patterns of error that writers can apply across their writing tasks. This improves not only the individual piece of writing that they bring to us, but their language knowledge overall.	We commit to: • Fostering collaborative peer tutoring dynamics that work to resist unjust power structures. • Initiating discussions about linguistic racism with writers so that they are better able to make informed and reflective decisions about their writing.

Although they share similar features in their genre structure, the two language statements position consultants and multilingual clients in strikingly different terms. At University A, "diversity" is used as an umbrella term to describe the university context. It presents academic writing as "inherently exclusive" and positions diverse writers as "lacking" and needing "improvement". Importantly, the statement writers take a strong stance against editing or proofreading. In the final section, the voice of the administrator is prominent ("we train our consultants") and reflects a top-down, deficit view of both consultants and writers. University B, by contrast, frames their language statement as social justice work. They mention the strengths and assets of linguistic diversity and highlight the agency and rights of writers as a central site of affirmation. Finally, they directly challenge the improvement paradigm in favor of sitting with the tension between the social value of "writing in the registers of power" and the moral imperative to "resist unjust power structures". The statement from University B appears to directly reject the paternalism found in University A's insistence on deciding what clients need and can get.

This brief comparison serves to highlight the variety of institutional positions writing centers take as they explicitly grapple with traditional monoglossic and emerging heteroglossic views of language. It also reflects the collective rejection of writing centers as neutral spaces, captured in Brooks-Gilles's (2018, p. 2) question: "What does a writing center do if not get knee deep, neck deep, buried, day-to-day, every day in issues of power, language, and identity?" Moreover, it raises the question of how such a statement is put into practice.

Navigating Social Activist Pedagogies Beyond Language Statements

Language statements (and other statements about social justice issues) are primarily symbolic and do not guarantee social action (Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022; Inoue, 2017).

Nevertheless, the creation and implementation of a language statement can be a productive process that codifies shared values and engages consultants in critical reflection. One common approach to promoting social justice work is by raising the issues through research and professional development. Suhr-Sytsma and Brown (2011) present a two-list heuristic (reproduced in Table 2) which they developed through focus groups with consultants and writers.

Table 2

Perpetuating and Challenging Oppression in the Writing Center

How Language Can Perpetuate Oppression	How Tutors and Writers Can Challenge Oppression through Attention to Language
1. Avoids discussing difference 2. Erases differences 3. Assumes uniform readership 4. Minimizes significance of discrimination 5. Speaks of oppression as only in the past 6. Exoticizes 7. Presents stereotypes as evidence 8. Disrespects sources from "other" perspectives 9. Fails to distinguish sources' views from writers' own 10. Misunderstands or misrelates sources' views	1. Clarify meanings together 2. Express understanding of one another's meanings 3. Discuss meaning and use of sources 4. Pose counterarguments 5. Maintain a non-combative tone 6. Address language without accusations of intentional oppression 7. Name the "elephant in the room" 8. Learn to better identify and address language that perpetuates oppression

Fields (2021) recently reported on one center's use of Suhr-Sytsma and Brown's (2011) lists to generate reflective writing and discussion among their consultants. Like others, Field noted that such critical reflection requires a process of unlearning assumptions about the neutrality of academic discourse and can require vulnerability and trust among consultants and administrators to engage with (Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022; Greenfield, 2019). Aguilar-Smith et al. (2022) describe this training process as "self-work" which involves "coming to terms with language and how it represents complicated interactions with power, hegemony, and social structure", thereby "challenging deep-seated assumptions and values about what makes 'good' writing" (pp. 9-10). For them, consultants are not tutors, teachers, or even collaborators, but

"critical interventionists who can grapple with the complexities of language alongside writers"

(p. 4). Rather than shy away from controversy and conflict, critical scholarly endeavors like

these openly embrace the challenge of ideological negotiation in public and professional

discourse by calling writing center administrators and consultants to be "accomplices" to racial,

linguistic, and social justice (Green, 2016).

Alongside the rise of nationalist political movements that strive for stronger national

identities often anchored by a shared language and the steady march towards English-medium

instruction in universities worldwide, movements such as *World Englishes* (Canagarajah, 2006;

Kachru, 1986), *translingualism* (Horner et al., 2011)*, and *critical language awareness* (CLA,

Clark et al., 1990) have gained traction as theoretical and pedagogical frameworks. Each of these

acknowledges multiple language varieties as valid and valuable and have emerged in writing

studies discourse. For example, the Purdue Writing Lab advises that teachers "take a World

Englishes approach in their lessons by working to pluralize students' perceptions…by accepting

cultural, rhetorical, and stylistic variations as well as by treating students fairly when they use

different English varieties in the classroom" (Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2023, para. 3).

Similarly, CLA offers both pedagogical and methodological frameworks for confronting

inequitable practices and assumptions, especially as they relate to language and writing

instruction and research (Shapiro, 2022). Recent special issues of *Journal of Second Language*

Writing and *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* showcase the momentum of this

movement that straddles critical and critical pragmatic paradigms (Habibie & Flowerdew, 2023).

Siczek (2023, p. 2) summarizes the benefit of CLA in US higher education in this way:

> The acquisition and deployment of Standard American English is often seen as a key
> element of effective communication in U.S. higher education and can indeed play a role
> in how students' work may be understood by their audience and the extent to which they
> achieve their rhetorical purpose. CLA allows language to do more than this, however. It

enables graduate students to explore and question how they encounter codes of power within their new discourse community and articulate these understandings *through language* in collaboration with peers from within and across disciplines.

(emphasis in original)

CLA places priority on rhetorical agency, which is the writer's ability to understand how language works in society and make informed decisions about how they want to participate (including meeting or subverting expectations) in social discourses using language. CLA offers a bridge between the progressive desire to dismantle oppressive societal structures and the pragmatic desire to gain the skills needed in today's academic and professional world (Ruecker & Shapiro, 2021; Shapiro, 2022). In practice, this means engaging in discussion about linguistic racism, presenting language as choices situated within context-bound rhetorical situations, and establishing collaborative relationships between students and instructors in order to engage in critical reflection together (Shapiro, 2022; Sizeck, 2023). By adopting critical pragmatism (Kadlec, 2006; Pennycook, 1997) as a guiding epistemological stance, CLA represents a both/and approach that provides and problematizes instruction toward a standard language.

Translingual approaches to writing pedagogy have also proliferated in the last decade (Bou Ayash, 2019; Horner et al., 2011; Schreiber, 2021). Schreiber (2021) argues that at their core, translingual approaches:

> 1) deconstruct language standards as socially constructed, dynamic, and context-based, offering students opportunities to explore how they emerge historically, how they are enforced, and how they contribute to structural inequality; 2) actively work to break down monolingualism-informed binaries and language boundaries; and 3) are not only for traditionally classified multilingual students. (pp. 229-231)

As guiding pedagogical frameworks that are growing in popularity, World Englishes, CLA, and translingual approaches embrace heteroglossic and poststructuralist conceptions of language and power in society. They also illustrate what Greenfield (2019) describes as ethical political engagement with social issues of power, equity, and justice. At the same time, they

represent potential ways forward through the tensions at the heart of enacting language statements in the ways consultants address tricky situations about expertise and correctness.

Nexus Analysis for Multi-Scalar Language Policy Analysis

I turn now to introduce nexus analysis (Hult, 2015; Scollon & Scollon, 2004) as a methodological framework to examine the discursive and ideological negotiation of language policy in the writing center. Nexus analysis adopts a participatory, activist, ethnographic orientation to discourse analysis, focusing less on the structures and forms of discourse as objects in favor of attending to the social action(s) enabled through discourse. Scollon and Scollon (2004, p. 8) distinguish it from traditional discourse analysis that tends to entail either a "micro-analysis of unfolding moments of social interaction or a much broader socio-political-cultural analysis of the relationships among social groups and power interests in the society". Instead, nexus analysis is posited as a "way to strategize unifying these two different levels of analysis," and is premised on the belief that "broader social issues are ultimately grounded in the micro-actions of social interaction and, conversely, the most mundane of micro-actions are nexus through which the largest cycles of social organization and activity circulate" (p. 8). Importantly, it also diverges from traditional ethnography in anthropology or sociology because it "takes social action as the theoretical center of study" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 13), rather than a predefined social group or culture.

Following Weber (1978 [1922]), social action is understood as any action that is given a subjective meaning that acknowledges the behavior of others. For example, a writing center consultant providing a possible revision to a client constitutes a social action because both participants may understand its meaning in relation to their own past experiences (e.g., the client or consultant's language backgrounds) and their relation to others in the session (e.g., their

identity positions relative to each other or to the university). The client may then choose any number of actions in response, including accepting the suggestion and making the change, ignoring the suggestion, explicitly disagreeing, or countering with their own alternate revision.

These social actions aggregate to form a nexus of practice, which can take many different forms at various scales. Take for example a Starbucks barista, whose main service function is to make coffee drinks, but whose typical working day includes many separate yet related actions. Each social action on its own—from wearing a green apron to greeting customers, operating a cash register, and using franchise-specific language—may be recognizably associated with the performing of "Starbucks barista" to varying degrees. Plenty of baristas operate cash registers and wear aprons, but the color green and the phrase "tall Frappuccino" are closely associated with the Starbucks brand. As social actions are repeated with regular frequency and associated with a particular space or "site of engagement" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 28), they form a nexus of practice.

Sites of engagement have spatial and temporal "circumferences" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 9) as any social action makes relevant various timescales. The rise of Starbucks as a global brand can be measured in decades, while the popularity of coffee has a longer, slower-moving history associated with global trade and the struggle for fair compensation for workers. The act of ordering a tall Frappuccino unfolds in a matter of seconds, but when examined with a slightly wider lens, these discourses, which have been submerged through routine practice, are brought into view. A nexus analytical framework therefore accounts for the stratified nature of discourse that circulates locally and globally, and accounts for the multiple timescales of interaction and social change. Figure 4 visually represents some of the relevant discourses circulating at various spatiotemporal scales within the writing center.

Figure 4

Spatiotemporal Scales of Discourse in a Writing Center Consultation
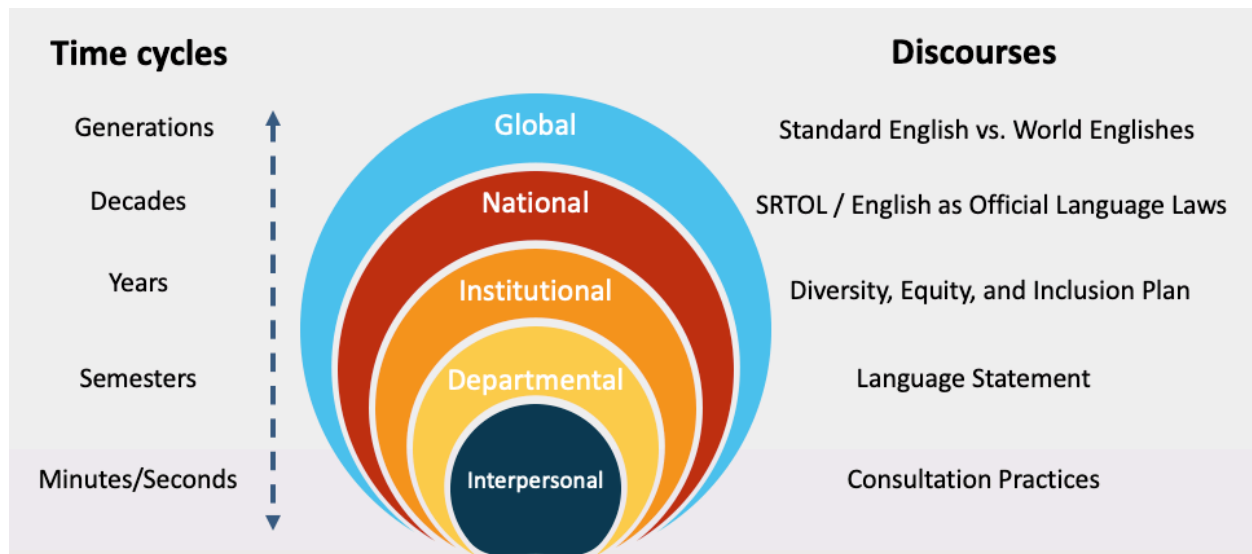
Because nexus of practice can be flexibly defined, ranging from a narrow examination of the positionings of one international student as "disengaged" (De Costa et al., 2023) to a wider investigation of the use of English as an academic lingua franca on a university campus (Ou et al., 2021), it is important to carefully set its scope. In this study, I frame the writing center consultation as a nexus of practice, composed of various social actions such as building rapport, setting goals, reading clients' writing, providing feedback, asking questions, encouraging, commiserating, and de-escalating tense situations. Taken together, they form the recognizable practice of writing center consulting.

Semiotic Cycles as Analytical Lenses

In nexus analysis, three types of discourse are understood to make up a nexus of practice like a writing center consultation: the *discourses in place*, the *historical body*, and the *interaction order*. With social actions at the center of our focus, these three discourse types help to organize the overlapping and intersecting discourses that Scollon and Scollon (2004) describe as

circulating and flowing through particular moments of meaningful interaction. Figure 5 depicts the three intersecting discourses cycles.

Figure 5

Overlapping Discourses of Social Action
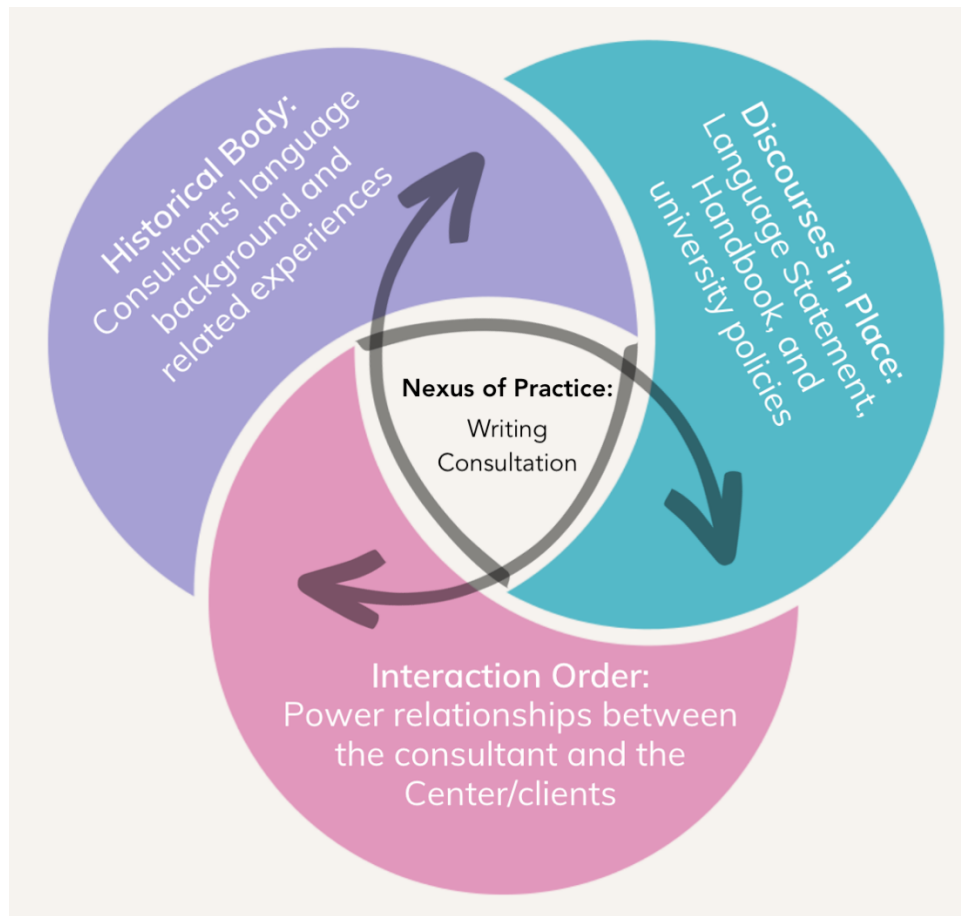
Note. Adapted from Scollon & Scollon (2004)

Because of its focus on social practice and change, this methodology has been used most extensively in language education, often highlighting one of the cycles or focusing on the tools that mediate language learning (Kuure et al., 2018). Although it has recently been enlisted to examine the discursive and agentive social processes of language policy formation (Källkvist & Hult, 2016), I selectively review four studies that demonstrate how nexus analysis allows for an investigation of language practices and language policies as 1) mutually constitutive and 2)

enmeshed across multi-scalar discourses. I am not aware of any studies that examine writing center spaces using this framework, although connections could be made between cultural rhetorics in the field of composition studies (e.g., Brooks-Gillies, 2018) and the action-oriented ethnographic discourse analysis of nexus analysis.

Rosén and Bagga-Gupta (2015) used nexus analysis to illustrate how individual interactions in a Swedish for immigrants classroom reproduced competing language policies. In particular, the researchers analyzed classroom discourse as it revealed and enacted tensions between a national language policy that promoted Swedish as a unifying language of national and the lived multilingual historical bodies of the adult immigrant student. After analyzing the language policies at national and institutional levels as discourses in place, the researchers described the co-construction of interaction orders that alternated between orienting to monolingual or multilingual norms in two different classrooms. In one classroom, the teacher positioned as problematic the historical bodies relevant in the students' diverse linguistic backgrounds and prohibited the use of multiple languages in the classroom. By doing so, the teacher ratified a monolingual interpretation of the national language policy and created a Swedish-only interaction order that maintained the hierarchical status of the native speaker teacher. Another teacher was documented embracing multiple languages in the classroom, a practice that made relevant the teacher's own historical body as multilingual. This teacher drew on the linguistic diversity of his students and enacted a multilingual interaction order. In doing so, the nexus of practice observed in his classroom foregrounded a heteroglossic interpretation of the national language policy and challenged historical norms related to question-asking and assessment in the language classroom.

Gynne et al. (2016) drew on video recordings and field notes from participant observations during a 20-month study in a bilingual Finnish-Swedish school in Sweden. They were interested in identifying how everyday languaging practices among the teachers, students, and researchers (re/dis)invented shared notions of language varieties and cultures. They attended specifically to the linguistic-cultural ideologies that were foregrounded in one stretch of interaction lasting 3 minutes and 40 seconds. They distinguished between the declared language policy in the nationally approved bilingual education curriculum and the practiced policy of a teacher describing a newspaper article about the greatness of the Finnish school system. The researchers explored the discursive co-construction of the identity positions of "teacher", "student" and "researcher" as moments of entextualization whereby linguistic, textual, and semiotic materials are reused to promote a sense of pride in belonging to multiple cultural and linguistic communities. The researchers point out the multitude of discourses and ideologies circulating in everyday interactions, including those related to nationhood, language status, minority education, community membership, expertise and adulthood, and **considered** teachers to be crucial language policy arbiters.

In their collaborative action research study, Dressler and Mueller (2022) used nexus analysis to identify strategies to increase teachers' adherence to the policy of increasing target language use in a German bilingual program in Canada. Relying on interview data from six German bilingual teachers at one elementary school, the researchers traced the changing discourses and practices during a year-long professional development series. The three elements of nexus analysis were used as a second-level analysis after a thematic analysis of the interview data, demonstrating that nexus analysis can be used flexibly and in conjunction with other theoretical frameworks.

Most recently, De Costa et al. (2023) examined the discursive construction of three newly arrived international students at a US university as "disengaged". They combined language socialization, positioning theory, and nexus analysis to demonstrate how the intersection of discourses in place, interaction order, and historical body of the teachers and students generated disparate identity positionings for the three students. Classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers, together with document analysis of course materials, demonstrated that Kristina (a female undergraduate student from China) was consistently described as "disengaged" or even "disrespectful", while her classmates (two Korean male graduate students) were seen as active and productive. The study highlighted how differing aspects of students' prior learning experiences and expectations for class participation, such as the priority of academic versus social discourse or the value of small class sizes and student-centered discussion-based learning, contributed to misalignment and negative social positioning for Kristina. The authors used their research to call attention to the unique historical bodies of international students, which require institutional support and openness to multi-directional socialization.

These studies demonstrate the utility of nexus analysis to bring language-in-education policies into textured contact with the practices and experiences of teachers and students. It is also a flexible framework for bringing together various theoretical and methodological tools to better understand a host of social issues within language education. However, despite its conception as an activist methodology for researchers to actively engage in democratic processes of changing social practices through close examination of discourses in action (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Scollon, 2008), it is rarely if ever employed in explicit support of a social justice agenda.

Aligning Theory, Epistemology, and Methodology

It is essential that researchers attend carefully to defining and aligning their epistemological stance with the analytical procedures they employ (Anderson & Holloway, 2020; De Costa et al., 2022). As an action-oriented methodology within the qualitative paradigm (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015), nexus analysis aligns with the social constructivist, bottom-up orientations to researching language policy and practice described above (Hornberger, 2020; Johnson, 2018), with academic literacies research that see literacies as heterogenous and embedded in institutional and societal structures (Horner, 2013; Ivanič, 2004), and with calls for critical and activist approaches to educational and applied linguistics within the decolonial turn (De Fina et al., 2023; Pennycook, 2022; Spolsky, 2022). Hult (2019) characterizes nexus analysis as "a way to map dynamism" (p. 137), which highlights the researcher's role as a cartographer of change. Wohlwend (2021, p. xvii) describes nexus analysis as "the critical analysis of literacies that move and matter," concerned with exploring "how people enact and mobilize meanings that largely go without saying." Such framings highlight a dual focus on social action and power.

It also aligns with a poststructuralist framing of discourse. Anderson and Holloway (2020) emphasize that power is "a product of systems of knowledge that have been discursively constructed and normalized over time. There is not as clear a locus of power, control, or the source of inequity in post-structuralist views as in structuralist ones" (p. 193). Meaning is thus viewed as "fluid, blurred, and multiple" (p. 193) and policy processes are considered non-linear and polycentric (Blommaert et al., 2005). Throughout the dissertation, I have sought to make my subjectivity transparent by offering vignettes at the beginning of each chapter drawn from field notes, presenting a robust positionality statement, and considering multiple interpretations of the

evidence I present. I return to this point in the next chapter when I map the research questions onto the nexus analytical framework.

For now, I expand on the concept of discourse, which can be understood as flowing through a social action like a water cycle, with discourses being expressed in local texts and conversations, potentially altered in the given sociohistorical context, and subsequently taken up again (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; see also discussion in Hult, 2017). This framing, along with the poststructural emphasis on power and the multiplicity of subjectivity, allows us to recognize that in any social action some discourses are foregrounded while others are backgrounded.

Figure 6

A Pair of Glasses Held up in Front of a Waterfall

Let me illustrate with a personal example. Figure 6 is picture I took in the spring of 2023, standing in front of a waterfall during a break from the hectic schedule of an academic conference in Portland, Oregon. The rushing Multnomah Falls are rendered blurry in the

background, while my glasses are foregrounded, and individual droplets are clearly defined on each lens. At a basic, physical level, the photo can be explained through a litany of details about the physical properties of water and the workings of the camera lens inside my phone. However, the photo becomes part of a social action when it takes on social meaning. For me, the photo foregrounds a moment when I felt a sense of gratitude to my colleague who insisted we get away from the bustling conference center and a recognition to stop and appreciate small moments in the midst of the rush of work life and the preoccupation of being "productive". In this sense, it foregrounds a wider discourse about work-life balance. Other discourses are present, including tourism, water and national park conservation, Indigenous land rights, social media, and optometry, but they are backgrounded in my interpretation.

A poststructuralist reading of the photo recognizes the power I hold as the photographer and interpreter in this dissertation, as well as the privilege that I embody as an able-bodied American graduate student with substantial institutional support to attend in-person conferences and ponder life at the foot of a waterfall. At the same time, it acknowledges the power held by others who might contest my interpretation of the photo, perhaps by making relevant other discourses waiting in the background. Like a Language Statement or the words spoken in a writing center consultation, the photo both reflects ideological orientations circulating at a moment and enables through resemiotization their (re)production and possible transformation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the conceptual framework for this study. I presented key terms and situated this study within literature related to language ideologies in LP research, standard language ideology and language statements in the writing center, and my conceptualization of nexus analysis. I described my poststructuralist stance that views social life

as "heterogenous, contingent, fragmented, and emergent" (Block, 2022, p. 19) as I seek to understand the relationships between ideas, people, and their actions. In summary, this conceptual framework 1) recognizes and embraces the subjective and interpretive nature of ethnographic qualitative research (Friedman, 2012; Seidman, 2006); 2) aligns with educational linguistics research that is "global in its perspective yet locally grounded in both educational practice and the close analysis of language use," (Hult & King, 2011, pp. xviii-xix), 3) responds to a need for more critical research into local language practices that impact the teaching of writing to diverse populations (Pennycook, 2022; Polio & Friedman, 2017) and 4) aligns with growing calls for applied linguistics researchers to develop robust ethics and to champion social justice through their work (e.g., De Costa et al., 2020b; Rosa & Flores, 2021). As I have argued, language policy and discourse analysis are never just about language and writing center consulting is much more than grammar correction. In the next chapter, I describe further the use of a nexus analysis framework in this study.

CHAPTER 3: WRITING CENTER CONSULTATIONS AS A NEXUS OF PRACTICE

I just had a consultation with Daiyu, who is revising her statement of purpose to apply to a master's program. She described a personal experience about her cousin experiencing mental health issues, which left Daiyu feeling helpless. Daiyu's mom told her to "just be a normal sister" for her cousin, a detail that she emphasized in the essay about why she wanted to go to grad school. I asked her how she felt about including a direct quote in Mandarin, since that is a huge part of her identity as a person, especially in her interactions at home and the way she was analyzing cultural attitudes towards mental health. And you know, she lit up. She thought about how to craft the phrase, included it, and then we talked about how it made her come across stronger and more authentically in her writing, emphasizing her expertise in multiple languages. I said, "of course these are all just choices and options, and it is up to you and how much, if at all, you want to highlight your knowledge of Mandarin." She replied, "No, I love it! I'm definitely going to keep it. I am super proud of my languages!" I was impressed by her expertise and cultural/linguistic repertoires that span continents, and I hope that interactions like this one move the needle slightly towards celebrating multilingualism. I so wish I could document the ripples of interactions like that. Will the admissions officer read it differently with a phrase in Mandarin? Will Daiyu think or act any differently after that small affirmation? Will her excitement spill over into my work and research?

(Reflective memo, February 9, 2022)

Documenting the ripples of language policy (LP) as it is developed and continuously re-entextualized into practice is a methodological challenge for LP scholars and requires evolving tools and approaches. To fully analyze a comparatively simple interaction like the one between myself and Daiyu described above, a researcher would require unfettered access to a participant's actions and inner reflections as she moves about her life, both before and after such interaction, and would produce copious data that would make the analytical process increasingly formidable. In this chapter, I explain how, by drawing on nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) as a meta-methodology (Hult, 2010, p. 10), I was able to identify such ripples, specifically the negotiation and appropriation of language ideologies as they are re-entextualized (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Savski, 2023) across scales (Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; Hult, 2010) and various speech events (Wortham & Reyes, 2021) through training and consulting practices in one writing center.

Building on the introduction of nexus analysis in the previous chapter, I elaborate the analytical steps in this interdisciplinary, multi-scalar study. I first describe how the epistemological and theoretical foundations of the study map onto the three research questions and align with the methodology I adopted in this study. I then dedicate the remainder of the chapter to describing the participants, the data I collected, and the data analysis procedures. I conclude by reflecting on my positionality and responsibilities as a researcher and active participant in this nexus of practice. By examining commonplace campus discourses as representations of language ideologies in localized action, researchers are able to make transparent values about language that encourage some language practices while denigrating others.

Research Questions

    (1) What language ideologies are promoted in the authoritative discourses circulating in the Center?

The first question relates to discourses in place (DiP), which are the wider discourses circulating at the time and place of the social action. These include primarily the "big D discourses" related to ideologies and belief systems embedded in society (e.g., individualism, native-speakerism) that can span generations and communities across time and space but are found within the "little d discourses" (Gee, 2013) of normative texts that consultants encounter, including the employee handbook, syllabi from courses required for undergraduate and graduate consultants, professional development workshops, and emails from university administrators. While I attend to "little d discourses" represented as the content of emails, consultant-client speech, or interview data, I use the term "discourse" to refer to the "Discourses" enacted within those stretches of language. For example, when university spokespeople repeat the refrain that

the university "will become a national leader in DEI", they signal their participation in advancing

and agenda of greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also frame the university as a

competitive space. The words in university policy documents and emails from administrators

(little d discourses) reproduce ways of being and doing in the world (big D Discourse). By

mapping discourses in place, researchers can highlight the ways local actions index ideologies

circulating at wider scales (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

(2) What prior experiences with linguistic diversity do four consultants bring with them

to their consultations?

The second question addresses the historical body (HB), that is, the life experiences and

learned practices of the individuals engaged in the social action. These could include past

learning experiences, the sociopolitical and historical context of a given setting, or the family

language practices of one's childhood, and one's future-oriented motives for engaging in a given

practice. While RQ1 can be answered using a text-centered critical discourse analytical

methodology, RQ2 centers the consultants involved in interpreting and appropriating the policies

of the writing center. Given the tension-filled discourse around standard English in the writing

center's Language Statement, the question explicitly focuses on linguistic diversity as a way to

draw out connections to consultants' understanding of language as it relates to power and

standardization.

(3) What language ideologies are constructed in four consultants' writing consultation

practices?

The third question examines the interaction order (IO), a term used to describe the social

power dynamics governing the relationship between social actors. This can include hierarchical

rank of employment as well as the relative status inscribed in linguistic, national, or gender

identities which contribute to the social arrangement of people interacting. This question is essential to seeing how language policy is enacted at the local interpersonal scale, in particular between consultants and clients. Moreover, it underlines the processes by which the language ideologies identified in RQ1 are re-entextualized into consultation practices, mediated by the lived experiences of the consultants examined in RQ2.

Engaging the Nexus

Scollon and Scollon (2004) identify three phases to a "complete" nexus analysis, describing the researcher's trajectory through the research site: *engaging the nexus*, *navigating the nexus*, and *changing the nexus*. Engaging the nexus involves 1) establishing the social issue under investigation, 2) finding crucial social actors, 3) observing the interaction order among those actors, 4) determining significant cycles of discourse, and 5) establishing my zone of identification (my role as legitimate participant). In this section, I elaborate on these steps, which act as an essential precursor to addressing the study's research questions.

As I introduced in chapter one, my own experience of being onboarded into the Writing Center provided the impetus to investigate the interdiscursive negotiation of language ideologies that occurs at the intersection of the Center's Language Statement and the practice of conducting a writing consultation. As I described in chapter two, I have identified significant cycles of discourse about multilingualism on various scales including global (e.g., taking a World Englishes approach to teaching writing), national (e.g., the CCCC position statements about anti-racism and the connection between writing and identity), institutional (e.g., a recent report on DEI and emails from university administrators), departmental (e.g., the Center's Language Statement, Handbook, and consultant training materials), and interpersonal (e.g., writing center

consultations and interviews). I present now an overview of the Center's operations, including its hiring and training procedures.

Within the Center, undergraduate and graduate students serve as consultants for writers in the community who include a diverse collection of students, faculty, community members, visiting scholars, and international partners, who are referred to as clients. While the Center also provides workshops about writing for students and faculty across campus, peer-to-peer consulting remains the core of the Center's work. Consultants bring their own experiences and ideologies to each consultation session, which becomes a salient site of ideological negotiation, a point in time and space where intersecting discourses are enacted in practice. I identified this discursive intersection as the "nexus of practice" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) under investigation. It comprises an array of separate discourses (e.g., personal experiences of the participants, wider narratives about language, and more immediate expectations about interpersonal interaction) that come together to form a recognizable event (e.g., a peer writing consultation).

To become a consultant, undergraduate students must take a course called Writing Center Theory and Practice, taught by a team of veteran consultants. Drawing on theories about anti-racist, anti-ableist and trauma-informed pedagogy, the course promotes a view that writing center work is a collaborative effort rather than a correction of deficits in writing abilities (see Appendix B for the syllabus from Fall 2022). Graduate student consultants are not required to take this course but are paired with a mentor and guided through onboarding materials including a peer mentoring curriculum (Appendix C) and the Center's Handbook, the latter of which defines literacy as human-centered "interactions among writing, speaking, and reading" (Handbook, p. 40) rather than a static practice.

The Handbook provides consultants with a critical view of literacy that maintains that writing is never apolitical or neutral because writing practices are "situated within cultural contexts of race, gender, dis/ability, sexuality". Such a critical historical view, the Handbook authors argue, "reveals the way literacy learning, using, and policing were used to guard power and exert control," and serves as a justification to actively combat English-only policies in education that "stigmatize multilingual writers" (p. 40). These passages suggest that the Center has adopted Street's (1995) ideological model of literacy, as it recognizes the unique social situations in which literate activity takes place. Furthermore, this intertwined relationship between discourse and real-world action is what Scollon and Scollon (2004) refer to as *resemiotization*, the process by which a semiotic cycle "is transformed from one semiotic mode to another, from text to speech and back to text, and then into objects" (p. 170). Given that about 40% of the client base identify first languages other than English, these messages about linguistic diversity are likely to meaningfully shape the experiences of consultants and clients who meet in the Center.

My own status as a legitimate participant in this nexus of practice stems from three years of participation in the Center, including sustained interest in the tension between linguistic diversity and language standardization. In the fall of 2021, I joined the Center and was confronted with the Language Statement, which challenged my prior training and experience as an Academic English instructor. In the spring of 2022, I co-instructed the undergraduate consultant training course, and observed the importance of linguistic diversity within the training materials. Over the next 18 months, as I moved from consultant and coordinator to assistant director, I informally observed consultations and frequently coached consultants on strategies to address challenging sessions. For example, a handful of stressful interactions arose in the fall of

2022 where a client was disappointed with a consultant's reluctance to "fix their grammar". During the 2022-2023 academic year, I served as the chair of the Multilingual Writers Committee, which spearheaded designing a professional development workshop for undergraduate and graduate student consultants to support consulting about grammar. This insider status afforded me privileged access to course syllabi, daily conversations with other administrators, and intimate behind-the-scenes knowledge about the processes of the Center. It also presented numerous challenges related to power dynamics as designed and conducted the research study. I address several of these concerns at later in this chapter and again in the final two chapters.

Navigating the Nexus

The second phase, *navigating the nexus*, is the most extensive and entails identifying and analyzing the semiotic cycles identified in the first phase. This is where the discourses in place (RQ1), historical bodies (RQ2), and interaction order (RQ3) are examined separately and brought back together. I turn now to describe how the data were collected and analyzed within this framework. Rather than devoting a single section to ethical considerations, I discuss these as I describe each stage of the study.

Participant Recruitment and IRB

I cast a wide net and invited all of the consultants in their first year at the Center. Ten writing consultants originally agreed to participate in the study, which received IRB approval in August 2022. The participants reflected a somewhat representative sample from the 44 consultants and therefore included both graduate and undergraduate consultants. They included both domestic and international students, study in a range of degree fields (but mostly in the

humanities and education) and are predominantly female. Unfortunately, no master's students agreed to participate, which limited the label of graduate student to doctoral students.

Given my interest in consultants' experiences of the WC's training processes, I included only consultants in their first year of consulting at this Center. Inspired by my own experience, I wanted to see how others from a variety of backgrounds navigated the language policy landscape as they began consulting in the Center. I expected the first year of working in a new professional community would the time when consultants would experience the most change, rather than those who had already solidified their consulting practices. Instead of relying on retroactive reflections on change and professional growth, I hoped to document their development in real time. The clients of the sessions I observed were also important informants, and so I include demographic information about them and the consultants in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

No	Pseudonym	Academic Status (Fall 2022)	Academic Program	Hometown (school demographic)	Language repertoire
			Consultants		
1	Ally	2nd year undergrad	History	Small city in US Midwest (mostly white)	English, Spanish
2	Audrey	2nd year undergrad	Professional writing	Small city in US Midwest (mostly white)	English, Spanish
3	Blaire*	2nd year undergrad	Interdisciplinary Studies and African American Studies	Large city in US Midwest (mostly Black)	Black English, White mainstream English
4	Elise*	2nd year undergrad	Advertising	Small city in US Midwest (mostly white)	English, Spanish
5	Taylor	2nd year undergrad	Japanese	Small city in US Midwest (mostly white)	English, Japanese

Table 3 (cont'd)

No	Pseudonym	Academic Status (Fall 2022)	Academic Program	Hometown (school demographic)	Language repertoire
6	Kaya*	1st year PhD	Writing and Rhetoric	Township in southern Africa (all Black)	isiZulu, SeSotho, English, Afrikaans, Russian
7	Max	1st year PhD	Agricultural Economics	Large city in US Northwest (mostly white)	English, Spanish, Italian
8	Melanie*	1st year PhD	Writing and Rhetoric	Large city in US Midwest (moderately diverse)	English, French
9	Nelly	1st year PhD	Writing and Rhetoric	Large city in US Southwest (moderately diverse)	Japanese, English, Spanish
10	Renee	1st year PhD	Writing and Rhetoric	Mid-sized city in western Africa (mostly Black)	Yoruba, English
			Clients		
1	Mark	4th year undergrad	History	Small city in US Midwest	English
2	Amina	1st year undergrad	Information Science	Large city in Saudi Arabia	Arabic, English
3	Beth	4th year undergrad	Interdisciplinary Social Science	Small city in US Midwest	English
4	Jack	4th year undergrad	Computer Science and Engineering	Large city in China	Mandarin, English
5	Ayotunde	Visiting scholar	Foreign Language Teaching	Mid-sized city in Nigeria	Yoruba, Nigerian Pidgin, English
6	Yuze	2nd year undergrad	Early Childhood Education	Large city in China	Mandarin, English
7	Diya	1st year undergrad	Computer Science	Large city in India	Telugu, English, Hindi, Spanish

Note: * indicates focal participant

Stemming from my view of this project as a collaborative inquiry between myself and the consultants with whom I work, I provided each participant with a consent form (Appendix D)

that offered them multiple levels of participation, including whether to include recordings of their voice, blurred or unblurred images or recordings of them, and altered or unaltered demographic details. This level of variable consent complicated the reporting of my findings as I needed to carefully adhere to each participant's unique wishes; however, it ensures that each participant is involved on their own terms. I also received grant funding that allowed me to provide participants with monetary compensation for each observation and interview.

Figure 7

Data Collection Timeline

I conducted interviews with all ten participants, although two withdrew before the observation phase (see Figure 7). With the remaining eight participants, I conducted at least two consultation observations and debrief interviews in the spring of 2023. In the fall of 2023, I was able to conduct reflective interviews with the four participants whose experiences became the focus of the analysis reported in this study: Blaire, Elise, Kaya, and Melanie. These four were selected in part because of the richness and depth of the data we produced through interviews and observations; they were also the most available for ongoing observations and conversations,

and openly shared their thoughts. They also represented varied backgrounds: although they all

identified as female, two (Blaire and Elise) were undergraduate and two (Kaya and Melanie)

were graduate consultants, and two (Blaire and Kaya) identified as Black and two (Elise and

Melanie) identified as white. Additionally, Elise and Melanie grew up as part of the standard

mainstream English-speaking majority, while Blaire and Kaya had rich (and sometimes painful)

experiences with linguistic diversity. These key differences, while not intended to be

representative of any gender, geographic, racial, or linguistic background, offered important

analytical leverage during the data analysis.

Data Collection

Although "a nexus analysis would like to document or record everything that might be

relevant to understanding the historical antecedents of a social action as well as the unfolding

outcomes of that action" (Scollon & Scollon, 2007, p. 621), I am limited to what is accessible

and feasible in one dissertation. Table 4 describes the data collected relative to various scales,

discourse types, and policy actors. While each text is created by individuals and is therefore a

social artifact, the table is organized by the scale of the text's impact based on approximate

audience size.

Table 4

Data Collection Overview

Scale	Discourse type	Policy actors	Data collected (Time range)
University (~70,000 people)	University, campus-wide values and practices	Administrators	- DEI Plan (2020) - DEI Report (2021) - Student newspaper (2020-23) - Email communications from university-level administrators (2021-23)
Writing Center Community (~200-2,000 people)	Writing Center values and practices (external)	WC administrators and coordinators	- Writing Center Website (2023) - Language Statement (2023) - Email communications from center-level administrators (2022-23)
Writing Center Staff (~60 people)	Writing Center values and practices (internal)	WC administrators, coordinators, and consultants	- WC Handbook (2023) - PD Training materials (2021-23) - Observations of orientation and PD sessions (2021-23) - Syllabus and assignment descriptions (Fall 2022)
Interpersonal (4 focal participants)	Individual values and consulting practices	WC consultants and clients	- Course writing (Fall 2022) - Interviews with consultants (2022-23) - Participant journals (2022-23) - Observations of consultations (2023) - Documents related to the consultations: Client intake form, client writing, and post-consultation survey.

Interpretive research in a single site requires an "in-depth, holistic, and multi-perspective analysis" of the context (Duff, 2008, p. 55), meaning that multiple and varied types of data over an extended time period are needed. I therefore cast an intentionally wide net in order to capture multiple instances of ideological discourse about language at various scales. The university scale is estimated to include about 70,000 people, including about 50,000 undergraduate students,

about 7,000 graduate students, and about 13,000 faculty and staff. While I collected a large corpus of documents related to this scale, I selectively focused my analysis on the DEI Plan and Report and email communications from university administrators. These were selected in order to highlight instances where linguistic diversity might be important. I also sought to contrast the more formal genres of strategic plans and reports with the somewhat less formal genre of everyday email to balance attention to declared and practiced LPs.

Moving to narrower, smaller scales within the university, I selected outward-facing documents and communications which communicated the Center's priorities and values. I estimate the audience of this scale to be 200-2,000 people (but many more cumulatively over time), as the Center's website, for example, would have been seen in part by the Center's 800-1,000 unique clients each semester. There are also over 6,000 students who take the first-year writing course, whose army of instructors works closely with the Center. Furthermore, the director's recruitment email was sent out to several hundred people, including university instructors and administrators. Data collected in these two outer scales are limited to documents.

I delineated two scales within the Center itself, the first being the community of Center employees (administrators, coordinators, and consultants). The primary data collected at this scale related to the inward-facing administrative discourses and were found in the Center's training materials, including the Center's 106-page handbook, the syllabi and course materials from the undergraduate training course, the peer-mentoring onboarding materials for new graduate student consultants, and presentations from orientation sessions and staff meetings. The latter are accompanied by field notes, which were an essential way to document and focus my learning and sensemaking processes (Copland, 2018).

At the most inner scale[2], I focused on four participants and their interactions with clients, other consultants, and myself. Seidman (2006, p. 44) implores researchers to safeguard against "distorting…[or] imposing their own sense of the world on their participants rather than eliciting theirs." I kept a research journal and a fieldnote journal which allowed me to continually document and reflect on my research processes. In addition to the written artifacts produced in and around consultation sessions, this scale included semi-structured interviews, informal and formal observations, participant journals, and fieldnotes. Each of these methods are typical of interpretive studies that aim to generate a thick description of the context and to approximate an emic perspective (Copland, 2018; De Costa et al., 2017; Polio & Friedman, 2017), and produced data that was analyzed using the discourse analytical methods described in the next section.

The combination of the interviews, observations, and participant journals contributed to a "well triangulated and carefully comparative study", which Scollon and Scollon (2004) say should include 1) members' normative generalizations about their own practices (what they say they do), 2) rich observations of their practices (what they actually do), 3) individual experience (how they describe their practice in relation to others in the group), and 4) interactions with members (how they resolve any contradictions raised in 1-3) (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 158). In order to provide structure to interviews about participants' lived experiences, Seidman (2006) recommends a three-interview structure that begins with establishing the context (past experiences), moves to a reconstruction of the details of their experience (specific instances of practice), and concludes with a focus on meaning making (reflecting on past, present, and future). While the actual questions varied slightly from participant to participant, the semi-structured interviews (summarized in Appendix E) followed this arc. The preliminary interviews

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[2] I use inner/outer as opposed to micro/macro to emphasize their position relative (rather than fixed) to other scales.

about the consultants' prior experiences with writing and linguistic diversity occurred in the late

fall and early spring of 2022; the observations and debrief conversations about consulting

practices occurred in the late spring and summer of 2023; and the retrospective conversations,

which included a member-checking discussion of the preliminary analysis from the observations,

took place in the fall of 2023.

It is important to emphasize that interviews are sites of socialization and knowledge co-

construction (Friedman, 2019) dependent on the "inter/subjectivity" of both participants

(Wengraf, 2001). As a graduate student administrator in the center, my questions had significant

potential to socialize my participants into ways of thinking about writing center work and the

processes related to conducting research. Sometimes they were explicit, as when I repeatedly

explained that there was no correct way of consulting that I was looking for. Other times they

were implicit, as I had a habit of sharing my own past experiences as a consultant, perhaps

signaling the value I hold for building personal connections and empathy. At the same time, they

were socializing me into ways of talking about and across difference.

> Kasper and Prior (2015) highlight this poststructuralist framing in this way:

> Conceptualizing interviews as situated sociointeractional activities rather than as
> unproblematic instruments for data collection opens up the view on how participants
> collaborate in producing the topical content of the interview, how they align themselves
> to the activity, and how they jointly construct identities, relationships, stances—and
> stories. (p. 232)

Taking this view requires acknowledging my role as an embedded and engaged

participant in the data collection and analysis process, including maintaining distance when

appropriate, joining in as a participant observer when invited, lessening power dynamics, and

allowing for strong engagement with my research goals.

During observations, I audio-recorded the interactions between consultants and clients

and took handwritten fieldnotes. Copland (2018) explains how the focus of fieldnotes can cycle

between open and focused attention and should capture rich details that will not be accessible

from the recording. For example, I drew a sketch of the layout of the space, described the mood

of the time of year in the Center, and jotted down notes about the unfolding action (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Handwritten Fieldnotes from Consultation Observation (4/28/23)
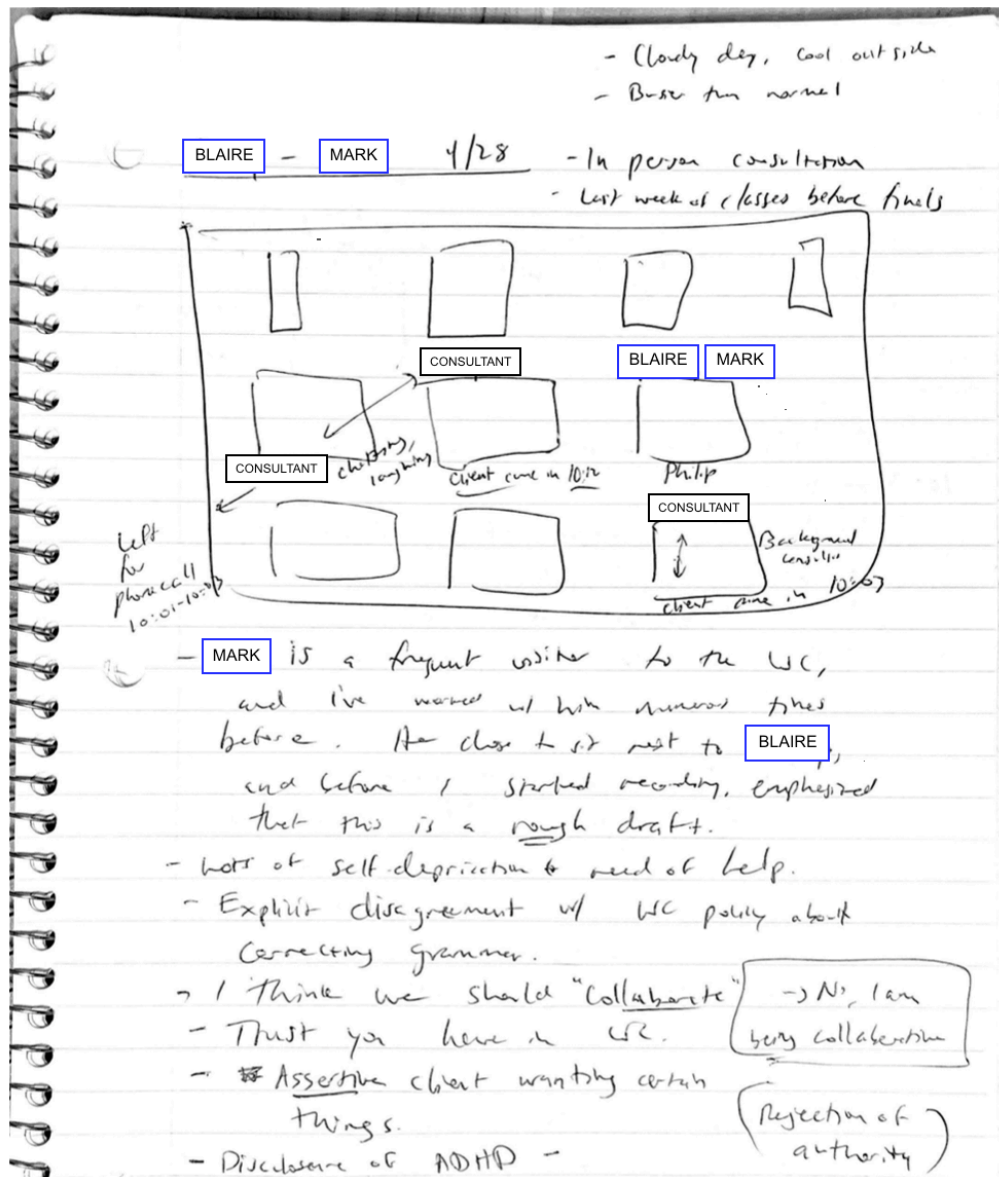
In the margins of these fieldnotes, themes such as claiming/rejecting authority and expecting/denying expertise came into focus.

My fieldnotes also contained sketches of participants' gestures and eye contact, which served to jog my memory of the session in lieu of video recorded data (Emerson et al., 1995). Finally, I developed the practice of writing analytical comments as questions which would focus my later analysis. In Blaire's session with Mark, an undergraduate history major who we will meet more extensively in Chapter 6, she expressed early on that she wanted to "collaborate" (to which Mark responded somewhat antagonistically, "I am being collaborative", see Figure 8). Thirty minutes later, Blaire was writing suggested revisions on Mark's document while Mark's attention wandered to a nearby consultation and then physically wandered to check out the fidget toys and hand sanitizer on another table. I wrote two questions: "What work is he doing?" and "Why does Blaire feel comfortable writing for him if she really wants collaboration?" (Observation data, 4/28/23). Such observations and questionings reveal an "an epistemic process: the way in which we try to make new information understandable for ourselves, using our own interpretive frames, concepts and categories" (Blommaert & Dong, 2020, p. 37). These early jottings formed the foundation for more detailed analytical memos that generated the main themes of Chapter 6 about consulting practices and ideological negotiation.

Participant journals were also used as a way to supplement other forms of data collection. Journaling can be a place of iterative reflection that occurs outside of spoken interaction with the researcher (De Costa et al., 2022). Following Hayman et al. (2012), who argue that participants may feel more comfortable to share written reflections on sensitive topics, I adopted a journaling protocol to supplement the interviews and observations (see Appendix E). Participants completed the journaling prompts before our interviews, which allowed us to discuss what they wrote. Table

5 summarizes the primary data sources collected from the four focal participants. It is worth noting that the consultants were more expressive in dialogue than in the journals, which may reflect the rapport we had built outside of the researcher-participant relationship, as well as the fact that we scheduled interviews during consultants' working shifts, while journaling would have been done on their own time and may have been an added burden.

Table 5

Overview of Participant-Generated Data Collected from Focal Participants

Participant	Consultation observations (minutes)	Interviews (minutes)	Journal entries (words)
Blaire	3 (161)	6 (312)	555
Elise	3 (78)	5 (230)	113
Kaya	3 (160)	6 (187)	507
Melanie	2 (77)	7 (256)	715
TOTAL	11 (476)	24 (985)	1890

Finally, I collected response data from clients whose sessions I observed using a brief online survey. The open-ended questions documented the clients' demographic information related to languages (see Table 3), their motivations for booking the session, their descriptions of the session itself, and their impressions about the extent to which the consultant met their expectations. While the clients were not considered focal participants, these responses added important contextual details that add nuance to the interpretation presented in this study. The full survey is included in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

Nexus analysis does not prescribe a discourse analytical method at the textual or interpersonal level, although Scollon and Scollon (2004) provide some baseline guidance. Because I was interested in identifying the ideological orientations reproduced across the intersecting discourse cycles of a writing center consultation, including the discourses in place

(RQ1), historical bodies (RQ2), and interaction orders (RQ3), I combined textual and action-oriented analytical frameworks, which I explain in the following paragraphs. Savski (2023) explains how a (re)entextualization approach to LP research—what he refers to as "the current 'action' paradigm in LP" (p. 16)—includes the type of textual analysis that stems from Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, 1989, 1995), but prioritizes human action and agency over the content of the policy texts under investigation. Bonacina-Pugh et al. (2022) similarly identify the multiple levels of LP research, arguing that language policies can (and should) be analyzed as text, as discourse, and as practice:

> Language policy as *text* is a written artefact that regulates language (use); texts are products of discourse, which is one form of social action. Language policy as *discourse* thus produces knowledge and meaning in context and stands in a dialectical relationship to the social. Language policy as *practice* (or 'practiced' language policy) refers to a set of implicit interactional norms that influence the production and interpretation of language choice acts. […]'Language policy' [is thus] a multi-layered social and discursive process that involves interconnected texts, discourses and practices.

<div align="right">(p. 1107, emphasis in original)</div>

Savski (2023, p. 16) suggests that, when investigating ideology, researchers shift from questions that center textuality (e.g., what ideologies are encoded in the text?) to those that center policy actors and their concomitant actions that (re)entextualize policy discourses (e.g., what ideological agendas do actors appropriate the text for?). I maintain that such a shift falls in line with the poststructuralist epistemology described in the previous chapter, and coincides with LP research that explores the ways texts and their meanings travel and transform, and how social action can be understood as discursive ripples across scales of time and space (Ou et al., 2021) through processes of resemiotization (Scollon, 2008) and re-entextualization (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Savski, 2023). In the context of my study, an example of resemiotization occurred when Blaire channeled her past experiences of linguistic oppression—itself a discourse system—into empathetic proofreading for Amina, an international student from Saudi Arabia. Re-

entextualization occurred when Melanie used the Center's language statement as a justification for "not doing grammar", although no such statement was promoted in the documents and PD sessions I examined. While the two processes are similar, resemiotization relates primarily to the transformation of habits and practices carried in one's historical body, while re-entextualization describes the continual re-interpretation of meanings found in texts.

Following this logic, I analyzed all the textual documents and transcripts from interviews and observations at two levels: (inter)textual and action-oriented.

(Inter)textual Analysis. At the textual level, I uploaded all documents, transcripts, and fieldnotes into a specialized software for qualitative data analysis (MAXQDA, http://www.maxqda.com/). I followed an iterative process of descriptive coding (Baralt, 2012; Miles et al., 2020) to familiarize myself with the data. I started with an open coding process of reading and re-reading the transcripts, interviews, and field notes, noting all explicit mentions of the requirements and responsibilities of consultants, approved or disapproved language practices, and descriptions of users of multiple language. For example, I categorized this excerpt from the Center's Handbook as *consulting practice*: "At the Writing Center, we primarily focus on working with clients to improve overall clarity and comprehension rather than doing solely proofreading." Many statements were assigned multiple codes at this initial stage, such as the following statement (also in the Handbook): "we always encourage consultants to be critical of the strategies we use in consultations, particularly as they might run counter to the values of the Writing Center and uphold inequity." This was descriptively coded as *critical* and *activism*.

As I read through the documents a second time, I paid attention to personal deictics (i.e., pronouns) and evaluative indexicals (i.e., value-laden nouns, adjectives, and verbs), drawing on Wortham and Reyes's (2021) linguistic anthropological framework of discourse analysis that

moves away from analyses of context-agnostic speech events and towards pathways of events. I

identified the linked associations evident in the use of pronouns and the connotations and implied

values given to the social actions described, using these questions:

- What contrasts of difference do actors make about language practices?
- What group distinctions do actors make (i.e., between us/them)?
- What value statements are made (implicitly and explicitly) about language(s)?
- What value statements are made (implicitly and explicitly) about good/bad practices?

For example, the practice of "solely proofreading" is undesirable, as is "running counter"

to the Center's values. At the university scale, the DEI report states, "As we strive to advance

these efforts and become a national DEI leader, our success depends upon every member of the

university community being an active participant." I noted the use of "we" to signal collective

identity of the university campus, as well as the close association of DEI and "becoming a

national leader". As ideological orientations related to social justice (such as countering inequity)

and neoliberalism (such as the desire to compete, lead, and expand) became relevant, I further

explored this theme across texts.

These questions reflect Bakhtin's (1981) notion of *dialogism,* which acknowledges the

co-ownership of our utterances and suggests that any "text" whether spoken or written carries

echoes or ripples of earlier speakers and writers. Because of their dialogic and multivoiced

nature, texts should be interpreted not in isolation but in relation to other texts (Fairclough, 2001;

Lemke, 1995). Multiple meanings are available in a given text, and intertextual analysis aims to

identify the links between texts, either as they extend back into the past or into the present and

future as new links and interpretations are made and solidified (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). At this

stage, I brought the various policy texts into contact, and I examined the ways the Language

Statement was embedded in the Center's website, the Handbook, and PD materials. As I re-read

the policy and communication documents, I identified the most prominent framings of group

membership, desirable qualities, and preferred actions in the various texts. I also noted the various uses of "we" mentioned earlier in this section, as the authors of the Handbook alternate between a collective meaning that includes consultants (as in, "we primarily focus on working with clients") and one that only includes administrators (as in, "we always encourage consultants to be critical").

My analysis of personal deictics and evaluative indexicals is also informed by Goffman's (1981) participation frameworks and positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1999; Kayı-Aydar, 2019), both of which recognize the dynamic, negotiated discursive construction of individual and collective identities. Kayı-Aydar (2019) explains that, as people use language to interact, they engage in "positioning moves" through a process of "situating oneself or others with particular rights and obligations through conversation" (p. 5). Applied to the university administrators who wrote the policy documents, the writing consultants who interpret them, and clients who visit the Center, this orientation to discourse analysis focuses on the social action of identity construction and negotiation, in particular with identity labels like teacher, student, expert, or novice. In this way, intertextual analysis both identified ideological orientations promoted by the policy documents surrounding the Center (thereby answering RQ1) and laid the foundation for an action-oriented analysis that accounted for participants' evolving social roles.

Action-oriented Analysis. As I shifted my attention more squarely on the four focal writing center consultants, including their prior experiences with linguistic diversity (RQ2) and the ideological orientations reproduced in their consultations (RQ3), I continued to identify and trace the linguistic resources that perform a social action across multiple events (Wortham & Reyes, 2021), paying attention to the ways the value statements about language use and users of multiple languages were continuously reconstituted (Savski, 2023) through consultants' actions.

In the early phases of observations, I identified the separate actions that made up a

consultation for each of the consultants, especially those that related to requests to correct clients'

grammar. Some consultants used margin comments while others made direct edits to the clients'

text, and I asked the consultants to reflect on those choices. I sought to examine to what extent

the consultants saw their practices in tension or alignment with the Language Statement. Over

the course of multiple sessions and debrief interviews with each focal participant, I alternated my

focus, zooming in and zooming out (Nicolini, 2009), to draw connections between the practices I

observed, the discourses foregrounded in their own past experiences, and the discourses

circulating at the various scales of the university (see Hult, 2015 for an overview of multiscalar

discourse analysis).

I identified moments where discourses that have become semiotic aggregates (e.g., labels

like "consultant" or "multilingual writer") appear as either internalized as practice or contested,

as the context surrounding those processes shed light on the nature of social action and change

(Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Scollon, 2008). I attended to the positioning moves of consultants and

clients as they "claim, deny, or give rights as well as demand or accept certain duties" (Kayı-

Aydar, 2019, p. 5) within consultation sessions. I also identified the regular, normative patterns

of action that constituted the "practiced" language policy (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012). Additionally,

by attending to the material objects such as the commenting function in GoogleDocs and

concepts like "linguistic justice" used as cultural tools, I was able to reveal the "mediational

means" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 5) that enable the social practices we seek to understand.

Savski (2023) argues that by focusing on (re)entextualization (i.e., the continual birth and

rebirth of a text), LP research should not aim to acquire a tidy picture of the policy landscape in a

given context, but rather to "account for the normality of abnormality" (p. 9) within policy

actions. This means the Language Statement will be interpreted and enacted variably across writing consultants and that different actors engaging in the "same" practice. Put differently, a singular practice of "conducting a writing consultation" may be relying on multiple social scripts that govern each actor's words and actions (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). To this end, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Bazeley, 2021; Miles et al., 2020) to explore how consultants' differing sociolinguistic backgrounds might relate to their consultation practices. This process was beneficial as it required me to identify only the most relevant language ideologies and consultant practices that make up a writing center consultation.

In summary, the aim of a nexus analysis to "open up and make visible links and connections among the many trajectories of historical bodies, discourses in place, and interaction order which constitute our social life" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 178). The answers to the research questions are a result of multi-step textual and action-oriented analyses of the policy documents, participant narratives, observations, and reflections. Each RQ relates to one of the overarching discourse cycles (historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order). I identified the ideological discourses embodied in the consultants' histories and future plans (reflecting multiple time scales) and explored how they are foregrounded in consultation settings (including multiple discursive scales). By shuttling between my analysis of the language statement, campus reports, PD training materials, consultant interviews, and observations of consultations, I was able to document the various discourses about language and how they are highlighted and linked with other concepts (like diversity, accessibility, or social justice) or submerged or made invisible, resulting in tension-filled opportunities of agentive action. In the following chapters, I pinpoint key moments that make visible the multi-scalar re-entextualization of discourse as new habits or ideological orientations emerge, thereby disentangling the ways

four consultants encounter the ideological tensions (e.g., whether and how to correct clients' grammar) inherent in a writing center's language policies.

Changing the Nexus

The final stage of a nexus analysis is *changing the nexus*, whereby the researchers and participants reflect together on the findings of the analysis and document the social changes occurring in their shared context. Scollon and Scollon (2004) conclude their pioneering book with a call for researchers to recognize their work as social activism. By interrogating social practices at multiple scales, contextualized by participants' histories and desired futures, a nexus analysis will inevitably lead to alterations to the practices being investigated. This form of inquiry is a kind of intervention, but as the authors warn, one that is not unilateral and does not assume or hypothesize a predetermined outcome. In chapter 6, I describe the changes in consultation practices that emerge over the course of this study and reflect on the interpersonal and institutional influences that contribute to those changes. The implications for practice, policy, and research presented in chapter 7 also reflect this stage, as they represent active participation within related continually evolving disciplinary discourse communities.

Interrogating Motives and Researcher Positionality

Scollon and Scollon (2004) implore researchers engaging in nexus analysis to avoid tidy positionality statements in favor of an interrogation of the motives that prompted and sustained the researcher's interest in the study. They argue that the privileged status of scholarly work should be continually interrogated and assert that "inquiry is a human right which constitutes the balancing mechanism to the false security of authoritative knowledge" (p. 149). Human-centered research, particularly scholarly inquiry that views itself as social activism, is rife with ethical concerns.

I reflect on those concerns here, drawing on Bakhtin's (1990) notion of *answerability*, a term which denotes the shared, two-sided ethical responsibility that we have for each other. The concept stems from Bakhtin's understanding that people experience interdependence through the intertwined nature language. If our words are filled with the intentions of others, our utterances are in constant dialogue with others. Answerability, Bernstein (2019) explains, means that our actions are answerable to those we come into contact with. Bernstein writes, "the answerable (ethical) act is always a response to the concrete and current world, to actual others, by the present self. Answerability is therefore always answerability-in-practice" (p. 131). In a researcher-participant relationship, answerability-in-practice frames the process of considering ethical actions not as "a pre-determined moral code" (p. 131), but as a moment-by-moment reckoning of the "others" to whom the researcher is answerable as they move through their social life.

The primary motivation for this study was to understand the experiences of writing consultants, who like me, must find their way through the ideological thicket of writing center expectations, their own experiences and beliefs, and clients' expectations about correct grammar. By documenting the tensions, pitfalls, and challenges, I hoped to provide institutional stakeholders with a more detailed and nuanced understanding of how their policies about language were enacted in practice. By documenting the ways consultants appropriated and re-entextualized the policy in various ways, I also hoped to gain theoretical insight into the processes of ideological negotiation of multilingualism in academic spaces. Finally, the dissertation is a career milestone that is adjudicated by a committee of supervisors. The pursuit of these questions means that I was answerable to my participants, to my institutional partners like the Center's administrative team, and to my dissertation committee.

Early in the design process, I wrestled with the fact that the Center's language statement is publicly available and my affiliation with the Center is public knowledge. This means that the institution's identity would not be considered anonymous. Similarly, it meant that individual participants could be easily identified by insiders in the community. My desire to transparently present the results of my study to the writing center community, both within the Center itself and at academic conferences, raised the possibility of my participants being in the audience as I presented. In this situation, I see myself as directly answerable to my participants as colleagues and prioritized their comfort when deciding whether to take pictures, which pseudonyms to use, and the modality of our interviews. I communicated this concern to my participants at least once per semester, with the aim of aligning my research with the personal and professional interests of the consultants and administrators. I also conducted lengthy member checking conversations with my participants as I refined my interpretation, and greatly appreciated the times the participants pushed back on my initial interpretations.

Another concern relates to the well-known challenges and complications arising from conducting ethnographically oriented research in one's own backyard. For example, some have argued that being too close to the research site prevents the researcher from achieving analytical distance (Blommaert & Dong, 2020). Scollon and Scollon (2004) argue the opposite, maintaining that ethnographic work involves meaningful participation that precludes attempts at distance, and that researchers play the role of "participant-analyst" that actively "transform discourses into actions and actions into new discourses and practices" (p. 178). Taking onboard this latter view, I embraced my subjective and embedded position, even though it complicated my role.

In particular, my formal status as an administrator in the Center inevitably shaped the questions I asked, the answers my participants gave, and the interpretations that I could make. Although the consent form explicitly stated that participation in the study was voluntary and that no penalty would come from refusal or withdrawal, the Center's director and I took the additional precaution to remove annual review observations from my responsibilities. As a graduate student and administrator, I was often asked to provide evaluative comments to the consultants I observed, and I instead repeated my intention of understanding consultant practices and encouraged my participants to engage honestly with the tensions that my questions about the policy raised. By denying the participants the evaluative feedback they wanted, I minimized my own agenda of promoting multilingualism and sought to balance my role as researcher who wants to understand practices as they naturally occurred. Nevertheless, in observation sessions where the consultant addressed me, I responded as a collaborative peer mentor.

I also recognize my identity positions as a white, heterosexual, English-dominant male, which come with historical privileges that I actively seek to understand and destabilize. My time in the Center has taught me a great deal of about the importance of relationality, sustainability, and community engagement, and I see this dissertation as a vehicle for my own continual personal and intellectual growth. Throughout my interactions with my participants and in presenting their ideas and experiences here, I have sought to embody values of cultural humility, reciprocity, accompliceship, and curiosity. I engaged in the practices of giving ample warning before conducting observations, providing monetary compensation for research participation, introducing myself with pronouns, beginning presentations with a land acknowledgement, and seeking critical feedback from my participants. I view continued critical reflection on these

issues and their impact on the study as an essential part of establishing trust and credibility with both my participants and my audience.

CHAPTER 4: THE DISCURSIVE-IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION

OF WRITING CENTER CONSULTANTS

- *I don't think that there's anything wrong with helping with grammar, but I want to make sure that I don't erase student voice.*

- *A client might say something like, "My professor tells me my grammar is really bad. If you see anything, let me know." This makes me feel sad.*

- *I know that students might be penalized for not having perfect grammar, and I have to remember that I can't fix a department in one session.*

- *I often have consultations with clients who want to work on grammar, and it is difficult for me to approach. I know and believe in the writing center's values, but I also understand the students' place in the university.*

(Anonymous written comments during staff meeting, November 19, 2021)

Writing center consulting occurs within the aggregated discourses about the university, as consultants and clients take up roles within that nexus of practice. As the comments above illustrate, consultants encounter moments of tension when thinking about "correct" language. What discourses have led to consultants' concerns about erasing student voice, accommodating or challenging professor expectations, or upholding the writing center's values? The statement "I know and believe in the writing center's values, but I also understand the students' place in the university" encapsulates the ascription to local ideologies (e.g., "the writing center's values"), the institutional positioning of individuals (e.g., "the students' place in the university"), and the tension created when trying to reconcile the two (e.g., "but I also understand").

This chapter presents an analysis of the discourses circulating at varying levels surrounding the consultants in this study. Of particular interest is the collective ideological positioning that occurs through the use of personal deictics (italicized in the excerpts below) and evaluative indexicals (underlined) by various community members. The discourses identified here include primarily textual data, beginning at the institutional level and zooming in to the

consultant perspective. Collectively, they represent intertextual backdrops—the *discourses in place*—that are selectively mobilized and re-entextualized in the interactional data presented in chapter 6.

What is the University?

Based on my epistemological stance that an institution is an aggregation of localized actions interpreted by various community members, I collected and analyzed 44 campus emails from September 2022-September 2023. These included statements from upper-level administrators, college deans and program directors, as well as newsletters highlighting current campus events. While none of the documents at this scale mention the writing center specifically, they reflect important ideological definitions of the university as an institution, as well as the collective social roles of various members. In the moments captured in these texts, the notion of *success* was prominently highlighted and consistently quantified. The communications centered around three events: 1) the resignation of the university president, 2) the aftermath of a shooting on campus, and 3) the circulation and promotion of a report on DEI initiatives on campus. The first two were chosen specifically because they represented tense moments for the university in which the administrators are simultaneously communicating directly to the university community and being exposed to increased regional and national media attention. The third is a more formally produced institutional document and narrows our focus to questions of diversity and belonging.

Presidential Resignation

The former university president, who had held the position for roughly three years, played a central role in steering the university through the COVID-19 pandemic. In his welcome email to all students in the fall of 2022, he emphasized community health and safety as a priority

for him and for the community: "The high vaccination rate among our students and employees is an essential component of *our success*, creating a safer community for all to live, work and learn" (email communication, 8/10/22, emphasis added). In September, the president came into conflict with the board of trustees over Title IX policies (the federal policies preventing sex-based discrimination in federally-funded education institutions), which ultimately resulted in his resignation[3]. The flurry of emails and speeches about the situation pointed to shared visions of what the university is and the values it should uphold.

In defense of the president, the provost wrote:

"[*THE UNIVERSTIY*] is <u>committed</u> to <u>providing</u> an environment that <u>fosters the values of mutual respect</u>, dignity, responsibility, and open communication. As *Provost* it is *my* responsibility to live by these commitments and take actions that align with this promise. […] *We* remain committed […] to creat[ing] <u>a safer</u>, <u>more secure</u>, <u>more supportive</u>, and <u>inclusive campus</u>. The safety and wellbeing of the campus community is a top priority of *this administration* and that has been re-enforced *by our actions*."

(Email communication 9/12/22)

On a thematic level, safety and well-being are reiterated frequently in campus communications, as noted in this excerpt. The provost explicitly names values like mutual respect, dignity, responsibility, and open communication, each of which are values that govern social life. Focusing on the personal deictics used, the provost cycles between a third person collective naming of the university (*the university is committed*), a first person claim of rightful actions (*my responsibility*), the third person self-reference (*a top priority of this administration*), and a collective possessive defense of rightful actions (*re-enforced by our actions*). Multiple intersecting interests, identities, and roles appear to be at stake, illustrating the multi-layered social process of naming and defending a shared university culture. The university, although

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[3] See news story for more context (https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/13/us/michigan-state-president-resigns)

referred to as a collective, concrete entity (as a thing that can "commit" to an action), is in fact

made up of individual administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students, and community members.

The president's resignation is a clear example of contested values and interpretations of

education administration. Salient also is the fragility of the political alignments between

university administrators, and the provost's message can also be construed as a buffer against

associations between, on the one hand, the political riff between a president and the board of

trustees, and, on the other, the overall stability of the university as an institution.

The president similarly framed the university as overwhelmingly successful. In his

resignation speech later that semester, he stated that he hoped for:

> a future where *we* successfully educate more *students* for meaningful and rewarding careers, attract and retain the world's best scholars, teachers and support staff, leading discovery and creative activities that impact the whole of society, address disparities in health across the state and the world, stand at the forefront of institutional sustainability. And do it all in a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that allows *everyone* to meet *their* full potential at *[the university's]* locations worldwide. (speech, 10/13/22)

Then, in his final week as president, he wrote in a campus email:

> Thanks to the commitment of *our* dedicated *community of students, faculty, academic staff, support staff and alums*, *we* safely navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic, grew enrollment in a difficult environment, rose in national and international rankings, set fundraising records and developed three strategic plans that will serve as blueprints for the future. And together, *we* put the goal of having a safe, welcoming, diverse and inclusive campus foremost, creating a firm foundation for continued excellence at [UNIV]. (email communication, 11/2/22)

While the resignation of a university president suggests that the university is a place of

transition and change where presidents, like all students and employees, come and go with time,

that discourse is backgrounded in these excerpts. Foregrounded is a vision of what the university

is for. A critical reading suggests that the "we" in the two excerpts are slightly different. In the

first, "we" appears to include administrators and faculty, while students are positioned as the

object of education, recruited and enrolled in great numbers and instructed by "the world's best

scholars and teachers". In the second, "we" is more inclusive and includes, at least in the first sentence, students within the "dedicated community". The excerpts reflect an idealized educational system in which personal growth, "meaningful and rewarding careers", and meeting one's "full potential" are lauded. However, this idealistic view is accompanied by a steady undercurrent of neoliberal competition, whereby "more students" are better, the scholars should be "the best" who "lead discovery" and "stand at the forefront", all implicitly in comparison to other universities. The university is a frame that brings together individual aspirations for growth and development, couched within a neoliberal society in which universities compete for students, faculty, and impact. The quantity of strategic plans, one of which I discuss in detail below, is highlighted, and even the values of being "safe, welcoming, diverse and inclusive" are positioned by the use of "foremost" in competitive relation to other goals. Importantly, linguistic diversity is not referred to explicitly in any of the campus communications I examined, although one could argue that it is included under the broad use of "inclusive" found in all three excerpts. Whatever the content of the messages, all communications are written in standard, or formal, English, discursively promoting a monolingual standard language ideology.

Campus Shooting

In the spring of 2023, a lone gunman took the lives of three undergraduate students and injured five others[4]. It was reported that the gunman, who was found dead by police, did not have ties to the university and there was no direct motive for the shooting. The shocking and tragic act was a major disruption to university life, as classes were canceled while the community grieved. This moment of turmoil is important to discuss as it left significant imprints on the remainder of

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[4] See news story for more context (https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/02/14/us/michigan-state-shooting)

the semester, during which I conducted consultation observations and follow-up interviews. In the communications that went out in the weeks after the violence occurred, university leaders again demonstrated their ideas of what the university is and does. Unlike the presidential resignation, which did not translate into classroom-level directives from mid-level administration, this incident had concrete, tangible impacts on classroom teaching.

The correspondence took the form of three waves, with the first expressing grief, gratitude, and solidarity. The board of trustees released this statement the day after the shooting:

> *Our* hearts go out to *the victims* and families of this senseless tragedy. Thank you to [University], local, state, and national law enforcement agencies and first responders who worked to <u>protect</u> our [University] community. *We* thank our counseling service providers who will work to <u>bring calm and care</u> to everyone on campus in the coming days and weeks. In the difficult days to come, the *[University] Board of Trustees* are <u>united to heal our university</u> and the entire [University mascot] community.

<div align="right">(email communication, 2/14/23)</div>

In their collectively authored message, the trustees acknowledge the suffering of the university community and express gratitude to law enforcement and counselors who mobilized in response to the tragedy. The community is defined broadly, expanding outwards from the victims and their families, to "everyone on campus", to "the entire [University mascot] community". In the final sentence, the board of trustees positions itself as a "united" administrative body, perhaps as an intertextual recognition of the disunity experienced throughout the presidential resignation five months earlier, and asserts a position of authority and responsibility over the process of healing after trauma. In its demonstration of care and concern for the entire community, this message also describes the hierarchy that governs decision-making processes.

A week later, the narrative shifted toward a second wave: addressing the logistical steps of returning to teaching after a crisis. The interim provost shared updated policies on allowing students to take a Credit/No Credit option on their grades for the semester, and several offices

circulated advice on returning to class. The chair of my academic department sent the following

message to all faculty and teaching assistants, distinguishing between the types of decisions

instructors were able to make and those needing to come from "upper admin[istration]":

> *You* may adopt a flexible student-centered approach to modality, student attendance
> policy, and the amount/type of materials/assignments. Before the spring break, *you* may
> adjust *your class* modality as appropriate. *See also* the email from [the College] at the end
> of this email on classroom relocation and what to consider for a modality shift. […] *For*
> *students* who eventually decide to withdraw from a class, it's a bit complicated and more
> information *from upper admin[istration]*is forthcoming. (Email communication, 2/17/23)

The department chair repeats the construction "you may" to indicate the classroom-level

decisions that instructors have control over. Instructors are given permission to be "flexible" and

to "adjust" their classes to make it more "student-centered". While this directive suggests that the

instructors have a great deal of agency and autonomy in this moment, the flexibility allowed by

the department chair stands in contrast to the normal operating procedures of university

instruction, which often include department-level guidelines about student attendance and

modality. In this excerpt, the university is presented as a complex institution requiring logistical

management, especially when it comes to classroom relocation, alternate teaching modality, and

student withdrawals. For those "complicated" issues outside of the classroom, instructors are

directed to guidelines from the College (the administrative body above the department and below

the provost and president) and other "upper admin[istration]". Instructors are therefore

positioned as policy makers in relation to most classroom decisions while simultaneously

positioned as subordinated to administrative policy makers when it comes to physical spaces,

teaching modality, and class enrollment. Importantly, these parameters appear to be flexible, as

the shooting led university administrators to allow instructors to make more decisions at their

own discretion than previously allowed.

Over the course of about two weeks, the messages circulating through our email inboxes shifted focus towards a return to normalcy. The final wave had traces of the previous two, as the interim president, who was the former provost before the previous president resigned, continued to express grief, gratitude, and solidarity in relation to the violence on campus, and acknowledged the challenge of achieving what she called "academic and research continuity" as seen in this excerpt:

> It has been said, "What [they] leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." [The three undergraduate students who were killed] are stitched forever on *our* hearts. And the five injured students, together with those *in our midst* bearing unseen wounds, are part of *our* fabric of care and community. […] *I* also thank *administrative leaders, support staff, faculty and academic staff and volunteers* who worked tirelessly during the last two weeks to ensure that *we* could provide educational and research continuity. (Email communication, 2/27/23)

As the email progresses, the interim president returns to familiar themes of academic excellence and the neoliberal backbone of US higher education as she congratulates the five faculty members named as fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an organization that is subsequently described as "the world's largest general scientific society and among the most prestigious" (Email communication, 2/27/23). Further congratulations of excellence are given to the university as "one of the country's premier research sites" as well as "a top producer of Fulbright U.S. Scholars for the ninth consecutive year" (Email communication, 2/27/23). The interim president concludes the email with this:

> As *we* have done for 168 years of change and challenge, *we* will strive to maintain our institutional momentum across *our mission* of advancing knowledge and transforming lives through learning, discovery and outreach in this present moment. And to do this, *we* again must look upward. Not away from *our* past, but with *our* past woven into *our* shared future. (Email communication, 2/27/23)

Using references to the university's long history and consistent use of "we/our", the interim president's words invite the reader to see the "change and challenge" of the moment as part of a greater narrative of progress and future achievement. Words like "momentum" and

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"upward" align with one of the university's mottos, "advancing knowledge and transforming lives." A week later, the interim provost shared tips for trauma-informed teaching while communicating that "*we* should not plan to hold moments of silence, town halls, or 'debriefs' without first consulting [*administrative office related to wellbeing*]" (Email communication, 3/10/23). The leeway about decision-making in classes prominent immediately after the shooting was replaced with reminders about what is allowed when, thus reestablishing the operating procedures and sanctioned actions of the university. The institution, therefore, exerts control over when and how community members express emotions, as well as what types of emotions (e.g., care) are deemed acceptable.

DEI Report and Plan

In the fall of 2021, the university released a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Report and Plan, one of the three strategic plans lauded by the president in his resignation speech above. The report is a 77-page document self-described as "a framework of recommendations" to challenge the "deep roots of racism and xenophobia" that exist in the US and on university campuses. In the president's opening remarks he broadly connects social difference with university success, stating, "When *we* acknowledge how differences enable excellence, *we* stay true to *our* mission to advance the common good" (p. 3). In this framing, any members of the university community holding deficit views about others based on social differences risk being "untrue" and out of alignment with the university's shared values. The document includes ample description of the members of the committee that created it, as well as bright and active pictures of students and faculty members of different genders, ethnicities, and physical abilities. However, intertwined with the document's "crucial imperative" (p. 3) of ensuring a campus that is welcoming and inclusive to all is a coinciding imperative to be a "national leader in DEI," a

phrase that was used 15 times in the document, another exemplification of neoliberal competition.

Using 2019 census data, the document prominently presents metrics and milestones related to the university's demographics, pointing out that the university's demographics skew whiter than the national average. In a section entitled "What will it take to make [the university] a national leader in diversity?" the report authors emphasize how the university's competitiveness is tied to enrollment numbers:

> As [*the university*] moves toward becoming a national leader, it is important to consider the trends for the college-age student population. The state and national landscape of the college-age student population is quickly diversifying. With the dwindling number of college-age students in [the state], *[the university]* will need to recruit nationally as *we* prepare the institution to be competitive in the future. (p. 71-72)

In this excerpt, the university is named as an abstract actor who, always looking toward the future, must plan for the "dwindling number" of local in-state students. The aim of creating a welcoming environment for a more diverse future student body is thus discursively linked with the economic and reputational success of the university. The report writers do not mention the fact that out-of-state students are pay higher tuition rates than in-state students, and that recruiting more out-of-state students would bring the university a financial windfall.

However, the document was not exclusively driven by competition. It also summarized the results of 50 listening sessions held in the fall of 2020 with various groups on campus. In this section, the members of the campus community expressed a desire for "a culture of acceptance […] where all experience a sense of belonging" (p. 28). The respondents expressed concern over a lack of "identity safe spaces" and demanded more resources to combat discrimination and to revise inequitable practices enshrined in institutional policies. They write: "People should not be discriminated against for their identity, orientations, ideologies or affiliations. Individual and organizational behaviors, beliefs and barriers that prohibit belonging should be addressed […]

DEI should be a proactive priority rather than a reactive afterthought" (pp. 28-29). By publicly amplifying the voices of diverse voices, the institution is acknowledging that traditional metrics of academic success do not reflect genuine wellbeing and belonging for all members of the university community.

Similar to the emails described above, neither language diversity nor multilingualism is explicitly mentioned. Language use is featured a handful of times when the human resources and university communications units are recommended to adopt "culturally competent, empathetic and inclusive language" (p. 60) in reporting demographic information and in communications about "historically underrepresented communities" (p. 55). Although attention to racial and gender categories reflects a shared view of language as a mediator of power dynamics, no language varieties other than formal English are represented or promoted in the document.

Two years after the initial DEI Report and Plan was released, in the spring of 2023, the office overseeing institutional diversity and inclusion published a second DEI report which documented the status of the goals and recommendations set in the first document. The 75-page document includes a colorful display of Indigenous attire, and similarly frames DEI in quantitative terms, introducing a DEI Scorecard, reproduced in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Visual Elements and DEI Scorecard in 2023 DEI Report

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23

DEI SCORECARD

In 2022-23, 270 diversity, equity and inclusion actions items were tracked with 24 recommendations completed, representing 9% of all actions. Most action items are in progress, making up 111 or 41% of all action items being advanced across campus. In addition, 60 action items (22%) are being evaluated for identifying resources and 75 (28%) are not started.

Of all the actions being tracked, 128 (47%) are focused on increasing diversity, 44 (16%) on ensuring equity, 60 (22%) on promoting inclusion and 38 (14%) on enhancing outreach and engagement. Additionally, of all the strategic goals, increase diversity and promote inclusion have the most items in progress, with 54 (20%) and 23 (8.5%) of actions respectively.

IMPLEMENTED	IN PROGRESS	EVALUATING	NOT STARTED
24	111	60	75

As in the first DEI Plan, this document combines the overarching goal of DEI with institutional excellence. For example, under the heading "Our Vision", the authors write, "[The university] will be recognized as a national leader in the advancement of knowledge by the most diverse and exemplary cadre of students, trainees, faculty, staff and alumni" (p. 3). The use of passive voice "will be recognized" draws attention to an external perception that university administrators actively cultivate, embedded within the broader discourse of neoliberal competition (Piller & Cho, 2013). Additionally, while the document more robustly challenges historical labelling terms related to gender and ethnicity (e.g., by noting as problematic the non-existence of nonbinary gender categories and the over-application of the category "white" to describe individuals from North Africa and the Middle East), it does not explicitly mention the diverse language practices of individuals on campus.

In summary, document analysis of selected communications and policy documents at the university level revealed prominent discourses related to the core values of the university. At the forefront is a narrative about excellence and retention of faculty and students, with specific mention to a competitive economic market. Human wellbeing, success, and self-actualization are framed in terms of achievement (quantified as grants, awards, and prestigious rankings), and the hierarchy between administrators, faculty, and students is commonly made relevant in campus communications. Accompanied with these neoliberal sentiments is a narrative of care and inclusion (Cinaglia et al., 2023; Pereira, 2018) whereby administrators assure the university community of the institution's stability and forward momentum in the face of administrative turmoil and physical violence on campus. Diversity, as highlighted in the DEI plan and report, is defined primarily in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Linguistic diversity is not mentioned in any of the email communications or policy documents reviewed, revealing a

consistent albeit implicit preference for English as the only accepted language in the public discourse related to the institution.

What is the Writing Center?

Narrowing within the institutional scale, we turn to the discourses defining writing centers, which routinely promote their services on their campuses and beyond. The collection of bookmarks and stickers in Figure 10 were gathered at a recent writing center conference.

Figure 10

A Collection of Writing Center Promotional Materials

Clients are given positive messages about how they and their voice matter, and how a writing

center consultation can help their writing "soar," "shine," or be "sexy". They are reminded that

"words are hard" and that putting in the work of "actually writing" is the only way to improve or

build confidence. Clients can come to the writing center for "help" or merely to gain access to a

"reader". These slogans capture some of the implicit messages writing centers communicate to

potential clients, including both evaluative and relational, deficit and asset framings of the

consultant-client relationship. In other words, they represent the materially instantiated

ideological orientations circulating in each center.

I present in this section a combination of communications from administrators and more

formal documents related to the focal Center in this study, including the employee handbook, a

105-page collaboratively authored document which describes the Center's mission, vision,

history, organization, and operational protocols. The handbook describes the Center's many

functions across the university, in the community, and on national and global levels, but states

that "the heart of our mission is supporting and uplifting writers at any phase of the writing

process across disciplines" (p. 16). The Center is a dynamic, multi-scalar entity that is made up

of the histories and practices of the multiple people who work there. After discussing the

ideological underpinnings of the texts examined, I highlight how they align and contrast with the

discourses described above.

The Ideal Consultant

One way to arrive at a definition of the Center is through discursive positionings of the

60+ individuals who work there. The handbook describes the main people and roles that make up

the Center, and the roles occupied by students are excerpted here:

- **Writing Consultants** promote, uplift, support, and champion the diverse languages,
  literacies, and identities of writers within and beyond the university community. [They]

engage all clients at any stage in the writing process through one-on-one consultations, both face-to-face and online.

- **Graduate Coordinators** are writing consultants who also have leadership roles within the Writing Center.
- **Student Office Assistants** […] act as the "first face" of the Writing Center by being proactive and approachable, answering any questions or concerns clients may have.
- **Graduate Assistant Directors** provide support to the Directors in managing the operations of the Writing Center by mentoring graduate and undergraduate consultants, chairing committees, promoting workplace culture, and teaching or acting as teaching assistants. (pp. 27-29)

Consultants can be undergraduate or graduate students, and their job description explicitly calls them to support linguistic diversity as it relates to the identities of the diverse clients who work with them. Graduate coordinators hold half-time appointments as graduate assistants and work 20 hours per week in the Center in exchange for a tuition waiver, a stiped, and health insurance. There are 16-18 coordinators each year, and they lead committees and have managerial roles in addition to consulting. The student office assistants are exclusively undergraduate students and do not consult on writing. Graduate assistant directors are advanced graduate students with graduate assistantships similar to the coordinators. They can work 20- or 30-hours per week, which is completely administrative and does not include any consulting hours. These position descriptions illustrate the range of activities that occur in the Center, as well as the levels of experience and responsibility among student workers.

The Center's longtime director routinely solicited recommendations from faculty and administrators on campus to help "identify prospective consultants." Such a call is an excellent opportunity to identify the various discourses circulating in the Center, as the email widely distributed to university faculty and staff explicitly named the desired attributes of future student employees:

> In identifying prospective consultants, *we* look for good listeners, thoughtful respondents, strong writers, and eager learners. Since *The Writing Center* offers one-on-one consultations for writers developing new media compositions, skill sets related to

technology and visual communication are <u>a bonus.</u> In addition, as *we* <u>work with</u> a range of <u>multilingual students and writers</u>, *multilingual consultants* <u>are also a bonus</u>.

<div align="right">(Email communication, 5/2/23)</div>

The director expresses an understanding of writing centers as places of employment where consultants are identified and selected. The Center "offers" a service to "students and writers", many of whom are "multilingual". The ideal consultant has "strong" writing ability, but this qualification is third in the list, surrounded by relational qualities. One message communicated here is that writing center work requires strong interpersonal skills, thoughtful reflection, and a desire for intellectual growth. Individualistic achievers, prescriptive grammarians, and know-it-alls are implicitly discouraged from applying, as they might find the work in the Center frustrating and misaligned with their strengths and values. Crucially, diversity is presented in two ways, first in the types of writing that are commonly brought to the Center, including "new media" and "visual communication", and second in the recognition of the various linguistic backgrounds represented by the clients who visit the Center. Consultants must be nimble and flexible to offer consultation services across media and languages, and knowledge of multiple languages is positively framed as a "bonus".

Throughout the training materials used to bring consultants into the Center (a for-credit course for the undergraduate students and peer-mentoring program for graduate students), consultants are regularly asked to reflect on the relational, emotional, and critical aspects of "working with writers" (Appendix B). For example, the undergraduate course syllabus names four learning outcomes:

(1) learn about language and literacy practices,
(2) recognize and account for writing as a social practice influenced by social forces,
(3) reflect on their own experiences, identities, and practices of reading and writing through these social forces including identity, location, race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality, and
(4) develop a range of practices for criticality and being. (p. 1)

Literacy is construed as a plural set of practices, writing is wholly social, and consultants must be cognizant of the connections between identity, literacy practices, and power. Such a framing renders invisible any view of writing as a set of technical skills, and there is no emphasis on what might be considered traditional writing competence (e.g., organization, argumentation, style).

The graduate mentoring program (included in Appendix C) is described as a bridge between undergraduates who complete the peer training course, and graduate students who do not. Like the undergraduate course, the Mentor Program curriculum is based on a collection of critically oriented readings about language, writing, identity, and language difference. The training modules frequently promote personal and collective reflection as a way of learning, and consultants are regularly asked to reflect on their own interests and needs. According to the program handbook, mentors, who have worked in the center for at least one semester, are expected to "articulate the praxis of being a mentor, provide guidance to others about complex issues consultants encounter, and develop strategies to create a supportive WC environment". Mentees should "articulate how to be a writing center graduate consultant […], understand and articulate the transition into the WC culture and community, and understand the theories presented in the Mentor Program and apply [them] to WC praxis" (Mentor Program Overview, Fall 2022). These learning outcomes position graduate students as leaders in the center and communicate an expectation that new consultants transition to a new culture and community.

Client Requests

Consultants are also discursively positioned by the clients who make appointments with them. For each appointment, the client fills out an intake form (Appendix G) where they describe the text they are working on as well as any goals they have for the session. These descriptions of

goals reveal their expectations about what the Center is for. In my capacity as assistant director, I regularly monitored the requests clients made, as well as the post-consultation letters the consultants would send to clients. As I screened the intake forms to select clients to observe for this study, I focused on those that mentioned editing, revising, or grammar help, resulting in a collection of client requests that represent the Center where they can come to improve the correctness of their writing and meet instructors' expectations for quality. Most of the requests stated directly, "I want to correct my grammar" (Jack, 3/16/23) or simply "grammar, sentences" (Amina, 4/7/23). Others mentioned an awareness of meeting reader expectations, for example, "I want the writing to be clear" (Mark, 4/28/23) and "I want to make sure I have a very good outline for my PPT presentation" (Ayotunde, 3/28/23). Two clients mentioned being recommended to come to the writing center by their instructors. These requests commonly framed consultants as evaluators who would be able to confirm or deny whether the text met the target standards of "correct", "clear", and "good". In doing so, clients alternatively positioned consultants as collaborators (e.g., "looking for ideas about whether I should delete or add more details on it" (Jack, 3/16/23)) or as editorial assistants (e.g., "Look over essay, make sure I am formatting everything good" (Diya, 11/6/23)).

Statements like "I want the grammar fixed" (Mark, 4/28/23) and "1. Correct syntax errors. 2. Polish the paper. 3. Make suggestions and improve" (Yuze, 4/11/23) reflect the view that consultants are serving the clients' needs. Compare the subtle difference between Jack's "I want to fix my grammar" and Mark's "I want the grammar fixed". The former indicates a sense of writerly ownership on the part of the client, while the latter resembles what you might say to get your hair cut or your car's oil changed. Compare also Ayotunde's "I want to make sure I have…" with Yuze's list of goals. The first implies a conversation with the consultant; the second

can be interpreted as terse commands directed at the consultant who is viewed as a service provider. Moreover, all client requests reflected a desire to improve their writing, and their collective use of phrases like "correct my grammar", "clean up my essay", "needs to be quality", "what I need to alter", "I'm not the best writer", "fix any grammatical errors" and "make it better" suggest a deficit orientation toward writing. The Center, in turn, is positioned by clients as a place to remediate poor writing. In chapter 6, we will follow these clients into their consultation sessions.

The Values and Strategies of the Center

I return now to the handbook as it serves as the backbone of writing center policy that consultants might use to navigate consultations about correct grammar. What values and strategies might guide consultants to respond to client requests related to "correct" writing? I described above the Center's core mission of "supporting and uplifting writers" (Handbook, p. 16). In an earlier section called "Our Guiding Values" appears a vision statement that describes the "broad vision of collaboration" of the Center and the shared aim to "expand ideas of literacy and composing beyond traditional models and geographic boundaries" (p. 7). Similarly, it is common to hear the mantra "we're just humans working with other humans" in staff PD sessions (as well as on p. 5 of the handbook). Consultants are called to collaborate with clients, and perhaps to call into question the traditional model of correctness in writing.

The language statement, which stands as a focal piece of text in this study (see Appendix A), appears prominently after the vision statement. The statement consists of four bullet points reproduced in their entirety below, followed by two short sections entitled "Our Challenge" and "Intentions and Desired Impact". The statement reads:

- *We* meet *writers* wherever they are in their writing and <u>work with them</u> as they <u>discover</u> how best to use *their* writing voices.

- *We* respect *writers'* <u>agency</u> to <u>express</u> *themselves* in ways most <u>comfortable</u> to *them*, including *their* <u>choice</u> of Englishes, languages, pronouns, stories, and perspectives.
- *We* challenge the notion of standard English as the only correct expressive form; rather, *we* recognize and value a number of Englishes.
- *We* address *writers'* <u>concerns</u> surrounding style, grammar, and other writing-related policies. *We* <u>support</u> *writers* in <u>advocating</u> for *their* <u>language practices</u>.

An abbreviated version of the statement (shown in Figure 11) appeared on the Center's website and the television monitor above the reception desk alongside announcements and client testimonials.

Figure 11

A Stylized Representation of the Center's Language Statement

WE CHALLENGE
the notion of Standard English

WE MEET
writers wherever they are in their writing

WE ADDRESS
writers' concerns and support
them in advocating their language practices

WE RESPECT
writers' choice of languages, pronouns, and stories

The statement explicitly emphasizes the writing center as a place of collaboration ("work with them"), where writing is a form of social literacy ("express themselves"), and consultants are responsive to writers' needs ("their writing voices"), while remaining critical of institutional power dynamics ("agency", "challenge", "advocating"). The statement consistently uses "we" to evoke a shared pluralistic view of language and literacy in which all members of the university community may use writing and language successfully to meet their aims. The language of the

statement suggests that consulting is a collaborative process among individuals on a more or less

level playing field, although it is the clients who are working to "discover…their voices" and

positioned as needing "support". Consultants are, by association, facilitators or guides to that

discovery and providers of support. Moreover, the statement positions the Center's staff as allies

and advocates of multilingual writers who may experience discomfort and a lack of validation

for their own language practices in academic spaces. Rather than providing instruction in

Standard English, the statement commits to "addressing writers' concerns" about grammar and

language policies in "a number of Englishes", thereby problematizing a prescriptivist,

monolingual approach to writing. Importantly, the statement to "challenge the notion of Standard

English" is abbreviated in the more widely circulating version, as the phrase "as the only correct

expressive form" is not included.

The statement was initiated and developed in 2018 by coordinators and administrators in

the Center, with input from diverse university stakeholders including the Writing Center

Advisory Council. It was publicized in 2019 on the Center's website, accompanied by a speaker

series and the production of t-shirts and bookmarks. The t-shirts, in particular, represent the

material embodiment of discourse, and consultants are invited to wear the statement as a physical

endorsement of the Center's values.

Consulting Practices

In addition to describing the committees of the Center led by consultants and

coordinators to conduct workshops, review policies, and maintain and develop relationships with

community partners, the handbook provides consultants with a "pedagogical toolkit" (p. 60).

Key consulting moves are suggested, including: analyzing rhetorical situations, active listening,

reading and writing, freewriting, outlining, reverse outlining, decoding assignments, reflecting,

activating prior knowledge, being a rhetorical reader, examining model texts for rhetorical

moves, and using multiple modalities. Together, these strategies are explained in a section called

"Our consulting philosophies":

> *We* recognize that learning is a process constrained by social forces (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism, and capitalism), so what works for *one writer* might not work for *another*. *We* reject nineteenth century dogma about learning as a process of mastery, but understand it as an on-going social process. In this spirit, *we* resist top-down and one-size-fits-all approaches to consultant pedagogy—the decisions *you* make as a *consultant* are based on what *writers* expect and need. In other words, *we* want *you* to think about consultant pedagogy as a toolkit for helping *writers* meet *their* specific goals. In saying this, *we* always encourage *consultants* to be critical of the strategies *we* use in consultations, particularly as they might run counter to the values *of the center* and uphold inequity.
>
> (p. 61)

In this excerpt, writing is an "on-going social process", and consultants are encouraged to

develop a "pedagogy" of their own. The authors are upfront about including themselves in the

text (*we recognize*) and speaking directly to the employees in the Center (*the decisions you

make*). They directly "encourage" and "want" consultants to think and act in a certain way (*we

want you to think about*), making clear the text's role in setting standards and expectations for

what it means to be a member of this professional community. Importantly, the word "we" shifts

gradually from only inclusive of the authors to also including the consultants: "*we* always

encourage *consultants* to be critical of the strategies *we* use". Consultants are thus gradually

included as members use conduct consultations and, ideally, adopt shared practices.

The authors take strong stances against traditional understandings of learning and

prescribed pedagogical strategies. Instead, they favor a bottom-up approach that centers the

writers' expectations and needs, and discursively places the consultant in an agentive role to

"make decisions" and use their pedagogical "toolkit" to accomplish the task. Importantly,

though, the authors remind consultants to be critical and careful not to "run counter to the values

of the center". As a result, consultants are saddled with considerable responsibility to adhere to

the Center's rejection of a view of writing as mastery while simultaneously helping writers meet diverse goals.

At various points in the handbook and consultant training materials, language diversity is introduced as a critical concern for consultants to attend to. A 2.5-page section of the handbook presents a detailed background of the issue, highlighting the "Students Right to their Own Language" statement reviewed in the previous chapter, and providing consultants with reflection questions and boilerplate language they might use with consultants. When faced with requests to proofread or correct grammar, consultants might use these phrases:

- At the Writing Center, we primarily focus on working with clients to improve overall clarity and comprehension rather than doing solely proofreading. Would you like to work together on reading your work and noting where content can be clarified or more clearly conveyed?
- I'm happy to help you revise your work for grammar-related questions, and want to let you know that at the Writing Center we challenge the idea of a Standard English. Would you be interested in incorporating code-meshing into your work?
- I understand you want to complete this assignment and are concerned about your professor's emphasis on 'perfect grammar.' Would you like to discuss resources for navigating a conversation with your professor about language diversity and be connected with on campus resources? (pp. 54-55)

In a PD meeting in January of 2023, consultants were posed the question "What questions/strategies do you have regarding grammar consultations?" In a collaborative idea-generating activity, they documented various strategies listed here:

- Clarify that we are not proofreaders, but we will identify recurring things that inhibit clarity and offer guidance
- Always couching it in the truth that grammar is plastic, socially constructed, and serves dominant ideologies/discourses which disenfranchise some ways of speaking that are actually equally valid
- Ask lots of questions to clarify what they mean by grammar
- Give them multiple options when addressing possible grammatical forms (you could do this or you could do this)

In these ways, the Center's administrators promote the practice of "working together" to "improve clarity and comprehension" over "solely proofreading". Consultants are encouraged

(through explicit reference to policy documents) and encourage each other (through consensus-building activities) to help clients "revise work for grammar-related questions" while explicitly challenging "the idea of a Standard English". They might do this by asking questions (e.g., "what do you mean by 'X'?"), giving multiple options for "correct" ways to express an idea (e.g., "you might say 'Y' or 'Z'"), or focus on patterns of language use that inhibit comprehension (e.g., 'I'm curious, are you translating 'X' from another language?"). Additionally, they are trained to position themselves as mediators between clients and their professors. They are given the explicit aim of disrupting dominant discourses about "perfect grammar" while supporting writers' concerns about grammatical accuracy. These suggestions serve to preempt or respond to the ideological tensions that arise for consultants.

Discussion: Emerging Tensions

This chapter answers the first research question regarding the ideological discourses prevalent in and around the writing center. While there does not appear to be any an explicit policy stance on linguistic diversity at the university level, the Center explicitly affirms various Englishes and challenges the supremacy of a single standard variety. Nevertheless, my review of policy documents and email communications at all levels reflects the dominance of standard American English, as no other language varieties are used in practice. Three tensions emerge from an intertextual analysis of the ideological discourses circulating in the writing center. I begin with the most abstract and furthest removed from the immediate context of consulting sessions.

First, there is a discrepancy between discourses related to competition at the university level and those related to relationality at the writing center level. The university's measurement of an institution's success in terms of impact, accolades, and recognition as a national leader

stands in contrast with the Center's stated goals of valuing writerly agency and choice of language. The Center does not promote itself as a place to get better grades, become an excellent writer, or achieve economic success on the job market. Unlike in the university-level documents, there are few mentions about the awards, published articles, or grants won by writing center employees (although these do exist), and there is no connection between social justice and perceived status as an institution. This tension arises most clearly within the client requests for consultants to help them meet word and citation requirements, and to measure up to the standard set by course instructors, doctoral thesis advisors, and admissions committees. In the case of clients working on graduate school applications, consultants are put in the challenging position of providing feedback to make the writing more competitive as well as to problematize the very nature of the competition in the US higher education system.

Second, within the writing center level, the notion of hierarchy and expertise arise as potentially problematic. On the one hand, the Center explicitly challenges institutionally sanctioned power dynamics between individuals on the basis of language, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Consultations are construed as collaborative interactions where rapport, relation-building, and mutual learning are prioritized over hierarchy or expert status. When it comes to writing consultations, the sentiment of "just humans working with other humans" suggests a skepticism toward all notions of hierarchy and expertise. However, the Center (as well as the institution as a whole) is structured hierarchically. The director is placed above the associate and assistant directors; the graduate coordinators hold leadership positions that consultants do not; coordinators are encouraged to apply to the graduate assistant director position (like I did); undergraduate consultants must pay to take a for-credit course while graduate consultants are paid to read and reflect with their peer mentors; and so on. Clients

wanting grammar correction as a way to improve their writing see the consultants as experts. Meanwhile, the consultants are implicitly directed to challenge that positioning.

Finally, the individual agency of the consultants potentially stands in tension with the institutional aim of developing a shared orientation toward consulting. The training material both encourages consultants to develop their own consulting pedagogy and cautions them against upholding social inequity. Consultants receive messaging that, while there is no singular "right" way of consulting, their work may contribute in various ways to systemic harm, even oppression. When clients' demands reflect a view of writing as mastery or the acquisition of a "standard" language (which the handbook explicitly rejects), how are consultants meant to help writers meet their goals?

In my three years at the writing center, opportunities for consultants to get formal feedback on their consulting practices were limited. In previous years, administrators and coordinators conducted formal observations followed by debrief conversations, but that practice had been abandoned during the stresses of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. In those years, the number of consultants shrank from more than 70 to less than 40, and administrators voiced the concern that evaluative observations might cause additional stress on the staff. From 2021-2023, consultants were encouraged to opt-in to observations by administrators, yet fewer than 10% of consultants volunteered to be observed. In the fall of 2023, administrators revived the formal observation protocol, however, I did not have the opportunity to investigate its implementation. The lack of observations may have prevented the stress consultants might feel from being evaluated on the job yet may also have contributed to the tensions consultants experienced navigating client requests related to grammar.

In this chapter, I have documented the most relevant discourses in place in a writing center consultation. In particular, I have shown that university-level discourses about competition and achievement contrast writing center documents and discussions that promote relationality and collaboration. Zooming in to the client request forms and the training curriculum for consultants, clients' requests for grammar correction come into focus as sites of conflicting discourses that consultants must navigate. The language statement in particular was identified as a pivotal policy text that indicated a value position about standard language without prescribing specific consulting practices. As I will show in the next chapter, these discourses come into contact with consultants' own historical bodies, including their experiences with linguistic diversity.

CHAPTER 5: HISTORICAL BODIES AS DISCURSIVE AGGREGATES

All new coordinators were asked to fill out a survey about their name, program, shirt size, and the pronouns we wished to be displayed on our magnetic name tags. I left the pronouns blank and wondered about the purpose of that question. After all, I'm a man in a man's body, and that should be obvious to anyone who met me. A week later, the director emailed me to check if I meant to leave that question blank. I was the only one who hadn't provided pronouns. I agreed to have "he/him" imprinted on my name badge, mostly as a way to fit in. Over the coming months, I learned that sharing pronouns was a cultural practice that extended beyond nametags. Their inclusion in introductions and videoconferencing profile display settings was intended to normalize the fact that some do not identify with a binary of gender choices. By explicitly presenting and using pronoun language in practice, we were enacting a shared value about our acceptance of difference. In short, we were practicing a language policy influenced by ideologies about gender and language. Interestingly, those values were not made explicit at all prior to encountering the practice. Through repeated interactions with the practice, the implicit ideologies and unspoken policies become more apparent.

(Reflective memo, September 3, 2022)

A focus on the historical bodies of social actors in action centers around the question, "How did these participants all come to be placed at this moment and in this way to enable or carry out this action?" (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 160). My own lack of exposure to explicitly introducing and displaying my preferred pronouns is critical background information preceding the moment of cultural learning (and unlearning) in the vignette above. For me, that learning occurred through social pressure to participate in the practice followed by observation and reflection about the symbolic social meanings enacted through the practice. In this way, our historical bodies are a form of discourse in place, more similar than different to the policy documents highlighted in the previous chapter. If identity can be thought of as the collection of stories we tell ourselves, our historical bodies can be understood as the aggregation of those discourses.

In this chapter, I focus on the historical bodies of the four main participants of the study, including two undergraduate consultants, Blaire and Elise, and two graduate consultants, Kaya and Melanie. Their contrasting historical bodies provide analytical leverage to understand the

negotiation of writing center language policies from various angles. As I recount their experiences that brought them to the writing center, I highlight their experiences related to linguistic diversity at home and in school, including snapshots from early schooling and their more recent university years. The narrative descriptions are generated from a combination of field notes, audio-recorded interviews, and journal writing. I end each section with the consultant's definition of the writing center, characterization of consultation work, and first impressions of the language statement. In this way, this chapter answers the second research question related to the language ideologies that the consultants bring with them to consultant work.

Blaire: The Activist

When we met in the fall of 2022, Blaire was a student in the undergraduate course to begin consulting the spring of 2023. As a sophomore double majoring in interdisciplinary studies and African American studies, she would have two and a half years to work as consultant before graduating. She was the only Black student in the course and found the course valuable as it prepared her for working as a consultant in a primarily white institution.

Blaire's identity as a Black woman was centered in our conversations, in part due to my interest in understanding experiences that differed from my own but mainly because of Blaire's focused interest in Black feminisms. Following in the footsteps of three generations of teachers who preceded her, Blaire wanted to be a teacher. Specifically, she described plans to be a university professor teaching and researching African American studies. In addition to the writing center course, she was taking courses in political science, psychology, and a social science elective. In the writing center, she became a regular member of the multilingual writers committee, where she drew attention to the need for the Center to recruit more students of color.

She considered herself multilingual, as she speaks both Black English and white mainstream English. During her time as a consultant, she was not able to attend most of the staff meetings because of her many commitments as a research assistant and cultural ambassador for international students.

Blaire grew up in a large city in the US Midwest and went to a highly segregated high school. The student population was primarily African American, although she only had one Black teacher before college. The school boasted its International Baccalaureate (IB) program through which students could earn college credit. However, her early experiences with literacy were not so positive. As she recounted:

> I remember a lot of the teachers and faculty and administration were discouraging Black students to pursue the IB program, and who, you know, kind of talk down to us, and I think, essentially broke our spirits, broke their spirits, and instilled that imposter syndrome in them, to make them feel like it wasn't possible for them to go to college. So a lot of my friends from high school didn't go to college.

(Interview, 9/28/22)

Her family members, on the other hand, always expected her to go to college, and her mom and her aunt would regularly provide support and guidance about writing. She struggled with writing in courses like economics and psychology but found success in her final year of high school when she completed the IB capstone project by writing an extended essay on Dr. Baker-Bell's (2020) book on linguistic justice. This course introduced her to concepts like codeswitching and linguistic subordination and gave her a theoretical lens to examine her own experiences with linguistic oppression. As she said, "I always perform my best on things like that. But I think it comes with a passion" (Interview, 9/28/22). Even through that experience, however, Blaire was constantly aware of the need to write according to a "white mainstream English" standard (Interview, 11/9/22), that is, to render her Black language invisible.

Academic life at the university was similarly marked by tension as Blaire took classes in which she was the only Black student. She shared this brief story that captures her attention to how language is imbued with identity, power, and privilege:

> [Sometimes] I automatically code switch by accident. I really have been working on not doing that in my writing and in the way that I speak. Last semester, […] we were taught the class was focused on the Harlem Renaissance and reconstruction. So we had a lot of heavy conversations, and then me being the only black student, I remember, on one of the first days of class, one of my peers, one of my white peers, was like, "I didn't realize that the KKK was like, a real thing". And I almost like, I have to say something. And I almost broke down crying when I was talking. It was really hard for me to keep that code switching front up. And I slowly started to see myself throughout the semester, turn back into who I am at home, and really addressing them how I would at a space where I'm comfortable and just not being afraid of speaking.

(Interview, 9/28/22)

Code-switching, the practice of alternating between two language varieties, is a practice that Blaire has come to actively challenge after reading work by Vershawn Ashanti Young (2011) and April Baker-Bell (2020). The practice suggests that speakers of minoritized languages should leave their home language at home. The view that language reflects identity and personal expression highlights the racial discrimination that Blaire would feel at being expected to leave her linguistic self at home.

For her, as for many 18 and 19-year-olds, college has been a season of reckoning who she is and who she wants to be. Between our interviews, she reflected in her journal about the difficulty of dropping the "old habit" of code-switching:

> I definitely am a code-switcher. It comes to me so easily because it is the only way I can be taken seriously in my classes. When I do this, I get comments like "You speak so well" or "You are such a great writer. I'm surprised" Although these statements are layered with microaggressions, it settles my own insecurities and imposter syndrome, which is super f*cked up and I am working on not allowing myself to fall for old habits like this.

(Journal entry, 10/10/22)

As a result of the ways she has had to suppress her Black language in white academic spaces, Blaire's linguistic historical body is fraught with insecurities and tensions around self-worth and authenticity. She brings her experience of linguistic precarity with her to the writing center.

I wanted to know how Blaire understood the work of the Center. She explained that she was beginning to see it as a place to support students while "dismantling white standard ideas when it comes to writing in an academic setting" (Journal entry, 12/11/22). She described consulting with multilingual writers in this way:

> I don't ever want a client to feel like I'm correcting them or that they don't feel smart that they're English isn't worthy enough, because clearly you're smart, you're in higher education, you're producing knowledge. I just want people to know that they are worthy, and their words matter, and their ideas matter.

(Interview, 11/9/22)

For her, good writing is essentially "producing knowledge," and a consultant's job is to "support clients in expressing their ideas through their writing in a collaborative way" (Journal entry, 12/11/22). This definition of writing center work views maintaining writer agency and bolstering self-worth as primary goals. Her switch to the second person "you" when describing her work with clients underscores the conversational relationship she sees between consultants and clients. As she entered the Center, she created interdiscursive links between her self-doubt stemming from experiences of not being able to freely choose her language practices at school and the Center's emphasis on relationality.

This link is salient in Blaire's reading of the language statement, as discusses the preservation of writer agency and the belief that all people should be valued for their authentic selves:

> The part of the language statement that 'we challenge the notion of standard English as the only correct expressive form, rather we recognize and value a number of Englishes,'

[…] is really powerful, because I know for me the language that I use at home […] my Black language is not appreciated in academic settings. And I have friends who have immigrant family parents and grandparents whose language is not appreciated, not valued, especially in [my city's] public schools. So I definitely think that that would have changed my experience if we had those types of conversations.

(Interview, 11/9/22)

Earlier in the same conversation, Blaire described the language statement as a way to document "how we value linguistic justice" (Interview, 11/9/22). In this framing, a language statement is most accurately understood as a practice rather than a document. It is "a type of conversation" that enacts a value position. Blaire's historical body is that of an activist. This participatory engagement with the values and practices signaled within the text leads her to attend to the ways her attention to correct language impact her and her clients' sense of self and self-worth.

Elise: The Learner

Like Blaire, Elise was a sophomore during the fall of 2022. However, she completed the undergraduate consultant course in the spring of 2022, and so was already beginning her first semester as a consultant. She was majoring in advertising management with an emerging interest in communications. Her first-year writing instructor formally recommended her to work at the writing center, and although she had always enjoyed literature and language arts in high school, she was just beginning to see how writing could be beneficial for her future job. In the previous semester, for example, she joined a club that partners advertising students with local non-profit organizations to assist in designing publicity material for them to use. Elise was partnered with a local food bank and was responsible for writing a brochure describing the organization's services and events, an experience she found rewarding as she gained hands-on advertising experience, developed her strengths as a content writer, and filled a community need.

Elise grew up in a suburb twenty miles outside of a large city in the US Midwest. She identified as a white woman and described her hometown as "mostly white" and "not super diverse" (Interview 10/13/22). She had always been "an English and language arts person" (Interview 10/13/22) and took advanced placement courses in American literature and English language in high school. She considered herself multilingual because of her five years of Spanish lessons, which she described in this way:

> I really liked the teacher. I requested to have her all 5 years. I liked learning about the language, but I also liked learning about the culture aspect of it. We did a lot [of learning about culture], especially because, the fifth year is like AP Spanish. And so I liked learning about like their culture, like something different than what I was used to. That was like the interesting part for me.

(Interview, 10/13/22)

Elise was interested to learn a second language, less for the knowledge of the language itself and more out of a curiosity for how others lived. For her, this curiosity stemmed from the lack of diversity she experienced in her hometown. As we dug into her linguistic background, I asked if she had ever felt like her own language was different from those around her, to which she replied:

> Not that I can think of. Like I said, my hometown was not very diverse. Everyone I was surrounded with were from [my town], grew up their whole life there. Of the people that I knew, everyone kind of spoke the same. (Interview, 10/13/22)

Elise's historical body is one of privilege where her home language was consistently valued and reflected by those around her, and where she never needed to consider changing her language practices. In comparison to her hometown, she found the university campus to be very diverse. For example, she described a friend from Spain she met recently:

> Her first language is Spanish [...] and she has a Hispanic accent. She always tells stories about her hometown friends and stuff that they would do in Spain. And I just think it's so interesting because it's so different from here, and things that me and my friends would do. And I just think it's funny, like I think it's cool to see just how differently we grew up

being from different countries. […] It would be cool to go visit her, and experience what she tells me about.

Language difference in this framing is resoundingly positive, as Elise sees multiple languages as opportunities to learn about the world, expand her horizons, and experience new things. Her use of words like "interesting," "funny," and "cool" reflect a link between language difference and tourism, bordering on exoticism. As such, linguistic diversity is not internalized as part of Elise's identity, and she does not explicitly mention language learning as part of her personal or professional growth.

Language can also be a challenge when it comes to consulting. When we started talking, Elise was well into her first semester of solo consulting and was beginning to encounter multilingual clients in her sessions:

> So I was working with a girl whose first language I think was Korean. I noticed she had all of the ideas and everything. But she struggled with putting it on paper in English. It was very interesting for me to be able to like help her […] because I hadn't really experienced that before then […] It was like kind of difficult at first, just because it's slightly harder to connect at first when you're from completely different places, completely different backgrounds, different language too. But as we continued the consultation, it definitely got easier to help her out, because I kind of felt it out.

In Elise's understanding, consulting is primarily a process of helping others put their ideas into writing. It involves noticing the needs of the client, connecting with others across differences, and "feeling out" the way to meet clients' needs. In this excerpt, language is framed as a barrier in two ways, between the client and her academic work and also between the client and her consultant's ability to build rapport. Elise's expertise as a speaker of a standard variety of English allowed her to help the client express her ideas in a way that would be understandable to her course instructor. Elise admitted that this client was her first session in which language

difference played a major role, and her expression "I kind of felt it out" indicated that she did not yet have pedagogical tools developed to address this situation. In this kind of ambiguous situation, when her training did not prepare her to consult across a language "barrier", Elise said her main strategy is to "ask lots of questions" (Interview 10/13/22) to arrive at an understanding of the clients' ideas.

The Center's language statement did not play a major role in Elise's consulting practice, although she had made connections between language diversity and the accessibility statement. For example, she had a goal to be "more accessible to people who don't have English as their first language" (Interview, 10/13/22). Her description of the statement suggests an emerging understanding of the statement's function in the Center:

> I'm not thinking about the language statement when I'm doing consultations […] I think it's just a good thing to be taught. I guess, as a consultant, it kind of gets you in the mindset that you're supposed to be in.

(Interview, 10/13/22)

The statement functions as a guiding document, albeit not a foundational one. As "a good thing to be taught", it reflects a hierarchical model of education, whereby the student consultants learn the 'right' way to consult. Moreover, Elise's "mindset" is recognized as part of the training. Being a consultant is not solely about what she is supposed to do in a session; her dispositions and ideologies about literacy, language, and accessibility are open to discussion. In one journal reflection after our interview, she commented that "questions about the diversity of my hometown […] really opened my mind to the lack of diversity of my hometown" (Journal entry, 11/30/22)." As an undergraduate consultant, she was experiencing more diverse perspectives than ever before. She was also younger and less experienced than the graduate consultants and faculty members leading the Center, and perhaps this power dynamic has contributed to her openness to taking on new, accepted dispositions in her work.

Kaya: The Chameleon

Kaya arrived in the US a few weeks before the beginning of the fall semester of 2022. In addition to navigating all the things a doctoral student must while moving to a new city and institution, she did so without her suitcase, which was lost on the way. Kaya had become interested in writing center studies during her master's program in the southern region of Africa and sought out the university specifically because of its reputation in the field. She was beginning a PhD in Writing, Rhetoric, and Cultures, and had secured a coordinator role at the writing center. This meant that her tuition, healthcare, and basic living expenses would be covered by the program in exchange for 20 hours of work within the Center each week. In addition to consulting 12 hours per week, Kaya would help spearhead the development of the Center's international partnerships, including coordinating campus visits from visiting university administrators and developing writing groups across universities.

Kaya grew up speaking several languages, including isiZulu, SeSotho, Afrikaans, and English, which she spoke with a British accent. She learned the first at home, the second "on the streets", where she developed a habit of "speaking their language, not mine" (Interview, 10/3/22). She then learned English and Afrikaans as official languages of instruction at school. As a Black African, she lived in a racially segregated, underdeveloped urban area and attended a more prestigious school. Learning to navigate social life in a superdiverse setting, she discovered that being multilingual can be a double-edged sword:

> Actually in high school we were not allowed to speak our own languages. Because it was an English school. They were like, "Stop speaking your language! This an English school!" We had that one English teacher who always used to say that, and actually we were teased because obviously, you're in a town and you go [home] to a township. So I was always teased for being snobbish, the way we spoke English, and it's like "Oh, you're so high and mighty."

(Interview, 10/3/22)

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In her school, English was boasted as one of the criteria to support its status as a "top 100 school" in the country. While that status was policed by teachers within the school, Kaya's English use was looked upon negatively by her peers outside of the school. In her experience, language was clearly political and had tangible ties to her socioeconomic status and racial identity.

When Kaya went to university in her home country, she found a similarly multilingual environment. However, the explicit policing of language use became less overt, and she found herself subverting social expectations about language:

> So when I got to university and having friends [that all spoke different languages], I spoke obviously a mixture of everything. So we used to speak English. Again now we were teased, like, "Oh, you guys think you're special speaking English all the time?" […] I enjoyed speaking to this one guy who spoke Afrikaans because there was still that racial thing of white people sticking together and black people sticking together. […] So it would be funny, like, we were interacting in Afrikaans, and white people [would] look at [us], like, "who do you think you are?" […] They think that other people can't speak Afrikaans, only them. But [us speaking Afrikaans] says, "Well, I can hear exactly what you're saying […] you can't whisper about me. But I can about you."

(Interview, 10/3/22)

In this setting, multilingualism, not monolingualism, is the norm, as Kaya "obviously" needed mastery of multiple languages in everyday life. English was a lingua franca that enabled communication, yet still invited derision from her peers who saw such use of English as performative. Kaya's anecdote about speaking Afrikaans, a language predominantly used by white people, with another Black student at university demonstrates an awareness of the power of multilingualism. While her use of English in public spaces was not valued, she showed how her wide linguistic repertoire could be leveraged to protect herself from exclusion or weaponized as a tool to exclude.

In one of our first conversations, I asked if she planned on actively acquiring an American accent. Kaya struck me as a linguistic chameleon, and I wondered how far she would

go to take on the languages and language varieties surrounding her. She responded, "I'm trying so hard not to lose my accent […] I don't want to be colonized twice" (Interview, 10/3/22). Her answer had a sudden emotional impact on me, as she, in a few words, captured the pain and oppression of colonialism and linguistic imperialism. Kaya's acceptance of her identity as a colonized Black woman called attention to the colonizing power that built the country and university in which we were working. By refusing to accommodate another local variety of English, she asserted her agency against those colonizing influences on her language and identity.

Kaya had a long-term future interest in writing center work and came to this US-based writing center with a strong foundation of consulting strategies. Before learning about writing centers, she employed narrative inquiry in her master's thesis, which led to a level of comfort in consulting with first year writing students required to do personal narratives. However, a month into consulting in the US, she still had insecurities about consulting with writers whose first language was English, as well as with multilingual writers in that context:

> [Back home], it's second language writing… you're speaking to people who don't usually know English… there's this element of feeling a little bit superior or more knowing. But then you come here to first language writing. I was scared. I'm just scared. Because I can talk to you. But am I confident enough that I can give you feedback? […] It's not like we are subject specialists. But we are reading as a reader, right, not as a professor. I'm not a grammar specialist, but now I see there is a need for me to have some grasp of grammar, actually, to be able to help second language speakers.

> (Interview, 10/3/22)

Kaya recognized the different expectations for expertise that she might be held to by her clients, and expressed her own self-doubt about what kind of specialist she should be. She found it more straightforward to consult in the university context of Southern Africa, where "there is only one English" (Interview, 11/17/22) and her earlier school training afforded her a comfort and ease in giving advice to clients. In the US, however, Kaya no longer had that status with a L1

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speaker of US English, and she questioned her ability to back up her feedback with sound reasoning. In this excerpt, she suggested that "reading as a reader" might allow her to give feedback to L1 English writers yet may not be enough for those writing in their L2, whom the Center refers to as multilingual writers. For these clients, she believed she would need "some grasp of grammar" to answer the "why" questions they would ask when she took on the role of judging a phrase or sentence as "correct" (Interview, 11/17/22). She found this ability to explain grammar especially important when working with multilingual writers, although she did not consider herself a multilingual writer because her schooling was entirely in English.

Kaya believed that a consultant's main job was to "be a second pair of eyes and a sound board for the clients' written work, by ensuring that they meet their writing goal" which is achieved by "assisting clients articulate their written thoughts" (Journal entry, 3/10/23). Consultants should "ask questions and propose and not obligate solutions when they identify issues that do not align to the writer's goals" (Journal entry, 3/10/23). Her definition of consulting work prioritizes the preservation of writer agency, and the subjugation and silencing of consultant-identified "issues". The writer's goals drive each session, and consultants play a role as assistant to the writer.

The language statement, Kaya admitted, was not present in consultants' minds. That does not mean, however, that it was unvaluable. In her words, "The language statement helps us recognize other peoples' Englishes. It helps us maintain writers' agency" (Interview, 11/17/22). For her, it served to tamper the urge to say one version of language is more correct than another, and represents how, once the social power dynamics within language practices have been raised, it can be "very tricky" (Interview, 11/17/22) to navigate them in practice. Kaya's linguistic historical body experience can be characterized as multilayered, highly diverse, and fraught with

power inequalities. Her wealth of personal and academic experiences where language use has indexed institutionally sanctioned hierarchical arrangements has contributed to her stance toward consulting, which was both grounded in cultural humility and an awareness of power dynamics mediated through language use.

Melanie: The Teacher

Like Kaya, Melanie joined the Center in the fall of 2022 as a doctoral student in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Cultures program. By the time we met, she had a master's degree in English and several years of experience teaching at the university level. As a coordinator, Melanie was the point person for the graduate writing groups and a series of workshops the Center offered about managing writing expectations in graduate school. This meant she consulted 12 hours per week and spent the other 8 hours of her commitment matching interested students with writing group facilitators, supporting the writing group facilitators with resources, and facilitating her own workshops with other graduate students. She began her PhD program with a plan to pursue a career in academia, with a focus on writing instruction.

Melanie was born in a small town near the university and identified as a white woman. She spent most of childhood in a more diverse suburb of a large midwestern city and attended a school that she considered very diverse. She and her siblings agreed that it was beneficial for them to grow up in a more diverse area than the "very white and very not diverse" upbringing their parents had in a more rural area of the US Midwest.

> I liked it because it wasn't just white people around. Tthat helped us get accustomed to interacting and knowing what different demographics of folks are dealing with in the area. Whereas my cousins and my family members that grew up [closer to here] don't have that experience. We talk about a lot in our family of how grateful we are that we grew up there, and that we are a little bit more aware than some of our extended family members are about some of those things.

(Interview, 11/14/22)

Melanie drew a distinction between her immediate family and her extended family who had a more linguistically and culturally homogenous upbringing. Diversity is positioned as an asset to gaining awareness about how others "deal with" social life, while homogeneity is associated with limited awareness.

As a child, Melanie always read a lot, which she attributed to her mom. She would stay up late reading by flashlight under her covers and would often have to convince teachers that the books she was reading was not too advanced for her. By the time she arrived at her high school with over 1,000 students in her graduating class, she was excelling at English and literature. She recalled the large common hallway, which students jokingly referred to as "the big nasty" because it was always crammed full of people, a roar of student voices "just yelling" (Interview, 11/14/22). It was not uncommon to hear multiple languages in the hallways, but never in the classroom. Although she aligned herself with the throng of diverse student voices in the hallways, saying "we'd be crammed like sardines" (Interview, 11/14/22), she did not consider herself truly multilingual:

> I wish I could speak other languages […] I took French because I always loved the French language. I just thought it was beautiful. I guess I'm envious of folks who have multiple different languages and can feel confident in communicating with [them]. […] So I feel like my personal experience with languages has always been like, damn, I wish I spoke more than English. It's so interesting and you have to be talented. And just communicating and translating constantly in different languages in your head, I wish I could do that.

(Interview, 11/14/22)

Although Melanie's English language upbringing contributed to her success in school, her monolingualism is presented as a limitation, while multilingualism is a talent, something "beautiful" and "interesting". In general terms, she experienced linguistic privilege in her early years of schooling.

As she moved to college and later graduate studies, Melanie was increasingly exposed to critical discussions of language use in academic spaces. Instead of treating writing as an exercise in communicating "properly", she found her teachers and the curriculum exhibit "more intentional awareness that we don't all use English outside the classroom" (Interview, 11/14/22). Nevertheless, like in high school, the status of the writing classroom as a monolingual English space remained unchallenged. In the fall of 2022, she took a course on African American linguistics, where she learned about how Ebonics white standard English have influenced each other. She described the raciolinguistic focus of the course as "fascinating" and "illuminating" (Interview, 11/14/22), words which underscore both that she is eager to engage critically in thinking about the intersection of language and race, and that this intersection has not played a large role in her own historical body.

Melanie wanted to be a country singer, but her dad said she needed a Plan B. In college, she had a composition instructor in college who showed her the freedom and creativity teachers at the university have in constructing their curriculum, and she eventually came to see herself as a teacher. Writing center consultants, according to her, "guide students with their writing in terms of offering support or encouragement for their choices, suggesting alternatives to what they have written to increase readability or more aptly fit what they're trying to do" (Interview, 2/27/23). She saw herself as a guide who could show others the way, or perhaps as a coach who gave suggestions for improvement. This framing of consultant work prioritized maintaining writer agency, while meeting a need for an interpreter who can decide what was "readable" or "aptly fitting." In describing her consulting philosophy, Melanie complained that she has heard from clients that many consultants "are just editing the work for them rather than taking on that 'teacher'/'consultant' role and asking questions and putting the work back on the client" (Journal

entry, 2/3/23). Her definition of consulting is wrapped up with the labor needed for learning. In this view, consultants should not be doing work *for* clients, but rather creating environments where learning can take place. This understanding of consulting work emphasizes learning and growth, while reinforcing a hierarchical positioning that privileges the teacher's knowledge and experience.

Melanie had a firm grasp of the language statement, although she admitted she "definitely couldn't recite it word for word" (Interview, 11/14/22). She explained that Center's message was that "we understand that white mainstream English isn't the norm, and that we're trying to honor different languages. Like, here's what we're actively trying to do" (Interview, 11/14/22). She understood the statement to be a call to action, and by using "we" aligned herself with the ideal that the Center is "trying" to enact. Her mention of "white mainstream English" suggests that she had made connections between the language statement, which does not explicitly connect language and race, and the handbook and other training materials, which do. Nevertheless, the statement raised some challenges for Melanie:

> It was nice that we have messaging about our ideals/values regarding language acceptance and agency. But I think it complicates my ability to conduct a session since I'm limited on time to have conversations with clients about language and agency with a right to their own language. Which then makes me feel like the language statement is more performative than anything since the conversations we have internally make it seem like we should be conducting these types of conversations with clients within 50 minutes in order to enact the work of the language statement. But there's really no time to be doing the education, empowerment, and conversation in that space.

> (Journal entry, 1/27/23)

She wondered if it was written "to make us feel like we're doing some type of language justice work" (Journal entry, 1/27/23). The tension expressed here suggests that the "conversations" about social justice in the Center create an additional requirement on top of consulting. Consulting, construed as "education", holds the top priority, while the language

statement represents a "conversation" consultants might have with clients about why the Center

does or does not condone grammar correction in the form of proofreading. For Melanie, if

consultants don't have time to enact the statement as intended, it risks being merely

performative.

Discussion: Emerging Connections

The four consultants highlighted in this chapter carried with them varying experiences

and relationships with linguistic diversity, which constitute a crucially important backdrop to

their exposure and evolving relationship with the policies and practices in the Center. Table 6

summarizes their experiences with linguistic diversity, the power they held (or not) related to

their linguistic repertoire, and their initial stance toward the language statement.

Table 6

Summary of Participants' Historical Bodies

Consultant (Program)	Linguistic Diversity	Linguistic Power	Stance Toward Language Statement
Blaire (BA, Interdisciplinary and African American studies)	Moderate - Black and white mainstream Englishes - Extensive codeswitching	Precarity - School in L2 - L1 unvalued at school	- Concrete - Connected with action - Necessary and overdue
Elise (BA, advertising)	Low - Monolingual upbringing - Spanish as additional language	Privilege - School in L1 - Excelled in school	- Abstract - Part of the curriculum - Another policy to follow
Kaya (PhD, writing and rhetoric)	High - 3+ languages - Extensive codeswitching	Privilege/Precarity - "Elite" school in L3 - Teased about L3 use - Doubt about consulting L1 English clients	- Concrete - Connected with action - Reminder about how to consult
Melanie (PhD, writing and rhetoric)	Moderate - Monolingual upbringing - French as additional language	Privilege - School in L1 - Excelled in school	- Concrete - Connected with action - Another policy to follow

Blaire experienced moderate linguistic diversity before university and actively codeswitched between her first and second language varieties. She experienced linguistic precarity as she wrestled with the tension created by keeping her Black English out of academic spaces. She saw the language statement as a rejection of that norm, and expressed an intimate understanding of how conversations about valuing linguistic diversity could have positive impact for speakers of minoritized languages.

Elise's upbringing was less linguistically diverse, although she did study an additional language and had a positive view of multilingualism. However, while Blaire's multilingualism

was born out of necessity, Elie experienced the privilege of multilingualism as a bonus. She excelled in school and never felt like her strongest, most authentic language was different from those around her. The language statement, like the diversity of the university campus as a whole, represented a new experience for her, and she saw it similarly to other curricular content that she was supposed to learn.

Kaya's highly diverse linguistic background required her to regularly alternate between languages at home and school. English was her third language, and while it afforded her privileged status when consulting in a writing center back home and when applying to US universities for graduate studies, she was regularly teased as being snobbish. She personally experienced the ways language could create and maintain social inequalities, and she actively used language to gain power. Her stance toward the language statement was concrete, as she saw it as a reminder for how to consult in a hands-off manner that preserves writer agency.

Melanie was exposed to multiple languages and cultures in her youth, at least more than her extended family. Like Elise, she went to school in her first language and always excelled at writing. She enjoyed the privilege of attending school in her home language, and her experiences of other languages were relegated to the hallways outside of the classroom. Her prior experiences as a teacher gave her a nuanced view of the language statement, which she critiqued for being mostly performative. Melanie recognized the challenges consultants might face if the language statement is understood as an additional requirement to squeeze into a consulting session.

Viewing historical bodies as discourses enables a discussion of interdiscursive connections with the policy discourses highlighted in the previous chapter. All four consultants had knowledge and appreciation for languages other than white mainstream English, which was one of the "bonus" criteria sought in prospective consultants. None described writing center

work in terms of economic success or competition found in university-level discourses about DEI, although Elise and Melanie arguably reinforced the hierarchical, transactional relationships between the university and its students: Elise as the student receiving learning from the institution, and Melanie as the teacher ensuring that clients "do the work". Blaire, Kaya, and Melanie appeared to have a more detailed and nuanced understanding than Elise of how the language statement was meant to empower clients and consultants to allow for or even celebrate language difference in the writing center, although Blaire and Kaya's historical bodies suggested that this rich understanding is the result of linguistic precarity experienced previously. Melanie and Elise, however, have only recently considered their linguistic privilege, and it is likely that Melanie's advanced experience in US higher education (rather than personal experiences of precarity) contributed to her closer personal alignment with the aims of the language statement.

This chapter has documented the rich and varied historical bodies that four consultants drew on as they interpreted and enacted the discourses circulating around a writing consultation. The consultants' experiences with linguistic diversity varied considerably, making it hard to predict how consultants would respond to client requests for grammar correction. Such thorough investigation of language policy arbiters' historical bodies as discursive aggregates makes it possible to explain a great deal of the variation in policy implementation. In the next chapter, I highlight interactional moments where the ideologies about language are re-entextualized as tensions between learner and teacher, competitor and collaborator, expert and novice, correct and incorrect grammar.

CHAPTER 6: WRITING CENTER CONSULTATIONS AS IDEOLOGICAL NEXUS

Before joining the writing center, I was a teacher of English for academic purposes. In my first years in that role, I evaluated student writing with a close eye to accuracy, mimicking the instruction I had received during decades of schooling. However, genre pedagogy gradually replaced that more prescriptive approach. As I began working at the writing center, I was curious how I would adapt to this new "teaching" environment. How was I supposed to consult writers if grammatical accuracy or one's ability to adhere to a standard language variety was not to be the focus of my sessions? Would a genre approach be enough?

Observations and conversations with my graduate student peer mentor were instrumental in building my confidence in the writing consultation setting. I particularly noticed how my mentor described what she was seeing and thinking as she read, followed by a suggestion or two for how the idea might be communicated more clearly. She did not jump into "correcting" errors as she saw them. She and many other consultants I observed appeared to have a mindset that they were "just readers" for writers, providing feedback about what was working well (or not) from their individual perspectives. As I continue to examine my own consulting and teaching practices, both present and past, I wrestle with the fact that I enjoy being the knower and fixer of language "problems".

(Reflective memo, September 2, 2022)

In this chapter, I present the answer to the third research question and my core interest in this study: what language ideologies are constructed in four consultants' writing consultation practices? I focus on the third discursive element of a nexus analysis, the interaction order, which describes the social arrangement of those involved in a given social action and unfolds moment by moment at a local scale. I present interactional data from consultant sessions, the Center's internal online messaging platform, and post-observation reflection interviews. In the analysis, I first identify the social roles negotiated in the interaction, especially as they relate to correct language use and the positioning of expert status. For example, my own status as a new coordinator (beginning August 2021) who looked to guidance from his peer mentor gradually gave way to more privileged positionings as I became chair of a committee (January 2022), facilitator of a writing group (April 2022), and eventually assistant director (May 2022-May 2023). After zooming in to examine how material elements of a session that serve as mediational means in practice (e.g., using the commenting or suggesting functions on an online document), I

zoom out to examine the associations between these practices and the wider ideological landscape documented in the previous two chapters related to discourses in place and historical bodies. By zooming in and out across spaciotemporal scales, I foreground the ideological discursive nexus continually unfolding in consultation sessions. Individual language ideologies are made visible as actions align with overt or submerged discourses about linguistic correctness, expertise, and the wider purpose of the university itself. When we examine the intersection of the ideological and the implementational (Hornberger, 2002, 2005), mechanisms of and for change come into focus.

Invoking the Language Statement

Now a few years removed from the fanfare of the language statement's publication in 2019, I began noticing how the language statement was used in the work of the Center. Would it remain as prominent in practice as it was in the handbook (see Chapter 4)? The statement itself was included in several of the workshops the Center offered across campus, and while I was its chair, the multilingual writers committee was working to embed the statement further into those outward-facing texts. The statement was occasionally invoked explicitly in conversations within the Center, always as a normative text for how consultants should act.

Late in the fall of 2022, Melanie, a composition teacher in a new coordinator role, posted in the Center's private informal discussion forum a question about a client she was about to meet. The client explicitly wanted proofreading, and Melanie asked how others had handled similar requests. One administrator replied with a response that Melanie could use to explain why she would not proofread: "our goal is to teach how you address ways you'd like to improve your writing—not to make those improvements for ya!" (Field notes, 11/17/22). Another coordinator wrote to support that message and to add that the intake form (Appendix G) used to mention

proofreading as an option. Another coordinator added: "Lean on the language statement as well to help reinforce what you're saying by pointing to very explicitly stated policy" (Field notes, 11/17/22). Based on her knowledge of the Center's Handbook, Melanie knew that proofreading for clients was not an acceptable consultation practice. The first response she received reinforced an ideology that consultants are primarily teachers who need to ensure that consultants do the work. The second added historical details that might help explain why clients continue to request proofreading, reflecting an important discourse in place related to the sharing of past experience in a workplace characterized by high turnover. The third invoked the language statement as "very explicitly stated policy" that consultants could point to while denying a client's request. Consultants' understandings of the language statement as "clearly stated policy" or something less straightforward represented a nexus of discourses in place that significantly impacted consulting practices.

Two months later, the language statement was included in a set of slides designed by the multilingual writers committee for an orientation session on critically aware grammar feedback. The session was attended by about forty consultants and included discussions of the tensions consultants might feel when asked to consult about grammar. The language statement served as an important document guiding the work of the committee, but was glossed over in the presentation, as one of the graduate consultants co-facilitating the session said of the statement briefly projected on the screen, "And of course we have our language statement …It basically lists our center's values…" (Field notes, 1/13/23). In this presentation, the language statement was claimed as "ours," yet the normative power of the document was downplayed with modifiers like "of course" and "basically". Over time the statement was becoming flattened as a "list" and, while it retained its power as a policy that consultants could use to justify their (in)actions, was

removed to the background. Moments like these suggest that the social significance of the language statement was continually up for grabs, available yet not guaranteed to be re-entextualized in action and subject to the discretionary interpretation and implementation of the consultant. In the following sections, I present critical moments where the language statement and other circulating discourses are re-entextualized in interaction with clients. It is these moments where discourses "jump scales" (Blommaert, 2010) as interactional moments make more widely circulating discourses in place (including ideological orientations) locally relevant while backgrounding others (Hult, 2015). Each moment represents a nexus that creates discursive connections whereby the language statement may be re-manifested in original ways.

Empathy and Justice: Blaire

Although many ideological values shaped Blaire's consulting practice, empathy for her clients and a broader mission of challenging racial linguistic privilege were most prominent. Recall that her historical body was that of the activist whose language practices were not valued in academic spaces, leading to a sense of linguistic precarity. Her understanding of the language statement as an active conversation was evident in the consultations I observed, and her consultations both provided and problematized the instruction of standard English grammar.

Amina was a female international student from Saudi Arabia in her first year of studying agriculture and natural resources. She came in-person to the Center in the spring of 2023 wrapped in a warm coat and ready to get help on draft of a course paper in which she redesigned a Capri Sun package to be more like a carton (shown in Figure 12).

Figure 12

Screenshot of Amina's Writing Sample (4/7/23)

> The new Capri Sun juice boxes are made up of six layers of paper, polyethylene plastic, and aluminum foil. The paper makes up 75% of the packaging, and provides stiffness, strength, and the efficient brick shape. Polyethylene plastic makes up 20% of the juice box. It seals the inside and outside of the box to keep it liquid-tight. A juice box is an "aseptic" container, meaning it is manufactured and filled under sterile conditions and requires no refrigeration or preservatives to remain germ free.
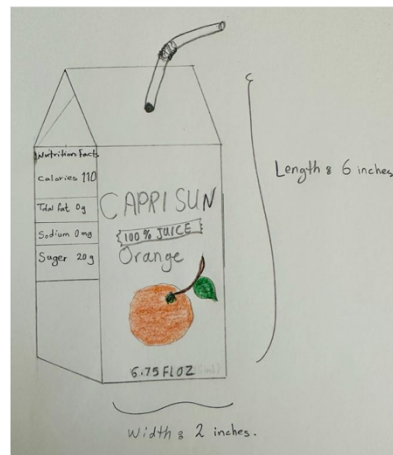
In the intake form, she listed "grammar, sentences" as her goals for the session, and within the first two minutes of the session explained that her professor had recommended that she make an appointment to get her grammar checked.

Blaire helped Amina share the document so they could both see it on separate computers while sitting across from each other. Blaire explained that she would turn on suggestion mode and ask questions as she read. After skimming the first paragraph, Blaire paused to clarify Amina's goals for the session:

Blaire:	So the main points that your professor had was to check grammar and did you want me to look into like the drawing also or just like the grammar?
Amina:	Yeah
Blaire:	Just focus on grammar?
Amina:	You can focus on everything.
Blaire:	I'm not sure how much feedback I can give on the product itself but I can definitely look at structure… and support you…

<div align="right">(Field recording, 4/7/23)</div>

Blaire assured her she could help and spent the majority of the session making minor

grammatical changes which would be highlighted in green text and which Amina could click to

accept or reject (see Figure 13). Periodically, Blaire reminded Amina that all her changes were

suggestions that Amina could reject if it wasn't what she "was trying to get across" (Field

recording, 4/7/23).

Figure 13

Screenshot of Blaire's Edits on Amina's Writing (4/7/23)
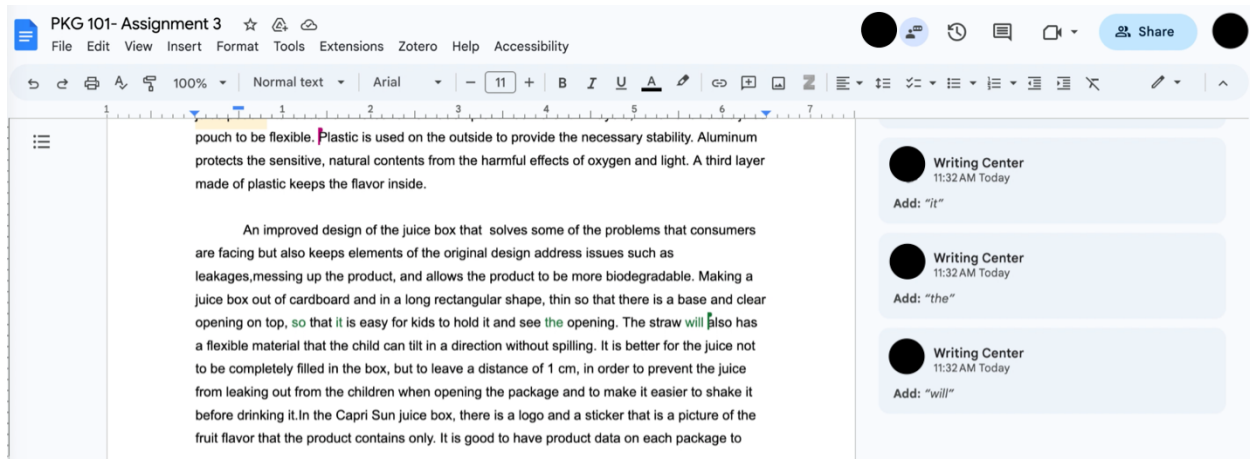
At several points in the session, Blaire asked, "How do you feel about that?" after

suggesting a change. When Amina replied, "makes sense now," Blaire responded quickly, "it

made sense before. I totally understand what you were trying to say." Throughout the session,

Blaire repeatedly countered Amina's attempts to criticize her own writing as not understandable:

> Blaire: How do you feel about that sentence?
> Amina: Yeah, it's better than mine! [laughs]
> Blaire: Yours was fine! I understood what you're saying. I just added a couple of words to kind of expand your ideas that what I'm doing here is just like you know...
> Amina: Yeah, the grammar is checking and like I understand now
> Blaire: It's good though.
> [45 seconds of silence]
> Blaire: Okay, so how about I put a comma here and then kind of just add to add what you're saying in this, the next sentence to this so just say like, "it keeps the and keeps the natural goodness of the"….

Amina:	So make it one sentence…
Blaire:	Yeah. How do you feel about that? And I take the next sentence out?
Amina:	Okay
Blaire:	Are you sure?
Amina:	Yeah. This sentence likes repeats what I say in the first sentence.
Blaire:	Unless…
Amina:	It should be deleted.

<div align="right">(Field recording, 4/7/23)</div>

In this interaction, Amina positioned Blaire as an expert and reproduced a standard language ideology whereby the speaker with more experience in the dominant language variety (here, white mainstream English) assumed the role of judge of correctness and clarity. Blaire accepted the role of evaluator (e.g., saying "it's good though"), but dismissed Amina's self-deprecation and pointed out that writing is about communication of meaning. Blaire explained that her actions were intended to "expand" Amina's ideas (in another moment she said she was helping make it more "cohesive") but did not challenge Amina's labelling of this practice as "grammar checking". In the second part of this excerpt, we see how Blaire drew Amina into making collaborative decisions about her writing.

After the session, Blaire explained that her primary aim was to build writers' confidence, especially when English is not their first language:

> I've had a few international students that came in really concerned about their grammar…they're being told that their language isn't enough, and it [...] takes value away from their essay [...] that's what they're being told. So, I really tried to build up that confidence in the best way that I can. I know that I'm not going to change everything that they're facing in their classes [...] I try my best to use intentional language that doesn't add to their anxieties about their writing, and their speaking, and their thinking and their producing knowledge.

<div align="right">(Interview, 4/7/23)</div>

Multiple scales of discourse become relevant here. First, Blaire's hands-on grammar correction challenged the Center-level discourse about not proofreading for clients. Second, her intentional praising of Amina's writing reflected a prioritization of undoing the emotional harm that international students might experience when told their language is not good enough,

<div align="right">135</div>

representing a discourse circulating at institutional, national, and global levels about language proficiency of speakers labelled as "non-native". Timescales are also involved, as Blaire's historical body of linguistic precarity and the support from strong female figures in her family enable her to challenge past interaction orders. By nudging Amina away from equating correctness as the sole criterion of good writing, Blaire pushed back against the professor who encouraged her to get her grammar checked and created a new interaction order between Amina and those with institutional authority. In this sense, she aligns herself the with relational values of the Center while challenging its stance on proofreading. Admittedly, she was walking a fine line regarding maintaining writers' autonomy and agency, a concern which she reconciled by continually checking for her multilingual clients' approval of the suggested changes. Nevertheless, there remained an unresolved tension, as Blaire left the session still looking for ways to communicate her practice of "correcting" grammar.

Blaire did not always agree to client's requests for grammar correction, however. In a session a couple weeks after the one with Amina, Blaire consulted with Mark, an undergraduate student who came to the Center with a course paper on the history of Roman imperial clothing. Mark was a white male whose first language was English, having grown up in a predominantly white town not far from the university. In his intake form, he wrote: "I want the writing to be clear, I want the grammar fixed," a statement that reflected assumptions that his writing had grammatical errors and that Blaire could provide that service. Mark frequently visited the Center and had been told by other consultants that they don't correct grammar, which Mark explained in the first minutes of the session:

> I really need you to correct grammar. I know that you're not supposed to go in manually do that all. Which by the way is, I think a bad idea […] I come here because I am not good at grammar and stuff. I come to you because I need your help. So not doing not correcting grammar on the basis of voice just feels a little silly.

Blaire said she understood why he felt this way and offered to have a conversation about grammar either and the Center's policy toward the end of the session. Before digging into the text she said, "I also want to preface that I am not an expert with grammar." Mark replied emphatically, "You're better than me!" While Blaire attempted to challenge the expert positioning Mark had initiated in the intake form and the opening moments of their interaction, Mark sought to maintain his deficit, learner status.

As she did with Amina, Blaire turned on suggestion mode and reminded Mark that he could delete or ask for clarification about any comments she made. Mark repeatedly attempted to reposition Blaire as the expert, which she consistently rejected or reframed. When he said, "You could tell me to delete the whole paper, and I would," she told him that would not be the best approach because his work is "valid". When Blaire suggested capitalizing the Roman general's title, Mark insisted, "Again, I have no qualms with anything you choose to do." Blaire's response, "I think that we should collaborate on what's best for you," highlights the contested entanglement of interests at play. In response to Mark's desire for his work to be fixed, Blaire insisted on a collaborative relationship by which they work through options together. The following exchange highlighted the challenge of resolving this misalignment:

Mark:	"As a result" […] I might want to remove that.
Blaire:	Yeah, I just didn't want to take away from your voice. I think that it's okay to be personal in essays. But if you want to take it out […]
Mark:	What do you think?
Blaire:	I think it is your decision. I know you hate me for that
Mark:	No, no, it's fine. Oh, it's more I just don't like the writing center for that.
Blaire:	And that's okay. It's just…
Mark:	In your opinion, do you think it should be removed?
Blaire:	In my opinion, I think that you should make that decision.
Mark:	Fair enough.
Blaire:	And that's in my true opinion, not my, the higher ups and the …
Mark:	Right. Okay. Okay. That's actually really good to hear […] I want to be personal but I also don't want to take away from what I'm trying to say.

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Blaire: Okay, I'll give you an alternative but then we can make a decision.
(Field recording, 4/28/23)

Mark's writing was very formal, with extensive transition language and low-frequency

vocabulary. As they debated whether to remove the phrase "as a result" to sound less formal,

Blaire reminded Mark that the decisions about his text were his, saying "I think that you should

make that decision". She repeatedly denied his request to make a word choice decision on his

behalf, and in the process named the practice of "giving alternatives" followed by

"collaboratively making decisions." In this session, Blaire navigated a tense situation and pushed

back on a client who explicitly wanted grammar correction. She invited him to talk through why

they disagreed on the approach and worked to find common ground. Near the end of the session,

Mark commented that much of his worry about writing stemmed from his anxiety in meeting his

instructors' expectations, saying, "I really don't want to mess this up." With this revelation,

Mark's insistence on correct grammar is externalized as a response to institutional expectation

tied with the achievement of high scores. In the last two minutes of the session, Blaire revisited

their plan to talk about grammar and told Mark about the connection between standard English

and whiteness, and how that made it problematic to uncritically correct writers' grammar. He

nodded along as she talked, after which she told him, "Thanks for letting me help you understand

our mission". In this session, Blaire adopted a justice-oriented mindset which prioritized

problematizing Mark's focus on grammar over providing instruction in a standard English.

Comparing the two sessions, Blaire's historical body as a Black woman aligned more

with Amina's, whose home language also lacked value in US academic spaces. In that session,

she was able to provide help for Amina to meet an academic standard, while problematizing

Amina's deficit mindset reinforced by her course instructor. With Mark, she provided many

hands-on suggestions about language, but made a point to explicitly problematize the role of

expertise in the Center. With respect to these efforts, Amina wrote after the session:

> Since my main language is Arabic, I need to have mercy on some words […] It was a very useful session. I learned about grammar and how to write a sentence correctly. The counselor helped me formulate the sentence correctly and in an orderly way.

After his session, Mark wrote:

> Largely, I handed the paper into their hands to fix […] My consultant however wanted a more active role from me to help with the paper. [She] told me that grammar didn't exactly matter and that I was better than I thought I was. [Blaire] asked me to deconstruct my notions of grammar.

In both sessions, Blaire sought to build up her clients' ability to see their work as valuable. In

nexus analytical terms, she drew on circulating discourses about language, writing, and

correctness to create her own consulting practice. At the interactional level, she consistently

rejected interaction orders that positioned her as an expert, as well as those at the institutional

level that positioned students as needing their grammar to be fixed. Instructors who required

students to visit the Center contributed to an institutional discourse in place that intersected with

Blair's historical body as a marginalized speaker of standard English. Although she ratified

Amina's request for grammar checking and challenged Mark's, the choice does not seem

contradictory because of her past experiences as a Black woman and her view of the language

statement as a conversation, not as a policy to be enacted. Blaire's consulting practice

foregrounded the Center's discourse of relation-building as it came into direct contact with

consultants' alignment with university-level discourse of achievement. The suggestion feature in

GoogleDocs represented an important mediational means by which she could offer suggestions

without taking over the writer's voice. In the end, Amina came away with new practical skills

about writing in English, while Mark began to critically examine his intense focus on fixing

grammar.

Service and Comfort: Elise

In her consultations, Elise was agreeable and helpful in meeting her clients' requests. As an undergraduate consultant who was eager to learn the right way to consult, one of her overarching goals was to help clients sound "more sophisticated" in their writing (Interview, 4/24/23). She worked primarily during the evening hours and in the Center's satellite locations located primarily in student dormitories. Her schedule was usually only partially booked, and I included observations where clients wanted prescriptive attention to citations and formatting rather than sentence structure or grammatical accuracy. In the two sessions I describe next, Elise prioritized her role as a service provider who made her clients feel comfortable and supported.

Beth was a middle-aged white woman who was returning to finish her bachelor's degree after taking several years off to raise her children. Elise and Beth met in person in the Center's satellite location at the main library, and Beth explained that her political science course instructor required all his students to visit the writing center before submitting their final paper. This was Beth's first visit, and she listed "work on Chicago citations" as the goal for the session. The following conversation unfolded as they prepared to look at the text on Beth's laptop.

> Beth: Sorry, I'm just talking a lot. […] So we had to send in a rough draft. And […] it wasn't graded for content. But he did say, 'I'm going to look at your margins, you know, did you follow the rules use the margins, right? Did you double space? Did you [follow] whatever the rules were, and citations? […] So I felt kind of good, because […] he didn't take any points off. I got four points there. I felt kind of good about my citations, but I was just a little bit nervous. Just makes me nervous.
> Elise: Yeah, I'm not very familiar with Chicago. But I can definitely look at them.
> Beth: Well, that'd be fun. It's like a whole new citation thing.
> Elise: Right. Do you want me to read through any of like your content or just pretty much just citations?
> Beth: I mean, if you want to read it for fun…
>
> (Field recording, 4/24/23)

Clients often came to the Center feeling nervous about following the rules and meeting the standard set by their instructor. Elise said she was "not very familiar" but could "definitely

look at them." In a way, she was rejecting Beth's positioning of her as an expert, but as the session unfolded, Elise repeatedly confirmed that the citations "looked good," although she made some verbal suggestions about including or omitting years and page numbers.

In the consultation, Elise asked for my input a couple of times, and we both went to the internet to try to find guides and templates to help Beth. As we did so, we performed the expertise that Beth was expecting and providing the formatting check the instructor wanted. After about half an hour, they reached the end of the document and Elise asked, "Is there anything else you want to go over? We've got a little bit of time." Beth replied, "Well, he told me I had to be here for an hour. So do I have to actually be here?" Elise repeated that the citations look good to her and let her go. In this episode, Elise was invited to serve as a deputy to an instructor who highly valued standardized formatting. No attention was paid to the content, either by the instructor on reading the first draft or by Elise during this session. Beth's instructor's expectations helped to establish a participation framework whereby Elise's task was to police Beth's work, attending to formatting conventions and monitoring the amount of time spent. In doing so, Beth and Elise re-entextualized the university's discourse of quantification. To my surprise as we reflected after the session, I was also swept up in the discourse of performing expertise when I helped her correct Beth's citations. We missed an opportunity to make explicit our approach of using templates and reference guides so that Beth could do the same independently.

In another session, Elise worked with Jack, an international student from China working on a statement of purpose to apply for a graduate program in machine learning. The consultation took place via videoconference, and both Jack and Elise kept their cameras on while they worked from a shared document. In his intake form, Jack wrote, "I want to correct my gramma [sic] and

looking for ideas about whether I should delete or add more details on it" (Field notes, 3/15/23).

Before beginning to read the one paragraph of text, Elise asked for some background about it,

and Jack explained:

Jack: The professor required me to write some reason for the application. I'm
         worrying. If you can look, take a look at the efforts.
Elise: Yeah, just this first paragraph, okay, anything specific you want me to look at or
         just the whole thing in general?
Jack: Yeah, I think just the whole thing in general first.
Elise: Okay. And if I see anything, any suggestions, do you want me to put in a
         comment, or do you want me to change it in the actual doc?
Jack: You can just change it on doc.
Elise: Okay, sounds good.

<div align="right">(Field recording, 3/15/23)</div>

Jack admitted that he was anxious about this piece of high-stakes writing, although he did

not have specific grammar questions to ask. Elise gave Jack a choice of feedback styles, whether

in-text or as margin comments, and then agreed to make in-text changes following Jack's

preference. As Elise read silently, she made direct edits to the text. A screenshot of the text with

the editing history is shown in Figure 14, although these changes were not highlighted for Jack in

the session.

Figure 14

Screenshot of Elise's Edits on Jack's Writing (3/15/23)

While making edits, Elise sought to check if Jack approved of the changes she was

making, as shown in this exchange:

Elise: Here, I might start a new sentence. […] Is that okay?
Jack: Okay.
Elise: Are you okay if I put like "those experiences helped me" or "helped build me into a knowledgeable scholar"?
Jack: Yeah, yeah, think it's good.

<div align="right">(Field recording, 3/15/23)</div>

The session went on with Elise making direct edits and Jack confirming his approval.

They met for less than half an hour, and in our conversation immediately after the session, Elise

expressed ambivalence about the practice of editing her clients' work:

Elise: Sometimes [...] I'm kind of like editing the paper in the document itself sometimes I feel like I'm just like doing it for them. So sometimes I find myself explaining word for word every single thing that I'm doing, so that I don't feel like I'm just doing it for them. Cause I know a lot of people prefer like comments, suggestions [...] And some people are like, [...] just do whatever you want in the document. Which is like good and bad, because [...] sometimes I don't know if I should ask them, Is this okay? If I add this, is it okay?
Philip: Are you doing that intentionally? [...] Why do you give them that choice?
Elise: I like to give them that choice. I think I've just always done that. I'm not sure the exact reason why I do that. I guess it's […] whatever makes them the most comfortable.

<div align="right">(Interview, 3/15/23)</div>

<div align="right">143</div>

Elise's practice of hands-on editing for clients made relevant multiple scales of discourse. The discomfort she felt stemmed from the schooling discourse of students and clients needing to do the work. She then found herself repeatedly checking if the client accepted each change, and by doing so foregrounded the Center-level discourse in the language statement supporting writers' choice of feedback. However, Elise's willingness to be the judge of that standard appeared to stem from her historical body as a native English speaker and ultimately opened the door to the writing center being a proofreading service, a reputation that the Center's administrators and writing center scholars more broadly actively resist. Elise's practice was writer-centered in that it gave the writer the choice but allowed the session to become very text-centered because that was what clients wanted. It was unclear that this approach would build writers' confidence, agency, or writing skill in the long run. In terms of language ideology, this practice provided support to writers who wanted their text to meet an academic standard, which both Jack and Beth reported as very helpful in the survey after the sessions. However, the linguistic privilege of Elise's historical body, together with the acceptance of an interaction order where she was the judge of correctness, highlighted a lack of critical reflection in her practice. In situations where the client did not engage further in making their own revisions in the session (in contrast to Amina's session with Blaire), she was coming to recognize the tension created by prioritizing client comfort above all.

As with Blaire's consultations in the previous section, instructors' expectations reflect a powerful discourse in place that shape interaction orders in the writing center. Consultants' historical bodies, in particular their personal language ideologies about providing or problematizing instruction in Standard English, shape their choices to either challenge or accept that discourse. While Blaire challenged a hierarchical view of writers in the institution, Elise

(and, in at least one instance, I) reaffirmed that status quo. The material actions through the use of different mediational means—Elise's practice of direct editing and Blaire's use of suggestion mode—were also highlighted as important mechanisms for changing this nexus of practice.

Pragmatism and Collaboration: Kaya

Kaya, the graduate consultant who knew several African languages in addition to English, consulted primarily in the Center's main location on campus. Unlike Blaire and Elise, Kaya had a firm self-imposed rule to never make in-text changes on a client's writing. In her journal, she listed as a major challenge, "the inability to assist clients as per their expectations—when a client expects you to make the changes instead of suggestions when giving feedback" (Journal, 3/10/23). In an in-person session with Ayotunde, a female visiting Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant from Nigeria, Kaya illustrated how she used margin comments to draw the writer into engagement and to prevent herself from taking over the session. Ayotunde was working on a written outline for a presentation about a proposed course on Yoruba for specific purposes. She and Kaya worked on their own laptops via a shared online document.
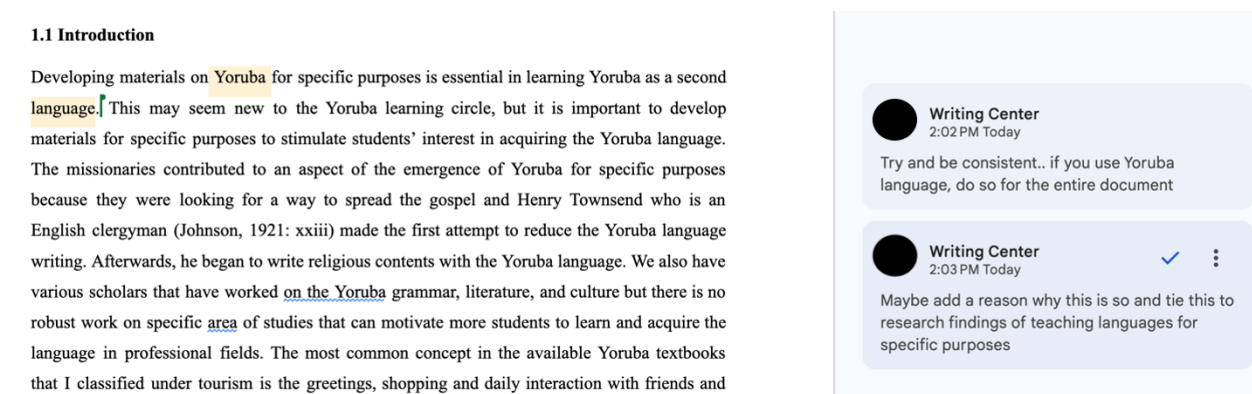
Ayotunde came to the Center "to make sure that I have a very good outline" (Client intake form, 3/28/23), and as they set goals for the session, she expressed interest in "fixing everything" and "checking the little things", especially the "obvious things you feel is not right" (Field recording, 3/28/23). Ayotunde therefore positioned Kaya as a judge of what is "right", both in the details and overall. Kaya did not explicitly challenge that positioning, but warned Ayotunde that they would not likely be able to go through 11 pages in one session. Kaya explained that she would read and add margin comments that they could discuss. Ayotunde, in turn, explained a bit more of about the context for the course she was designing and told Kaya about a video from Instagram about a pilot speaking Yoruba and Pidgin on the plane flying from

Atlanta, Georgia to Lagos, Nigeria. Kaya said she had actually seen the video, and they settled in to read.

In the session, there were long stretches of silence while Kaya read. She added comments about consistency and places to add more supporting argumentation (see Figure 15). The comments were softened with "try and" or "maybe add," which tempered the criticality and directiveness of the comments.

Figure 15

Screenshot of Kaya's Comments on Ayotunde's Writing (3/28/23)

In one comment, she prefaced her comment with the phrase, "as a reader," downplaying her status as arbiter of correctness. When Kaya did see grammar-related issues, she presented options for correcting them in the comment, as she did in the question, "in professional or for professional?" As they neared end of the session, Kaya checked in to see how Aytonde wanted to spend the final ten minutes:

Kaya: So if you want us to go through the comments, or are you fine with the comments?
Ayotunde: No, you know, I … It's very important. Like, I love the comments. […] what I didn't see, you made me see.

(Field recording, 3/28/23)

By adopting a stance as "a reader" who continually asks questions and provides options, Kaya was able to meet Ayotunde's request for feedback without taking over the session.

Ayotunde called the session "an eye-opener" in the post-session survey and expressed her

gratitude for Kaya sharing her expertise. Kaya, meanwhile, was mulling over her practice of

silent reading in our post-observation conversation:

> At first, I thought it was taking too long, but I can see that it was really important, because by also continuing to reiterate, "is this what you're trying to say?", so that I don't put my words in her mouth […] I always want to ask the client, what makes them feel comfortable […] And I didn't want to rush in, like let me take over.

> (Interview, 3/28/23)

Kaya found herself working against a time crunch exacerbated by Ayotunde's hope of

closely reading an 11-page document. She explained that time pressure was created when clients

come to the Center implicitly saying "do not waste my time", often communicated by the

writer's tone of voice or body language (Interview, 5/1/23). From the client's perspective, having

someone proofread might be seen as the most efficient use of time to avoid losing points for

grammar mistakes. From Kaya's perspective, the least stressful sessions were when the client

knew what they wanted, as long as it wasn't mere proofreading. As a result, Kaya needed to

decide what kind of reader she needed to be:

> […] when a student is looking for grammar and structure. this is when you bring in your critical reader self because obviously when you're reading, whether they say grammar, because we don't deal with grammar, you're looking for coherence. So you are a critical reader when you're reading […] because I'm not a grammar specialist. When somebody is asking me, 'Is this a synonym? A simile?' All those English… I don't know what you call them.

> (Interview, 5/1/23)

After a year of consulting, Kaya had realized that while most clients come to the Center

apparently wanting consultants to check grammar, what they really want is someone to verify

that their ideas come across coherently. The practice of providing margin comments and

frequently checking in about the writer's intended meaning served as a buffer that protected the

writer's agency and voice, while allowing Kaya to share her expertise about language. According

to Kaya, she should be critically aware of her lack of metalinguistic knowledge about parts of speech and literary devices in order to avoid the trap of speaking about things she was not confident in. By explaining that her expertise comes from her positioning as "an audience" or "a reader", she could sidestep the tension of performing expertise and lean into the interaction as a collaborative practice of making meaning.

In relation to the language statement and her own historical body as an African woman and speaker of multiple languages, Kaya appeared to have developed a pragmatic and flexible approach that allowed her to talk about grammar without talking about grammar and to be an expert of her own understanding without diminishing the agency and autonomy of the writer. The language statement is one of many discourses, and she refrains from making it a central part of her practice. She rejects clients' expert positionings of her, not directly through praise or self-deprecation (as common in Blaire's practice), but through her intentional use of margin comments. Her extensive experiences of linguistic privilege and precarity perhaps have taught her not to pick those fights within the limited time of her sessions. As with the previous two consultants, the discourses related to one's historical body appear to have an outsized role in mediating which discourses in place are made relevant, and which interactions are enabled.

Teaching and Learning: Melanie

Melanie, the white US-born graduate consultant with extensive teaching experience, consulted in online, asynchronous, and in-person modalities, and my schedule only allowed me to observe online synchronous sessions. Before one of the observations, I asked Melanie to compare her writing center practice with her classroom teaching. She replied, "My consultant work […] has made me shift how I think about feedback as a teacher. I find that I like consultant work for feedback. I feel like it's less pressure on me" (Interview, 4/11/23). In this section, I

illustrate how Melanie adopted a teacher role with an international student from Korea, and that ways that role contributed to ongoing tensions and frustrations about correct language.

Yuze was an undergraduate student in the early childhood education program and was a frequent visitor to the Center. He was working on a final paper about his classroom observations and listed three goals in the intake form: "1) Correct syntax errors, 2) Polish the paper, 3) Make suggestions and improve" (Field note, 4/11/23). Yuze joined the session about ten minutes late and left his camera off during the interaction. Because Yuze had not included many details about the paper's topic, Melanie took a couple minutes at the beginning to get her bearings:

> Melanie: I'm just skimming here to […] know what the project is about. So I see you have an introduction and a section on toys and materials. […] So are you an Early Childhood Education major?
>
> Yuze: Yeah, and I'm sorry, like, I'm not sure, do we have enough time because you see this is a very big essay like to do. Just like the most important thing for me is I want you to help me check the grammar […] And the other part I think I just need to follow the rules. Yeah.
>
> Melanie: Okay. Uhmm, what do you mean by grammar? Like, are you just trying to make sure that the writing is clear for a general audience? Or what would you like to have accomplished by the end of our session?
>
> Yuze: Just like, there are, I hope there are no grammar mistake and, like, if there are some sentences if you think strange, could you help me change it and give me some suggestion? Just like this kind of thing.
>
> Melanie: Okay, so just to like, make it clear and flow well, and like understandable for a reader?
>
> Yuze: Yes.
>
> Melanie: Okay. Okay, yeah, we can work on that.
>
> (Field recording, 4/11/23)

Melanie asked Yuze some questions about the general purpose of the text in order to better engage with the content and understand Yuze's purpose. Yuze said he was worried they would not have enough time and asked Melanie to focus on the checking the grammar. He did not seem interested in engaging in a discussion about himself or his writing's purpose. When Melanie asked for Yuze's definition of grammar, she was nudging him toward clarity and

understandability, something she was willing to discuss with him instead of correcting grammatical errors for him.

The session unfolded as Melanie read Yuze's work and asked questions about the moments that she found confusing. When she got stuck on the opening sentences of the paper, she asked for more context to help her understand his meaning. She said, "Tell me a little bit about this introduction. What are we introducing us to?" Questions like these would help Melanie provide more helpful feedback if she could reach a shared understanding about the paper. However, Yuze refused to share contextual details, and instead replied, "I'm sorry? Is there any grammar mistake here?" (Field recording, 4/11/23). Melanie's desire to understand Yuze's meaning and Yuze's desire to polish his paper for grammatical correctness were speaking past each other.

At several points, Yuze dismissed Melanie's attempts to understand the Yuze's intended meaning, and both Yuze and Melanie began to show their frustration. When Melanie read the sentence, "In the class, I have seen more than once the children […] take the small picture books," she asked if he meant "more than one child" or "multiple times". After a couple unproductive questions back and forth, she explained, "what I'm trying to trying to understand, is like what you're trying to say with the sentence so that we can revise it so it's clearer." Yuze replied, "I think my head teacher understands this one, because she is always having me in her class." Refusing compete with Yuze's instructor, Melanie dropped the question and moved to the next paragraph without resolving her confusion.

When they reached the section summary, Melanie continued to read for clarity and identified a point where a comma was "tripping her up". She brainstormed aloud how they might

revise the sentence by removing part of it and this exchange ensued (See text and suggestions in

Figure 16):

Yuze: Could you just type it in beside of it? I really cannot understand […] if you say it in the Zoom meeting.

Melanie: Yeah, I'll suggest and then that will show what I mean. So I think what I would do here is 'ABE emphasized'. And then I would delete this part. […] And then just to make the verbs make sense and be consistent for the sentence. It would just change like this. […] How do you feel about those changes?

Yuze: You can continue, I already see that. It seems like we don't have time.

(Field recording, 4/11/23)

Figure 16

Screenshot of Melanie's Edits on Yuze's Writing (Observation, 4/11/23)

The variety of digital tools enabled Melanie and Yuze to revise the sentence, although it

took a considerable amount of time before they landed on the suggestion mode as the best way to

interact. Even though he received the grammatical input he was looking for, Yuze was not

interested in offering his opinion on the changes and urged Melanie to "continue." The time

pressure that Kaya experienced above was amplified here as Yuze consistently positioned her as

a proofreader, while she sought to have him slow down and explain his intended meaning.

Afterwards, Melanie described the session as "a struggle":

Sometimes I get second language learners who want to hyper focus on grammar. And I felt like that was what he wanted to do, to the point where he didn't want to hear anything else. And that as a consultant, and as the teacher, that's hard sometimes for me to do […] And there really weren't many grammar errors. But then he wanted me to make the corrections for him, which I don't like doing either. […] When they come in, and they want grammar, I usually have them talk to me about what they mean by grammar. […] I think he really just wanted me to go through and check like punctuation and commas and

like, make sure it was, um, quotes here, a 'standard English' correct. I try to frame it as clarity of understanding. Because I feel like that more closely aligns with the writing centers, values of like, not really doing grammar, […] but then when I had questions about things that didn't make sense, when he didn't want me to provide feedback on that, that was a struggle for me.

(Interview, 4/11/23)

In our conversation, Melanie expressed frustration at being asked to correct Yuze's work for him, thereby articulating the tension at the core of this practice. She explained how framing grammar correctness as "clarity" for a reader like her was a way to "not do grammar" and therefore align with her understanding of the Center's values. In her description of her practice, Melanie has re-entexualized the language statement's challenging of Standard English and the Handbook's cautioning against proofreading as "not doing grammar". This may come from her experience in other writing centers which do have such hardline stances about discussing grammatical correctness (see Table 1 in Chapter 2). Nevertheless, she used a variety of feedback strategies including margin comments and suggesting mode, and reflected that the check-in questions are essential to steer clients away from text-centered editing.

Melanie's historical body as a teacher was salient as she worked to guide Yuze to understanding the impact of his writing on her understanding, something that was more important to her than to the client, who described in the survey his main aim for the session was "to get a good grade." In this session, the Center-level discourse of relationality was backgrounded, and both the consultant and client experienced frustrations over the negotiation of the consulting practice. Melanie described her ideal consultation as one in which the consultant was "working themselves on the writing," adding that "I always tried to get them to do it, because I don't want to do it for them." This approach aligned with the larger university model of learning, and created a familiar interaction order where teachers design learning experiences for

students. In this way, Melanie's approach challenged the client's expectation for grammar checking in the Center, but supported the hierarchical foundations of university structure.

Writing Center Consultations as Ideological Nexus

Writing center consultations are active sites where innumerable discourses come into contact. The language statement, as one discourse that emphasizes linguistic plurality in support of social equality and justice, does not act as a strict policy in practice, although some consultants and coordinators saw it as such. As demonstrated above, consultants differed widely in their willingness to correct grammar errors according to standard mainstream English, representing resemiotizations of their historical bodies. Blaire accommodated Amina's request but resisted Mark's, reflecting her racialized experiences with linguistic oppression. Elise was happy to help and serve by providing revisions for both Jack and Beth, thereby reproducing her privileged status as an L1 user of English. Kaya was willing to engage in grammar correction, but only in the margin comments, while Melanie tried valiantly to avoid talking about grammar in favor of focusing on clarity. In doing so, Kaya resemiotized her understanding that language differences reinscribe unequal social roles into the practice of intentionally guarding her clients from overvaluing her comments; in contrast, Melanie's resemiotization of her teacher identity reinforced the power differential between her and her client.

Interestingly, all four prioritized the preservation of writer agency and autonomy, a core value of the Center and one included in the language statement. However, the phrase "respecting writer agency" from the language statement was re-entextualized into action differently by each consultant: Blaire saw Amina as needing a confidence boost and so celebrated her production of ideas; Elise gave clients a choice of feedback styles, even if it caused her discomfort; Kaya toggled between reading and critical thinking roles to draw the client into conversation; and

Melanie gave in to Yuze's request to make in-text edits once other options were unsuccessful. These discursive connections between historical bodies and consulting practices are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Discursive Connections Between Historical Bodies and Consulting Practices

Consultant	Diversity in Background	Power	Statement	Practice	Ideological Roots
Blaire	High	Precarity	Overdue/ active "conversation"	Accommodate sometimes/resist sometimes	Empathy / Uplift
Elise	Low	Privilege	New/ Receptive/ Abstract	Always accommodate	Service / Help
Kaya	High	Precarity/ Privilege	Reminder/ active practice	Accommodate and resist	Pragmatism / Collaborate
Melanie	Mid	Privilege	Reminder/ active practice	Resist and give in	Development / Educate

More important than the text of the language statement is the ideological valence of the consultants' own experiences with language. When each consultant received requests for grammar correction, they found themselves in the same tension documented in chapter four, with the wider social scale of the university landscape placing high value on achievement and competition (even when talking about DEI initiatives), and the writing center network promoting relationality and mutual growth.

Blaire's empathy with Amina and tough love with Mark can be seen as responses to the linguistic precarity she experienced from childhood to present day. Kaya's pragmatic collaborative approach required the same flexibility she developed navigating multiple languages in school and social life. These two consultants' ideological profiles more closely align with the Center's philosophies, and their tensions related more to self-doubt and insecurity about how to

push back against a dominant discourse of achievement. Elise and Melanie, on the other hand, experienced linguistic privilege which recreated hierarchical power dynamics, either as uncritical judge of correctness (Elise) or as expert teacher (Melanie). The critical incidents analyzed in this chapter acted as prisms that refracted the multiple discourses—organized into the three dimensions of historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order—that intersect to constitute the social actions comprising a writing center consultation. In particular, these connections identified between local writing center practices and consultants' past experiences speak to the centrality of historical body when seeking to understanding and enacting social change. In the final section of this chapter, I extend this multidimensional, polycentric analysis of language policy outward to larger scales.

Mechanisms of/for Change in an Ever-Changing Nexus

This close examination of social action—in which circulating discourses are foregrounded, participation frameworks and interactional orders constructed, and historical bodies are engaged—reveals the ever-present and ever-changing ideological contestation of social life. If we want to understand how language ideologies are negotiated and re-entextualized through policy discourses about correct grammar, it is essential expand the circumference of our attention to identify interdiscursive links across multiple scales, ranging from interpersonal to institutional and beyond. I conclude this chapter with an initial discussion of the mechanisms related to change, which in turn frame the conclusions in the final chapter.

One straightforward conclusion to make at this point is that the practice of correcting grammar in local interactions reinforced a standard language ideology. Of the many social actions that occur in a writing center consultation (e.g., setting goals, building rapport, discussing meaning, suggesting revisions) the negotiation of expertise proved to be central in shaping the

recreation of this ideology. When clients position consultants as language experts, they are reproducing discourses of linguistic subordination and institutional hierarchies that dominate at wider scales outside of the interpersonal interaction, thereby illustrating an important nexus between interaction orders and discourses in place. On the other hand, challenging expert positionings between writers and consultants in the center is an important mechanism of change. If we consider this to be a status quo of the focal institution, challenging expert positioning in the local interaction order simultaneously challenges hierarchical positionings inscribed in the discourses in place at other levels. For example, when Blaire told Amina that her language was "already good", she was pushing back against the discourses held by many instructors (in fact, all the clients featured here with the exception of Ayotunde) that standard English grammar is a highly valued aspect of academic writing.

A second, more nuanced conclusion is that we should place greater emphasis on understanding individuals' historical bodies as they choose how to navigate their practice. For example, consultants like Elise might uncritically provide grammar correction, thereby reproducing the same dominant discourses about correctness. However, interviews and reflective journaling revealed that her practice stemmed from a desire to serve others and a lack of awareness of her own linguistic privilege. Similarly, resistance to correcting grammar—as highlighted in Melanie's experience—might challenge linguistic subordination at first glance, but upon further investigation with other intersecting discourses can reproduce the same hierarchy by withholding from clients the thing that is in fact valued in the broader social context. Again, it is Melanie's prior experience as a teacher that has the most explanatory power as to how this interaction came to pass. It follows then, that if policy makers and language policy researchers want to understand how policy discourses are rearticulated at the level of interaction, we must

account for individuals' ideological orientations to language compiled over years, as it another essential mechanism of change.

A third conclusion from this chapter is that language ideologies are never isolated discourses but appear enmeshed across the three types of discourse. In my analysis above, I hope to make clear the regimes of value that shape each participant's historical body, become enshrined in policy documents and email communications, and enacted through the arrangement of social action. The interactions presented above highlight moments where ideologies materialize to enable social interactions. If we consider ideology to be a structuring element of everyday interactions, rather than as a nebulous concept circulating somewhere "out there", we are equipped with a potent mechanism for change.

At an implementational level, there was a concerted effort to create a shared ideological appreciation of diversity and multilingualism, largely through the creation and promotion of a language statement. These efforts contest the dominance of standard English in the writing center and the university, as well as in the requests from clients, who frequently mentioned their course instructors' expectations for accuracy and correctness. However, consultant training is a moving target, both because the staff turn over every few years as students graduate, and because consultants develop, articulate, and refine their practices, they change; each new client interaction brings a chance to re-entextualize the discourses around them, and their own historical bodies, in new ways.

A theoretical lens of nexus analysis, with an emphasis on re-entextualization, acknowledges that language policy arbiters themselves are in a state of perpetual change, an element not captured in Johnson and Johnson's (2015) LP funnel model (Figure 2). While the funnel model helpfully highlights the iterative process of interpretation, it reinforces a static,

hierarchical representation that assumes LP arbiters can be neatly assigned to "primary" or "secondary" levels. In contrast, re-entextualization offers a mechanism to connect elusive and evolving ideological orientations to micro-level interactions and, in turn, to larger institutional networks of practice. This approach would be a productive way for education policy implementation scholars (e.g., Wohlstetter et al., 2015) to add nuance and depth to research often limited to the institutional level. I return to this discussion and emphasize the value of the nexus mechanism in the next chapter.

For now, it is helpful to consider two ends of a philosophical spectrum, criticality and pragmatism, to chart a path through this challenging ideological terrain. A critical orientation to the teaching of academic writing tends to prioritize the aim of problematizing standard practices of correcting grammar and adhering to norms related to structure, organization, and argumentation. Meanwhile, a fully pragmatic orientation would suggest that students be provided the necessary tools to succeed in the academic and professional world as it is, not only as it ought to be. I suggest writing centers consider a critical pragmatic approach that both provides instruction of standard language norms and takes advantage of critical moments to problematize those practices with the clients/students. Paying attention to expert positioning in writing center consultations and consultants' past experiences in consultant training and ongoing PD would likely develop consultants' critical awareness of the small ways that social power is recreated and how practices relate to larger ideological discourses. The result would be an incremental raising of awareness within the consulting session for both the consultant and client, without risk of alienating either.

The job of the educational institution is to create the conditions for positive interactions that lead to learning, growth, and change on a personal level. By adopting a blindly pragmatic

approach, future opportunities for linguistic diversity are closed off, and standard language practices continue to reflect their historically white, western influences. On the other hand, adopting a wholesale critical approach where the primary aim is to call attention to injustice runs the risk of stifling communication. If administrators and consultants point out connections between standard English grammar and white supremacy in every session, consultants and clients may simply withdraw from engaging with each other for fear of being labeled racist, sexist, or ableist.

I concur with Ruecker and Shapiro (2021), who argue for a critical pragmatic approach when addressing linguistic diversity in academic spaces. In the writing center, such an approach could be dubbed "provide and problematize". In practice, this means *providing* support to writers who visit the Center in search of advice and expertise, while simultaneously *problematizing* the deficit ideologies reproduced in the frames of "support" (i.e., students needing help) given by "experts" (i.e., consultants as authority figures). Consultants may be skilled technicians of writing, but their expertise might be reframed to center writing instruction as ideological negotiation. In line with Aguilar et al.'s (2022) view of consultants as "critical interventionists" (p. 4), consultants trained to embed critical pragmatism into their work would leverage their own ideological foundations and personal growth into moments of productive collaboration with those visiting the Center. At the same time, they would challenge the internalized discourses of linguistic subordination and neoliberal competition that writers (and consultants) bring to the Center.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

At a staff meeting, 30 writing center consultants stand in a circle, each wearing a name tag with a word from the Center's website, handbook, or workshop catalog: words like multi-modality, relationships, journaling, and holistic support. The facilitator hands a large skein of purple yarn to the first person, who defines their word, holds on to a piece of yarn, and tosses the skein to another person in random order. One consultant defines environmental stewardship as "understanding yours and other's impact on the planet," and another says, "everyday language means speaking and writing in a way that is natural and comfortable, not following others' ideas of what is correct." When someone tosses the yarn and it falls straight to the floor, someone remarks, "it's okay...none of us are sporty." Everyone chuckles. In the last hour, the word "welcoming" has been used five times by the guest speaker and the consultants, and the atmosphere does feel as warm and cozy as a mandatory team building activity can hope to be. One by one, consultants explain that "relationality means being able to share something with another person without necessarily understanding it," that "well, I don't really know what this one means," that "care might relate to self-care, which can actually be really performative...." As the yarn unspools, the consultants contribute to a network of interconnected ideas that represent the Center, showcasing brief yet rich insights into each person's understanding of hard-to-define words like identity, diversity, and anti-racism. Although the words come from writing center policy documents, they are given life and meaning through each individual's lived experiences. Of the thirty, only four mention anything directly connected to the act of writing or peer revision.

(Field notes, November 10, 2023)

In the writing center, student consultants participate in a melee of colliding, intertwining, and transforming discourses. They consult other students (through conversational discourse) about their writing (written discourse) while drawing on their past histories (embodied discourse) and institutional policies and norms (political and ideological discourse). This study employed nexus analysis to explore the relationships between these discourses, both as cycles that intersect to accomplish the joint creation of a writing consultation and as important artifacts of ideological negotiation. I begin this final chapter by discussing this study's application of and contribution to theory building in applied linguistics and language policy studies. To do so, I apply and critique the three theoretical frameworks introduced in chapter 2: Johnson & Johnson's (2015) funnel model, Savski's (2023) (re)entextualization model, and Scollon and Scollon's (2004) nexus

analysis. I then conclude by considering practical implications, limitations, and future directions inspired by this work.

One clear takeaway is that writing center consultants are important language policy arbiters who interpret and appropriate training materials in diverse ways, leading to diverse practices in their interactions with clients. Johnson and Johnson's (2015) LP funnel model is helpful as it highlights critical points (i.e., diverse policy actors) where the meaning of a policy can be altered from its original meaning (see Figure 17). However, the model renders a complex multidirectional process as a primarily linear, top-down process. While this may reflect the experience of consultants like Elise, who described the language statement as "a good thing to be taught," it fails to capture the participatory nature of policy as an ongoing conversation, which is how Blaire understood the language statement. Additionally, by reinforcing a focus on hierarchical levels, it positions consultant action as somehow less important or impactful than administrative actions, which may not be accurate judging by the volume of interactions and influences consultants have with clients and the polycentric nature of LP processes. Moreover, the model does not recognize the dynamic nature of individual growth, as consultants adapt their practice over time. Nevertheless, this model is valuable for its emphasis on the power various social actors along the policy process have in interpreting and appropriating a given policy.

Figure 17

Writing Center Consultants as LP Arbiters (adapted from Johnson and Johnson, 2015)

Language Statement

Consultant Training

Writing Center Consultant

Client Interactions
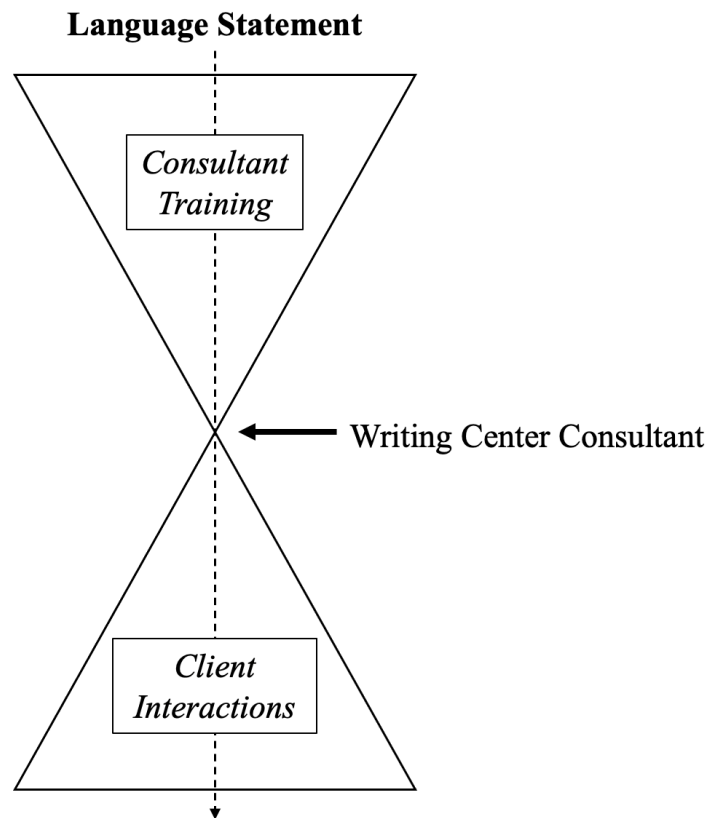
Note. Adapted from Johnson and Johnson (2015)

Alternatively, Savski's (2023) conceptualization of LP as continual (re)entextualization shifts away from top-down implementation in favor of waves emanating horizontally from a text, thereby emphasizing LP as "a series of interwoven processes across multiple timescales" (p. 11). In this study, an informal policy like the language statement is re-entextualized as actions and practices in writing center spaces such as professional development workshops and everyday consultations (see Figure 18). The arrows in Figure 18 represent the tensions present in a given LP process. The actions consultants undertake with clients and among themselves aggregate as practices that alternately prioritize providing a service to clients or building collaborative relationships with others. The choice to correct clients' grammar directly and thereby perform the

role of grammar expert can be experienced as a tension between institutional/societal and

local/personal ideologies about language. I have therefore added to the tension between global

and local meanings an emphasis on the personal and ideological, as these are important elements

raised in my study not accounted for in the model. Additionally, this study highlighted the role of

positioning, particularly personal deictics, in manifesting ownership of the policy as either

institutional or individual, and I therefore highlight pronoun use in the figure.

Figure 18

Re-entexualization of the Writing Center's Language Statement
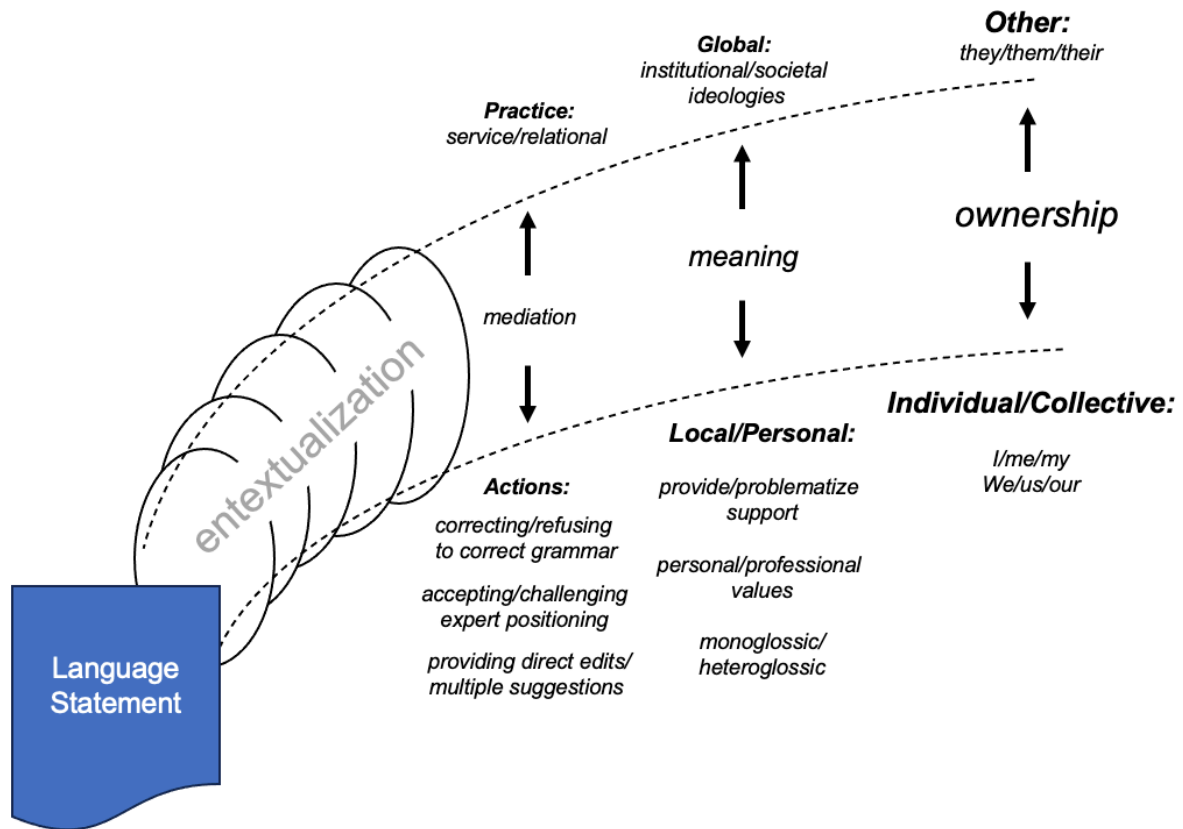
Note. Adapted from Savski (2023)

Although the re-entexualization model highlights a dynamism lacking in the visual in

Figure 17, the two are similar in their focus on the policy text as the focal point from which

action occurs. While examining the continual "rupture and re-creation of indexical meanings" (Savski, 2023, p. 15) of a policy text enables scholars to highlight its continually evolving purpose and use across contexts, it potentially loses sight of the individuals without whom the policy is meaningless. As my study indicated, historical body is a principal factor in consultants' interpretation of the language statement, yet this dimension is conspicuously absent in a (re)entextualization model. Moreover, neither model adequately attends to the role of power and privilege circulating at institutional and interpersonal scales.

I suggest that nexus analysis, as a meta-methodological framework, productively shifts the attention to the confluence of material discourses relevant to the social actors constituting a nexus of practice. In this study, the writing center consultation provided a frame through which the meanings of the language statement were brought into being. Figure 19 presents Scollon and Scollon's (2004) tripartite framework of circulating discourse. Within the nexus of practice of a writing consultation, the specific action of direct editing on a client's writing (as evidenced in Elise's session with Jack) draws on the confluence of 1) numerous discourses in place, including writing as a skill to advance one's employability and consulting as providing choice and support; 2) the client and consultant's historical bodies, including experiences of linguistic precarity or privilege; and 3) the interaction order constructed between the consultant and client, including their back-and-forth positioning of expert status. Ideology, which is not explicitly mentioned in Scollon and Scollon's work, is added not as a fourth discourse but as an essential element interwoven with the three others. Highlighting the ideological negotiation that consultants face draws critical attention to everyday interactions within the writing center, thereby providing texture and nuance to practiced language policies (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012) and their role in reproducing regimes of value.

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Figure 19

A Nexus Analysis of Language Ideologies in Writing Center Consultations
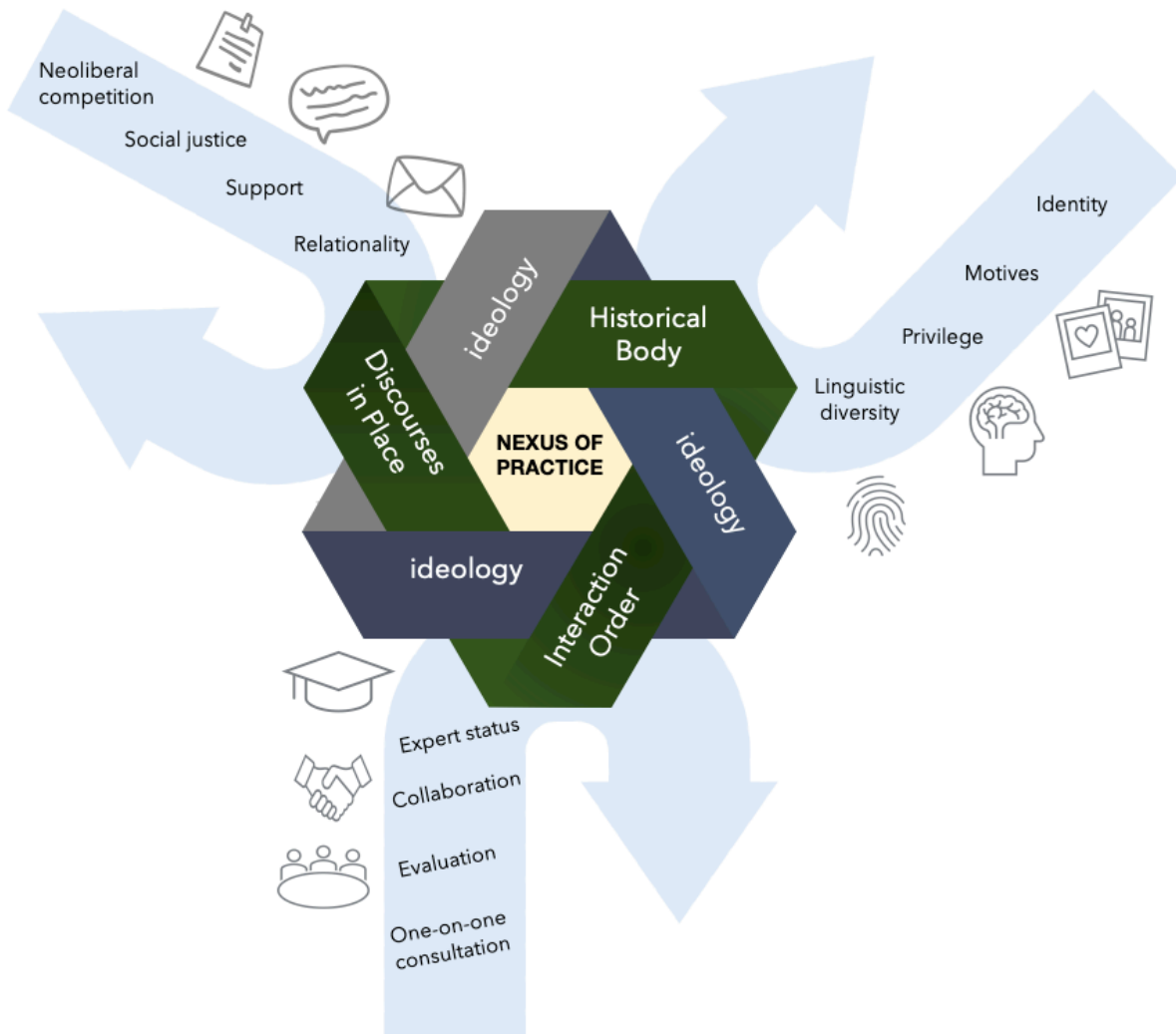
Note. Adapted from Scollon & Scollon (2004)

I conclude that the writing center in this study is best understood as a loosely bound collection of individuals engaging in the work of the university. Clients often bring their text-centered concerns about "doing it right" in terms of correctness, and in the process reproduce ideological orientations of neoliberal competition, individual achievement, and standard language. In the Center, clients find consultants wrestling with how to balance clients' requests with their own desires to "do right" in a personal, moral sense, given their own ideologies related

to language, school, and linguistic difference. Writing center administrators, in turn, are in a position to recognize these ideological concerns and engage with the tension they frequently produce.

Nexus analysis, together with a focus on re-entextualization and language ideologies, has made visible the semiotic relationships between people, ideas, and values that are (re)constructed in and around writing consultations, especially the indexical links between grammar correction, expert positioning, and neoliberal competition. In the following sections, I discuss five relationships that impact the multiscalar work of the writing center. For each, I summarize how the findings from this study help explain how the relationships are discursively and ideologically constructed at local and institutional scales, as well as how their continual re-entextualization opens the door to new relationships and practices that help enhance both the client writing experience and the institution's articulation and implementation of its shared values.

Relationship 1: The Consultant and the Client

Drawing on Goffman, Scollon and Scollon (2004) explain that the interaction order both constrain and enable possible actions, and that it is crucial to explore "not only what are the scenes within which people take action, but how they organize themselves for social interaction within those scenes" (p. 157). Writing center consultations, as we have seen, reflect important moments of language socialization, as consultants mentor, coach, and guide writers in deeper understanding of what writing is and does. They are important language policy arbiters who enforce institutional and societal norms in explicit and implicit ways. They participate in one-on-one interactions where they are arranged or positioned by clients as experts in "correct" or "standard" language.

In response to client requests to "fix" or "polish" sentence structures, word choice, verb tenses, formatting, and punctuation, consultants choose from a range of ideological foundations to accept or challenge those positionings, to ratify or reject the interaction order the clients woud like to arrange. In this study, those choices were largely influenced by their past experiences of linguistic privilege or precarity. When Blaire corrected Amina's grammar, she was acting from a place of empathy for the linguistically marginalized. When Melanie reluctantly corrected Yuze's grammar, she felt she was compromising her value of teaching clients to be autonomous learners. Elise chose to make direct edits on Jack's writing because she prioritized his comfort and choice of feedback style over her own discomfort about doing the work for him. Kaya insisted on only making margin comments as a buffer preventing her from slipping into driving a text-centered session. All four consultants expressed ambivalence at the request to "correct" or "do" grammar in their sessions. For all four, text-centered consultations were unpreferred, either because they created time pressure (as with Melanie and Kaya), asked multilingual consultants to further subordinate their own language practices (as with Blaire), positioned consultants as metalinguistic experts (as expressed by Blaire, Elise, and Kaya), or diminished the relationship to an impersonal service (as seen in sessions with Elise and Melanie).

In contrast, consultants consistently sought to create person-centered consultations, where relation building and shared meaning making were valued over superficial correctness or adherence to a convention. In practice, this does not mean avoiding grammar altogether, because such a stance signals to clients that they should not care about something that is clearly socially valuable in US higher education and more broadly. It means instead that consultants should develop ways of talking about grammar that focus on clarity of understanding (audience awareness), and that the goal is to provide an ally for clients by offering options to respond to

moments of misunderstanding. This interpretation of the writing consultation aligns with a view

of writing as a suite of social literacies underpinned by ideological eco-systems (Gee, 2015

[1996]; Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Street, 1995). It also supports a framing of consultants as

collaborators and empathetic peers who, like Kaya, put on that critical reader hat when the client

wants grammar correction (Aguilar-Smith et al., 2022). Importantly, it also means consultants

should be willing to accept the mantle of expertise, not as arbiters of correctness or deputized

language police, but as experts in engaging writers within the ideological negotiation that for so

many remains invisible. The following table of phrases and actions could be used to advance this

agenda.

Table 8

Connecting Consultant Moves to Ideological Action

Move	Consultant Phrases	Ideological Action
Frequent check-ins	- What do you think of this? - Are you OK with this idea? - Is this what you were trying to say?	Maintain writer ownership and agency
Margin comments with options and discussion of rhetorical effect	- Do you mean "X" or "Y"? I understood X, but based on what you said earlier, I think Y might more clearly communicate your idea. - You might say "X" or "Y". X is a bit more formal, while Y is a bit more informal. - Is this an important detail? If so, I wonder if providing an example or more explanation would help emphasize it.	Emphasize the multiplicity of rhetorical choices available
Explanation of practice	- I tend to provide margin comments to make sure that I don't take over your voice or misinterpret your ideas. - I'm willing to put on suggestion mode too if that is helpful, but I want you to make sure you are happy with any changes. - I don't usually make direct edits on a piece of writing because I want you to really own your process.	Clarify the consulting relationship in terms of ownership
Rejection of expertise	- I'm not a grammar expert… - I'm not your course instructor… - There are a lot of ways to express yourself… - You are the only one who knows what you want to say… - I have always struggled with this too…	Challenge the uncritical adherence to standard language
Confidence in expertise negotiating writing situations	- …but I can point out places where I don't understand. - …but I've written a lot of course papers for different instructors. - …we want to make sure you have the tools to make confident choices about what language you use. - … I'm happy to talk about how your writing reflects you and your values. - …and what I've learned is…	Reframe writing as dynamic, situated, interpersonal communication

Relationship 2: The Center and its Consultants

I argue in this study that writing center consultations are politically and ideologically charged spaces where diverse individuals and discourses come into contact. In the nexus mechanism, this contact is referred to as the nexus of historical bodies and discourses in place. Writing centers are spaces where ideas and meanings are continually negotiated, and where the ideologies of consultants, clients, and administrators are reconsidered and revised. This dissertation was not intended to evaluate the professional development processes of the Center yet does emphasize how policy discourses around language use intersect with the historical bodies of consultants who bring varying experiences with linguistic diversity and pedagogical training. The findings suggest direct implications for how writing centers might approach language policy and consultant training, given their role in promoting in and enforcing these local discourses in place.

First, writing centers can and should engage in the explicit negotiation of ideologies about language on individual, interpersonal, and institutional scales. Put differently, professional development should engage consultants' historical bodies directly and from various angles, using the historical body as a window into the discourses and values consultants bring with them to the writing center. Administrators should openly and transparently discuss their visions and values and invite consultants to examine their own experiences stretching back into the past and ahead to the future, as well as laterally into and out of writing center consultations. The Center in this study engaged regularly in such discussions (as illustrated in the vignette opening this chapter), which likely contributed to the willingness of so many consultants to participate in this study, and to the richness of their reflections.

Second, language statements can be valuable public expressions of solidarity and support for multilingualism and anti-racism, yet consultants may have trouble consistently translating such statements into practice. A both/and approach may help achieve this end. Consultants and administrators should explicitly reference the statement in a variety of contexts (like the PD session described in Chapter 6). This top-town signaling of policy can ensure that the Center's values are recognizable and familiar. However, writing center administrators should be cautious to not overly rely on abbreviated versions of the policy which might contribute to the simplification and overgeneralization of the policy. Writing center staff should also routinely engage in connecting the values of the statement to the everyday practices that reflect ideological positions even if left unexamined. These are the little moments of interaction found in the client intake form, the goal setting and rapport building at the beginning of consultations, and the back-and-forth positioning that occurs throughout each session. Consultants with less experience of linguistic diversity (like Melanie and Elise) would benefit from reflective exercises that highlight the symbolic and material impacts of expert positioning, ideological erasure, and linguistic subordination. Consultants with robust toolkits of navigating complex social and political dynamics related to language in society (like Kaya and Blaire) should be celebrated and supported to share their experiences and strategies.

Third, consultants need more opportunities to develop strategies to engage in consulting about grammar. If the Center's stance is that they meet writers where they are and attempt to address their concerns about writing, then "not doing grammar" (a view explicitly expressed by Melanie and Kaya) would be a detriment to their mission. They would, in essence, be punishing the client for striving to achieve a widely accepted social capital in order to make a political statement against that value system. A critical pragmatic approach would support clients even in

cases where they are wanting to bring their writing into alignment with standard language conventions, recognizing a shared moral obligation to improve institutions and practices, and that sustainable change is made incrementally within existing systems. In such cases, consultants might use their own experiences of writing within the academy to navigate these requests. While providing scaffolding toward standard language practices, they might employ a range of nudges that work to challenge the processes that uphold the standard.

Writing center administrators need to be sensitive to the diverse ways consultants draw on their historical bodies to interpret and appropriate the policies that govern their work. The mechanisms by which the Center continually assesses its practices should be informed by consultants' ideological foundations and transformations. If the writing center's values of collaboration and reciprocal relationality are to be fostered against the wider discourses of competition and achievement, ideological negotiation should be a central skill for consultants and administrators to develop. In Table 9, I suggest possible discussion questions for professional development to guide this work. A language statement, as a hortatory language policy tool, can serve in these instances as a frame for discussing ideological negotiation across scales, but not as a black-and-white policy directive.

Table 9

Discussion Questions to Facilitate Ideological Negotiation in the Writing Center

Theme	Questions
Individual language ideologies	- What experiences did you have with linguistic diversity growing up? - Have you ever felt like your own language was different? - What does being multilingual mean to you? - In what ways might multilingualism be an asset? - In what ways might it be a challenge?
Institutional language ideologies	- What language varieties are spoken on your university campus? - What language varieties are legitimized in websites, policy documents, and email communications? - What advantages do speakers of the dominant language variety enjoy while studying or working at the university? - What challenges do speakers of non-dominant language varieties encounter?

Writing center practices	- What policies and practices further advantage speakers of dominant language varieties?
	- What policies and practices are needed to counter linguistic privilege in the university?
	- Reflect on a consultation you had where you and the client shared the same language variety.
	  o How did you and the client position each other?
	  o What are the advantages/risks of this alignment?
	  o What tensions were raised?
	- Reflect on a consultation you had where you and the client had different linguistic backgrounds.
	  o How did you and the client position each other?
	  o What are the advantages/risks of this alignment?
	  o What tensions were raised?

Interrogation of practices and values	- Identify three core values to your consulting practice.
	  o For each value, list situations or practices that are easy to enact in alignment with those values.
	  o List situations or practices that are challenging to make align with those values.
	- Observe a consultation and identify three moments of social positioning between the consultant and client.
	  o Identify possible motives and implicit values underpinning the actions.
	- Discuss ways to resolve tensions identified between practices and values.

Relationship 3: The Center and its Institution

Writing center consultants are providers of academic support as well as enactors of the university's mission and should be highly valued as such. Writing center consultations represent a kind of experimental space where various versions of the university are continually re-created. The dominant discourses in place at the university scale—in this study, the quantification of achievement and the competition for human and economic capital—have the potential to be amplified to the nearly 2,000 clients who visit the Center each year. Just as possible, however, is the advent of new ways of doing writing, doing grammar, or doing university, as new interaction orders sediment and aggregate into more prominent discourses in place. Writing centers can and should be in dialogue with university administrators about the challenges created by the institution's pursuit of neoliberal and neocolonial agendas (Hotson & Bell, 2022).

University administrators should look to writing centers to better understand the needs of the students who come seeking help, and importantly, interrogate those needs as kaleidoscopic reflections of the institution's ideological landscape. A nexus analytical lens thus uncovers sites of change, perhaps by generating new questions that acknowledge the multidirectionality of interaction orders. From a top-down perspective, what might the administrators at the institutional scale do to dissuade instructors from seeing language homogeneity as more important than the production of ideas? How are required visits to the writing center shaping the interaction order of consultations in a way that perpetuates deficit views about students and their abilities to express their ideas? Acknowledging a bottom-up view, administrators and education policy makers might also take a cue from the consultants who are experimenting with ways to reconcile visions of social justice with practices that silence and marginalize diverse voices. As it admits in the DEI report examined in Chapter 4, the university's economic success depends on

its ability to attract and support increasingly diverse students. Equally important is the moral obligation to ensure equitable access to individuals seeking educational advancement and to unravel the systems and ideologies that privilege one social group over another. I concur with Hotson and Bell (2022), Green (2016), and Greenfield (2019) that writing centers are supremely positioned to lead in this work.

Relationship 4: The Researcher, Participants, and Readers

Throughout this study, I have sought to represent my participants honestly and in the spirit of critical inquiry. My characterizations of consultants and their practices and ideologies are severely limited by my own experiences with language diversity, writing practices, and educational policy. While they are anonymous to most readers, they are significant individuals in my own learning journey, as captured in many of the reflective memos found in the vignettes that introduce each chapter. I caution against judging the participants harshly, as each consultant I observed and interviewed was faced with challenging ideological terrain, as were the clients who visited the Center. They should be revered for their willingness to open their consultations to outside scrutiny and to critically reflect on their practices while being recorded.

In nexus analysis, a multifaceted understanding of reflexivity is essential. Any nexus analysis must recognize that the practices and reflections documented within are also products of the discourses in place, historical bodies, and interaction orders that intersect to form the recognizable practice of "conducting research" or "defending a dissertation". I would like to emphasize my own role as a student in this space, in the sense that this dissertation represents my own learning about the workings of the language ideologies in a writing center. Nevertheless, the gender difference between me and my female participants as well as the power differential in my status as graduate assistant director are worth noting as potential complicating influences on the

practices observed and the conversations documented in interview data. Indeed, Blaire and Elise regularly drew me in to share suggestions and advice during the consultations and often asked me to evaluate their practices after each observation. Although I limited my involvement in their sessions and refused to provide evaluative comments in my role as observer and researcher, it is possible that due to the power imbalance in our relationship the participants felt additional insecurities during observations or withheld critical commentary for fear of retribution. These are not faults of the participants, but rather well-documented and ongoing challenges for critical ethnographic discourse analysis (Blommaert & Dong, 2020). This reflection further illustrates the universality of the nexus mechanism to facilitate the describe and analyze social action, both of research participants engaged in school or work activities and of researchers and their disciplinary discourse communities.

Relationship 5: Researchers, Practitioners, and Social Activism

Ethnographic approaches to researching writers and writing instruction can help us see writing as constitutive of institutional practices, primarily by closely documenting the actualities of writing. Additionally, they aid in conceptualizing writing as a relational and discursively constructed social practice (Bou Ayash, 2019; LaFrance, 2019; Lillis, 2008). This theoretical and epistemological view of writing, research, and social action, in turn, blurs the lines between social roles indexed by labels of researcher, practitioner, and policy maker. All the participants in this study, including consultants, clients, administrators, and I, occupied these roles to varying degrees and influence in the nexus of practice related to consulting. By reconsidering and expanding these labels—a poststructural endeavor to be sure—we stand to gain a richer understanding of social life and our responsibilities toward each other.

Researchers, to begin, should be reflexive about their role as legitimate and subjective participants in the spaces they conduct research. As Kadlec (2006, p. 536) wrote, drawing from Dewey, "our obligation to battle all barriers to freedom of inquiry and expression are only deepened because they become a matter of addressing the real conditions of peoples' lives." We have an important stake in each nexus of practice we study, as well as a responsibility to share our research outside of the academic echo chambers where we might feel most comfortable. As Scollon (2008) argued, the analytical tools of discourse analysis, while well accepted in the academy, should move beyond academic spaces and into community spaces of public discourses where they can make visible the workings of language and power within social and governmental institutions.

This study has demonstrated that writing center consultants and administrators participate in a nexus of practice that draws on their historical bodies to make relevant discourses in place and create new interaction orders. Practitioners should recognize the power and responsibility they hold as language policy arbiters. By cultivating a research mindset, we might interrogate our values, assumptions, ideologies, and practices that impact the lives of those around us. The power to decide one's actions can lead to greater investment into the institutions we build, thereby strengthening their democratic foundations. Policy makers and administrators might strive to avoid the association of social activism with performativity, as Melanie saw conversations about linguistic justice as an additional burden on consultants. Instead, social activism, construed as ideologically aware democratic participation in social life, should be embedded within and throughout the everyday doings of higher education institutions.

Conclusions and Future Directions

This study explored how writing center consultants navigate complex ideological interactions, continually resemiotizing their past experiences with linguistic diversity to engage with issues of expertise and grammatical correctness in writing. Language statements supporting heteroglossia and linguistic pluralism are explicit institutionally endorsed discourses in place that constitute a small yet important tool to promote ideological change. This study drew on a combination of document analysis, biographical interviews, observations, and field notes to highlight how the discourses in tension at wider institutional scales come into contact and negotiation in everyday interactions, thereby supporting a view of writing center consultants as powerful language policy arbiters. Nexus analysis was used to organize the collection and analysis of these various data sources and helped to identify two key interactional moments as influential in the re-entextualization of standard language ideology: the acceptance, rejection, or reframing of expertise about grammar, and the consultant's choice of offering direct editing, suggesting, or margin comments. I conclude that using one's expertise to help others is not a bad thing, as long as the discursive positionings within those interactions do not perpetuate the linguistic hierarchies and deficit mindsets about language difference. It is important to make explicit the expertise that consultants have as relation-builders and collaborators in the writing process, and there is great potential in developing their confidence and expertise as flexible navigators of language ideology.

Several research questions follow from this conclusion, each narrowing into some aspect of the nexus analysis framework. A follow-up study might cast a wider net to observe more consultants and drill down into an analysis of expert positioning and feedback modalities to identify further associations between these moves and the linguistic, demographic, or educational

backgrounds of the consultants. This would more robustly interrogate the intersection of interaction order and historical body. Another approach would be to extend the study longitudinally, which would illuminate how practices change both during a consultant's tenure as a student worker and as they move into social and professional roles outside of the university. This approach prioritizes the historical body and its continual evolution. Researchers might employ an experimental mixed-methods approach to explore the impact of professional development models on consultants' ideological awareness, thereby documenting the links between discourses in place and individuals' historical bodies. The role of regular observations by a critical friend and various post-observation reflection protocols are ripe for further investigation. Above all, more research is warranted to develop strategies for institutional actors to engage in the ethical and relational negotiation of language ideologies.

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APPENDIX A: THE WRITING CENTER'S LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Our Commitments
- We meet writers wherever they are in their writing and work with them as they discover how best to use their writing voices.
- We respect writers' agency to express themselves in ways most comfortable to them, including their choice of Englishes, languages, pronouns, stories, and perspectives.
- We challenge the notion of standard English as the only correct expressive form; rather, we recognize and value a number of Englishes.
- We address writers' concerns surrounding style, grammar, and other writing-related policies. We support writers in advocating for their language practices.

Our Challenge
Academic spaces often prescribe specific grammar rules and writing structures, enforcing "Standard" English as the only legitimate language. In doing so, the academy silences othered voices and diminishes diversity within our campus.

Since Standard English is the norm in academic writing, we often serve writers concerned with "fixing" their grammar. In our commitment to working with writers to develop multiple literacies, promoting diverse understandings of writing, and supporting multidisciplinary methods of thinking, this language statement serves as a valuable addition to our Writing Center.

It is a choice to accept the standardized linguistic culture at the expense of writers who use variations of English or other languages. Instead, we take a position honoring the decades of advocacy done by others for greater language inclusivity. Thus, we affirm and support writers' choices of languages, pronouns, English(es), stories, and perspectives.

Intentions and Desired Impact
In creating, publishing, and implementing this statement, we hope to:
- Inform students, faculty, and staff at MSU, so that together, we may create a space where writers may use their authentic voices
- Encourage the larger academic community to adopt similar statements and language-inclusive practices

APPENDIX B: UNDERGRADUATE CONSULTANT TRAINING COURSE SYLLABUS

WRA/ENG 395: Writing Center Theory and Practice (3 credits), Fall 2022

Course Description and Overview
Welcome to our class! This semester, we have an instructional team: [names redacted]

This course invites students to build more comprehensive understandings of the theories and practices of writing centers, writing, and literacy. Throughout the course, students will (1) learn about language and literacy practices, (2) recognize and account for writing as a social practice influenced by social forces, (3) reflect on their own experiences, identities, and practices of reading and writing through these social forces including identity, location, race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality, and (4) develop a range of practices for criticality and being. Through reflection, practice, and community-engaged learning, students will develop toolkits and strategies for working with writers. In this, students will learn how to balance their own boundaries and needs with the needs of writers who have differing needs, experiences and literacies whilst remaining critical of power structures. Specifically, you'll:
- Define and identify key terms, concepts, and conversations in writing and writing center studies
- Recognize and account for writing as a social practice constrained and afforded by social forces including identity, location, race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality
- Reflect on your experiences, identities, and practices of reading and writing and the social forces which shape them
- Develop strategies and tools for working with writers with different needs, experiences, literacies, and languages
- Develop a range of practices for being in community through community-engaged learning experiences
- Articulate your values, attitudes, and knowledges that shape and will shape your consulting philosophy and practice and your professional work in general

Course Schedule & Required Materials
Most required texts will be provided ([The instructor] will provide hardcopies of readings if you'd like) along with any content warnings we can foresee.[5] You will need to purchase books Faison & Condon's *Counterstories from the Writing Center*. Each week begins Monday and ends at 11:59pm[6] Sundays. We'll check in with everyone as we go through the semester, and this may change this syllabus to work best for y'all. Your required course materials include an internet capable device (bring chargers), writing utensils and paper, Google Classroom, and your institutional email/Google Drive.

Land Acknowledgement
Writing Centers are sites where radical change can occur, but sometimes they are also sites of complicity in historical violence. Thus, we must recognize and acknowledge (and land acknowledgements are a start, not a decolonial practice) that [the university] occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg–Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. The University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw.

Expectations

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[5] I can make as many predictions as possible, but I can't predict everything that could be said, nor can any of us account for all of our own possible triggers.
[6] In the last time zone on Earth, which is Howland Island, which is 7 hours behind EDT.

What you can expect from the instructional team...	What I expect from you....
-Learning from your expertise and practicing listening and reflection in the class -Recognizing my own gaps in knowledge and investigating them together -De-centering dominant languages and ideologies -An attention to care, accessibility, and empathy -Timely, thorough feedback and response to assignments, emails, etc.	-Learning from others' expertise and practicing listening and reflection in the class -Engaging with required readings, materials, and assignments to the best you can -De-centering dominant languages and ideologies -Showing others respect in the way *they* would want to be treated -Communicate needs and wants if willing/able

Student Expectations

We will be engaging critically with a variety of social and cultural topics where we challenge ideas (not people) while still de-centering dominant languages and ideologies. We are all responsible for the impact of our words, regardless of intention. In order to have a tolerant and safer classroom, we have to be intolerant of intolerance. While people do have the right to their own opinion, we will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior. Disrespectful language includes, but isn't limited to, micro/macroaggressions[7], violent, rude, insulting, and/or disparaging remarks/slurs. Disrespectful behavior includes, but is not limited to, talking when another person is talking as well as gestures that are violent and/or rude.

Assignment Types (More information in the linked assignment prompts).
<p style="text-align:center">I'll check in with everyone as we go through the semester,
and this may change to work best for y'all.</p>

- **Weekly Syntheses:** These are due Mondays before class starts (unless otherwise noted). After completing the readings, you'll submit a synthesis matrix that looks across common themes in the readings as well as answer optional check-in questions so that we can stay in touch.
- **Consultant Toolkit:** Updates to your toolkit are due each Thursday before class starts (unless otherwise noted). After completing the readings, you'll update your toolkit for that week based on ideas you gained from the readings as they may (or may not) apply to your own consulting.
- **Writing Center Consulting:** Throughout the semester, you will be a client in the WC, observe appointments, co-consult, and have consultations on your own. You may also engage in work that supports WC happenings, but is not directly tied to consultations. These will happen both in the WC and the Community Writing Center at the Public Library.
- **Final Portfolio:** The final portfolio will include various elements:
  - **Semester Reflection**: You will reflect on your growth and experience in the course, including the readings, community engagement, consulting, and more.
  - **Community-Engaged Project**: In conjunction with the work in the Community Writing Center, you will talk with our community partners to collaborate on a shared goal. You will work toward a sustainable project that can exist after you exit the class, such as social media kits, marketing materials, programming, etc.
  - **Beyond 395 (choose one below):**
    - Application Packet Draft: For students who want to be hired into the WC after the semester ends, you will submit a draft of your application packet.

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7 As Oluo discusses, "Microaggressions are small daily insults and indignities perpetuated against marginalized or oppressed people because of their affiliation with that marginalized or oppressed group [...]" (Chapter 12).

- ▪ Research Proposal
- ▪ Self-Designed Project

Late Assignments

We are in a pandemic and a world full of messiness. Let [the instructor] know as soon as you're able if an assignment's deadline isn't feasible, and we will come to a solution together (note: this is a condensed course and getting behind by a week or two may mean the best solution is to drop the course to be able to prioritize your time elsewhere).

Grading and Evaluation[8]

This course will be graded through a labor-based grading, which is probably very different from classes you've had in the past. We acknowledge that labor-based grading is not perfect, as it still centers a capitalist model, but no grading system in a capitalistic university context can be perfect. I use this model because I want you to be able to take risks with your work, to focus on learning, and to be rewarded for the thoughts and work you are putting into the class. Below is a chart that explains what you'll need to do to earn each grade. The assignments (both formal and informal) **MUST** meet the minimum assignment requirements. If this isn't feasible for you, we may negotiate that at any time.

"A" Grade (4.0)	"B" Grade (3.5)	"C" Grade (2.5)	D (1.0)	F (0.0)
• Total of 23 combined syntheses and toolkits • Complete observations/co-consulting • Final Portfolio	• Total of 21 combined syntheses and toolkits • Complete observations/co-consulting • Final Portfolio	• Total of 19 combined syntheses and toolkits • Complete observations/co-consulting • Final Portfolio	Missing one of the requirements from the "C" column	Missing at least two of the requirements from the "C" column

Equitable Classroom

Accessibility and Accommodations (adapted from Dr. Aimée Morrison)

We want to make this class accessible to everyone—introverts, extroverts, assault survivors, parents, rebels, injured students, disabled students, people without internet, etc. If there's something that you need to succeed, let the instructional team know. If something is making you anxious about this course, let's chat. If you need course adaptations because of anything that may affect your learning (regardless of "official" paperwork), please contact [the instructor] as soon as possible. Requests for official accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities.

Self-Care

Sometimes we will be engaging with heavy topics and reflections. Consulting is also full of emotional labor. In the first week, some optional readings are on self-care and creating a pod worksheet. You may want to create a self-care plan at the beginning of the semester. We also want to acknowledge that a self-care plan alone is individualistic and sometimes can put the onus of change on a person instead of a harmful society and systems of oppression. Acknowledging that, the instructional team is also here for you to make whatever course adjustments need to be made at any time because of life. Additionally, below, you'll find lists of resources that also may be helpful.

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[8] Adapted from templates provided by Dr. Asao B. Inoue as well as Dr. Jennifer Eidum

▨ Writing Center Mentor/Mentee Program

Fall 2022 Syllabus

Contact Information

- ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨
- ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

Overview

This program matches experienced graduate consultants with new graduate consultants to foster community and provide support for new graduate students. The mentor program bridges the gap between undergraduate students who completed a peer tutor training course (WRA/ENG395: Writing Center Theory and Practice) and new graduate consultants who come to the center without this course's training.

This program's intention is to create supportive spaces for interactions, mentoring, questions, consulting, and collaboration. We also strive to continue professional conversations happening in writing centers and other salient disciplines. Program participants will meet throughout the semester one-on-one with a mentor/mentee. This program is part of the Writing Center's conditional hiring process—to be considered for a fully hired status, new graduate consultants mentees are required to complete training and meetings as articulated in the Mentor Program curriculum. Experienced graduate consultants can volunteer to be mentors.

Expectations

- Complete the required training and mentor program curriculum
  - During training, this means conducting at least three observations, two co-consulting sessions, one session as a client.
  - Throughout the semester, this means reading and engaging with curriculum materials/resources. This time spent with the materials and the training process are **paid** and may count towards your hours.
- Meet 3 times through semester with mentor/mentee and 2 times with mentor/mentee/▨▨
  - These meetings should consist of (1) engagement with the readings included in this curriculum, (2) time to ask questions, and (3) space for the mentee to consider their experience with the Writing Center thus far.
  - These meetings are **paid** and may count towards your hours. Please plan accordingly so that you do not exceed the maximum number of hours permitted for your personal circumstance.
- Complete the pre-assessment by September 9 and post-assessment by final debrief or December 9 (whichever comes first)
- Mentees meet with ▨▨ and ▨▨ the end of the semester to discuss continued hiring status and future goals (link to Calendly: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨)
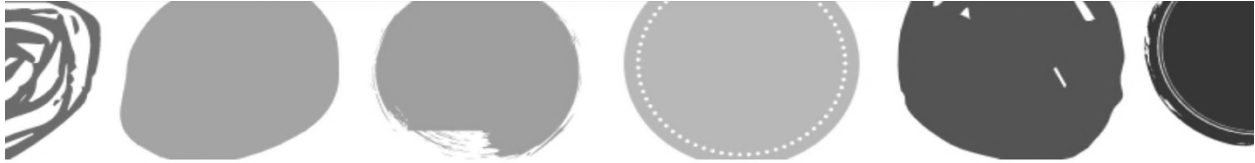
Mentor Learning Outcomes

- Articulate the praxis of being a mentor
- Provide guidance to others about complex issues consultants encounter
- Develop strategies to create a supportive WC environment

Mentee Learning Outcomes

- Articulate how to be a writing center graduate consultant, including how to access information, processes, support, and community at ▬▬
- Understand and articulate the transition into the WC culture and community
- Understand theories presented in the Mentor Program and apply to WC praxis

Overview of the Curriculum

As per the infographic on the next page, there will be four main phases to the mentor program curriculum:

- Training includes meeting with your mentor, completing the pre-assessment, observing and co-consulting WC sessions, and having your own WC consultation for your own work. After completing this training, mentees will "go live" on the schedule to consult.
- Phase 1's theme is on "Intersectionality and Language." In this, mentors and mentees will read through the provided readings (readings and guided questions will be released on the first of the month at the end of this document) as well as have a meeting together along with ▬▬.
- Phase 2's theme is on "Active Listening and Dialogue across Difference." In this, mentors and mentees will read through the provided readings (readings and guided questions will be released on the first of the month at the end of this document) and have a meeting together along with ▬▬.
- Phase 3's theme is on "Bridging a Gap." In this, mentors and mentees will choose a topic to study from provided options and read through those provided readings (readings and guided questions will be released on the first of the month at the end of this document) and meet together (without ▬▬). They will then complete an asynchronous meeting form and their post-assessment. Mentees will have a meeting together along with ▬▬ and ▬▬ at the end of the semester.

Scheduling Meetings and Final Debrief

Every mentor/mentee pair will meet with ▬▬ throughout the semester. Every meeting will have time in the first 15 minutes where ▬▬ will be there for part of it, and then the mentor/mentee will have time to meet alone with each other for the remaining 30 minutes. In order to schedule meetings with ▬▬, she will be using Calendly. To sign up for mentee/mentor/▬▬ meetings, ▬▬ will make available a new Calendly link for each meeting (Phase 1, Phase 2, and the final debrief).

To sign up for final debrief: Calendly

Alternative text for the infographics on the following page linked here: "Writing Center Mentor Program"

Writing Center Mentor Program

Training (September 6–20)

Meet with mentor and complete pre-assessment by 9/9

Observe ≥3 sessions
Co-consult ≥2 sessions

Be the client for your own work at the WC

Email scheduling to "go live" on schedule and begin consulting alone

Intersectionality & Language (will be released by September 1)

September

Read and engage with provided readings and resources

Meet with mentor and ▮ by 9/30

Active Listening and Dialogue Across Difference (will be released by October 1)

October

Read and engage with provided readings and resources

Meet with mentor and ▮ by 10/31

Bridging a Gap (will be released by November 1)

Nov. & Dec.

Read and engage with provided readings and resources

Mentor/Mentee meet and check-in by 11/30

Complete post-assessment by 12/9

Mentee meets with ▮ to discuss program completion in December

Phase 1: Intersectionality and Language (September 6-30)

Readings (~21 pages **or** ~15 minutes & ~15 pages)	- Read "Privilege... What Does it Mean?" from University of Central Arkansas [PDF here (original source)] - Read "Why intersectionality can't wait" by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2015) [Google Doc here (original source)] - Read and/or Listen to "There Is One Correct Way of Writing and Speaking" by Anjali Pattanayak (2017) in *Bad Ideas About Writing* [Podcast reading here; PDF here (original source)] - Read excerpt from the "Introduction" of *Out in the Center* by Denny et al. (2018) [PDF here (original source)]

Learning Goals of this Phase	**Mentors** - Learn and provide guidance to others about complex issues consultants encounter, particularly those of identity, intersectionality, and language differences - Foster reflection of self and mentee on concepts of identity, intersectionality, differences, and language in a writing center context	**Mentees** - Understand differences in identity and intersectionality - Reflect on identity and intersectionality in a writing center context - Reflect on how language differences apply to writing and writing centers

Questions to Consider (during reading and for meeting) *Meetings occur by 9/30*	- What is privilege (UCA)? What is intersectionality (Crenshaw)? Have you heard of these before? How do these apply to you, as both a person and consultant? - How did Parranayak's chapter inform your understanding of language differences? How do you see it relating (or not) to the WC's language statement? Are there any tensions with your own experience versus what was presented? - How did Denny et al.'s introduction further expand on identity and intersectionality in a writing center context? Were any of the claims/questions points of tension for you? Were any of them particularly interesting to consider for our WC/your work?

Suggested Outline for Mentor/Mentee/ Coordinator Meeting #1	~10 minutes: General Check-In (how are you doing? What's been going well so far? What's been challenging?) ~15 minutes: Observation Debrief (How have your first few weeks at the WC been? What have you found to be surprising? Concerning? Were there particular consulting strategies that you observed and liked?) ~15 minutes: Reading Discussion (questions above) ~5 minutes: General Questions/Concerns

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Study Title: University Language Policies and Language Ideologies: Examining Curricular, Professional
Development, and Tutoring Practices

Researcher and Title: Philip Montgomery (PhD Student) and Peter De Costa (Associate Professor)

Department and Institution: Second Language Studies; Department of Linguistics, Languages, and
Cultures; Michigan State University

Contact Information: Philip Montgomery (montg301@msu.edu); Peter De Costa (pdecosta@msu.edu)

1. EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH and WHAT YOU WILL DO:

You are being asked to participate in a research project that investigates how language policy is
implemented in a university setting. The study will last for about a year and a half, although the data
generated may be used in publications over the next five years.

To complete the study, you will be asked to participate in:
- Two individual interviews per semester. Each individual interview should not take more than 30
  minutes and will be recorded.
- Four reflective journaling prompts per semester (about 300 words each).

You may also be asked to:
- Allow for the researchers to observe and video/audio-record (see section 5 below) four writing
  center consultations during the semester. This will only occur if your clients also consent to a
  recording.
- Share any additional relevant documents (e.g., training materials, notes) that help us gain a better
  understanding of how language policies are implemented in your university.

2. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:

- Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You
  may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific
  questions or to stop participating at any time. Whether you choose to participate or not will have
  no effect on your participation in any course, the Writing Center at MSU, or any other future
  collaboration with the researchers.

3. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:

- Participation in this research project is completely voluntary.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Participation in this project will help you reflect on your understanding of language in the
  university, including how language policies are created, enacted, and adapted over time. Your
  reflections on language use in the Writing Center will potentially make you a more critical,
  thoughtful instructor and writer in the future.

5. POTENTIAL RISKS

- In this ethnographic study in which the university's name will not be anonymized, it is likely that your identity will be known to those within the Writing Center community. However, you will be given the right to choose how much information will be shared about you, which may anonymize your participation to those outside of our community. You will be given a pseudonym that will be used throughout the study, and you will be consulted on how/if information about you (including any background or demographic details or images) is presented in any published findings from this study.

4. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researchers (Philip Montgomery, montg301@msu.edu; Dr. Peter De Costa, pdecosta@msu.edu).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

5. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.

We plan to publish the results of the study as a written report and at conferences. Please indicate your desired level(s) of anonymity in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **audio recordings** collected in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **unblurred images and video recordings** collected in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **blurred images and video recordings** collected in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **my real name** and **demographic information** (age, sex, languages spoken, region of origin) about me collected in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **a pseudonym** and **demographic information** (age, sex, languages spoken, region of origin) about me collected in this study.

[ ]   I allow the use of **a pseudonym** and **altered demographic information** (altered age, sex, languages spoken, region of origin) about me collected in this study.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study and the terms of the study mentioned in this document. If you would like to receive updates about the study and to be consulted ahead of future publications, please provide us with your address.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND JOURNAL PROMPTS

These questions were asked in one-on-one interviews over 2-4 sessions.

Basic demographics:
- Tell me about your hometown where you grew up
- What languages were spoken at home and at school
- Tell me about your experiences learning to write in school
- Tell me about your transition to the university. How similar/different is this setting to your hometown?
- What are you studying in university and what do you hope to do with that degree?

Language:
- Tell me about a recent interaction you've had *in a university setting* where language difference played a role.
- Tell me about a recent interaction you've had *in a non-university setting* where language difference played a role.
- Tell me about a time when you changed the way you thought about language or writing, either in the university or in your personal life.
- Do you speak a certain "type" or "variety" of English? Explain.
- Do you consider yourself multilingual? Explain.

Interest in Writing Center
- What made you decide to join the Center?
- What do you hope you will gain from it?
- How do you hope your instructor/administrators will see you?
- Are there any parts of this work that are most exciting to you? Are there any you are apprehensive about?
- What role did the WC Language Statement play in your decision to join the Center?
- Are there any other formal or informal policies in the WC or University that have guided your decision to join the center?

Language statement
- What is your opinion of the WC's Language Statement?
- What do you think it means for you and your work?
- How does it relate to the interactions you told me about?
- What is it asking you to do/not do?
- How do you see this statement relating to your past experiences?
- How does it relate to your future academic or professional goals?

Writing:
- How do you define "good" writing?
- How do you define "academic" writing?
- As a student, how important is it for you to write "academically" in your classes?
- What have been your biggest challenges to learning to write for school, university, or publication?
- What kind of writing/language do you expect you will need in your professional/academic life after graduation?

The following journal prompts were shared via GoogleDoc and participants responded to them over a period of several weeks.

Journal prompt 1:
- What ideas or questions were most interesting from our first interview?
- Are there things you thought about while/since talking to Philip that you didn't get a chance to say?

Journal prompt 2:
- What is your initial impression of the Language Statement?
- Who is it written for?
- What is it asking you/us to do?
- How are the class readings or discussions shaping your thinking about the statement?

Journal prompt 3:
- What does it mean to be multilingual?
- What would you say are the advantages/disadvantages of being multilingual at MSU?

Journal prompt 4:
- What are writing center consultants supposed to do?
- What is their main job?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges they face in working with clients?

APPENDIX F: CLIENT REFLECTION SURVEY

Demographics

Please tell us a little bit about you.

Your name: _____

Email: _____

Date of session: _____

Name of consultant: _____

Academic program: _____

Expected graduation: _____

Language background. What language(s) do you speak?

_____

Experience of the session.

In this study, we are interested in the consulting practices that define the Writing Center. Please share as much as you are willing in each of the four open-ended prompts.

Think about what brought you to the Writing Center. What motivated you to make this appointment? What are you working on? Why did you choose this consultant? Why did you choose this modality (in-person or zoom)?

_____

_____

Now think about what the session looked like. How would you describe the session? What did you do? What did the consultant do? What stood out to you as the most important or meaningful moments in the session?

_____

_____

Now let's focus on your feelings about the session. Did you get what you were expecting to get? Are there any aspects of your session that surpassed (or fell short of) your expectations? Did anything surprise/frustrate/confuse you?

_____

_____

Last one! Do you have any questions about why the consultant did in the session? Do you have any suggestions for how the Writing Center could better meet your needs?

_____

_____

APPENDIX G: CLIENT INTAKE FORM

Appointment Details

Questions marked with a * are required.

Project Type (such as course paper, thesis, report, application/professional documents, etc.) [150 character limit] *

Key Project Details (such as due date, class/course level, citation style, project requirements, etc.). *

What are 2-3 goals you have for the session? In other words, what do you want to accomplish during your appointment? [150 character limit] *

Name you want your consultant to use *

Preferred email address for sending Zoom/Google Doc details *

Does your project contain sensitive/triggering content, depictions, or situations including traumatic incidents, violence, mental illness, oppression? Extra info is above in consultant's bio. *

-- please select --

Feel free to share anything else you want your consultant to know before the session (such as access needs, feedback preferences, background information, themes of the sensitive content). [150 charact

Create Appointment   Close