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**LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AS POLICY:
THREE LESSONS FROM THREE DECADES**

A Thesis in

English

by

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ABSTRACT

The aims of “Language Diversity as Policy” are threefold: to deepen rhetoric and composition scholars’ understanding of what language policies are; how political and social agendas propel these policies in specific directions; and what purposes language policies can serve in scholars’ efforts to set the topics and terms for debate in public dialogue about the increasing linguistic diversity in the U.S. To fulfill that aim, I revisit and reread two language policies created by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in the past thirty years, the 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution and the 1988 National Language Policy. Here I analyze how compositionists in the Brooklyn College-based Language Curriculum Research Group and the CCCC Language Policy Committee wove the principles at the heart of these language policies into our professional and civic practice. I then build on the results of these studies to illuminate the National Language Agenda, drafted by the U.S. Defense Department to articulate the nation’s language needs in a post-September 11 world. Here I consider how rhetoric and composition scholars can join with other language scholars to engage this next important debate about language politics and national identity.

This dissertation analyzes how scholars, civic groups, and government agencies have used language policies as tools to make specific arguments for preserving linguistic diversity in education and in society. Each of the three language policies in this study makes claims about how language, literacy, and cultural diversity can support the creation of specific political, cultural, or economic arrangements in the U.S. Just as significantly, the authors of these language policies create them to focus their efforts for developing and managing the nation’s language resources in ways that would bring about these desired ends. For these reasons, I contend, studying the history of two CCCC language policies as well as scholars’ responses to them can help compositionists to invent pedagogical and political strategies for working in our classrooms, our academic institutions, and our communities in ways that build a broader public commitment to meeting our nation’s various—not just security- or economic-related—language needs.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

During this present moment when various current national constituencies are “discovering” the importance of writing, let’s make sure they understand what it means to teach writing and what learning and teaching environments best facilitate it. [. . .] As language arts educators, we ought to be at the center of all policy decisions that affect the teaching and learning of communication skills. Somebody needs to ask *us* the next time decisions are made about how facility with language will be assessed. Somebody needs to ask *us* before proclaiming a national crisis in the quality of college student writing. And we need to have ready answers when they do.

—Shirley Wilson Logan, “Changing Missions, Shifting Positions, and Breaking Silences” (335)

In her Chair’s Address at the 2003 convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), Shirley Wilson Logan encouraged her fellow CCCC members to revisit the organization’s position statements on language diversity. Compositionists need to reread these language policy statements, she explained, in order to better understand “the important principles they uphold” as well as “their salience in this moment in history” (333). These texts renew the CCCC’s commitment “to enhance

conditions for learning and teaching college composition” (qtd. in Logan 332). Moreover, Logan argued, the CCCC’s language policies can help scholars to compose effective arguments in public debates about language and literacy education.

The sense of urgency compelling us to revisit these language policies has only intensified since Logan spoke three years ago. During that time, compositionists have seen no end to the “discoveries” about language and writing declared by public officials, civic groups, and political pundits.

In March 2005, for example, the College Board decided to send “a loud and clear message that strong writing is essential to success in college and beyond” (qtd. in Toppo) by adding a 25-minute timed-essay component to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The College Board claims to be testing students’ abilities to do “the kind of writing you have to do over and over again in college” (qtd. in Toppo). Through this test, however, the Board reinforces a relatively standard rubric for evaluating these impromptu essays, one that emphasizes mainstream norms of grammar, organization, and style (NCTE Task Force 10). This type of assessment in effect leaves little room for students from non-prestige language backgrounds to draw on strengths they may have developed in their vernacular languages and dialects (10).

The state of California, meanwhile, has staked the position that “if you do not know it in English, you do not know it” (Tucker). The state’s Board of Education now requires all high school students to pass the California High School Exit Exam in English only in order to receive their diplomas. This requirement has created difficulties for many test-takers in the state, one in which 25 percent of the students are considered English-

language learners. As of January 2006, 31 percent of the state's high-school seniors who were English-language learners had yet to pass the exam for that academic year (Tucker).

And most recently, on May 18, 2006, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly declared that U.S. citizenship can be fully expressed only through the English language. Senators that day voted 63-34 to amend an immigration policy reform bill to declare English as the U.S.'s "national language." Such a declaration, the amendment's text suggests, serves "to promote the patriotic integration of prospective U.S. citizens" (S.Amdt 4064). The specific details of the amendment effectively narrow the path through which prospective citizens can integrate: "Unless specifically stated in applicable law, no person has a right, entitlement, or claim to have the Government of the United States or any of its officials or representatives act, communicate, perform or provide services, or provide materials in any language other than English" (S.Amdt. 4064). The amendment's sponsor, Oklahoma Republican James Inhofe, equated English-language literacy with full economic and political opportunity as he declared, "This is not just about preserving our culture and heritage, but also about bettering the odds for our nation's newest potential citizens" ("Inhofe to Senate").

These "discoveries" of the importance of writing and speaking in English reinforce a dominant attitude toward language difference in U.S. schools and society. The actions taken by the College Board, the California State Board of Education, and the U.S. Senate convey the idea that there is one way to communicate effectively—in Standardized English only.¹

While legislators and education officials pronounce these "discoveries," however, they do so in a historical moment marked by increased movement over national

boundaries and communication across linguistic and cultural differences. For example, the U.S. Congress seems poised to make English the official language of the government's interaction with citizens at the same time that U.S. businesses and advertisers have broadened their linguistic repertoires in order to reach the 47 million (18 percent) Americans over the age of five who speak a language other than English at home (Shin and Bruno 1). By 2002, 664 Spanish-language radio stations and 252 Spanish-language television stations (served by 26 Spanish-language television networks) were available to consumers in the U.S. (MacNeil and Cran 98). Trends were similar for other forms of media. Between 1990 and 2002, the number of Spanish-language newspapers published in the U.S. increased from 355 to 652 (98). As Robert MacNeil and William Cran explain, many of these dailies and weeklies were printed by prominent English-language newspapers such as the *Miami Herald*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* "both to make up for the continuing loss of English-language circulation and to attract advertisers to the surging Hispanic market" (97).

And while the California State Board of Education tests high-school seniors in English only as a means for ensuring that every student has "the full opportunity to succeed in California and the global economy" (qtd. in Tucker), increasing numbers of native and non-native speakers of English are bolstering their academic credentials and improving their resumes by studying languages of key economic and political significance within the world. For example, public and private courses in Mandarin Chinese experienced a 20 percent growth at the secondary level between 1998 and 2002. As of May 2005, 240,000 students were taking courses in Mandarin at public high schools, while an additional 150,000 were taking private courses ("Chinese Classes").

The Modern Language Association (MLA) has reported similar growth in foreign language study in higher education. The MLA found that overall, foreign language enrollments in U.S. colleges and universities jumped by 17 percent between 1998 and 2002 (Feal, “Higher” 16). Enrollment in Arabic courses in particular rose from 5,505 students in 1998 to 10,584 by 1992, an increase of 92 percent over the five-year period (16). This final statistic reflects the fact that not all government agencies have followed the U.S. Senate’s lead in arguing that one language alone can unify and strengthen the nation. Explains U.S. Marine Corps Major Sean Riordan, who began taking Arabic courses after returning from a two-year tour of duty in Kuwait, “Career-wise, the Department of Defense has made it clear that gaining and retaining people with languages is a priority” (qtd. in Chang W33).

These numerous examples show that competing forces are pulling the nation’s priorities for language arts education in different directions. Language politics are not always a topic of national concern in the U.S. When they do arise, however, they always do so out of issues of race, culture, and economics, all of which intersect with definitions of national identity. In the same way, languages policies that emerge from or speak to these debates promote particular languages and dialects as a means for reinforcing specific conceptions of community and nationhood. As Logan declared in her Chair’s Address, rhetoric and composition scholars need to find ways to intervene in these public debates about language politics. Just as importantly, she argues, scholars would do well to revisit the CCCC’s language policies as they compose “ready answers” that can help communities to define and prioritize their needs for languages and for language education (335).

Logan has not been the only leader of the CCCC to make this call. Doug Hesse extended Logan's vision during his tenure as CCCC Chair, as he sought to forge stronger connections among the various stakeholders in these debates about language politics and policies. At a November 2004 retreat, Hesse focused the CCCC Executive Committee's energy and attention on addressing two key questions: "What should be the relationship of CCCC to various national initiatives on writing?" and "What research, publication, or policy initiatives might CCCC pursue in order to further our mission, with a particular eye toward external constituencies?" ("CCCC Chair's Letter" 373). Hesse acknowledged that research alone would not settle public debates about the aims and methods of language and literacy education. Like Logan, though, he expresses his belief that the absence of good research "disadvantages us" (373) as both a professional and civic-minded discipline. More significantly, Hesse argued, rhetoric and composition scholars need to find ways to assume more proactive postures in public and political debates about language education. Too often compositions and other language arts educators are put on the defensive. And, as Hesse notes, significant consequences follow from such a response. "Even when the effect of our response is productive," he explains, "the topics and terms under scrutiny often aren't ones we'd have chosen as most vital. We look defensive, acting out of narrow self-interest rather than the deep interests of our students, schools, and society" (373).

This dissertation responds to the calls of past CCCC Chairs by identifying "the important principles" that the CCCC's position statements uphold and articulating more clearly "their salience at this moment in history" (Logan 333). My specific aim in "Language Diversity as Policy" is to deepen rhetoric and composition scholars'

understanding of what language policies are; how political and social agendas propel these policies in specific directions; and how scholars can use language policies in order to set “the topics and terms under scrutiny” (Hesse, “Chair’s Letter” 373) in these present and pressing debates about the nation’s increasing linguistic diversity. To fulfill that aim, I first revisit and reread two language policies created by the CCCC in the past thirty years, the 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution and the 1988 National Language Policy. Here I analyze how compositionists in the Brooklyn College-based Language Curriculum Research Group and the CCCC Language Policy Committee wove the principles at the heart of these language policies into their professional and civic practice. I then build on the results of these studies to illuminate the National Language Agenda, drafted by the U.S. Defense Department to articulate the nation’s language needs in a post-September 11 world. Here I apply the lessons gleaned from my earlier historical analyses to action-oriented possibilities, explaining how literacy educators can fruitfully engage this next important debate about language politics and national identity.

Each of the three policies in my study makes a specific argument for preserving linguistic diversity in education and in society. The first two policies were crafted by progressive educators in the CCCC. The 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution countered the widespread attitude among educators that most ethnic minority students then matriculating to college in increasing numbers were “verbally disadvantaged” and, consequently, uneducable. The CCCC’s language policy instead called on teachers to affirm the linguistic skills and abilities that speakers of non-standardized language varieties brought with them to college. Many compositionists responded to this language policy in productive ways. The Language Curriculum

Research Group, for one, made use of the theory at the heart of the “Students’ Right” resolution as it developed a progressive pedagogy for first-year composition in the City University of New York (CUNY) system.

Fourteen years later, in 1988, the CCCC published its National Language Policy in order to neutralize a constitutional amendment sponsored by the English-Only movement that would declare English the official language of the U.S. In response to this movement, the CCCC’s National Language Policy outlined a plan for educators to collect information on the English-Only movement, coalesce with other professional groups to create opposition campaigns, and promote language education as a means of ensuring linguistic and cultural pluralism in the country. The CCCC Language Policy Committee used the National Language Policy to persuade fellow composition scholars to see their professional responsibilities extending beyond the classroom walls and into the surrounding communities. Together, these two language policies outline both pedagogical and civic ideals that should still prompt rhetoric and composition scholars to intervene in debates about the politics of language difference in the U.S.

In the nearly five years since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., several non-academic groups have come to see language policy as not only an educational but also a national security concern. In June 2004, the Department of Defense hosted the National Language Conference, bringing together government officials, corporate executives, linguists, and language educators, who then debated the nation’s pressing language needs; emphasized the importance of linguistic minorities’ maintaining their heritage languages; and proposed strategies for creating a cohesive language program throughout the entire United States’ educational

system (K-18). These conference deliberations informed the Defense Department's drafting and February 2005 publication of the National Language Agenda.

In some ways the National Language Agenda echoes the CCCC's earlier language policies, as it seeks to persuade U.S. citizens and their elected officials that the nation's linguistic diversity can be leveraged as a valuable resource. The National Language Agenda, however, presents a dangerously narrow view of the uses toward which our nation should put its language resources. Rhetoric and composition scholars need to engage this debate about the nation's language needs in order to ensure that this government-authored language policy responds to the pressing needs of linguistic minority communities in the U.S. Studying the history of two CCCC language policies as well as scholars' responses to them can help compositionists to invent pedagogical and political strategies for working in our classrooms, our academic institutions, and our communities in ways that build a broader public commitment to meeting our nation's various—not just security- or economic-related—language needs.

“Saying what the schools should do in a positive vein”

My dissertation project highlights the importance of language policies in the face of several critiques about their relevance and efficacy for rhetoric and composition scholars. Many compositionists have perceived language policies to be ineffectual tools in the field's efforts to create the conditions that allow for positive language and literacy learning. In many of our professional journals, scholars have criticized the CCCC's language policies for offering few pedagogical practices to bring these educational ideals into being inside the writing classroom. *English Journal* editor Stephen Judy used his

December 1978 column to express this view about the “Students’ Right” resolution: “One great weakness in the CCCC statement is that it talks about respecting and not interfering, but it doesn’t say anything about what the schools should do in a *positive* vein. It doesn’t attempt to describe what teachers can and should be doing to help kids learn language” (7). Others have expressed concern that language policies too easily get divorced from the real-world demands placed on students in their future courses, jobs, and communities. In 1988, for example, Trudy J. Sundberg expressed her concern that the CCCC National Language Policy and the National Council of Teachers of English’s (NCTE) “Resolution on English as the ‘Official Language’” did nothing but encourage immigrants “to avoid learning English, thus confining many of these students to self-perpetuating linguistic ghettos” (“The Case” 17). And still other compositionists have expressed the opinion that language policies are inappropriate texts for writing scholars and teachers, some even calling for counter-statements that “would limit the ability of the CCCC to become wrapped up in ideological wars which [are] of little concern to them” (Parks 212).

Just as significant as these criticisms of language policy is the general ignorance of them among language-arts educators. Indeed, critiques of language policies’ pedagogical value and political relevance have resulted in the fact that they have rarely been included in the professional training of either the present or future generation of composition scholars. The CCCC Language Policy Committee reported in its 2000 “Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey” that two-thirds of CCCC and NCTE members do not know about either the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution or its National Language Policy (14-15).

This dissertation project brings language policy back to the center of our disciplinary concerns. It clarifies the theoretical grounding and rhetorical purpose of language policies in relation to public and professional debates about language diversity and literacy education. As I argue throughout this dissertation, scholars, political representatives, and activists compose language policies in order to synthesize their theories and ideas about language into a plan for shaping the political, cultural, and economic environment in specific ways. Given this emphasis on articulating broad arguments about language, literacy, and cultural diversity in America, language policies do not always present compositionists with concrete strategies for classroom or political practice. Nevertheless, this dissertation gives compositionists direction on how they can adopt an active stance toward language policies, reading them as a means for critically examining their own language practices and beliefs. This active reading and reflection can in turn spark revision of our pedagogy, our research, and our service in ways that work toward the goals these policies represent.

Defining “Language Policy”

I cannot begin to articulate the salience of language policies for our present-day work in composition studies without first defining what I mean by “language policy.” Applied linguists; political scientists; scholars of education, law, and modern languages; and (in ever-increasing numbers) compositionists have all studied “language policy.” The specific subject scholars have studied in the name of “language policy,” however, has been broadened or narrowed in order to reflect the particular aspect of a community’s language practices or beliefs that each scholar wants to understand.

Language policy documents can take both overt and covert forms. Overt language policies are those “which are explicit, formalized, and/or codified” (Huebner 4), such as English-Only laws in private workplaces or San Francisco’s Proposition O, which banned bilingual ballots in 1983. Covert language policies, meanwhile, are those which “make no mention of any legal document, administrative code, etc.” but still affect uses of or attitudes about language (Schiffman 30), as with the Federal Communications Commission’s tendency to award broadcasting licenses in ways that suggest the “desirability” of programming that serves language minority communities (Piatt 115).

Journalist James Crawford, one of the more prominent contemporary analysts of language policies, refers to specific textual documents when he uses the term “language policy.” He proposes a two-pronged definition to account for both overt and covert language policy at the government level:

1. What the government does officially—through legislation, court decisions, executive action, or other means—to (a) determine how languages are used in public contexts, (b) cultivate language skills needed to meet national priorities, or (c) establish the rights of individuals or groups of individuals to learn, use, and maintain languages.
 2. Government regulation of its own language use, including steps to facilitate clear communication, train and recruit personnel, guarantee due process, foster political participation, and provide access to public services, proceedings, and documents.
- (“Language Policy”)

While Crawford’s definition accounts for both overt and covert language policies, he restricts these documents to the domain of government activity. As Thom Huebner

contends, “language policy formation and enforcement is more ubiquitous than that” (4). Huebner explains, “Private enterprises from small businesses and multinational corporations, the media, publishing houses, professional and religious organizations, foundations, and supranational alliances and confederations have language policies” (4). Ultimately, though, both Crawford and Huebner refer specifically to textual documents when they use the term “language policy.”

This “‘language policy’ as text” definition actually emerged within applied linguistics because of scholars’ investments in practices of language planning. The study of language policy within applied linguistics, in fact, started when scholars began to address language situations resulting from colonization in newly liberated nations.² Applied linguists working on language policy and planning have generally viewed language as the source of communication problems between communities (Ruiz), problems to be solved “by studying its various languages or dialects and developing an official language policy concerning their selection and use” (Crystal 220). Applied linguists first studied the uses of languages within these communities and then created a policy document to manage the use of their various languages. In this sense of “language policy,” then, applied linguists referred to explicit texts adopted by legislative bodies to promote specific language practices in public and/or private spaces.

More recently, however, applied linguists have argued for a broader definition of language policy. The field’s earlier work focused on developing language policy texts that could resolve communication problems between a community’s different linguistic groups and its government. Bernard Spolsky argues, however, that scholars need a broader definition of language policy because “[e]ven where there is a formal, written

language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent” (8). For these reasons Spolsky proposes a definition that encompasses three specific yet interrelated dimensions of a nation’s or a community’s language policy:

1. language practices: community members’ habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire;
2. language beliefs or ideology: community members’ beliefs about language and language use; and
3. language intervention, planning, or management: any specific efforts by someone with or claiming authority to modify the practices or beliefs of someone else within that community. (5)

Within Spolsky’s broader definition, “language policy” in the sense of explicit texts refers more specifically to “language intervention, planning, or management.” For applied linguists such as Spolsky, the “language policy” of any community instead emerges from the inter-animation of these three dimensions, rather than being prescribed in a specific text alone.

This broader approach proves especially important for scholars studying the language policy of countries that have not adopted a constitutional amendment declaring one or more languages to be “national” or “official” languages. Spolsky suggests that in countries and communities where there is no single document that explicitly states a language policy, “one must search for the implicit lines of language practices and beliefs in a maze of customary practices, laws, regulations and court decisions” (13). To better understand the language policy of the U.S., for example, scholars from the fields of applied linguistics, law, education, and political science have focused on court decisions,

amendments to state constitutions, management practices of private and public employers, and school standards and curricula.

I use the term “language policy” throughout this project, though, to refer to written texts that outline a plan for directing particular language practices toward specific political, economic, or cultural ends. This dissertation focuses on “language policy” situated between overt and covert language policy and within professional, civic, and governmental contexts.

I take as my subject of study language policy texts that explicitly outline the three aims in Crawford’s first definition: to influence the use of languages in public life; to set priorities for and propose strategies for developing languages that meet certain national or communal priorities; and to clarify and support the rights of individuals to make their own decisions about language use. The CCCC’s National Language Policy, for example, supports efforts to create a multilingual public sphere in the U.S. The Defense Department’s National Language Agenda proposes a specific understanding of the nation’s language needs and outlines strategies for developing and managing language resources to meet these needs. And the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution advocates for the rights of all students to produce “precise, effective, and appropriate communication” in a wide range of language varieties (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 2).

The three examples at the heart of this dissertation do not carry legal force or serve an official function. They nevertheless are powerful documents. They have been created by professional organizations (the CCCC) and government agencies with language-related interests (U.S Defense Department) in order to sharpen and clarify their

respective visions for language learning and language use in the U.S. These texts in turn serve to guide pedagogical practices, research projects, and management decisions as well as the deliberations of education, corporate, and legislative leaders.

Scholarly Contributions of Dissertation Project

My decision to focus specifically on “language policy” texts aligns my study with those of fellow rhetoric and composition scholars such as Arnetha Ball, Suresh Canagarajah, Keith Gilyard, Bruce Horner, Ted Lardner, Richard Marback, Paul Kei Matsuda, Stephen Parks, Elaine Richardson, Geneva Smitherman, John Trimbur, and Victor Villanueva. As with their work, this dissertation contributes both to the larger multidisciplinary effort to study language politics and policies in the U.S. as well as to conversations inside rhetoric and composition studies about pedagogical approaches to language diversity in the writing classroom. This study of two historical language policies from the CCCC and one present-day policy from the Defense Department also speaks to the concerns of scholars investigating how political, social, and economic contexts affect literacy education, and it adds texture to rhetoric and composition’s disciplinary histories.

U.S. Language Policy Studies

This dissertation intervenes most explicitly in composition’s fifty-five-year-long effort to understand and shape language policies affecting literacy education and political participation. As Smitherman explains in “CCCC’s Role in the Struggle for Language Rights,” compositionists engaged in language policy work as early as 1951, just two

years after the founding of the CCCC. In that year's February issue of *College Composition and Communication*, Donald Lloyd launched an attack against writing instructors who trivialized the language of students who did not speak "correct" English. Lloyd declared, "In our day, to make statements about English and about language which do not square with linguistics is professionally reprehensible" (qtd. in Smitherman, "CCCC's Role" 350). Lloyd called for students to retain their Mother Tongue while learning Standardized English as a set of "alternative language habits" (354). Smitherman suggests that in so doing, Lloyd anticipated the ideas and attitudes that would lead the CCCC to adopt the "Students' Right" resolution two decades later (354).

The CCCC's 1974 publication of the "Students' Right" resolution and accompanying background document marked rhetoric and composition scholars' entry into larger public debates about language politics and language policy. The need for such activity has become increasingly more necessary since that moment, and a few notable scholars have taken charge in organizing the discipline's public responses. Smitherman testified as an expert witness in the *King v. Ann Arbor* Black English case in 1979. Nine years later she represented the CCCC on the English Plus Information Clearinghouse, an umbrella organization that coordinated opposition to the English-Only movement. As the CCCC Language Policy Committee drafted and circulated its 1988 National Language Policy, Smitherman ("Mis-Education"), Villanueva ("*Solamente Inglés*"), Dennis Baron ("The Legal Status"), Vivian I. Davis, Roseann Dueñas González ("In the Aftermath"), and James Sledd ("Anglo-Conformity") contributed to an essay collection, *Not Only English*, that explained the CCCC's and the NCTE's theoretical and philosophical objections to English-Only legislation. Villanueva also engaged Richard Rodriguez in

debate over English-Only legislation and bilingual education policies in the pages of monographs and journals during the 1980s (“Whose Voice”; “The Voice”). Since that point Villanueva has written extensively about how the English-Only movement reinforces amnesia about the history of linguistic and cultural diversity in the U.S. (“On English Only”).

Many other rhetoric and composition scholars have since joined this effort to study U.S. language policy. One strand of scholarship has focused on how scholars can best engage public debates on language policy. Richard Marback, for example, has proposed strategies for building common ground with those parents, civic leaders, and school administrators who reject progressive language policies and pedagogies such as the Oakland School Board’s Ebonics curriculum. Parks similarly has outlined a strategy that can serve to “reenergize the goals of education” by linking the university and the community in ways that reflect the “Students’ Right” ideal (249).

A second strand of scholarship has examined the language policy (in its broadest sense) that emerges through the disciplinary work of rhetoric and composition. Scholars such as Ball and Lardner (“Dispositions”), Canagarajah (*Critical*), Horner and Trimbur (“English Only”), Matsuda, and Richardson (“Anti-Ebonics”) have draw attention to ways in which compositionists reproduce and/or challenge a dominant U.S. language policy through composition program policies and objectives; textbook publishing; teaching practices; teacher-education curricula; and research priorities. These scholars explore how these activities and texts effectively manage the language practices and shape the language beliefs of students. Horner and Trimbur, for example, contend that the field of composition actually reinforces the goals of the English-Only movement.

Through their historical analysis of writing instruction in U.S. colleges, they find that “the first-year writing course actually *embodies* a language policy that privileges English in relation to other languages” (595). All compositionists need to recognize the influences of these forces on their teaching, research, and service. This entire strand of scholarship prompts rhetoric and composition scholars to recognize that all writing pedagogies “embody” a language policy, no matter whether they reproduce or challenge the dominant social imperative to acquire facility in Standardized English only.³

Composition scholarship on language policy should be seen as just one piece of a larger multidisciplinary effort to identify and analyze the various texts, values, and practices that give shape to a U.S. language policy. Scholars in education studies, legal studies, political science, and applied linguistics have also written extensively in hopes of identifying a U.S. language policy (or policies) and explaining its effects and consequences for public and private life.

Legal scholars have made the most concerted effort to understand attempts at language management through both overt and covert language policies. They have focused in particular on legal challenges to such policies that affect linguistic minorities’ access to education, employment, political participation, and social services. In short, legal scholars have sought to understand the extent to which courts have interpreted a “language right” to exist within the framework of human and civil rights in the U.S. Bill Piatt, for example, observes that the development of laws relating to language use has been inconsistent within the U.S., leading him to conclude, “It is as though the threads of language rights have not been woven into the fabric of the law, but rather surface as bothersome loose ends to be plucked off when inconvenient” (xi).⁴ Critical race theorist

Juan F. Perea, on the other hand, has argued that the U.S. courts and legislatures in fact *have* been consistent—consistent, that is, in their refusal to recognize discrimination on the basis of a person’s use of a non-English language as a form of racial or national origin discrimination.⁵ Legal scholars, then, have reached different conclusions about the implications of court rulings on government laws and business policies relating to language use. Nevertheless, their work makes a significant contribution to the study of language policy in the U.S. as it draws our attention not only to what overt and covert language policy texts say but also to the ways in which these texts get interpreted or enforced.⁶

While legal scholars have focused on language management in the form of federal, state, and local laws, scholars from fields such as political science, history, and applied linguistics have attempted to trace how beliefs about and attitudes toward language have shaped U.S. language policy. Much of this research has focused on identifying the sources of people’s support for or opposition to restrictive language policies. The most common type of study is analysis that identifies the racist, nativist, and xenophobic underpinnings of English-Only laws (Crawford, “What’s Behind”; Espinosa-Aguilar; Hill). More nuanced studies, though, show that support for English-Only laws often represents, in linguist Joshua Fishman’s words, “the displacement of middle-class Anglo fears and anxieties from the more difficult, if not intractable, *real* [economic, social, and political] causes of their fears and anxieties, to mythical and simplistic and stereotyped scapegoats” (“Displaced” 169). Geoffrey Nunberg concurs, noting that “language has always done the work of symbolizing cultural categories that are in themselves too deep and inchoate to be directly expressed” (494). Political scientist

Deborah Schildkraut has since confirmed such arguments with empirical evidence. Through focus-group studies, Schildkraut demonstrates that one's particular conception of American identity influences—in predictable ways—one's support for, opposition to, or ambivalence about English-Only laws.⁷ These types of studies, no matter whether they deliver extreme or more tempered conclusions, help to illuminate how beliefs and attitudes toward language influence public demand for or resistance to various overt and covert language policy texts.

Education scholars and applied linguists have drawn on these two lines of research as they have analyzed how language beliefs and language management have and have not affected the language practices of teachers, students, and their families. Sociolinguists such as Fishman (*Language and Ethnicity*), William Labov, and Lesley Milroy have shown, in fact, that larger political, social, and economic forces exert greater influences on the acquisition and use of different language varieties in minority communities than do overt language policies or language management activities. Robert S. Williams and Kathleen C. Riley's recent research serves to illuminate these conclusions. They studied generational language shift in one Franco-American family in Vermont and found that a shift toward English monolingualism intensified as political, social, and economic pressures manifested themselves in dominant society's hostility toward multiculturalism and multilingualism. These pressures, Williams and Riley explain, made it difficult for "bilingual/bicultural-'friendly' institutions," such as the Francophone farming community, one-room schoolhouse, and church, to function (87).

Education scholar Stephen Krashen has analyzed public debates in order to better understand the sources of this hostility toward multicultural and multilingual education.

He finds the U.S. public generally to be misinformed about what bilingual education programs entail; how the success of such programs can be measured; and what their potential benefits might be for students, for schools, and for communities (“Bilingual Education”). These misconceptions serve to erode public support for these programs and, in turn, undermine the aims not only of bilingual education but also of those very people who would favor English-language assimilation. Indeed, English-Only policies such as California’s Proposition 227 have been lauded as the most efficient means of helping non-English speakers to learn the language. As applied linguist Elliott L. Judd has found, however, such restrictive language policies force many Limited-English Proficiency students into mainstream classrooms before they are linguistically competent enough to master the academic material in English.

To combat the pressures from public support for English-Only policies, applied linguists, educators, and ethnic studies scholars have pursued another line of research that has taken them into linguistic minority communities. Here they have begun efforts to develop programs to revitalize indigenous communities’ use of heritage languages, such as various Native American and Hawaiian languages.⁸ These scholars work alongside community leaders to develop curricula and other language management practices that help students to gain greater facility in the language that reflects their community’s culture and worldviews (K. Davis 84). For example, Mahealani Pai has developed a summer camp program in which children learn about indigenous perspectives on their culture’s relationship to the ocean through the process of learning traditional Hawaiian chants, hula, and songs. Language policies that promote maintenance of heritage languages prove significant within scholars’ larger project to trace strands of U.S.

language policy. These policies mark overt attempts to manage the language practices of a community in ways that resist dominant political, social, and economic forces. In so doing, these language revitalization policies and programs counter the hegemony of English in both public and private life.

My dissertation contributes to this larger intellectual project to trace the many forces and factors that shape a language policy within the U.S. I focus in this dissertation on language policy documents that were not written into law but nevertheless are meant to shape the public conversation around issues of language use in schools and in society. The trajectory throughout these chapters is one that shows language arts educators leading the way in calling for a language policy that values public uses of non-English languages. The CCCC's texts shows language arts educators and scholars taking the stance that their teaching and research should not "reflect the prejudices held by the public" (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 1). Moreover, particularly in Chapters Three and Four, one sees language arts educators working in close relation to other civic groups, government agencies, and corporate institutions. This exchange, dialogue, negotiation, and conflict contributes to this larger effort to tell a fuller story of how language policies in the U.S. have been or continue to be shaped in public life.

Approaches to Linguistic Diversity in Composition

Although this dissertation project foregrounds the significance of language policies for composition studies, the impetus for this study comes first and foremost from disciplinary conversations concerning the linguistic diversity of composition students. Each of the three language policies at the heart of this study argues for speakers and

writers of marginalized languages and dialects to have great opportunities to participate in public life. In making this argument, these language policies speak to concerns around linguistic diversity in our field.

Early composition scholarship on language diversity drew on linguistics research. These studies documented specific grammatical, syntactical, and lexical features of non-standardized language varieties, particularly African American Language, that students learned in their communities or in their homes and that diverged from the assumed “correct” or “proper” language used and expected by these students’ teachers (Labov).

Compositionists used this linguistics research to build a case for the legitimacy of non-standardized language varieties as tools for precise communication. Geneva Smitherman exerted the most consistent and forceful effort in bringing this research to audiences inside composition studies. In texts such as her 1977 *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America* Smitherman did not stop at merely detailing the unique grammatical and syntactical features of African American Language. She also painted a rich portrait of the cultural influences and worldviews that shaped the language’s rhetorical features. A decade later, Keith Gilyard chose a slightly different route to dispel the notion that African Americans were linguistically deprived. He composed a personal literacy narrative, *Voices of the Self*, showing both the systematic and inventive uses of African American Language to negotiate the demands of home, community, and school.

More recently, Elaine Richardson in *African American Literacies* and Arnetha Ball in “Expository Writing of African American Students” have built on Smitherman’s and Gilyard’s efforts. Both of these scholars articulate a fuller picture of the linguistic and rhetorical resources that African Americans use to communicate powerfully and

intervene purposefully in their worlds. Ana Celia Zentella has made a similar contribution in describing the linguistic and rhetorical features used by Spanish/English/Spanglish-speaking students with her 1997 *Growing Up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York*. Compositionist Michelle Hall Kells and modern language scholars Guadalupe Valdés and Daniel Villa have continued to deepen our understanding of the influences of heritage language on Latino students' oral and written texts, while rhetorical scholar LuMing Mao has articulated key principles that are coming to define Chinese American rhetoric. Compositionist Katherine Kelleher Sohn has drawn on linguistics research on the dialect of whites in Appalachia to begin tracing its effects on the writing of rural, working-class white women.

All of these studies of non-standardized and non-privileged language varieties prompt composition scholars to see that the languages of linguistic minority students are as robust as the Standardized English long valued in the writing classroom. Just as significantly, these findings suggest students need to be encouraged to draw advantageously on their language backgrounds both now and in the future.

Other composition scholars have used these findings about the systematic nature and rhetorical sophistication of non-prestige language varieties to trouble long-held assumptions about the aims of education in general and literacy instruction in particular. Villanueva (*Bootstraps* 65-90), Terry Dean, Margaret Marshall, Min-Zhan Lu ("Professing"), Victoria Cliett, Charles F. Coleman, Peter Elbow, Rebecca Moore Howard, Kelvin Monroe, and Vershawn Ashanti Young have helped to elucidate how much of our pedagogy reinforces dominant societal conceptions of appropriate and effective language use. To quote Monroe, these scholars push us

to recognize that as the daily lived experiences and the everyday languages of people diversify within this world, there are greater forces at work telling us/students that cultural uniformity—employed by uniformed texts, readings, writing practices—is the only way to achieve anything worth acquiring (110).

This strand of the conversation on language diversity prompts scholars to open their composition classrooms to reading, writing, and reflection on issues of language, identity, and power.

Lu (“An Essay”), Canagarajah (*Resisting*), and James Gee (“New People”) have begun to push this critique of compositionists’ assumptions about language difference even further, as they study linguistic diversity from an internationalist perspective. More specifically, they explore how globalizing forces of the economy and migration have shaped peoples’ uses of English as well as their attitudes and expectations toward variations of English. And Ball and Lardner (*African American Literacies*), Terry Meier, Rashidah Jammi` Muhammad, and Gail Okawa have emphasized the need to bring language diversity issues into teaching-training courses, giving pre-service teachers opportunities to reflect on their often-implicit attitudes toward language standards and linguistic difference as well as to identify the sources of these attitudes.

More recently, composition scholars have begun in earnest to develop and share concrete pedagogical practices that teachers can use to foster respect for and allow students to draw on their diverse language backgrounds. Present-day members of the CCCC’s Language Policy Committee have led the way in this regard with their 2005 collection *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice*. As the title

of this volume suggests, it addresses the intellectual and emotional barriers that have kept many teachers from doing more than just voicing their support of students' diverse languages and dialects. Throughout this text, the Language Policy Committee members propose a variety of strategies for translating this reorientation toward the classroom into pedagogical strategies.⁹ Gilyard and Richardson ("Students' Right") and Valerie Felita Kinloch have also proposed pedagogical models that can allow compositionists to affirm the significance of students' diverse languages as well as, in Kinloch's words, help them in "problematizing and complicating [linguistic and cultural differences] as essential components of academic literacy" (103). Compositionists such as Jaime Mejía and Louise Rodriguez Connal have also joined in this effort to articulate specific pedagogical practices that give students opportunities to develop skills in using a variety of linguistic forms and registers to achieve a wide range of rhetorical purposes.

This present study contributes to several strands of this disciplinary conversation about students' linguistic diversity. Chapter Two, for example, tells the story of the Language Curriculum Research Group, a collective of scholars who, like Smitherman, worked to translate linguistics research on African American Language for composition scholars and to create concrete pedagogical strategies for bringing the "Students' Right" ideal to life in the writing classroom. Chapters Three and Four, meanwhile, investigate language policies that prompt English-language arts educators to see their work in relation to other languages and language communities both within the U.S. and around the world. My analyses of the debates surrounding English-Only legislation, the CCCC's National Language Policy, and the Defense Department's National Language Agenda call on compositionists to see students' language-learning needs within a political,

economic, and cultural context that increasingly demands facility in multiple languages. Throughout all three chapters, then, I articulate the implications of the respective language policies for composition scholars' research, teaching, and service in colleges and in communities marked by increasing linguistic diversity.

The Contexts of Language and Literacy Education

As this study explores the pedagogical implications of these three language policies, it also contributes to efforts by language arts educators to understand how social, political, and economic forces influence literacy education. It follows most directly Curt Dudley-Marling and Carole Edelsky's edited collection *The Fate of Progressive Language Policies and Practices*, a volume that underscores "the enduring truth that *context matters*" in how literacy educators can translate the field's language policies into pedagogical action (xvii, emphasis added). Dudley-Marling and Edelsky explain in their introduction,

As with any plan, the intentions behind progressive language practices are not the entire story; nor is the practice as played out. The "players" are not only those directly involved in creating, revising, and participating in the innovative assessment project or the instructional program development or the policymaking activity. Parents, media, voters, local church groups, national movements, even disembodied current "commonsense" approaches participate in and affect the life histories of progressive educational language practices and policies. (ix)

In other words, the “success” of any particular language policy depends not just on the “quality” of the theories and ideas written into its pages. The interpretive frameworks of other scholars, school administrators, government officials, journalists, and citizens all affect the ways in which the policy circulates, the ways in which it gets used, and the ways in which it does (or does not) get recorded and analyzed in our disciplinary history.

Of course, this understanding that dominant social forces shape language and literacy education is not new. Gee (*Social Linguistics*), Shirley Brice Heath, and Brian Street have taught composition scholars to see “literacy practices” as both physical and mental activity and “the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing” (Street 2). In other words, compositionists do not simply teach students writing skills. They also convey a particular set of ideas about the purposes of writing and an accompanying set of values about appropriate or effective writing. These pedagogical practices reproduce or revise dominant ideas and values about writing and language difference. In the same way, the three language policies in this study advocate for developing specific language practices as a means for creating particular political, social, and cultural arrangements in the U.S.

More recent scholarship in literacy studies has extended the work of Gee, Heath, and Street by focusing our attention on how the shift from an nation-based industrial economy to a global information economy have created new pressures on composition teachers. Lu (“An Essay”), Deborah Brandt (“Losing”), Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič, and scholars in the New London Group (including Gee, Joseph Lo Bianco, and Carmen Luke; see Cope and Kalantzis) have explored how the contexts for and demands placed on literacy education have changed dramatically as technological developments and changes

in institutional structures are transforming peoples' working, civic, and personal lives. Lu, for example, has articulated how the global economy of "fast capitalism" has reinforced desires for language standards because they are seen as enabling efficient, clear transmission of information (43-44). These pressures, Lu argues, have reinforced many compositionists' belief that their primary aim in teaching composition is to teach students to reproduce the standard conventions expected in workplaces as a means for communicating clearly and efficiently (43-45).

This dissertation contributes in several ways to these on-going conversations about how "context matters" for language policies and pedagogies that affirm linguistic diversity. Chapter Two, for example, examines how histories of one particular progressive language policy, the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution, have themselves been influenced by the conservative political and economic pressures of the period in which the policy emerged. Chapter Three, meanwhile, examines the English-Only debates of the 1980s within the context of conservative political discourse of the Ronald Reagan era; such an analytical framework highlights the ways in which debates about pedagogical aims and methods are also debates about the types of communities we want to live in and the role of schools in bringing about these political, social, and cultural worlds. Finally, Chapter Four examines the ways in which national institutions, in this case the Department of Defense and several other government agencies, can shape debate about the priorities of the U.S. educational system and the nation's vision about what language arts education should prepare students to do. And throughout all three chapters, we see language scholars such as Smitherman, Carol Reed (of the Language Curriculum Research Group), and Mary Louise Pratt engaging various stakeholders in these public

language debates in order to bring about a particular vision for developing, using, and managing languages toward progressive political and social ends.

Histories of Composition Studies

To emphasize the disciplinary significance of these three language policies, I both ground my work in and contribute to histories of U.S. composition studies. James Berlin, Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, and Susan Miller have composed histories that help us to better understand the conditions that led to the marginalization of rhetoric and composition inside U.S. colleges and universities. These scholars have written histories that serve a clear rhetorical purpose: to legitimate the field by recording its intellectual progress in developing theories about composing. Moreover, these histories have encouraged compositionists to see the field's marginalization as contingent and therefore open to reconfiguration. James Berlin's histories of writing instruction in nineteenth- and twentieth-century U.S. colleges (*Writing Instruction; Rhetoric and Reality*), for example, laid the foundation for his proposal in *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures* to refigure English studies by situating rhetoric and composition studies at its center, cultivating students' abilities both to analyze and produce texts.

This intellectual trajectory came into sharp clarity with the 1999 special issues of *College Composition and Communication* on the theme *A Usable Past: CCC at 50*. As then-CCC editor Jams Harris explains, the essays in these issues "propose ways not simply of reconceiving our past as a field but of reshaping our actions as writers, teachers, intellectuals, activists, and administrators" ("A Usable Past" 343). Essays by Gilyard ("African American Contributions to Composition Studies"), Smitherman

(“CCCC’s Role in the Struggle for Language Rights”), and Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams (“History in the Spaces Left: African American Presence and Narratives of Composition Studies”) did some of the most dramatic reshaping. Their contributions to these special issues complicate the historical narratives that had come to predominate compositionists’ thinking about the discipline’s formation within the U.S. As Gilyard, Royster, and Williams show, these narratives too often elide African American scholars’ contributions to the field’s theoretical and pedagogical development. And Gilyard and Smitherman demonstrate how these dominant narratives often ignore compositionists’ work in advocating for marginalized students’ language rights.

Similar efforts to create “a usable past” have sought to forge stronger connections between composition and other academic fields. These studies achieve these ends by recovering activities and intellectual traditions where such cross-disciplinary work did in fact occur. In his contribution to the *CCC* special issues, Paul Matsuda notes that histories of composition studies by Berlin, Connors, Miller, and David Russell do not include discussions of second-language writing. This elision reinforces composition’s sense of professional identity wherein “the sole responsibility of teaching writing to ESL students falls upon professionals in another intellectual formation,” namely, applied linguistics and the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL) (699). Matsuda traces the histories of composition studies and TESOL to find that these fields “claim[ed] their own areas of expertise” in order “to establish their own unique identities as respectable professions or academic ‘disciplines’” (701, 700). Present trends in higher education, Matsuda argues, demand that the two fields begin to work together again so that

compositionists' theories of writing account more fully for the increasing presence of second-language writers in mainstream composition classrooms.

Stephen Parks similarly has composed an alternative narrative that reasserts the significance of the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution within our disciplinary history. Parks critiques Berlin for labeling the language policy document as a product of sociolinguistics and thereby marginalizing its within histories of composition studies. In his 2000 *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language*, Parks attempts to reassert the importance of interdisciplinary activist groups within academia. He tells the story of the New University Conference's efforts in the 1970s to push the CCCC to radically re-envision the writing classroom's relationship to the wider social world.

This dissertation contributes to this project of making new knowledge about the history of the discipline as a means for more effectively negotiating the political and intellectual demands of composition studies' present and future. This study builds on the work of Gilyard, Smitherman, Matsuda, and Parks as it situates language policy and linguistic diversity more centrally within our disciplinary history. The narratives in Chapter Two and Three describe compositionists in the 1970s and 1980s working within their classrooms, within their colleges and universities, and within their communities to build a broader public commitment to literacy education that values and builds on students' diverse languages and dialects. Such historical analysis of the "Students' Right" resolution and the National Language Policy, two of the CCCC's key language policies, helps in our discipline's efforts to create "a usable past." Indeed, we need to learn from and draw on this past as we attempt to make our voices heard in debates—such as the one

sparked by the Defense Department's National Language Agenda—that affect our teaching and our students. Moreover, because this study focuses on both language policies that deal with dialects of English (the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution) and others that deal with non-English languages (the CCCC's National Language Policy and the Defense Department's National Language Agenda), I am able to highlight related concerns among applied linguists, modern language scholars, and compositionists. This analytical perspective allows me, like Matsuda, to explore the theoretical, pedagogical, and political possibilities that could be realized by forging stronger connections between these fields.

Theoretical Grounding

I ask three tiers of questions to understand the significance of the language policies in this study. These questions allow me to analyze the policies within their original context as well as to articulate their implications for present-day conversations inside composition studies concerning language politics, linguistic diversity, and our professional and civic commitments.

The first set of questions help me to get at the original rhetorical situation to which each language policy responded: Who wrote these language policies? How were they composed? What was the authors' purpose in composing the language policy? What does the language policy itself say? What arguments does each language policy make about language education and linguistic diversity inside schools and in the larger society? What did these language policies respond to? What was the exigence for each language

policy? What other types of texts did the drafters of the language policy produce concerning issues of language education and linguistic diversity?

The second tier of questions allows me to explore more deeply the context surrounding the language policy and to better understand its significance in its original moment of composition. These questions include the following: What debates about the politics, culture, and economics of U.S. society were ongoing as the language policy was drafted? What were the dominant attitudes toward language difference at the time? How did practices of literacy education reinforce or challenge these attitudes and beliefs about language? How did the political, economic, or cultural discourses of that moment shape the language policy? How did the language policy reinforce or challenge the dominant educational or language practice of that moment? What did people do with these language policies, if anything?

Finally, a third tier of questions enables me to articulate, in Logan's words, each language policy's "salience at this moment in history" (333): How have and how can present-day composition scholars use this language policy to rethink their teaching and their public advocacy for those on the linguistic margins of U.S. life? What can composition scholars learn about the range of rhetorical tools at their disposal in shaping public debates about language and literacy education? In what ways do policies created by government agencies and/or corporate institutions speak to the work composition scholars do inside and outside the university?

Archival research, interviews, and traditional library research best enable me to answer these three related sets of questions. To write Chapter Two, I conducted archival research at the Ford Foundation on the Language Curriculum Research Group's project

and also interviewed Carol Reed, the group's co-founder. For Chapter Three, I made research trips to the NCTE archives, which house the materials of the CCCC Language Policy Committee, and to the office of the National Immigration Forum, which maintains the archives of the English Plus Information Clearinghouse, the umbrella organization that coordinated a national response to the English-Only movement. To compose Chapter Four, I read the transcripts of presentations at the June 2004 National Language Conference, hosted by the Defense Department and the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Study of Language. The conference participants each argued for specific understandings of the nation's language needs and proposed strategies for developing and managing the nation's language resources in order to meet these needs. These various conference presentations ultimately informed the Defense Department's initial draft of the National Language Agenda. I have also used the Defense Department's web site to acquire reports that examine the government's development of both military and civilian language professionals.¹⁰

Scholarship on linguistic diversity and multicultural rhetorics and writing helps me to "read" each language policy's arguments about language and social, cultural, and political power. Smitherman has been at the forefront of this theory-building inside rhetoric and composition studies. In her own words, she studies language diversity not just by analyzing the surface structures of specific linguistic texts but also by "consider[ing] matters of socio-political and economic subordination and language, the perpetuation of inequality through language, and the historical backdrop against which these linguistic power-plays are enacted" ("From Ghetto Lady" 7). Scholars such as Canagarajah (*Critical*), Gilyard (*Voices*), Lu ("Professing"), Mejía, Richardson (*African*

American Literacies), and Villanueva (*Bootstraps*) have developed similar theoretical perspectives as they describe the tensions faced by linguistic-minority students and citizens as they operate within spaces dominated by majority languages. These theorists have demonstrated the linguistic and cultural creativity of speakers and writers of non-privileged language varieties and, in so doing, exposed “Standard English” as a static portrait of what is in fact an ever-evolving linguistic medium. Also, as these theorists draw attention to the broad scope of linguistic variety in our communities, our homes, and our classrooms, they, like literacy theorists in the New London Group, demonstrate the increasing need for all students and citizens of the world to develop “multiliteracies,” that is, literacies across various—not just culturally dominant—modes of communication, symbol systems, and languages and dialects (Cope and Kalantzis).

Throughout this dissertation, then, I draw on these theoretical perspectives about the connections between language diversity and the political, cultural, and economic vitality of our world. These theories help me to articulate each language policy’s vision for literacy education and for public life. Moreover, this scholarship on linguistic diversity helps me to demonstrate how language policies can lead us to promote every individual’s academic, personal, professional, and civic development as we foster respect for cultural and linguistic diversity in our discipline, our classrooms, and our communities.

Mapping Chapters

In each of this study’s three main chapters, I first describe the context within which each language policy was written, paying particular attention to political, cultural,

economic, and education situations to which it responded. From that point, I use an organizational strategy that helps me to analyze a specific aspect of the production and the use of each language policy.

I aim in Chapter Two to challenge claims that the “Students’ Right” resolution did not usefully inform compositionists’ pedagogies during that era. For this reason, I do not devote my full attention to the CCCC’s creation of the “Students’ Right” resolution.¹¹ Instead, I begin the chapter with only a brief analysis of this language policy, highlighting how it responded to professional debates about the purpose of education sparked by the Open Admissions policies at CUNY in the early 1970s. I then center my focus on the Brooklyn College-based Language Curriculum Research Group’s work in creating a “Students’ Right” pedagogy. I describe in turn their research, their textbook writing, and their teacher-training courses. This arrangement allows me to present a reading of the “Students’ Right” resolution through an historical analysis of how several compositionists translated the language policy into pedagogical practice.

Chapter Three, meanwhile, analyzes the CCCC’s National Language Policy as a document intended to position the field as both a professional *and* civic body able to fill a “language leadership vacuum” (Smitherman, “Lessons” 30) in public debates about language politics and policies. To make this argument, I first situate the CCCC’s 1988 language policy within the social, political, and cultural contexts from which it emerged, particularly conservative political discourses about “national identity” that circulated widely during the Ronald Reagan-era. After describing how the English-Only movement built on this conservative discourse to articulate a strong link between the English language and U.S. national identity, I then analyze the CCCC’s effort to reconceptualize

its own mission and challenge the English-Only movement both inside the writing classroom and within the broader public sphere.

I read the Defense Department's National Language Agenda in Chapter Four as a text that should prompt rhetoric and composition scholars to dialogue with modern language scholars, government officials, corporate leaders, and language minority communities about what a linguistically competent U.S. society should be able to do. I provide historical depth to this analysis by describing the efforts of scholars in the MLA to shape the drafting and implementation of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, legislation that committed significant funds to science, mathematics, and foreign language education in order to support the U.S.'s efforts to win the Cold War. With this historical foundation of the nation's security-related language needs, I then detail how language specialists are coming to play an increasingly central role in the U.S. military's efforts to transform itself to fight the Global War on Terrorism. This understanding sharpens my reading of the Defense Department's National Language Agenda. It helps me to suggest ways in which rhetoric and composition scholars can draw on their current research projects in order to intervene in the conversations shaping how this present-day language policy will be implemented.

All three of the main chapters conclude with a discussion of the ways in which these language policies contribute to contemporary discussions inside composition studies. For example, Chapter Two highlights how we can link our arguments for progressive change in literacy education to analyses of the material conditions that enable or disenable students from historically marginalized groups from participating fully in academic life. Chapter Three discusses what it means for the CCCC to operate as both a

professional and a civic-minded organization. Chapter Four, meanwhile, highlights the ways in which public debate about the nation's foreign language resources underscores the need for composition scholars to expand the linguistic range of their research and teaching.

The final chapter in this dissertation project steps back from these individual studies and examines the implications of language policies for the field of composition studies as a whole. This conclusion outlines the ways in which this dissertation (1) refines our understanding of the rhetorical purpose of language policies and their value inside our field; (2) emphasizes the significance of language policies to our discussions about how best to teach writing in ways that respect students' linguistic diversity; (3) expands our conceptions of "academic work" and helps us to envision what it can mean to work as a "public intellectual" in debates about language politics and literacy education; and (4) prompts us to develop strategies for transforming institutional practices in ways that build a greater public commitment to linguistic diversity.

An Exigent Moment

Throughout this dissertation I echo the CCCC's call for composition scholars to value linguistic diversity and for all members of society to gain competency in multiple languages. As I explored the implications of our field's language policies, however, I continually reflected on my own language background. I am a white, monolingual male. My competency in non-English languages extends only to my reading ability in Latin, a "dead" language.

Examining the political, economic, and social contexts that shaped my own linguistic background has only strengthened my belief that the field of rhetoric and composition needs to change. Three decades after the CCCC affirmed the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution, my own professional education—one conducted in English only—speaks to our field’s need to see that composition scholars “have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language” (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 3).

The language policies in this study should lead us to re-imagine our teaching and research in ways that attend more carefully to writing that our students do in languages and dialects other than Standardized English. These language policies should lead us to invent teaching practices that push students to expand their linguistic repertoires. And they should lead us to give students opportunities to explore how and why they use different dialects and languages to compose their identity as they move between their classrooms, their homes, their neighborhoods, and their jobs.

Now is an important time to act on the principles at the heart of our discipline’s language policies. Several congressional representatives have proposed legislation that would implement various aspects of the Defense Department’s National Language Agenda. The on-going deliberations about this language policy and its accompanying legislation hold significant implications for language arts educators, particularly in terms of funding priorities for teaching and research innovations. And, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the U.S. Senate has approved a declaration of English as our

nation's official language. Such an amendment would only exacerbate the discrimination and difficult material conditions facing language minority communities in the U.S.

Leadership of the CCCC and the NCTE reacted swiftly to the Senate's recent action. By the next day, May 19, 2006, the NCTE had jointly drafted a letter, along with TESOL and the National Council of La Raza, that expressed the organizations' opposition to such an English-Only language policy. Significantly, the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution and National Language Policy informed the NCTE Executive Committee's response to the Senate's affirmation of English as the national language. I hope this dissertation deepens our understanding of both the disciplinary and political significance of language policy texts such as these. This historical analysis reminds us of the need to teach and serve alongside other professional and activist groups so that U.S. language policy reflects our field's democratic ideals—to teach language and literacy in ways that enable citizens to participate more fully in public life.

CHAPTER TWO

Pedagogies of the “Students’ Right” Era:

The Language Curriculum Research Group’s Project for Linguistic Diversity

We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. [. . .] The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable [. . .] leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

—Committee on CCCC Language
Statement, “Students’ Right to Their Own
Language” (2-3)

Although many compositionists and other language arts professionals greeted the “Students’ Right” policy with high enthusiasm, still a great degree of lingering confusion existed: “Well, then, if I don’t correct the grammatical errors, what do I do?” as one well-meaning instructor queried.

—Geneva Smitherman, “CCCC’s Role in
the Struggle for Language Rights” (364-65)

With its 1972 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution and accompanying 1974 background statement, the CCCC prompted the question, “[W]hat should the schools do about the language habits of students who come from a wide variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds?” (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 1). As Smitherman recalls, however, many compositionists felt the “Students’ Right” documents left them with few specific strategies to take to the classroom.

This initial unsettled reception has influenced our current perceptions of the document, as composition scholars continue to debate the relevance of the “Students’ Right” policy to our disciplinary concerns. For example, in the introduction to their 2005 collection *The Hope and the Legacy: The Past, Present, and Future of the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,”* Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback explain that compositionists past and present variously characterize the “Students’ Right” resolution “as a failed attempt at coalition, as an indirect influence, as a unique historical moment, and as an important inspiration” for literacy educators (“Critical” xii). Even with these disagreements, the most consistently reached conclusion among compositionists is that the students’ right to their own language is a theory that rarely, if ever, has materialized in the writing classroom. Michael Pennell, for example, suggests the “Students’ Right” resolution and background statement may be little more than “rhetorical ghosts with no substance below the ink and paper that [they] embody” (229). In fact, as the CCCC Language Policy Committee reported in its recent survey of members of the CCCC and the NCTE, many compositionists have never even seen the ink and paper—let alone the

substance—of the “Students’ Right” policy, as two-thirds of survey respondents were unfamiliar with the resolution (14-15).

In most present-day work around issues of linguistic diversity and language policy, then, compositionists seem to agree the conversations informing the “Students’ Right” theory did not lead to pedagogical transformation inside the classroom. In this chapter, I seek to complicate this notion by recovering the work of the Language Curriculum Research Group (LCRG), a research collective that in the late 1960s and early 1970s created a textbook manuscript and trained writing instructors in order to answer the era’s pressing question, “What should teachers do about students’ varied languages?” The research group, based out of Brooklyn College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College, created a Standardized-English-as-a-Second-Dialect (ESD) course for African American and Puerto Rican students¹ whose writing displayed features of the Black English Vernacular (BEV) dialect.² Over a five-year period, the LCRG received financial support as well as professional legitimacy from prestigious Ford Foundation grants totaling over \$250,000.³ 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 referenced the LCRG’s work, a fact which has only reinforced assumptions that the “Students’ Right” theory did not usefully inform teachers’ practices.⁴

Studying the history of the LCRG can contribute to the ongoing conversation among compositionists who are trying to understand more fully the educational and linguistic politics of the “Students’ Right” era. I argue we can deepen our understanding

of the “Students’ Right” legacy by analyzing actual pedagogies, such as the LCRG’s, that emerged from the scholarly discussions informing it. By drawing upon archival materials from the Ford Foundation, the LCRG’s unpublished textbook manuscript and teachers’ manual, and interviews with Carol Reed, a founding member of the LCRG, this chapter challenges perceptions of the “Students’ Right” document as a progressive theory divorced from the everyday practices and politics of the composition classroom. Through this recovery of the LCRG’s work, scholars can see the “Students’ Right” ideal did in fact inspire teachers to invent pedagogies enabling students to leverage their linguistic diversity as a means for accessing academic literacies. Learning about the LCRG challenges our ideas about the range of scholarly work that has gone on in the name of the “Students’ Right” theory, for we see not only the group’s successes in helping students to use their own languages as resources for their academic writing and exploration, but we also see how and why the LCRG’s efforts to transform our pedagogical and political commitments have been nearly forgotten within our disciplinary memory.

To make this argument, I first consider the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution and background document, highlighting how these texts prompted compositionists to rethink their responsibilities to their students, to their discipline, to their colleagues in other fields, and to the communities outside school walls. Having thus examined the theoretical foundations of the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” policy documents, I next turn my attention to the LCRG. I begin by presenting a brief overview of the research group’s work in order to underscore the timeliness as well as the broad scope of its project. I then articulate the significance of the LCRG within composition studies by focusing on three

aspects of the group's project that it created in order to enact a "Students' Right" pedagogical theory. I analyze, in turn, the LCRG's Ford Foundation grant proposal and the ESD exercises in its textbook manuscript, which show how the group members bridged sociolinguistics research on BEV with composition studies; the reading materials, writing assignments, and classroom projects incorporated into the textbook manuscript in order to make BEV and African American culture significant subjects of study in the writing classroom; and the LCRG's efforts in teacher training, through which the group prompted teachers to reflect on their attitudes toward racial and linguistic difference.

In the final section of this chapter, I attend to the reasons why the LCRG's project has escaped our disciplinary memory. Specifically, I analyze how aggressive public resistance in the mid-1970s crippled the LCRG's efforts to create progressive literacy education for African American students. Recounting the effects of this conservative educational discourse should strengthen our commitments to reinvigorating the "Students' Right" ideal and force us to examine carefully the assumptions that have guided both past and present efforts to improve literacy education for students of all linguistic heritages.

Composition's Debate over Students' Language Rights

The CCCC adopted the "Students' Right" resolution in 1972 amid vigorous debate over the purposes of higher education. The civil rights protests of the 1960s had called for increased access to education for students who, by "traditional" standards, seemed under-prepared for academic work at the university level. The most notable

institutional response to these demands came in 1970. During the spring of that year, CUNY adopted a policy that guaranteed admission into one of the university system's eighteen tuition-free colleges for every city resident who earned a high school diploma. This policy led to significantly increased enrollment figures (an increase from 174,000 in 1969 to 266,000 in 1975). Mina Shaughnessy, then CUNY's basic writing program administrator, explains that this policy also brought to CUNY

a wider range of students than any college had probably ever admitted or thought of admitting to its campus—academic winners and losers from the best and worst high schools in the country, the children of the lettered and the illiterate, the blue-collared, the white-collared, and the unemployed [. . . .]; in short, the sons and daughters of New Yorkers, reflecting that city's intense, troubled version of America. (1-2)

Shaughnessy warned that the “academic losers”—the children of the illiterate, blue-collared, and unemployed—brought the most pressing educational issues to the university with them. In *Errors and Expectations*, she describes the ways educators dealt with these new students in the composition classroom. Many of the students' placement exams caught instructors and administrators' attention because their “difficulties with the written language seemed of a different order” from those of other students, so much so that it appeared “even very modest standards of high-school literacy had not been met” (2). Many of the students in this group spoke other languages and dialects at home and “never successfully reconciled the words of home and school, a fact which by now had worked its way deep into their feelings about school and themselves as students” (3). Even with these difficulties, though, these students themselves had *chosen* to come to college. As

poet and former City College writing instructor Adrienne Rich explains, these students had made it to CUNY having struggled throughout their educational lives to demand their “right to learn and to be treated with dignity” (59).

The influx of students unfamiliar with academic standards of style threatened many English teachers’ sense of professional standing and their traditional modes of writing instruction. Of the scene, Shaughnessy writes, “Here were teachers trained to analyze the belletristic achievements of the centuries marooned in basic writing classrooms with adult student writers who appeared by college standards to be illiterate” (3). The writing produced by these new students did not appear even remotely similar to these instructors’ traditional notions of appropriate, let alone eloquent, academic writing. Shaughnessy implored CUNY administrators and faculty to realize that “the first stage of Open Admissions involves *openly admitting* that education has failed for too many students” (qtd. in Rich 61). Nevertheless, many traditionally minded scholars felt that no type of instructional methods could help these students to become writers because, they believed, their home languages and their home cultures already had failed them. Shaughnessy mentions that many writing instructors quickly labeled their open admissions students as “ineducable” and “announced to their supervisors (or even their students) after only a week of class that everyone was probably going to fail” (3). CUNY’s admissions officers, then, granted the “academic losers” and the “children of the unlettered” access to college, but many teachers made their own determinations about whether or not these students truly belonged among them.

“Not literate enough to absorb information in books or lectures”

Not all scholars trained in *belles lettres* gave up on their students so quickly. Many of these teachers, however, promoted a limiting idea about how students should reconcile the words of home and school. Scholars such as J. Mitchell Morse and William Pixton sought to rescue students from the effects of what they saw as their linguistically disadvantaged and uncultured home life. These scholars viewed a student’s performance in the first-year writing course as an indicator of his or her willingness and intellectual capacity to enter academic culture.

Scholars such as Morse and Pixton firmly believed that the first rite of initiation into academic culture entailed learning to speak and write *only* Standardized English (SE), the language of so-called “literate society.” They argued that students’ BEV restricted their abilities to read, write, and think, let alone to develop the refined critical skills of a liberally educated person. Pixton warned, “Students unable to remove these deficiencies through learning to write standard English may not complete college successfully because they are not literate enough to absorb information in books or lectures” (248). Morse, meanwhile, declared that the ill effects of students’ home languages, particularly BEV, had become all too evident to those writing instructors marooned in their classrooms:

Everybody who has ever corrected freshman themes knows that a limited vocabulary and a limited command of syntax limit the possibilities of thought; and that an inaccurate vocabulary and an unreliable command of syntax often shipwreck thought. Black English [. . .] lacks the vocabulary

and the syntactic resources for thought of even moderate complexity.

(841)

Morse, like Pixton, argued that African American students would fail college unless they cut ties to their home language. Moreover, African American students' limiting language would ensure they continue to "suffer a real [cultural] deprivation" throughout their lives, because BEV's limited vocabulary and syntactic resources simply would never permit them to appreciate the intellectual value or the aesthetic beauty of written texts (841-42). Morse explained, "[P]eople who lack linguistic equipment [. . .] are almost helplessly drawn to writing that makes no intellectual demands and offers no disturbing aesthetic stimulation, but affords only a kind of analgesic escape from vacancy" (842). Students who learned SE, in contrast, could extend their knowledge beyond what they gained through the oral culture of their families and communities. Morse and Pixton called on teachers to demand that students replace their BEV with SE to ensure they left the writing course "linguistically equipped" to develop clear, precise thoughts about the world (837).

Several compositionists—Pixton foremost among them—believed SE-only pedagogies worked toward socially progressive ends. They saw themselves liberating African American students from their linguistic ghettos and delivering them into the wide world of ideas. Pixton, in fact, denied that students had a right to their own language. What students did have, he argued, was their "right to the truth," the truth that BEV is "linguistically different *and* deficient" (252). He concluded, "If students are taught to retain the dialect of their nurture under the delusion that it is as effective as standard English for their attaining higher education and business success, then they are being denied that right" (252).

Like Pixton, Morse believed compositionists had an ethical imperative to teach students to speak and write SE instead of BEV. It was an absolutely necessary—even if somewhat unfortunate—resolution to the conflict between the languages of home and school:

Unavoidably, with the best of democratic intentions, we ask them to grow beyond their native culture and alienate themselves to their neighbors, friends, and relatives. Unavoidably, with the best of democratic intentions, we ask them to identify with people they have always considered effete impudent snobs. (837)

To underscore his “best of democratic intentions,” Morse cited a long list of literate black leaders who “without exception” wrote and spoke in SE, including public officials such as Shirley Chisholm, lawyers such as Thurgood Marshall, revolutionaries such as Huey Newton, and sociologists such as W. E. B. DuBois (838-839). Morse asked, “Who among these can’t or couldn’t or doesn’t or didn’t write standard English?” (838). A Black leader “who habitually expresses himself in Black English,” on the other hand, can attract no more than “a neighborhood following” (839).

Morse suggested that African American leaders such as Chisholm, Marshall, Newton, and DuBois achieved no small measure of their success because SE vocabulary, grammar, and syntax allowed them communicate precisely and clearly to the American mainstream. Because these skills had enabled leaders to push for political and cultural reform, Morse saw “no contradiction between helping students to become articulate and working for social change” (843). For Morse, though, “becoming articulate” meant

learning and using Standard English only; “working for social change” required alienating oneself from neighbors, friends, and relatives.

“The melting away of minorities”

Ultimately, Morse, Pixton, and others advocated pedagogies that exacerbated cultural and linguistic conflicts between majority schools and minority students. In a 1977 *Communication Quarterly* article, Jesse Colquit articulated the cultural consequences that result when “dominant instructional models [. . .] deny the legitimacy of minority dialects” (82). For example, Morse reinforced an assimilationist model by asking students to “alienate themselves to their neighbors, friends, and relatives” and to identify with the “effete impudent snobs” of cultured society (837). Such a pedagogy distorts our nation’s pluralist identity, argued Colquit. Those scholars, administrators, and public officials who advocated a vision of American education as a “melting pot,” Colquit explained, advocated only for a specific kind of melting to take place. Her analysis of this assimilationist model suggested that Morse and others would like to bring about, in Colquit’s words, “not a vigorous amalgam of the best from each culture, but the melting away of minorities and the extension of the dominant culture” (83).

Morse and Pixton also reinforced what Colquit labeled a “language deficit” pedagogical model (83) through their repeated calls for eliminating students’ native dialects in order to promote their social progress and academic achievement. This model implicitly defines *language difference as deficiency*, thereby reinforcing the marginalization of non-standardized English dialects. This perspective toward dialect

difference manifests itself in claims by Morse and Pixton that African Americans' language itself should be blamed for their social, economic, and political marginalization.

Both the “melting pot” and “language deficit” pedagogical models, Colquit argued, ensure the “programmed invisibility of minorities” in American schools and in American society (83). According to Colquit, this invisibility manifests itself in teaching practices that reinforce the culture and values of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) such that most political and cultural commentary in the U.S. comes to equate “the American mind” with “the WASP mind” (qtd. in Colquit 84). Morse supported this perspective when he claimed that SE alone provides students with the “linguistic keys that would open [. . .] the world of complex thought and complex beauty” (842). Such a claim helped to reproduce an American educational system that fails to recognize a full range of African American cultural productions and worldviews.

“What the linguistic evidence indicates we should emphasize”

These dominant pedagogical models prompted the CCCC to adopt the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution at its 1972 convention. This paragraph-long policy statement crafted an alternative vision for literacy education, one that challenged mainstream society’s unwillingness to affirm diverse cultures and languages. The resolution aimed to embolden educators to transform their pedagogies in ways that defied—not reinscribed—America’s prejudices. Moreover, it encouraged minority students and teachers to claim their linguistic and cultural identities as vital resources for thinking, reading, and writing critically about the world.

The resolution drew both praise and rebuke. Many teachers, however, expressed their confusion about what the resolution actually demanded of them in the day-to-day of their classrooms. Bruch and Marback go so far as to suggest that “the conversation that surrounded the resolution reflected a public and professional turn away from visionary ideals and abstract ideas [such as equality, difference, and racial justice] and toward practical problems and concrete solutions” (“Initial” 51).

The CCCC helped to re-direct the conversation this way in 1974. The Committee on the CCCC Language Statement felt that amid the “Student’s Right” controversy, too many English-language arts educators had been “forced to take a position on an aspect of their discipline about which they have little real information” (1). The CCCC therefore published a background statement and annotated bibliography in a Fall 1974 special issue of *College Composition and Communication* that outlined the resolution’s theoretical foundations. These documents were meant to convince educators to focus “on what the actual available linguistic evidence indicates we should emphasize” in student writing, not “on what the vocal elements of the public thinks it wants” (1). As the CCCC suggested throughout its policy statement and background document, this linguistic evidence ideally would help compositionists to invent teaching practices that spark progressive social change.

The primary pieces of linguistic evidence confirmed the CCCC’s belief that “precise, effective, and appropriate communication” can be created in any dialect, not just SE (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 2). Linguists such as William Labov, Walt Wolfram, and Ralph Fasold had demonstrated that although standardized and nonstandardized English dialects were marked by different surface features, they all

operated according to *systematic* grammatical and syntactical patterns. In other words, the members of any given speech community created meaning through language in part by following their dialect's set of internally consistent rules. More importantly, the background document explained, the available evidence showed that "differences among dialects in a given language are always confined to a limited range of *surface* features that have no effect on what linguists call *deep structure*, a term that might be roughly translated as 'meaning'" (6).

The CCCC used these findings from linguistics to argue that BEV had robust vocabulary and syntactical complexity to allow its speakers to develop clear thoughts and communicate precise meaning. For example, while critics such as Morse and Pixton argued that African Americans could not understand abstract concepts such as plurality until they learned SE, the CCCC countered that students had "learned a principle of linguistic competence" once they mastered their native dialect's forms for plurality, no matter whether that entailed the "book/books" of SE or the "*one* book/*two* book" of BEV (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 5).

Assertions that Black English prevented "thought of even moderate complexity" (Morse 841), the CCCC argued, revealed a set of preferences based on "social attitudes and cultural norms," not factual determinations of precision or clarity (6). It was these attitudes toward racial, cultural, and social differences—not phonological, grammatical, or lexical differences—that built "psychological barriers" preventing speakers of related dialects from understanding one another (4). The CCCC hoped these linguistic insights would prompt teachers to reflect on their own attitudes toward language differences and

to identify any psychological barriers that might have been making them less likely to work to understand their students.

“Oriented to the experience and sophistication of our students”

The CCCC believed this linguistics research called for teachers, administrators, and students to adopt a new perspective toward the goals of writing courses. Many linguistic minority students had been so beaten down from an overemphasis on the minor aspects of writing (e.g., spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics) that they felt anxious and hesitant when they approached “formal,” school-based writing assignments. Rich, who taught basic writing at City College, suggested that many of her students struggled to write formally because they had to come to lack trust in their teachers. She explained, “[I]n order to write I have to believe that there is someone willing to collaborate subjectively [as a reader], as opposed to a grading machine out to get me for mistakes in spelling and grammar” (64). The “Student’s Right” background statement tried to convince teachers to re-see themselves as willing readers, not punitive graders, since students’ could produce powerful and imaginative prose in any dialect. Teachers were to “concentrate on building up students’ confidence in their ability to write” (8), giving students every opportunity, in Rich’s words, to “discover that they have ideas that are valuable, even original, and can express those ideas on paper” (67). Composition courses needed to become spaces where students saw academic work as a means for making sense of their worlds, using writing to shape—not merely consume—knowledge. Teachers needed to read students’ writing with an eye toward helping them express their ideas more effectively, not more “correctly.”

The CCCC background statement provided teachers with some pedagogical strategies both for respecting and for building on students' right to their own language in the writing classroom. All of these activities and assignments centered on students' analysis of and experimentation with a wide array of linguistic resources. For example, while Morse and Pixton believed reading materials needed to address minority students' cultural and intellectual deprivation, the CCCC urged teachers to select readings such as John Oliver Killens' *Cotillion* that are "oriented to the experience and sophistication of our students" and that allowed students to see how writers can experiment with different dialects to reflect different characters' social realities (11). Teachers could create a variety of writing assignments that gave students opportunities to experiment in similar fashion, writing for different purposes and for different audiences throughout the semester. Students' language choices in these assignments could further support students' right to their own language, too, by prompting classroom discussion that allowed teachers and classmates to better understand the "linguistic values and customs" of each students' family and community (4).

"Many varieties of language to meet our multiplicity of needs"

The CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution and background statement in effect crafted a new identity for college composition in relation both to other disciplines and to American society. The subject of the classroom shifted from Standard English grammar and "the belletristic achievements of the centuries" (Shaughnessy 3) to "the totality of language" and "the multiple aspects of the communication process" (CCCC 12). The

background statement explained how other field's limiting ideas about "good" writing effectively narrowed the range of topics that composition courses often addressed:

Teachers from other fields who view English as a service course, one which will save them the labor of teaching writing, often implicitly define writing as the communication of information within a limited social context. Perhaps when they (and some English teachers) fuss about spelling and usage, they are merely avoiding difficult problems of writing or, at least, avoiding talking about them. [. . .] Whatever the reason for the complaint, courses which limit themselves to a narrow view of language in hopes of pleasing other departments will not offer a view of dialect adequate to encourage students to grow more competent to handle a fuller range of their language, and thus will defeat their own purpose. (13)

The CCCC believed linguistics research offered "a view of dialect adequate enough" to prompt compositionists to see themselves serving broader social goals instead of other teachers' narrow needs. Compositionists were to aim at broadening students' "range of versatility" such that they could use language to meet different purposes in their home, in their communities, in their courses, and in their future civic and professional lives (6).

This course goal situated the composition classroom within a wider context, connecting it not only to other classrooms within the university but also to the diverse communities outside the school's walls. As the CCCC declared in its background statement, "Our pluralistic society requires many varieties of language to meet our multiplicity of needs" (5). Forcing students to choose the standardized dialect over their native variety promoted a narrow view of the rhetorical situations to which a student

needs to be able to respond. Moreover, it reinforced a dominant cultural perspective that views usage, grammar, and mechanical conventions as “single-standard etiquette *rules* rather than as *options* for effective expression” (10, emphasis added). The CCCC used the “Students’ Right” documents, then, to persuade compositionists that the purpose of literacy education is not “to erase differences” (2) but to expand all students’ linguistic repertoires so they can operate effectively in all types of communication settings.

Having presented the theoretical foundations for its “Students’ Right” resolution, the CCCC nevertheless continued to face charges that it promoted a permissive, *laissez-faire* pedagogy. Even those compositionists who were inclined to support the “Students’ Right” resolution in theory felt that the policy statement and background document did not give them a clear outline of what they should be doing in the classroom. It was amid this discourse about the “Students’ Right” pedagogy that the Language Curriculum Research Group used the concept of students’ right to their own language as the foundation for its pedagogical response to the changing conditions in CUNY’s writing courses. The Brooklyn College-based researchers drew on the emerging linguistics research about BEV to transform the composition classroom into a space where African American students’ languages and cultures were both subjects of study and resources for critical thinking and writing. The LCRG in effect created a “Students’ Right” pedagogy that gave students new opportunities to reconcile the words of home and school.

The LCRG’s Broad Strategy for Curricular Reform

The LCRG’s founding members, Carol Reed and Sylvia Lowenthal of Brooklyn College and Milton Baxter of the Borough of Manhattan Community College, formed the

research group in 1969 to address concerns they had while teaching composition in CUNY's Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program. SEEK offered academic support and instruction for students who entered CUNY through its Open Admissions policy.⁵ Traditional methods of teaching grammatical correctness frustrated many of the African American students and teachers in SEEK. According to Reed, CUNY instructors, just like Morse and Pixton, assumed these students made grammatical errors simply because they did not know the rules of SE grammar and mechanics. Teachers therefore gave students "intensive doses of 'more of the same'" (Reed, "Why Black English" 10), namely, repeated exposure—couched as "enrichment"—to the rules of SE grammar and to countless examples of SE prose (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 1).

Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal, each trained in sociolinguistics, questioned this pedagogical approach.⁶ They believed many African American students' writing reflected "cross-dialect interference," whereby aspects of BEV's grammatical and syntactical code appeared in their efforts to write SE prose (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 3). Several linguistic studies had already shown that children internalize the basic behavioral patterns of their first language by the time they reach schooling age, so the LCRG felt students would benefit from having the patterns of BEV made explicit. This knowledge, the researchers suggested, would better prepare students to identify where BEV grammar and syntax "interfered" when they tried to compose SE (3-5). This hypothesis, which drew heavily upon the sociolinguistics theories of William Stewart, served as the foundation for the group's ESD composition instruction.⁷ In 1969, Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal began to create exercises and writing assignments for a composition textbook that would

allow students to learn about the language varieties of their communities as well as how to edit their prose to reflect the SE conventions expected by most teachers in college courses.

The group presented its initial classroom strategies and textbook exercises at several professional conferences, but it was at the 1969 NCTE convention that the group received a big break. Marjorie Martus of the Ford Foundation attended Reed's presentation, and as Reed would later explain, Martus sensed from attendees' enthusiastic responses that all composition teachers needed to know about the LCRG's project (telephone interview, 9 Nov. 2003). Martus encouraged Reed to apply for a foundation grant that could support the LCRG's efforts to develop its textbook manuscript and ultimately to publish and distribute it to interested writing programs throughout the United States. Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal readily accepted this invitation. On March 24, 1970, they submitted their grant proposal to the foundation, titling it "A CUNY Demonstration Project to Effect Bidialectalism in Users of Nonstandard Dialects of English."

Ford Foundation officials awarded the research group an initial \$64,456 grant to support textbook development, in large part because they agreed with the LCRG's assessment that literacy educators needed specific pedagogical strategies to use in their classrooms (Ward 6). The Ford Foundation certainly understood the value of sociolinguistics research on BEV, having already supported the Center for Applied Linguistics' work in this area. The LCRG convinced foundation officials that it could—indeed, needed to—translate this research into pedagogical methods in order to help those CUNY instructors who, as Shaughnessy later described them, felt "marooned" in their

composition classrooms during the early years of Open Admissions, with “no studies nor guides, nor even suitable textbooks to turn to” (3).

The LCRG, which grew by 1971 to include Paul Cohen, Samuel Moore, and Jacqueline Redrick, used its Ford Foundation grant money to address this situation on several fronts.⁸ First, the group members researched several semesters’ worth of their students’ writing so they could focus their efforts on addressing only those BEV features that appeared most frequently in students’ attempts to write in SE. Second, they developed, piloted, and revised their textbook manuscript for ESD first-year composition courses. Half of the units in this manuscript allowed students to compare and contrast BEV and SE toward the ends of acquiring the “code” of written SE as well as the rhetorical modes they could use in their college writing. The remaining materials made African American language practices explicit subjects of study in the composition classroom. Students learned about theories concerning BEV’s origins and development, read various examples of BEV use by African American journalists and artists, wrote essays about their experiences with and attitudes toward BEV, and conducted ethnographic research on BEV use in their own communities. Third, the LCRG researchers overviewed their pedagogical methods and textbook manuscript by presenting papers at a variety of conferences, including conventions of the CCCC, NCTE, TESOL, College Language Association (CLA), College English Association (CEA), and the Linguistic Society of America (LSA). The LCRG’s project was well-received at conferences, as evidenced by Moore’s report to the Ford Foundation following his presentation at the 1972 CCCC convention: “Because [my] presentation outlined methods and gave examples of actual materials designed to attack the problem

effectively, much interest was generated in what we are doing here at Brooklyn College” (1). Fourth, the group created a multi-faceted approach for preparing educators to teach ethically and effectively to African American students whose writings reflected ESD language-learning situations. Specifically, the group wrote a teachers’ manual to accompany the textbook manuscript, arranged sessions in which Brooklyn College education majors tutored the LCRG’s SEEK students, and conducted workshops for CUNY instructors to learn about the pedagogical implications of sociolinguistics research on BEV. Many workshop participants valued the LCRG’s insight and suggestions, and the workshops were well-attended, with the names of prominent scholars such as Shaughnessy, Patricia Laurence, and Kenneth Bruffee appearing on workshop sign-up sheets the LCRG filed in its annual reports (“LCRG-CUNY Teacher-Training”; Bruffee).

On the basis of these successes, the LCRG in 1973 began trying to spark publishers’ interest in its textbook manuscript. The research group sent its manuscript to six commercial publishers, including Harcourt-Brace Jovanovitch, Prentice Hall, and Houghton Mifflin, as well as the Center for Applied Linguistics. During this period, however, “back-to-basics” critics warned that experiments in literacy education for minority students were eroding traditional academic standards. The charged atmosphere led many administrators and teachers to curtail progressive educational programs, and textbook publishers consequently refused to touch the LCRG’s textbook manuscript. In June 1974, the Ford Foundation stopped funding the LCRG, leading foundation officer Richard Lacey to conclude that the researchers “were tackling a terribly important problem without enough horses” (Memo to Martus, 12 July 1974).

Bridging the Gap between Sociolinguistics and Composition

As African American scholars who were speakers of BEV, trained in sociolinguistics, and teachers of first-year composition, the LCRG researchers were well positioned to develop writing instruction responsive to the language diversity of students entering universities during the early years of Open Admissions. The group knew writing instructors should hear how sociolinguistics research on BEV could usefully inform their teaching. Just as significantly, the researchers also considered their BEV-speaking students to be an important, interested, and intellectually capable audience for this research. Reed would remark in a 1973 *TESOL Quarterly* article that her students were “ready and willing (if not downright *eager*) to [. . .] make practical use of an interesting body of knowledge about factors influencing their own linguistic behavior” (“Adapting” 292). The LCRG’s grant proposal, along with its textbook manuscript’s instructional units on grammar and mechanics, illustrate one aspect of the group’s contribution to conversations that informed the “Students’ Right” vision for theoretically sound language arts pedagogy. These materials not only show how the group used sociolinguistics research to meet composition instructors’ need for methods to teach SE prose, but they also demonstrate how such research helped to get students more engaged in the composition course, building on students’ own ideas about what they wanted to learn and do with writing.⁹

The LCRG was clearly indebted to the sociolinguistics research of Stewart, Labov, and Wolfram, which catalogued and analyzed the systematic nature of BEV’s syntax, phonology, and morphology. The LCRG distinguished its project, though, by tailoring this research to meet the specific needs of writing instructors. The LCRG

members felt sociolinguists too often pursued “misdirected priorities in descriptive research,” in that they focused their energies too narrowly on identifying, describing, and classifying as many features of the spoken BEV dialect as they could (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 8-10). The LCRG researchers instead tailored their descriptions of BEV grammar and syntax in order to meet the needs of their non-specialist audience of composition instructors and students.

Just as significantly, the LCRG believed writing instructors would pay closer attention to this research if it presented precise analyses of how students’ *speech* specifically influenced their *writing*. Therefore, at the outset of their project, the LCRG researchers conducted an exhaustive study of their students’ writing through which they identified the features of the spoken BEV code that appeared most often in their students’ attempts to write SE prose (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 8). Through this examination, the LCRG helped teachers to distinguish between those features in students’ writing that represented “errors” common to many SE writers (such as the *who/whom* distinction) and those features that resulted specifically from “cross-dialect interference” (such as *they/their* distinctions, as in “They are at they mother house,” or the zero copula, as in the BEV “He at home now” versus the SE “He is at home”) (LCRG, “Teachers’ Manual” 24).¹⁰ The LCRG used its research on students’ writing, then, to determine what compositionists needed to know about sociolinguistics research on BEV in order to teach writing effectively to linguistic minority students.

On the basis of these initial investigations into how best to apply sociolinguistics research to composition instruction, the LCRG created its contrastive analysis exercises. These materials made up a significant part of the ESD writing instruction found in the

textbook manuscript. Half of the units presented grammatical rules for BEV, such as those for subject-verb agreement, negation, and pronoun usage, and juxtaposed them with SE usage rules. In the exercises that followed, students read passages in BEV as well as some that evidenced hypercorrection, and edited them to meet SE conventions.¹¹ For example, in a chapter on pluralization rules, students changed BEV usages to their SE equivalents and identified the SE grammatical rules that led them to make the changes. Exercises of this type included the sentence, “I know because it has happened to me a few time but I just have to live with it” (“Students’ Manual” 115). Given this sentence, students had to distinguish between BEV and SE pluralization rules; in the former, the quantifier *few* signals pluralization, while in the latter, the noun itself, *times*, needs to signal the pluralization.

The LCRG also added nuance to these exercises in order to stress to students that “correct” SE usage did not determine a writer’s effectiveness. This emphasis is most readily apparent in the textbook manuscript’s use of prose passages and poems as materials for contrastive analysis. For example, in a unit on pronoun usage, students first read poems from the Black Arts Movement, Don L. Lee’s “The Revolutionary Screw” and “Re-Act for Action” and David Nelson’s “Know Yourself.” Students then identified where and how each of these poets uses reflexive pronouns, such as Nelson’s splitting of reflexive pronouns in the lines “Do you know the ugliness of *your still becoming Black self*/ Do you know the warm beauty of *your true Black self*” (73-76, emphasis added). Accompanying questions asked students to analyze how each particular usage suited the poet’s aim, audience, and message (71-72). These types of exercises emphasized effectiveness over correctness. In so doing, they confirmed students’ own perceptions of

how language functioned in their social worlds outside of school, where friends and relatives lauded for their ways with words commonly “broke” SE grammar rules in order to achieve their rhetorical goals.

With the systematic ESD approach of their writing textbook, the LCRG researchers contributed to the conversations informing the “Students’ Right” policy by articulating specific ways sociolinguistics research on non-standardized dialects of English could usefully inform writing instruction. Moreover, the LCRG’s textbook manuscript made SE conventions a concern only for latter stages of the writing process. Students were taught to write first, recognize areas of cross-dialect interference second, and only then, when editing their drafts, to change these features into the SE grammatical code.

Nevertheless, in certain respects the group’s sentence-level translation exercises seemingly reproduce the traditional aims of the composition course. The curriculum characterizes SE prose as the “polish” students needed to give their writing in order to meet educators’ and employers’ expectations for “good” writing. As we will see in the next section, however, the reading materials and writing assignments of the LCRG’s textbook manuscript challenged English-language arts educators’ assumptions about how BEV could invigorate African American students’ intellectual work.

Valuing the Black English Vernacular in Composition Classrooms

As the previous section illustrated, the LCRG aimed “to effect bidialectalism in users of nonstandard dialects of English” (to quote its grant proposal title) by creating exercises to improve students’ abilities to write SE. The textbook manuscript’s attention

to the surface features of BEV and SE was characteristic of most bidialectalist pedagogies of the era; these pedagogies took compositionists' primary responsibility to be teaching students to write according to the SE conventions other teachers and employers would expect to see in formal writing.

Another aspect of the LCRG's project, however, created an equally significant set of aims for the first-year composition course. Student-centered research projects as well as culturally relevant writing assignments and reading materials from the textbook manuscript suggest the LCRG's project pushed students and teachers to analyze and work with language at deeper levels than just its surface features. These aspects of the LCRG's pedagogy addressed what Reed called the "compulsory miseducation" that African American students—indeed, all students and teachers—endured through traditional language-arts curricula, which taught them to devalue BEV and consider African American communities verbally "impoverished" ("Adapting" 294).

As they tried to make BEV central to academic exploration and writing, the LCRG researchers joined an emerging group of African American compositionists and sociolinguists who argued that conventional bidialectalist pedagogies limited the range of what students could envision themselves doing as writers. Ernece B. Kelly made one of the earliest criticisms of compositionists' work relative to dialect difference with her talk at the 1968 CCCC convention, which she delivered in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Kelly denounced the discipline's willful ignorance of Black English and challenged the assumptions on which bidialectalist pedagogies were based:

Here in Minneapolis we meet to discuss composition. Here we meet to discuss the dialects of Black students and how we can upgrade or, if we're really successful, just plain *replace* them. [. . .] Why aren't there Blacks here who will talk about the emergence of an image among Blacks which does not permit them to even bother with the question of whether or not the white man understands their dialect? [. . .] Why aren't there Blacks helping to plan this conference who have access to the papers which deal with the Black aesthetic and its relationship to composition or the Black image and why it does or does not rest in the anthologies we use or the richness and values of the Black ghetto? (107)

A number of sociolinguists echoed Kelly's critique. They maintained that the "project to effect bidialectalism" constituted an unethical aim for English-language arts instruction. James Sledd, Wayne O'Neil, and Geneva Smitherman in particular argued that even though bidialectalists used the term "dialect difference" to suggest that "correctness" was always relative, they still connoted "dialect deficiency" because, as Sledd explained, they only considered students' non-standardized dialects to be appropriate for uses that middle-class white society granted little intellectual or cultural worth, such as rapping with friends ("Doublespeak" 450-51). Smitherman extended this critique, claiming bidialectalist pedagogies forced students to attend to the relatively insignificant surface features of language. Students thus were effectively discouraged from devoting their full energy and attention to crafting powerful, meaningful prose: "[T]eaching strategies which seek only to put white middle-class English into the mouths of black speakers ain did nothin to inculcate the black perspective necessary to address the crises in the black

community” (*Talkin and Testifyin* 209). These scholars collectively urged compositionists to focus their efforts on teaching students to use writing as a tool for analyzing and producing new knowledge about the world, no matter the dialect.

The LCRG’s project, however, defies easy categorization with other bidialectalist pedagogies that focused solely on the surface features of white middle-class English. With its emphasis on contrastive-analysis exercises and “translation” between BEV and SE, the LCRG’s textbook manuscript does indeed lead students to view SE writing as *the* medium for academic work. In fact, the LCRG researchers make the very distinction Sledd criticizes when, in the textbook manuscript’s introduction, they explain to students that SE represented a formal style of language appropriate for school, job applications, and addresses to professional groups, while the BEV dialects of their communities were most suitable for talking with family, rapping with neighbors, or writing letters to friends (16). Through statements such as this one, along with the repeated emphasis on moving from BEV rough drafts to SE final copies, the LCRG’s textbook manuscript reproduced traditional requirements for the first-year composition course, whereby teachers demanded SE proficiency from students in order to grant them credit for the course.

Several other aspects of the LCRG’s textbook manuscript, however, show the researchers also believed the composition course needed to account more fully for the lived experiences, worldviews, and languages of African American students. To work toward these ends, the LCRG created research projects through which students treated BEV as a legitimate object of inquiry in the writing classroom. In one such project for their own courses, the LCRG’s SEEK students used tape recorders to chronicle effective BEV speech in their communities (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 18). Along with these

tapes, the LCRG's students composed ethnographies in which they identified the wide range of linguistic strategies and interpersonal behaviors that BEV speakers used to communicate meaning (Reed, telephone interview, 7 Dec. 2003). Such class projects pushed the LCRG's students to produce more substantial work than they would within bidialectalist courses. Rather than "seek[ing] only to put white middle-class English into the mouths of black speakers" (Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifyin* 209), the LCRG allowed its African American students to compose academic research to address an important issue facing their communities. Specifically, the LCRG incorporated data from students' tapes and ethnographies into the textbook manuscript (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 18), thus enabling the student-researchers themselves to help improve literacy education for African Americans.

In the textbook manuscript, meanwhile, the LCRG gained students' interest by centering discussions and writing assignments on their own experiences with language difference in their schools and in their communities. For example, the first essay assignment asked students either to analyze how they "change [their] speech for different occasions" or to narrate situations in which they "have to talk 'uppity'" (15). The research group effectively linked English-language arts instruction to students' social worlds, as these essay assignments allowed students to discuss their own ideas and attitudes toward language diversity. Moreover, these prompts encouraged students and teachers to grapple with the politics of language use that bidialectalist pedagogies often left unexamined.

Reading materials in the textbook manuscript likewise countered the widespread perception that many African American students came to school from linguistically

deprived communities. The LCRG meant for the wide range of readings to illustrate that BEV has “its own continuum” of rhetorical styles, ranging “from the street to the pulpit” (“Teachers’ Manual” 23). For this reason, the textbook manuscript included toasts¹² by poet and jazz musician Gil Scott-Heron; raps by Frankie Crocker and Lou Rawls; excerpts from the autobiographies of Malcolm X and Billie Holiday; a student essay responding to public criticism of CUNY’s Open Admissions policies; articles from African American newspapers; recipes from soul-food cookbooks; and poems from the Black Arts Movement, such as Helen King’s “Reflections of a 69th Street Chicago Pimp after Reading a Really Good Black Poem.” The LCRG also devoted over twenty textbook pages to instruction on African American narrative styles. Readings in this section were followed by comprehension questions asking students to make links between BEV use and African American worldviews. In one example, students read “The Fall,” an African American toast in which the protagonist narrates his exploits of lawlessness and, even after being jailed, boasts, “I hope the game [on the streets] is still the same / when I finish up next fall” (“Students’ Manual” 354). Questions followed asking students to analyze various aspects of the toast, including “Are there special speech acts [in the toast] characteristic of Black delivery style?” and “In what ways does the toast represent a ‘blatant disregard and even contempt for white cultural norms?’” (355). By giving such materials concrete space within its textbook manuscript, the LCRG effectively built on Kelly’s call for compositionists to deal with “the richness and values of the Black ghetto” (107). The LCRG’s textbook manuscript helped students to move beyond bidialectalist pedagogy’s attention to making their academic writing “formal.” These reading materials and analytical prompts gave students opportunities to learn about the many powerful

rhetorical patterns and strategies African Americans had used to build distinctive language traditions.

Through these kinds of materials, the LCRG reinforced the need for compositionists to understand and respect the social contexts within which students learned and used BEV. The LCRG textbook manuscript linked language and culture in this way to redress how most English-language arts curricula ignored the variety and complexity of Black worldviews and, in turn, devalued many African American cultural forms (Reed, “Adapting” 294). To be sure, there were teachers who included in their syllabi texts by prominent African American writers such as Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, and James Baldwin. The LCRG argued, however, that such courses too often narrowly taught students to evaluate African American writers’ prose and poetry according to traditional conventions of style and to analyze these texts’ characters with reference only to Eurocentric social values and worldviews (LCRG, “Teachers’ Manual” 20-23).¹³ The LCRG instead shaped compositionists’ ideas about the linguistic politics of writing instruction by showing how teachers’ best intentions to value BEV in the classroom would be meaningful only if teachers and textbooks valued the social contexts of BEV use, as well.

Prompting Teacher Reflection on Racial and Linguistic Difference

The LCRG’s project was well-received by English-language arts educators, but the researchers knew the discipline’s assumptions about linguistic diversity would not change if teachers only viewed these activities and assignments as more efficient means for ridding students’ writing of BEV. Therefore, the research group created a teachers’

manual, tutorial sessions for pre-service educators, and workshops for in-service compositionists to address directly how normative ideas about race, language, and the aims of education informed dominant approaches to writing instruction. Within each of these sites for teacher-training, the LCRG encouraged English-language arts educators to see how their practices in linguistically diverse classrooms were shaped by social attitudes concerning cultural and linguistic difference.

The LCRG's teachers' manual prompted reflection on how, particularly for white SE-speaking teachers, acknowledging BEV in the classroom necessarily changed the relationship between students and teacher. The researchers emphasized this fact within the manual's introductory material. The group discussed the rationale and methodology for its course and also answered ten common questions teachers had about BEV in general and its role in the classroom in particular. Among the most significant questions were "What attitudes can be found in the black community regarding BEV?" (39-46); "Are BEV and SE mutually intelligible?" (61-63); and "Must a teacher be fluent in BEV in order to use a bi-dialectical approach?" (59-60). The LCRG responded to these questions but then asked teachers to see that the best answers could only emerge from their interactions with students. To foster these relationships, the LCRG created the textbook manuscript's essay assignments, described in the previous section, for which students wrote about their everyday experiences with language. The teachers' manual also included many similar open-ended discussion questions meant "to tap the students' intuitions about their dialect" (30). The LCRG explained of its intentions with this design, "The students, therefore, are the primary sources of BEV data, and the teacher—

in recognition of this—ought to gain an appreciation of BEV from them as much as from the curriculum materials presented in the manual” (30).

Framing the teachers’ manual this way encouraged teachers to position themselves as students of BEV, too, open to learning from their own students’ language practices. In so doing, the LCRG strategically troubled many teachers’ desire to enter the classroom feeling they knew all there possibly was to know about the subject. While the LCRG certainly used sociolinguistics research to create a theoretical foundation for compositionists’ approaches to language diversity, its teachers’ manual nevertheless asked instructors to see that social interaction and reflection across racial and linguistic difference was how meaningful knowledge about BEV got created.

The LCRG created small, controlled environments for such cooperative learning and reflection through a partnership with Brooklyn College’s School of Education. The research group arranged collaborative-learning sessions which paired upper-division education majors with the BEV-speaking students enrolled in the LCRG’s composition courses (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 25-30). In these mutually enriching sessions, the pre-service teachers helped the SEEK students to revise their essays and edit them using the grammatical concepts they were learning in the textbook manuscript. Other activities allowed the composition students and education majors to learn more about language practices in African American communities. For example, in some sessions the pair read toasts. The pair would first edit these toasts to reflect conventions of SE. Then, just as the composition students did in the textbook manuscript exercises, the group would discuss how these toasts commented on America’s mainstream cultural norms and how specific narrative techniques helped the storyteller to make his or her point (Reed, telephone

interview, 7 Dec. 2003). Such activities encouraged both the first-year composition students and the education majors to explore the interconnectedness of African American language practices and worldviews. In addition to these weekly tutorials, all participants met with Fred Hill, an educational administrator with a background in sensitivity training and behavior therapy. Hill facilitated discussions and reflections on how power, race, and language affected interactions in these tutoring sessions (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 28-29). Collectively, these tutorials and discussions deepened the pre-service teachers' understanding of African American linguistic traditions and heightened their sensitivity to their students' rhetorical sophistication and critical sensibilities. Just as significantly, by arranging these sessions, the LCRG offered both future teachers and present SEEK students opportunities to explore their attitudes about racial, ethnic, and linguistic difference and to reflect on how these beliefs influenced the learning atmosphere in college.

In its workshops for CUNY instructors, meanwhile, the LCRG provoked a more thorough interrogation of how composition curricula were too often grounded on discriminatory assumptions about the value of non-standardized dialects. As the group explained in its teachers' manual, English-language arts instruction promoted the "general tendency in American society to assimilate divergent cultural and linguistic heritages into a kind of homogeneous mainstream culture, to the exclusion, in particular, of the culture in which BEV is found" (22). The LCRG used its workshops to help teachers see they should not focus instruction solely on BEV's linguistic features but needed also to explore the cultural contexts—the spaces, the audiences, the values, the content—that shape BEV, rather than relegating it "to the status of 'street language'"

(22). Similarly, the LCRG helped CUNY instructors to recognize BEV as an entire communicative system, complete with gestures, body language, and intonation patterns that speakers and listeners used to create meaning.

Baxter explained the need for this aspect of training in his 1976 *College English* article “Educating Teachers about Educating the Oppressed.” Baxter suggested, “[W]hen educators envision the classroom use of a dialect such as BEV, they have in mind BEV speaking students who will utter their dialect patterns with SAE mannerisms, gestures, pitch ranges, intonation patterns, etc.—no doubt to facilitate the teachers’ understanding of BEV” (680). The LCRG’s workshops therefore provided a space for helping teachers, many of whom came from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds than their students, to understand and interpret the various tools their students often used to communicate meaning. This emphasis throughout the CUNY workshops prompted instructors to recognize the range of cultural and interpersonal elements they needed to attend to in order to create meaningful language-learning situations for linguistic minority students.

Given these aims, the LCRG devoted significant portions of the workshop to the difficulties and demands of introducing the textbook manuscript and BEV within the composition classroom. The researchers knew that African American SEEK students had endured twelve years of what Reed called “indoctrination” to the belief that they seemingly had no significant linguistic heritage (“Adapting” 294). Workshop participants thus were warned that many BEV-speaking students would resist the acknowledgement of their language in the college classroom, particularly when white teachers tried to use the textbook manuscript. Reed explained, “The student will most likely resent the

teacher's calling attention to what he regards as an embarrassing deficiency. He will most likely be wont to suspect racist motives, interpreting his teacher's intent as some subtle new attempt to trap him into admitting what he secretly suspects is proof of his linguistic inferiority" (294-95).

Since there was potential for student resistance, the LCRG used the workshops to suggest strategies for introducing the ESD curriculum. For example, they suggested teachers assign books such as Edward T. Hall's *The Silent Language* and Robert A. Hall Jr.'s *Linguistics and Your Language* to help students appreciate the concepts of cultural and linguistic relativity (295-96). An even stronger strategy, discussed earlier, came from the LCRG researchers' own SEEK classrooms; teachers could begin courses with student ethnographies on language practices in their communities, underscoring their commitment to making BEV and African American culture significant subjects of study in the composition classroom. The LCRG repeatedly emphasized—in its teachers' manual, in its published articles, and in its workshops—that how teachers introduced the BEV-centered curriculum, as well as how they engaged students' responses to this approach, would greatly affect students' motivation to do the intellectual work the course demanded of them.

The LCRG's work in teacher-training shows why teacher education concerning linguistic diversity must answer more than just the always pressing "What do I do?" question. The research group understood that sociolinguistics research and classroom exercises alone would not push educators to affirm BEV's relevance to students' writing and academic inquiry. The teachers' manual, tutoring programs, and workshops consequently became spaces in which the LCRG cultivated habits of self-awareness and

self-reflection among English-language arts teachers. Letters written to the LCRG by workshop participants suggest many teachers found these experiences essential for their professional development. For instance, Elaine Avidon, course coordinator for Herbert H. Lehman College, wrote, “One of our faculty members participated in your workshop this past weekend at the Conference on English in the Community Colleges. It was clear to her after listening to you, and it’s clear to us after listening to her, that we need to hear more about your work in Black English” (1; see also Berlinger, Sealy).

These programs heightened teachers’ awareness of how normative assumptions about race and language shaped their interactions with students. They also prepared educators to teach students not only to recognize but also to value and build on the language resources they brought to the classroom. More importantly, these programs allowed instructors to envision how their interactions with students across linguistic difference transformed their understanding of sociolinguistics research and the aims of writing instruction.

Losing the Battle for Reform: “Back-to-Basics” Again

As its period of annual funding from the Ford Foundation drew to a close in June 1974, the LCRG researchers had already enjoyed numerous successes. Colleagues had given them good feedback about their teacher-training programs. Many students noted in course evaluations that the LCRG course was “better than any other writing course” they had ever taken (“Student Course-Evaluation”). And linguist Beryl Bailey, head of Hunter College’s Black and Puerto Rican Studies Program, concluded her 1972 review of the LCRG’s textbook manuscript with this assertion: “This project represents the serious

efforts of a responsible and energetic group of researchers to fill a breach in the new dimensions which Open Admissions has thrust upon higher education in New York City” (5). On the basis of these positive evaluations, the LCRG circulated revised drafts of its textbook manuscript and teachers’ manual to external reviewers as well as six commercial publishers.

This push to publish its materials and reach a broader audience would not succeed. In the mid-1970s, a highly charged public discourse constricted mainstream conceptions of productive and appropriate literacy education, effectively limiting the chances for projects such as the LCRG’s to flourish.

Although not the first to do so, Merrill Sheils issued the most visible warning of a literacy crisis with her now infamous 1975 *Newsweek* cover story, “Why Johnny Can’t Write.” Sheils alerted readers that statistics measuring literacy in the U.S. were declining each year. She made a specific argument about the source of these problems, implicitly targeting the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution. Sheils strategically juxtaposed examples of college students’ tangled, sentence-fragmented prose with passages from the CCCC’s document. In so doing, she encouraged readers to see teachers’ affirmation of students’ linguistic differences as a sign that well-established standards of correctness were being ignored, even deemed irrelevant, in order to make all students feel welcome in school. She explained:

The point is that there have to be some fixed rules, however tedious, if the codes of human communication are to remain decipherable. If the written language is placed at the mercy of every new colloquialism and if every fresh dialect demands and gets equal sway, then we will soon find

ourselves back in Babel. In America [. . .] there are too many people intent on being masters of their language and too few willing to be its servants.

(65)

Sheils conflated ungrammatical, incoherent prose with urban non-standardized dialects to force a specific conclusion: the “new” students of Open Admissions, through their demands for culturally relevant education, had wrestled away teachers’ authority to impose objective standards; corrupted the integrity of writing instruction for all students; and, ultimately, cheapened the significance of a college degree. In his reading of Sheils’ work, John Trimbur suggests that as she lamented the blurring of lines separating “masters” from “servants,” Sheils tried to reassert literacy’s traditional authority to “draw lines of social distinction, mark status, and rank students in a meritocratic order” (“Literacy” 279). Given this implicit argument, one can see that to Sheils and other critics, pedagogies like the LCRG’s represented academic permissiveness in the name of improving minority students’ self-esteem.

A “back-to-basics” educational movement built on this belief that colleges no longer instilled the “American” values of hard work and discipline. This discourse intensified criticism of the LCRG and its work. The ministers, politicians, businessmen, and parents who led the grassroots back-to-basics movement saw the literacy crisis as evidence of a more widespread social decline illustrated most prominently in the civil disturbances of the 1960s (Brodinsky 522). The back-to-basics supporters in particular believed the civil rights movement’s demands for equal access had been translated into student demands for a light work load and easy credits. Central to the back-to-basics movement’s vision for restoring significance to U.S. education were a sternly disciplined,

teacher-centered pedagogy; academic criteria, not social criteria, as the basis for promotion through the curriculum; and the elimination of experimental and innovative programs in favor of textbooks that provided frequent drilling and promoted traditional social values (Shor 78-79). The SAT even came to reflect the influence of back-to-basics reform. Amid clamor about declining SAT scores, officials in October 1974 added a 30-minute section to test students on their knowledge of SE grammar (Parks 196-97).

This emphasis on SE and the movement toward educational “basics” directly affected the LCRG. The LCRG’s pedagogy seemed to confirm critics’ belief that teachers had lowered their standards of “good” writing to accommodate students’ nontraditional literacies. The emphasis on basic SE grammar and standardized testing, they argued, reinstated clear-cut measures of quality and reestablished literacy’s ability to ensure that hard-working students could achieve economic and social status.

Some English-language arts educators in the CUNY system made similar arguments about the need for professors to reclaim authority from students and reinstate rigorous writing standards. For instance, in a 1974 *CCC* article, Joam Baum of CUNY’s York College exhorted her colleagues, in their quest to meet the apparent needs and interests of Open Admissions students, to quit using “textbooks and workbooks that strain for relevancy and slick contemporaneity” (295). Echoing Morse and Pixton, Baum argued this approach would not solve students’ writing problems because these students were “not underprepared in feeling, but in thinking” (295). She instead demanded that publishers recommit to producing “slim essential monographs” that covered issues in logic and academic forms, which in Baum’s opinion were “the particular demonstrated needs” of Open Admissions student (295).

Baum labeled her ideas as “traditional, even reactionary” (294), given that she called for removing politics from writing instruction. Her argument in effect characterized pedagogies as misguided, even uninformed, when they allowed students to write *about* their social worlds and *in* the languages they used to negotiate everyday life. In so doing, she, like many others, ignored the theoretical foundations on which scholars such as the LCRG researchers were working. Moreover, she failed to acknowledge a significant assumption that informed both the LCRG’s pedagogy and the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution—“traditional” approaches to writing instruction had done a disservice to most African American students in the first place.

The controversy sparked by Sheils and fueled by the back-to-basics movement’s causal analysis that culturally relevant pedagogies led to declining educational and social values created sufficient alarm among publishers about the potential marketability of the LCRG’s textbook manuscript. In a letter to Martus at the Ford Foundation, Baxter explained that every publisher the group contacted was unwilling to publish the textbook manuscript “in these unstable economic times” because they sensed there was “a ‘limited’ market for curriculum materials addressed to an all-black audience” (1). Meanwhile, Allene Grognet, publications director of the Center for Applied Linguistics, predicted that “the sales potential of these books could be fairly large, but not through the regular educational channels” (1). She believed they would be used most widely in alternative sites of education such as adult education, vocational retraining, and church and community-action schools.

This characterization of the LCRG’s textbook manuscript as material for “alternative” education underlined the pervasiveness of the normative educational

philosophy wherein concentrated attention to the languages and literacies of African American students were not viewed as central to the university's academic mission. No less significant were bottom-line concerns. Publishers might have been able to sell high quantities of textbooks to these alternative markets, but they were not the mainstream—and hence, more profitable—markets publishers value most.

When Richard Wright and Walt Wolfram, both sociolinguists affiliated with the Center for Applied Linguists, reviewed the textbook manuscript in June 1974, they expressed similar concerns about how students and teachers might react to the textbook manuscript's attention to BEV. They recommended changes that would narrow its focus to teaching students to write SE. Wright in particular felt "[t]he heavy usage of Black pride materials" (2) needed to be eliminated because it encouraged BEV-speaking students "to 'be themselves' while living in ignorance of the role/function of language in the larger world community" (1). Moreover, he felt that "[w]ith all the glorification of BEV through poetry, narratives, etc., the student might come to wonder exactly what the course is all about" (2). The textbook needed to focus more narrowly on "the teaching [of] and sensitivity to SE," he argued, and to include far more models of SE prose (2). Wright called for the LCRG to condense its discussion of BEV and the politics of dialect difference into a preface, whereas in the LCRG's draft these ideas were at the heart of most readings, comprehension questions, and writing assignments. Wright felt that if the preface contained the textbook manuscript's sole efforts "to win converts to a more humanistic view of BEV" (2), the body chapters would be free to focus on the business at hand in first-year composition—teaching SE, the standard of correctness students would

need to meet in order to open “linguistic avenues to wider audiences, both nationally and internationally” (1).

The LCRG maintained that publishers’ and sociolinguists’ predictions about the textbook’s likely reception were unjustified. The researchers repeatedly told Ford Foundation officials that these evaluations were never confirmed with classroom observations of the textbook manuscript being used in pilot courses. Indeed, Lacey, the Foundation’s program officer for the LCRG’s project, noted, “Although [the LCRG] invited publishers to visit classes, publishers’ representatives have tended to rely on their own or outside professional opinions of the worth of their materials without seeing firsthand the work of the group with students at Brooklyn College and Manhattan Community College” (Memo to Martus, 29 July 1974, 2). Were reviewers to have observed students and teachers using the textbook manuscript in CUNY classrooms, they might have perceived disconnect between Wright’s assertions and the ideas guiding the LCRG’s approach. For example, whereas Wright felt the LCRG needed to teach linguistic minority students not to “liv[e] in ignorance of the role/function of language in the larger world community” (1), the essay prompts and discussion questions in the textbook manuscript allowed students to explore what they already knew from their everyday experience—language skills could be leveraged to create greater social and economic opportunities, but they could also be used to accentuate differences and promote discrimination. Moreover, the LCRG knew such discussions did not distract students from the “real” work of learning SE grammar but instead were central to helping them prepare to negotiate the demands they undoubtedly would face throughout their academic and professional careers.

In order to contradict publishers' and reviewers' assessments about the reception and effectiveness of the textbook manuscript, the LCRG presented Ford Foundation representatives with end-of-course evaluations written by both students and teachers who had used the ESD materials in their courses. These documents showed that even those SEEK students who initially resented having to take a writing course for BEV speakers eventually left the semester feeling proud of their language and their communities ("Student Course-Evaluation"). On the basis of its findings as well as its disagreements with reviewers, the LCRG refused to surrender editorial control of its project. The researchers wanted to ensure the textbook manuscript continued to focus on both SE *and* BEV as a means for making composition classrooms into spaces where students and teachers examined the connections between language, culture, and power.

Ultimately, the LCRG never overcame these public perceptions that BEV's presence in the classroom drained educational resources and hastened academic decline. The Ford Foundation, in its highly visible position, felt pressured to dissociate itself from a project the mainstream press characterized as threatening the values and standards of public education. Consequently, in a July 18, 1974 letter to the LCRG, Lacey stated that the Ford Foundation could no longer "justify continued involvement" in its project, "especially given the increased national attention recently directed to the problems you have addressed" (1). The Ford Foundation discontinued funding the LCRG on June 30, 1974, just months before the CCCC would articulate the pedagogical implications of the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" resolution in its Fall 1974 special issue of *CCC*.

The pressures preventing publication of the LCRG's textbook manuscript complicate our common assumptions about why the "Students' Right" ideal never materialized into widespread classroom practice. Present-day compositionists tend to think that the "Students' Right" era saw no theoretically-based pedagogical projects develop, or if they were created, they just weren't effective. The LCRG's project proves otherwise. The textbook manuscript went unpublished because of resistance to the LCRG's efforts to reconcile what Min-Zhan Lu describes as the "discrepancy between the academy's account of what student writers can/should be allowed to do and the student writers' counter accounts of what they can do/are interested in and capable of doing" ("Composing" 18). Back-to-basics reformers restored faith in authoritarian pedagogy and narrowed many publishers' and teachers' visions of what linguistic minority students needed to learn in writing classes. This political and social conservatism shaped the material conditions of 1970s writing instruction in ways that affect how we see the "Students' Right" document today.

The LCRG's project shows us the "Students' Right" era was not long on theory yet short on praxis. As Reed argued at the 1981 CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors Conference, the racially charged analyses of a literacy crisis led many teachers to become "timid and fearful of any curriculum materials" focusing on dialect differences ("Back" 9). The market for the textbook manuscript effectively shrank, "successfully stifling efforts to disseminate new and effective teaching strategies to English teachers in inner-city classrooms across the country" (9-10). Back-to-basics discourse characterized racial and ethnic minority students as unmerited beneficiaries of CUNY's Open Admissions policies. Many professors, reviewers, textbook publishers,

and political commentators agreed. As a result, they paid no attention to the LCRG's aim to teach African American students to write SE academic prose. Instead, the group's "heavy usage of Black pride materials" and its valuing of BEV's presence in the classroom fueled fears that innovative educators had allowed the "new" African American students of Open Admissions to be masters, not servants, of their language and their education. This controversy undoubtedly contributed to the LCRG's failure to publish its textbook manuscript, leaving the discipline of composition with no textual history of the LCRG's work.

Conclusion

Through its textbook manuscript, teachers' manual, and training workshops, the LCRG created a composition course in which students could enact their right to their own language. Despite the project's significant breadth, however, the absence of the group's work in composition histories speaks volumes about the imperative, in Smitherman's words, to "publish—or your ideas perish" (personal interview, 26 March 2004). Certainly, the LCRG's project met pressing disciplinary needs, a fact underscored by the Ford Foundation's substantial monetary support as well as the feedback the researchers received from colleagues. Ultimately, though, the group's efforts to strengthen composition's commitment to linguistic diversity were dismissed by publishers concerned with managing bottom-lines amid feverish back-to-basics discourse. Since the researchers could not effectively respond to the fears of administrators, teachers, and publishers, the LCRG's textbook manuscript remains unpublished, and the ideas it

advanced remain unaccounted for in present-day work on linguistic diversity in composition.

The way in which another form of basic writing pedagogy gained a foothold at CUNY during this period further underscores how political conservatism sealed the fate of the LCRG curriculum. As seen in the previous section, back-to-basics discourse successfully opposed “political” pedagogies, particularly those like the LCRG’s that countered the “miseducation” of minority students, against the university’s standards of academic excellence. Bruce Horner, in his analysis of the material and institutional conditions of CUNY’s early Open Admissions years, shows how compositionists, already marginalized within CUNY, ensured their institutional existence in the face of this discourse. Specifically, compositionists argued they would prepare SEEK students to fit into the academic system rather than challenge the narrow definition of “academic excellence” that functioned to make higher education an exclusive community (“Discoursing” 207-08). As Horner suggests, compositionists reinforced their argument by teaching students basic writing “skills” and focused their research efforts on developing, in Shaughnessy’s words, “more efficient and challenging ways of teaching grammar and mechanics” (qtd. in Horner 209).¹⁴ Basic Writing pedagogy survived, Horner argues, because it preserved the back-to-basics movement’s distinction between academics and society’s political and economic concerns.

In some respects, the LCRG’s project fit this dominant approach to writing instruction, for half of the textbook manuscript crafts a more efficient approach for teaching BEV-speaking students to write SE prose. However, because the textbook manuscript’s reading materials, writing assignments, and research projects brought

linguistic politics into the composition classroom, more widespread adoption of the LCRG's project could have threatened the already tenuous position of CUNY's writing programs. Horner's analysis illustrates how material and institutional conditions, by enabling one pedagogy/research agenda among many to secure a dominant position within the discipline, effectively narrowed the range of what many scholars see as possible within basic writing classrooms. Recovering the history of the LCRG's project fortifies Horner's claim about the ways material, institutional, and political conditions affect our theoretical and pedagogical visions for enabling students to do critical intellectual work.

In addition to this conservative atmosphere, the project's chances for survival may also have been lessened by the LCRG's focus on curricular reform to the extent that it did not also address other factors affecting marginalized students' participation in higher education. Certainly, the LCRG's emphasis on curriculum reform was essential, given the dominant focus at CUNY on developing "more efficient and challenging ways of teaching grammar and mechanics." The research group reinvigorated public education's democratic values as it helped linguistic and racial minority students to deepen their knowledge about their linguistic heritages and, in so doing, develop an intellectual base that traditional education had systematically denied them. As Mary Soliday argues in her study of the politics of remedial education, however, progressive pedagogical projects open themselves to conservative critiques when, much as the LCRG did, scholars only address the cultural conflict that marginalized students face as they work their way into the academy. While Soliday acknowledges the significant insights gained through such analyses, she nevertheless warns they can also serve the purpose of critics who argue that

Open Admissions students and the remedial instruction developed for them perpetuate low standards and drain the university's resources (105-06).

Soliday's work, then, asks us to see how the LCRG's project could have been strengthened. They needed to couple their arguments for curriculum redesign with analysis of how other material conditions affected students' access to campus, textbooks, and the time and space needed for academic work, as well as how public under-funding of higher education exacerbated these difficulties curtailing Open Admissions students' access to college (19). By focusing solely on the need for curriculum reform, the LCRG allowed back-to-basics supporters to sidestep discussions about the politics and economics of education. These critics were free to attack those curricular projects that seemed to favor social promotion over academic integrity.

As we attend to students' material concerns, we also must better understand how the group's textbook manuscript, the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution, and journals from this era created a limited representation of what Smitherman calls "the linguistic-cultural complexity of the composition classroom" ("CCCC's Role" 369). The almost exclusive attention to African American students and BEV in these materials signals that future recovery work needs to account for the presence of other students who faced linguistic and ethnic discrimination in Open Admissions classrooms. Victor Villanueva, for one, has prompted compositionists to begin to talk about the language politics of the "Students' Right" era in broader terms than just Standardized English and the Black English Vernacular. Consider his description of growing up in Williamsburg and Bedford-Stuyvesant, just blocks from the Brooklyn College campus:

I was born in Brooklyn. Raised there with Black kids and Asian kids and one Mexican kid and Boricuas. My first language was Spanish; my first English was the English of the neighborhood, Black and Spanglish, or even a Black Spanglish. When I was 15, the family moved to California. I've been in the West (except for two years in Kansas City and trips abroad) ever since—with Mexican kids, Chicano kids, vato kids, pachuco kids, Indian kids, Asian kids, Black kids, and White kids. And the nonsense that Ricans have to endure in New York is the same nonsense that all the other kids of Color endure. (qtd. in Smitherman and Villanueva, Introduction 1)

Part of the motivation for revisiting the “Students’ Right” document in the twenty-first century, Villanueva argues, is to account more fully for the Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, African, and Jamaican students whose presence in composition classrooms of the 1970s has been elided in our disciplinary histories.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the LCRG’s grant proposals in fact stated that the researchers created the ESD curriculum for both African American and Puerto Rican students who spoke BEV. The textbook manuscript and teachers’ manual, however, focused exclusively on African American language practices and cultures. It is unclear how, if at all, the LCRG prompted students to investigate how Puerto Rican and African American cultures intersected and diverged in the communities where students lived. Future work in recovering pedagogical projects submerged by dominant educational discourses of the 1970s could help us to understand more precisely how “Black English Vernacular” might have functioned as a blanket term that elided

other forms of cultural and linguistic difference in college classrooms.¹⁵ Such studies would direct compositionists' attention to the specific educational pressures that faced linguistic minority students from Latino, Asian American, Caribbean American, Native American, and rural white communities whose language varieties have not been valued in the academy. Just as importantly, analyses of how "Students' Right"-era compositionists and sociolinguists responded to this range of language diversity can encourage present-day scholars to re-see our discipline as one with a history of engaging, learning from, and drawing upon multiple language traditions.

Recovering the history of these projects gains special importance given recent efforts in composition to reinvigorate the "Students' Right" resolution. The CCCC Language Policy Committee emphasized the need for such efforts upon confirming that a majority of English-language arts educators feel inadequately prepared to address the learning needs of linguistic minority students (18-22). For that reason, the committee called for the CCCC to draft a "'Students' Right' document for the Twenty-First Century [. . .] that would reflect the last quarter century's advances in research on language and linguistic diversity" (33). The fate of the LCRG's project demonstrates the need for "advances" in research on linguistic diversity to be considered more broadly than by our discipline's customary measure of publication. Historical investigations such as this one should lead scholars to reconsider the widespread doubt, as Bruch and Marback describe it, that "the words of the ["Students' Right"] resolution have been anything more than empty" ("Critical" xiii). These studies can also problematize the common perception, as Smitherman characterizes it, that the "Students' Right" resolution failed to bring change because "it was informative in terms of theory [but . . .] did not go far enough in praxis"

(“CCCC’s Role” 365). As we have seen, the LCRG researchers applied theory in a variety of ways. The textbook manuscript materials respected students’ non-standardized dialects, emphasized the rhetorical histories behind students’ languages, and enabled students to build upon their linguistic resources in order to negotiate the demands of academic writing. The teacher-training workshops and teachers’ manual prompted writing instructors to explore how their attitudes toward racial and linguistic difference had been shaped by social norms and how these attitudes in turn influenced their expectations of students’ work.

This study of the LCRG therefore asks compositionists to view the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution in a new light, as a heuristic scholars have used and continue to use for inventing ethical and productive responses to linguistic diversity. The “Students’ Right” resolution and background documents surely have never been mistaken for an annotated syllabus telling teachers how to work through each class period and assignment. But as this chapter shows, the theory of students’ right to their own language has prompted teachers to listen to students’ experiences with and ideas about language, to enable students to begin creating their own scholarly identities through researching and writing about the languages of their communities, and to negotiate the institutional and political resistance to positioning marginalized dialects, languages, and cultures at the center of the composition curriculum. And there are other important, yet largely ignored, projects from the “Students’ Right” era that we would do well to recover, such as the curricula developed by the Psycholinguistics Project Staff working for the Chicago Board of Education and by writing instructors working for the Baltimore City Public Schools; the Bridge readers coauthored by Gary Simpkins, Grace Holt, and

Charlesetta Simpkins; the ethnic heritage studies programs in the Orchard Lake School system's linked high school, liberal arts college, and graduate program in Orchard Lake, Michigan; the curriculum and classroom projects developed at the Multi-Ethnic Institute in San Francisco; and the unpublished instructors' manual of activities and classroom assignments compiled for the CCCC by Smitherman, Elisabeth McPherson, and Richard Lloyd-Jones.

The history of the LCRG as well as these other projects should inform a “‘Students’ Right’ document for the twenty-first century.” In recent years compositionists such as Keith Gilyard and Elaine Richardson, Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner, and Valerie Felita Kinloch have helped us to see what it looks like to translate the theory of “‘Students’ Right” into present-day pedagogical practices. Historical analysis complements these scholars’ efforts. It leads us to attend more carefully to how material, institutional, and political contexts have affected previous pedagogical advances and, as a result, have shaped our reading of the CCCC’s original 1974 “‘Students’ Right” resolution. The lessons we learn from such historical study can help us as we join Smitherman, Villanueva, Gilyard, Richardson, Ball, Lardner, Kinloch, and others in creating sustainable projects to reform teacher-training and situate linguistic and cultural diversity at the center of English-language arts education.

CHAPTER THREE

The National Language Policy:

Composing a Professional and Civic Identity for the CCCC

I agree that we need to bring information to a public debate [about language diversity and literacy education] that has had little. But I would emphasize that such information must be made to speak to the concerns of the public. As scholars, we are mistaken not to listen to the critics and to simply reject or resist what they say.

—Richard Marback, “Ebonics: Theorizing
in Public Our Attitudes toward Literacy”
(30-1)

Richard Marback criticizes compositionists for missing a critical opportunity that presented itself in the late 1990s during public debate about the Oakland Ebonics Resolution. Marback suggests that the moment called for scholars and teachers in the CCCC to dialogue with the resolution’s critics on “the shared democratic values that we would have determine our attitudes and practices of literacy education” (31). Marback contends, however, that the organization “fail[ed] the spirit of the resolution” by failing to engage openly and critically in such debate (31).

More specifically, Marback finds that the CCCC, rather than listening carefully to critics and understanding the values informing their position, instead created an “unpersuasive” argument in the form of the CCCC Statement on Ebonics. This language

policy, he explains, is “premised on the view that public reactions to the Oakland Ebonics resolution were ill-informed or even mean-spirited” (13).¹

Marback does acknowledge that the CCCC statement provides the public with much-needed information about the theoretical foundations of the Oakland Ebonics Resolution. At the same time, he sees compositionists’ falling short in their efforts to contribute meaningfully to this debate. Literacy educators and language scholars, he contends, tend to read controversies such as this one as simply being centered on how best to facilitate language minority students’ learning of Standardized English (24-6). Because of this perspective, Marback suggests, compositionists too often only contribute to these public debates their ideas about pedagogical practices and teacher training. He argues that such limited efforts serve as a glaring example of “professional claims not responsive to public anger” (13). These responses ultimately “risk misrepresenting compositionists as irrelevant” (13). Through his essay, then, Marback offers an alternative reading of this language policy debate and presents rhetorical strategies for intervening in ways that address the despair and frustrations felt by critics of pedagogies that affirm students’ diverse languages varieties.

In this chapter I look to our disciplinary history in order to challenge Marback’s representation of how rhetoric and composition scholars contribute to public debates about language policy and linguistic diversity. Specifically, I tell the story of the CCCC’s opposition to the English-Only movement in the 1980s. The CCCC’s 1988 National Language Policy reflects the work of compositionists responding to “public anger” about the nation’s political and cultural identity. Behind the leadership of scholars such as Geneva Smitherman, Ana Celia Zentella, and Victor Villanueva, the CCCC engaged the

English-Only movement by drawing on and then redeploying the terms of a larger debate focused on the responsibilities of individuals, communities, schools, and the government to reinvigorate the nation's democratic ideals. Rather than rejecting demands for English-Only laws as "ill-informed or even mean-spirited" (Marback, "Ebonics" 13), compositionists such as Smitherman, Zentella, and Villanueva engaged in the public struggle to define the meaning of immigrants' and language minorities' experiences in the U.S.

At the heart of the CCCC's interventions in the English-Only debate was the CCCC Language Policy Committee, formed in 1987 and chaired by Smitherman. The committee assessed the implications of English-Only laws for linguistic minorities and language education in general and for composition students and teachers in particular. Through drafting the National Language Policy, the committee articulated the CCCC's policy toward the English-Only movement. Just as importantly, the Language Policy Committee educated rhetoric and composition scholars about how they could work both inside their classrooms and within their communities to counter the English-Only movement and bring about the democratic ideals at the heart of the National Language Policy.

The CCCC National Language Policy that emerged from the Language Policy Committee's work did in fact affirm the English-Only movement's belief about the importance of the English language for citizens participating in U.S. public life. The CCCC, however, also applied pressure to conservative critics' faith that American democracy would best be expressed in English only. The National Language Policy expressed the immeasurable value of language diversity in helping communities to enact

the nation's democratic ideals. This language policy made public the CCCC's vision of a U.S. public sphere in which citizens from all language backgrounds could participate in shaping their communities. Indeed, as Smitherman would later suggest, the CCCC National Language Policy would come to reflect rhetoric and composition scholars' evolving "sociolinguistic and political maturity about language rights issues" ("CCCC's Role" 369).²

I argue that the CCCC National Language Policy positioned the CCCC as a civic institution that could challenge English-Only policies not only inside but also outside the rhetoric and composition classroom. The language policy filled a "language leadership vacuum" (Smitherman, "Lessons" 30) in public debates on English-Only laws and crafted an alternative vision of what democratic communities could look like within the U.S. These alternative visions become clearer as one reads the language policy within the context of the conservative political rhetoric of the 1980s from which the English-Only movement emerged. This perspective on the National Language Policy sheds light on the CCCC's arguments about national identity and communal and family values. Such analysis of how the CCCC negotiated the conservative social, political, and cultural discourse of the Ronald Reagan era applies pressure to Marback's argument that compositionists have "misdirect[ed] our professional attention away from the public attitudes and political values" that have made language policies like the Oakland Ebonics Resolution and English-Only laws such "volatile" issues in public debate (14). In fact, analyzing the CCCC Language Policy Committee's efforts to persuade compositionists to assume both professional *and* civic duties can help present-day scholars to understand the

necessary scope of their own efforts to engage debates on linguistic rights and language policies.

To make this argument, I first situate the CCCC's National Language Policy within the social, political, and cultural contexts from which it emerged. To do so, I examine how Reagan-era political discourse concerning national identity influenced public policies on welfare, immigration, and education and effectively fostered distrust on the part of individual citizens toward governmental and educational institutions. I then analyze how the rhetorical strategies of the English-Only movement built on this conservative discourse and articulated a link between language and national identity. After relating the events that triggered the CCCC's response to the English-Only movement, I discuss in the final section how the National Language Policy created a civic identity for the CCCC that showed the organization's commitment to local communities and challenged the English-Only movement both inside the classroom and within the broader public sphere. Specifically, I analyze the arguments that the CCCC made in support of a broader language education for all citizens within the nation. This analysis shows the CCCC reconceptualizing its own mission, forging networks with other civic organizations as a means for strengthening the nation's identity as an egalitarian and democratic space. I conclude this chapter, then, by exploring how the National Language Policy's argument for the CCCC to operate as both a professional and civic body connects to contemporary concerns and missions inside rhetoric and composition.

Empowering Individuals, Restoring Values: Political Discourse of the Reagan Era

Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 as Americans' confidence in their nation sagged. In his 1979 *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch expressed the citizenry's frustration with its political leaders, frustration that Reagan would successfully channel in his presidential campaign:

Hardly more than a quarter-century after Henry Luce proclaimed "the American Century," American confidence has fallen to a low ebb. Those who recently dreamed of world power now despair of governing the city of New York. Defeat in Vietnam, economic stagnation, and the impending exhaustion of natural resources have produced a mood of pessimism in higher circles, which has spread through the rest of society as people lose faith in their leaders. (17)

Reagan campaigned to restore Americans' faith in their nation's greatness as he focused on "the traditional values of family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom" (White 4). As John Kenneth White notes, "These are not simply nice-sounding platitudes, but romantic visions that voters seek to emulate in their own lives. Consequently, most want reassurances from their political leaders that such dreams can be made real" (5).

Reagan provided such reassurances. Local communities had the desire and talents to make the country great again, he explained. Reagan saw this potential being squashed, though, by colossal national institutions that were disconnected from the day-to-day lives of Americans. He promised to restore the nation's pride by getting the federal government off families' backs. Freeing individuals in this way would empower them to fulfill their civic, professional, and personal goals.

Reagan had a particular “romantic vision” of U.S. civic life in mind, as well. In 1986, political scholar Hugh Heclo described how this conservative political climate affected much of public and policy discourse during the 1980s: “[J]ust as liberalism made it all right to talk about sex, Reaganism made it all right to talk about patriotism, work requirements and family values, parochial allegiances, moral purpose and, yes, imposing middle-class values on others” (qtd. in Weinraub 19). Throughout the 1980s, these “traditional values” and “romantic visions” served as rich rhetorical resources for conservative political and cultural leaders. Elected officials and interest groups—among them organizations that argued for English-Only laws—echoed these themes as they tried to restore Americans’ faith in their abilities to solve the nation’s economic and social problems.

“Supporting a class of people who live without toil”

Many conservatives’ proposals to solve these problems were grounded on the faith that American ingenuity and individual initiative could spark recovery, if only the government would get out of the way. This perspective can be seen most clearly in Reagan’s efforts to address what was the foremost domestic problem of his first administration, the nation’s economic slowdown that began during the 1970s. As Gillian Peele explained in 1984, the “glue” that held Reagan’s economic policies together was his strong belief that the government itself had been primarily responsible for the nation’s economic decline (152). Likeminded conservatives therefore rejected “the idea of using the federal government to promote the goal of substantive equality” and denounced “redistributive mechanisms such as [. . .] welfare expenditure” (152).

Reagan's criticism of welfare programs such as food stamps and Aid to Families with Dependent Children confirmed many middle-class whites' attitudes that such programs undermined the traditional American value of working hard for an honest wage. Many Americans who criticized welfare programs, of course, leveled blame on the recipients themselves. At the same time, though, they also blamed those legislators who would use Americans' tax dollars "to support a class of people who do not do enough to find employment, and who live without toil—sometimes even for generations—at a level of affluence nearly equal to their own" (Long 5). Reagan concurred. His economic policies reflected his view that the federal government hurt American communities by providing too many incentives for poor Americans to stay unemployed. He therefore withdrew federal oversight of welfare programs and instead provided block grants to state and local governments, assuring Americans that this use of taxpayers' money would be "more responsive to genuine need because it will be designed and administered closer to the grass roots and the people it serves" (qtd. in Peele 158).

Throughout his presidency Reagan continually tried to convince American citizens that their romantic visions of individual and communal freedom could be realized. To do so, he argued, they needed to be given the power that had been seized by large, self-serving governmental institutions. This rhetorical strategy proved to be powerful because it was grounded on the American citizenry's faith in two related components of the "American Dream": the individual's freedom to excel and an equality of opportunity. These beliefs inform what White describes as Americans' consistent preference "to shoulder the blame themselves for having not lived up to expectations" rather than blaming systematic inequalities in the nation's political and economic systems

(28). Many political conservatives like Reagan believed that they could instill in Americans the moral purpose of self-improvement by removing incentives for individuals to rely on governmental programs.

“A place where opportunities still exist”

Political conservatives also attempted to frame public debate about U.S. immigration policy, another prominent political issue during the Reagan presidency, around these themes of individual freedom and equality of opportunity.³ Interestingly, faith in these American ideals actually manifested itself in two competing interpretations of how immigrants did or did not invigorate these American values. Those who supported immigration restrictions maintained that immigrants drained social resources and taxpayers' dollars at a time when federal and state governments couldn't even support citizens (Chaze 37). Moreover, these critics argued, immigrants competed for and stole jobs from U.S. workers during economic hard times (37). According to this view, immigrants unfairly benefited from an inequality of opportunity compared to middle- and working-class individuals who endured economic hardships.

Other political leaders and journalists, however, felt that immigrants reinvigorated the ideal vision of the U.S. as a land of opportunity where individuals, through their own initiative, could succeed. *U.S. News and World Report's* July 4, 1983 cover story, “Still the Land of Opportunity?,” presented portraits of immigrants who had become or were on their way to becoming self-made successes within the U.S. economy (Lang 37). Such energy and idealism, the article suggested, was badly needed at a time when national confidence was flagging.

Anthropologist Leo Chávez, in *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*, explains that stories such as these are “meant to reaffirm America’s self-image” during times of political, social, and economic uncertainty (114). The message these narratives intend to deliver “is more about America as a place where opportunities still exist and is less about immigrants and their impact on American society” (114).

Chávez’s insight highlights the fact that even when public attitudes appear to be in favor of immigration, the place and significance of immigrants within the social imaginary is still shaped by the assimilation narrative. According to this narrative, immigrants are to cut ties with the political and cultural ideologies of their homelands and adopt dominant American values. As Chávez suggests, many Americans’ faith in the assimilation narrative reflects their investment in believing that Americans do indeed have freedom and equality of opportunity. And, as the English-Only movement would eventually show, this popular narrative does equally significant cultural work as it helps dominant society to control the meanings which immigrants’ experiences and insights have in our thinking about our democratic ideals and national identity.

“A problem that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility”

Many political conservatives saw education as *the* critical means through which to reassert the nation’s greatness and instill new immigrants with the cultural and political values they believed to be common to all Americans. In fact, though, several reports led many politicians and citizens alike to see schools themselves as failing Americans in the same ways as had the federal government. The National Commission on Excellence in

Education sounded the loudest alarm of an educational crisis in April 1983 when it published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*. The introductory paragraph of this “open letter to the American people” echoed the concerns of national demise that pervaded public discourse throughout the late 1970s and into the 1980s:

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. (5)

The implicit message delivered throughout much of *A Nation at Risk*, then, was that America’s schools had let down their communities. Teaching professionals had failed to inspire students to create innovative solutions to the nation’s problems.⁴ Students and parents themselves—not educational or governmental institutions—were the best hope for reviving the American values of hard work and commitment to one’s family and community.

The National Commission of Excellence in Education warned that more so than lost economic productivity, the failure of America's schools threatened the common culture it felt was necessary for sustaining democratic life. The commissioners expressed particular concern that school curricula had become so fragmented that students no longer shared the knowledge and values that would be necessary for communities to make effective decisions about their future direction and purpose:

Secondary school curricula have been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose. In effect, we have a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses. Students have migrated from vocational and college preparatory programs to 'general track' courses in large numbers. (18)

Many American students, the commission explained, were earning more and more credits (nearly twenty-five percent) through "general education" courses such as physical and health education, occupational education on work sites outside of school, and remedial mathematics and English (19). Much like another mid-1980s educational report *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace, A Nation at Risk* concluded that school administrators' decision to wildly diversify the curriculum explains "a great deal about where we find ourselves today" (18).

Conservative critics made the nation's "fragmented curriculum" a major theme in their plans for restoring the nation's identity and preserving its cultural continuity. Many of their proposals ensured that all students shared a common educational experience. E. D. Hirsch Jr. argued in his 1987 *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*,

“During recent decades Americans have hesitated to make a decision about the specific knowledge that children need to learn in school. [. . .] We have permitted school policies that have shrunk the body of information that Americans share, and these policies have caused our national literacy to decline” (19). Specifically, Hirsch found that American schools had come to ignore their responsibility for helping students to master “the shared national vocabulary” and “systems of associations” (134) that enabled members of society to communicate more effectively and efficiently with one another.

Hirsch criticized school administrators for exacerbating the fragmentation of the national culture by imposing multicultural education on public schools. He did acknowledge its value for encouraging students to view American culture and values from different perspectives. Hirsch feared, however, that it had become a higher priority for schools than helping students to master the information they needed to know in order to enter the culturally literate mainstream. He warned that multicultural education encouraged students to form stronger allegiances with their ethnic, linguistic, or religious communities than with the larger national community. Hirsch countered the multicultural education movement by proposing a curriculum that would instill in all students a knowledge of and respect for the central ideas, persons, and values that gave shape and permanence to American identity.⁵

These romantic visions of freedom, community, work, moral purpose, and “our common culture” were threads running through Reagan-era conservative discourse on the economy, welfare programs, immigration policies, and education. Faith that these “traditional” American values could be restored was accompanied by a belief that individuals and communities were best able to identify and solve their needs. Less

government involvement in the lives of individuals and communities was a necessary condition for creating an environment that fostered the individual initiative and innovation that could restore the nation's identity as a world leader economically and politically. This faith that the U.S. promoted equal opportunities for all citizens came to be important rhetorical resources that both the English-Only movement and the CCCC would deploy in their respective campaigns for a national language policy.

The English-Only Campaign for a National Language and Culture

The same year Reagan entered the White House, 1981, Californian Senator S. I. Hayakawa introduced legislation to the U.S. Congress that, like many of Reagan's policies, aimed at reuniting the nation and renewing its democratic ideals. Hayakawa, a linguist and former president of San Francisco State University, warned his fellow representatives and the public of "an unhealthy development": Hispanics sought "to maintain—and give official status to—a foreign language within our borders" (20). To restore the damage done by this "linguistic division" (21), Hayakawa introduced Senate Joint (S.J.) Resolution 72. This law would have declared English to be the official language of the United States and not have allowed federal and state governments to "make or enforce any law which requires the use of any language other than English" ("Proposed" 112). This resolution, cosponsored by ten other legislators, was never voted on by the 97th Congress. When Hayakawa retired from office in 1983, however, he intensified his efforts to persuade the nation that an English Language Amendment (ELA) to the U.S. Constitution was essential for "dissolving distrust and fear" among the citizenry ("One Nation . . ." 15).

After retiring from the Senate in 1983, Hayakawa co-founded the lobbying group U.S. English and began to target the state level as the space for winning “legal protection” for the English language (Crawford, “Editor’s Introduction” 1). By 1986, two other organizations, English First and the American Ethnic Coalition, had formed to support lobbying efforts in favor of an ELA. This emerging English-Only movement scored its first substantive victory in the California primary that year. Seventy-three percent of California voters supported Proposition 63, which became Article III, Section 6 of the California State Constitution. This legislation was intended “to preserve, protect, and strengthen the English language” (“State Official Language Statutes” 134). It granted state legislators the power to “take all steps necessary to insure that the role of English as the common language of the State of California is preserved and enhanced,” and it also gave California residents the standing to sue the state in order to enforce this article.

The English-Only movement continued to gain momentum through 1988, as voters in Colorado, Florida, and Arizona that year passed ELAs to their state constitutions. National lobbying organizations such as U.S. English played a significant role in shaping public debate about these statewide ballot initiatives. For example, U.S. English’s Legislative Task Force contributed \$158,774 (98 percent) of the budget for the group Arizonans for English Only (Combs 140).

The campaigns in support of each state’s proposal resonated with the national conservative discourse about the U.S. being adrift and losing its core identity. English-Only supporters in these states therefore argued that a common language could restore the nation’s heritage and unify the divided nation (Combs 134). The amendments before voters in these three states, though, proposed different means for restoring these ideals.

The Colorado and Florida measures were simply one-line declarations: “English is the official language of the State” (qtd. in Combs 132). Arizona’s Proposition 106, meanwhile, imposed restrictions on language use. It bluntly stated, “This State and all political subdivisions of this State shall act in English and no other language” (qtd. in Combs 152). The proposition passed, but it did so by fewer than 11,000 votes, a margin slimmer than one percent. Even so, Mary Carol Combs concludes that many of the Arizona voters who supported Proposition 106 likely did so not “because of its punitive language” but rather “because they hoped to reify its imagined benefits” (146). The appeal of these “imagined benefits”—a common culture unified by a common language—suggests that the English-Only movement’s rhetorical strategy proved most successful when it drew on those themes, revived by Reagan, about national identity, middle-class values, and the freedom of all individuals to succeed.

“One wonders about the rank-and-file”

The English-Only movement echoed this political discourse to greatest advantage when it argued that government and educational institutions repressed linguistic minorities’ freedoms by encouraging them to maintain their first languages. English-Only advocates routinely argued that the federal government and public schools acted so counter to common sense when they provided bilingual social services and bilingual education that they must be working to preserve their own self-interests. Political leaders and bilingual educators could not honestly say they acted in the best interests of language minority communities, Hayakawa intimated, because these bilingual services and educational programs only hurt non-English-speaking individuals, discouraging them

from learning the English-language skills they needed to improve their professional and public lives. Indeed, in his 1984 “One Nation . . . Indivisible?” speech, one that became a primary text in U.S. English’s public campaign, Hayakawa went so far as to attack Hispanic political leaders “who claim *to speak for* the Hispanic peoples” (16, emphasis added). Hayakawa bluntly stated, “The advocates of Spanish language and Hispanic culture are not at all unhappy about the fact that ‘bilingual education,’ originally instituted as the best way to teach English, often results in no English being taught at all” (19).⁶

Hayakawa here targeted Hispanic leadership who sought “power and fame” by advocating policies that kept their constituents trapped in their own enclaves and isolated from the linguistic mainstream (“One Nation” 20). He declared, “The only people who have any quarrel with the English language are the Hispanics—at least the Hispanic politicians and ‘bilingual’ teachers and lobbying organizations. One wonders about the Hispanic rank-and-file. Are they all in agreement with their leadership?” (20). Hayakawa thus suggested that non-English-speaking Hispanics were, like all Americans, unable to be heard over the rhetorical bombast of political elites. An ELA, he assured listeners, would prevent politicians from imposing their cultural and linguistic values on their constituents. This amendment would simply allow for common sense to prevail—non-English-speaking citizens would be free to learn English, assimilate, and fulfill their own personal aspirations.

Fellow English-Only supporter Linda Chávez provided a more detailed explanation of how and why Latino leadership provided disincentives for their constituents to learn English. Besides serving as president of U.S. English from 1987

until her resignation one year later,⁷ Chávez worked as staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1983 to 1985 and later chaired the National Commission on Migrant Education from 1988 until 1992. Chávez viewed proficiency in English as the key asset Latinos needed to acquire in order to enter U.S. public life and succeed economically. As she would later argue in her 1991 *Out of the Barrio*, however, Chávez believed Latino politicians limited their constituents' opportunities for advancement as they steadfastly refused to abandon the civil rights model of social and economic assimilation. Whereas previous immigrants eagerly assimilated, "the entitlements of the civil rights era encouraged Latinos to maintain their language and culture, their separate identity, in return for the rewards of being members of an officially recognized minority group" (5). These government policies, Chávez argued, led Latino leaders to create "a perverse standard of success" whereby "[t]o succeed at the affirmative action game, Hispanics had to establish their failure in other areas," such as education and employment (433). Chávez encouraged readers to see Latino leadership as standing between individual Latinos' opportunities for social and economic progress and, as a result, undermining the interests of the communities of individuals they purportedly served. She prodded federal representatives to realize that lessening their involvement—that is, providing fewer of the "entitlements" that created disincentives for self-improvement—was the only way to truly empower individuals and reinvigorate the nation's values of equal opportunity and honest work.

“Eager to expand its bureaucracy and influence”

The English-Only movement’s rhetoric also characterized bilingual educators, like Latino politicians, as a group that limited students’ abilities to acquire the skills they needed to enter public life. Hayakawa, for example, depicted the U.S. Department of Education and bilingual educators in ways that resonated with conservatives’ distrust of big government. Hayakawa argued that these institutions were operating without a clear sense of the goals and aspirations of the individuals they claimed to serve:

The new U.S. Department of Education, established during the Carter administration, was eager to make its presence known by expanding its bureaucracy and its influence. The department quickly announced a vast program with federal funding for bilingual education, which led to the hiring of Spanish-speaking teachers by the thousands. [. . .]

“Bilingual education” rapidly became a growth industry, requiring more and more teachers. Complaints began to arise from citizens that “bilingual education” was not bilingual at all, since many Spanish-speaking teachers hired for the program were found not to be able to speak English. But the Department of Education decreed that teachers in the “bilingual” program do not need to know English!

Despite the ministrations of the Department of Education, *or perhaps because of them*, Hispanic students to a shocking degree drop out of school, educated neither in Hispanic nor in American language and culture. (18, emphasis added)

Hayakawa's brief history of bilingual education located its origins in the Carter administration and in the 1970s. In so doing, he associated the educational program with a period many middle-class Americans believed to be marked by governmental mismanagement of the nation's affairs.

Moreover, Hayakawa's narrative echoed *A Nation at Risk's* charge that schools and educators had failed local communities and, in turn, compromised the nation's cultural identity and political strength. Hayakawa maintained that it was primarily through classes taught in English that immigrants learned "the social imperatives of being an American, the attitudes and customs that shape the American personality, the behavior that makes a good American citizen" (qtd. in Baron 56). He left no doubt that it was *because of* the Department of Education and bilingual educators that Latino students faced limited opportunities to improve their educational, professional, and civic lives. Voters alone could make these opportunities available by adopting an ELA.

"Putting the political bosses out of a job"

By tapping into American values concerning individual opportunity and political freedom, the English-Only movement's rhetorical strategies appealed to many political liberals, as well. Linguistic anthropologist Kathryn A. Woolard suggests that such was the case with San Francisco's Proposition O ballot initiative in 1983. This proposition eliminated bilingual ballots for the city's linguistic minority communities, a measure one might initially think would never pass in the often socially progressive city. As Woolard shows, however, English-Only advocates successfully appealed to liberal voters by presenting Proposition O "as fulfilling, rather than violating, the principles of a liberal

political agenda” (275). The English-Only movement built its campaign for Proposition O, she explains, on the argument that voters who need bilingual ballots have little knowledge or understanding about the issues and candidates that they are voting for. According to this perspective, voters who could not *read* information *in English* about political campaigns could not form their own opinions on issues and were therefore susceptible to the influence of ethnic political leaders.

By employing this argument structure, the English-Only movement opened the door for liberals to vote in favor of Proposition O. Woolard writes, “In these representations, Proposition O becomes not an attack on minority rights, but a crusade to liberate minorities from minority leaders and protect their ‘real’ rights and interests” (274). She adds, “Removing the offending languages from the ballot is presented symbolically as a move toward freeing the minority-language citizens from jail and putting the jailers (the political bosses) out of a job” (274). With the terms of debate set in this way, minority leaders who spoke out against Proposition O were often seen to be acting in their own self-interest and trying to preserve blocs of voters. One sees in the Proposition O campaign, then, how the English-Only movement succeeded in persuading voters to see how English-Only measures would free people to participate fully in public life.

Through this specific argument for eliminating bilingual ballots, the English-Only movement resituated accountability concerning citizens’ abilities to participate in public life. The English-Only movement’s campaign directed attention away from dominant society’s reluctance to grant full civil rights to marginalized citizens and instead placed full responsibility on linguistic minorities to demonstrate that they would act in the wider

interests of the nation rather than the narrow interests of their ethnic group. As the terms were set in the Proposition O debate, responsible citizenship entailed voting only for those candidates who campaigned in English—what is seemingly a transparent language and, as such, the language used by all genuinely legitimate candidates. A vote cast on an English-language ballot was seen as a vote for maintaining “our common culture” and preserving the social and political status quo. The English-Only movement, then, restricted the terms on which linguistic minorities could participate in civic life and presented a narrow view of how they should perform their national identity.

“They understood that I needed to speak a public language”

Many English-language arts educators nevertheless held a similar perspective about the means for linguistic minorities to participate in public life. Instructors felt that their responsibilities to these students required teaching focused on the grammar and structure of Standardized English. Such viewpoints were expressed in a 1988 *English Journal* debate on the merits of the discipline’s opposition to English-Only legislation. Trudy J. Sundberg, for one, argued that English teachers’ responsibilities were best fulfilled through English-language immersion classes, since they enabled “limited- and non-English-speaking Americans [. . .] to enjoy the rights of full participation in society” (85).

Sundberg’s argument echoed one made by Richard Rodriguez in his 1982 *Hunger for Memory*, a text that effectively launched Rodriguez into a position as the foremost critic of bilingual education. He argued that bilingual education misled language minority students because it promised that they could acquire the language of public life in

America even as they retained allegiances to their heritage cultures. In his autobiography, Rodriguez recounts his painful experiences learning English—and assuming a public identity—in an immersion setting. Bilingual education, Rodriguez suggests in the passage below, provided too big of a disincentive for enduring this painful—but also, he argued, necessary—transition:

Without question, it would have pleased me to hear my teachers address me in Spanish when I entered the classroom. I would have felt much less afraid. I would have trusted them and responded with ease. But I would have delayed—for how long postponed?—having to learn the language of public society. I would have evaded—and for how long could I have afforded to delay?—learning the great lesson of school, that I had a public identity. (19)

As Sunberg's argument suggests, Rodriguez's story proved persuasive to many English-language arts educators. He assured teachers that the process of learning English in this way was difficult, but ultimately necessary. His descriptions of his own teachers in effect told educators to continue doing as they long had done:

Fortunately, my teachers were unsentimental about their responsibility. What they understood was that I needed to speak a public language. So their voices would search me out, asking me questions. Each time I'd hear them, I'd look up in surprise to see a nun's face frowning at me. I'd mumble, not really meaning to answer. The nun would persist, "Richard, stand up. Don't look at the floor. Speak up. Speak to the entire class, not just to me!" But I couldn't believe that the English language was mine to

use. (In part, I did not want to believe it.) I continued to mumble. I resisted the teacher's demands. (Did I somehow suspect that once I learned the public language my pleasing family life would be changed?) Silent, waiting for the bell to sound, I remained dazed, diffident, afraid.

[. . .]

Weeks after, it happened: One day in school I raised my hand to volunteer an answer. I spoke out in a loud voice. And I did not think it remarkable when the entire class understood. That day, I moved very far from the disadvantaged child I had been only days earlier. The belief, the calming assurance that I belonged in public, has at last taken hold. (19-22)

Rodriguez's personal narrative confirmed for many educators that their students' opportunities to participate fully in American democracy were contingent upon their learning the Standardized English of mainstream society. The clear distinctions between public and private languages, Rodriguez and other teachers argued, necessitated that language arts instruction focus on providing linguistic minority students with the skills and knowledge of the public culture that would allow them to contribute to their communities. Such education would strengthen America, as well, reinforcing the nation's identity as a land of equal opportunity.

* * *

This analysis of the English-Only movement's rhetorical strategies underscores how the campaigns in support of ELAs drew upon discourses about national identity and "traditional" values that had already proven persuasive not only to conservatives but also

to many liberals.⁸ In so doing, I have not directly engaged those aspects of the movement's rhetorical strategy that, as other scholars have demonstrated, effectively mask xenophobia, racism, or nativism behind arguments for preserving national unity.⁹ I agree with scholars such as Vivian Davis, Elliot Judd ("The Federal English Language Amendment"), and James Sledd ("Anglo-Conformity") who assert that English-Only advocates often appeal to base emotions and present a dangerously simplified view of the source of society's problems and the means for correcting them.

While I find this analysis important because it highlights how narrow political, social, and cultural views underlie the English-Only debate, my analysis in part follows Marback's suggestion that compositionists need to attend to the wide range of attitudes and values that inform critics' arguments about progressive language policies. English-Only advocates did much more than distort "facts" about bilingual education or kindle hatred toward immigrants. Groups such as the CCCC that attempted to counter the English-Only movement entered a rhetorical terrain that was already populated by discourses that created "romantic visions" of American ideals of individual opportunity and freedom. Contrary to Marback's representation of compositionists' involvement in public language debates, however, the CCCC did indeed engage in this struggle over definitions of American values, as it created an alternative vision of what strong communities and individual opportunity could look like.

The CCCC's Mission to Promote a Multilingual Society

When the CCCC went public in its opposition to the English-Only movement, the organization engaged a debate that had put educators on the defensive. Reports such as A

Nation at Risk and critics such as Hayakawa and Chávez had argued forcefully that language-arts teachers had failed their students and failed the nation. To effectively negotiate this situation, the CCCC needed to do more than simply critique the ELAs and English-Only advocates as “ill-informed or even mean-spirited” (Marback, “Ebonics” 13). The CCCC needed to project itself as an organization committed to empowering individuals and strengthening communities. Moreover, the CCCC had to propose a policy alternative, one grounded on and committed to reinvigorating America’s democratic values. And the CCCC needed to direct its persuasion not only toward legislators, civic groups, and English-Only supporters, but also toward rhetoric and composition scholars themselves, for the CCCC Language Policy Committee’s vision of a civically engaged profession marked a radical shift from the CCCC’s decade-long withdrawal from such public debates.

The following section analyzes the CCCC’s efforts both to develop a language policy that promoted multilingualism as a means for strengthening public life in the U.S. and to position itself as an organization committed to the communities in which its members worked and lived. First, I briefly survey the CCCC’s work on linguistic diversity and language policy issues after the 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution up to its decision to answer the English-Only movement of the 1980s. I pay particular attention to the work of the CCCC’s Language Policy Committee, formed in 1987, as I investigate the ways it tracked the English-Only movement, outlined the organization’s educational and civic stance toward English-Only legislation, and proposed strategies for CCCC members to educate students and communities about alternatives to English-Only policies and practices. I then analyze the major tenets of the

CCCC's National Language Policy and its rhetorical strategies for engaging Reagan-era conservative discourses as it promoted a public commitment to multilingualism as a means for strengthening schools, communities, and the nation. This aspect of my study also examines the CCCC's strategies for educating all rhetoric and composition scholars about language policy issues and helping them to create classrooms where language diversity comes to be seen as a resource for promoting critical literacy education and, in turn, revitalizing the nation's democratic ideals. This section, then, presents a detailed historical example of how rhetoric and composition have situated their critical understandings of language, literacy, and identity within the terms of larger public debate about the nation's political, economic, and cultural future. This study can prompt us to invent strategies for working both as teachers and as public intellectuals who create opportunities for language diversity to strengthen, not weaken, our communal ties.

“Filling a language leadership vacuum”

In 1981 the CCCC Executive Committee created a committee to study whether the organization needed to produce a new language policy statement to move past the controversial 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution. The Executive Committee took this action largely in response to two major concerns. First, the CCCC had yet to articulate what students’ “right” to their own languages meant in practice. Second, the organization sensed the need to address the changing landscape of language use in the U.S., changes due in large part to increasing immigration to the U.S. in the 1970s. In 1981, William Irscher, then president of NCTE, wrote to Lynn Troyka, then chair of the CCCC, to suggest that the CCCC create a new language policy statement that

would address what he perceived to be the “Students’ Right” resolution’s “limited historical reach” (Parks 210):

[A] new statement might try to describe an increasingly complex situation in this country that concerns foreign languages. The chauvinistic attitude of most Americans toward other languages poses an obstacle to respect for speakers of other languages and an accommodation of their language needs to the national scene. The language problem has acquired new dimensions since 1972. CCCC should now address the new decade in an informed way. We need a statement that reflects both an idealistic and realistic assessment of the language situation in this country. (qtd. in Parks 211)

In response to Imscher’s call, the CCCCC Executive Committee later that year formed the Committee to Study the Advisability of a Language Statement for the 1980s and 1990s, a committee that was chaired by Harold Allen and included among its members Richard Rodriguez and Milton Baxter, formerly of the LCRG.

The committee’s final report did little to build on the progressive vision for the CCCC that the “Students’ Right” resolution first proposed. As Stephen Parks notes, the committee characterized the “Students’ Right” resolution as “a future utopian politics” such that “its current impact is nullified” (224). The committee added that elementary and secondary teachers, not college-level instructors, were the ones who needed to exert the most effort to foster greater respect for linguistic diversity and students’ right to their own languages (225). In brief, the committee called for “full professional action on a front wider than that of CCCC” (qtd. in Parks 225). By positioning any future language policy

outside the scope of the CCCC's concerns and responsibilities, the committee failed to articulate a vision of how the organization could or should have operated within an increasingly diverse society.

Several rhetoric and composition scholars saw the committee's 1981 report abandoning the CCCC's responsibilities and missions. Smitherman, for one, perceived that this conservative response to the U.S.'s language needs created a "language leadership vacuum" into which subsequently moved "reactionary and counter-progressive forces and movements" ("Lessons" 30). She therefore articulated the first workings of a national language policy at Howard University's Black Communications Conference in 1984, the same year that a U.S. Senate Subcommittee held hearings on four proposed ELAs.

Smitherman meant for this policy to sound the call for speech, language, and composition scholars to "take up the unfinished business" of the "Students' Right" resolution ("Lessons" 31). More specifically, she originally saw it to be a necessary tool in efforts to address the alarming drop-out rate among the non-Standardized English-speaking African American students who came from society's underclass. Her proposal for changing this situation came in three parts, "a 360° Trinity that constitutes an inseparable whole" (31):

1. Reinforce the Need for and Teaching of the Language of Wider Communication;
2. Reinforce and Reaffirm the Legitimacy of Non-Mainstream Languages and Dialects and Promote Mother Tongue Instruction as a Co-Equal Language of Instruction Along with the Language of Wider Communication;

3. Promote the Acquisition of One or More Foreign Languages, Preferably a Language Spoken by Persons in the Third World, Such as Spanish, Because of its Widespread Use in this Hemisphere. (31)

Smitherman presented a clear policy alternative to the English-Only laws then being debated on Capitol Hill. Indeed, she meant for her proposal “to counteract those reactionary sociolinguistic forces that would take us back to where some folk ain’t never left from” (31).

The need to promote a progressive national language policy became more urgent within the next two years. In 1986, 73 percent of California voters passed Proposition 63. As previously mentioned, this ballot initiative became Article III, Section 6 of the California State Constitution and gave California residents the right to sue the State in order to enforce the legislation’s aim “to preserve, protect, and strengthen the English language” (“State Official” 134). Proposition 63 did not specifically impose limits on language instruction. Nevertheless, it affected language-arts educators’ work because it sent a forceful message about the place of language diversity in California’s communities and schools.

California’s passing of Proposition 63 prompted reaction from the CCCC. The CCCC Progressive Composition Caucus, like Smitherman, saw a role for the CCCC to play in the public debate on language policy issues, given its position as “the leading professional organization dealing with language and literacy” (CCCC, Annual Business Meeting minutes, 21 Mar. 1987, 5). The Progressive Composition Caucus submitted a motion for the CCCC’s 1987 annual business meeting that called for CCCC to appoint a committee, chaired by Smitherman, that would “articulate the issues and formulate and

implement strategies to educate the public, educational policy-makers, and legislatures” about the dangers of English-Only legislation (5). This motion was passed by the CCCC membership. By November 22, 1987, the CCCC Officers’ Committee approved a charge for the Language Policy Committee, and the CCCC Executive Committee voted to authorize \$3000 for the Language Policy Committee’s initial work (CCCC Officers’ Committee, Meeting minutes, 21 Mar. 1987; CCCC Officers’ Committee, meeting minutes, 22 Nov. 1987). Smitherman immediately set to work assembling a committee that would eventually include Elizabeth Auleta, Thomas Kochman, Elizabeth McPherson, Guadalupe Valdés, Jeffrey Youdelman, and Ana Celia Zentella.

The Language Policy Committee initially aimed to create a strategy for the CCCC to provide leadership in the language policy debate. Specifically, the CCCC Executive Committee charged the Language Policy Committee with drafting a national language policy, based on current research on language and language arts education; compiling information on and keeping track of the English-Only movement; and developing strategies for providing these materials and updates to CCCC members. The group also was to identify and coordinate the CCCC’s public role in the campaign against the English-Only movement. Toward these end, the Language Policy Committee members were to network with like-minded professional organizations and advocacy groups, such as the NCTE, the Linguistic Society of America, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the National Council for Black Studies. These networks were seen as spaces for fertile exchange that could help the Language Policy Committee “to formulate mechanisms and strategies for educating legislators, educational policy-makers, and the lay public about language learning, the rich heritage of American English, and the implications and

consequences of legislative proposals for ‘English-Only’” (CCCC Language Policy Committee, “Interim Report #1” 2).

The Language Policy Committee held its first meeting in June 1987, and it was at this time that the committee began to identify how the CCCC could contribute to the public debate over English-Only legislation.¹⁰ The National Language Policy was one of the most significant of these contributions, obviously, because it presented an alternative to English-Only policies. The language policy reflected much of what Smitherman first proposed in her 1984 presentation at Howard University. Specifically, the CCCC’s National Language Policy outlined three actions that language associations, businesses, governments, and other stakeholders needed to take in order to ensure all citizens have opportunities to contribute to the political, cultural, and economic life of their communities and of the nation:

1. to provide resources to enable native and non-native speakers to achieve oral and literate competence in English, the language of wider communication;
 2. to support programs that assert the legitimacy of native languages and dialects and ensure that proficiency in the mother tongue will not be lost;
 3. to foster the teaching of languages other than English so that native speakers of English can rediscover the language of their heritage or learn a second language.
- (CCCC Secretary’s Report, 1987-1988).¹¹

Significantly, the CCCC’s National Language Policy conceded the fact that English would and should remain “the language of wider communication” in U.S. public life. This commentary anticipated and tried to alleviate concerns that a vote against an

English-Only policy was a vote for displacing English as the nation's majority public language.

In addition to drafting the CCCC National Language Policy at its first meeting, the Language Policy Committee used that time to brainstorm strategies for educating CCCC members about why the organization supported an “English Plus” policy. The committee members also spent time developing plans for bringing the National Language Policy to life. For example, the committee members proposed a double-session for the 1988 CCCC Convention. According to a report it filed with the CCCC Executive Committee, the Language Policy Committee set four specific goals for this panel:

1. make teachers aware of the past, present, and future efforts of the English-Only movement, both its implicit and explicit aims as well as the tactics it used to fulfill these aims;
2. explain how these English-Only policies could affect the work of college-level English-language arts educators and students;
3. outline an alternative solution to English-Only legislation—the National Language Policy—and provide the theoretical and historical foundations for this alternative; and
4. offer colleagues a specific set of strategies and practices they could use to support and enact the National Language Policy in their classrooms, schools, communities, and profession. (“Program Proposal”)¹²

The broad range of these goals reflects the committee members' realization that many rhetoric and composition scholars within the CCCC viewed appropriate or effective language use in limiting ways. The Language Policy Committee saw the CCCC

Convention, then, as an opportunity to tell colleagues what they needed to know about the theoretical underpinnings of the English-Only movement, to show them that a legitimate language policy alternative existed, and to help them develop their own ideas about how to enact this language policy both inside and outside their classrooms.

The Language Policy Committee members themselves knew they needed to do more than draft the National Language Policy and present at professional conferences. Therefore, they used their initial meeting to chart a course for CCCC's future action in this public debate. The committee saw numerous avenues of influence through which the CCCC could circulate its language policy and shape political and public opinion on linguistic diversity. The more obvious among these recommendations included preparing a background document to accompany the National Language Policy ("Interim Report #1" 4); drafting letters and fact sheets for NCTE and CCCC members to use in contacting legislators and newspapers (4); and initiating contact with media outlets in order to focus their attention on the need for a English Plus policy (5). The Language Policy Committee also proposed to make other supporting materials, such as bibliographies, available for language arts scholars interested in introducing the topic at regional or local meetings and conferences. Additionally, the committee called for the CCCC to support its development of a video on English-Only legislation and the National Language Policy that would target the lay public (5). Finally, the Language Policy Committee began to sketch proposals to state humanities councils for support of similar types of public-oriented projects and programs on language diversity issues (5). In proposing these types of projects, then, the Language Policy Committee sought to persuade rhetoric and composition scholars to see themselves as public intellectuals who were well-positioned

to create forums for dialogue about linguistic diversity and language policy in their communities.

To further the CCCC's public presence in this debate, the Language Policy Committee persuaded the CCCC Executive Committee to nominate Smitherman to represent the organization at meetings of the English Plus Information Clearinghouse (EPIC). CCCC's participation in EPIC, the Language Policy Committee argued, would help it to foster intellectual exchange between other organizations, both scholarly and community-based, that had a stake in opposing English-Only legislation (5).¹³ The committee members saw in EPIC an opportunity for compositionists to contribute their professional expertise in ways that could reshape communities and the nation toward more inclusive, democratic ends.

More significantly, the Language Policy Committee's interest in EPIC signaled its recognition that the struggle for minorities' language rights involved a much broader range of concerns than language alone. EPIC drew groups concerned with issues ranging from bilingual education and legal and political rights to labor, ethnic, and immigrant concerns. Whereas English-Only activists saw ELAs by themselves creating economic and political opportunities for all citizens, the CCCC and other "English Plus" organizations understood that a language policy alone would not do. Economic and political change, they argued, needed to accompany language policies in order for language minorities to enjoy equal opportunities to participate in the life of their communities. As Smitherman explained in 1987, improving economic and social conditions would likely provide greater motivation for historically marginalized students to develop and hone advanced literacy skills ("Lessons" 34). In fact, Smitherman herself

called on compositionists to work “on the political front” (33) with other social and political advocacy groups, such as those addressing poverty and unemployment, in order “[t]o insure rewards from language and literacy for American’s working and UNWORKING classes” (34).

This expanded notion of the CCCC’s role in the public sphere effectively countered the limited understanding of the organization’s mission articulated just a half-decade earlier by the Committee to Study the Advisability of a Language Statement for the 1980s and 1990s. Significantly, the Language Policy Committee’s call for compositionists to network with other scholars and activists underscored how the social, cultural, and political environments in which students lived and learned affected their sense of how their abilities were valued (or not) in the writing classroom and in public life.

“Enabling everyone to participate in the life of this multicultural nation”

As one could see in its campaign to eliminate bilingual ballots, the English-Only movement defined responsible U.S. citizenship in a narrow way—reading, speaking, and writing in English and preserving “our common culture.” Hayakawa and others called for the government and educators to get out of linguistic minorities’ way, allow them to learn English, and leave them to pursue their professional and personal dreams. The Language Policy Committee saw these narrow representations of political participation, however, deflecting attention away from dominant society’s responsibility to ensure that all citizens could participate in the democratic life of the nation. The CCCC’s National

Language Policy, therefore, crafted a vision for meaningful inclusion of non-English languages in public life.

Through its National Language Policy, the CCCC asserted that the English-speaking majority had a responsibility to preserve everyone's right to participate in public life, no matter his or her language. The policy document encouraged readers—compositionists, politicians, educational policymakers—to “[s]trive to include all citizens of all language communities in the positive development of our daily activities” (5). The Language Policy Committee maintained that “ensuring continued respect both for English, our common language, and for the many other languages that contribute to our rich cultural heritage” would “enable everyone to participate in the life of this multicultural nation” (1).

The CCCC's language policy seemed to suggest, as well, that this participation should take place in more ways than just through punching holes in a bilingual ballot or answering questions under oath through bilingual court interpreters. Indeed, the National Language Policy emphasized that U.S. communities would be better served when *all* Americans gain proficiency in the many languages that make up our diverse citizenry. This widespread linguistic competence would allow all citizens to participate in public deliberations about how best to assess and meet our collective needs. The CCCC here drew on one of the era's dominant political themes, the need to reinvigorate American democracy, as it demanded all citizens to recognize that the nation would be stronger were more citizens able to dialogue in different languages.

By insisting that more than one means existed for language minorities to participate in public life, the National Language Policy also rejected the arguments made

by Hirsch, Hayakawa, Rodriguez, and others. The Language Policy Committee maintained that all people in the U.S. needed to learn second or third languages in order to “unify diverse American communities” (5). Indeed, the CCCC saw a need for monolingual English speakers to acquire facility in speaking, writing, and listening to other languages. Only then would linguistic minorities have a truly equal opportunity to make known their needs, concerns, and ideas. In turn, this deeper communication between linguistic majority and minority groups would “enlarge our view of what is human” (5).

As it articulates the benefits of all Americans undertaking the complex tasks of learning and using multiple languages, the CCCC’s language policy underscored linguistic minorities’ rights to participate in U.S. democracy on terms they could negotiate with the political and cultural majority. The National Language Policy at every turn highlighted the need for multidirectional language-learning in the U.S—not only heritage language users learning English but also English-language users learning others’ languages. These arguments show that the CCCC’s National Language Policy encouraged scholars, policymakers, and citizens to see that the nation’s many difficulties in working against language differences revealed the limitations of a predominantly English-only-speaking society. The CCCC, in other words, acknowledged that all citizens have a responsibility to ensure everyone can participate in public life. In advancing this claim, the CCCC countered the English-Only movement’s view, illustrated in Rodriguez’s literacy narrative, that linguistic minorities expressed their commitment to America’s political ideals most clearly through their dedicated learning of English.

“Participating more effectively in worldwide activities”

Much of the English-Only movement’s rhetorical strategy focused on preserving traditional American values and reinvigorating the nation’s identity as a land of opportunity for immigrants. Given the Reagan-era discourse concerning the U.S.’s weakening political and economic status within the international community, however, it is curious that few English-Only advocates discussed how ELAs would affect the U.S.’s position relative to the larger world. The CCCC Language Policy Committee seized this rhetorical space. The committee members highlighted how the principles within the National Language Policy could help the U.S. to strengthen its political, economic, and cultural relationships throughout the world.

The Language Policy Committee first spoke directly to public concern about the nation’s economic troubles. The committee members inserted into the National Language Policy the widely used argument that bilingualism would allow U.S. society to “participate more effectively in worldwide activities” (5). Without explicitly naming it, the policy here likely suggests the U.S. would benefit in the activity of international commerce. Improving the nation’s multilingual resources would allow the U.S. to open new markets and to compete in the increasingly global economy. Given the sluggishness of the U.S. economy in the mid- to late-1980s, these promises of greater economic productivity were politically expedient for the CCCC.

Were the National Language Policy founded solely on this argument, it would have promoted a situation wherein schools offered foreign language education only in those languages used in overseas markets with sufficient capital to make them worth tapping. Such a language and educational policy, in other words, would only reinforce the

international political, social, and economic order. Countries and language groups without economic capital would remain peripheral to our national imaginary.

Smitherman, though, problematized this dominant assumption about why people should learn new languages. She called for composition scholars and educational policymakers to revise the criteria guiding their language education decisions. These choices, she maintained, could instead be driven by the need to connect with the marginalized groups of the world, to promote international cooperation, or, at the very least, to avoid societal destruction. Smitherman in fact argued that the third prong of the National Language Policy, which promoted the learning of one or more additional languages, should give priority to “language[s] spoken by persons in the Third World,” particularly Spanish, the use of which predominated life in the Western Hemisphere (“Lessons” 31).

This language learning would be a means for Americans to deepen their understanding and heighten their appreciation of other cultures of the world rather than to tap into the market potential of the Spanish-speaking communities in Central and South America. Smitherman reminded readers

Contemporary history is rife with the sordid remains of narrow provincialism emanating from a world superpower (e.g., the Viet Nam War). Our students, the citizens of the future, must be capable of understanding and carrying on dialogue with [Third World] peoples—the majority population in today’s world. (“Lessons” 33).

The significance of such dialogue with the Spanish-speaking world in that historical moment could not be overestimated. To cite just one notable reason, U.S. intervention in

the Central American wars during the 1980s did much to increase immigration to this nation.¹⁴ This dialogue across linguistic and cultural differences, of course, would also have extended to the internal relations among English-speaking members of mainstream U.S. society and the nation's Spanish-only speaking immigrants and citizens.

The benefits of “understanding and carrying on dialogue” with these immigrant groups could have created a deeper understanding of the political and economic forces that shaped other nations' attitudes toward the U.S. As journalist Juan González contends, since many Spanish-speaking immigrants in the 1980s “came from countries that have been long dominated by the United States, the attitude of Latin American migrants toward North American society was invariably more ambivalent, certainly more critical, than those of newcomers from other parts of the world” (191).¹⁵ Of course, the Language Policy Committee's argument for listening to these stories opened the CCCC to criticism from English-Only supporters that its educational initiatives would send “the wrong message” to Spanish speakers by granting their language a place in U.S. civil society and potentially threatening national unity (Fishman, “The Displaced” 167). Smitherman's articulation about the educational and political vision informing the National Language Policy, however, reveals how the nation's language attitudes and practices affect its ability to participate effectively with other countries of the world.

“Providing time and encouragement to learn a new language”

Given the weakening domestic economy during the 1980s, the English-Only movement enjoyed rhetorical success with its arguments that an ELA would save precious government funds otherwise spent on bilingual education, ballots, and social

services. Larry Pratt, former president of English First, tapped into many Americans' concerns about the economy with this passage from his organization's fundraising letter: "Tragically, many immigrants these days refuse to learn English! They never become productive members of American society. They remain stuck in a linguistic and economic ghetto, many living off welfare and costing working Americans millions of tax dollars every year." Pratt here uses a "ghettoization" metaphor that proved to be successful in the campaign for Proposition O in San Francisco. While supporters of Proposition O urged voters to free linguistic minorities from this imprisonment and the control of manipulative politicians, Pratt instead warned that bilingual social services drained the nation's resources and kept inhabitants of these linguistic ghettos from contributing to the betterment of their communities. Such arguments were meant to persuade Americans that bilingual services used public money to provide incentives for not learning English.

The Language Policy Committee countered these economic arguments and demonstrated the CCCC's support of popular national values—rather than pursuit of narrow self-interest—by suggesting that these services in fact ensured the nation's long-term prosperity. The committee members explained that research had shown linguistic minorities, like all language learners, "need time and encouragement to learn" a new language (5). Funding for bilingual education programs, both in public schools and in community literacy centers, provided this necessary support. The Language Policy Committee members felt that English-Only supporters ignored, even downright discredited, this perspective. They saw English-Only advocates arguing that once barriers to learning English (in the form of bilingual ballots and bilingual education) were

removed, non-English speakers would more easily and energetically acquire the language. Language Policy Committee members repeatedly questioned this assumption that English-Only laws would free non-English speakers to learn the language and participate in American democracy.

The committee pushed this point in the National Language Policy. The CCCC leadership tried to convince rhetoric and composition scholars as well as civic leaders that more needed to be done to support this complex language-learning.¹⁵ As journalist James Crawford explains, many Americans mistook a vote for English-Only legislation to be a vote for providing resources for English-language education (“What’s Behind” 175). The Language Policy Committee sought to clarify this misunderstanding for the public. In a letter signed by then-CCCC Chair Andrea Lunsford, the committee explained to superintendents, educational policymakers, and legislators that English-Only laws would do nothing to provide one more course, one more teacher, or one more textbook for the thousands of people who were on waiting lists for English classes (2).¹⁶

The U.S. House of Representatives failed language minority communities in 1988 when it did not follow through on an initial promise to provide much-needed resources that would, in the CCCC’s words, “enable native and nonnative speakers to achieve oral and literate competence in English, the language of wider communication” (National Language Policy 1). Congressional representatives proposed to support an adult English literacy grants program when it signed into law the “English Proficiency Act,” Title V of House Resolution (H.R.) 5, the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendment of 1988.¹⁷ This legislation provided grants to states for English literacy programs for Limited-English Proficiency adults and out-of-school students, giving

special preference to community-based organizations that had already proven their success in providing such educational services to these two groups.¹⁸ Participating organizations were to use these funds for purchasing instructional materials, securing classroom space, training personnel in English-language instruction, and providing support services such as child care and transportation costs (Vargas).¹⁹

Although the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate both passed H.R. 5 by overwhelming margins in April 1988, both branches appropriated zero funds for the Adult English Literacy Grants program (Vargas).²⁰ This zero-funding kept thousands of adults enrolled on waiting lists for English-language classes, a situation English-Only advocates often were remiss in discussing. Nevertheless, Congress' zero-funding of the grants programs strengthened the arguments of groups such as the CCCC that supported linguistic minorities. Resources are what was needed to promote English-language literacy education, the National Language Policy suggested, not the extra motivation supposedly provided by English-Only policies. The National Language Policy's background document reminded readers, "Laws making English the official language do nothing to increase the number of [English] classes, nor do they teach a single person English" (3).

Given its belief in all citizens' responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for political participation, the CCCC also called for resources that would support instruction in students' non-English native languages, as well. Here the CCCC countered arguments by Hayakawa, Rodriguez, and others that the citizens' maintenance of non-English languages was a matter of private, not public, concern. Marjorie Ann Sucansky expressed this latter viewpoint in a 1988 *English Journal* debate on whether English-language arts

educators should support or oppose English-Only legislation. Sucansky reminded readers that previous generations of immigrants, even as they learned English in order to make the transition to becoming American, “chose to retain and foster bilingualism in their children through private studies” (Sucansky 83). One of U.S. English’s “Guiding Principles” also reinforced this belief that decisions to maintain heritage languages were not ones for public officials to make or public money to support: “The rights of individuals and groups to use other languages and to establish *privately funded* institutions for the maintenance of diverse languages and cultures must be respected in a pluralistic society” (U.S. English 145, emphasis added). These arguments tapped into many middle-class Americans’ concerns about the nation’s fiscal strength. More importantly, they reaffirmed the distinction Rodriguez made between public and private languages, and they echoed his argument that English-language instruction was central to public education’s mission of helping students to develop civic identities.

Research done by members of the Language Policy Committee, however, showed the dangers of leaving heritage language instruction to the private sphere. The committee members believed the English-Only movement did not fully understand the complexities involved in learning and using languages in communities that were stigmatized precisely because of their linguistic difference. Moreover, the committee argued, English-Only supporters severely misunderstood how material conditions for learning affected heritage language acquisition and maintenance. Language Policy Committee member Ana Celia Zentella highlighted one such source of difficulty in her analysis of the sociocultural situation facing New York Puerto Rican families:

There is little awareness of what it takes to raise children in the US so that they end up with a command of two languages. Most caregivers are satisfied if children understand enough Spanish to behave appropriately. Almost no one insists that Spanish be spoken in certain settings or with certain speakers. The expectation is that exposure to grandmothers will ensure fluency in Spanish, and that English is learned in schools and on the block. But grandmothers with limited years of formal schooling cannot teach children to read and write standard Spanish, and since most of them understand English and do not insist on being addressed in Spanish, grandchildren may get little practice in speaking Spanish. (285)

These findings informed the Language Policy Committee's decision to use the National Language Policy to call for formal educational programs in students' heritage languages that focused on a broader range of communicative and cultural goals. This advanced literacy instruction in native languages would in turn strengthen communities, the National Language Policy suggested, for it would allow people to draw on a greater variety of experiences and perspectives as they shaped the daily activities of the citizenry.²¹

As the Language Policy Committee drew attention to these pressures that worked against heritage language maintenance, it also attempted to show that English-Only supporters spoke only half-heartedly when they claimed to "rejoice in our ethnic diversity, which give[s] us our richness as a culture" (Hayakawa 19). Indeed, despite what this type of statement seems to suggest, English-Only supporters in point of fact made sharp distinctions between heritage languages and ethnic cultures. Hayakawa

explained, for example, that it was the English language that enabled our society to share and “to create a unique and vibrant culture” (19). The Language Policy Committee saw a major disjuncture between the English-Only movement’s campaign for ELAs and its supposed support for diversity. For the Language Policy Committee, affirmation of our nation’s cultural diversity required an affirmation of its linguistic diversity, as well.

The CCCC’s National Language Policy countered Hayakawa’s argument by emphasizing the positive gains that the public could enjoy were it to provide sufficient resources to support heritage language maintenance. The CCCC argued that greater school and governmental support for bilingual development and maintenance were needed, of course, if the nation truly considered its diverse linguistic heritage to be worth conserving and using. More important in this regard, though, the National Language Policy appealed to the traditional values of strong communities. The policy suggested that teaching children their families’ and their communities’ heritage languages is one of many significant “life-supporting customs” that can help to maintain the family as a supportive bond both for children and their families. The Language Policy Committee, it seems, meant to expose the limits of the English-Only movement’s appeals to strengthening and unifying the nation. At a time when Reagan-era political discourse championed traditional family values, the National Language Policy encouraged civic leaders to see how educational experiences such as Rodriguez’s revealed the limits of ELAs. English-Only policies, that is, eroded American values as they forced many children into social isolation from their parents, relatives, and communities.

“Expanding learning opportunities”

The Language Policy Committee created the National Language Policy primarily in order to fill a “language leadership vacuum” in policy debates (Smitherman, “Lessons” 30). Consequently, the document presents less in the way of pedagogical theories and practices than did the “Students’ Right” resolution and background statement fourteen years earlier. At the same time, the CCCC faced political discourse that had portrayed teachers as undermining the nation as they failed to help students realize their full potential. For these reasons, the CCCC National Language Policy directly addressed the damaging educational and social consequences that would follow from English-Only laws. Specially, the CCCC warned that English-Only laws promoted teaching that discouraged non-English-speaking or Limited-English Proficiency students from drawing upon their linguistic skills in language arts education: “When students cannot use their strengths, they experience alienation and failure. Prohibiting or discouraging diversity limits rather than expands learning opportunities” (4). *A Nation at Risk* had conjured up images of America’s educators wasting away students’ skills—and the nation’s resources—in math, science, and English. The CCCC demanded that we see language diversity as significant personal and national resources, as well. The National Language Policy revised the image of the English-language arts educator as one who reenergized the nation’s democratic ideals by acknowledging and creating opportunities for students to draw upon their discursive and rhetorical strengths.

The Language Policy Committee members knew, however, that rhetoric and composition scholars needed pedagogical strategies to help them create a classroom atmosphere where language and dialect diversity was respected and valued. In an early

draft of the National Language Policy's background document, the Language Policy Committee presented compositionists with initial answers to the question "How does the Policy affect what you do?" This page urged compositionists to publicly support English Plus policies and presented strategies that would help teachers to "create a classroom climate where all language variations are respected" (CCCC LPC, "Outline/Draft" 1). For example, teachers were encouraged to create classroom assignments in which students' wrote about and discussed "what motivates them to learn other languages or dialects" (1). Harvey Daniels of the NCTE Commission on Language offered other teaching strategies in his pragmatic-oriented conclusion to NCTE's 1990 volume *Not Only English: Affirming America's Multilingual Heritage*. One project would have teachers assist students in conducting linguistic field work. Students would collect information about the various languages used in their communities as well as community members' attitudes toward linguistic differences or their support for English-Only policies ("What One" 124). Such projects would help teachers create opportunities for students to connect their personal experiences in learning languages to the experiences and concerns of others in their communities.

The draft of the National Language Policy brochure also encouraged teachers to create activities in which students considered "the social and cultural forces that have shaped and changed language" (1). These discussions and assignments would foreground the topic of language varieties and the standardization of English as well as encourage students to retain and continue developing their abilities in their native languages (1-2). The Language Policy Committee's draft also reminded teachers to "respond to and

evaluate students' speaking and writing in light of your own humane understanding of language and current linguistic research" (2).

As Daniels acknowledged in his essay, however, most English-language arts educators' professional training was likely to have been heavily weighted toward literary studies and pedagogical methods. This training was too often "weak and sketchy" on issues concerning models and theories of language use and linguistic diversity ("What One" 122). Daniels therefore encouraged teachers to commit themselves to personal reading or, if resources permitted, additional coursework in order to learn about "the more coherent models of language developed by linguists" (122). These models, he explained, contradicted the English-Only movement's "staggeringly inaccurate notions of how languages are learned and used" (122). Foremost among linguists' findings at the time, for example, was that language acquisition results "when acquirers *understand* incoming messages" rather than "from grammar drill, repetition of patterns, or from listening to incomprehensible input or noise," as often happened in immersion settings (Krashen, "Sink-or-Swim" 355).

The strategies Daniels outlined were intended to send a clear message to compositionists: the outcome of English-Only debates carries important consequences for your classroom practices. Passage of an ELA would create an atmosphere of even greater hostility toward language differences, which would undoubtedly affect students' motivations for learning English as well as maintaining their first language. By evaluating students' speaking and writing "in light of [their] own humane understanding of language," teachers would be taking an important step toward cultivating an atmosphere of respect for and appreciation of the benefits of language diversity.

Moreover, teachers could promote critical language awareness through fostering dialogues about students' motivations for language-learning and about the social and cultural pressures that affected their language use. These class discussions would provide a foundation for problematizing the English-Only movement's assumptions about "natural" language practices. For example, students' reflections might lead them to question the inevitability of immigrants losing their first languages in order to clear space for English or monolingual English speakers' presumed lack of need to acquire competencies in other languages.²²

In a 1987 *English Journal* article, however, Victor Villanueva critiqued many of the implicit assumptions about linguistic and ethnic difference that guided English-language arts educators' approaches to teaching language minority students. Villanueva at the time was a member of NCTE's Commission on Language, which also produced a statement opposing the English-Only movement.²³ Villanueva pointed to the limitations of providing teachers only with linguistics research that poked holes in English-Only arguments about language learning and showed the grammatical coherence of all language varieties. Villanueva contended that Rodriguez's educational narrative appeals to many teachers because in it the "complexities of the minority are rendered simply—not easy—but easily understood" ("Whose Voice" 19). Villanueva argued instead that ethnic and linguistic minority students deal with complex identity issues that compositionists needed to understand in greater depth as a first step toward creating more effective writing pedagogies.

In particular, Villanueva called on English-language arts educators to be more attentive to students' different attitudes toward and motivations for learning advanced

literacy in the Language of Wider Communication. Compositionists would do well, he explained, to keep in mind that Rodriguez's voice does not apply to all other voices in U.S. society. Villanueva asked teachers to become more sensitive to what he calls the "rhetoric of cultural tensions" in students' writings ("The Voice" 68). Students use this particular rhetoric, he observed, to represent their experiences in "always having to deal in crossing cultures and [. . .] thereby always having to deal in voices, not voice" (68). Villanueva therefore encouraged teachers to give students opportunities to read about various people's experiences across lines of difference and to enter these conversations themselves, writing about and analyzing their own experiences with languages both inside and outside of school.

The variety of these pedagogical approaches were significant in that they brought home the fact that English-Only laws affected rhetoric and composition scholars' professional lives. With its National Language Policy, the CCCC recreated the image of the English-language arts educators as a citizen committed to improving the communities in which they lived and worked. As I earlier argued, the Language Policy Committee called on rhetoric and composition scholars to assume responsibility for working in the public sphere to engage "all citizens of all language communities in the positive development of our daily activities" (CCCC, National Language Policy 5). The classroom, however, was no less a space for doing this necessary work. Teachers were to enact the National Language Policy's ideals by creating opportunities for students to explore various paths for participating in public life, rather than demanding English as the only means for displaying linguistic competence. Through the National Language Policy and related materials, the Language Policy Committee helped teachers to envision

themselves as agents of change, able to prepare “everyone to participate in the life of this multicultural nation” (1). The National Language Policy, that is, called on teachers to transform the English-language arts classroom from a space where students learn English only to one where they create opportunities for students to develop critical awareness of how languages can reshape and reinvigorate the national identity.

Conclusion

Bruce Horner and John Trimbur maintain that the CCCC National Language Policy sacrificed an opportunity for the organization to bring progressive change in writing instruction and in public ideas about languages and language use. At key points in the policy, they contend, the CCCC aligned its arguments too closely with the assumptions on which the English-Only movement based its campaign. For example, the background document assures readers that the National Language Policy would ensure “continued respect” for English (1). Elsewhere, this document conceded that linguistic minorities’ “ability to prosper over the long term requires facility in the dominant American language” (5). Moreover, the National Language Policy background document explained, “English, as the global lingua franca and the language of wider communication in this country, is not threatened” (3). Horner and Trimbur admit the veracity of the CCCC’s claims that English’s prominence in the U.S. is not threatened. They contend, however, that there are limitations in basing opposition to English-Only legislation on the assumption that immigrants’ language differences, “with time and patience and training, will disappear” (616). In effect, they argue, such arguments create little impetus for the monolingual English-speaking majority to develop competencies in

second and third languages such that they would invite minority communities to participate in the public sphere in meaningful ways.

Horner and Trimbur's analysis on the National Language Policy highlights limits of the CCCC's opposition to the English-Only movement. At the same time, we should acknowledge the diverse rhetorical and political strategies the CCCC Language Policy Committee used to engage the conservative discourse that Reagan revived and Hayakawa applied. This historical example complicates Marback's assertion that rhetoric and composition scholars have ignored the political, social, and cultural values that inform criticism of our progressive language policies and pedagogical projects. Indeed, we see in the National Language Policy the CCCC's critical understanding of the attitudes and beliefs underpinning support for the English-Only movement. We see in the National Language Policy a document boldly asserting that all Americans need to learn multiple languages in order to revive our national identity. It is through learning second and third languages, the CCCC contends, that we can "unify diverse American communities" and "enlarge our view of what is human" (5). Revisiting the National Language Policy can help to reinvigorate rhetoric and composition scholars' commitment to providing leadership on language issues facing our communities, cultivating respect for heritage languages in the public sphere, and creating a positive atmosphere for language learning inside the classroom.

The Language Policy Committee did significant work with the National Language Policy, then, in composing the CCCC as a civic institution. This language policy provided the intellectual foundations for rhetoric and composition scholars to engage in public dialogue about what our nation and our communities could look like. The National

Language Policy itself provided such a vision for our public sphere. The many languages spoken in our communities enrich our nation's cultural heritage, as they are resources for strengthening families and communities, expanding learning opportunities, and better engaging the world outside our national borders. The present political, social, and cultural climate makes it vital for rhetoric and composition scholars to assume a greater role as leaders in public dialogue on the connections between language instruction, community interests, and the national identity.

Our reflection on statements such as the National Language Policy should inform this work. The National Language Policy provides “the necessary intellectual basis and rhetorical framework for waging language debates and arguments” (Smitherman, “CCCC” 397), while the Language Policy Committee's entire range of practices—from creating networks with groups committed to immigrant, labor, and poverty issues to proposing public educational projects to humanities councils—can help us to envision new ways for filling the “language leadership vacuum” in our communities.

While the history of the National Language Policy's drafting prompts us to attend to how our discourses might limit our ultimate aims, we still need to engage present and pressing conversations that affect the climate of respect for and appreciation of the need for language diversity in our society. One need only look to the nation's borders for just one example of this social and political atmosphere. On April 1, 2005, a group of civilians gathered in the southern Arizona desert to form the Minuteman Project. This group has the expressed aim of defending American citizens from the “invasion” of thousands of illegal immigrants annually across the U.S.-Mexico border (U.S. Border Control). The Minuteman Project sought to remind Americans that if aggressive action is

not taken, “Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious ‘melting pot’” (Minuteman Project). While explicitly addressing legal matters concerning U.S. immigration policy, the Minuteman Project gestures toward the social disharmony and cultural disintegration that would result among a “rancorous, squabbling” multilingual populace. Some public leaders and political commentators have dismissed the Minuteman Project as the work of citizens at the fringes of society. The group has received a measure of credibility, though, from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, himself a former member of the U.S. English board of directors. Echoing Reagan’s faith in the power of individuals and civic groups to restore America’s traditional values, the current governor praised the group for enforcing the nation’s law when their government has not (“Schwarzenegger Praises”).

A less menacing but equally significant debate centers on a recently released Spanish-language version of the U.S. national anthem. British music producer Adam Kidron created the song as a response to the present-day immigration debate in the U.S. This new version, entitled “Nuestro Himno” (“Our Anthem”), features Puerto Rican singers Carols Ponce and Olga Tanon and hip-hop artists such as Wyclef Jean and Pitbull singing lyrics based on the original theme of the English-language “Star-Spangled Banner.” At certain points, however, the song switches to English lyrics and directs sharp criticism at U.S. immigration policy, particularly in lines such as

These kids have no parents
 ‘cause all of these mean laws
 [. . .]

let's not start a war with all these hard workers

they can't help where they were born. (qtd. in Wides-Munoz A5)

Pitbull suggests that “the American dream is in that record [‘Nuestro Himno’]: struggle, freedom, opportunity, everything they are trying to shut down on us” (qtd. in Wides-Munoz A5). Despite such claims and appeals to America’s democratic values, countless numbers of critics have expressed outrage at the singing of the U.S. national anthem in a language other than English. U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, a Republican from Tennessee, went so far as to propose a resolution “giving senators an opportunity to remind the country why we sing our National Anthem in English” (qtd. in “Sen. Alexander to Introduce”). Alexander expressed his concern in ways similar to those of Hayakawa two decades earlier. Alexander stated:

We Americans are a unique nation of immigrants united by a common language and a belief in principles expressed in our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution, not by our race, ancestry or country of origin. We are proud of the countries we have come from, but we are prouder to be Americans. (qtd. in “Sen. Alexander to Introduce”)

Alexander here expresses his concern with preserving our common culture and political ideals. As he does so, however, he reinscribes a narrow view of how citizens can or should reaffirm the nation’s democratic principles.

Recovering the history of the CCCC National Language Policy helps us to see the rhetorical and political strategies compositionists have used to respond to debates similar to those sparked by the Minuteman Project and “Nuestro Himno.” The National Language Policy worked with the terms put forth by political conservatives such as

Reagan, Hirsch, Hayakawa, and Chávez. The CCCC reworked and breathed new life into the themes concerning democratic values and national identity rather than rejecting them outright. At the same time, the CCCC National Language Policy demands that we see how our democracy will be stronger and our communities will be more unified as we foster a multilingual, multicultural society. Such a diverse community would push on but also reinvigorate our commitment to basic human rights and build on diverse perspectives and solutions to our common problems.

The Minuteman Project and Senator Alexander's Senate Resolution illustrate the fact that much work remains for our disciplinary ideals to be realized. Revisiting the CCCC National Language Policy in our contemporary moment only reinforces the need for rhetoric and composition scholars to dialogue about and create coalitions to respond to policies and discourses affecting the lives of linguistic and ethnic minorities—many of whom are our students, neighbors, and colleagues. A social and political atmosphere that denigrates the culture, language, and political rights of immigrants and minorities negatively affects the conditions for language learning.

Even as we continue to look for ways to engage debates on language and educational policies, we need to remember the considerable work the CCCC had to do in order present itself as a civic-minded, not self-interested, institution. We need to remain attentive to the public perception of our expertise and motivations. Daniels in 1990 expressed his optimistic belief that “[a]s educators, we are still heard with a great deal of attention and respect. Though our profession has been besmirched during recent school reform debates, Americans still give special attention to the views of teachers on issues of language and learning” (“What One” 122). In the public debates over language policies in

the 1980s, however, English-Only advocates attacked the credibility of language professionals and the relative merits of their work in this area.

The most striking example of this perspective appeared in Gary Imhoff's implication that sociolinguists, in promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism, were content to be self-serving opportunists with little concern for social and political consequences of the resulting cultural fragmentation. Imhoff characterized academics in the following way:

Monolingual societies are defined as culturally impoverished and multilingual societies as culturally enriched because of the amount of material these countries provide for sociolinguistic study. But our societies are not organized for the amusement of academics, and we have no responsibility to complicate our lives in order to provide material for their monographs. (qtd. in Zentella 286)

Imhoff's speculations provide a clear indication of the challenges compositionists face in their hopes of "going public" (Mortensen). Imhoff implies that academics infuse personal and liberal politics into their supposedly disinterested research projects. The CCCC made no claims to scholarly objectivity in the National Language Policy, making it an even greater target for criticism that it recklessly ignored the boundaries between politics and academics. As we compose our professional associations as civic organizations, we must anticipate these charges and explore ways to project our discipline as one committed to strengthening our communities.

We can also better envision what it means to "go public" by revisiting the Language Policy Committee's plans for working within communities. These activities

included building educational exhibits and videos with the support of humanities councils and working “on the political front” (Smitherman, “Lessons” 33) with political and social advocacy groups committed to poverty and unemployment issues. Nevertheless, Imhoff’s perspective underscores the fact that, as Trimbur contends, the practice of writing as an expert for public audiences “is not so simple [. . .] that by changing one’s prose style [. . .] one can thereby take on a new identity as a public intellectual” (“Composition” 212). Instead, Trimbur emphasizes that compositionists need “to problematize expertise, to find ways to rearticulate it within the circulation of knowledge” (215). He adds, “The issue is not to substitute one group of experts for another but to redistribute the means of production [of knowledge] in order to increase public participation” in the study of language and the formation of language policy (216). This distinction is important. “Redistribut[ing] the means of production” of knowledge could in fact help us to enact ideals expressed in the National Language Policy, for it could help to create the conditions for a broader public dialogue on language policies that takes up more directly the questions and concerns of linguistic minorities.

The Language Policy Committee’s work shows us, too, that we need to and can connect these public debates about linguistic diversity and language policy to our teaching in the writing classroom. Mary Soliday, in *The Politics of Remediation*, provides just one example of what the National Language Policy’s ideals might look like when translated into practice in the rhetoric and composition classroom. Soliday’s “translation theory” pedagogy helps students to hone their skills in analyzing how the politics of language use affect their writing as they negotiate the ragged boundaries between home, school, and community. The writing her students produce examines how literacies and

languages from their private lives can inform the public's understandings of and assumptions about language use. What Soliday finds many students doing in their essays is putting pressure on the "straight-line" theory of assimilation, one that Rodriguez reinscribes through *Hunger of Memory*. According to this theory, of course, a person from a marginalized community faces an absolute choice between acquiring the dominant discourse or maintaining the discourses of the community from which she or he comes.

Soliday finds that her students' analyses of how they represent their experiences through writing show that individuals can enact their "desire to appropriate aspects of more than one cultural experience" (167). As they analyze their movement between these different worlds, Soliday's students often articulate a critical perspective that allows them to understand the demands that the worlds of home, school, and neighborhood make on their personal choices in daily living. Soliday argues that these writing projects allow students to "dramatize rather than resolve" the tensions they experience in living between cultures (170). Moreover, this writing gives linguistic minority students the opportunities to craft alternative representations that problematize mainstream conceptions of linguistic minority students and their place in higher education. In so doing, these students are encouraged—as the National Language Policy declares they should be—to "build on their linguistic skills" (3) as a means for helping to "enlarge our view of what is human" (5).

These types of projects that connect political and pedagogical work can help rhetoric and composition scholars to see there are several ways of "going public" as leaders in discussions about language politics and policies. Documents such as the National Language Policy are significant in and of themselves since academics can

position themselves to provide governmental officials with “the ideological rationale for public policy” (Smitherman, “CCCC” 397). Given this influence, Smitherman explains, “it was and is important for organizations like 4Cs to go on record as supporting language rights” (397). The broad scope of the Language Policy Committee’s work can also help us to see networks we might create not only with other language associations but also with groups concerned with issues such as immigrants’ rights and unemployment. These coalitions might help us to invent ways for educating the public about the interrelationships between language, identity, and power. The Language Policy Committee’s work also can help us to see how we can operate as public intellectuals not through media outlets alone but through working with students, local libraries, historical societies, and museums to create and present rich portraits of the language diversity in our communities both past and present.

Moreover, we can make language politics and pedagogies for linguistic diversity central to our training of future rhetoric and composition scholars. One strategy for doing so would be to foreground documents such as the National Language Policy and the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution in our respective department’s teaching practicum and graduate seminars. This practice would emphasize that compositionists must remain vigilant in their commitment to protecting the rights of linguistic minority students both within and beyond our nation’s borders. Just as significantly, putting these documents at the center of these courses would make a statement about our disciplinary identity and mission, for the National Language Policy encourages rhetoric and composition scholars to re-see our professional associations as

civic organizations committed to bringing linguistic minorities to the center of the national imaginary.

CHAPTER FOUR

Make Policy, Not War:

Engaging the Defense Department's National Language Agenda

Increasingly, the pressure of the new economy is aligning literacy and language with productivity and competitiveness. While becoming a “good worker” was long a desired outcome of literacy education, what is new is the direct role literacy now plays in economic activity. [. . .] Literacy is now what iron ore or oil once was: a raw material to engine the GNP. [. . .] Given these conditions, ownership, control, management, and investment become real issues. Who owns what we know? Who controls what we learn? Who sets the value on literacy?

—Deborah Brandt, “Losing Literacy”

(305-06)

Deborah Brandt’s entire body of scholarship has helped us to better understand how people’s acquisition of reading and writing skills are influenced by, in her words, “powerful sponsors whose interests control the routes to and rewards for literacy as well as the rationales for learning and using it” (310). As the opening passage of this chapter suggests, the contemporary moment has seen government and corporate policies identify, develop, and then extract the “raw material” of citizens’ and workers’ literacy skills and language competencies. Brandt warns, though, that this emphasis on productivity and competitiveness carries significant implications for language arts educators. Government

and corporate sponsors use these criteria to guide their decisions about what and whose language and literacy skills to develop as well as what and whose language competencies are not worth their investments of money and institutional resources.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, government agencies have sought to exert even greater control on “the rationales for learning and using” specific language skills. The 9/11 Commission found that both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Department’s “capacity for covert action [had] atrophied” over the previous decade in large part because the agencies had few officers who possessed Arabic language skills that would allow them to penetrate or collect intelligence on fundamentalist terrorist networks (Natl. Commission on Terrorist Attacks 93). Since the 9/11 Commission published its findings, the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have argued that investing in foreign language resources will enhance the nation’s ability to analyze intelligence (Gulotta). The State Department has called for similar investments in order to improve its ability to conduct diplomacy that could prevent future terrorist attacks (Pearson). And the Defense Department has explained how a greater depth of foreign languages capabilities within the U.S. military would help the Armed Services to operate effectively in the post-Cold War security landscape (Porter; Jumper).

As a result of these perceived needs, the Defense Department in June 2004 convened the National Language Conference in Adelphi, Maryland. This conference brought together legislators, government officials, corporate leaders, academics, and educators in order to assess the nation’s language needs and to offer policy suggestions that would help to develop the language resources believed to be necessary for strengthening national security and revitalizing the U.S. economy.

These conversations at the National Language Conference eventually led to the Defense Department's drafting of a white paper entitled "A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities." This policy document, more commonly referred to as the National Language Agenda, represents a significant example of government sponsors' efforts to control and manage language skills and literacy learning toward specific ends. The National Language Agenda offers guidelines to help legislators, academics, teachers, and administrators begin to create structures for building up the nation's language resources and channeling those resources into professional and civil positions that benefit the nation. This policy includes, in no small part, ideas for making modern language instruction in the U.S. more responsive to and more able to deliver results toward meeting the nation's language needs. It even echoes the CCCC's National Language Policy at several points where it acknowledges the linguistic and cultural resources that already exist in the nation's heritage language communities.

Although the National Language Agenda was published in February 2005, it is still in progress, as it continues to prompt conversations about what the nation's language needs are and how a language-competent society can be created to meet them. Leading scholars in the modern languages have already engaged this debate. Rosemary G. Feal and Mary Louise Pratt represented the MLA at the National Language Conference. Both scholars have since written about the government's desires and efforts.¹ In her position as Executive Director of the MLA, Feal also has prompted the organization to track the federal government's activities related to this national language policy. Specifically, in May 2004 the MLA created an Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages and charged it "with examining the current language crisis that has occurred as a result of September 11

and with looking at the efforts of the U.S. government (including some 40 agencies that are involved in teaching languages other than English) to meet the needs of national security” (“Meeting, 21-22 May 2004” 280). This committee also is exploring opportunities for networking with other academic organizations, such as the Middle East Studies Association and the Association for Asian Studies, in order to promote outreach on language policy issues and also to “recommend ways in which the MLA should promote dialogue with representatives from government agencies so as to present views on language acquisition that offer a rationale for language study that goes beyond the needs of national security” (280).² The creation of the MLA Ad Hoc Committee shows the MLA filling a “language leadership vacuum” (Smitherman, “Lessons” 30) into which government agencies and corporations had moved in order to “set the value” (Brandt, “Losing” 306) of different languages, language skills, and language needs in our country.

Scholars in composition studies also need to see the National Language Agenda as a matter of disciplinary interest and importance and to consider how they should engage this ongoing policy debate about language and national defense. This public conversation centers on issues of multilingualism, educational funding, language learning, citizenship, and communication, a set of concerns at the forefront of our disciplinary discussions. As composition scholars such as Suresh Canagarajah, Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, and John Trimbur have argued, teachers should cultivate a broader respect for linguistic diversity and promote competency in multiple languages and dialects for all Americans. Canagarajah, for example, shows educators how they can teach students to hone the rhetorical and linguistic skills that will help them “to shuttle between [speech] communities” rather than forcing them to master only the dominant

culture's "target language" (Foreword xiii). Lu likewise challenges teachers to see how students' interests in or affiliations with non-standardized languages can in fact strengthen their efforts to acquire facility in the dominant discourse ("An Essay" 43). Thus, these scholars call for a multilingual approach to writing instruction, a quality that they in many ways share with the participants in the National Language Conference. Compositionists need to find ways to engage the National Language Agenda debate at various levels as a means to reaffirm this disciplinary mission of a more pluralistic understanding of students' language needs.

In this chapter, I argue for rhetoric and composition scholars to read the creation of the Defense Department's National Language Agenda as an opportunity to begin a dialogue with modern language scholars, government officials, and corporate leaders in order to compose a vision for what a linguistically competent United States can look like. Through engaging these debates, compositionists can work to fulfill the CCCC's promise to ensure the rights of civic participation for those on the linguistic margins. Composition scholars can also use this current policy debate to prompt reflection on the possibilities for writing instruction and to revise what Horner and Trimbur see as universities' and colleges' implicit policies of English writing only (594-95). In so doing, rhetoric and composition scholars can reinvigorate the CCCC's identity as both a professional and civic institution as they create the conditions for a multilingual public sphere first envisioned in the 1988 National Language Policy. Composition scholars can use the present policymaking moment, too, to forge stronger connections to the local citizenry, particularly heritage language communities, in ways that reinvigorate the ideals at the heart of our discipline's language policies.

In order to make these claims, I first provide historical depth to the present-day conversations by studying the public policy response to a previous moment of “language crisis” fueled by national security concerns. Specifically, I analyze the efforts of modern language scholars to shape the drafting and implementation of the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Here I aim to better understand the conditions that have prevented sustained, long-term public commitments to language education and linguistic diversity in the U.S. With this historical foundation about the nation’s security-related language needs, I examine how the Defense Department now sees language and cultural knowledge as part of its plans for transforming the U.S. military in ways that better address the post-Cold War security environment.

The Defense Department’s current vision for “language transformation,” in fact, led the military officials to call for a National Language Agenda to develop and manage the nation’s multilingual resources. The Defense Department’s perspectives on language and literacy skills, therefore, inform my analysis in the chapter’s final section of the National Language Conference debates and the National Language Agenda that emerged from these conversations. Just as Brandt helps us to see how corporations have applied pressure to literacy education, I read this language policy in ways that help us to understand how its authors attempt to exert control over language learning and manage language use. In that sense, then, I attempt to articulate how the various stakeholders at the conference helped to shape the National Language Agenda’s definition of our nation’s language needs. Given how the policy advanced a narrow definition of the nation’s language needs, I propose strategies for compositionists both to engage these debates as a means for making public their ideas about linguistic diversity as well as to

create opportunities for language minority communities to have a voice in these debates about how to build a greater public commitment to multilingualism and modern language education.

Learning Translation, Securing the Nation: The National Defense Education Act

Participants at the 2004 National Language Conference were well aware that their vision for securing the nation through foreign language education was not new. Many presenters, in fact, drew clear historical parallels by labeling the September 11 terrorist attacks as our era's "Sputnik moment." Under Secretary of Defense David S. C. Chu, U.S. Representative Rush Holt, and others used this phrase to refer not only to the Soviet Union's December 1957 launch of the *Sputnik I* satellite but also to invoke the U.S. government's response to the U.S.S.R.'s perceived technological and military superiority. Indeed, Defense Department (DoD) officials and many other conference participants expressed the need for a contemporary policy on par with the U.S. Congress' National Defense Education Act of 1958. This legislation provided substantial funds for science, mathematics, and foreign language education as means for regaining technological and strategic superiority over the Soviets. Presenters drew this parallel in their presentations at the National Language Conference in order to encourage other stakeholders to see in this earlier "Sputnik moment" the type of collective effort that the U.S. needed to address its post-September 11 security crisis, as well.

This section examines these earlier debates linking foreign language education to national security concerns as a means for better understanding what it means to invoke the "Sputnik moment" in the present-day language policy debate. In returning to the

original “Sputnik moment,” one finds a sustained, decade-long conversation about the national need for greater foreign language skills. One finds, too, language scholars asserting their discipline’s relevance as they try to connect language-learning to the nation’s social and political concerns. One also unfortunately finds both the U.S. legislature and the modern language discipline ignoring and further marginalizing linguistic minority communities in conversations about the nation’s language needs.

“A challenge to constructive advance”

The DoD perceived a critical need for foreign language skills long before the Soviet Union sent *Sputnik I* into space in late 1957.³ Military officials realized in the early 1940s that were the U.S. to enter World War II, the armed forces would operate effectively only if it deepened its pool of servicemen with language skills (Watzke 45). These officials determined, however, that the U.S. educational system could not develop the necessary language skills in students in a short amount of time. Therefore, in 1941, just months before Japan would attack Pearl Harbor, the Navy established intensive Japanese language programs at Harvard and the University of California, while the Army and Air Force established a joint program in conversational Spanish and Portuguese. The military’s language needs only intensified once World War II began, particularly in terms of Dutch, Russian, and Chinese.

U.S. colleges and universities appeared unable to meet the military’s language needs in large part because of a sharp divide in pedagogical approaches to teaching English and other modern languages. More specifically, modern language departments had not produced a significant number of graduates with communicative skills in these

types of languages because of entrenched assumptions held by universities and colleges about the relationship between English and other modern languages. Horner and Trimbur explain that during the late 1800s, the influence of the traditional classical curriculum informed many scholars' belief that "rigor and intellectual seriousness" (604) came only through studying classic literary texts. On the basis of this belief, universities came to treat non-English modern languages "as texts in an archive" rather than "as living languages" (604). These assumptions shaped a modern language pedagogy that improved students' fluency in reading literary classics but did little to encourage students to see real-world applications for reading, speaking, listening, or writing in non-English languages.

The U.S. military challenged this dominant approach toward modern languages, then, by establishing those language programs at Harvard and the University of California. At the same time, military officials also directly challenged the entire modern language field to adopt a more pragmatic approach to education. Major Francis Millet Rogers, a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, contributed "Languages and the War Effort: A Challenge to the Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages" to the *Modern Language Journal* in 1943. He used this article to outline a specific role that language educators could fill to contribute to the U.S. war effort and, in turn, justify the field's continued funding during a period when many financial resources were directed to the U.S.'s military operations abroad.

Rogers dispelled any notion that "[l]earning the modern languages as living, spoken languages is [. . .] a nonintellectual, feminine activity" (Horner and Trimbur 603) as he described the intense demands under which intelligence officers, secret agents,

interpreters, and translators learning and working with the enemy's languages. For example, the secret agent "either speaks the language perfectly or he gets shot" (Rogers 307). Translators, meanwhile, needed to the ability to read documents and listen to intercepted messages "while being both bombed and under artillery fire" (306). These depictions of the demanding nature of military language specialists' work challenged educators to see that using modern languages in real-world contexts did indeed require mental rigor.

Rogers further argued that for students to learn to *use* modern languages as "living languages," teachers needed to employ texts other than classic literary works as their primary curriculum materials. Students should read modern texts rather than "classic" literature, Rogers argued, because language professionals in the military needed to learn to work with the modern languages as they are used in contemporary militaries and in the everyday lives of the towns and cities where U.S. soldiers were fighting (307-308). Interrogators, for example, "must speak the language their prisoners speak" (306). He explained this requirement in a way that, from his perspective, underscored the need for more practical approaches to language study:

It is not very likely that a prisoner will at the same time be a student of Romance or Germanic philology. It is much more likely that he be a semi-literate dialect-speaking individual. And you either speak *his* language, or he does not talk. And if he does not talk, maybe some more American lives will be lost. (306)

The literary texts that scholars positioned at the center of language arts curricula, Rogers argued, did not account for the wide diversity of languages and social perspectives of

people from other cultures. Rogers pleaded with scholars to see that the U.S. military efforts were of such “indescribable proportions” that educators needed to teach languages “realistically” (309), developing students’ fluency in vernacular languages rather than their appreciation of literary and cultural heritages.

In effect, Rogers called on modern language scholars to redirect their seemingly apolitical intellectual pursuits toward functional ends. The nation’s pressing security needs demanded it, he explained. Educators who did not respond in this way, Rogers warned, rendered themselves superfluous in decisions about spending the nation’s scarce financial resources.

Rogers’ “challenge to the teachers of modern foreign languages” (to quote the subtitle of his article) spurred several scholars to reexamine the field’s relationship to the larger world and ultimately, to reinvigorate foreign language education by connecting language-learning to national and international affairs. William Berrien of the Rockefeller Foundation, for example, encouraged scholars to see Rogers’ argument as a “challenge to constructive advance” rather than as an “indictment” (310). Berrien warned scholars, however, that they needed to do more to justify their discipline’s significance than cite “endorsements of government officials, intellectual leaders, and prominent citizens in all walks of life” (312). Berrien argued for scholars instead to revamp the modern language curriculum so that it gave all students experiences and opportunities to see for themselves how knowledge of and skills in a second language could allow them to do productive work in their academic and professional lives.

“Knowing the hearts and minds of our enemies and our friends”

While Berrien promoted pedagogical change for the discipline’s long-term viability, other scholars continued to amplify their public arguments that foreign language courses deserved a place within deliberations about the nation’s pressing educational concerns. William Riley Parker, who became the MLA’s executive secretary in 1946, most directly challenged the military’s view of foreign language skills as a means of knowing and destroying the enemy. He instead promoted foreign language education as a means for destroying other countries’ status as enemies. Parker used his lectures and his writing to argue that U.S. political leaders and educational policymakers had helped in “paving the road to an atomic hell” as they continued to “induldg[e] our linguistic and cultural isolationism long after we have abandoned political isolationism” (“Language” 110).

Parker issued one of his earliest calls for reform in a 1953 commencement address at Middlebury College. Speaking at an institution with a reputation for its fine foreign language programs, Parker used the term “Language Curtain” in this commencement address to describe the U.S.’s implicit educational policy of monolingualism. The “curtain” metaphor resonated with national perceptions of the Soviet Union during the early Cold War years:

The first great fact [of our time] is the presence in our world of an unfriendly political force, both aggressive and withdrawing, both propagandist and isolationist, which we have come to think of as lurking behind an “iron curtain”—iron because it is relentless and militaristic; a

curtain because it conceals truth, discourages close inspection, bars casual intercourse. (“Language” 111)

The U.S. played no small part in the creation of this Iron Curtain, Parker argued. The nation’s monolingualism illustrated its lack of desire to foster dialogue across linguistic and cultural difference:

What is a Language Curtain but an ironic barrier to the good will that depends upon direct understanding? In the very period that saw Russia emerge as a threat to world peace, American educators, with the tacit consent of the American people, began lowering here a Language Curtain that has inhibited our knowing the minds and hearts of either our enemies or our friends. (111)

Parker here promoted foreign language education for more reasons than simply to facilitate clear, efficient translation of non-English language communications and information. Parker encouraged American political leaders to see foreign language education as a means for better understanding the “ethnic symbols and sympathies and aspirations” of people from other nations and language communities (111).

From his leadership positions within MLA, Parker repeatedly argued that the experiences of foreign language learning would better prepare Americans for the cooperation needed to secure peace in an increasingly complex international order. He maintained that learning a second language “is a ‘liberalizing’ experience because, among other things, it teaches the limitations which the speech patterns of any single language impose upon individual thinking processes or even upon national attitudes and assumptions” (“Why?” 126). Modern language education could serve an overlooked

national need, then, by creating moments for teachers and students to reflect on the fact that no nation's policies were based on a "true" perspective of the world. A renewed commitment to improving the nation's linguistic competencies, Parker argued, would help the U.S. to assume a significant position of international influence based not on the rightness of its democratic ideology but instead on its ability to dialogue across seemingly impenetrable cultural barriers.

"The prime defense measure in a democracy"

As Parker's commencement address and other published writings would suggest, he played a crucial role in moving the MLA to engage pressing political and social concerns. By 1957, the MLA's Foreign Language Program had drafted "A Five-Year Program for Improving Modern Foreign Language Instruction in the National Interest." The MLA designed this program in order to make foreign language education programs a more attractive investment for federal and philanthropic funding, for it helped political and civic leaders to see how their monies would be spent toward the ends of building the nation's foreign language resources (Diekhoff 119).⁴

Despite having drafted a specific strategy for improving foreign language education in the U.S., the MLA proved unable to generate funding to implement its program. Nevertheless, the MLA succeeded in using the document to put foreign language education in the foreground of educational policy debates by the time the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I* on October 4, 1957. U.S. political leaders interpreted *Sputnik* as evidence that American schools were failing the American people by not preparing enough students to be scientific and technological innovators. The MLA, along with the

Intensive Language Program of the American Council of Learned Societies, tried to convince legislators that the U.S. also needed to improve foreign language study in order to ensure its continued influence “in this competitive and fast-changing world” (Derthick 48).

The “Five-Year Program” helped the MLA to make its argument a persuasive one. The study gave Congress a detailed picture of the present state of foreign language education in the U.S., a vision of what improved foreign language programs could help the nation to achieve, and a specific set of strategies for bringing about these ends. Congress ultimately rewarded the MLA for its efforts. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 included an entire section devoted to foreign language education programs (Diekhoff 3-4).

In passing the NDEA on August 22 and 23, 1958, Congress authorized more than \$1 billion in federal aid to be directed toward all levels of public and private education, from elementary to graduate schools. The NDEA focused its spending on three specific subject areas: science and mathematics education; technical and vocational training in fields related to the defense industry, such as electronics; and foreign language education. In terms of languages, federal funds aimed to promote new research on “critical” languages and regions of the world as well as on effective methods for incorporating these research findings into education curricula (Sufrin 7-8). Title VI-Part A of the NDEA allotted money for the creation of Language and Area Studies centers to train specialists in less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindustani, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian⁵; Part A of Title VI also provided funds for fellowships to enable promising graduate students to pursue advanced study in one of

these critical languages. Title VI-Part B, meanwhile, allocated money for colleges to establish language institutes that could spark scholars' invention of new teaching methods and materials as well as provide continuing education opportunities for teachers (Carlson and Williams 18).

Whereas Parker called for deepening our appreciation of other societies' ways of organizing their daily lives, however, the U.S. Congress promoted the NDEA as a means for strengthening the nation's democratic values to reject communist influence. Legislators felt that schools needed to do a better job of ensuring "that every young person, from the day he first enters school, [has] an opportunity to develop his gifts to the fullest" (Carlson 1). They believed the NDEA would create conditions that would allow each individual to pursue excellence, "the prime defense measure in a democracy" (Sufrin 16).

Threats from and disdain for Communism seemingly shaped every educational provision crafted in the name of "national defense." For example, the following passage from a Rockefeller Foundation education report was crafted in a way that alluded to regimented educational institutions of communist countries:

A free society cannot commandeer talent: it must be true to its own vision of individual liberty. And yet at a time when we face problems of desperate gravity and complexity, an undiscovered talent, a wasted skill, a misapplied ability is a threat to the capacity of a free people to survive.
(qtd. in Carlson 13).

U.S. Congressional representatives similarly believed that Americans already possessed within themselves the intelligence and creativity necessary to lead in scientific and

technological innovation and to defend democracy around the world. They saw the NDEA providing material support to encourage all citizens to develop their talents and apply them in ways that promote economic vitality and national society for all Americans.⁶

“An anomalous national language policy”

In one significant way, however, the U.S. Congress—and, by implication, the MLA—perverted this vision of “individual opportunity.” Specifically, the NDEA ignored the linguistic talents of children and adults in America’s heritage language communities. As Bruce Gardner would later argue in 1965, the NDEA reinforced a long-standing educational and cultural policy whereby “in American school rooms it was quite respectable to study and try to learn a foreign language, but that the child who already knew one before he entered school was somehow at a disadvantage” (19). Gardner, a specialist in foreign languages for the U.S. Office of Education, believed the MLA contributed greatly to American society by sparking efforts to address the effects of a long-term disregard of foreign language education. Nevertheless, he accused the MLA’s “Five-Year Program” and the NDEA of promoting an “anomalous national language policy” according to which it was “at best to ignore, at worst to stamp out, the native competence while at the same time undertaking the miracle of creating something like it in our monolinguals” (19).

This anomaly certainly created difficult learning environments for non-native speakers of English. It also led to the misapplication and inefficient use of federal funding. Gardner explained that while governments and school districts made multi-

million-dollar expenditures to create or bolster education programs in common and neglected languages, they directed none of the NDEA's funds toward maintaining or further developing the native language competence of the 11 percent of Americans (19 million people overall, 5 million of whom were children) whose native languages were not English.⁷ Gardner challenged policymakers to see that the NDEA distorted its own idealized vision of education in a democracy wherein all students have opportunities to discover their talents and to develop their abilities to the fullest extent.

The NDEA's neglect of these linguistic resources illustrates the effects of labeling non-English language programs in U.S. schools as "foreign" language education. Modern language scholar Deborah M. Herman explains, "In the United States the very term *foreign* language education carries a history of sociocultural implications rooted in nationalist ideology which defines those who are inside and those who are outside the sociocultural body of the political nation" (2). Within the entire text of the NDEA, the U.S. Congress used "foreign language education" to refer only to the teaching of second languages to Anglo or White students who spoke English as their first language. In so doing, legislators positioned non-native English speakers outside "the sociocultural body of the political nation." Non-English speaking citizens and their languages effectively became "foreign" inside of U.S. borders, prompting suspicion that they pose potential threats to U.S. security. According to this articulation of "the sociocultural body of the political nation," non-English and non-native English speaking citizens were not to be viewed as assets for securing the nation.

“The immense stillness of the profession”

Given this greatly expanding need for language resources, language education “fell under the logics of competition—in which there can never be a limit on better, faster, cheaper, smarter means to an end” (Brandt, “Drafting” 496-497). Legislators framed the need for language competencies as a matter of national security, thereby greatly accelerating the timeframe within which they wanted to see results from NDEA funding. Ideally, the Language Institutes program would have been founded on a greater research base of effective teaching methods, research that would be conducted by the increasing number of scholars trained at the Language and Area Centers. Instead, the need to shore up national defense forced educators to emphasize increasing the quantity of language offerings rather than also increasing the quality and innovation of instruction in both existing and new programs (Diekhoff 128). Programs such as the Language Institutes for primary and secondary educators, Diekhoff concluded, were not as effective as they could have been because they grew “faster than the capacity of the profession immediately to make the most of them” (130).

These demands for producing short-term results from NDEA funds also prompted many scholars to abandon their role in promoting a progressive educational vision within language policy debates. Key leaders from the MLA did join the U.S. Commission on Education to oversee the implementation of the NDEA, most notably Parker, who served as director of the office’s Language Development Program. Many scholars and administrators also served on a committee that advised the Education Commissioner on language policy issues. Nevertheless, by 1963, Kenneth W. Mildenberger could express his concern with “the immense stillness of the profession,” as he saw scholars do little to

advance the public dialogue on the nation's language needs and language education (qtd. in Diekhoff 125). Mildenerger observed,

It would seem as though the Modern Language Association Foreign Language Program of the Nineteen Fifties had settled all the questions of the language field, and now it remains only for Government funds to implement FL Program policies and American education will be fully served. (qtd. in Diekhoff 125)

Certainly, scholars were working at the local level to decide how best to use Title IV funding to build language and area research programs. Mildenerger suggested, however, that academics, language associations, and educators missed opportunities to foster public dialogue even after the NDEA had been written into law. These conversations were needed to assess how the policy was and was not meeting its stated goals as well as to continue examining—and re-imagining—the nation's language needs.

The effects of the MLA's inability to sustain public discussion about language needs and language education were made manifest over the subsequent two decades. The NDEA directed significant resources to foreign language education during an initial five-year period, but the legislation's impact diminished over the long-term. John Watzke notes that many NDEA programs did not become financially self-sustaining. As the conflict in Vietnam escalated, funding and public support for national-security initiatives dwindled, and many NDEA programs were discontinued (53).

These difficulties only intensified as the national economy slowed in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. By 1979, the number of foreign language and area studies fellowships funded by the federal government had dwindled to 828, down from

2,557 a decade earlier. (Presidential Commission 9). Between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, federal spending on university-based foreign affairs research declined by 58 percent, from \$20.3 million to \$8.5 million (9). The NDEA had promoted a utilitarian perspective toward foreign language education, but as foreign language programs dwindled in number, colleges and universities once again shifted a majority of their resources toward providing basic instruction in languages instead of taking learners “to a level of competency that enables them to use the language as a vehicle for communication” (Panetta 6). Public support for foreign language education only continued to erode, for these basic courses enabled students to develop little in the way of what either they or their parents saw as usable skills.

Present-day political and military leaders have used the term “Sputnik moment” to invoke the image of a massive, coordinated, and focused national response to building language resources. These and other stakeholders in the National Language Agenda debate need to acknowledge, though, that while the MLA and the U.S. Congress did create a vision for invigorating democracy and securing the nation through foreign language study, they also reinforced a sharp distinction between English and “foreign” languages that encouraged people to see English as the only “living” language for use within U.S. society. Consequently, the NDEA discouraged students, parents, and students from seeing second languages as resources that could invigorate democracy within the U.S. by fostering dialogue across communities.

Ultimately, the NDEA implicitly aligned learning foreign languages with defeating communism such that it encouraged Americans to see modern languages as tools for furthering division between societies. In this way, the NDEA threatened to pull

down the “Language Curtain” between the U.S. and the Soviet Union even lower. This perspective toward languages encouraged feelings of difference and suspicion rather than fostering dialogue and openness. Participants in the present National Language Agenda debate need to understand these resonances of the “Sputnik moment” even as they build modern language education programs to promote understanding between societies and cultures both within the U.S. and abroad.

Reading the Military’s Roadmap for Language Transformation

Congress passed the NDEA in short order after the Soviet Union’s *Sputnik I* launch signaled a threat to the U.S. The NDEA grouped language competencies with scientific, mathematical, and engineering skills as important tools for securing the nation against both physical and political force from communist nations. As the Cold War continued through four decades, the U.S. developed a fairly deep pool of professionals with proficiencies in languages of eastern Europe and the Soviet states. Nevertheless, sophisticated technologies, not language professionals, proved to be the most efficient and effective means for the U.S. military to gather information about its Warsaw Pact opposition (Porter 4). Because the U.S.’s primary allies and enemies in the Cold War all employed conventional militaries, the U.S. could use satellite imagery to gather and analyze intelligence concerning Soviet troop concentrations and weapons capabilities. Moreover, DoD officials found the Soviet Union’s political and military leadership to be fairly predictable. They felt comfortable anticipating the totalitarian regime’s military tactics (4). The Cold War security environment did require that the U.S. armed forces had a significant number of language professionals to aide in intelligence collection against

the Soviet Union and its allies, but aside from the “Sputnik moment,” the conventional nature of the Warsaw Pact’s operations did not exert undue pressure on the military’s language resources.

By the time the DoD convened the National Language Conference in June 2004, however, Pentagon officials had once again come to see language skills as a critical weapon in the U.S. military’s arsenal. This renewed emphasis on languages reflects changes in the international security environment after the Cold War and within the Global War on Terrorism. The DoD’s ideas about how best to use “soft skills” such as languages have changed in significant ways since the NDEA of 1958. This section traces these developments in the U.S. military’s thinking about how it should use language skills in twenty-first century operations. This analysis can sharpen the lens through which language arts scholars read the DoD’s specific conceptions of the nation’s language needs that it advanced during the National Language Conference and in the National Language Agenda.

“Unlocking the secrets of the enemy”

Inquiries into the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have suggested that the federal government’s insufficient language resources contributed to its inability to anticipate and prevent the attacks. Several government reports, including those resulting from inquiries by the 9/11 Commission, warned that the military and intelligence communities did not have enough linguists and translators on staff to read covert documents (National Commission). The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) similarly found that at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, “shortages of language-

proficient staff have resulted in the accumulation of thousands of hours of audiotapes and pages of writing material that have not been reviewed or translated” (14). In this same January 2002 report, the GAO concluded that the Army did not have “the linguistic capacity to support two concurrent major theaters of war, as planners require” (15). These reports do identify a significant shortage in the number of language professionals employed in the military. Nevertheless, as they focus solely on linguists, translators, and similar personnel, these reports reinforce a limited conception of the type and range of language expertise that the military and intelligence communities need.

The DoD had designed the U.S. armed forces with a similarly narrow focus. In fact, this common understanding of the military’s language needs had become engrained within its culture. In a 2004 report that culminated a multi-year institutional self-analysis, DoD officials reported that Combatant Commanders within the U.S. armed forces think about the military’s language needs solely in terms of linguists who conduct intelligence-related translation activities. This *National Security Strategy* report concluded that these commanders “lack understanding of the multiple dimensions of language capability” they could deploy while planning and executing military operations in overseas theaters (qtd. in Defense Language Transformation Team 14). As a result of this narrow conception, Combatant Commanders in the U.S. military often fail to give senior military leadership an accurate picture of their forces’ language needs. In turn, DoD officials do not sufficiently attend to these language skills in their recruitment or training decisions.

The post-Cold War security environment has brought new challenges that have pressured U.S. military officials to develop language expertise at all personnel ranks. These challenges have arisen primarily within the Global War on Terrorism. Terrorists

fight what DoD leadership call “asymmetrical warfare” (Porter 1), as it involves surprise and deception rather than conventional, direct applications of military force. Those terrorist forces conducting asymmetrical warfare are not “strictly organized military units,” such as the U.S. faced during the Cold War, but rather “less-predictable enemies that may or may not fight on conventional battlefields and hide in the hinterlands of the world where the languages spoken are rarely studied in the Western world” (1-2). The asymmetrical nature of the Global War on Terrorism, argues historian Clifford F. Porter of the Defense Language Institute, demands that the military invest in developing its human resources rather than sophisticated satellites and weapons:

[W]hen the enemy is unconventional, hiding within civilian populations and motivated by an ideology that targets civilians, the foreign language capability of intelligence and special operations assets is one of the critical tools to unlocking the secrets of the enemy in his hiding places. (3)

Global positioning systems can help the U.S. military to know where enemy forces might be located, Porter explains, but these and other technologies cannot tell U.S. commanders “how the enemy thinks from the strategic to the tactical levels of war” (1). Foreign language capabilities are needed to understand “how the enemy thinks.” Gaining this type of knowledge can help U.S. military leaders to anticipate the enemy’s surprise attacks.

The U.S. military’s emerging language needs also reflect its strategy of disrupting terrorists’ recruitment efforts. Porter explains that by learning how terrorists’ languages reflect their culture and their politics, the U.S. can also understand their ideology and how it motivates both terrorists and their recruits (2). Terrorists’ ideology, Porter suggests, shapes their perceptions toward the U.S. and motivates their “absolute

unwillingness to compromise with what they perceive as the manifestation of evil on Earth—the United States” (1). U.S. military officials such as Porter believe that learning terrorists’ languages can help the U.S. to understand their culture. Such knowledge would allow the U.S. military to challenge terrorists’ fundamentalist ideology more effectively, jamming their recruitment efforts by “delegitimizing [the ideology] in the eyes of the parents of teenage boys” (2).

“Transforming the way we value language expertise”

Unfortunately for the U.S. military, Combatant Commanders’ staffs had not yet been effectively restructured by the time the armed forces began Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The DoD’s evaluations of U.S. performance in OEF and OIF illustrate the negative effects of fighting against nontraditional military forces while still granting little value to language competencies and cultural knowledge. DoD leadership provided this assessment:

Emerging lessons learned from OEF, OIF, and other operations in the [Global War on Terrorism] are reinforcing the importance of language and regional capabilities for Joint and multinational forces. Senior OEF and OIF leaders and planners cite the lack of qualified language professionals and regional experts as a major shortcoming in both operational planning and execution. [. . .] These lessons learned are showing that [Foreign Area Officer]-like expertise is essential in initial planning for combat and contingency operations, for the execution of the combat phase, and for

post-combat reconstruction and stabilization efforts. (Defense Language Transformation Team 29-30)

This report reflects the fact that U.S. Combatant Commanders planned OEF and OIF with officers who brought “traditional” military analytical skills and expertise to the staff. These command structures have been based on deep-rooted biases in the military culture that regard language competencies as “soft” rather than “critical warfighting skills” (Science Applications International iii). The assessment above, however, only accentuates the military’s need for more than just linguists and translators with skills in “critical” languages. The lessons of OEF and OIF signal that the U.S. military also needs more officers who possess advanced knowledge of the languages, politics, and cultures of the regions where the U.S armed forces will be operating and who can use these skills to network with other coalition forces and with local officials.

These conclusions prompted the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, David S. C. Chu, to assemble a Defense Language Transformation Team “to transform the way we value, develop, and employ language and regional expertise” (Defense Language Transformation Team 6). Beginning in November 2002, this team studied how the U.S. military established its requirements for language proficiency in certain personnel positions as well as how it developed and managed officers with necessary regional knowledge and language skills (8). These studies informed the team’s June 16, 2004 draft of a “Defense Language Transformation Roadmap.” This roadmap outlined a strategy for the U.S. military to build a foundation of language and cultural expertise in all personnel ranks (officer, civilian, and enlisted) for both active and reserve military units. The roadmap also proposed a method for identifying language-proficient

personnel in the military and for ensuring that they are assigned to positions where they can make use of—and, in so doing, maintain—these skills.

The “Defense Language Transformation Roadmap” describes the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) as *the* model for the type of linguistically proficient personnel that the U.S. military needs to recruit or train at all levels if it is to operate more flexibly in twenty-first century asymmetrical warfare. The FAO combines a primary war-fighting skill with advanced knowledge of a region’s language, culture, politics, and economics. Through their training both in the U.S. and abroad, FAOs develop a near-native proficiency in speaking, listening, and reading at least one language in a wide range of military, diplomatic, and civilian contexts.

Not surprisingly—but no less interesting for humanistic scholars—the FAO then puts this regional and linguistic knowledge to use in ways that serve the U.S. military command within that particular geographical area. In particular, the FAO works as a diplomat to forge relationships with “the key political, military, and social leaders who can influence the outcome of an operation,” making use of his or her ability to “understand the nuances of U.S. foreign policy and how U.S. perspectives are shared or opposed by foreign governments and different groups within their populations” (Defense Language Transformation Team 18).

In calling for FAOs to have a more central role in the DoD’s “language transformation,” the Defense Language Transformation Team has promoted a broader conception of the military’s language needs than political and military leaders would imagine were they to focus solely on the work of linguists and translators. Indeed, the Defense Language Transformation Team seeks to promote a vision for the U.S. military

in which all personnel see language proficiency not as a discrete skill for translating texts but rather as applied knowledge that re-shapes how one plans for, conducts, and assesses the impact of all military tasks.

“Shaping events, responding rapidly, and operating globally”

The “Defense Language Transformation Roadmap,” then, advocates a new design for the U.S. armed forces in which a deeper pool of language skills proves as important as technological advances. Such transformation, in fact, would support DoD leadership’s recent argument that analytical precision and speed need to become the U.S. military’s new sources of power because terrorists’ asymmetrical warfare has offset the U.S.’s traditional strength in technological sophistication. Pentagon officials first presented this strategy in the document *Joint Vision 2020*. DoD officials stated in this strategic plan that the U.S. military needs to focus on achieving “decision superiority” within any particular security environment, that is, “better decisions arrived at and implement faster than an opponent can react” (qtd. in Defense Language Transformation Team 8). To achieve “decision superiority,” the U.S. military needs to gather accurate, timely, and relevant information. More importantly, however, the U.S. military needs to have personnel who can convert “superior information” to “superior knowledge” by situating this information within its multicultural context and identifying the implications of this information on U.S. Commanders’ planning and execution of military operations.

The U.S. military’s potential analytical power would likely remain undeveloped, however, as long as language skills and regional expertise continue to be dismissed as “soft” skills in comparison to more easily recognizable warfighting skills. For these

reasons, Pentagon officials have declared that a “deep understanding of the cultural, political, military, and economic characteristics of a region must be established and maintained” on every Combatant Commanders’ staff (*Joint Vision 2020* 23; qtd. in Defense Language Transformation Team 8). Each branch of the military, then, now needs to assess the degree to which language capability exists on Combatant Commanders’ planning staffs and to develop strategies to incorporate officers with such skills into more significant decision-making positions (12). DoD leaders believe that officers with regional knowledge and linguistic skills can significantly improve Combatant Commanders’ ability to understand security situations from a variety of cultural perspectives, thereby improving the U.S. military’s ability to operate effectively with various multinational coalitions and in concert with different government agencies and international organizations.

This increasing emphasis on “decision superiority” has drawn attention to the fact that the U.S. military’s language needs extend beyond training personnel to translate intelligence documents, interrogate prisoners of war, or conduct covert operations. For the past four years, U.S. military officials have been guided by the March 2002 warnings of retired Israeli General Arie Amit. The U.S. will not win against terrorists, Amit declared, unless it understands “their language, their literature, and their poetry” (qtd. in Porter 4). This realization has in turn shaped the language education programs inside the U.S. military, particularly at the Defense Language Institute’s Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in Monterrey, California. In a report submitted to the Defense Language Transformation Team, DLIFLC administrators argued that the institute needs to begin providing students with a baccalaureate-style education that “expands [their] knowledge

of area studies, history, geography, culture, and other disciplines needed to think, speak and function in the target languages with sophistication” (18). This broader pedagogical focus, DLIFLC suggested, “will ensure the right skills are developed” that enable U.S. military personnel “to shape events, to respond rapidly, and to operate globally” (29).

“Language is our weapon”

The DoD’s focus on the language, the literature, and the poetry influencing terrorists should grab the attention of all modern language scholars, including English-language arts educators. On the one hand, the DLIFLC promotes learning languages and reading literature as a means for gaining insight on another culture, a pedagogical goal that language arts educators have long supported. On the other hand, the U.S. military has described its educational project as one of teaching languages and literatures, to quote Porter, as a means for “understanding how the enemy thinks and acts” (1). U.S. President George W. Bush echoed these ideas during a January 5, 2006 speech at the State Department to announce a \$114 million National Security Language Initiative. Speaking to 120 college and university presidents who had gathered to discuss problems in international education, the President explained that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld “wants his young soldiers who are on the front lines of finding these killers to be able to speak their language and be able to listen to the people in the communities in which they live” (2). U.S. Colonel Michael R. Simone of the DLIFLC had stated this view even more bluntly during his presentation at the June 2004 National Language Conference. Colonel Simone declared, “Language is our weapon.”

These comments highlight the critical language needs of the U.S. military. As they make these assertions, though, Porter, Bush, Simone, and others advance an implicit argument about how they want foreign languages to be used. For the U.S. Commander in Chief, for DoD officials, and for DLIFLC administrators, foreign language learning must serve as a tool—a tool used to ascertain and translate information; a tool used to kill terrorists. Such ideas send the message that we use these languages to wage war—we speak them as a means to know the enemy and to eliminate him.

Language arts educators need to publicly challenge this perspective. It only enacts a kind of linguistic other-ing in which native speakers of languages such as Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu get defined as informants at best and terrorists at worst. Mary Louise Pratt helps us to see how this naming of linguistic others necessarily limits the possibilities for language education and disrupts diplomatic efforts abroad. She states, “By the time a language has become a national security imperative, in a way it’s already too late: the other has already been defined as an enemy; the failures of communication and understanding have already done their damage” (115). As Pratt claims, defining language learning as a tool in the war against terrorism only further compounds the us-them dichotomy. The reason for which soldiers now learn Farsi and Arabic is to burn bridges, not to build them.

Compositionists need to join with other language arts educators in challenging these ideas about language and language-learning. The DoD’s discursive practice of labeling “linguistic others” reflects a desire to gain and wield power through language. Just as Brandt sees corporate sponsors of literacy organizing and managing language education toward particular ends, (“Losing”), so too does this analysis of the DoD’s

“Language Transformation Roadmap” help us to understand how its language policy might define language-learning as a means for acquiring cultural and linguistic mastery over other groups.

Indeed, as the next section demonstrates, this understanding of non-English speakers as potential threats to our well-being has undoubtedly influenced the DoD’s draft of the National Language Agenda. The document fails to address the problems facing many linguistic minorities within U.S. borders. Compositionists can resist this discourse of linguistic weapons and should promote a broader vision of what the language arts classroom can be. In so doing, they will be engaging the battle to redefine schools not as spaces for securing the nation against terrorist threats but rather for teaching students how they can use language to make “superior decisions” as they negotiate the realities of their academic, familial, and communal lives.

Shaping the Vision of the National Language Agenda

The DoD’s “Defense Language Transformation Roadmap” charted a new course for the U.S. military, one that would redefine language competencies as critical warfighting skills and incorporate them into operations planning and execution. Because of financial pressures brought on by OEF and OIF as well as the Global War on Terrorism, however, DoD leaders have sought to involve stakeholders from other sectors of U.S. society in the effort to build the nation’s language resources. Indeed, the DoD sees such a significant shortage in its language capabilities that military officials believe partnerships have become the only feasible means for addressing it (“A Call” 12). Strengthening language instruction at high school and collegiate levels, the DoD believes,

would in turn improve both the quantity and quality of personnel who possess language competencies at the time of their military enlistment. Such improvements in the nation's educational system would then free the DoD to use its resources more strategically in developing the specific linguistic competencies that officers, soldiers, and language professionals need to operate effectively in the twenty-first international security environment.

Seeing that the U.S. military did not have all of the answers to meet its language needs, DoD officials in early 2004 envisioned a policy statement that would articulate the nation's language needs, identify its existing language resources, present a strategy for developing new resources, and outline a plan for managing all of these language resources to meet the nation's most pressing needs. The DoD, along with the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Study of Language, in June 2004 convened the "National Language Conference: A Call to Action" in Adelphi, Maryland in order to initiate conversations that would lead to such a policy statement. The National Language Conference brought together various stakeholders in this language policy issue, including leaders from federal government agencies such as the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Labor, and Health and Human Services; the corporate sector; modern language educators and scholars from both the secondary and collegiate levels, including Rosemary G. Feal and Mary Louise Pratt of the MLA; and private companies that provide language services.

Under Secretary of Defense Chu explained in his opening remarks that he hoped the National Language Conference would achieve two major goals: first, raise public awareness of the nation's "greater need for people who are multilingual, with an

understanding of the languages and cultures of the world”; and second, change “the direction of language and area studies in our nation” by creating “new goals for our educational and cultural institutions (“The Influence” 1). Many participants in the conference roundtables and presentations underscored the existing problems that made these goals necessary. Other participants, meanwhile, described strategies that their respective agencies have enacted to work toward these goals. To build on the discussions provoked by the roundtables and presentations, conference attendees participated in small-group working sessions on the last day. These sessions ultimately built the foundation for the DoD-authored National Language Agenda.

The DoD subsequently published this white paper in February 2005, re-titling it “A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities.” According to the DoD, this policy statement describes the conference participants’ vision of “a future in which the United States enhances its global leadership through increased proficiency in foreign languages and understanding of and respect for the cultures of the world” (Chu, Foreword). The document also proposes a broad seven-part strategy for coordinating efforts to identify, manage, and expand the nation’s language resources. These strategies include making language education a key aspect of professional training across a wide range of fields; coordinating language instruction more effectively from primary schools through undergraduate classrooms; and involving all levels of government—federal, state, and local—in efforts to implement solutions to the nation’s language problems.

Although the National Language Agenda was published in February 2005, it is still in progress, as it continues to prompt conversations about what the nation’s language needs are and how we can create a language-competent society to meet them. The

National Language Conference proceedings as well as the National Language Agenda itself will be the focus of this section, as I consider how and why composition scholars should engage this ongoing policy debate about language and national defense. My position is not that we should deny the significance of national security needs as part of what a language-competent society can address. Rather, I contend that we need to analyze all of the effects that follow from linking “language instruction” to “national security” and to work toward seeing that the National Language Agenda attends to the needs of the many language communities within our borders.

This section, then, has three parts. First, I analyze how conference participants defined the nation’s “language problems” and explore how their various interests, values, and worldviews shaped specific definitions of our nation’s “language needs.” Second, I study the complexities that seem to work against developing, implementing, and promoting a national language policy in the U.S. Third, I examine how the National Language Agenda reinforces a limiting conception of heritage language communities by describing their value to the nation in strictly utilitarian terms. Compositionists can, as teachers and as citizens, promote wider participation in articulating what a language-competent society should be able to do. By participating in this debate, composition scholars can help to revise our language policy so that it represents a broader range of communal and national interests in American society.

“The language competence necessary for our survival in today’s world”

Organizers of the National Language Conference called on participants to take a pragmatic approach to the problems they faced. For example, Chu made the following assertion in his prefatory remarks:

Our hope may be that a new American psyche will develop in time to respond to a changed world in a more effective way, but in this conference and white paper we need action. [. . .] Our nation has raw materials in abundance. This conference must provide initial pieces of a plan and begin the work of shaping that raw material into the [language] competence necessary for our survival in today’s world. We cannot continue to delay taking action. (“The Influence” 7-8)

Chu’s appeal for a quick, decisive response reflects the tenor of the conference theme, “A Call to Action,” as he charged participants with doing the necessary work to ensure “our survival in today’s world.” The nation undoubtedly faced critical shortages in the number of citizens with advanced skills in non-English languages. Conference organizers argued that the U.S. could secure its borders—not to mention sustain its position of power and influence in the world—only by creating a deeper pool of citizens and soldiers with advanced skills in foreign languages and deploying them in the service of the greater national good. Leaders from government, business, and academia were assembled, then, to craft a plan to meet these language needs. Despite these urgent calls, though, many conference participants knew that to mobilize such action they would first need to pinpoint the nation’s pressing and critical language needs.

How social or political problems are defined proves to be as important in policy deliberations as does the creation of solutions to meet these needs. As in all policy debates, the nation's present language crisis was not a problem "out there in the world waiting for smart analysts to come along and define [it] correctly" (Stone 122). Instead, this language problem, like all policy problems, has been "created in the minds of citizens by other citizens, leaders, organizations, and government agencies, as an essential part of political maneuvering" (Fischer 171). Political scientist Frank Fischer explains that policy debates often center on arguments to define policy problems in specific and strategic ways, as participants use rhetorical strategies "to portray a social situation in a way that favours one's own argument and course of action as being in the public interest" (170). According to Fischer, "such strategic problem definition usually means 'manipulating the scope of conflict' by making some members of the public appear more affected by the conflict than others" (170). Participants shape the policy discourse by using rhetorical strategies either to expand or limit the size of the populace or the number of communities affected by a particular causal event or situation.

Proceedings at the National Language Conference show how various attendees tried to define the precise nature of the U.S.'s language problem—as well as its cause—in order to create political and public support for policies that would direct resources to target these specific problems. At the same time, these participants also made implicit arguments about who can or should participate in this process of defining, evaluating, and solving the nation's language problems.

Throughout his opening remarks, Under Secretary of Defense Chu portrayed the U.S. military as an instigator of progressive social change. In so doing, he tried to leave

no doubt in conference attendees' minds that the DoD should be leading this effort to identify and address the nation's language problems and solutions. Chu provided several historical examples in which the DoD identified critical social problems and then created and implemented effective policy solutions to resolve them. For instance, he described how "[m]any innovations in public health have begun in the realm of national security" ("The Influence" 4):

[A]n investigation into the health of young men rejected in the World War II draft showed a connection between physical deficiencies and childhood malnutrition. In response, Congress enacted the 1946 National School Lunch Act as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children. (4)

Likewise, the DoD has shaped many American advances in science and technology and found ways to incorporate these insights into U.S. classrooms:

In science and technology, the Department of Defense has been a key element in national and even world-wide programs. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) played a formative role in the development of the Internet. Today many math and science programs in elementary schools, high schools and colleges are supported through the provisions of Title 10 of the United States Code, the statute that establishes and defines the Department of Defense and the Armed Services. (5)

Chu wanted conference attendees to see the DoD's convening of the National Language Conference as just one more example of the DoD's commitment to improving American

life. Indeed, he suggested, “it is appropriate that the Department of Defense also sponsor efforts in language and cultural studies as matters of vital concern for our nation’s future” (5).

Chu used his opening remarks, then, to convince conference participants that the DoD had again identified a pressing need that affected the entire citizenry. He assured listeners, too, that the DoD again would protect the public interest by crafting and implementing a policy solution to resolve this national language problem. As Chu made these arguments, however, he also implicitly suggested that the nation’s language problems had already been identified and precisely defined. What U.S. citizens now needed was less debate, more action.

U.S. Representative Rush Holt followed Chu to the podium during the National Language Conference’s opening session, and he used his speech to emphasize that the *military’s* critical language needs should be seen as the *nation’s* critical language needs. Rush titled his speech “Is American Security Being Lost in Translation?” and he answered “yes” in his remarks. He linked U.S. military personnel’s language shortages in overseas theaters of war to increased threats to the security of U.S. citizens living within U.S. borders. Holt remarked,

Our national deficiency in the languages and cultures of critical areas around the world is compromising American security interests at home and abroad. [. . .] [T]he deficiency is making our troops overseas more vulnerable and the American people less safe than they should be. (1)

By defining the language problem in terms of national security, Holt here was “manipulating the scope” of the policy problem (Stattschneider 7; qtd. in Fischer 17).

More specifically, Holt threaded through his speech the implicit claim that the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil could have been prevented if vital intelligence had not been “lost in translation.”

Holt linked language skills and terrorist attacks in this way to broaden the scope of this language policy debate, showing that the National Language Agenda would affect all Americans, not just non-English speakers or those who work for or with them. He clearly suggested that Americans could be safer at home if the conference participants were to draft a policy that corrected this “national deficiency in the languages and cultures of critical areas around the world.” By defining the military’s language problems as *the* pressing language problem facing the entire nation, Holt and the DoD declared their support for a policy that would make schools important spaces for securing the nation against terrorist threats. Moreover, Holt defined the nation’s language problems in terms of the military’s overseas concerns in ways that threatened to direct attention away from pressing language problems affecting the day-to-day experiences of people living within the U.S. borders.

Representatives from the corporate sector also defined the policy problem in terms of national security, but they specifically argued that public investments in language skills could help U.S. companies create stability abroad. For example, Rick Lazio, Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Service Forum, which represents the world’s largest financial institutions, reminded conference attendees that while “[o]ur military forces are one of the pillars of modern American power [. . .] the wellspring of American power is the U.S. economy” (1). Lazio called for a national policy that would direct federal resources toward building the nation’s competencies in languages that

could allow U.S. companies to open markets in non-English-speaking parts of the world that are politically, economically, and socially unstable and—as a result—“home to the most radical ideology” (2). According to Lazio, a language policy that addressed the nation’s security needs would help the U.S. military to defeat terrorists in the volatile post-September 11 world, of course, but it would also enable U.S. businesses “to consolidate our gains and complete our missions” by leading recovery and reconstruction efforts in war-torn nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq (5). Lazio, then, defined the nation’s security-related language problem as one that encompassed the U.S. military and intelligence communities’ need for “critical” languages as well as the U.S. business community’s need for linguistically competent employees to secure Americans at home by building stronger nations elsewhere in the world.

While military officials and corporate executives linked their language needs to Americans’ desire for a secure homeland, several other federal representatives at the conference argued that the National Language Agenda needed to conceive of the nation’s needs more broadly. These conference participants demanded that the language policy address the problems facing linguistic minorities within the U.S. Presentations on this topic included the Justice Department’s need for greater numbers of translators for federal trials (van der Heide), the Labor Department’s need for more bilingual employees to service Limited-English Proficiency small-business owners and workers (Mok), and the Department of Health and Human Services’ need to recruit more heritage language speakers into the medical field in order to remove cultural and linguistic barriers that limit many citizens’ access to the health care system (Jang). These presentations challenged the DoD to expand its definition of the nation’s language needs and to

recognize the legitimacy of non-English-speaking citizens' claims to equal access and civil rights. Moreover, their definitions of the nation's language needs encompassed the general lack of cultural understanding and empathy for linguistic minorities. They called for the National Language Agenda to speak to the social, political, and economic pressures linguistic minorities face in their everyday lives.

While these participants *did* broaden ideas of what language competency would need to address, Pratt's arguments especially highlight how the military's definition of "critical needs" stifles debate about resource distribution as well as instructional priorities. Pratt warned that defining our nation's language problem in terms of overseas concerns can disconnect schools and colleges from using their resources to serve the communities where they are located. She provided the following example to illustrate this point:

Within its own borders the United States needs professionals and service people of all kinds who can operate in locally spoken languages. A few months ago, for example, two southern California primary school teachers told me of their frustration when a flagship Japanese program was set up in their school district, while an acute need for Tagalog-speaking nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, even tax preparers went unmet. There was no pipeline to track local Tagalog speakers into these professions and enable them to develop their Tagalog. (114)

Pratt's words illustrate the fact that a National Language Agenda conceived solely on international concerns may keep the citizenry safe from enemies but will also ignore inequalities that face linguistic minority communities within U.S. borders. Scholars in

rhetoric and composition, therefore, should join Pratt. We too must engage the debate about how to prioritize the kinds of languages that schools and colleges develop in their educational programs. As Pratt does here, we should take part in discussions about language instruction and articulate the many ways that undervalued communities' language needs—like with this Tagalog community—go unmet. Toward these ends, we must also argue for representatives from linguistic minority communities to have a place in the conversations that are shaping our National Language Agenda. Their participation is vital. Their perspectives and strategies can help to ensure that the language-competent society we work to create will improve our domestic well-being in a variety of ways, particularly for those people situated outside the national imaginary in most debates about effective public policy.

Composition scholars can begin to facilitate such interventions by building on work our field has done with community literacy programs. These projects have helped marginalized communities to express their language-learning desires and to develop skills for articulating their language needs. This work in many ways challenges the arguments made by Chu, Holt, Lazio, and others that the U.S. educational system failed the nation by not teaching the language skills U.S. military personnel need to secure our nation's borders. Compositionists' work with community literacy programs instead redefines the nation's language problem as one resulting from the U.S. political and educational systems' repeated failures to acknowledge or value the needs and interests of minority communities.

While the DoD, Congress, and American businesses call on universities to create the workers who will support the nation's military and economic missions,

compositionists can engage community literacy projects as a means for reinvigorating, in Stephen Parks' words, "a vision of the academic life as representing the work of a committed citizen" (241). Working within community literacy programs prompts compositionists to listen to linguistic minorities' language needs. Compositionists' continued work with extracurricular literacy programs can help the field speak to the National Language Agenda debate, demanding a national language policy that defines the nation's language problems in ways that direct students' and scholars' attention toward addressing a pressing need found in our local communities.

"Forging a persuasive way to talk about multilingualism"

Throughout the National Language Conference, many presenters spoke about how (often unacknowledged) cultural, economic, and political pressures in U.S. society continually reinforce the belief that America has "naturally" become a primarily monolingual nation. These normalizing forces and the consequent ubiquity of English in public spaces has led many Americans to think that the nation does not have and does not need a language policy (Lo Bianco, "The Language" 46-47). Chu, in his opening remarks at the conference, described this dominant cultural attitude about English, one based on a perception of American society as a melting pot:

America has had, from the beginning, a unique position in the world, a world in which we have been, not just another country among many countries, but both a destination and a dream. It has been part of our national psyche that other cultures and languages are something to be left behind. [. . .]

For us, growing up in this land, in this tradition, learning other languages, or even finding a way to relate to those who have not (yet) come to us, is an intellectual exercise, not a necessity. It is not always naiveté or arrogance that causes us to feel it is not necessary or even appropriate to meet the world on its terms; it has been our experience, a defining act of our existence—and it is a fact that the majority of Americans still live and feel in their hearts. (“The Influence” 3)

Of course, the “part of our national psyche” that promotes substituting—not adding—English in Americans’ linguistic repertoires plays an influential role in shaping the larger U.S. language policy. This implicit language policy exerts such a strong influence on the national psyche that many Americans have vehemently opposed bilingual ballots and other services, viewing them as linguistic minorities’ efforts to weaken their commitments to U.S. civic institutions.

For these reasons, a successful national language policy needs to do more than outline a strategy for developing the nation’s diverse language resources. Supporters of the National Language Agenda also need to effect change in the hearts and minds of many Americans so that they see learning multiples languages as a civic necessity, not an intellectual exercise.

Language scholars at the National Language Conference anticipated these pressures that could hinder public and political support for the National Language Agenda. Joseph Lo Bianco, professor of language and literacy education at the University of Melbourne, spoke most directly to this issue as he described his work in drafting Australia’s National Policy on Language in 1986. During that time, Lo Bianco repeatedly

heard critics in the federal government declare that “language policy is not something we do” (“Brief” 1). Lo Bianco explains that these legislators’ concerns were based on the belief that language polices represent a form of “national deficiency correction” and “imply that some key feature of the nation’s institutions or culture was not fully formed” (1). This view, he explained, “reflects a deeper sense, and one especially strongly felt in English-speaking countries, that multilingual states are inefficient, unstable, and troubled” (1). Complementing this view is the assumption that thoroughly modernized nation-states follow a unidirectional trajectory toward a single, unified, and standardized national language (1). Significantly, the National Language Agenda challenges this assumption. It recasts U.S. monolingualism as a “national deficiency” in need of “correction.”

Lo Bianco warned conference attendees, however, that because beliefs about multilingualism’s troubling nature have been so thoroughly engrained in the American psyche, supporters of the National Language Agenda need to devote as much energy to “forging a persuasive way to talk about multilingualism” as to debating the specific details involved in policy planning and implementation (“Brief” 3). Lo Bianco therefore called on conference participants to see that while they may be divided over whether the language policy needs to strengthen the national economy, ensure national security, or promote social equality, they collectively need to find a way to persuade all citizens that language policy planning can help the nation to achieve its goals.

The long-term benefits of such work become apparent, Lo Bianco suggested, when specific programs, laws, or policies do not survive changes in governmental leadership. What *can* survive such changes, he argued, is “a discourse, a way of talking

about linguistic diversity in positive terms” such that it constitutes “a persisting language policy” (“Brief” 3). Lo Bianco’s recommendations draw attention to the fact that the National Language Agenda itself, no matter how precisely it guides organizations’ development and management of the nation’s language resources, fails to directly engage what Chu describes as the “part of our national psyche that other cultures and languages are something to be left behind” (3).

Among all the National Language Conference participants, Pratt has led the way in trying to forge a persuasive way of talking about multilingualism. In her 2003 *Profession* article, she argued that “today’s dramatic circumstances” following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have created space in which can be formed “a new public idea about language, language learning, multilingualism, and citizenship” (112). This “new public idea,” she suggested, can be one that considers “knowing the world through languages” to be “an aspect of educated citizenship” (112). Pratt warned, though, that a way of talking about multilingualism in positive terms will not be persuasive over the long-term if it is linked solely to security-related discourses about “critical” language needs. Supporters of a national language policy, she argued, need to advocate not for specific languages but for “advanced language learning itself” (118).

Pratt’s strategies for forming a new public idea about language actually help one to see how the National Language Agenda itself could have done more to support this effort. The National Language Agenda repeatedly emphasizes the need for more Americans to develop advanced competencies in second and third languages. At the same time, the policy document does not help Americans to conceptualize what these advanced competencies look like in practice or what effort is required to develop them (other than

simply “more schooling”). Pratt believes that one of the most critical tasks in building a new public idea about language needs to be finding ways to talk about the broad range of tasks and knowledges that define various levels of competency in a language. These different types of competency range from being skilled enough in a language to be able to get by in a trip to another country to being skilled enough in a language to be able “to read sophisticated texts, write, develop adult relationships, exercise one’s profession, move effectively in a range of contexts, and adapt quickly to new situations” (116). As Pratt has noted, “Though everyone knows these differences exist, the current public idea about language has no way of talking about them, just as it has no way of talking about the many kinds of language learning” (116).

Presentations at the National Language Conference by representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice, to cite just two examples, gave the DoD ample material with which to illustrate these various competencies within the National Language Agenda’s text. Doing so could help Americans to see how knowing multiple languages needs to be a goal of civic education for all Americans, rather than simply an educational goal for those people most likely to use these skills in their professions. Equally as important, these descriptions, because they illustrate the complexity involved in acquiring and deploying advanced literacies, could help convince legislators and their constituents that a substantial long-term commitment is the only way to address the nation’s language needs. They need to see that while advanced competencies take significant time and resources to achieve, language-learners gain unique insights and experiences from such investments.

Our persuasive way of talking about multilingualism and a range of advanced competencies, however, needs to press hard against U.S. society's traditional notions about appropriate language use and the power that informs these decisions. The National Language Agenda attempts to broaden Americans' understanding of what constitutes valued literacies in U.S. society. These discourses, though, potentially threaten what Catherine Prendergast describes as the cultural belief in literacy as "White property" (8).⁸ Prendergast suggests that "literacy has been often regarded as a White trait, something that Whites possess naturally, rather than as a White privilege" (8). This belief, she contends, has led many Whites to act "as if something has been taken away from them when the goods of literacy are redistributed" (8). The National Language Agenda moves toward such a redistribution by calling on Americans to pursue literacies in multiple languages. Of course, the National Language Agenda would not challenge English's existence as the dominant language in U.S. public life. Nevertheless, the National Language Agenda threatens to lessen the value of White property as it recasts multilingual Americans and heritage language speakers as rhetorical power players in public life. Compositionists and other advocates for linguistic diversity need to anticipate the backlash against this redefinition of immigrants' and linguistic minorities' literacies as valuable property. The next section explores the complexities involved in such reevaluation of minority languages in U.S. civic and educational spaces.

"Bringing heritage communities into the educational 'main tent'"

As Bruce Gardner demonstrated in his 1965 analysis, the NDEA effectively elided the presence of the 11 percent of Americans at that time whose native languages

were other than English. Gardner criticized the NDEA's promotion of a paradoxical approach to language instruction whereby schools were to create native-like fluency in a second language for native English speakers while encouraging native speakers of the other languages to pursue an English-only educational path (19). The federal government and U.S. corporations now acknowledge that minorities can serve the nation through non-English channels. In sharp contrast, America's heritage language communities received significant attention in the National Language Conference deliberations as well as in the National Language Agenda. Many participants in the National Language Conference, in fact, called for a National Language Agenda that would make heritage language instruction a central component of the strategy to address the nation's language needs. Nevertheless, ideas about the specific uses of minorities' language skills still limit the value that the majority culture sees minorities contributing to public life.

The National Language Agenda, like many of the conference presentations on which it has been based, describes heritage languages in strictly utilitarian terms. The National Language Agenda acknowledges that the nation does not have enough resources to develop and employ professionals with language skills in all of the languages needed both now and in the future (DoD, "A Call" 9). Heritage language speakers therefore become valuable to the nation. Government agencies and U.S. businesses see them as a more efficient means of meeting their critical language needs. In fact, the National Language Agenda declares, "Our heritage communities must be viewed as assets upon which the nation can draw" (9).

In her presentation at the National Language Conference, Margaret R. Gulotta, Chief of Language Services for the FBI, expressed her view that heritage language

communities should be seen as a potential source for linguists to assist in the administration of justice:

Despite efforts to declare English as the official language, the 2000 Census reported that a language other than English is spoken at home by one out of every five people in this country—that equals over 47 million people! In the Department of Justice, the numbers equal a lot of suspects, victims, witnesses, and defendants—and, by the way, an excellent source of potential professional translators and interpreters. Even if English were declared the official language of the country, we still have to communicate with all of the suspects, victims, witnesses, and defendants in the foreign language. (2)

Gulotta went on to cite 2000 U.S. Census figures showing that 55 percent of those people who speak a language other than English at home are also highly proficient in English. These persons, she argued, represent “a largely untapped new generation who, with some additional language education,” could fill a significant amount of the federal government’s language needs (4). For these reasons, the National Language Agenda calls for a public information campaign that would in part target heritage language communities with the aim of raising their awareness about professional opportunities in language-related careers (DoD, “A Call” 3).

These arguments, of course, reflect the fact that federal government and business leaders are now recognizing that minorities can serve the country in more ways than just through the English language. Nevertheless, heritage communities now seem to be valued only for the efficiency and flexibility they can bring to governmental and business

institutions. The National Language Agenda's statement about drawing on the nation's heritage communities as assets is founded on what Judith Rodby calls a universalist understanding of languages. This perspective sees decisions about language use made solely on the basis of utilitarian concerns. Languages are viewed as tools for extracting exchange value from any particular sociolinguistic context (31). For example, in the scenario Gulotta describes above, Spanish-language speakers become valuable to the FBI because they have the most efficient means for getting information from Spanish-speaking suspects, victims, witnesses, and defendants. This universalist understanding of languages also creates a hierarchy of value among non-English languages. Languages from which the nation stands to extract the most value will in turn receive priorities in governmental resources to fund training and staffing. This hierarchy appears most notably in the government's designation of "critical" languages such as Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, and Mandarin that appear to have immediate value for improving national security and economic well-being.

Grounded as it is on this perspective toward languages, the National Language Agenda fails to value heritage language speakers who choose not to use their languages in ways that meet the nation's "critical" security and economic needs. In so doing, those calls for heritage language speakers to help the nation achieve its military and economic goals ignore the effects of minorities' marginalization within the cultural imaginary of U.S. civic and professional life. Political scientist Deborah Schildkraut, in an extensive focus-group study unconnected to the National Language Agenda debate, has called for paying closer attention to how an individual's conception of American identity can shape his or her ideas about language policies. Schildkraut found that the ethnocultural tradition

of American identity—that is, belief in “America as a nation of white Protestants” (6)—continues to influence many immigrants’ and ethnic minorities’ everyday experiences and, consequently, to affect how they “navigate their relationship with American politics and society” (204). One of the participants in Schildkraut’s study stated, for example, “I was born here, but I don’t feel that America includes me at all. I live here, but that’s it” (qtd. in Schildkraut 204). Such expressions of feeling and articulations of identity should caution stakeholders in the present language policy debate to consider how the National Language Agenda might be read by members of the U.S. political community who do not “self-identify as members of that community” (204). More specifically, Schildkraut’s findings must prompt us to identify where the National Language Agenda might better bridge the gaps that exist between the presumed “national” interest and the hopes, needs, and expectations of local communities.

Similarly, Schildkraut’s conclusions draw attention to the fact that many National Language Conference presentations as well as the National Language Agenda itself reproduce the normalized discourse that keeps many minority communities in the U.S. from identifying with the larger political community. While the National Language Agenda finally gives greater visibility to non-English languages within our borders, it reinforces negative conceptions of them as the languages of terrorists and criminals; of economic rivals preparing to drain American profits; and of the illiterate and unemployed in need of the government’s and taxpayers’ assistance. It remains to be seen whether heritage language speakers will use their languages for the government’s and businesses’ defined purposes at the same time that their communities still hold little leverage for

making their own claims for representation and cultural legitimacy within U.S. democracy.

Linguistic Joshua Fishman, in his presentation at the National Language Conference, elaborated on the forces that have limited the spaces for legitimate public uses of heritage languages. Fishman focused on how the social conditions of a language's users shape the perceived value of that language. He explained that this linkage particularly affects ideas about the values of Spanish:

[L]ow literacy within the Latino speech community reflects negatively on the entire image of Spanish in American society. Rather than being viewed as the literary and standardized language that it has been for centuries, Spanish is widely viewed as the dialectally splintered and socially stigmatized language of lower-class illiterates. ("300-Plus Years" 11)

These assumptions that non-English speakers possess few literacy skills has often led to educational policies that require students to devote all of their language learning to the English language. Such programs, of course, exacerbate students' difficulties in acquiring advanced literacy skills. They fail to give non-native-English-speaking students meaningful contexts for formally studying and developing proficiency in their first languages while they also learn English (Snow and Hakuta 389). The Spanish language's absence within the formal space of the classroom reinforces the dominant society's belief that minority languages have no place within U.S. public life. Unfortunately, the National Language Agenda does not provide strategies for challenging these negative public perceptions about heritage languages. The document instead only stresses that heritage

languages increasingly have gained use value within the U.S. because they can be used as tools to solve the nation's "critical" security and economic problems.

Fishman used his presentation to show why the National Language Agenda must look beyond what the nation can draw from and how it can make use of heritage languages. He attempted to convince conference participants that heritage languages such as Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Polish, and Spanish need to be brought "into the educational 'main tent,' where our national well-being is given its most serious attention and most ample support" ("300-Plus Years" 14). The aim of educational and language policies, he argues, must be not only to increase the number of students graduating with proficiency in "critical" languages such as Arabic, Urdu, and Chinese but also "to dignify our country's heritage language communities and the cultural and religious values that their languages represent" (13). Scholars such as Fishman have learned through their research that heritage language education can strengthen students' commitment to learning because it encourages them to see their cultural history as an important subject within the formal space of the classroom.

Unlike what the DoD would imply, heritage language education can also serve as a foundation for students to develop the intellectual skills that will allow them to participate in all facets of professional and civic life in the U.S., not just in "foreign" language-related careers. Fishman argued, in fact, that a commitment to increasing proficiency in students' and adults' heritage languages "will help language instruction to connect with cultural and intellectual creativity, which it has often been speciously distant from" (13).

Rhetoric and composition scholars can help to amplify Fishman's arguments. Several compositionists, in fact, have anticipated Fishman's call for seeing heritage languages as resources that students use to better understand and make sense of their worlds. Jamie Mejía, who teaches writing in predominately Chicano/Chicana classrooms of the U.S. Southwest, creates such possibilities for his students to tap into their creative energies. Specifically, he presents his students with rhetorical situations that allow them to employ tactical mixtures of both English and Spanish. Mejía's pedagogy in this way acknowledges the linguistic realities of his students' lives in the Southwest, for students sharpen the rhetorical skills they need to use in "negotiating for a legitimized position as bilingual and bicultural U.S. Americans" (52). These creative public uses of rhetorical skills across two languages, Mejía explains, allow both him and his students "to work toward composing ourselves lest we be composed by others" (53).

Other composition scholars have turned their attention directly to community-based educational programs in order to better understand how to encourage students to use their heritage languages as resources for higher learning. Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner, for example, have described how the Ujima program⁹ has created opportunities for African American girls to work through language- and literacy-learning activities that "provide them with the training and extended family experiences necessary to deal with and to excel in today's fast paced society" (qtd. in Ball and Lardner, *African American Literacies Unleashed* 87). Activities in the Ujima program specifically focus on "community service, effective communication, physical development, Swahili, job preparedness, and Christian values" (90). More generally, the Ujima program provides a formal context for African American girls to learn their communities' traditions.

Dialogue and group activities help the girls to discover how they can draw on these cultural knowledges as they grow in and through their professional, familial, and civic lives. Ball and Lardner explain that all of these activities help students work toward the goal of *Kujichagulia*, a Swahili concept that refers to “self-determination in defining themselves, naming themselves, creating for themselves and speaking for themselves instead of being defined, named, created, or spoken for by others” (93). As they practice self-definition, the girls in the Ujima program, like those students in Mejía’s class, also learn to wield rhetorical power as a means for participating in personally and communally meaningful ways inside the American public sphere.

Ball and Lardner’s analysis helps us to see the foundations from which rhetoric and composition scholars can contribute to ongoing debates about a national language policy. The National Language Agenda unfortunately emphasizes “action” and short-term language “needs” such that it only encourages mainstream society to view heritage language speakers as resources that can bolster national security and economic strength. In so doing, the document overlooks the benefits both to marginalized communities and to the entire society that follow from creating a positive atmosphere for heritage language instruction in the U.S. As Fishman, Mejía, and Ball and Lardner suggest, such an atmosphere can encourage students to use their languages and cultures as their own important resources to draw from in their life-long effort to shape their academic, communal, professional, and civic identities.

Conclusion

The National Language Agenda debate presents rhetoric and composition scholars with an opportunity to affirm our professional and civic values. We must find ways to contribute to this collective effort to implement the National Language Agenda and, more broadly, to build a public commitment to foreign language education. English-language arts educators, in fact, did participate in the policy debates concerning the NDEA of 1958. Their motivations, though, were limiting. Scholars such as then-NCTE Chair Albert Kitzhaber argued that English language arts education should receive substantial federal investment because it stimulated the nation's economy and democratic process just as much as did foreign language education (Kitzhaber; see also Jewett).

Rhetoric and composition scholars need to respond differently in the present moment. We should not see this debate over national language policy as a zero-sum game pitting modern language and English language education, for our nation *does* have critical needs for competencies in non-English languages. Following Pratt's lead, all language scholars need to "make themselves heard as advocates not for a particular language but for the importance of knowing languages and of knowing the world through languages" (112). As Horner and Trimbur have shown, English-language arts educators in U.S. colleges and universities too often have advocated for learning and using English as if it was the only living language one could use in everyday discourse. This implicit policy of writing instruction in English only has exacerbated the language crisis facing the U.S. in this post-September 11 moment. We need to join all modern language educators in providing leadership in this debate and to support the development of a

national language policy that promotes and facilitates all Americans' learning of second or third languages.

The professional and civic ideals at the heart of the CCCC's 1988 National Language Policy should guide rhetoric and composition scholars in this work. While compositionists strive to build a greater commitment to "knowing the world through languages," they also need to be open to compromise and sustained dialogue across various sectors of society. Compositionists need to work with modern language scholars and heritage language community leaders to call for a broader conception of the language problems that the National Language Agenda should address.

At the same time, however, compositionists need to generate public support for multilingualism for all Americans, no matter the precise arrangement of priorities or ends toward which specific language policies might be directed. Even though legislators and federal officials may support multilingualism as a means for securing the nation, not "enlarging our view of what is human" (CCCC, National Language Policy 5), English-language arts educators need to engage this debate—not critique it from afar—and facilitate discussion and compromise among the various stakeholders. As Lo Bianco suggested during his presentation at the National Language Conference, language policies will be most influential when the various interested parties "have forged a consensus of ambition, involving compromise and dialogue, occasionally even the surrendering of sectional claims, and the preparation of transcending claims for wider national language education change" ("Brief" 1). This work can range from conducting advertising and academic advising campaigns that promote language-related careers to creating public research exhibits that examine the history of minority languages within a

university's surrounding communities and regions. These types of projects could promote a wider public dialogue about how language skills are intertwined with the nation's political, social, and economic realities. This dialogue, in turn, potentially can spark a greater societal commitment to valuing and rewarding abilities in foreign languages.

Compromise, however, should not mean that compositionists abandon their efforts to advocate for foreign language education that aims first and foremost to “enlarge our view of what is human” (CCCC, National Language Policy 5). President Bush has suggested this same value informs his proposed National Security Language Initiative. In his January 5, 2006 speech at the U.S. State Department, he explained,

Learning a language—somebody else's language—is a kind gesture. It's a gesture of interest. It really is a fundamental way to reach out to somebody and say, I care about you. I want you to know that I'm interested in not only how you talk but how you live. (2)

These values of caring for and connecting with other people and other cultures, however, have been radically distorted by President Bush's contention that his initiative would help the U.S. soldiers “who are on the front lines of finding these killers to be able to speak their language and be able to listen to the people in the communities in which they live” (2). The President, like the DoD, promotes language-learning as a means for knowing and mastering “other” groups. This perspective implicitly challenges many of the assumptions and beliefs about language that have informed the CCCC's “Students' Right” resolution and National Language Policy.

The ideas about language reinscribed by the National Language Agenda, however, must also prompt composition scholars to examine how similar assumptions

about linguistic mastery continue to inform many of our pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. Min-Zhan Lu argues, in fact, that compositionists tend to reinforce such a “commodity approach” to language learning and use. This perspective toward the acquisition of language, Lu explains, “is associated with the image of someone first buying and inheriting a ready-made, self-evident, discrete object—a tool (of communication) or a key (to success)—and then learning to use that object like an expert” (“An Essay” 25). Lu suggests that this “commodity approach” toward language and this particular understanding of “expertise” have been *the* assumptions that have guided the discipline of composition’s “discourse on the language needs of College Students” (43). Composition pedagogy, then, seems to reinforce the perspective—one that underpins the DoD’s National Language Agenda and President Bush’s National Security Language Initiative, as well—that languages exist in discrete spaces, with prescribed standards and fixed purposes determining the proper use of each one.

This perspective toward language, Lu argues, has “locked our attention” on identifying *what* language “tools” one needs or lacks as well as *what* (standardized) form that this “object” should have (“An Essay” 25). What these specific emphases ignore, however, is *how* individuals in fact are using the languages in their daily lives and *how* these languages choices have “real consequences for [their] well-being” (24-25). Indeed, as Lu notes, the commodity perspective toward language has kept many compositionists from considering the possibility that efforts to acquire a language, particularly academized and standardized varieties, “can be, have been, and indeed, need to be enhanced by critical engagement with it” (25).

The National Language Agenda debate can prompt this type of reflection within the field of composition studies. Just as scholars need to promote a broader definition of the nation's language needs, they also need to reshape language arts curricula to promote a broader range of purposes for language use and a less utilitarian definition of "effective" language use. The National Language Agenda promotes language-learning as a means for acquiring a tangible skill set that a student could put to use in future work within the military, the corporate world, the medical field, or some other governmental or service employment. This perspective, Lu contends, gets reinforced by

sound bites assuring us that we can simply "ease in and out" of disparate social domains, languages, englishes, discourses, prototypical selfhoods, relations with others and the world in the same way one picks up and puts down a tool (or slips into and out of a dress) without any "real" effects on one's Authentic Selfhood [. . .]. ("An Essay" 430)

Compositionists and other language arts educators need to mute these sound bites in our efforts to redefine what it means to "use language like an expert." Our research needs to provide spaces for marginalized language users to describe "real" effects they experience when they make decisions about language as they negotiate the everyday demands of their lives. Our teaching needs to reflect marginalized language users' own articulations of their language needs. Through this type of research and teaching, compositionists can begin to build a public commitment to language learning as a means for "enlarging our view of what is human" (CCCC, National Language Policy 5).

Composition research focused on *how* linguistic minorities use languages in their everyday lives rather than on *what* they lack can also begin to bridge a gap that has kept a

majority of composition scholars and teachers from concerning themselves with the English-Only and National Language Agenda debates. Pratt's comments in her "Building a New Public Idea about Language" essay reinforce this common assumption. Pratt here, in a publication addressed to all members of the MLA, calls directly on foreign language scholars to try to shape public conversations about the nation's language education:

Speaking as people who have had the opportunity to learn languages well, who made the effort and reap the rewards, scholars of non-English languages and cultures are uniquely situated to bear witness to the possibility of language learning and to make the case for language learning as an aspect of educated citizenship. (112)

Compositionists and other English-language arts educators have effectively distanced themselves from this conversation. We perpetuate the assumption—and the reality—that our field is primarily monolingual. The CCCC needs to provide the material and symbolic support that will encourage multilingual scholars within our field to explore how language issues affect their professional work and their personal and public lives.

The tensions resulting from this invisibility of multilingual concerns inside composition studies can be seen in the program for the 2006 CCCC Convention in Chicago. Renee Moreno, Paul Velazquez, and Jaime Mejía note in their panel description that the call to the CCCC convention "interestingly fails to mention Chicago's rich Latino/a cultural traditions." This omission, they contend, signals that "more work acknowledging [Latino/a] contributions needs to happen within our field" (Mejía, Moreno, and Velazquez). Mejía in particular saw the panel as an opportunity to examine and propose ways to challenge the "negative ideological underpinnings" of composition

pedagogy that keep apart English and Spanish languages as well as the cultures they represent.

Mejía, Moreno, and Velazquez propose that compositionists use Latino/a literary and cultural texts in their classrooms to prompt discussions about the politics of working across or within multiple languages as well as to provide tangible examples of how critical knowledges get created where writers bring languages together in the same spaces. Such texts problematize the “commodity approach” to language where languages are seen as discrete objects that exist in easily defined spaces, each with their own places for “appropriate use” (Lu, “An Essay” 25). Moreover, these Latino and Latina scholars, by promoting the use of multilingual texts within composition classrooms, show how we might begin to confront what Lu perceives as many compositionists’ fear that “issues of dissonance are irrelevant to [students’] learning and discursive practices” (19). Working to dismantle these limiting notions of language use and language learning within the field of composition itself are vitally important steps to take as the field builds a foundation for providing leadership in national, institutional, and communal debates about linguistic diversity and language needs.

Redirecting the discipline’s research and teaching concerns toward these types of literary and cultural texts ultimately could better prepare compositionists to speak to national language policy debates. During his chair’s address at the 2005 CCCC Convention, Doug Hesse called on compositionists to engage public conversations concerning literacy education and writing assessment, contributing our “knowledge of what writing is and what it can be, the whole of it, in every sphere” as well as “the never-done knowledge of how writing develops, within a person or a populace” (“Who Owns”

355). We need to problematize—and in so doing, strengthen—our theories about writing. We need to broaden our gaze to consider the linguistic realities of people who move between languages or use only one non-English language in their daily lives. We need to discover how these people use writing, why they use writing, and what they want to be able to do with writing.

Indeed, scholars in the field of English-language rhetoric and composition need to come to terms with the monolingual perspectives that shape much of the work done in the name of “progressive” research on and teaching of writing in the U.S. Hesse claims that “those who teach writing must affirm that we, in fact, own it” (“Who Owns” 338). To provide significant leadership in the public debate over the shape of the National Language Agenda, we must come to terms with the great linguistic diversity in writing in the U.S and in the world that we in fact do *not* own because of the material and symbolic constraints in our field that have focused our attention on writing in English only. By researching writing in the public realm, rhetoric and writing scholars could bring to the field a greater sense of what language diversity looks like in our communities and to better understand the language needs of our communities. Indeed, we most likely would begin to discover ways in which the National Language Agenda could better account for the language needs of Americans who would learn a second or third language in order to “write themselves into the world” (351) rather than simply to meet military, governmental, or academic demands.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This dissertation began with the voice of Shirley Wilson Logan delivering her Chair's Address at the 2003 CCCC Convention. Logan declared that at a time when “various current national constituencies are ‘discovering’ the importance of writing,” language arts educators “ought to be at the center of all policy decisions that affect the teaching and learning of communication skills” (335). The CCCC’s policy statements, Logan argued, can usefully inform our participation in these public debates. The 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution, the 1988 National Language Policy, the 1998 Statement on Ebonics, and the 2001 Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers—all of these texts contain principles that have “salience at this moment in history” (333). Logan urged CCCC members to “revisit and reread portions of these documents” in order to understand how our field has worked “to enhance the conditions for learning and teaching college composition” (334, 332).

This dissertation took up Logan’s call to revisit our field’s policy documents. The studies of the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution and National Language Policy as well as the DoD’s National Language Agenda show how scholars have provided leadership in public debates about language policy. Each chapter showed how language policies can prompt reflection on the political and cultural contexts of literacy education and how they can spark teaching innovations that help students learn to write themselves into public and academic life.

By heeding Logan's call, we can also better understand how language policies—whether created by scholarly organizations or by government agencies—articulate a specific disciplinary identity for language and literacy educators. We learn how and why compositionists have created language policies such as the “Students’ Right” resolution and the National Language Policy: to provide theoretical clarity to professional or public conversations about language and literacy education at moments when the prevailing arguments stray from what our research on linguistic diversity has taught us. We see, too, how compositionists and other language scholars can use language policy statements to challenge the theoretical foundation for larger governmental policies. As I note in Chapter Four, for example, compositionists can engage the present National Language Agenda debate by drawing on the CCCC National Language Policy’s vision of what a language-competent society should be able to do. The analyses of two key CCCC language policy statements in Chapters Two and Three can help us to respond to present-day debates among governmental and corporate representatives who have “discovered” the importance of language learning amid the post-September 11 “language crisis.”

In the body chapters, then, I focused on how each policy spoke to our present concerns about how to provide leadership in public and professional debates concerning the increasing linguistic diversity in our schools and society. This concluding chapter looks at the three language policies together. Here I make broader statements on the cultural and political work that language policies do (and don't do) and their significance to composition studies.

Specifically, I argue that compositionists need to see language policy as a critical form of academic writing that has shaped both our past and present practices in

composition. This chapter proposes strategies for reading language policies in ways that call on us to rethink our professional work in three different discursive spaces: within our classrooms, within our discipline, and within our respective institutions. Compositionists need to consider the implications of language policies for their work in all three spaces in order to build a greater public commitment to language diversity. In short, Chapter Five articulates broad lessons on what it means to revisit past and to engage present language policies. As Logan contends, we need to draw on these lessons because they can strengthen our commitment to our disciplinary missions.

Defining Language Policies

Both scholars and the lay public alike have expressed confusion about what the purposes and the consequences of language policies such as the “Students’ Right” resolution, the National Language Policy, the National Language Agenda, and even English Language Amendments might be. For example, Chapter Two shows that compositionists both past and present have criticized the CCCC for presenting too few pedagogical suggestions to help them visualize what a “Students’ Right” classroom can look like. English-Only advocacy groups in Florida and Colorado leveraged similar confusion about the effects of language policy during their successful campaigns in 1988 to add an ELA to their respective state constitutions. Mary Carol Combs explains that these ELAs passed by wide margins because “the text of the proposals seemed harmless to most voters” (148).

This confusion results in part from the belief of many people that a language policy should provide detailed instructions for people to follow in order to bring that

policy's goal into being. This dissertation, therefore, helps to define language policies and to articulate what their significance for composition studies can be. The analyses in the body chapters attend to the specific purposes for which scholars, public officials, and activists have drafted different language policies. These analyses reveal that groups write language policies for different purposes than they would hope to achieve by writing academic articles, newspaper editorials, syllabi, teaching handbooks, course policies and procedures, position papers, or written statements for congressional hearings. Language policies in effect synthesize a group's theories or opinions about language and make a public, collective argument for others to adopt this perspective.

Sociolinguists such as Bernard Spolsky define "language policy" in the broadest sense to entail the language practices, language beliefs, and language management strategies within any particular speech community. This dissertation includes these three components in its working definition of "language policy." That said, it focuses more narrowly on those documents that describe a broad vision or propose general goals for managing the language practices or shaping the language beliefs of a particular group.

The analyses in this dissertation, then, explore how the CCCC, the NCTE, U.S. English, and the Department of Defense, among others groups, create language policies as a means for translating their ideas about language in ways that persuade educators, government officials, corporate leaders, and citizens to adopt a particular attitude toward language difference and to promote specific language practices in U.S. public life. For example, the CCCC "Students' Right" resolution aims to cultivate in compositionists a respect for all students' native language varieties; it also promotes the pedagogical goal of encouraging students to use these linguistic strengths as a foundation for advanced

literacy education. The National Language Policy similarly seeks to instill in teachers and public officials a belief in the cultural and political value of linguistic diversity and to lead all Americans to learn and use multiple languages in their communities' day-to-day activities. Finally, the National Language Agenda provides seven goals that the DoD and other National Language Conference participants believe should guide how government agencies, corporations, and academic institutions develop and manage the nation's language resources.

These language policies do not put forward specific plans of action for specific groups to follow in order to bring about the policies' imagined ends. Each of these policies instead argues for the creation of a particular political, cultural, and social environment within a nation, state, school, corporation, federal agency, or community. Moreover, each policy helps stakeholders to visualize how the promotion of specific language practices—and the restriction of others—fits within this social arrangement.

“Weapons which language rights warriors can wield”

Smitherman has addressed our field's conflicted ideas about the value of language policies. In her historical account of the CCCC's “struggle for language rights” (“CCCC's Role” 349), Smitherman provides an insider perspective on the creation of the CCCC's “Students' Right” resolution and National Language Policy. Near the end of her essay, she acknowledges the limitations of such policy statements:

If it is true, as CCCC leader Anne Ruggles Gere has asserted, that changing language attitudes is tantamount to changing a world view, then there may not be a lot that a policy from a professional organization can

do about the myths and misconceptions about language that continue to plague the struggle for language rights. One cannot erase long-held attitudes and deeply-entrenched biases and stereotypes with the stroke of a pen—you know, go henceforth and sin linguistically no more. (370)

Despite these limitations, Smitherman still sees value in language policy statements.

These texts aid compositionists who work to improve the conditions for language learning in the U.S. Language policies, she argues, are “weapons which language rights warriors can wield against the opponents of linguistic democratization” (373). More specifically, compositionists can use language policies to give other scholars, public officials, and activists “the necessary intellectual basis and rhetorical framework for waging language debates and arguments” (373).

The analyses in this dissertation confirm Smitherman’s insights about the efficacy of language policies. Arguments about the value or effectiveness of the “Students’ Right” resolution, the National Language Policy, and the National Language Agenda need to take these documents on their own terms. As Smitherman suggests, these policies do not tell teachers, school administrators, or legislators what specific steps to take in order to create these types of environments. Instead, groups circulate their language policies among other stakeholders in order to provide them with an intellectual scaffolding on which to create new initiatives. For example, the DoD’s National Language Agenda, which resulted from collaboration and negotiation among government officials, corporate leaders, academics, and teachers, outlines seven priorities that need to guide any effort to develop and manage the U.S.’s language resources in ways would secure the nation and stimulate the economy. While the DoD’s language policy presents a broad vision of how

language skills could serve as tools for securing the nation, President George W. Bush's administration has filled in the steps needed to create these tools with its National Security Language Initiative. The DoD's National Language Agenda has likewise prompted congressional representatives to propose legislation aimed at meeting our nation's language needs, as with the National Foreign Language Coordination Act of 2005 introduced by Senator Daniel A. Akaka. Groups such as the CCCC, the DoD, and U.S. English, then, compose language policies in order to present a coherent vision for how certain language practices would create a particular political, cultural, and social environment.

Whether or not they directly address education, all language policies make arguments about the responsibilities and the relationship of language and literacy education to students and to society. The ELAs discussed in Chapter Three, for example, promote public education as a means for strengthening democracy through initiating all students into our common culture. The CCCC's National Language Policy, meanwhile, promotes public education as a means for strengthening democracy through teaching about and preserving the nation's linguistic and cultural diversity. As these examples suggest, language policies prompt compositionists to consider how their communities and they themselves see the goals of the writing course intersecting with U.S. social and political values. The "Student's Right" resolution, the National Language Policy, and the National Language Agenda all encourage teachers, parents, administrators, and legislators to see schools as spaces in which students learn to live and work in diverse civic and communal contexts, rather than as institutions that preserve and reproduce a mythic "common" (and monolingual) culture.

Groups such as the CCCC and the DoD, then, write language policies in order to articulate how certain language practices can contribute to the development of particular political, cultural, social, or economic ends. These groups move beyond the pursuit of individual research projects, instead synthesizing available research in order to take a stand on a contentious issue. In this way, language policies are meant to provide clarity in public debates. They attempt to focus our attention on the fact that debates about the politics of language practices are really debates about the type of communities in which we want to live and work.

Pedagogical Invention through Language Policies

Given this specific purpose language policies often serve, compositionists should not read them expecting to find a host of activities to use in their classes next Monday morning. Instead, compositionists need to read these language policies in ways that the LCRG members did, that is, as a means for sparking pedagogical reflection and invention. More recently several composition scholars have been reading the CCCC's language policies in just this way. These scholars offer teachers concrete pedagogical strategies to use in order to create classrooms where diverse languages and dialects are valued. Keith Gilyard and Elaine Richardson, Kim Brian Lovejoy, and Valerie Felita Kinloch, among others, have presented fellow compositionists with discussion guidelines, in-class activities, assignment prompts, and assessment techniques for teaching composition in ways that affirm students' right to their own language. Gilyard and Richardson, for example, drew on theoretical principles at the heart of the "Students' Right" resolution as they designed and tested curricula that helps us to understand, in

concrete terms, “to what extent African American speech styles can be instrumental to the development of critical academic writing” (39). Such studies complement the CCCC’s language policies. They extend our disciplinary conversation about how to create conditions that enable all students to develop as confident, skilled writers.

Promoting Reflection on “Unspoken Dimensions of Teaching”

For language policies to serve as valuable heuristics, however, compositionists also must probe the theories that give them their shape. The “Students’ Right” resolution and the National Language Policy, of course, synthesized an extensive amount of research on language variation and its implications for literacy education.¹ Therefore, teacher-training programs need to give new writing instructors opportunities to begin learning about the rhetorical and linguistic features of the dialects and languages that are part of their students’ cultural backgrounds. As Arnetta Ball and Ted Lardner explain, “Teachers who lack any familiarity with the cultural-rhetorical resources their AAVE-speaking students bring with them to the classroom are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to skillfully responding to their students’ writing” (*African American Literacies Unleashed* 49). Teacher-training programs also should include studies of the sort published by Gilyard and Richardson, Lovejoy, and Kinloch, for they show new teachers how language policies can help compositionists to develop new teaching practices.

Ball and Lardner, echoing the LCRG members, nevertheless have warned that presenting writing teachers with linguistics research, language policies, and teaching strategies will not in and of itself transform teachers’ thinking about the value of language diversity in writing courses. Ball and Lardner therefore propose a construct of

teacher knowledge that accounts for the “unspoken dimensions of teaching, for example, its felt reality, and trace[s] them to their sources” (*African American Literacies Unleashed* 65). More specifically, they call for us to attend “not just to what teachers know about linguistically and culturally diverse students but what teachers believe about their ability to teach students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds” (65). Ball and Lardner, along with scholars such as Rashidah Jaami` Muhammad and Gail Okawa, caution us to see that teachers’ beliefs about language difference are deeply rooted. These “unspoken dimensions” influence how teachers read and make use of language policies. For these reasons, compositionists need to create opportunities in teacher-training programs for participants to reflect on the sources and the manifestation of their attitudes toward non-standardized language varieties.

Developing Language Researchers in the Writing Classroom

While keeping in mind that teachers’ affective dimensions influence their readings of language policies, this dissertation aims to provide examples of compositionists reading these texts in ways that allow them to develop pedagogical projects that affirm students’ linguistic backgrounds. One effective way that compositionists have encouraged students to make productive links between their academic subjects and their cultural backgrounds has been to put language variation itself at the center of class investigations. Such projects give students the chance to be language researchers. The LCRG, for example, designed a mini-ethnographic assignment in which students closely examined how people in their families and neighborhoods used language to achieve their communicative goals. This project aimed to create a foundation for

students' success in college. It brought students' languages and cultures into the college classroom as subjects of study, thereby encouraging students to seek opportunities in that and other courses to make new knowledge by synthesizing their academic studies and the intellectual resources of their communities. Similarly, the CCCC Language Policy Committee, in a draft of the brochure that would accompany the National Language Policy, encouraged teachers to create writing assignments in which students narrated and analyzed learning experiences involved in becoming a member of a new linguistic community, no matter whether that involved learning a new language or dialect or a new way of using any language ("Outline/Draft" 1). Such assignments could prompt discussions about what motivates people to learn new languages as well as what enables or constrains them from doing so.

The DoD's National Language Agenda, of course, emphasizes one particular motivation for learning new languages: to know and master the enemy. Even so, teachers can use the CCCC's National Language Policy and the DoD's National Language Agenda as foundations for students to reflect on and dialogue about our nation's language needs. For example, students in the English 202A: Writing in the Social Sciences course at Penn State could conduct ethnographic projects in which they explore the linguistic diversity of surrounding communities and then examine policy issues that affect local heritage language communities. One place to start these types of pedagogical projects can be the MLA's on-line language map, accessible on the World Wide Web at http://www.mla.org/census_main. This map is based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census, and it can help students to gain a tangible sense of the linguistic composition of their communities. By consulting the MLA Language Map, for example, Penn State

students would learn that there are 11,200 speakers of languages other than English in Centre County, and that 2,300 people in this group speak some variety of Spanish and 1,600 speak Chinese.²

This data could in turn support community-based research projects in which students explore the spaces where Spanish or Chinese speakers can and cannot use these languages in public. Students could similarly conduct interviews to learn about how the local government uses census data in deciding what resources, if any, to make available for linguistic minority populations. They could also build on these interviews by researching the cost to taxpayers of making these resources available and, equally significant, the cost to communities when such resources are *not* made available. This research could serve as the basis for a feasibility report or proposal for new technologies, for new hiring practices, or new educational programs that better serve the needs of these communities and that promote opportunities for the voices of non-English speakers to be heard in local public spheres.

Reading language policies as heuristics, then, can help compositionists to create teaching practices that promote students' active learning about how language debates play out in the lived experiences of people in their communities. Since these primary research projects ask students to examine local language policies and promote writing as a means for participating in the cultural and political lives of their communities, they also build on the university's mission to prepare students for both their professional and civic lives. Even more, students come to understand the significance of language policies while also gaining the facility and adeptness to engage language debates.

Such projects can provide a way into discussing the CCCC's National Language Policy and the DoD's National Language Agenda, too, because they prompt questions concerning how we as a community or as a nation define our "critical" language needs. Through these class explorations we can raise issues about the terms on which various groups in society can participate in public debates about our language problems, and we can encourage students to reflect on how they conceive of "the community" when they write about public issues. These projects can also help students to strategize and debate how the university should or should not connect to these language communities. Through such discussions, students begin to reflect on the university's mission and to consider how educational institutions might build a greater public commitment to language learning. Ultimately, by creating the conditions for students themselves to critically engage current language policy debates, compositions can reinvigorate the spirit of the three language policies at the heart of this dissertation.

Revising Definitions of Academic Writing

In addition to analyzing the pedagogical implications of language policies, this dissertation also helps us to see language policy as an important form of academic writing. A common perception of academic work as only teaching and article writing has kept many compositionists from paying attention to language policies and understanding their implications for our field. Attending to the practices that lead to and surround language policies can enable compositionists to develop effective strategies for connecting their academic theorizing on rhetoric and writing to public debates about language.

“The possibility of reconfiguring our discipline”

While researching in the NCTE archives in Urbana, Illinois, I located orientation packets given to new members of CCCC committees in the mid-1990s. The printed materials in the folders’ interior pockets gave the new CCCC committee members an overview of the policies and procedures that governed committee activities. Just as significantly, these materials conveyed to new committee members a sense of the organizational identity that they now represented.

When the new committee members opened their packets, the first materials they saw were three CCCC policy statements: the 1974 “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution and background document; the 1989 “Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing” (known more commonly as the “Wyoming Resolution”)³; and the 1988 National Language Policy.

The positioning of these three CCCC policy statements is significant. These orientation packets encouraged the new committee members to see the “Students’ Right” resolution, the Wyoming Resolution, and the National Language Policy as core documents that shaped the identity of the CCCC. Positioning the materials in this way conveyed a clear message: these policy statements provide a critical theoretical foundation for compositionists’ work in classrooms, in colleges and universities, in communities, and in the larger society.

This dissertation mirrors the CCCC orientation packet as it puts language policy at its center. My aim throughout this study has been to write language policies and language policy debates more thoroughly into our disciplinary history. As Stephen Parks

has observed, influential histories of composition studies have not often granted “disciplinary importance” to such policy documents (12). He cites James Berlin’s *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American College, 1900-1985* as one example. Parks argues that although Berlin participated in politically progressive organizations within the CCCC, such as the Marxist Literary Group, he nevertheless reproduces “traditional visions of academic work” in his histories. More specifically, Berlin organizes his study of twentieth-century writing pedagogies by classifying them according to three rhetorical models: objective, subjective, and transactional. Parks explains that because of this particular organizing principle, and because he sees the “Students’ Right” resolution “as a product of linguistics,” Berlin reinforces the belief that language polices are peripheral to composition studies’ concerns (12).

The studies in this dissertation, on the other hand, illustrate language policies’ disciplinary importance. I found in the libraries of the Ford Foundation and the NCTE what Susan Wells describes as one of the gifts of archives: “the possibility of reconfiguring our discipline” (60). In countless pages of correspondence, meeting minutes, and policy drafts, I saw compositionists debating what our field should be. At a moment when, as Logan suggests, compositionists need to communicate to the public our theories about language learning and literacy education, we need to study how compositionists and other language educators have engaged language policy debates in the past. As we recover and reconstruct these stories, we see *what* compositionists created when they wrote language policies. More importantly, we learn *why* they wrote them: to bridge our theoretical understanding of language and writing instruction with our political and social goals of promoting civic participation and equal opportunity.

These archival materials help us to fill in the fine details of the disciplinary story that Smitherman first told when she described the CCCC's role in the struggle for language rights. I found in these texts committee members' competing ideas about what teachers' responsibilities to students were; I found in these materials scholars debating how the field should respond to misguided arguments about the public value of Spanish or African American Language varieties. This dissertation situates journal articles, conference presentations, and pedagogical practices—the materials at the heart of many histories of composition studies—alongside language policy statements, meeting minutes from CCCC committees, and grant applications for curricular redesigns. The synthesis of these particular archival materials, I hope, persuades scholars to redefine the academic work of composition studies in broader terms than teaching and article writing. Through language policy work, compositionists can help to foster an atmosphere of respect for the languages and dialects that shape our students' identities and that are important foundations on which they can build advanced literacy skills.

“All the discourse written and spoken by academics in a variety of contexts”

This dissertation, then, contends that we should see language policies as an important part of the historical and present-day practice of our discipline. This understanding in turn should compel us to broaden our ideas about how we conceive of “academic writing” and how we define “academic work.” As in Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality*, many articulations of composition's disciplinary identity reinforce a narrow definition of the “academic discourse community.” These definitions account for only a

thin slice of the wide range of speaking and writing that academics actually do, in particular, teaching and writing books, textbooks, and articles.

Bruce Horner argues in *Terms of Work for Composition* that composition histories and theories continually reaffirm this definition because scholars conceive of academic writing “in dematerialized fashion,” that is, “as a commodity divorced from the material social relations of its production” (106). Were we to view academic writing in a material sense, Horner explains, we would focus instead on the practices of academics as they write. He suggests that in so doing, we would come to recognize “academic writing” as the “full range of academic work,” not just those fixed forms of the “academic essay,” the characteristics of which are hard to pin down anyway (105).

Building on Joseph Harris’s material view of “community,” Horner calls us to define the academic discourse community in ways that account for not only our writing in journals but also “all the discourse, formal and informal, written and spoken by academics in both their official and unofficial capacities, in a variety of contexts” (114). Horner suggests that this materialist definition of academic discourse encourages us not to focus on the seeming uniqueness of academic writing but rather to situate our work within the social contexts in which it is produced and to examine the distribution and consumption of academic texts in relation to all texts within the lay community. This definition promotes an understanding of academic writing as part of the social context, engaged with it rather than removed from it.

Horner’s materialist definition of academic writing provides a means for ascribing greater disciplinary importance to language policies. Archives can help us to create this more robust definition of academic discourse. This dissertation contributes to this

collective effort as it draws on archival materials to tell the story of how compositionists have used language policies to engage public debates about linguistic diversity. From these archival materials at the Ford Foundation, the NCTE, and the Defense Department's on-line database emerged a fuller picture of scholars assuming active roles in shaping public debates about the politics of language use in the U.S.

In Chapter Three, for example, one sees Geneva Smitherman first identify and then fill a "language leadership vacuum" through the initial outline she drafted of the National Language Policy; her recording of minutes from the Language Policy Committee's initial meetings; her presentations (along with her fellow committee members) as part of a special session at the 1988 CCCC Convention; and her correspondence with the organizers of the English Plus Information Clearinghouse.

In Chapter Four one sees Mary Louise Pratt and Rosemary G. Feal similarly employ a variety of discursive practices to provide leadership in the present-day debate about our nation's post-September 11 "language crisis." Pratt used her article in *Profession 2003* to craft a rhetorical strategy for engaging this debate, but then she went public with her ideas. Pratt met with Pentagon officials to suggest alternatives to security-related motivations for improving foreign language learning in the U.S.; she participated in the federal government's Interagency Language Roundtable; she played a part in the working groups that drafted the National Language Agenda; and she assumed the role of chair of the MLA's Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages.⁴ Feal, meanwhile, has used her columns in the quarterly *MLA Newsletter* to highlight the relevance of this national language policy debate to the association's work; she presented at the National

Language Conference on the state of foreign language education in U.S. colleges and universities; and she commissioned and publicized the MLA Language Map.

Following Harris and Horner, then, this dissertation argues for us to see language policy and the discussions surrounding it as a major part of academic discourse. This view challenges the common perspective that engagement with public issues is somehow “other” in relation to our academic identities and our academic work. Indeed, seeing language policy writing as part of the “academic writing” that constitutes our disciplinary history should be one significant lesson that we learn from revisiting and rereading our disciplinary policies, as Logan has encouraged us to do in order to provide leadership in public debates about literacy education.

“Joining with (rather than speaking to) our communities”

Moreover, analyzing the various discursive activities that the LCRG members, Smitherman, Pratt, and Feal performed can deepen our understanding of what it means to use language policy as a platform from which to speak as “public intellectuals.” Harris himself argues for compositionists to transform the academy’s and the society’s understanding of “public intellectual.” This conception, Harris lamented, is one that unfortunately had “devolve[d] into that of the maven or the pundit” who wages battles on CNN’s *Cross-Fire* or the *New York Times*’ op-ed pages (“Public” 151). Following media critic Jay Rosen, Harris argues instead for a different form of “public scholarship,” one in which academics “join *with* (rather than simply speak *to*) other members of our communities in addressing matters of common concern” (151). Rosen presents three characteristics marking “public scholarship”:

First, the scholar's work is made to be shared with others outside the professional domain of academic inquiry; second, the quest to know originates in some problem or challenge that could usefully be called "public" business; third, the others with whom one is inquiring are not limited to experts, policy professionals, academics, or government officials seeking technical advice, but may include all manner of people [. . .]. (qtd. in Harris, "Public" 47)

The individual studies of language policy in this dissertation help us to visualize what public scholarship looks like. The CCCC used the "Students' Right" resolution to speak back to public outcries that Open Admissions students compromised traditional academic standards. Merrill Sheils eventually did distort the language policy such that it appeared the CCCC supported no standards whatsoever. Nevertheless, the "Students' Right" resolution's appearance in Sheils' *Newsweek* cover story "Why Johnny Can't Write" shows that the language policy indeed did circulate through and influence public debate. By the late 1980s, Smitherman and other CCCC Language Policy Committee members focused their research and writing on how English-Only legislation affected not only the atmosphere for language-learning inside the composition classroom but also the atmosphere of respect across ethnic and linguistic differences in local communities. And Pratt and Feal's "quest to know" originated in a public concern about how to identify and address the nation's language needs.

The MLA Language Map emerged from Pratt and Feal's initial engagement in this debate, and its consumption by various constituencies helps us to visualize what it means for academic work to "join with" rather than "speak to" other community

members in addressing matters of public concern. A recent article in the *MLA Newsletter* explains that visitors to the on-line map “from outside the language and literature community have reported uses for the language map that its designers did not originally imagine” (“The MLA Language Map” 21):

A representative of a federal agency told us of using the map in research for a project on disability benefits for citizens who are not native speakers of English, and a state public health agency used the map in developing an HIV/AIDS education project. A regional disaster-preparedness planner has used the map to determine the need for translators for medical facilities, and an international firm has used the site to make decisions in a marketing campaign. (21)

Paying attention to the material forms of academic work and tracing how they circulate and are used in various social contexts reveals that our academic work on and around language policies can and does have affects outside the academic community. How people in our field develop and respond to policy, like the LCRG members, Smitherman, Pratt, and Feal, needs to be seen as a significant part of our disciplinary history and present-day practice. These scholars give us a vision of what Logan herself has called us to do: shape our work in ways that contribute to larger communal efforts to address our nation’s language and literacy needs.

Policy Writing, Institutional Redesign

By seeing language policy as an example of academic discourse, compositionists can then pursue strategies for bringing the values at the heart of our language policies

into being. Logan calls for us to revisit the CCCC's language policies as a means for inventing critically sound and politically effective contributions to public debates about literacy education. Indeed, the CCCC's 1988 National Language Policy itself committed compositionists to providing leadership in language policy debates. Scholars are to call for all Americans to learn second and third languages "so that we can participate more effectively in worldwide activities, unify diverse American communities, and enlarge our view of what is human" (5). These values should guide our participation in the current debate over what our National Language Agenda should be.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that we continue to face a "language crisis" nearly twenty years after the CCCC drafted its National Language Policy. Neither the CCCC's language policies nor federal legislation such as the NDEA of 1958 have brought sweeping, lasting change to the way U.S. schools and society approach linguistic diversity and language education. This situation suggests that compositionists need to do more than simply pay attention to how the twenty-first century National Language Agenda defines the nation's multilingual goals and how these goals coincide with or depart from the kinds of visions articulated by scholars and teachers in our field.

This relative lack of success, however, has not come solely because of the specific arguments contained within these policy documents. Rather, compositionists and other scholars need to interpret these broader language policies as a means for creating micro-policies at the local level. In effect, academics need to write the values of the "Students' Right" resolution and the National Language Policy into the discursive practices that shape academic, governmental, and corporate institutions.

In their 2000 *College Composition and Communication* essay “Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change,” James Porter, Patricia Sullivan, Stuart Blythe, Jeffrey Grabill, and Libby Miles demonstrate why this type of micro-policy writing needs to be done, and they articulate a strategy for changing institutional practices toward progressive ends. Specifically, Porter et al. argue that because the discipline’s policy documents provide only macro-level critique, they “are by themselves not effective strategies for institutional change” (616). “Institutions,” they contend, “can too easily ignore global arguments for local reasons” (616). For example, a dean could explain to a Writing Program Administrator that while she agrees in principle with the values outlined in the CCCC’s National Language Policy, she cannot support its use as a means for redesigning the writing program because the college lacks the funds to support curriculum revision and the training needed to facilitate transition to a new pedagogical approach.

Porter et al. argue, therefore, that compositionists seeking progressive change cannot solely rely on documents such as the CCCC’s National Language Policy that simply articulate ideals. Instead, because institutions are not impenetrable monoliths but rather “rhetorically constructed human designs” that are “changeable” (611), compositionists need to read policies in new ways. They need to approach these documents with an eye toward inventing rhetorical strategies they can deploy within the spaces of their own institutions. These locally persuasive arguments can in turn inform compositionists’ work within the spaces of their institutions in order to see these policies adopted and effecting change in university-, college- and departmental-level practices.

For Porter et al., the act of creating effective rhetorical strategies begins with analyzing the material and rhetorical design of one's local institution. This analysis can help scholars to identify spaces within the institution where its practices can be changed through written discourse. More specifically, one first would analyze "lines of action, maps of decision making, or maps of authority" within institutions and then identify discursive gaps or ambiguities within the system, that is, "places where writing can be deployed to promote change" (631).⁵

In his keynote address at the June 2004 National Language Conference, Adelphi University president Robert Scott articulated the kind of work Porter et al. call for. Here Scott highlighted specific discursive spaces and writing practices that often shape universities' institutional designs and practices. Scott labeled these spaces and documents "points of leverage," a list of which included the following items:

the mission statement; the strategic plan; annual academic program and administrative unit reviews; annual goals and objectives for senior officers, including deans; annual budget requests and allocations for continuing and new initiatives; staffing decisions; funds for faculty and curriculum development; annual awards, rewards, and other forms of recognition for meritorious service, including appointments, reappointments, tenure, promotion, and compensation; the Trustees' public agendas; regional accrediting and professional program self studies; articulation agreements with community colleges; fundraising materials, drawn from the mission, vision, and strategic plan statements; and other forms of public recognition for people and efforts. (5)

Compositionists committed to building a new approach to language education need to identify spaces within their local institutions where they can influence the drafting or revision of these types of documents in ways that reflect the educational values at the heart of the “Students’ Right” resolution and National Language Policy.

Porter et al. and Scott can help compositionists begin to imagine ways of working within these discursive spaces to redesign institutions and institutional practices in ways that foster, in Pratt’s words, “a public commitment to language education” (166).

The CCCC’s language policies, as Smitherman suggests, provide compositionists with the “intellectual basis and rhetorical frameworks” for arguing about the political, cultural, and social value of linguistic diversity (“CCCC’s Role” 373). Compositionists, however, need to use these frameworks to promote policy revision in their schools that makes language education vital to its mission of serving the greater public good.

This type of work does not bring the sweeping change envisioned by those who attempt to critique institutions from outside. Instead, this work incrementally redesigns institutions toward the ends of creating a culture that values language learning not only because it will enable students to participate effectively in the global economy but also because it will help, in the words of the CCCC’s National Language Policy, to “unify diverse American communities.” Porter and his colleagues, then, call on compositionists to link the macro-level critique of language policies to micro-level policy revision within individual institutions.

Through the rest of this section, I trace how compositionists can draw on the CCCC’s language policies as they work within local spaces to engage the present National Language Agenda debate. I illustrate how micro-level policy writing that affects

the design of these institutions can be the material through which compositionists and other language education advocates create substantive and sustained change that reflects the CCCC's visions for meeting our nation's diverse language needs.

“Finding sources of scholars, diplomats, international professionals of all kinds”

Compositionists can bring this work by identifying spaces within their own institutions where “writing can be deployed to promote change” (Porter et al. 631). For example, a university's strategic plan often identifies resources already in the community and gives priority to university programs that connect these resources to the university's existing intellectual strengths. Compositionists could develop rhetorical strategies to give strategic planning committees a tangible sense of the “resources” that exist within the region's or state's heritage language communities. Moreover, since strategic plans, particularly at land-grant institutions, articulate the school's responsibility to serve the public interest, compositionists can work to ensure that the strategic planning committee's definition of “the public” or “the community” reflects the linguistic diversity present within it. Compositionists can also provide strategic planning committees with research that shows how language policy issues affect the economic and political vitality of the town, city, region, or state that the university aims to strengthen.

Indeed, compositionists need to discover how strategic plans and other forms of policy writing can connect the university's cultural and civic ideals to the practice of building a public commitment to language education. They can identify their institution's expressed commitment to local communities and analyze how the university's policy decisions and institutional practices either connect or disconnect the academy and local

heritage language communities. Pratt provides one example to spark invention about ways university administrators and faculty might create a stronger connection between universities and the heritage language communities that have for too long been marginalized by them:

These [heritage language] communities should also be sources of scholars, diplomats, international professionals of all kinds. Why shouldn't Sacramento, with some 75,000 Russian speakers, be the crucible of the next generation of Slavicists? Why shouldn't the 100,000 Vietnamese speakers in Texas make that state the place for a bilingual research nucleus in Vietnamese studies? Why shouldn't Dearborn, Michigan, with some 50,000 native speakers of Arabic, be a crucible for a new pool of Middle East scholars and diplomats? (116)

Pratt's insights can help scholars to envision how they might link efforts to prioritize language education to the university's mission to establish productive relationships with the community.

Language programs and area studies centers such as Pratt describes would build on the existing linguistic and cultural resources already concentrated within the area. Such programs could increase a university's visibility within a region and also breathe life into mission statements that speak of serving the local citizenry. In return, these programs stand to create greater community support for the university. Compositionists and other language advocates involved in strategic planning and academic program review can use policy writing to redesign institutions in ways that build on the interests and talents of the people living in local language communities. This micro-level policy

work can frame the university's commitment to the state, region, or city not simply in terms of creating economic efficiency or technological innovation but also, in the spirit of the CCCC's National Language Policy, unifying diverse communities that might not otherwise see their interests or concerns reflected in the priorities of local educational institutions.

“Bumping elbows and noggins with all manner of other languages”

Foreign language departments and area studies programs, however, should not be the only academic units affected by university policy revisions. Compositionists need to look inward to address the roots of their universities' disconnect from local language communities. Certain policies within English departments reinforce the widely held assumption that universities are and/or should be primarily monolingual spaces. Compositionists can use the CCCC's language policies as a guide for smaller policy changes that redesign doctoral education in ways that make linguistic diversity more central to our disciplinary concerns.

One specific way to effect such a redesign can be to make foreign language requirements more fundamental to graduate students' coursework and research agendas. Doug Seward of the MLA's Office of English Programs argues that this requirement has lost its significance in many scholars' training because of most doctoral programs' "deference to the scientific research model" (qtd. in Feal, "Language Requirements" 6). This deference manifests itself in "the utilitarian devaluation of any skill, such as knowing a foreign language, that does not yield quickly tangible research benefits" (6).

Seward helps us to see, though, how this emphasis on short-term results has caused us to overlook how foreign language skills can help scholars and teachers to deepen their understanding of the politics of language use and writing instruction:

Politically, English monolingualism means national isolationism and a parochial self-regard. If this is a problem in the United States' English-language population at large, I can think of no good reason to condone such isolationism among the most educated Americans—those with research degrees—or among those who specialize in research on literatures written in English, which is after all a world language and, as such, in the best cases, bumps elbows and noggins with all manner of other languages and literatures and, in the worst cases, tramples them underfoot. In terms of intellectual work, English monolingualism means ignorance of context and of one's limits. (qtd. in Feal, "Language Requirements" 6)

To put ourselves in position to provide leadership in present and future debates about national language policies, our research and teaching must reflect the fact that English exists alongside other languages, not in a vacuum. Doctoral faculty should encourage graduate students to build research projects that explore how an increasing number of students, citizens, and colleagues speak and write in multiple languages to negotiate the demands of their everyday lives. Faculty should also encourage graduate students to take linguistics courses that can deepen their understanding of language minority students' literacy practices and to develop multilingual skills that allow them to write and speak with students in their home languages.

Compositionists could promote this type of work by revising local institutional policies to provide greater financial and logistical support for graduate students to study non-English languages. Additionally, to reinforce the idea that graduate coursework is not a scholar's only opportunity to develop his or her language skills, policies concerning tenure and promotion could be revised to give added weight to a candidate's development of language competencies during his or her probationary period. Departments and colleges could give priority to requests for professional development funds that faculty members would use to begin or continue language education. To further emphasize the need for long-term commitment to learning languages, compositionists could also encourage curriculum committees to give greater emphasis to language requirements for all undergraduate English majors. This micro-level policy redesign would convey the message that critical thinking, reading, and writing in the twenty-first century demands the skills to think, read, and write within multiple language communities.

As Porter et al. suggest, scholars need to see these types of policy revisions as opportunities to incrementally change the values by which institutional practices are conducted. All of these suggestions for policy revisions would emphasize the value of foreign language skills to our field's continued pursuit of knowledge about all aspects of writing. Indeed, more scholars need to incorporate foreign language competencies into their repertoire of research skills in order to connect with the linguistic realities of our students' lives, to understand the political aspects of teaching written composition in English, and to make research connections between writing instruction in English and in other languages and in other countries.

In addition to revising policies related to professional development, compositionists can also shape how the CCCC's National Language Policy manifests itself within institutional spaces by redesigning writing curriculum with scholars in other departments. Horner and John Trimbur have already emphasized the need for this type of interdepartmental work. They call on composition scholars to begin a dialogue with teachers of writing in the modern languages "to identify shared concerns as well as differences in language pedagogy" (622). Horner and Trimbur promote this collaboration between language departments in order to begin dismantling the implicit logic of unidirectional monolingualism that has shaped writing curricula in U.S. universities.

Toward these same ends, English and modern language scholars can work together to analyze the implications of language policies such as the DoD's National Language Agenda. These scholars collectively can decide what they believe language education should be and what it should do. For example, writing scholars in the various language departments can collaborate to develop assignments and linked courses that create learning and research opportunities for students that involve reading, speaking, and writing in multiple languages. This interdisciplinary work can expand the possibilities for language education beyond the narrow vision proposed in the National Language Agenda. For these reasons, compositionists could argue for language-related courses to receive greater priority for curriculum development grants. Increasing the institutional visibility of these courses in this way can promote language-learning as a means for students to acquire the linguistic and rhetorical skills that will enable them to participate in public and professional life in ways that they find to be meaningful, whether that involves serving local communities' medical needs or working in national security.

Reading Language Policy, Realizing Possibilities

Concrete actions within three discursive spaces—classroom, discipline, and institution—are necessary in order to begin making language policy documents such as the CCCC’s “Students’ Right” resolution or the DoD’s National Language Agenda reshape civic life in the U.S. The CCCC’s National Language Policy gave compositionists rhetorical arguments to use in public debates about linguistic diversity. We similarly need to analyze contemporary language debates affecting both English and non-English languages alike. The CCCC’s Language Policy Committee, in fact, has already done critical work for our discipline in this regard. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the committee has recently called for the drafting of a “‘Students’ Right’ document for the twenty-first century [. . .] that would reflect the last quarter century’s advances in research on language and linguistic diversity” (“Language” 33). As we pursue this project, we should also consider joining with language scholars in the MLA and other organizations in order to craft a language policy that counters the DoD’s National Language Agenda and promotes a broader understanding of the nation’s language needs.

Moreover, all compositionists—not just those interested in research on language diversity—need to learn from the work of scholars such as Ball, Canagarajah, Mejía, Gilyard, Kinloch, Lardner, Lu, and Richardson. These researchers have helped us to see how we can read language policies in ways that spark pedagogical innovations that enable students to tap their creative intellectual potential by moving between dialect and language varieties.

As Porter et al. argue, however, compositionists also need to find those spaces within universities where they can use micro-level policy writing to redesign these institutions and change the practices that occur within them. We need to identify spaces where we can use micro-level policy writing to incorporate the “Students’ Right” and National Language Policy ideals into universities’ mission statements and to redesign these institutions to prioritize language-learning within the school’s decision-making processes.

Enacting this broader conception of academic work can help to reinforce the disciplinary significance of language policies. Compositionists need to work on all fronts to realize the values written into the “Students’ Right” resolution and National Language Policy. We need to develop pedagogical practices that affirm students’ diverse languages. We need to draft language policies that articulate our theories about language and literacy education to a broader constituency. And we need to revise institutional policies in order to create the material conditions necessary to support these progressive language projects. By strategically employing all our available discursive resources, compositionists can begin to build a public idea about the need for language competencies that incorporates civil values of serving, unifying, and building on the strengths and resources of our communities.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

¹ I use the term “Standardized English” instead of “Standard English” throughout this dissertation, following Romy Clark and Roz Invanič, who do so in order “to emphasise that [the dialect’s] privileged position is the result of an ideologically shaped process, not an objective fact” (211).

² This project gained significant initial support from the Ford Foundation. As Huebner explains, the Ford Foundation promoted research on language policy and planning that aimed “to find solutions to language problems in emerging nations” rather than research conducted for purely theoretical reasons (7). At the Linguistic Society of America’s Linguistic Institute in 1955, the Ford Foundation sponsored a roundtable that brought together linguists, educators, and social scientists to discuss language problems in nations where the Ford Foundation had been supporting development efforts. One of the panelists’ recommendations was for the development of a clearinghouse for research on strategies for solving language problems, which led to the founding of the Center for Applied Linguistics in 1959. Several of the Center’s early projects dealt with language policy and language planning in developing countries, including the *Survey of Second Language Learning in Asia, African, and Latin America* and the *Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in East Africa*.

³ Another interesting strand of language policy scholarship inside composition studies has been one that takes an international perspective on language policy analysis. For example, Smitherman, Marback, Trimbur, and Parks have studied the creation and implementation of an official language policy within the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The nation’s constitution recognizes eleven official languages, and these

compositionists have been conducting comparative analyses of “the tensions between constitutionalized language rights and the attitudes toward language in South Africa” (Marback, “Language” 358), even as they arrive at different conclusions about the prospect of democratizing language practices in the U.S. without an officially recognized, overt language policy. See Smitherman, “Language and Democracy in the USA and the RSA,” González and Melis (Vol. 2) 316-45; Marback, “Language Rights in South Africa: Lessons for the United States,” *JAC* 22 (2002): 355-75; Trimbur, “Language Policy and Normalization in South Africa: Some Other Lessons,” *JAC* 22 (2002): 646-57; Parks, “Language Rights and Political Change,” *JAC* 22 (2002): 658-67.

⁴ The following example is just one among many that Piatt sees illustrating the inconsistent approach to language rights within U.S. law and legal decisions: “While undocumented persons are constitutionally guaranteed an interpreter in administrative deportation proceedings, it is somewhat ironic that a U.S. citizen faced with administrative proceedings with potentially severe consequences such as the termination of public assistance has no such right” (149).

⁵ Perea, drawing on Derrick Bell’s theory of “interest convergence,” contends that linguistic minorities will gain rights to use non-English languages and language varieties “only when it is in the interest of the dominant majority to concede” such rights (136).

⁶ For a broader survey of legal scholars’ contributions to U.S. language policy studies, see Edward M. Chen, “Statement on the Civil Liberties Implications of Official English Legislation before the United States Committee on Governmental Affairs, December 6, 1995,” González and Melis (Vol. 2) 30-62; Randy H. Lee and David F. Marshall, “‘Shooting Themselves in the Foot’: Consequences of English Only Supporters ‘Going to

Law”” González and Melis (Vol. 2) 171-93; Martha Jimenez, “The Educational Rights of Language-Minority Children,” Crawford, *Language Loyalties* 243-51; and Joseph Leibowicz, “The Proposed English Language Amendment: Sword or Shield?” *Yale Law and Policy Review* 3 (1985): 519-50. Also worth noting is Arnold H. Leibowitz’s “English Literacy: Legal Sanction for Discrimination,” *Notre Dame Lawyer* 45.7 (1969): 7-67. Leibowitz submitted this article for inclusion in the public record of the May 11, 1988 U.S. Senate Subcommittee hearings on English Language Amendments, thereby making it of interest to scholars interested in studying how academics have intervened in public and political debates on language policy.

⁷ For example, some participants in Schildkraut’s study conceive of America as a democracy that functions best when all citizens participate in the political process and make informed decisions, no matter the language they use to do so; these people tend to favor language policies, such as those requiring bilingual ballots, that enable linguistic minorities to participate in the political process. Other participants, meanwhile, conceive of America as a democracy that requires a single medium of communication for all citizens to dialogue and arrive at the best decisions for the community; these people, not surprisingly, favor language policies that require political information and political debate to be in one language, namely, English. See Chapter Six, “Discussing Language Policy” (127-61) of Schildkraut’s study for a more detailed analysis of the links between conceptions of American national identity and attitudes toward language policy.

⁸ For examples of language revitalization projects in Native American communities, see the essays by Ann Batchelder (1-8); Brian Bielenberg (132-51); Michael Fillerup (21-34); and Mary Ann Goodluck, Louise Lockard, and Darlene Yazzie (9-20) in *Learn in*

Beauty: Indigenous Education for a New Century, eds. Jon Reyhner, Joseph Martin, Louise Lockard, and W. Sakiestewa Gilbert (Flagstaff: Northern Arizona UP, 2000). For a brief historical analysis of the forces that have affected the use of Native American languages in the U.S., see Andrew Dalby, *Language in Danger: The Loss of Linguistic Diversity and the Threat to Our Future* (New York: Columbia UP, 2003): 149-66.

The federal government outlined a plan for protecting indigenous languages with the Native American Languages Acts of 1990 and 1992. The legislation stated, “It is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans [. . .] to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Congressional Record 15024-30, 11 Oct. 1990). This legislation authorized spending for a grant program to work toward these ends. The federal government’s support remained purely symbolic, however, until the Clinton Administration awarded \$1 million in 1994 to launch 18 language revitalization projects nationwide. The federal government’s initial unwillingness to fund this program, of course, speaks to the need for scholars to do more than simply study overt language policy texts in their efforts to describe U.S. language policy.

⁹ Kim Brian Lovejoy, for example, proposes several writing assignments that require students to write in a variety of forms, thereby helping them to appreciate the full “power and capacity of language to communicate in written mode” (93).

¹⁰ I tried unsuccessfully to schedule interviews with Geneva Smitherman, Ana Celia Zentella, Guadalupe Valdés, and James Stalker to discuss their work as members of the CCCC Language Policy Committee during the late 1980s. I also was unable to schedule interviews with Mary Louise Pratt and Rosemary G. Feal, through which I hoped to gain

insight on their contributions to the present-day National Language Agenda debate.

Valdés, Stalker, and Pratt expressed their interest in talking with me when their respective schedules permit. I intend to follow through on these opportunities as I revise this dissertation into a book manuscript.

¹¹ For competing historical accounts of the creation of the CCCC's "Students' Right" resolution, see Smitherman, "CCCC's Role" 354-64, and Parks, *Class Politics*. See also Gilyard's insightful critique of how Parks analyzes Smitherman's role within the "Students' Right" movement ("Holdin It Down" 199-22).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

¹ The LCRG stated in its initial Ford Foundation grant proposal that its curriculum materials were meant to help both Black and Puerto Rican students whose writing reflected influences of the Black English Vernacular dialect (Reed, Baxter, and Lowenthal 1). The reading materials in the textbook manuscript, however, come almost exclusively from African American writers, the lone exception being Pedro Pietri's "Unemployed," a poem from his 1973 collection *Puerto Rican Obituary*. To reflect this emphasis on writings by African Americans and about African American culture, I have decided not to continue using the phrase "African American and Puerto Rican students" throughout this chapter. That said, I discuss the implications of both the LCRG's elision and my own in the conclusion of this chapter. Victor Villanueva, who reviewed an earlier essay-version of this chapter for *CCC*, directed my attention to this omission of Puerto Rican students as well as the consequences for our discipline's understanding of the

educational and linguistic politics of the “Students’ Right” era.

² I use the designation “Black English Vernacular” in this chapter in order to reflect the terminology used by many sociolinguists and compositionists during the period under discussion. In its teachers’ manual, in fact, the LCRG foregrounded the significance of terminological distinctions about the language of African Americans. The project staff explained, for example, that the word “Vernacular” in the term “Black English Vernacular” signaled that not all Blacks spoke the dialect (44). The researchers also encouraged teachers to let students invent their own label for the language, since “Black English Vernacular,” “Black English,” “Inner-City Dialect,” and “Nonstandard Negro English” were all created by non-Blacks, a fact that often “was sufficient to create suspicion among Blacks about the terms and what they represented” (44).

Each of the terms in this designation has been subject to analysis and criticism since the 1970s. While linguist John Baugh made one of the earlier efforts to reintroduce “African American” as a term of self-reference instead of “Black,” Reverend Jesse Jackson has been more widely credited for promoting the use of this designation in a 1988 speech honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Just as we were called colored, but were not that, and then Negro, but not that, to be called black is just as baseless. Every ethnic group in this country has reference to some cultural base. African Americans have hit that level of maturity” (qtd. in Baugh 86). Ernie Smith has critiqued the use of the term “English” to refer to the language varieties of African Americans because, he argues, even though African American Language varieties have borrowed extensively from English vocabulary, the pidgin and creole languages from which they developed were based on the grammar of Niger-Congo African languages, not of English (50-54).

Smith thus contends that Eurocentric scholars “reveal an ignorance” of African American Language’s origins by “using vocabulary as their basis for classifying Black American speech, while using grammar as their basis for classifying English” (57-58). Robert Phillipson, meanwhile, argues that although the technical meaning of the term “vernacular” is used to classify those languages “made up of the words and patterns grown on the speaker’s own ground, as opposed to what is grown elsewhere and then transported,” this term nevertheless stigmatizes those languages to which it is applied because it is almost always used, “both in its technical sense and in popular speech, to mean a localized nonstandard or substandard language in contrast to literary, cultured, or foreign language” (40). Finally, Geneva Smitherman began to use the term “language” instead of “dialect” in the mid-1970s in part to avoid the pejorative connotations almost always attached to the term. More significantly, she writes, “as I got deeper into the study of my Mother Tongue, it became starkly clear that the speech of Africans in America is so fundamentally different, in so many ways, from the speech of European Americans that it seems to get right up in yo face and *demand* that you address it as a ‘language’” (*Talkin that Talk* 14).

Given this rich analysis concerning these designations, I will follow the contemporary practice of many present-day scholars by using the term “African American Language” when I do not directly reference the texts and ideas of the LCRG and its contemporaries.

³ The LCRG also received funding from the following sources: the City University of New York Research Foundation’s Faculty Research Award Program (\$15,000); Brooklyn College’s Search for Education, Excellence, and Knowledge Program’s release-time

funds (\$15,000); the New York State Higher Education Opportunity Program (\$5,000), and the New York Board of Higher Education (\$25,539). All told, the LCRG received over \$311,000 in funding from 1969 to 1974.

⁴ Among the LCRG's contemporaries who did reference the group's work, if only briefly, are Mina Shaughnessy, who provides a footnote mentioning the group's work on cross-dialect interference (157, n14), and Robbins Burling, who presents excerpts from a controversy about the LCRG project that erupted in the pages of the *Crisis* in 1971 (109-110). Present-day discussions of the LCRG can be found in Keith Gilyard's "African American Contributions to Composition Studies," in which he surveys this same 1971 controversy (637-638), and Elaine Richardson's *African American Literacies*, in which she describes the theoretical foundations of the LCRG's textbook manuscript (14-15).

⁵ CUNY's City College inaugurated the SEEK program in the Fall 1965 semester. Originally titled the "Pre-Baccalaureate Program," it offered remedial coursework, academic counseling, and stipends to 109 black and Puerto Rican students during this first year. The program was renamed the SEEK program one year later and expanded to include the CUNY as well as the state of New York's college and university system. For a detailed account of Shaughnessy's role in shaping the SEEK program and creating a central place within it for writing instruction, see Maher 91-123.

⁶ Lowenthal, with an M.S. in Speech Pathology and Audiology, and Reed, who held an M.A. in German Language and Literature, both participated in the Linguistic Society of America's 1969 summer institute, where their course of study included descriptive linguistics and second-language learning. Milton Baxter, meanwhile, was working toward a Ph.D. in Linguistics at New York University, consulting in the Black English

Linguistics Department at Brooklyn College, and entering a new teaching position at the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

⁷ In 1970, Reed worked part-time with Stewart at Columbia University's Teachers College, teaching about BEV to inner-city teachers enrolled in his "Introduction to American Negro Dialects" course. For a description of early pedagogical approaches to what he labeled a "quasi-foreign language situation," see Stewart.

⁸ Cohen and Redrick, both of whom held Masters' degrees in Linguistics, joined the LCRG in 1970. One year later, Moore became both a member and the coordinator of the LCRG. Unlike the other researchers, Moore trained in the education field, earning a Masters' degree in Education from Columbia University's Teachers' College, where he focused on the philosophy of education and curriculum building.

⁹ When the LCRG used the term "Standard English" throughout its materials, it referred almost exclusively to the standardized *written* code of English. Not only did the researchers acknowledge that spoken standards differed from written standards, but they also wanted teachers to attend only to students' writing habits, not their speech. Being BEV speakers themselves, the researchers believed interference with students' speech in effect told them to reject a significant aspect of their identities ("Teachers' Manual" 57-59).

While the LCRG constructed its project, however, linguists were developing terminology to differentiate the spoken and written standards of English: Standard American English (SAE) and Edited American English (EAE), respectively. This distinction was meant to counter E. D. Hirsch's argument in *The Philosophy of Composition* that if one learned to speak Standard English, he or she would necessarily

be able to write it (39). Although the CCCC's 1974 "Students' Right" background document reflects the then-emerging SAE-EAE distinction, I use the abbreviation SE in this chapter to reflect the LCRG's practice throughout its materials for referring to written Standard English.

While the LCRG was developing its ESD curriculum, several linguists had begun to argue that learning to write Standard English was not analogous to learning a second dialect. For example, Carol Chomsky and Irene Moscovitz each showed that one's ability to write Standard English correlates more closely with one's reading ability, not his or her spoken dialect (Hartwell 104). As Patrick Hartwell explains, this research connecting reading to writing would eventually erode support for bidialectalist and Standard-English-as-a-Second-Dialect pedagogies, based as they were on the claim that students' spoken dialects "interfered" with their writing (104-105).

¹⁰ The zero copula and the invariant *be* have been two of the most frequently studied aspects of African American Language. The term "copula" refers to the linguistic units *is* and *are* that couple, or join, a sentence's subject and its predicate; "zero copula," then, refers to sentences created without this joining unit, as with the absent *is* in the sentence "He at home now." The invariant *be*, meanwhile, describes habitual action or activities performed regularly, as illustrated in this sentence from the LCRG's teachers' manual: "When Nixon *be* saying that he is going to help Blacks, he really don't mean it" (48). As John Russell Rickford and Russell John Rickford note, even though quantitative sociolinguistics analyses of the zero copula and the invariant-*be* demonstrate that African American Language is systematic, many people viewing the language from outside the culture fail to recognize that numerous rules govern its use, leading to uninformed

conclusions that African American Language is ungrammatical or its speakers are lazy and uneducated (109). For a succinct overview of grammatical rules governing African American Language, see Rickford and Rickford, Chapter 7.

Indeed, many educators and policymakers have misinterpreted, ignored, and in some cases outright rejected sociolinguistics analysis, using the zero copula and invariant *be* to support their arguments that African Americans were cognitively deficient relative to European Americans. Thomas J. Farrell, in his 1983 “IQ and Standard English,” argued Black children’s lower scores on IQ tests resulted from differences in grammar between their language and that of white students (477). Specifically, he claimed that because Black English did not fully conjugate the verb *to be*, Black English speakers, especially black children, could not develop the most complex forms of abstract thinking: “[T]he emergence of the verb ‘to be’ [. . .] affords a far more flexible sense of time than what was previously possible conceptually when action verbs alone dominated the language. The development of the copulative verb is very important because a language with only action verbs is not likely to develop propositional thinking” characteristic of the abstract thought articulated within Aristotle’s science of logic (475). Farrell argued that if the grammar of one’s language did in fact determine one’s patterns of thinking, Black students needed to learn the grammar of Standard English in order to develop fully their capacity for abstract thinking (477).

Baugh was among the many linguists and compositionists who criticized Farrell’s invocation of the “difference as deficit” theory as well as his failure to acknowledge the influence of cultural and economic factors on students’ IQ scores (12; 163, n1). He noted that while access to written Standardized English literacy has often been restricted to

those with political and economic power, “the cognitive interplay of *langue* and *parole*, so central to abstract thought, is available to all normal children in language acquisition” (12).

¹¹ Hypercorrection occurs when a writer applies grammatical rules to irregular words for which these rules don’t apply. For example, the common rule for SE pluralization calls for adding an *-s* to a noun. Hypercorrection might occur when a writer uses *-s* to mark plural nouns in cases where words do so by internal vowel changes instead; hypercorrection, then, would explain the pluralization of *woman* as *womans*. The LCRG had concluded from its extensive research on student writing that hypercorrection reflected the forms students most often wrote in, rather than fully BEV dialect writing (“Teachers’ Manual” 196-197). As a result, several student essays in the textbook manuscript showed hypercorrection, and students were to revise these essays according to SE grammatical conventions.

¹² Smitherman defines toasts as epic-poem tributes to a hero who displays fearlessness, defiance, and open rebellion to white power (*Talkin and Testifyin* 157).

¹³ For one extended example of a pedagogy grounded on Eurocentric approaches to African American writers’ rhetorical styles, see Fleischauer.

¹⁴ The original source of this quotation comes from Shaughnessy, “Basic Writing and Open Admissions,” Intradepartmental Memorandum to Theodore Gross, 10 Dec. 1970, City College Archives, City College of New York. I cite this quotation indirectly in order to acknowledge its central importance to Horner’s analysis of how attention to grammar and mechanics came to dominate the field of Basic Writing.

¹⁵ An example of such elision within composition scholarship can be seen in Marian E.

Musgrave's 1971 CCC essay "Failing Minority Students: Class, Caste, and Racial Bias in American Colleges." In this article, Musgrave presents an important critique of how first-year composition courses "seldom meet the needs of minority group students, and in fact often destroy these students" (24), adding, "I am talking as much about Indians, Puerto-Ricans, Eskimos, Cubans, Mexican-Americans, poor whites, and Cajun French as I am about Blacks" (24). As she unpacks biased assumptions about "black dialects," however, Musgrave notes in passing, "for 'black' read Appalachian, Spanish-American, etc." (26), and then never articulates the similarities and differences in the biases faced by students from these linguistic communities.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

¹ Early in its Statement on Ebonics, the CCCC attacks critics of the Ebonics curriculum, whose arguments the organization found to be "for the most part, incomplete, uninformed, and in some cases purposefully distorted" (524).

² Suresh Canagarajah adds depths to Smitherman's analysis, arguing that the "increasingly complicated global situation for English and language rights" must prompt us to recontextualize the CCCC's National Language Policy, "deepening [its] implications, creating higher levels of expectancy, and posing fresh challenges" (Foreword ix). Canagarajah in particular finds that the focus on a "national" language policy does not account for the wide range of forces that shape language use within the U.S. He writes, "With the boundedness and self-confinement of the nation gradually eroding as the global seeps into the local, one might question whether we can have an

exclusive ‘national’ policy on anything anymore without being sensitive to the pressures and pulls of the international” (xi). This insight suggests that as we revisit the National Language Policy, we can articulate more precisely the goals and needs we envision for present-day language arts education in the U.S.

³ According to the 1981 report *U.S. Immigration Policy and the National Interest*, the annual average number of immigrants to the U.S. between 1931 and 1970 varied between 52,000 and 332,000 (Select Commission 230-231). By 1988, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) established that the number of immigrants admitted to the U.S. in 1985 had been 570,000, with that number then having exceeded 600,000 annually from 1986 to 1988 (qtd. in Rivera-Batiz 1).

⁴ For example, the report’s authors found that teachers and school administrators expressed educational expectations in terms of “minimum requirements.” As a result, they had effectively substituted the “minimum” for the “maximum” in terms of what students could achieve (14, 20). The National Commission on Excellence in Education called on schools instead to see each student’s potential to perform “on the boundary of individual ability in ways that test and push back personal limits, in school and in the workplace” (12). The commission also concluded its report with a special note to students urging them to work rigorously and maximize their gifts and talents (35-36).

⁵ Dinesh D’Souza likewise argued during this period that multicultural education encouraged students, particularly historically marginalized students, to identify more strongly with these marginalized communities than with the larger nation (xiii-xiv). From D’Souza’s perspective, the fragmented multicultural curriculum was more concerned with uncritical inclusion of repressed voices than with intellectual rigor. As a result,

schools failed to provide students with the freedom to develop the habits of critical thought that democracy required.

⁶ As other scholars have demonstrated, Hayakawa grossly misrepresented the research findings on bilingual education that were available at the time when he claimed that bilingual education “often results in no English being taught at all.” For representative examples of this research, see Lily Wong Fillmore, “Against Our Best Interest: The Attempt to Sabotage Bilingual Education,” Crawford, *Language Loyalties* 367-76; Kenji Hakuta, *Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism* (New York: Basic, 1986); and Stephen D. Krashen and Douglas Biber, *On Course: Bilingual Education’s Success in California* (Sacramento: California Association for Bilingual Education, 1988).

⁷ Chávez, along with John Tanton and Walter Cronkite, resigned from U.S. English’s Board of Directors in October 1988. These resignations occurred after the release of Tanton’s private October 10, 1986 memo to WITAN, a private discussion group focused on its perceived need for immigration restrictions, among other topics. James Crawford explains that in this memo, Tanton links the issues of English-Only, immigration restriction, and population control. Crawford contends that the contents of this memo reveal that the real interests of the English-Only movement have more to do with racism and xenophobia than with language itself. The following paragraph from Crawford’s essay “What’s Behind Official English?” provides a sense of how Tanton links these major themes:

“The question of bilingualism grows out of U.S. immigration policy,” Tanton says, because the influx of non-English speakers has overwhelmed “the assimilative capacity of the country.” There is no question which

language group he finds most menacing. “*Gobernar es poblar* translates ‘to govern is to populate,’” he writes in his 1986 memo. “In this society, will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile? . . . Can *homo contraceptivus* compete with *homo progenitiva* [*sic*] if borders aren’t controlled?” (172).

Crawford also explains in this article that until 1992, U.S. English was part of a large tax-exempt lobbying project called U.S., Inc., which also funded the Center for Immigration Studies, Californians for Population Stabilization, Americans for Border Control, and the Federation for American Immigration Reform. At the time of her resignation, Chávez claimed that she knew nothing about the links between U.S. English and these organizations concerned with restricting Latino immigration to the U.S. (Crawford, “What Behind” 172).

⁸ By Reagan’s second term, the Democratic Party had determined that it was necessary to go along with, rather than challenge, Reaganism: “A 1986 report by the Democratic National Committee proclaimed a ‘Democratic Creed,’ a set of commandments that could have been written by Reagan himself: ‘the freedom to make personal choices is at the heart of the American dream’; ‘individuals must be responsible for their own lives’; ‘opportunity is the key to a free society’; ‘a growing economy is the foundation of a society that is both dynamic and just’; ‘achievement and progress are central to the expectations of Americans’; ‘strong state and local governments are essential’; ‘America must be strong to deter aggression and keep the peace.’” (White 135). For the full text of this report, see Democratic Policy Commission, *New Choices in a Changing America*:

The Report of the Democratic Policy Commission to the Democratic National Committee (Washington, D.C.: Democratic Natl. Committee, 1986).

⁹ See, for example, Crawford's "What's Behind Official English?," in which he provides substantial documentary evidence to support his contention that the English Only movement "exploits strong feelings about language to build a new nativist movement" (177).

¹⁰ The Language Policy Committee's October 19, 1987 report to the CCCC Executive Committee provides a glimpse of the issues that were on the table during these initial meetings. The group prepared for its first working session by reading a variety of materials on the issues of language diversity in general and English-Only policies in particular. These readings included journalistic updates on the status and strategies of the English-Only movement, particularly its 1986 victory in California; resolutions and policy statements opposing English-Only that had been adopted by other professional organizations; "English Plus" policy documents then being developed by the Language Advocacy Coalition of the Joint National Committee for Languages; and scholarly articles that addressed linguistic diversity and language policy issues from sociological, psychological, and legal perspectives. On the first evening of its working weekend, the Language Policy Committee members also viewed and discussed "American Tongues," a fifty-minute video on American dialects. (CCCC Language Policy Committee, "Interim Report #1" 2-4)

¹¹ The CCCC National Language Policy reflects the major tenets of an "English Plus" policy then being promoted by the National Immigration Forum and the Joint National Committee for Languages. Underpinning the "English Plus" policy was the belief that

“the national interest can best be served when all persons of our society have access to effective opportunities to acquire strong English proficiency *plus* mastery of a second or multiple languages” (English Plus Information Clearinghouse).

¹² The Language Policy Committee’s three-hour panel, “The English-Only Movement: Background and Current Status,” featured two hours’ worth of presentations, followed by a one-hour discussion period. Below is a list of the panel participants and the titles of their presentations:

1. Jeffrey Youdelman, “Background—The English-Only movement”
2. Elizabeth Auleta, “The Threat of English-Only: What does it mean?”
3. Guadalupe Valdes, “English-Only: What it can and can’t do”
4. Elizabeth Baldwin, “Ironies and Realities of the English-Only Movement”
5. Elizabeth McPherson, “What can *we* do?”
6. Geneva Smitherman, “A National Language Policy: The Solution”
7. Ana Celia Zentella, “Social, linguistic and cultural bases for the National Language Policy”
8. James Stalker, “Implications of the policy for the profession”
9. Thomas Kochman, “Issues and questions”

¹³ Other professional organizations that supported English Plus policies and joined the English Plus Information Clearinghouse included the Modern Language Association, the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, the Center for Applied Linguistics, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council of Black Studies. Advocacy groups working toward the same ends were, among others, the National Council of Churches of Christ, the National Council of La Raza, the American Jewish

Committee, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Haitian American Anti-Defamation League, and the Organization of Chinese Americans.

¹⁴ A report in the July 1, 1983 *New York Times* revealed that a majority of Americans could not say what side the U.S. government was backing in the wars in Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua (Clymer 1).

¹⁵ The decision-making process of the U.S. Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) in cases affecting asylum seekers from Central America during the 1980s provides some understanding of how U.S. activities informed this “more ambivalent, certain more critical” attitude toward the U.S. (Juan González 191). As Juan González reports, between 1983 and 1990, the INS granted 2.6 percent of political asylum requests from Salvadorans, 1.8 percent from Guatemalans, and 2.0 percent from Hondurans, but 25.2 percent of requests from Nicaraguans, whose government (the Sandinistas) the Reagan administration was supporting the Contra guerillas to overthrow (131).

¹⁶ In this same letter, the Language Policy Committee members re-worked the “imprisonment” metaphor central to the English-Only movement’s rhetorical strategies. The Language Policy Committee argued instead that ELAs would “ghettoize language minorities” and create a barrier to immigrants’ learning English (2).

¹⁷ The cosponsors of H.R. 5 were Augustus F. Hawkins and Robert T. Stafford. The Adult Literacy Grants Program component of H.R. 5 was developed by the National Council of La Raza at the request of Congress.

¹⁸ The English Proficiency Act authorized the following federal funding for a six-year period: \$25 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 1988; \$26.3 million for FY89; \$27.6 million for FY90; \$29 million for FY91; \$30.5 million for FY92; and \$32 million for FY93.

¹⁹ The legislation also established a demonstration program for developing innovative approaches and methods of literacy education for LEP individuals. The Center of Applied Linguistics would serve as the national clearinghouse for this research.

²⁰ Although the Adult English Literacy Grants Program was part of H.R. 5, it required a separate appropriation from Congress.

²¹ Additional research on the “costs of monolingualism” supported the National Language Policy’s argument that heritage language maintenance needs public support in order to succeed. In particular, research on language instruction in the home revealed that parents and children needed to make significant investments in order to develop and sustain competencies in heritage languages such as Spanish. Education scholars Catherine E. Snow and Kenji Hakuta speculated in 1989 that “the psychological energy needed to keep using both languages or to risk losing proficiency in one” has been a significant factor contributing to the demographic trends toward English monolingualism in heritage-language families and communities (387). They also emphasized the mental and emotional demands bilinguals experienced in their everyday lives given that every single language choice they made affected their relationships with others, their self-images, and their personal identities (387-388).

²² In a 1992 *College English* review essay, Elsa Auerbach argued that teacher education needed to do more than expose the English Only movement’s “staggeringly inaccurate notions of how languages are learned and use” (Daniels, “What One” 122). Auerbach found Daniels’ recommendations troubling because they were, she argued, “almost apolitical” (849). She particularly criticized the extent to which they “neglected study of the socioeconomic context of language policy” (849). According to Auerbach, it was

issues of power and hegemony, not a common desire for empowering linguistic minorities and ensuring their democratic participation, that informed people's support or opposition to English Only legislation. Auerbach's analysis suggests that teacher education programs need to promote instructors' self-reflection on their ideas and attitudes toward language difference and the goals of writing instruction.

²³ Villanueva became a member of the CCCC's Language Policy Committee in 1994 and continues to serve on the committee.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

¹ Feal has consistently used her "Editor's Column" in the *MLA Newsletter* to examine various connections between modern language scholarship and the present "language crisis." See "Mapping Languages in the United States," *MLA Newsletter* 36.3 (2004): 4-5; "Scaring (Up) 'Foreign' Language Speakers: One Hundred Years of Multitude," *MLA Newsletter* 36.4 (2004): 4-5; and "Language Requirements and the English PhD: 'A Gesture of Interest'" *MLA Newsletter* 38.1 (2006): 5-6. Pratt, meanwhile, contributed an article to the MLA's *Profession 2003* in which she provided a set of four arguments for language scholars to use in their efforts to foster public support for multilingualism and language learning. See Pratt 110-119. More recently, Domna C. Stanton, 2005 President of the MLA, called on language scholars to broaden their sights beyond the present U.S. language policy debate in order to engage the international movement for language rights. See "On Linguistic Human Rights and the United States 'Foreign' Language Crisis," *Profession 2005* (New York: MLA, 2005): 64-79.

² The Ad Hoc Committee, it is important to note, was created for the specific purpose of improving the MLA's ability to engage public policy debates. The MLA Executive Council concluded that the MLA Advisory Committee on Foreign Languages and Literatures, "established in 1989 under different national and professional circumstances," limited the association's focus too narrowly on professional concerns ("Meeting, 27-28 Feb. 2004" 1390). The council therefore established the Ad Hoc Committee to bolster the MLA's "ability to engage seriously with national policy issues affecting foreign language study in the United States" (1390).

³ The U.S. Department of Defense only came into existence with the signing of the National Security Act of 1947. This legislation combined what were then the Departments of War and Navy to form the National Military Establishment. This name changed to the Department of Defense when Congress amended the act in 1949. The initial 1947 legislation made the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force members of the President's cabinet. The 1949 amendments to the National Security Act subordinated these three secretaries to the Secretary of Defense. This legislation granted the President authority, with consent from the Senate, to appoint the Secretary of Defense, who in turn assumed full cabinet authority over the Defense Department.

⁴ At the heart of the MLA's five-year program were efforts to learn how to teach languages more effectively and more efficiently, rather than simply to expand the number of foreign language programs in the U.S. Toward these ends, the MLA proposal called for the creation of fifteen "demonstration centers" that would each serve as a hub for researching one specific aspect of language education, from integrating language

laboratories into high-school language courses to designing short-term, intensive courses for adult professionals in less commonly taught languages such as Chinese and Arabic (119).

⁵ A secondary group of critical languages included Bengali, Burmese, Finnish, modern Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian-Malay, Khakha (spoken in outer Mongolia), Korean, Marathi (spoken in India), Persian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhalese (spoken in Ceylon), Swahili (spoken in East Africa), Tamil (spoken in Ceylon and India), Telugu (India), Thai, and Turkish.

⁶ Several provisions of the NDEA were meant to create these conditions that would allow for individuals to realize their true potential in critical subjects areas and professions. Title V of the NDEA, for example, directed funds to help schools identify and counsel students with abilities in science, mathematics, foreign languages, or technologically oriented vocations. Title IV of the NDEA, meanwhile, appropriated funds to create a pool of “National Defense Fellowships” that would enable a greater number of students to pursue graduate work in critical subjects. It is worth noting amid all of this discourse of empowering students to develop their gifts, however, that the federal government’s vision for improving teaching focused educators’ attention solely on questions about what subject matter to teach rather than on questions about how students learn best and how teaching methods could best create the conditions for successful learning (Sufrin 9).

⁷ Gardner drew these statistics from a 1964 manuscript of linguist’s Joshua A. Fishman then-forthcoming *Language Loyalty in the United States*.

⁸ Prendergast here uses the term “property” in its broadest sense to refer to a “quality, trait, attribute” (8).

⁹ According to Ball and Lardner, Ujima is a Swahili word meaning “collective work and responsibility” (87). The work and responsibility refers to the passing down of cultural knowledges and traditions through the generations. Ujima reflects the value of “collective” responsibility for passing down these traditions, as adult volunteers from the community provide mentorship for the African American female adolescent and youth participants (89).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

¹ The “Students’ Right” background statement gives readers a tangible sense of such synthesis. It includes an annotated bibliography of 129 entries that would allow readers to understand the theoretical foundations of the CCCC resolution.

² To learn about the MLA’s development of the on-line language map, see “The MLA Language Map” 21.

³ The CCCC’s 1989 “Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing” responded to colleges’ and universities’ increasing use of non-tenured full-time and part-time faculty to teach first-year writing courses. The CCCC leadership saw this trend as a strategy colleges and universities were using to erode the tenure system and, along with it, scholars’ academic freedom. Sharon Crowley, one of the co-authors of the “Statement of Principles and Standards,” summarized the policy’s core argument in this way: “[A]ll college writing teachers who present the appropriate qualifications and who are hired under appropriate circumstances are entitled to the same academic benefits enjoyed by any other college teacher, including and especially

academic freedom” (237). For the full text of this policy, see *College Composition and Communication* 40 (1989): 329-36. For a discussion of the invention, drafting, and revision of this policy, see Linda Robertson, Sharon Crowley, and Frank Lentricchia, “The Wyoming Conference Resolution Opposing Unfair Salaries and Working Conditions for Post-Secondary Teachers of Writing,” *College English* 49 (1987): 274-80; and Robertson and James Slevin, “The Status of Composition Faculty: Resolving Reforms,” *Rhetoric Review* 5 (187): 190-94. For analyses and discussions of strategies for implementing the policy, see Shirley K. Rose and Susan Wyche-Smith, “One Hundred Ways to Make the Wyoming Resolution a Reality,” *College Composition and Communication* 41 (1990): 318-24; and John Trimbur and Barbara Cambridge, “The Wyoming Conference Resolution: A Beginning,” *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 12 (1988): 13-17.

⁴ Given that I draw here on Horner’s materialist definition of writing, it is worth noting that the MLA Executive Committee’s charge to the Ad Committee on Foreign Languages concludes with this sentence: “The committee will produce documents relevant to its charge as its work progresses” (280). Such documents can be important objects of analysis. They can help us to deepen our understanding of how language scholars envision their work relative to lay society and how their ideas circulate through writing to those spaces where lay audiences work.

⁵ Porter et al.’s formulation of “institutional critique” involves localized, micro-level analysis of specific institutions. They distinguish their critique of localized institutions from analysis of macro-level “Institutions” (e.g., the State or the University) and “Disciplines” (e.g., English Studies). This distinction can be most clearly in the

following passage: “This [micro-level] view focuses on institutional actions or policies of places such as Lafayette Adult Reading Academy, the Lafayette Public Schools, and the Purdue University campus server (as opposed to Community Literacy, K-12 education, and the Internet)” (621). Porter et al. contend that this level of analysis can be an effective way to empower compositionists to see how change of macro-level institutions can be possible. They state, “We believe, to be direct about it, that local institutions (and local manifestations of national or international ones) are important locations for written activity, and furthermore, we believe that constructing institutions as local and discursive spaces makes them more visible and dynamic and therefore more changeable” (621).

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