

<https://wac.colostate.edu/atd>

A Special Issue of *Across the Disciplines*

Call for Proposals

Confluences of Writing Studies and the History of the English Language

Guest editors: Chris C. Palmer, Kennesaw State University; Amanda Sladek, University of Nebraska-Kearney; & Jennifer Stone, University of Alaska Anchorage

The relationship between writing and language studies is complex and sometimes contradictory. On the one hand, it has been characterized in terms related to misunderstanding, othering, and disciplinary division (Donahue, 2018; McComiskey, 2006). On the other hand, writing studies has engaged with language in exciting, productive ways, particularly as it relates to translanguaging, language rights, and world/global Englishes. Yet, as noted by Matsuda (2014), writing studies scholarship—even when it focuses on language—rarely draws on the work of linguists and language historians. Even explicitly historical scholarship often exhibits similar traits: language historians often draw heavily on writing as an object of study but do not always acknowledge their own work as *part* of writing studies, while historians of writing studies have primarily focused on the field's emergence in 20th-century university teaching contexts. This raises the question of what else “the historical” can entail for the fields of writing studies, language studies, and their confluences.

The flowing of rivers is a common metaphor for language diversity within historical studies of English (Morse-Gagné, 2019; Smith & Kim, 2018). A confluence occurs when two rivers come together, often in powerful and surprising ways. We see the confluence of writing studies and the history of English as an underexamined area needing additional exploration and mapping. This special issue extends the historical scope of writing studies broadly and WAC/WID specifically to include the history of the English language. Examining these confluences can yield dynamic and innovative insights, including situating “proper English” as a social construct, illuminating the ideological roots of emphasizing English in writing classrooms, and broadening understandings of the roots of writing practices in various institutional and professional contexts within and outside university halls.

The issue will explore ways in which the study of language change and variation can contribute to rhetoric and writing studies, and vice versa. Language history, as we construe it, can consider any period, from the origins of English to its use one moment ago, inclusive of its contact and mixing with other languages. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- What methodological, theoretical, or pedagogical insights could linguistic and sociocultural approaches to the history of English bring to WAC/WID conversations—e.g., empirical studies of teaching efforts or faculty development exploring the confluences of writing and historical language study; implementation of historical linguistics methods into WAC/WID spaces; or applications of composition theories to historical questions?
- How might studies of the history of the English language contribute to decolonial and antiracist approaches to WAC/WID, as well as writing studies more broadly (Anson, 2012; Lyons, 2000; Milu, 2022; Morse-Gagné, 2011; Powell, 2002)?

- How does engaging with the history of English help us more fully engage with translingual and multilingual contexts (e.g., Canagarajah, 2013; Kiernan et al., 2021; Pahta et al., 2017; Schendl & Wright, 2011), including its complications and critiques—for instance, Gilyard’s concerns about “the flattening of language differences” (2016, p. 284) and Matsuda’s (2014) warning to avoid (as individuals and as a field) uncritically adopting translingualism for its trendiness or out of a sense of moral obligation?
- How has the history of language standardization influenced and been influenced by the historical development of specific writing institutions, such as writing centers, style guides, first-year writing programs, or composition studies as a distinct academic discipline? How might we interrogate constructs such as “standard English,” “correctness,” “English-Only,” and other related language policies or ideologies (e.g., Cameron, 2012; Curzan, 2014; Flowers, 2019; Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Lippi-Green, 2012)?
- How can teacher-scholars incorporate ideas and principles from the study of our language history into different pedagogical contexts, including first-year writing, upper-level/advanced, and graduate education/teacher training (e.g., Sevenker, 2019)?
- How might studies of the history of the English language inform approaches to the study of craft and industry practices in creative, policy, legal, business, professional, science, and/or technical writing, and related fields?

In addition to the above questions, we encourage proposals on a range of topics related to the intersections of writing studies and history of English language studies, including rhetorical genre studies (e.g., Devitt, 2021); world and global Englishes (e.g., Jenks & Lee, 2020); the study of creative, literary, or public writing (e.g., Bokamba, 2015; Walker, 2020); the history of rhetoric and rhetorical theory; pedagogy and curriculum development; and cross-disciplinary explorations of method, theory, and/or practice. We also welcome empirical studies describing the results of teaching interventions, professional development, and other “on-the-ground” work at the confluences of writing studies and the history of the English language.

We invite single- and co-authored proposals of no more than 500 words by new and seasoned history of English and/or writing studies scholars. Submissions will be considered from faculty of all ranks, including lecturers, contingent faculty, independent scholars, graduate students, and writing center specialists. We also invite co-authored proposals by undergraduate students working with faculty mentors. **Please submit proposals to the co-editors: Chris C. Palmer (cpalme20@kennesaw.edu), Amanda Sladek (sladekam@unk.edu), and Jennifer Stone (jstone32@alaska.edu) by May 26, 2023.** Drafts will be due from authors in October 2023 for peer review, with a targeted publication date of Summer 2024. We are happy to meet with prospective authors any time before this date, so please contact us with questions or ideas.

References

- Anson, C. M. (2012). Black holes: Writing across the curriculum, assessment, and the gravitational invisibility of race. In A. B. Inoue & M. Poe (Eds.), *Race and writing assessment* (pp. 15–28). Peter Lang.
- Bokamba, E. G. (2015). African Englishes and creative writing. *World Englishes*, 34(3), 315–335. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12145>
- Cameron, D. (2012). *Verbal hygiene*. Routledge.
- Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. Routledge.
- Curzan, A. (2014). *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and language history*. Cambridge University Press.
- Devitt, A. J. (2021). The blurred boundaries of genres-in-use: Principles and implications from rhetorical genre studies for English historical linguistics. In P. J. Grund & M. E. Hartman (Eds.), *Studies in the history*

- of the English language VIII: Boundaries and boundary-crossings in the history of English* (Vol. 108, pp. 45–72). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110643282>
- Donahue, C. (2018). “We are the ‘other’”: The future of exchanges between writing and language studies. *Across the Disciplines*, 15(3), 130–143.
- Flowers, K. S. (2019). Writing studies’ concessions to the English-only movement: Revisiting CCCC’s national language policy and its reception. *College Composition and Communication*, 71(1), 31–59.
- Gilyard, K. (2016). The rhetoric of translanguaging. *College English*, 78(3), 284–289.
- Horner, B., & Trimbur, J. (2002). English only and U.S. college composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 53(4), 594–630.
- Jenks, C., & Lee, J. W. (2020). Translanguaging and world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 39(2), 218–221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12455>
- Kiernan, J., Frost, A., & Blum Malley, S. (2021). *Translingual pedagogical perspectives: Engaging domestic and international students in the composition classroom*. Utah State University Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Lyons, S. (2000). Rhetorical sovereignty: What do American Indians want from writing? *College Composition and Communication*, 51(3), 447–68.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2014). The lure of translanguaging writing. *PMLA*, 129(3), 478–483. <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2014.129.3.478>
- McComiskey, B. (2006). *English studies: An introduction to the discipline(s)*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Milu, E. (2022). Toward a decolonial translanguaging pedagogy for Black immigrant students. In T. Do & K. Rowan (Eds.), *Racing translanguaging in composition: Toward a race-conscious translanguaging* (pp. 123–142). Utah State University Press.
- Morse-Gagné, E. (2011). From Sutton Hoo to Tougaloo: Teaching HEL at an HBCU. *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching*, 18(1), 19–33.
- Morse-Gagné, E. (2019). Language variation: Which strand is the real river? In C. Moore and C. C. Palmer (Eds.), *Teaching the history of the English language* (pp. 38–43). MLA.
- Pahta, P., Skaffari, J., & Wright, L. (2017). *Multilingual practices in language history: English and beyond*. De Gruyter.
- Powell, M. (2002). Rhetorics of survivance: How American Indians use writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 53(3), 396–434.
- Schendl, H. & Wright, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Code-switching in early English*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Sevenker, J. R. (2019). HEL for composition studies: Critical language awareness. In C. Moore and C. C. Palmer (Eds.), *Teaching the history of the English language* (pp. 302–311). MLA.
- Smith, K. A., & Kim, S. M. (2018). *This language, a river: A history of English*. Broadview Press.
- Walker, C. (2020). Lifeworld discourse, translanguaging, and agency in a discourse genealogy of César Chávez’s literacies. *Literacy in Composition Studies*, 8(1), 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.21623/1.8.1.3>