# Linguistic Currents in Writing Studies Scholarship: Describing Variation in How Linguistic Terms Have Been Borrowed and (Re-)Interpreted in Writing Studies[1]

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**Abstract:** In this article, we analyze how linguistic terms have been borrowed and reinterpreted across disciplines. Specifically, we describe how terminology associated with Applied Linguistics (AL) changed meaning as it entered the new disciplinary context of Writing Studies (WS), often resulting in confusion and turbulence between the two fields. As in other work on the History of English (HEL), our analysis thus considers how language change works both over time (diachronically) and across different communities of speakers (synchronically). Our analysis of how the terms code-switching, translingualism, translanguaging, and declarative and procedural knowledge have been used and defined in AL versus WS points to the disciplines' different value systems. We argue that such differences in usage may also stem from WS's need to establish itself as a discipline. We end by considering how WS and AL, informed by HEL, can work together to further our knowledge of language and language-centered pedagogy.

The Hell Gate Bridge in New York City, not far from our university, crosses a narrow channel where currents from the Harlem and East Rivers collide with those of the Long Island Sound to create rough and unpredictable undercurrents. Even experienced sailors use caution when passing through this area and usually avoid it in the dark.

This article addresses how writing studies scholars in recent years have entered linguistic waters, seemingly without a compass, and created unexpected currents in their wake. At times, the resulting confluences have led to favorable destinations, but often they have created turbulence and a widening of the gulf between the two fields of writing studies (WS) and applied linguistics (AL). This turbulence has been discussed recently by AL writing scholars whose work borders or has been used in WS. For example, a 2015 open letter in *College English* authored by seven and signed by an additional 24 scholars calls for WS scholars to avoid conflating work on second language writing with work on translingualism in WS (Atkinson et al., 2015). Matsuda (2013, 2014, 2021) has been perhaps the most vocal critic of "linguistic tourism," where WS scholars borrow terms from linguistics without fully understanding their meaning or original context (2014, p. 482), with the result that they often end up "valorizing" in addition to "valuing" language difference (Matsuda, 2021, p. 109).

In what follows, we add to these conversations by focusing on terminology, and specifically terms that originated or have been in the AL lexicon and were borrowed by scholars in WS, or, in the case of translingualism, where a term originated in WS to describe a phenomenon also being studied

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under a different name in AL. Like many of the scholars who authored or signed the 2015 letter, we see our work as inhabiting the nexus between AL and WS. Kristen is an applied linguistics scholar who directed our university's composition program for more than 10 years. Meaghan is a writing studies scholar who teaches language-centered courses on genre and identity and has come to see the value of incorporating AL work in her scholarship and pedagogy through her collaborations with Kristen.

Our discussion of how these terms have been differently defined and used in these fields recalls discussions of language change in general. A foundational truism about how language works is that language changes, both over time (diachronically) and across different communities of speakers (synchronically). A common cause of language change stems from language contact among different speech communities, often resulting in lexical borrowing. While most linguists are in favor of leaving a language free to change alongside its current speakers' needs, as we will discuss in the implications section, language change resulting from contact across disciplinary communities can have unintended consequences within those disciplinary contexts. In fields conducting empirical research, as both AL and WS do, operationally defining terms and using them consistently helps ensure that researchers build on each other's work and advance disciplinary knowledge. When lexical changes create confusion, however, disciplinary knowledge and growth are threatened.

We begin this article with anecdotes from the perspective of Kristen and then Meaghan that illustrate some of the tensions that can occur in cross-disciplinary language contact when the same or similar term is understood differently by two different fields. We then briefly outline which terms we chose to examine and why before turning to an in-depth examination of how AL and WS scholars have used and understood these terms. Given our experiences, we share the concerns of scholars from AL and second language writing who have noted discomfort with how WS scholars have borrowed or used linguistic terms, so we then discuss why consistency in terminology matters.

Historians of language remind us that language is forever changing, suggesting that the lack of consistency we describe is simply a manifestation of the natural process of language variation. Studying patterns in language variation, however, can provide insight into the motivations for specific changes. Motivation for the variation we describe in this article, we believe, stems from a desire for disciplinary identification and the resulting silos we often build to distinguish one discipline from another. We argue, however, that we can best serve the linguistically diverse students we teach when scholars from AL and WS reach across their disciplinary silos to learn from one another. This article also draws upon and contributes to the work of History of the English Language (HEL) scholarship, albeit unconventionally, in its analysis of relatively recent linguistic variation across disciplinary contexts. Our hope is thus to offer an example of how the fields of AL, WS, and HEL can work together to further language-related research and pedagogy.

## Kristen: From an Applied Linguist's Perspective

The first time Kristen encountered the term *code-switching* in WS, she was intrigued, as it was in the title to an article arguing against code-switching. As a linguist she wondered, haven't we moved beyond criticizing bilingual speakers for something they often do naturally and unintentionally? The title led her to think the author must be one of those traditional, old fogey composition instructors who oppose the use of non-standard dialects in writing courses and consider anything outside prescriptive English usage an error. The article begins with a definition of code-switching with which Kristen was familiar: using two or more languages in the same conversation. The author then draws on an example of code-switching as an argument against code-switching. Now Kristen is a bit confused. As she reads further, she has to backtrack several times to be sure she understands the contradictory statements that she encountered. For example, after already providing a widely

accepted definition of code-switching that she was familiar with, the author then states that there is another definition, one promoted by language educators. This latter definition is described as a type of language conversion, where students are instructed to leave their home languages outside the classroom and switch exclusively to standardized English in academic contexts. The more she reads, the more her reaction ranges from intrigued, to confused, to disappointment, and finally to alienation as the article is a perfect illustration of WS's lack of engagement with scholarship in linguistics, even when a linguistic concept is in the title. Elsewhere, Kristen then encountered other WS scholars following suit, arguing against the so-called code-switching perspective and proposing in its place a practice that, ironically, is what linguists define as code-switching. The dismissal and replacement of scholarship in linguistics by compositionists who prefer different terminology came across to this AL reader as a celebration of the separation between the two disciplines.

As Kristen tried to understand how such a misunderstanding could have occurred, she read work by other scholars whose disciplinary expertise includes both WS and AL (e.g., Matsuda, 2013, 2014; Severino, 2017; Tardy, 2017). Matsuda, in particular, calls WS scholars to task for posing as pioneers, believing they have discovered a "new frontier in the knowledge desert" (2013, p. 131) of linguistic knowledge, unaware that this desert is actually WS scholars' point of departure. To address the knowledge gap they see in their field, Matsuda notes, WS scholars have "borrow[ed] key terms and concepts from other disciplinary contexts, and, in the process, sometimes create[d] an incongruent representation of those terms and concepts" (2013, pp. 132-133). Though still aggravated with WS scholars for their rejection of linguistic scholarship, at least Kristen now had confirmation that she was not alone in her reactions.

## Meaghan: From a Writing Studies Scholar's Perspective

Around five years ago, Meaghan was on our department's curriculum committee reviewing the syllabus for a new course. In the description of assignments, the faculty member who designed the course, a WS scholar with a background in English education, stated that students would be doing a "rhetorical analysis." During a meeting discussing the course, Meaghan asked, "What concepts from rhetoric are they going to use or read about?"

> "Oh," the faculty member replied. "I didn't really mean *Rhetoric* rhetoric. I thought about using *discourse analysis* instead, but I thought that meant something too specific."
>
> "*Rhetoric* means something specific, too," Meaghan rejoined.
>
> "Hmm," she replied. "Maybe I should just use the term *analysis*?"

Confusion around terminology continued into another curriculum committee meeting in which Meaghan proposed teaching a course titled Introduction to Genre Studies. Meaghan's proposal was met with enthusiasm by a colleague from literary studies who gushed, "That sounds great! So I guess you'll just be guiding students through a number of different aesthetic genres?"

Horrified that this is how the literary studies colleague would imagine this course, Meaghan spluttered out, "I hope not!" and was met with a confused stare from the literary studies colleague.

## Which Terms and Why?

The impetus for this article came from moments like those described above where misunderstandings occurred because the same or a similar term was being used differently by people from different yet adjacent disciplines. Addressing first and second language contexts specifically,

Costino and Hyon (2011) describe how these "differences in the lexicons" of different fields "can hinder productive . . . communication" (p. 24). Before writing this article, we created a list of terms where we felt that different understandings of the same term were harming cross-disciplinary communication. Included in this list were: code-switching, translanguaging, genre, discourse, transfer, and declarative and procedural knowledge, among others.

As we began researching how these terms were used in WS versus AL, we realized that we would have to streamline our list. First, we wanted to give each term adequate space so we could explore its use both diachronically and synchronically, but we encountered problems with the searchability of certain terms. For example, the term *genre* is used so ubiquitously, and to signal both lay and scholarly interpretations, that it was difficult to explore systematically (and the same could be said for transfer and discourse). Moreover, differences in how different schools of genre have interpreted the term are already well documented (Aull, 2015; Costino & Hyon, 2011; Hyon, 1996; Swales, 1990). Finally, some terms on our list couldn't be considered without also discussing other related terms. We thus narrowed our list to terms where differences in how the fields define them either hadn't been well explored or where differences were significant enough that they were influencing, if not obstructing, cross-disciplinary conversation.

To compare how these terms were used in WS versus AL, our initial strategy involved a systematic analysis of how each term was defined in these two disciplines synchronically, that is, current usage across the disciplines. We looked for databases that would allow us to search for these terms' appearances across a wide range of journals in each discipline. This quickly proved difficult given the lack of databases specific to each discipline. We then took a different tack: in AL there are established resources (such as encyclopedias and textbooks) defining key terms, which helped us understand where and how the terms originated. While WS also has collections examining disciplinary terminology (cf. Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2016; Harris, 1997; Heilker & Vandenberg, 2015; Malenczyk, 2016), they generally haven't included the more language-focused terms under examination here. To get a better sense of these terms' historical trajectories in WS, then, we used the databases JSTOR and Gale OneFile to trace their use in the flagship journals *College English* and *College Composition and Communication*. We reasoned that both journals were old enough to help us pinpoint where and when these terms might have originated, even if it was through citations of older sources using the terms. We also used Google Ngram to see how early the terms appeared in their corpus of books.

In the following sections, we describe the following terms: code-switching, translingualism, translanguaging, and declarative and procedural knowledge. In the sections on code-switching and declarative and procedural knowledge, we begin by looking at the terms in AL before moving to WS's use of the term. We switch the order in our section on translanguaging and translingualism since it's unclear whether one term emerged from the other or whether they derived from separate contexts.

## Terms

### *Code-switching from an Applied Linguist's Perspective*

Code-switching is a language contact phenomenon that has long intrigued linguists as they observe, describe, and attempt to explain naturally occurring language in use. The first use of the term *code-switching* is often credited to the linguist Einar Haugen's (1953) observations of the linguistic behavior of bilingual speakers of English and Norwegian in the US. While research on bilingual behavior in general and code-switching in particular had long been subjects of study for linguists (Benson, 2001), common terminology for these language contact behaviors only emerged once the discipline of applied linguistics, and specifically sociolinguistics, separated from general linguistics and the adjacent discipline of anthropology. Figure 1 provides a visual depiction of code-switching's emergence in books tracked by Google Ngram, along with the term code-meshing, which we discuss in the next section.

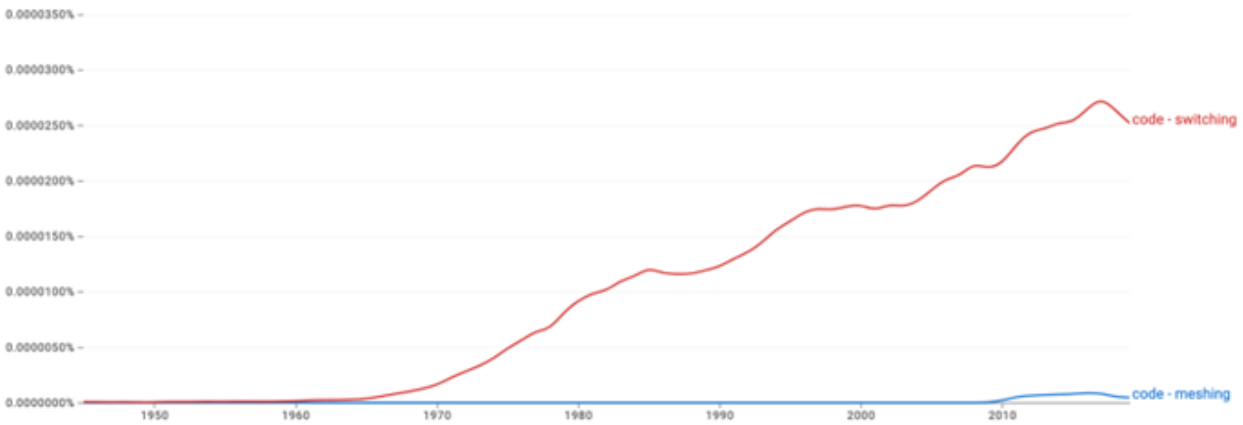


*Figure 1: Google Books Ngram Viewer of Code-switching and Code-meshing, from 1945-2019*

Early scholarship on code-switching distinguished situational from metaphorical code-switching, where situational code-switching occurs when a speaker alternates languages based on the context, and metaphorical switching occurs when a speaker draws on more than one language in a single conversation as they see fit (Bailey, 1999). In general, however, code-switching in AL refers to metaphorical switching, with situational switching defined as another, related language contact phenomenon known as diglossia (Ferguson, 1959; Hudson, 2002). Interestingly, WS scholars who discuss code-switching within the context of social justice could benefit from awareness of the sizable scholarship on diglossia, as it is not a new phenomenon nor is it unique to the United States.

A current textbook for introductory linguistics courses defines code-switching as "the use of two or more languages or dialects within a single utterance or within a single conversation" (Dawson & Phelan, 2016, p. 511). Another popular textbook defines it as "the movement back and forth between two languages or dialects within the same sentence or discourse" (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2003, p. 577). Both definitions share striking similarities with the definition of code-meshing that Kristen encountered in the article described in the opening anecdote.

Moving beyond descriptions to theoretical explanations, Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model proposes that speakers code-switch to deliberately signal a departure from the expected norms of power and prestige in a given community or speech situation. Code-switching, therefore, is "almost

always socially motivated" (p. 476). Similarly, Auer (1995) sees code-switching as a contextualization cue whose meaning is to emphasize otherness, similar to changes in "intonation, rhythm, gesture or posture" (p. 123).

In addition to describing what code-switching is, language specialists also note what it is not. Contrary to a layperson's assumptions, code-switching is not random or haphazard, but rule-governed and systematic (MacSwan, 2017). And despite similarity on a surface level, the use of established loan words or phrases does not fall under the category of code-switching (Myers-Scotton & Ury, 1977), nor does the spontaneous borrowing of a word or phrase from one language into another (Poplack, 2017). For example, describing a committee as ad hoc or telling someone carpe diem is not code-switching, nor is inviting someone out for a glass of vino or cerveza. Also not code-switching is the practice of alternating languages as a function of the situation or context which, as noted above, comes under the label of diglossia. Moreover, as empirical researchers, linguists who study code-switching do not promote language substitution or language conversion, contrary to some readers' (mis)interpretation of the approach described by Wheeler and Swords (2006), which the WS scholar from one of the opening anecdotes referenced.

### *Code-Switching as Depicted in Writing Studies*

In recent years, perhaps resulting from the publication of many trade books about language (e.g., McWhorter, 2014), language contact between linguists and non-linguists has increased, leading to extensive borrowing of the term *code-switching*. As often happens with technical terms, non-specialists have altered the meaning of code-switching to no longer reflect its scholarly meaning.[2] For example, when Kristen raises the topic of code-switching in her linguistics courses, many students claim to already understand the concept, citing sources such as the 2018 film *Sorry to Bother You* in which an African American telemarketer illustrates adopting a white-sounding accent to succeed at his job, or entertaining skits by comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele in which they "translate" expressions from Black English (BE) into standardized English. Some even insist that code-switching is a phenomenon specific to speakers of BE, ignoring that speakers of other languages may also engage in code-switching.

WS scholars, with closer connections to popular media than to the adjacent discipline of applied linguistics, have tended to define code-switching more similarly to these popular definitions than linguistic ones (Young et al., 2014).[3] That is, for many WS scholars, code-switching is what speakers do when they adopt a formal or standardized language variety in some contexts and a relaxed, more natural variety in casual settings. Under this view of code-switching, speakers are often encouraged or forced to reject their home dialects/languages in favor of the language associated with people in power, politically or socially.

The term *code-switching* appears quite early in the WS journals we examined, in 1965 for *College English* and 1975 for *CCC*. However, these first appearances were mostly one-off mentions without definitions or engagement, with authors occasionally acknowledging code-switching as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. It's not until 2004 in *CCC* that scholars really began engaging more sustainedly with these terms, with articles by Young (2004) and Lu (2004).

Young (2004) would of course continue to develop his critique of what he terms *code-switching* in his 2009 article in *JAC*, promoting the term he coins, *code-meshing*, as an alternative, a practice that reinforces the notion that "in order to have new thoughts, you must inevitably create new nouns – or, correspondingly, if you create new words, you are being original" (Billig, 2013, p. 10). Significantly, in the 2004 article, Young cites Gilyard's (1991) use of code-switching from his autobiography, *Voices of the Self*, arguing that Gilyard describes code-switching as "a kind of enforced educational schizophrenia" (p. 163). However, a closer examination of Gilyard's book reveals that he

had only discussed code-switching in a much earlier chapter than where the quote appears, and there his definition of code-switching was much closer to how it's defined in AL. Notably, throughout his work, Gilyard credits having taken several courses in linguistics (including Applied Linguistics in the Classroom) for his knowledge of linguistic concepts, explaining why his understanding of code-switching contrasts sharply with that of Young's (and of the field of WS more broadly). In reference to Young's work, Gilyard notes, "He speaks with new and welcome urgency, but the work has been well underway" (2011, p. 128).

A frequent commonplace in WS today is thus to condemn language behaviors reflecting their conception of code-switching, confusing scholars (and students) who understand code-switching in the linguistic sense, as illustrated in one of the opening anecdotes. Looking back at how the term has been used in WS journals, however, it's understandable that this confusion has occurred, as many early mentions refer to code-switching in the context of educational policy (see, for example, Wright, 1980). As we stated earlier, the practice of language alternation criticized by compositionists has also been studied extensively by linguists but under the term *diglossia* (Ferguson, 1959; Hudson, 2002). Simplifying the differences somewhat, diglossia is considered a societal issue while code-switching describes an individual's behavior. These are not trivial differences, as the former is a social justice issue, one that can and should be addressed by policymakers and institutions. As a type of individual behavior, however, the linguistic concept of code-switching arguably cannot (nor should) be regulated.

WS scholars' criticism of what they refer to as code-switching uncovers another major difference between the disciplines' use of the term: linguists aim to approach their study of language behavior from a position of neutrality (to the extent possible), relying on description rather than prescription; WS scholars often tend toward judgment (Matsuda, 2013), replacing one type of prescriptivism with another. Linguists might acknowledge, however, that boasting a more neutral stance is, in itself, a judgment, one potentially worth evaluating and reconsidering more critically (cf. Curzan, 2014). For example, at what point does neutrality become indifference? And how does a focus on description address the reality of prescription in most educational and professional contexts? Languages may be linguistically equal (as linguists proclaim), yet they are far from socially equal. Although consistent terminology could have helped both disciplines by creating alignment with one another and avoiding unnecessary distractions, WS scholars' call for social justice through a (re)analysis of linguistic phenomena at both societal and individual levels illustrates how linguistic equality might be practiced rather than merely described.

### *Translingualism as Described in Writing Studies Scholarship*

However one defines code-switching, additional (separate but parallel) discussions taking place in the past fifteen years by scholars in both applied linguistics and WS have called into question code-switching's relevance at all. Specifically, scholars in both fields currently challenge the view that languages are concrete, separate entities with clear boundaries from which speakers (or writers) can shift. Instead, for these scholars, language is described as a process or "a fluid social practice" (Flores & Aneja, 2017, p. 443) that language users adapt as needed. This phenomenon is generally referred to as translingualism in WS and translanguaging in AL. As we'll discuss later in this section, while some scholars have used both terms and treated them as overlapping, they are not completely interchangeable as they're associated with different histories and goals. In this section, we describe translingualism as it is used in WS. We then turn, in the following section, to translanguaging in AL.

The introduction of translingualism to WS is generally credited to Horner et al.'s (2011) article in *College English*, and our searches of these terms in *College English* and *College Composition and Communication* suggest that this and another article from the same year in *CCC* by Horner, NeCamp,

and Lu (2011) were probably the first instances of these terms in WS. Interestingly, the term *translingual* appears earlier in *College English* than in *CCC*, but in articles in the field of comparative literature, indicating that the term could even have originated in literary studies (Mao, 2007). Our searches also revealed that the adjective version of the term, translingual, is used more often than the noun *translingualism*, as in the terms translingual approach, translingual disposition, translingual praxis, and translingual orientation. This observation of translingualism being characterized as an approach or praxis aligns with Tardy's (2021) discourse analysis of the term's use in WS. The Google Ngram presented in Figure 2 also depicts translingual as the more frequently occurring term.

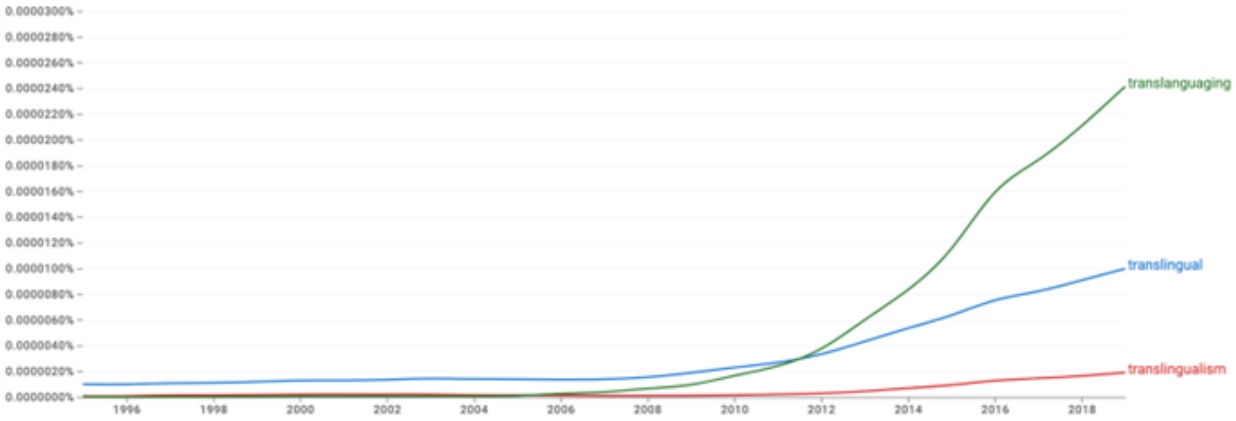


*Figure 2: Google Books Ngram Viewer of Translanguaging, Translingual, and Translingualism, from 1995-2019*

Acknowledging that languages are not fixed but fluid (a basic tenet of how living languages work), Horner et al. (2011) propose "a new paradigm: a translingual approach" (p. 303), in which language difference is not an obstacle or an occasion for errors, but rather a resource for writers to draw on, an opportunity to illustrate linguistic heterogeneity in opposition to monolingual expectations. Translingual writing, therefore, displays a writer's "deftness in deploying a broad and diverse repertoire of language resources, and responsiveness to the diverse range of readers' social positions and ideological perspectives" (p. 308).

Published five years prior to Horner et al.'s (2011) piece, Canagarajah's (2006) article, which implored writing teachers to treat multilingual students' languages as a resource rather than a problem and to accommodate different traditions that students bring to their writing, is arguably a precursor to the translingual turn in WS. A similar case could be made for Canagarajah's (2009) article introducing the concept of plurilingualism, or plurilingual English, which Canagarajah describes as writing in which the vernacular is used alongside the standardized Sanskrit. More broadly, the idea of viewing languages as resources for multilingual speakers has been around in both WS and AL for decades.

By 2011, changing audiences from WS to AL, Canagarajah adopts the term translanguaging, noting the concept's concurrent development in different disciplines and with different labels. In 2015, however, realigning with WS scholars, Canagarajah rejects the term translanguaging in favor of translingualism, which Canagarajah depicts as "an expansive orientation to language that contests ideologies informing native speaker ownership" (p. 1) and "that we need in writing instruction" (p. 4). In a similar move, Horner et al. (2019) exclude "the growing body of scholarship on translanguaging" (p. 2) from their bibliography on translingual approaches to teaching writing, reinforcing not only perceived distinctions between translingualism and translanguaging, but also "the limited engagement of translingualism with existing language scholarship" (Gevers, 2018, p. 74).

Furthermore, analyzing publications in which translingualism and second language writing (SLW) are described, Tardy (2021) illustrates how the former is framed as a new approach for teaching composition, one that values multilingual writing, leading to the conclusion that existing approaches are outdated and limited to the promotion of standardized written English. Tardy's observation that the translingualism-SLW dichotomy might really be about the field of composition versus SLW resonates with ours with regard to WS and AL.

Similar to her confusion upon reading how code-switching was used by a WS scholar, Kristen struggled to make sense of the concept of translingualism as used by WS scholars. Unlike the former example, however, Kristen's first encounters with translingualism occurred in WS scholarship, where the main takeaway seemed to be pedagogical suggestions to allow or encourage students to display their "deftness in deploying a broad and diverse repertoire of language resources" (Horner et al., 2011, p, 308). For Kristen, this seemed like a lot of words to say that code-switching/code-meshing in writing could be a valuable strategy for students in writing courses. It wasn't until reading scholarship on translanguaging in AL journals, where theoretical explanations from sociolinguistics were used to support translingual practices, that the concept became clear. Initially, Kristen thought that her own unfamiliarity with WS scholarship accounted for her lack of understanding of translingualism. The more she read about translanguaging, however, the more she felt that had WS scholars drawn closer connections to the linguistic theories on which they based their pedagogical suggestions, their descriptions of translingualism would have been clearer and their arguments stronger.

### *Translanguaging as Described in Applied Linguistics Scholarship*

For applied linguists, translanguaging first emerged in the 1980s when Welsh educator Cen Williams and his colleague Dafydd Whittall coined the term *trawsieithu*, which was then translated into English as translinguifying and finally translanguaging (Lewis et al., 2012). Developed as an instructional strategy for use in bilingual classrooms, translanguaging in this context referred to a pedagogical practice incorporating planned, deliberate switches between languages, with teachers using one language to reinforce students' development of the other (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Conteh, 2018a). Teachers used the pedagogy of translanguaging to help students achieve "effective communication, function rather than form, cognitive activity, as well as language production" (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 641). The participial-ing emphasizes that, in AL, translanguaging is an active practice, where the primary focus is on the process of communicating meaning and not on the linguistic product (Mazak & Carroll, 2016). It is not a coincidence that translanguaging as such emerged alongside efforts to recognize Welsh, a previously stigmatized language, as a legitimate alternative to the dominant English (Conteh, 2018b). This concept of translanguaging, thus, is historically related to issues of language rights, academic success, and social justice for linguistic minority populations (Conteh, 2018b), all issues at the center of AL (and sociolinguistic) scholarship.

While the origin of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in bilingual classrooms assumes an artificial, or arbitrary, division between languages (Wei, 2018), subsequent theorizing of translanguaging by applied linguists recalls the widely accepted but often overlooked fact that languages are distinguished from one another based in large part on social and political status, and not on linguistic characteristics (Otheguy et al., 2015). Attempts to identify distinct boundaries between two synchronically closely related languages (such as Spanish and Italian), or between diachronic stages of a named language (such as the emergence of Italian from Latin), based on linguistic features alone illustrate the inadequacy of linguistic criteria for marking such boundaries. Similar conclusions are reached by attempts to describe differences between languages and dialects in linguistic terms, as these, too, are social constructs.

From these observations, several AL scholars note, it follows that the existence of discrete, named languages as material and stable objects is more myth than reality. Instead, the closest thing to a tangible, linguistic object is not a named language adopted by a community of speakers, but rather the linguistic repertoire of a specific individual known in linguistics as the speaker's idiolect. This idiolect, comprised of all the languages, registers, or codes that that individual speaker has at their disposal, is central to a theory of translanguaging that rests on linguistic principles. A speaker (or writer) selects, with varying degrees of awareness, which elements in their idiolect (repertoire) best fit a particular context and their communicative purposes. The context thus helps delimit which elements in their idiolect a speaker will select. Since languages are not discrete entities in a linguistic sense, nor are they physically distinct in a language user's mind, a speaker can choose to recognize, or not, socially defined divisions between named language varieties in their selection. When speakers draw on their entire repertoire, without concern for socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages, they are engaging in translanguaging in the sense that their language use "transcends the named language… and returns the focus to the individual's language" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 297).

Accordingly, translanguaging, as conceived by some AL scholars, is a process of language selection not limited to bilingual or multilingual speakers, since all speakers have the option to translanguage when they select among the codes and registers in their linguistic repertoire. This is not to say, however, that the practice of translanguaging is accepted or received equally for all speakers. For speakers whose idiolect is restricted to variations within a single named language (so-called monolinguals), translanguaging may go unnoticed, as differences between the varieties in their idiolects may not be salient. For multilingual speakers, in contrast, translanguaging across named languages (including language varieties like Black English) is likely to be noticed and perhaps questioned. In short, "monolinguals are usually granted license to operate at full or nearly full idiolect [b]ut for bilinguals, the deployment of full linguistic resources can run up against strong norms articulating the sharpness of linguistic boundaries" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 297). In other words, all speakers translanguage, but some speakers do so more freely and without judgment while others must suppress part of their linguistic repertoire and limit translanguaging to settings in which it is accepted or allowed. The challenge for multilingual speakers in monolingual environments (such as in school), is, then, not simply the requirement to learn a particular variety, but the requirement to limit their repertoire selection to that variety in those contexts, that is, to suppress part of their linguistic proficiency. Based as it is on observations of how languages work and how language users behave, this expanded view of translanguaging is more than a pedagogy, a practice, or a process, but potentially a theory of language in general (Otheguy et al., 2015; Wei, 2018).

### *Declarative and Procedural Knowledge in Applied Linguistics*

Scholars in educational psychology and applied linguistics have traced the origin of the concepts informing declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge to the philosopher Ryle's (1949, as cited in Faerch & Kasper, 1987) distinction between "knowing-that" and "knowing-how," respectively. The terms were later coined by Anderson (1976) describing his adaptive control of thought (ACT) model, which he revised and tested in subsequent publications including his often-cited monograph *The Architecture of Cognition* (1983). Figure 3 supports this general timeframe and also shows how these terms are often used in tandem, with procedural knowledge being the more frequently used, a phenomenon we address in the next section.

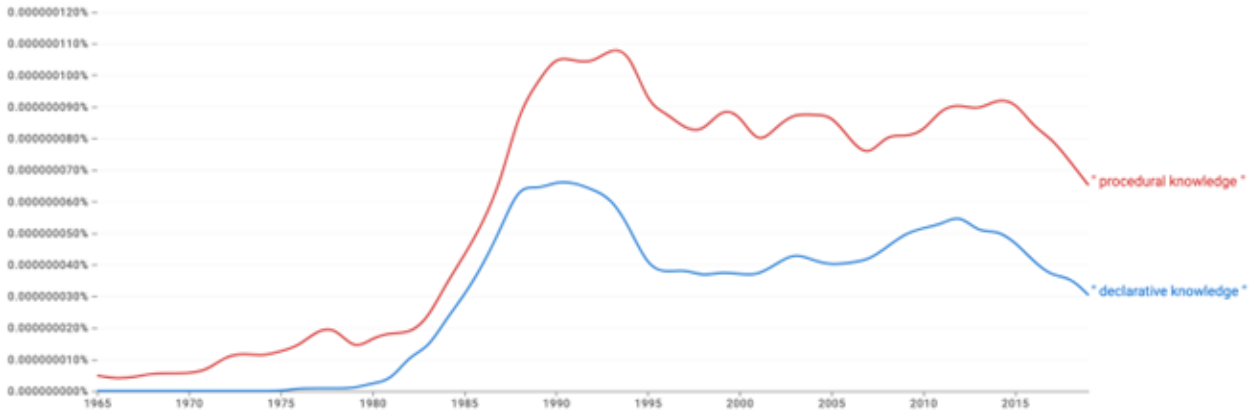


*Figure 3: Google Books Ngram Viewer of Procedural Knowledge and Declarative Knowledge from 1965-2019*

The ACT model is a unitary theory of how the human brain works while learning. Anderson (1983) theorized that all human knowledge could be broken down into two categories, declarative and procedural, and describes how declarative knowledge becomes procedural knowledge through a process called proceduralization (p. 34). As an individual performs a task, declarative knowledge, which can be learned relatively quickly, becomes proceduralized, eventually building to a point (over subsequent performances) where performance of the task becomes automatic. Once knowledge is proceduralized, it frees an individual's mental capacity so that they can focus on other things, including performing the task more fluidly.

Applied linguists adopted Anderson's model and expanded it to understand communicative knowledge, and especially how people learn and acquire languages (see Faerch & Kasper, 1987). Salaberry's (2018) description of declarative and procedural knowledge aligns with Anderson's model:

> In the first stage of skill development, declarative (propositional) knowledge provides facts for general-purpose production rules (the general description of a procedure is learned through verbal mediation and rehearsal). In the second stage, declarative knowledge is embedded into procedures necessary to perform the skill (from declarative to procedural). In the third and final stage, the proceduralized skill becomes more and more automatic with practice. (p. 1; see also DeKeyser, 2007)

In AL, declarative and procedural knowledge are often associated with explicit and implicit knowledge (or learning), where explicit knowledge is learned with the intention of learning while implicit is generally learned without intention or even awareness of the learning that has occurred (Salaberry, 2018). Relatedly, declarative (or explicit) knowledge is conscious, while procedural knowledge is generally unconscious. This latter distinction explains why expert language users within a particular context are often able to perform tasks with relative ease but may be unable to explain how to perform the same task to novices, as the declarative knowledge associated with learning the task has been forgotten.

### *Declarative and Procedural Knowledge in Writing Studies*

Writing studies scholars interested in cognitive models of composing discovered declarative and procedural knowledge shortly after applied linguistics. But, apart from a few scholars studying

cognitive models of composing (Flower et al., 1986; Carter, 1990), the terms weren't picked up until Wardle and Downs' (2013) retrospective on Writing about Writing (WAW). They introduce declarative knowledge stating

> In 2007, we published an article in *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) that said, in essence, that writing studies is a field with declarative knowledge, and we need to be directly teaching that knowledge in our first-year composition courses.[4]

Wardle and Downs (2013) neglect to define procedural or declarative knowledge, and they don't cite anyone in reference to those terms.

Providing a bit more clarity in a 2014 chapter, Wardle and Downs again don't define the terms, instead offering examples of each:

> in addition to teaching students that genres are flexible responses to recurring rhetorical situations (declarative knowledge), assignment descriptions and scaffolding themselves treat genres this way, and ask students to engage in activities that reflect such an understanding of genre (procedural knowledge). (p. 281)

As in other WS scholarship, the relationship between declarative and procedural knowledge is left unexplored. For example, there's no sense, as in AL, that declarative knowledge can become procedural knowledge if a learner is engaged in similar, recurrent experiences with language. Lacking articulation of how they're interrelated, or how a learner might draw on both in the same task, declarative and procedural are simply ways of referring to different kinds of writing knowledge.

Perhaps because Wardle and Downs (2013, 2014) were arguing for focusing first-year writing on WS content, the more important term for them was declarative knowledge, which is often equated (we would argue incorrectly) with content knowledge. Perhaps following a similar line of thinking, Downs and Robertson (2015) characterize procedural knowledge as "narrow," asserting, "Unlike narrow procedural (how-to) knowledge, which varies from task to task, threshold concepts apply broadly to almost every writing situation" (106).

We understand Downs and Robertson's (2015) point that being able to articulate knowledge could make it more likely that learners then apply it in contexts that they perceive as being not similar enough to the original learning context that they would have to more consciously adjust what they are doing with language. In fact, a major tenet of the WAW movement was that simply guiding students through the processes of writing and revising by itself is insufficient for learning to occur. Viewed through the lens of Anderson's ACT model, in many applications of WS's process movement in the classroom, the first stage of skill acquisition, wherein declarative knowledge provides students with concepts and grounding, was skipped or at least minimized. Moreover, as we've argued elsewhere, declarative knowledge is important for language instructors, who need to be able to articulate knowledge to students (Brewer & di Gennaro, 2022). But it doesn't make sense, within the AL (and ACT) framework, to characterize procedural knowledge as "narrow," since whether knowledge is "procedural" isn't about the object of learning (or what is known) but rather how the learner is accessing that knowledge in memory and whether that process is conscious or unconscious.[5]

Notably, this recent foregrounding of declarative knowledge in WS is in contrast to the higher frequency of the use of the term procedural knowledge depicted in Graph 3. To understand why procedural knowledge is the more frequently used term outside of WS, we searched for the terms declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge in JSTOR and found that while the former is used 513 times within this database, the latter is used 892 times, or roughly 1.74 times as often. Looking

at references to procedural knowledge in these other disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, education, and information systems, suggests that its more frequent usage is associated with developing expertise. As stated earlier, in Anderson's ACT model, procedural knowledge occurs at a later stage once the learner has had the opportunity to apply declarative knowledge in everyday experiences and problem-solving tasks. So it makes sense that proceduralization is a more advanced goal of learning in many contexts.

Another instance of locating declarative and procedural knowledge in the object of learning, rather than the learner, occurs in a table in Reid (2016), which categorizes different kinds of "Field-specific knowledge" as declarative, procedural, or metacognitive (p. 248). Reid's inclusion of "Effective pedagogical strategies" under both declarative and procedural hints that these kinds of knowledge could be either declarative or procedural, depending on how the learner is accessing and articulating said knowledge (p. 248). Since declarative and procedural are only defined briefly, however, a reader could conclude that declarative simply means 'content knowledge' while procedural refers to something like 'knowledge of a process.' From an AL perspective, however, "revising," which is included under procedural knowledge in the table, could involve both declarative and procedural knowledge. For example, a writer might start revising by drawing upon strategies relatively unconsciously and automatically, such as rereading and deleting unnecessary repetition. However, if they run into a problem, they might not be able to rely on unconscious, automatized knowledge and instead recall other revision strategies that they access as declarative knowledge.

Without a clear line of theory building about procedural and declarative knowledge, some scholars have gone outside of WS, to fields like educational psychology, for definitions (Carillo 2020; VanKooten, 2016). So while applied linguistics came to declarative and procedural directly through Anderson (who continues to be referenced within AL), WS scholars are coming to these concepts more secondhand, through work that only sometimes cites Anderson directly.

To be clear, we're not arguing that every source using these terms needs to cite the source coining them. WS scholars also aren't necessarily wrong in their use of declarative and procedural. It's more that these terms aren't being consistently defined or theorized in ways that could be operationalized to advance research on how people learn how to write. For example, left open in discussions about WAW and other pedagogies that draw on WS content is how declarative knowledge about writing becomes proceduralized, or whether proceduralization is possible or even desirable within the first-year course. Although AL has done empirical studies on language acquisition that could help WS scholars understand this relationship, WS scholars aren't citing these studies (di Gennaro et al., 2023).

We've also read scholarship where declarative or procedural aren't used even though they could provide a meaningful theoretical framework. For example, Yancey et al. (2014) use the terms "writing knowledge" and "writing practice" rather than declarative and procedural (p. 34). Similarly, Driscoll and Cui (2021) develop an additional framework for understanding learning because, they admit, "'writing knowledge' has not been well operationalized in the previous literature" (p. 234). But Driscoll and Cui's finding that "most" of the transfer that took place among the participants they interviewed was "invisible" (p. 239) could also be explained by the phenomenon of proceduralization whereby learners forget the declarative knowledge they learned, while retaining the procedural knowledge needed to perform a skill automatically.

In the absence of clear definitions, declarative knowledge can come to mean little more than "content knowledge" while procedural is flattened to knowledge about a process. Discussing another term, transfer, Wardle (2012) contends that WS "has not deeply theorized transfer much beyond what Perkins and Salomon offered" (para. 5). We argue that the same is true of declarative and procedural knowledge.

## Discussion: Trends in Language Variation in Writing Studies and Applied Linguistics

Based on the usage of our sample of terms, we've noted a few trends. First, at least a few WS scholars seem to engage with the research in adjacent disciplines, but not very deeply, and thus they bring terms and concepts to WS with a partial awareness of their usage in the source discipline. After adopting the terms, WS scholars often theorize their meanings in a direction different from existing theoretical frameworks, potentially distancing the WS community further from adjacent disciplines. A second observation, perhaps based on WS's historical ties to prescriptive grammar in writing instruction, is that scholarly discussion about language leans toward judgment, with a tendency to distinguish "good" from "bad" practices, even when these practices reflect individual choices. In fact, code-switching, translanguaging, and declarative and procedural knowledge as theorized in AL are all cognitive phenomena; that is, things that individuals do with language (or knowledge). WS scholars' different interpretations of these terms might then reflect the field's discomfort or unfamiliarity with cognitive models of language learning since the field's social turn.[6]

For their part, AL scholars engage very little or not at all with WS scholarship, and thus they sometimes over-theorize concepts to the neglect of practical concerns. To put it another way, they often ignore or are unaware of the classroom-based research and experience that WS scholars bring to their theorizing of these terms. Additionally, AL's sometimes more neutral and objective position not only deserves interrogation, but also inhibits AL scholars from identifying opportunities to apply theory to practice.

A main goal of research is theory building, where researchers draw on existing work, identify potential gaps or conflicting results, and then add to ongoing conversations with additional findings or alternative perspectives. When scholars ignore previous research, they discount (intentionally or unintentionally) the work their colleagues before them and in adjacent disciplines have contributed to the conversation. At best, they fail to contribute meaningfully to larger, ongoing conversations, and thus to ongoing theory building; at worst, they fail to learn from existing research, and potentially lose credibility among their peers in adjacent disciplines. For disciplines related to teaching, lack of knowledge-sharing affects which teaching practices are promoted. Variation in terminology, therefore, has implications for knowledge-building and teaching. Conversely, a shared set of terms allows scholars to "engage meaningfully and usefully in professional discussion and debate" and to "build knowledge in a coherent and efficient manner" (Murray & Muller, 2019, p. 262). If the goal of research is to seek answers to relevant, pressing questions, then we need a set of concepts with agreed-upon definitions.

Some scholars have suggested that WS's flouting of terminological differences confirms that the goal of their research is not, in fact, related to creating clarity, theory building, or interdisciplinary collaboration. After initially welcoming greater attention to language study in composition, these scholars may now regret WS's linguistic turn, as further deepening long standing divides (Matsuda, 2013, 2021; Tardy, 2017; Severino, 2017). The maligning of code-switching while simultaneously promoting code-meshing (Young, 2009) is often cited as an example of WS's detachment from linguistic knowledge (Matsuda, 2013). As Matsuda notes, blame for dissemination of misunderstandings about linguistic scholarship lies less with individual scholars such as Young, and more with publishing gatekeepers, such as journal editors and peer reviewers, whose expertise the discipline relies on. We agree with this assessment, and would add that Young deserves more credit than blame. If readers can get beyond the cognitive dissonance required to simultaneously oppose and promote code-switching/meshing, they might realize that Young's work has made significant progress toward linguistic equity in the past five or so years, and arguably more than the detailed

observations and descriptions presented in linguistic research have in the past fifty. Young's critique of code-switching, though initially under-informed, has, arguably, motivated linguists to make AL's history of linguistic activism more visible, and to make their research more accessible to the public, something they did not previously prioritize.

## Implications: Why Terminology Matters and the Case for Disciplinary Language Change

In an effort to compile an exhaustive, historical list of research on code-switching more than two decades ago, Benson (2001) identified nearly 3300 matches on LLBA to codeswitching since 1990 but noted that early research is virtually invisible due to differences in terminology. In WS, even recent research on code-switching is invisible, or rather, has been erased, a reflection of WS's separationist policy with regard to language study (Kilfoil, 2018; Matsuda, 1999; 2013). This erasure of both past and current research is a consequence of terminological inconsistency.

While our discussion regarding WS's adoption of new meanings for old terms and new terms for (old) meanings started from a place of frustration, examining WS' linguistic choices through the lens of language change recalls Haugen's (1966) widely cited article "Dialect, language, nation." Known primarily for Haugen's description of the stages a vernacular undergoes as it becomes standardized, the article also draws close connections between language and nation-building. As a community develops, members create their community identity by establishing their internal cohesion as well as their external distinction from other groups. Since language is closely connected to identity (Curzan, et al., 2023), this leads to the need to "to have one's own language" even in cases where such "separatism" may lead to conflict (Haugen, 1966, p. 928).

For decades, WS has attempted to establish itself as a discipline, separate from the closely adjacent disciplines of literary studies and creative writing. Our analysis of concepts shared among WS and AL scholars suggests an attempt to draw clear boundaries between WS and AL as well. When a barrier occurs between speakers of the same language, such as the Atlantic Ocean between speakers of British and American English or socioeconomic barriers among American English speakers, dialects emerge. Likewise, as WS scholars struggle for recognition as a distinct discipline, one could argue they are developing their own disciplinary dialect to accompany their disciplinary identity. Those of us who prefer the putative original meanings could be the old fogeys resisting language change (similar to whom Kristen mistook the anti-code-switching WS scholars to be), or we could accept that language changes (even where we don't want it to) and celebrate WS's emergence as its own discipline with its own language.

## Conclusion: Ideas for Reconciling and Moving Forward

In recent years, scholars who wade in both AL and WS waters have sought reconciliation (e.g., Costino & Hyon, 2011; Ferris, 2021; Silva & Wang, 2021; Tardy, 2021). For example, Cox and Watson (2021) argue for engaging in "the emotional labor . . . of working through what may be a contentious process of discussing disciplinary and pedagogical differences" (p. 126). We agree that narrowing the gulf between these disciplines should be our goal if we wish to advance research as opposed to individual scholars. Cox and Watson, however, acknowledge the difficulty of one field learning the terms and scholarship of the other, admitting that "none of us are capable of familiarizing ourselves with the scholarship of an entire discipline, much less two" (p. 125). This statement especially resonated with Meaghan, who, as she encountered more and more scholarship in AL, felt increasingly like a novice even within areas she thought she had already mastered. At one point, she vented to Kristen, "I mean, what am I supposed to do? Go back and get another PhD?"

As we've crossed these disciplinary boundaries, we've also noticed that in one field, certain things didn't need to be said and that we were preaching to the choir, whereas in the other, those same things were tantamount to heresy. For example, when we first submitted an article, which later got published in an AL journal, to a WS journal, one reviewer stated they felt they were "being shamed for not knowing some of these older conversations" from AL. This reviewer's defensive reaction reveals how perceived challenges to our disciplinary identities and knowledge bases can affect us. But while Meaghan's reaction has been to try to get up to speed in these areas, the reviewer's reaction prevented our work from being published in a venue where WS scholars could see it, further strengthening disciplinary siloes.

Meaghan isn't planning on getting a second PhD, but we agree with Ferris (2021) that when we're crossing disciplinary boundaries, we need to do our homework. In research, one of the first stages is defining a project's terms and concepts. Although, as HEL research reminds us, language change can and does occur as terms cross disciplinary contexts, we hope this article illustrates the importance of not only defining our terms, but also of the need for consensus among like-minded scholars. When we started this paper, we planned to draw on sources of consolidated knowledge, such as handbooks, encyclopedias, and introductory textbooks in each discipline's knowledge base, to compare how terms were used across these two disciplines. Such sources are abundant in AL. While WS also has collections that examine terminology in the field (e.g. Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2016; Harris, 1997; Heilker & Vandenberg, 2015; Malenczyk, 2016), the relative absence of language-related terms[7] from these collections forced us to take a different tack in our analysis. We hope current projects, such as the encyclopedia *Constructing the Threshold: A Reference Work of Concepts between Teaching for Transfer and Teaching Writing* (Skeen & Roen, forthcoming) foreshadow moves toward consensus in how WS scholars define their terms. As the entries are based on previous scholarship in relevant disciplines, they promise both connections to the past and continuity moving forward. Such resources would offer a compass for navigating interdisciplinary currents, thereby avoiding collisions with fellow travelers.

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## Notes

[1] We would like to thank Paul Kei Matsuda, Amanda Sladek, and Chris Palmer for their valuable feedback and suggestions on an earlier version of this article.

[2] Scholars in psychology and psychiatry have been particularly vocal about combatting semantic shift, or what Haslam (2016) has coined "concept creep."

[3] Rusty Barrett's chapter in this volume is an exception, as Barrett writes from the perspective of a linguist.

[4] While Wardle and Downs (2013) frame the argument from the original (2007) article as having been about declarative knowledge, they didn't use this term in the original, referring instead to "content knowledge" (p. 553).

[5] In a similar move, Yancey et al. (2014) equate "procedural" with narrowness when they state, "Including reflection in writing classes by now course, is ubiquitous, but its use is often narrow and procedural rather than theoretical and substantive" (4).

[6] In WS, the social turn marked a theoretical move away from what social turn theorists viewed as a narrow focus on the individual writer or "inner-directed" composing processes towards a view of writing that took into account the context-based, political realities of writing and the composition classroom (see, for example, Bizzell 1982, p. 215).

[7] Heilker and Vandenberg's (2015) *Keywords in Writing Studies* does include entries for "English" and "Multilingualism," but among the concepts under examination here, only translingualism and translanguaging are briefly mentioned within these chapters.

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