Nationalism, Composition Textbooks, and Standard English at the Turn of the 20th Century

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Abstract: The invention of composition as a required course in the United States, a booming textbook industry, and an increased focus on nationalism perpetuated the standardizing of English language practices and curriculums in secondary and post-secondary schools in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Composition textbooks circulated both standard English (SE) and standard American English (SAE) throughout educational institutions across the country and closely correlated standard language practices with nationalism and national pride, which further codified and sedimented standard language practices in English curriculums and classrooms. In this paper, I analyze how several popular textbooks for teaching English in the United States established and enforced standards for English. Then I examine how several American textbooks for teaching composition and English directly associated nationalism with SE and promoted a national language practice. I argue that this correlation between nation and language formed an ideological network that empowered SE and SAE. To conclude this paper, I contend that using translingual and multimodal pedagogies to teach writing is an important first step educators can take to justify teaching and learning with and about diverse language practices. Students using multimodal and translingual writing practices to learn about themselves and to compose academic arguments that are as well-reasoned and researched as English-only print-texts can challenge the dominance and authority of SE and SAE.

Introduction

In this paper, I examine how textbooks for teaching English from the turn of the 20th century helped circulate and codify standard English (SE) and standard American English (SAE) in secondary and post-secondary schools. The invention of composition at the end of the 19th century as a required course at universities led to an explosion of composition textbooks, several of which correlate the use of SE with being American. Many of these textbooks for teaching English directly and indirectly associated nationalism with standard language practices and provided guidelines for speaking and writing English that focused on memorizing standard rules for spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. The consistent attention to teaching these standard practices and rules led to a slow but steady sedimentation of standard language practices throughout higher education that continues to complicate efforts to destabilize the authority of SE and SAE in educational spaces today.

There is a shortage of research in writing studies on how textbooks codified SE and SAE and there is a shortage of research on the history of the English language (HEL) that examines how nationalism

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influenced the growth and evolution of SE. There is even less research that examines SE, nationalism, and textbooks for teaching English. To address this limitation in the research, I engage the following questions: How have textbooks for teaching English promoted and codified SE? How have textbooks for teaching English promoted national language practices? To engage these questions, I use theories and histories of nationalism from Anderson (1991), Crystal (2006), and Kohn (1946) to determine how nationalism influenced the formation of language practices, and I use theoretical frames from Bourcier (1978), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008), and Haugen (1966; 1972) to define and examine the complex processes for language standardization.

To make my argument, I analyze how several popular textbooks for teaching English established and enforced standard language practices that emphasized using correct spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. Then I examine how several popular American textbooks for teaching composition directly associated nationalism with SE and promoted a national language practice. I contend that textbooks that promoted SE and national language practices strengthened the authority of both SAE and SE. An increased focus on teaching SE in composition courses led to more composition textbooks throughout the turn of the 20th century, and many of these textbooks directly or indirectly correlated SE with American nationalism or called for the country to adopt a common language practice. Textbooks from the turn of the 20th century formed an ideological network of support that privileged SAE and SE and ignored diverse language practices. To conclude, I suggest that writing studies and HEL research can challenge problematic ideological arguments that have been used to validate teaching SE and push back on monomodal and monolingual writing pedagogies. I contend using translingual and multimodal pedagogies to teach writing is an important first step educators can take to validate teaching and learning with and about a wide range of diverse language practices and codifying those language practices into the nation's cultural, linguistic, and professional fabric. Students using multimodal and translingual writing practices to learn about themselves and to compose academic arguments that are as well-reasoned and researched as print-texts written in SE can challenge the dominance and authority of standard language practices. In the next section, I examine how textbooks instantiated systems for codifying standard language practices.

Textbooks and Codifying Standard English

Establishing official definitions for SE and SAE is complicated because of the flexibility and ambiguity of these terms and language practices. SAE is an attempt to define approaches to spelling, punctuation, and syntax that are distinctly American, even though SE has come to represent American language practices as much as SAE. Routine definitions for SAE contend that American English is a form of English found in professional and educational contexts that has specific standards for spelling, pronunciation, and grammar. According to dictionary.com, SAE focuses on "neutralizing nonstandard dialectal variation" to remove diverse language practices. SAE is the form of English heard and read in America's professional, political, and educational contexts. Because SAE does not differ significantly from SE many people use these terms interchangeably. Both SE and SAE are more or less the same styles of English outside of some minor spelling and pronunciation differences. SE "is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences" and it "is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated" (Merriam-Webster.com). Although SE allows for more variation in how individuals use English, like SAE, it privileges the linguistic practices of the elite and educated classes. Both SE and SAE have gained enormous authority in the United States and reinforce and support each other. The institutionalization of the composition course as a general education requirement in higher education, and the textbooks that resulted from the invention of writing programs to manage this course, made SAE and SE a professional and social qualification for the middle class.

Using textbooks that valorized standard language practices to teach English in authoritative, national institutions like schools and colleges increased the association between SE and nationalism. Textbooks that promote SE extend and prolong an existing codification process that began, arguably, around the fifteenth century (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2008). Composition textbooks and courses have played a significant role in sustaining the ongoing codification process of standardized English. "Standard languages do not magically or neutrally appear; they result from the process of language standardization" (Curzan et al., 2023, p. 21) over long periods of time. According to Haugen (1972), standardization has four primary stages:

> The four aspects of language development that we have now isolated as crucial features in taking the step from 'dialect' to language, from vernacular to standard, are as follows: (1) selection of norm, (2) codification of form, (3) elaboration of function, and (4) acceptance by the community. (p. 252)

In the 19th century, standardization in America witnessed a resurgence in the "codification" and "acceptance" stages with the formalized designation of composition as a required course in higher education across the country. Haugen asserts that codification occurs when standard language practices are "regulated in an attempt to minimize variation across speakers and writers" (as cited in Curzan et al., 2023, p. 21). Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008) affirms that "From a linguistic perspective codification may be defined as the laying down of the 'laws' of the language, i.e. the rules of usage and the definitions and pronunciation of the items in the lexicon, in grammars and dictionaries for the benefit of the common user" (p. 1). A substantial increase in composition programs and textbooks for teaching English expanded the existing and ongoing codification and acceptance process of SE from earlier centuries.

Acceptance occurs when standard language practices are "institutionalized" and become "a qualification for higher education and many professional careers" (as cited in Curzan et al., 2023, p. 21). The national institutionalization of composition extended the codification of SE into a qualification for the middle and upper classes. Language practices and patterns within national institutions form cultural codes that outline how a nation uses and accepts language. Textbooks that focus on error correction pedagogies for spelling, grammar, and pronunciation are a codification practice, and the diligent enforcement and assessment of the accurate usage of standards became a form of acceptance. Composition textbooks amassed power and authority from their constant repetition of similar lessons, outcomes, and assignments that focused on identifying spelling, pronunciation, and grammar errors. Bourcier (1978) explains that "Linguistic standardisation involves more than a conviction that one variety of a language is preferable to all others. It requires conscious regulation of spelling, grammar and vocabulary" over and over across a wide range of institutions (pp. 179-80). Nationalism is coded in textbooks "by way of repeated, redundant semantic structures and lexis" that come to represent a national language practice (Luke, 1988, p. 146). Repeated linguistic structures in textbooks help manufacture a standard language practice, and its consistent presence in the school system and educational materials like textbooks helps correlate it to nationalism. Composition textbooks for teaching English circulated a common set of standards for speaking and writing that regulated the teaching of spelling, grammar, and vocabulary in composition courses, codifying standard language practices into American culture and its school systems.

Common textbooks for teaching English "helped create a common curriculum" that determined how educators taught across grades, schools, and institutions (Reese, 1995, p. 121), and educators heavily leaned on these textbooks to do the bulk of the teaching in the classroom (Reese, 1995, p. 102). Composition textbooks from the turn of the 20th century provided an authority for SE and they instilled writing pedagogies that drilled students on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and

pronunciation—the tenets of SE. Standard language practices concentrated on how people misspelled and mispronounced words and misused grammar. By 1850 there were over a million grammar textbooks in circulation and almost all of them emphasized error correction drills to teach SE (Stahl, 1968, p. 41). Whitney's *Essentials of English Grammar* (1886) contains 508 rules for paragraphs, sentences, and words. The opening chapter of Carson's *Handbook of English Grammar: A Compilation of Standard Rules and Regulations* (1907) is titled "Capitalization" and is 21 pages. There is also a chapter titled "Spelling" that is 11 pages, and a chapter titled "Punctuation" that is 48 pages. Genung's *Practical Elements of Rhetoric* (1890) contains extensive chapters on style, diction (30+ pages), figures of speech, composition (80+ pages), and ordering (40+ pages) that characterize a national standard for using English. Denney and Scott's *Composition-rhetoric* (1912) is 300+ pages on how to write only paragraphs and sentences correctly. Most English textbooks from the turn of the 20th century argued that "Grammatical errors and vulgarisms must be rigorously corrected from the first" day of class (Hinsdale,1900, p.123). The intense focus on correctness in English textbooks in American schools signaled to students that there was one way to use English in the United States. One of the most widely used grammar textbooks for teaching correctness ever published was Lindley Murray's *The English Reader* (1799).

The English Reader sold millions of copies and found its way into thousands of classrooms. Its chapters on orthography, etymology, punctuation, and purity greatly influenced the standardizing of English. There are large sections on the "Propriety of Pronunciation" and "Select Sentences and Paragraphs." English teachers designed entire courses with Murray's book. Crystal (2006) asserts that all grammar school books "traced their ancestry back to Murray" until the middle of the 20th century, and that most secondary schools in the United States adopted *The English Reader* for well over a century (p. 109). The popularity of Murray's textbook exemplified how expanding print-capitalist systems for mass distribution empowered textbooks. Abbott's *How to Write Clearly* (1874) was another popular textbook to promote a common set of rules for spelling, punctuating, and writing English that was found in classrooms across the country year after year (Connors, 1997, p. 89). Hewitt and Beach's *Mother Tongue* (1889) is 800 pages of examples of incorrect use of English grammar. Students are encouraged to "read the best English authors" and always start with "short sentences" and "Saxon words" (p. 438). Moreover, titling a book for teaching English *Mother Tongue* evokes a correlation between nationalism and learning English, a point I'll revisit in a later section. Textbooks for teaching English during this era concentrated on standard grammar lessons and spelling rules.

Woolley's *Handbook of Composition* (1907) is a massive compendium of rules for grammar and spelling that is primarily concerned with the surveillance and maintenance of standards. There are 20 pages devoted to punctuation, 15 pages devoted to spelling, and over 50 pages devoted to structuring sentences. The synopsis page contains over 330 rules and 150 subrules that outline the linguistic and syntactical foundations for SE. There are brief commentaries to the right and left side of each rule that address how to create unity, cohesion, or mass in one's writing. For example, "Long compound sentences consisting of many statements strung together with and's, but's and so's are especially bad violations of unity" (Woolley, 1907, p. 34). And "Long, straggling sentences . . . are a palpable violation of unity" (Woolley, 1907, p. 35), but readers are left without a complete explanation for why and how these specific types of sentences violate a unity law or represent standard language practices. Readers never learn exactly why these types of sentences or phrases are linguistically problematic or why others are linguistically superior. DeProspo (2023) asserts that "Standard Written English is unquestioned because it's Standard Written English" (p. 655). t assumes its cumulative power from its consistent and redundant presence in textbooks and educational institutions year after year. The repetition of textbook lessons on spelling, grammar, and pronunciation in classrooms across the country helped ossify standard language practices. Spelling

lessons were one of the very first tools for standardizing and codifying English that Noah Webster helped institutionalize in the late 18th century.

Webster's dictionaries were some of the earliest resources for teaching English that called for a national language. Webster did not want Americans using foreign words and language practices; he was one of the earliest American lexicographers to both create and promote American English. He was an outspoken nationalist who wanted the country to design and enforce a national language. In his "Preface to his Blue-Backed Speller" from 1783, he asserts:

> To define a uniformity and purity of language in America—to destroy the provincial prejudices that originate in the trifling difference of dialect, and produce reciprocal ridicule—to promote the interest of literature and harmony of the United States—is the most ardent wish of the author. (as cited in Applebee, 1974, p. 1)

Applebee claims that Webster "promoted a chauvinistic nationalism" (p. 5) that valued the paternal authority of the English language. His dictionaries attempted to separate American English from all its other styles. Anderson (1991) argues that "Webster's 1828 (i.e., 'second-generation') American Dictionary of the English Language was intended to give an official imprimatur to an American language whose lineage was distinct from that of English" (p. 197). Webster spent his life "laying the foundations of an American language and culture" he wholeheartedly believed to be superior (Kohn, 1946, p. 314), and he called for a form of American English that would bolster "western superiority" (Kohn, 1946, p. 319). Millions of Webster's dictionaries were sold and used to teach spelling throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and demonstrate how "Codification (through grammars and dictionaries) and prescription (the belief that one variety is the 'correct' variety) also serve to maintain the Standard" (Pilliére & Lewis, 2018, para. 8). Increased codification and prescription of SE and SAE meant more pedagogies that identified, marked, and removed slang and non-standard language practices from the classroom and that catered to specific grades and classes.

Codification led to more textbooks for teaching writing that outlined specific standards and practices for teaching English in specific grades and classes. Mahoney (1919) includes a standards section in his textbook at the end of each chapter that imagines a curricular boundary for teaching English in different grades, schools, and institutions, and it advances and outlines rules and regulations for SE that can be drilled. Klapper (1915) expresses grave concerns about students using slang and vernacular in their writing and speech (p. 8). He spends 50 pages of his textbook arguing about the importance of teaching and learning standard grammar. Genung also refers to the use of slang as a form of crudeness (p. 37) two decades before Klapper in *Practical Elements of Rhetoric.* In this textbook, he includes extensive chapters on word choice (55 pages) and syntax (60+ pages). Hill's *The Principles of Rhetoric* (1878) also has robust chapters on grammatical purity (48 pages) and word choice (58 pages). These types of textbooks encouraged English teachers to drill the slang out of their students, and they provided educators with an authoritative reference—with unlimited examples—to identify errors with some prejudice. Mahoney refers to grammar and spelling errors as "unforgivable sins" that must be drilled out of students (p. 11). He provides long lists of words for "Special drilling" throughout his book and recommends that educators not "hesitate to drill" when they see the need to do so (p. 66). Textbooks during this era contained a common set of rules for speaking and writing English that became the foundations of SE. Any student unable to meet the standard was subject to "untiring" and "constant" drilling to remove any vernacular residue (Klapper, 1915, p. 23). The consistent repetition of drilling students' spelling, punctuation, and grammar over and over proved an effective method for standardizing English.

Furthermore, textbook authors at the turn of the 20th century became overly dogmatic about language errors personally offending them. Mahoney (1919) refers to an ongoing "war" (p. 51) on

students who cannot speak and write SE correctly, which further increased students' anxiety about using English correctly. Equating language errors with sacrilege and war inevitably made students correlate speaking and writing SE with being American. Haney (1922) claims that the "real battleground" for standardizing American English "has been in the secondary schools—and the war is still on. The struggle has been for national as well as local standardization" (p. 216). An ongoing war on non-standard English made students defensive and educators more aggressive about seeking out errors. This association of using SE with war and religion ostracized students from discourse communities that did not practice SE; they could face eternal damnation. Students also felt anxious about using English correctly in the United States because they could be marked as deficient or foreign for speaking or writing English incorrectly. In the next section, I examine how several popular American textbooks for teaching English more directly reinforced the codification of SE and SAE in to America's consciousness.

Nationalism, Textbooks, and Standard English

The invention of composition at Harvard in 1874 led many American schools and colleges to move away from adopting British textbooks to teach composition and English courses and implement more American textbooks that bolstered the superiority of SAE. An over-reliance on using textbooks for teaching composition and English during this era led many English departments to center the teaching of SAE in all its courses, further codifying SAE in to the American school system. Designating first-year writing a mandatory course in higher education launched a wave of composition textbooks that intertwined language and nationalism. Hewitt and Beach's *Mother Tongue* (1889) signaled the importance of one's loyalty to their mother tongue—to their home language. The term mother-tongue embodies a spirit of nationalism that purifies a chosen language practice. In *Practical Elements of Rhetoric*, one of the more widely used composition textbooks in America at the turn of the 20th century, Genung (1890) asserts that "The writer must see to it that he keeps his mother-tongue unsullied" (p. 28) at all costs, and that the writer must "hold the purity of his mother-tongue sacred against innovations" (p. 36), but Genung never explains why maintaining linguistic purity is sacred or why a mother-tongue is so important beyond supporting nationalism. Many authors of composition textbooks during this era did not support linguistic innovations that undermined associations between SE, nationalism, and one's mother-tongue. Arguments for more diverse languages in the classroom were often drowned out by parents, administrators, industry, and politicians who were demanding schools to focus on SAE (Veysey, 1965, p. 254; Reese, 2013). Speaking and writing English well was a sign of respect for one's class, country, and self at the turn of the 20th century, and in America there was only one mother tongue that mattered. SE and SAE are part of a dominant cultural "system that privileges exclusion" and "valorizes subordination and obedience as a mark of one's capacity to succeed" (hooks, 2003, p. 86). This includes obeying national language practices.

De Quincey contends that "after the flag of his country" nothing is more important than "the language of his country" (as cited in Genung, 1890, p. 29). Genung references this quote in his textbook for teaching how to speak and write English. Sloppy English became a disreputable linguistic defiance that reflected poorly on one's self and one's country, offended the educated and middle class, and branded someone deficient, subnational, or noncitizen. The continual referral to one's language as a mother-tongue conjures a sense of national pride for one's native country. Nationalism evolves from "a vernacular mother-tongue" that has "sunk such deep roots in sections of the population over centuries" that it becomes part of the very foundation of a community's identity (Anderson, 1991, p. 119). Speaking and writing SE well in America became a sign of not only class and education but of patriotism. Standard language practices "reflected the rising spirit of nationalism" and gave birth to national language practices that separated citizens and non-citizens into groups based on language

use (Reese, 1995, p. 116). SAE became America's mother tongue, and it centered white, middle-class language practices, empowering the people who valued, promoted, and enforced it (Baker-Bell, 2020). Language was not historically used as a tool for privilege and authority. Kohn (1946) writes that "Before nationalism, language was very rarely stressed as a fact on which the prestige and power of a group depended" (Kohn, p. 7). Nationalism empowered SE and the people who practiced and enforced it. Haugen (1966) contends that "National languages have offered membership in the nation, an identity that gives one entree into a new kind of group, which is not just kinship, or government, or religion, but a novel and peculiarly modern brew of all three" (p. 933). Continued attention on learning one's mother tongue at the end of the 19th century further incentivized the mass production of prescriptive and formalistic textbooks for teaching SAE, strengthening its presence within educational systems and satisfying the country's desire for a national language practice.

The Principles of Rhetoric (Hill, 1878) is one of the earliest and most widely used composition textbooks in the United States that associated language with nationalism. Hill's textbook sold millions of copies and was used to teach composition and English at Harvard and other universities across the country for several decades. Hill defines pure English as "reputable as opposed to vulgar or affected; national as opposed to foreign, local, or professional; present as opposed to obsolete or transient" (p. 60). Several heavily used composition textbooks during this era adopted this mantra. Hill wanted to codify SAE into the nation's discourse communities. Enhancing the national reputation of the country's language practice, for Hill, should always dictate how Americans use English. He contends that Americans should privilege SAE and always avoid using foreign and local words and vernaculars; however, Hill never completely demonstrates how foreign and vernacular language practices are inferior to SAE or linguistically problematic. He contends that when there is a disagreement about correct usage, respected and famous writers have the authority to decide which usage is acceptable. Proper English, reputable and national English, is determined by the opinions of the best literary authors, according to Hill (p. 30). Even though his claims for SAE are based on personal opinion and selective examples of literature and prose—and he never explains how nationalism informs and defines language standards or why they are superior—his textbook continued to shape and influence how English was taught in higher education for several decades. Hill's protégé, Barret Wendell, carried on his legacy and love of nationalistic language practices at Harvard. Wendell even borrowed his mentor's mantra for good English and published it in his own composition textbook.

In *English Composition*, Wendell (1894) contends that good English is "Reputable, National, and Present, —Reputable as distinguished from vulgar, slangy, and eccentric; National as distinguished from local or technical" (p. 21). Wendell's "Reputable, National, Present" paradigm was a direct replica of Hill's. Poor English for Wendell is slangy and foreign. Barbarisms, or "words not in the language," are deplorable (p. 44). For both Hill and Wendell, reputable and national language practices center SAE and ignore language practices from certain classes, ethnicities, and foreign countries and cultures. *English Composition*'s acute attention to the surgical application of SAE teaches students that misusing their mother tongue is disrespectful and embarrassing. Quackenbos (1896) also copies Hill's mantra and claims that the English language should be "National, as opposed to provincial and foreign" and that "The people of every section of the country naturally come to consider as correct the peculiarities in the use of language that characterize the region in which they live, but which really form no part of the national tongue" (p. 138). In addition to a chapter on "Nationalism" in a section on language "Usage," Quackenbos mentions the word national 18 times in his textbook. Regional usage does not represent national language practices for Quackenbos, who reiterates how important it is to refer to grammar books and dictionaries to learn and maintain language standards. "Consultation of grammars and our unabridged dictionaries will further aid him in determining what use is reputable" in the English language (Quackenbos, 1896, p. 138). Reference books, like Webster's dictionaries, were instrumental in standardizing English. For Quackenbos,

"Foreign and Local Words are not National, and hence not English. Foreign words include unnaturalized intruders from all languages" and students need American reference sources to continual cleanse their English (p. 149).

Perhaps no author correlates standard English with nationalism quite like Woolley (1907), who claims that "A pride in our common Americanism is today the most powerful incentive for supporting a single standard of good English" (p. 1). Woolley, like Wendell, also adopted Hill's definition of reputable and national language practices almost verbatim. Proper English is the "usage generally observed in the writings of the best English authors and in the speech of well-educated people. Dictionaries, grammars, and books on rhetoric and composition record this usage, on the basis of wide observation and study" (Woolley, 1907, p. 1). In the preface, he quotes Edward Gardner's call for a national language practice: "In our new insistence on the national use of our language as a means of national unity we shall not, I believe, fail to insist also on high standards in its use as one measure of our pride of country" (as cited in Woolley, 1907, p. vi).

Parker (1967) argues that American pride led Americans to adopt SE as the primary language for education, commerce, and politics (p. 11). SE connected the people in a nation through a common language practice. Many textbooks for teaching English from this period insist that linguistic standards will unify and elevate the country. A common language implants a "national historical consciousness" that provides "people a unique permanency and certainty" that bonds them (Kohn, 1946, p. 35). The illusion of stability that comes from uniformity continued to intoxicate many language enthusiasts and led to more prescriptive textbooks like Woolley's, Hill's, and Wendell's that formed a network of ideological support for a national language. Definitions for correct English were "created, perpetuated, and enforced by widely recognized, often institutionalized language authorities" who eventually became "culturally sanctioned language authorities" (Curzan, 2014, p. 5). Crystal (2006) contends that standard language practices generate power from "the cumulative impact of a group of key people using language in the same way" within educational and political institutions, news agencies, textbooks, and academic journals (p. 190). Language experts and powerful people in professional positions were responsible for codifying nationalist standards for English and forming a network of support. Nationalism, textbooks, and standard language practices instantiated an ideological network of support for SE and SAE that has been difficult to undermine.

A Network of Ideological Support

Seton-Watson (1977) contends that "It is natural that the leaders of the incipient national movements should have been those whose expertise was the manipulation of language: members of the intellectual professions, and especially grammarians, writers, and journalists" (p. 430). The interconnectivity between the intellectual professions, nationalism, standardization, and textbooks formed an ideological fortress around language practices that has been difficult to displace with research and counternarratives. Many of these composition textbooks advance a similar definition of good English that has ossified into a national standard for speaking and writing, but none of them can implicitly explain how using SAE makes the nation great, or how a standard language practice embodies nationalism or intellectual superiority. The power and prestige of SAE is assumed and maintained from its consistent repetition within educational, political, and cultural institutions. The habitual recurrence of standard language practices in educational and cultural institutions, including within millions of textbooks, fertilized "the embryo of the nationally imagined community" (Anderson, 1991, p. 44) and entrenched SAE throughout the United States' educational system. SAE slowly and steadily became an indelible and indefatigable part of America's consciousness, siphoning off multilingual and translingual representation in the English classroom. Educators and textbooks that center SAE close off pathways for multicultural and multimodal language practices and perpetuate an ideological network of power.

The ideological network for teaching SAE has been particularly burdensome to BIPOC students in first-year writing (FYW) programs. "The historical formation of the first-year composition course is tied tightly to a monolingual and unidirectional language policy that makes English the vehicle of writing instruction in the modern curriculum" (Horner & Trimbur, 2002, p. 623). FYW courses and programs have had a difficult time abandoning curriculums that center SAE and SE because standard language practices "that were institutionalized" at the turn of the 20th century "have become sedimented in the way we think about writing pedagogy and curriculum" and entrenched within textbooks for teaching writing (Horner & Trimbur, 2002, p. 608). SE is the language of higher education and any attempt to challenge it, in any course or department, may be met with intense resistance. Milu (2022) argues that even today there is a stricter reinforcement of SE for present-day BIPOC students than for white students, and that standardization manifests a representation of intellect that privileges certain types of linguistic practices and empowers the people who become experts of those practices. Conservative nationalism boosts the superiority of SAE and ignores and obscures language practices from "historically oppressed communities" and bilingual and non-English speaking communities (Shapiro & Watson, 2022, p. 293). American nationalism does not appreciate diverse language practices or voices, which makes students who cannot write or speak SAE or SE well feel and appear less American. SE only in higher education strips away students' autonomy over their language practices and imposes "racialized or nationalistic constraints on their linguistic agencies" that are difficult to challenge and escape (p. 293).

Certain groups of students who have limited control of standard language practices continue to struggle to pass English classes built on mastering SE. The rules for SE and SAE stack up to form an unbreachable wall—a linguistic fortress—that can overwhelm students and reiterate the superiority of English-only curriculums. Milu (2022) highlights how SE is "used to signal what students should already know and, relatedly, what they don't know, or deficit" (p. 657) in educational institutions. Lu (1994) reiterates how a command of the English language in the United States has come to represent a type of American. Winifred Bryan Horner (1990) notes that SAE has always been an assertion of class, education, and national identity. Research on how standard language practices are used to classify and stereotype has determined that "Distinctions between standardized and nonstandardized language features are often raced and classed," and that the language practices used by BIPOC, foreign, and underrepresented students have been positioned as nonstandard in America and its professional and formal institutions (Curzan, et al., 2023, p. 23). Nationalism and SE have always shaped and reinforced each other around class and race. Proper use of SAE elevated the educated, American citizen above the rest of society and lifted them, socially, above the commoner and foreigner. Standard linguistic practices are a powerful assertion of one's identity. Bruce Horner and John Trimbur (2002) argue that the "territorialization of languages" led to defining "one's social identity . . . in terms of nationality" and using a nation's standard language practices to embody its belief system (p. 596). Nationalism structures prescriptive linguistic boundaries that exclude the assemblage of other cultures and their language practices. Language is an important tool for inventing a nation—for imagining a nation. A nation's mother tongue is the conglomeration of a nation's shared cultural rituals and linguistic practices. Not knowing the rituals can mark someone as foreign or deficient and lead students to develop an intense fear of making mistakes when speaking and writing English in the United States (Leonard, 1917, p. 61).

Challenging weak and baseless ideological arguments that have been used for over a century to validate teaching SE is one way both HEL and writing studies scholars can push back against monomodal and monolingual writing curriculums. Shapiro and Watson (2022) call for more research that closely looks at the "*ideologies* and *political histories*" of SE and SAE (p. 296). They encourage writing studies scholars to confront the political, cultural, and social ideologies that have favored and promoted SE and SAE. Berlin (1988) contends that "ideology is transmitted through language

practices" and that more research is needed that examines the relationship between ideology and language practices (p. 478). If writing studies scholarship can identify and question the ideologies and political histories that have empowered SE and SAE, and HEL scholars can further reinforce how and why standard language practices are not linguistically superior, both fields will be engaging—with a more focused intention—the critical work needed to decenter and displace English-only and monomodal pedagogies steeped in exclusion, linguistic oppression, and white supremacy. Writing studies and HEL research can "trace and examine" how, when, and why ideologies and language practices converged to inform and shape language standards (Shapiro & Watson, 2022, p. 303). A comprehensive history of English studies can give educators a more accurate trajectory of the discipline's history that they can use as a frame to design equitable curriculums and pedagogies for FYC.

HEL and writing studies research need to account for how political and social forces have "shrouded" educational language policies and standards "in myth and anecdote" and obfuscated academic histories with "current political allegiances" and nationalistic language practices (Luke, 1988, p. 5). Unraveling misconceptions between nationalism and standard language practices is only possible with a unified effort between writing studies and HEL scholars who are committed to disrupting the authority of SE. Expanding the definition of a national language practice will require writing studies and HEL scholars to more carefully examine the nuanced and complex strands of ideology that have authorized and sanctified SE and SAE. This is important because ideologies inform how writing standards are materialized, privileged, and enforced in classrooms across disciplines. Despite the United States not having an official language everyone knows SE and SAE are language practices in the United States that have the most power and authority. To gain access to a majority of professional and social communities in the United States, individuals need to have firm control of SE. This privileging continues even though both HEL and writing studies research has demonstrated that languages or linguistic styles are not superior and that English is an assemblage of multiple languages. To chisel away at this ossification, I suggest implementing more translingual and multimodal pedagogies across disciplines to challenge the ideologies that have led to the sedimentation of SE and SAE. To truly offset the power of standard forms of English, students need to learn how a wide range of language practices are equal to, and (in some cases) more effective than, SE and SAE.

A Turn to Multimodal and Translingual Pedagogies

Scholarship and research on the history of the English language have not prevented linguistic hostility and racism against non-English and English speakers (Baker-Bell, 2020), nor has it curbed the valorization of standard forms of English in education, business, and government. SE-only curriculums continue to disrespect and ignore alternative, epistemological decisions about using image, sound, text, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation to communicate messages. Furthermore, many educators are not providing pedagogical spaces and curriculums to teach and discuss the history of spoken and written English in the classroom. An additional step needs to take place in the classroom so students can learn about the history of the English language and its diverse range of local, national, global, and multimodal composing practices.

Many language arts educators and linguists have taken that first step. Collections like Colette Moore and Chris Palmer's (2019) *Teaching the History of the English Language* and Mary Hayes and Allison Burkette's (2017*) Approaches to Teaching the History of the English Language* contain numerous examples of pedagogies, curriculums, and courses that center HEL histories and research in the English classroom. Some linguists (Devereaux & Palmer, 2019; Devereaux & Palmer, 2022) and writing studies scholars (Canagarajah, 2016; Lu, 1994; Milu, 2022; Selfe, 2009; Shapiro, 2022) have

also started to move away from SE-only curriculums. For example, Lu (1994) believes that composition courses should be:

> (1) enabling students to hear discursive voices which conflict with and struggle against the voices of academic authority; (2) urging them to negotiate a position in response to these colliding voices; and (3) asking them to consider their choice of position in the context of the socio-political power relationships within and among diverse discourses and in the context of their personal life, history, culture, and society. (p. 493)

However, many educators need permission from their department or university to move away from SE-only pedagogies and adopt curricula that capture and celebrate all voices and language practices in the classroom, making this move more difficult.

To counter the ideologies that have historically grounded and sustained SE's authority, English educators need to allow students to compose with multiple modes and languages and expose them to the linguistic diversity across the institution. "For the redistribution of linguistic power to take place in schools, the academy has to make a fundamental ideological shift away from language standardization toward a preference for language diversity" (Curzan et al., 2023, p. 28). To push back against the hegemony of national language practices, writing studies and HEL scholars can correlate nationalism with a plethora of multiliteracies and expand how students see and define national language practices. Moreover, research on learning continually demonstrates that not everyone knows the world through print or SE; some people rely on "multiple and hybrid ways of knowing, communicating and establishing identity" that require additional modes and language practices (Selfe, 2009, p. 618). Translingual and multimodal pedagogies for teaching writing resist claims that SE and SAE are more stable, epistemic, and logical than other languages and structures of English.

According to Milu, "Translingualism is a theory of multilingualism that views language as a set of mobile, fluid, and hybrid practices that users draw upon to communicate" (Milu, 2022, p. 377). Because translingualism encourages rhetors to use any semiotic resource available to communicate a message it empowers and encourages the use of multimodality. Canagarajah (2016) defines translingualism:

> as a semiotic system, integrated with other visual, aural, and tactile modalities, to communicate meaning. Translingual writing is a form of situated literate practice where writers negotiate their semiotic resources in relation to the dominant conventions of language and rhetoric. (p. 267)

Writing pedagogies that appreciate varied language practices and modalities celebrate every student's linguistic and cultural background instead of excluding students for their preferred language practices. Using more translingual and multimodal pedagogies for teaching writing and critical thinking can capture "specific racial, national, multilingual realities impacting the students in their actual classrooms" (Shapiro & Watson, 2022, p. 311). Making space for translingual and multimodal learning in the classroom will require educators "to construct their pedagogies with sensitivity to student, writing, and course diversity" and to allow students to learn with different languages, modes, and styles of English (Canagarajah, 2016, p. 267). Translingual and multimodal pedagogies can decenter SE and imagine national language practices that are inclusive and multicultural, teaching students that there are equally valued alternatives to SE and SAE that expand, not digress, meaning making.

Translingual and multimodal writing pedagogies provide equal space for a wide range of diverse student populations. "Opportunities for translingual and multimodal composing "open spaces in

closed systems" (hooks, 2003, p. 74) and teach students how to respond to complex rhetorical situations with multiple modes and language practices. Pedagogies rooted in translingualism and multimodality can "honor diversity, resisting the conventional tendency to maintain dominator values in higher education" (p. 45) that have become firmly ensconced in the classroom, curriculum, and textbook. Confronting the inadequate associations between nationalism and SE is important for writing studies and HEL scholarship because SE continues to dominate how writing educators teach students to write and speak English across disciplines. A more complete understanding of the arguments that led to language standardization can justify the displacement of monomodal and English-only writing practices and curriculums that segregate students into intellectual spaces based on raced, classed, and gendered discourse. Both writing studies and HEL scholarship can draw more attention to the translingual and multimodal history of English that accounts for the range of modes and linguistic influences that have shaped English and its varied syntaxes.

Conclusion

A critical history of standardizing English that considers the role of nationalism can expose and disrupt ideological influences that have favored monolingual pedagogies and closed off spaces for translingual and multimodal writing in the English classroom (Welch, 1985; Lu, 1994). Nationalist ideologies that promote monolingualism and standard language practices have heavily influenced the standardization of English and positioned SAE as superior to other languages and English dialects. Linguists and HEL scholars are in a position to counter nationalist narratives that privilege standard language practices. Not allowing students to use and learn with diverse languages and dialects positions the people that use non-standard languages and dialects as inferior (Shaprio & Watson, p. 298). To dismantle systemic power structures that reify SE and SAE, writing studies and HEL research can interrogate the ideological histories that justify privileging standard language practices and advocate for more multilingual, translingual, and multimodal pedagogies that support a wide range of writing and learning styles. Replacing approaches to teaching writing that promote and privilege SE and SAE requires dismantling the ideological messaging that cements language practices in to school systems and the wider cultural fabric. Despite research in linguistics and writing studies demonstrating that languages, and their varied styles, do not have organic or natural authority over other languages, SE and SAE remain firmly embedded in educational and professional institutions. To challenge the ideological norms and traditions that celebrate standard language practices, writing studies and HEL scholars need a broader understanding of how textbooks and nationalism have historically privileged specific language practices in higher education. A more complete history of how standardization, nationalism, and textbooks strengthened each other's authority can improve how both HEL and writing studies scholars critically interrogate problematic ideological constructs like SE, correctness, and English-Only that fail to account for a variety of dialects and diverse language backgrounds.

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