18 The Sociopolitical Implications of Response to Second-Language and Second-Dialect Writing

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INTRODUCTION

Toward the conclusion of "Ideology in Composition: L1 and ESL," after portraying the first language (L1) field as expressly political and the second language/English as a Second Language (L2/ESL) field as non- or apolitical, Terry Santos (1992) speculates about whether L2/ESL studies will follow L1 composition studies in articulating a similar ideological stance. Although the political implications of L2/ESL teaching are not yet clearly and frequently articulated, they are more evident than has been heretofore suggested. Both inside and outside the university, ESL teaching abounds with ideological undertones, overtones, and arguments, which, as Johns (1990) recommends, need to be brought out in the open—the primary goal of this article. To accomplish this goal, I first discuss the ideological implications of ESL teaching in general and then develop a "continuum of sociopolitical stances" toward response to second language and second dialect writers and their writing. I then apply the continuum of stances to actual and alternative responses to three writers from different cultural and language backgrounds to illustrate on a practical level the political nature of ESL instruction.

THE POLITICS OF ESL INSTRUCTION

The political dimensions of ESL pedagogy are evident in many contexts, both academic and nonacademic. On a university level, ESL curricula such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are not simply pragmatic as Swales (1990) suggests, but imply an acculturative ideological stance—the desirability of assimilating quickly into academic, corporate, and U.S. mainstream cultures. In other words, the implications of an EAP or ESP curriculum are ideological, but the ideology can be construed as more conservative and assimilative to the status quo, not radical and challenging to it, as the pedagogies advocated by the L1 composition scholars Santos (1992) mentions purport to be. Expressivist L2 writing

pedagogies emphasizing personal experience, growth, and discovery also have assimilative and Americanizing implications, especially for international students whose home cultures are more oriented to the group rather than to the individual (Leki, 1992). Emphasizing individualism in writing pedagogy is a particularly Western, or more specifically, American, cultural and political bias; it is neither ideologically neutral nor culturally universal. Politics also surface when ESL teachers are reluctant to engage in discussions of world politics with students from the wealthy and influential upper classes of their native countries—"the educational and economic elite of the world," as Johns (1993) characterizes them. These teachers fear the classroom tension and discomfort which might result when students disagree with them and with one another about how nations should be governed. How can the sources of such tension be characterized in any way but political?

Outside the university, the political implications of ESL teaching are even more evident. In community-based ESL programs in large U.S. cities, the dynamics of the curriculum are more obviously assimilative and conservative in ideology; such programs promise immigrants and refugees that learning English will increase their chances of acquiring jobs and the good life. Auerbach and Burgess (1985) have shown that ESL "survival approach" curricula common in these programs often encourage passive and subservient social roles in relation to employers, health professionals, and agency bureaucrats: "Language functions in most survival texts include asking for approval, clarification, reassurance, permission, and so on, but not praising, criticizing, complaining, refusing, or disagreeing" (p. 484). James Tollefson (1989) in his book *Alien Winds: The Reeducation of America's Indochinese Refugees* describes how the ESL curricula of the refugee programs follow the tradition of the Americanization movement by communicating to refugees that their ability to solve economic and social problems depends on their cultural and economic assimilation. Tollefson points out that in contrast to the post-World War I Americanization programs in which immigrants were taught to make sandwiches and pies and salute the flag, today's ESL texts "focus instead on the ethos of the consumer society. Rather than didactic patriotism, texts teach economic patriotism—the importance of proper market behavior and of accepting the principle of starting at the bottom of the employment ladder" (p. 57).

In the recent Amnesty Program for undocumented workers, ESL pedagogy was also reminiscent of the Americanization described in *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* (Ross, 1937), although the political circumstances of this recent wave of immigrants were more threatening to them; to avoid deportation, undocumented workers learned English while studying pro-U.S. versions of civics and history from materials produced by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The students prepared for test questions such as "What were the 13 colonies?" and "How many stripes are on the U.S. flag?" (Wolfram, 1992).

Many ESL teachers resisted the propagandistic features of the ideological ESL/Amnesty curriculum and encouraged their students to do likewise; they developed a counter-ideology of resistance modeled on the problem-posing

pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1972), Ira Shor (1987), and Henry Giroux (1983) and specifically adapted to ESL instruction by Nina Wallerstein (1983)—to think critically about what they are learning and about their economic and linguistic situations, to choose, as Wolfram (1992) says, the relationship they want to have with the dominant culture in which they find themselves. The very circumstances of these students' ESL classes—learning the host's language in the host's country in hopes of increasing their economic status—are manifestly political. As Tollefson (1989) demonstrates, it is often the case that U.S. policies in their native countries have contributed to their immigration to the U.S. in the first place. In fact, the ascendance and dominance of English, contributing to the proliferation of ESL or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs both in the U.S. and abroad, is obviously political, thus causing the situation of *any* ESL student in *any* classroom inside or outside a university to be ideologically charged. To use Frederick Erickson's (1984) terms, the "micropolitics" of the ESL teaching/learning situation inevitably reflect the "macropolitics" of the world situation.

BLURRING OF L1 AND L2 DEMOGRAPHICS AND PEDAGOGIES

Santos (1992) predicts that L2 pedagogical literature may gradually become more expressly political, for as the demographics of the college population change, it becomes more difficult to separate L1 from L2 pedagogy. Indeed, the fields are becoming closer as classrooms become more multicultural and ESL students become harder to distinguish from non-ESL students. Ann Johns (1993) recently described a proposal at one California state institution to combine L1 and L2 writing instruction into one Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Increasing numbers of college students, especially in California, New York, Illinois, Texas, and Florida, were born in countries such as Mexico, El Salvador, Korea, Vietnam, The Philippines, or China, but have received much if not most of their education in the U.S. Years of a U.S. education, including years in Intensive College English and ESL, do not guarantee native-speaker proficiency; how then are these second-generation immigrants grouped—with L1 or L2 students?

Sorting and classifying students and disciplinary subfields can become hairsplitting. For example, if the students just described are fairly fluent, conversant English *speakers*, but not fluent English *writers*, are they L1 or L2? And what about the large population of bilingual Puerto Rican students raised in New York or Chicago who are speakers of a dialect similar to African-American English Vernacular? Are they L1, L2, or Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD)? And how much should it matter how teachers label various types of ESL students?

What should matter is not how teachers label fields and students, but how they teach them, especially how they respond to students' writing. My argument is that whatever our responses to their writing are, they have sociopolitical implications, some more subtle than others, that need to be brought out in the open and examined. To support this argument, I use three

case studies to analyze actual and alternative responses to the writing of three college students from different linguistic and academic backgrounds — an L2/ESL international student, a bicultural ESL student, and an L1 (SESD) student. This analysis of actual practices helps counteract the tendency toward vagueness of much ideological L1 composition theory which is hard to translate into everyday teaching situations (Santos, 1992), as well as the tendency of ESL pedagogy toward pragmatism without acknowledging ideology (Johns, 1993; Santos, 1992).

THREE STANCES TOWARD RESPONSE TO WRITING

In my analysis, I argue that all teachers and tutors, consciously or subconsciously, have a *stance toward response* to all writing, in this case, second language and second dialect writing. This stance, or, as Louise Wetherbee Phelps (1989) calls it, the "deep structure of response to writing," is determined by a complex of many factors, some more influential than others, in different situations. One factor is how the teacher's own L1 and L2 writing has been responded to by English and foreign language teachers. Other influential factors are the pedagogy of the overall writing/language program, the demands of a particular writing assignment, and the needs of the writers and their linguistic and academic situations — their own ideas and feelings about what features constitute helpful responses to their writing. Also, factors such as whether international students will be returning to the native country or going onto the U.S. job market affect the way a teacher responds to them and their writing.

Teachers' stances are also determined by an even weightier factor — their general political attitude, or their *ideology*, as James Berlin (1988) would say, toward international students and dialect speakers. Specifically, this political attitude or ideology of response is about the issue and extent of acculturation — how much and how quickly or even *if* teachers think second language and second dialect students should assimilate culturally, socially, and linguistically into the U.S. corporate and academic mainstreams, and how much of their cultural and language patterns they can and should retain. Related to the degree of acculturation assumed desirable by writing teachers, three stances for responding to writing are posited: *separatist, accommodationist*, and *assimilationist*. These stances comprise a continuum of response represented by the broken line (----) in Table 1.

Models representing different stances toward social, cultural, and linguistic assimilation have been developed in ethnic studies, sociolinguistics, and L1 composition. In ethnic studies, the conflict between the assimilationist, or melting-pot, model and the model of cultural pluralism to explain immigration and assimilation patterns in the U.S. (Chametzky, 1989–90) has been explored by historians Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1963) in their classic work *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* and by Milton Gordon (1964) in *Assimilation in American Life*. In sociolinguistics, more than 20 years ago, different stances toward

TABLE 1.   A Continuum Representing Sociopolitical Stances toward Response to Second Language and Second Dialect Writing

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	Sociopolitical Stance		
	Separatist	*Accommodationist*	*Assimilationist*
1) Attitude about cultures	Independent cultures	Intersecting cultures	A blended U.S. culture
2) Attitude about differences	Ignore differences	Explain differences	Correct differences
3) Public policy examples	"Students' Right to Their Own Language" (1974)	1979 Ann Arbor Decision	"English Only" Movement
4) Student case-study examples	Michael	Susan	Takaro

linguistic assimilation by teachers and administrators were addressed by Ralph Fasold and Roger Shuy (1970) in their preface to *Teaching Standard English in the Inner City*. They contrasted three pedagogical approaches to the dialect differences of African-American students: eradication, biloquialism, and appreciation of dialect differences. Min-Zhan Lu (1992) has examined the differences between acculturative, assimilationist, and accommodationist L1 composition pedagogies and how they have been articulated in relation to the basic writers who entered City University of New York through Open Admissions; she then proposes a fourth alternative — a "pedagogy of struggle."

Two features on the Table 1 continuum distinguish the stances from one another: (a) the attitude toward culture contact, and (b) the attitude toward linguistic differences. I define the first stance, *separatism*, as the belief that cultures, languages, and dialects in contact should be able to exist almost independently — unaffected, untainted by mainstream cultures, languages, and dialects. The second more compromising position of *accommodation* is the belief that second language and second dialect speakers can be both *a part of* mainstream society and *apart from* it, retaining to some extent their culture and language. The third position is *assimilation* — the stance that everyone should blend into the mainstream or melting pot. Table 1 must be thought of as a continuum because those involved with L1/L2 writing are likely to fall somewhere in between the categories or may even occasionally change response stances.

These stances, if contemplated apart from the continuum, might seem like a set-up for the classic "critical" L1 composition essay in which three views are laid out, and one of them, usually the third, is obviously the most correct, thereby pointing the finger at those who subscribe to the first and second views. However, following Fasold and Shuy (1970), I believe that valid political and pedagogical arguments exist for each stance, arguments I hope to explain fairly, although my preference is for the accommodationist view, as theirs is for biloquialism.

Assimilationist Stance

The most extreme assimilationist response to second language or second dialect writing would be to encourage the student to write linear, thesis-statement and topic-sentence-driven, error-free, and idiomatic academic English as soon as possible. The goal is to smoothly blend or melt into the desired discourse communities and avoid social stigma by controlling any features that in the eyes of audiences with power and influence might mark a writer as inadequately educated or lower class. The assimilationist position on what Bruce Horner (1992) calls the "sociality of error" is conservative. Linguistic differences would be regarded as "errors" or instances of L1 "interference" — cultural or linguistic — to be eliminated.

At their best, assimilationist responses are practical, bottom-line acknowledgments of the realities and demands of academic and corporate discourses, in short, what many students (and their parents) assume they are

paying for when they sign up for an L1 or L2 course. At their worst, a disproportionate attention to form and convention over meaning and message either inadvertently or purposely disparages students for the language, skills, and culture they bring with them into the classroom/writing center. Sensitive, moderate assimilationist responses are savvy about discourse conventions, the job market, and promotions; insensitive, extremist ones put students and their cultures down and aim to eradicate linguistic and cultural differences.

Separatist Stance

In contrast, the most extreme separatist view holds that assimilationist responses are unjust and colonialistic and that language minorities should not have to change or adapt in order to gain educational and economic rights and opportunities. Like those who advocate the third approach described by Fasold and Shuy (1970), which they call "appreciation of dialect differences," separatists believe that the society and the class of employers or educators that disparage and discriminate against ESL and SESD speakers should be challenged and changed, not the ESL and SESD speakers themselves or their discourses. Separatists want to preserve and celebrate linguistic diversity, not eradicate it.

Language policy statements and movements illustrate how the stances and the continuum function. Separatists were more influential in the 1960s and 1970s as shown by the position statement, "Students' Right To Their Own Language" (1974), of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). For this reason, the CCCC's statement is placed toward the left on the Table 1 continuum. The 1979 Ann Arbor Court Decision, which held that teachers of Vernacular Black English speakers must educate themselves about their students' language and use this knowledge of language contrasts to teach standard English, is placed in the middle of the continuum, where sociolinguistics argue it belongs, not at the separatist end where the media placed it (Farr, 1980). The ideologically conservative "English Only" Movement is placed at the right (Auerbach, 1992).

At their best and in the most ideal contexts, separatist responses, in emphasizing meaning and ignoring formal differences, permit the ESL or SESD writer to work on fluency, development, and communication, freed from what might be distractions and constraints, such as attention to word endings and spelling. Separatists read ESL texts generously, with a "cosmopolitan eye" (Leki, 1992); they are accepting of different culturally influenced logics and rhetorical patterns. As Land and Whitley (1989) say, such readers of ESL writing "allow the piece of writing at hand to develop slowly, like a photographic print shading in the details" (p. 290). At their worst, separatist responses, forgiving or applauding deviations from Standard English rhetorical and grammatical patterns, inevitably set students up for a shock when the next teacher, tutor, or employer they encounter tends toward an assimilationist stance.

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Accommodationist Stance

An accommodationist stance, like Fasold and Shuy's (1970) biloquialism, often called the "compromise" position (Farr, 1990), includes students not giving up their home oral and written discourse patterns in order to assimilate, but instead acquiring *new* discourse patterns, thus enlarging their rhetorical repertoires for different occasions. In the best of all possible accommodationist worlds, patterns are only gained, not lost; true bi- or tri- or even multilingualism and culturalism would be the ideal, a stance embodied in Lisle and Mano's (1997, pp. 12–26) "Embracing a Multicultural Rhetoric." At their best, accommodationist responses are comprehensive and rhetorical, emphasizing that certain discourse features are appropriate or inappropriate for certain occasions. At their worst, they are longwinded, laden with conditions, and hard to process. Accommodationists tell students that in certain more informal situations, certain features, like lack of idiomatic English for ESL students and lack of past tense or third-person-singular-present tense markers for SESD speakers are acceptable, but in certain more formal situations, they are unacceptable. "It all depends on how much like a native speaker you want to sound," teachers tell ESL students. "It all depends on what kind of an impression you want to make on whom," teachers tell SESD speakers. At their worst, the accommodationists' conditions, contexts, and qualifications may sound like double-talk that may confuse more than help the students; with their explanations they might even help themselves more than students as the accommodationists literally talk themselves into feeling better for not Americanizing ESL students or forcing African-American students into standard English and out of their spoken dialect. Sensitive accommodationists are, according to their name, accommodating of both linguistic differences and societal conventions. Insensitive accommodationists are overexplainers, whose own agenda, shared by many separatists, to rid themselves of any association with academic or linguistic assimilation or colonization, can overwhelm their teaching of writing.

RESPONSES TO THREE WRITERS

The enactment of these stances will be demonstrated in actual and optional responses to the writing of three students: (a) Takaro, an international student from Japan, a senior in his mid-20s who is planning to become a teacher of Japanese in the U.S.; (b) Susan, an 18-year-old freshman who immigrated with her family from Korea at age 11 and is embarking on a liberal arts education; and (c) Michael, an African-American student in his 20s, a janitor for the university, enrolled in the university's evening program. Takaro had been referred to the writing center by International Student Services; Susan, by her classroom teacher; and Michael, by a friend.

I will describe to you the ways I responded to Takaro's, Susan's, and Michael's texts, all of which were written at the beginning of the semester in and for the writing center, not for a grade or a class, but for written and verbal

responses to help them improve as writers. After these introductory assignments, however, students can receive help with any of their academic papers for any graded course. The center's pedagogy, in keeping with the writing and speaking courses it also serves, is rhetorical; writers write to communicate rather than to demonstrate proficiency, and meaning/content/ideas are more important than the formal features of grammar and mechanics, although the latter considerations cannot be ignored, especially when they interfere with the message conveyed. This writing center operates more like an independent study course than a drop-in center; students commit themselves to coming to the center twice a week and work with the same teacher throughout the semester.

The sample texts of all three students are political in content: Takaro's is about the tragedy of a Japanese-American bilingual after WWII, Susan's is about her "binationality" possibly preventing her from acquiring "A Sense of Place," the title of her assignment, and Michael's is about the Nazi invasion of The Netherlands, the setting for *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the book he chooses to discuss. Such emotionally, culturally, and politically charged themes, common in the texts of writing center students, international students, and basic writers, demand responses that are content-based. Not to address the substance of the students' accounts of political and personal tragedy is reminiscent of the caricature of the insensitive elementary-school teacher who responded to the written sentence "Yestrday my sistr was hit by a truk" by correcting the student's spelling.

The ways I responded all tend toward accommodationist on the Table 1 continuum, although my responses to Michael veered more closely to separatist than my responses to Takaro and Susan. With Takaro, I tended more toward assimilationist (see Table 1). I will also suggest alternative responses that are more separatist and more assimilationist to these three students' texts. Using my own interactions with students rather than those of other teachers has both disadvantages and advantages; in these combination self and case studies, the objectivity that is lost is compensated for by the opportunity for "thick" description (Geertz, 1973) of and critical reflection about the texts and responses to them.

Takaro

Takaro wrote "Futatsu no sokoku" (Appendix A) in 1 ½ class periods. His essay is strikingly relevant to the present discussion in its powerful depiction of the conflicts of a bilingual/bicultural interpreter. In response to a previous assignment to describe his reading interests, Takaro had written that he had recently stayed up all night to finish the book *Two Motherlands*. I asked him for his next assignment to write about the book and why it was important to him. When he finished his piece up to the completed sentence of line 40, he called me over to tell me that he did not consider himself finished because he had not yet told how he felt about the book; he said he wanted to do that the next lab period.

My response to the text that he handed me was as follows: I sat down and with the paper between us, I read it aloud rhetorically with feeling and meaning like a reader. In this expressive oral reading, I did not stumble or do doubletakes over nonidiomatic phrases, inconsistencies in tense, or the *l* and *r* errors, and I supplied the missing articles myself. If there was an emotional section, I reacted the way I actually felt. Because I had never seen Takaro's essay or read the book before, it was all new and news; to use James Kinneavy's (1971) term, this discourse had "surprise value." Of course, I was shocked upon reading that the main character, Kenji, committed suicide and stopped reading to react accordingly. Then Takaro and I briefly discussed the dilemma of being caught between two worlds, two nonaccommodating ones.

At Takaro's next lab period, the following week, he took about 20 minutes to write the last three sentences (line 40, "This novel is . . .") about what the book meant to him. Again, I read these lines as an interested reader. When I looked a bit puzzled afterwards, he showed me the Japanese characters he had written at the top of the original page and explained how their meaning was ambiguous; they could be translated two ways into two "ancestral lands" *or* two "nations." As Takaro says, being caught between two nation states or two governments or political entities destroyed Kenji, not being caught between two cultures.

Had I been more separatist, I might have adopted a "hands off formal features" (verbs, wording, spelling) policy and stopped responding right there. Rhetorically reading for meaning would have been enough; after all, Takaro's discourse is not only comprehensible, but powerful, rich, and interesting. I could have ignored its various levels of L1 transfer — cultural, syntactic, and phonological. That is, Takaro's conclusion could be an instance of cultural transfer — a writer from a reader-based rhetoric of Japanese (Hinds, 1987) expecting an English-speaking reader from a writer-based rhetoric to understand the ambiguity of "Two Motherlands" without further explanation. Syntactic transfer is evident in the missing articles and the nonidiomatic phrasing, and phonological interference in the confusing of *l* and *r*, resulting in "interigence" (line 19) and "corapse" (line 23). However, the grammar, wording, *l-r*, and other spelling (pronunciation) problems were not serious enough to interfere with the communication of Takaro's summary and evaluation of *Two Motherlands*.

After doing an error analysis, I discovered that Takaro's most common error was inconsistency of tense. He had two problems with articles and six spelling mistakes — two, as mentioned, from phonological interference. Five problems were in wording/phrasing, some more "global" (causing some cognitive strain to a native speaker) than others (Burt & Kiparsky, 1972). As separatist arguments go, systematically addressing these errors (first the puzzling conclusion, then verbs, wording, articles, and spelling) could stifle Takaro's desire to write further on this topic and others; such a systematic response would change/interfere with his linguistic choices, some of which resulted in "interlanguage" features (Selinker, 1972) which actually contribute to the charm and uniqueness of Takaro's discourse. Such changing and editing often results in what L1 theorists Bran-------- and K--------- (1989)------

"appropriation" of the students' texts (158), often construed as an act of academic/linguistic colonization. If the recommended pedagogical technique of "reformulation" of L2 texts by L1 writers (Cohen, 1983) became more widespread, it could also become an assimilationist appropriation of students' texts.

However, as an accommodationist wanting Takaro to add as native-as-feasible English discourse to his repertoire, and responding to Takaro's requests for detailed corrections, I read the entire paper aloud *again* to help Takaro *edit* it. The more assimilationist option would have been to dispense with a rhetorical reading and do only the second reading to edit. When I read Takaro's paper aloud this second time, I read it more slowly and with less feeling, pausing a few seconds before reading a problematic feature. Takaro had a pen in his hand, and with the pause hints and possibly having remembered the changed features from my previous oral reading, he caught most of the verb/tense problems himself. I helped him correct the five phrasing problems and read the smoothed out phrases aloud in context a few more times so that they would sound natural and he might later have an auditory memory of these phrases — for example, "he had a lot of problems with the camp authorities" (line 15). My last comment to him was the situation-based advice typical of the accommodationist, that is, that one's rhetoric depends on the occasion. If Takaro were writing the paper for a class, he would have to explain in the *paper* what he told me orally about the ambiguity of the Japanese words and characters to make sure his ending had the proper impact. The common spelling errors that even native speakers make, like "exsistence" (line 31) and "goverments" (line 42), I ignored to focus on the more important areas.

Susan

Susan, the second student, is not an international student like Takaro, but immigrated from Korea at the age of 11 with her family. She is a good example of someone who is neither L1 nor L2, but close to bilingual. She attended a U.S. junior high and high school in a school system with an excellent reputation for its rhetorically based language arts programs. Susan had also been through the university's ESL program. However, her fluency in speaking English is far ahead of her fluency in reading and writing, as can be seen from her brief piece responding to a writing center assignment called "A Sense of Place" which asks students to recall in detail a place that is important to their emotional development (see Appendix B).

As with Takaro's paper, my first response was rhetorically based, but in the form of written marginal and end comments that simulated a conversation. I wrote the comments rather than reading aloud and commenting orally as with Takaro's essay because Susan had not completed the piece until the very end of the lab period. To Susan's comment that she did not have a significant place "to show the part of me," which at the time struck me as sad and self-deprecatory, I wrote what I thought was an up-beat comment — that

this comment could be interpreted as a kind of push toward stronger emotional identification with the U.S., in other words, toward assimilation. It seems that Takaro, Takaro's subject Kenji from *Two Motherlands*, and Susan all have one foot in each land.

My other marginal comment is a "me-too" comment, common in responses in the center and writing/speaking program that train teachers to respond to the discourse as an act of meaning-making. I asked why in the U.S., the game is called "Red Light, Green Light" and in Korea, "Red Light, Blue Light." My two endnotes are also me-too comments focused on childhood games ("Playing with friends under the street lights is a great memory"), but the second endnote, after proposing the topic of "the midwestern place" for the next writing, introduces an error pattern intimately attached to meaning that I wanted her to work on in the following session ("Is there a special place in the midwest that you can write about today? Also, we could edit this paper for tenses to make sure it shows your games happening in the past").

I chose tense/time as a focus because it seemed like the easiest feature to work on successfully, and it was the most frequent error, as in line 13 ("want" vs. "wanted" and "should come" vs. "had to come") and line 24 ("tomorrow" vs. "the next day"). Susan had one article problem ("*the* part of me" vs. "*a* part of me" in line 5) and a faulty word form (the adverb "well" instead of the adjective "good" in line 29). During the next session, after we chatted briefly about childhood games, I reiterated the point about happenings in past time, and had Susan read the paper aloud slowly, pausing where something did not sound right, so she could make corrections. She did experience dissonance when reading over a few features and proceeded to correct them herself with a bit of prompting. In the first two lines, for example, she deleted the words that did not belong—both instances of the word "in" (lines 1 and 2). She also added words that were missing—"little *girl*" (line 3) and "close *enough*" (line 6).

Another assimilationist response could have been to circle all the errors and/or correct them myself, which would backfire and contradict the assimilationist goal to write in standard English as soon as possible, because Susan would not be participating in the process of finding and correcting problems. A more separatist response would have been to avoid mentioning matters of form such as tense and omitted words, in the interest of working on Susan's fluency and development, clearly the discourse level she needed to address first. Yet I was concerned about Susan's fitting into her English class and therefore veered to the right on the response continuum. In the course of the semester, I discovered she was unsure about when and how to use relative clauses. In Korean, relative clauses are used before rather than after the head noun as they are in English (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983).

Michael

The third student is Michael, a man in his 20s who, when he finishes his shift as a janitor for the university, attends a freshman English class. (When the writing center teacher who enrolled Michael asked him if he had ever

worked in the writing center, he said yes, that he had cleaned the writing center many times.) Trained as a welder in a high-school vocational program, but unable to afford the equipment to go into business for himself, he is now exploring the option of a college education. In high school, he had done very little writing. His piece, like Takaro's, is also a response to my request to choose a favorite book and write about why it is important to him. Michael chose *The Diary of Anne Frank* (see Appendix C).

When I read this piece (Michael was not present), like the teachers in Shaughnessy's (1977) basic writing program, I was temporarily "stunned" by the sheer quantity of errors. My error analysis revealed, however, that most of Michael's problems (16 of the 26 errata) are in spelling. It could be that, from lack of school writing experience, he had missed or forgotten some spelling and grammar rules—dropping *e* before adding *-ing*, when and how to form the possessive with *s*, homophones ("their" vs. "there," "hole" vs. "whole," "passed" vs. "past"), and when to terminate sentences (lines 1, 14). Some of the spelling problems may result from his pronunciation, especially of word endings and beginnings ("survie" vs. "survive," "abanded" vs. "abandoned," "lone" vs. "alone," "hiden" vs. "hiding"). Another error, the verb/tense problems ("troop was," "want" vs. "wanted"), may also result from the carryover from dialect features; in African-American English Vernacular, it is not necessary to mark plural or past with *-s* or *-ed* or other endings, because one can tell from context whether the speaker means past or plural, with words such as *yesterday* or *many* (Labov, 1972).

I might have been tempted to begin explaining to Michael the rules he had forgotten, the obvious assimilationist response. A more extreme assimilationist response would also include telling Michael that books, unlike movies, do not contain "footage" (line 2), and that in Standard English "bad" does not mean "good" like it does in African-American English Vernacular, and that therefore he should change these lexical items, thus encouraging him to remove features of his personal voice from the text. An accommodationist may have commented on "footage" and the two meanings of "bad," but not demanded the changes.

In keeping with the center's pedagogy, I responded to his piece as an act of communication, which it was, rather than as a demonstration of how well Michael knew and/or could apply the rules. In light of Michael's situation as a returning student just beginning to articulate his ideas in writing and considering the serious content of the piece, I decided also to veer toward separatism with a solely content-based response. In later lab sessions, however, I had Michael start a list with his spelling problems, explained some rules of spelling and tense, and taught him to use the word processor and the spell check.

On this piece, I wrote three marginal comments and one end comment. My first comment was "I like the way you say actual 'footage' as if it were a movie." In my next comment, I told him about dramatic and film versions of the Anne Frank story. The third was a me-too comment about my own fears of facing this kind of adversity. The end comment, like my response to Susan, responds to signs of negative self-image about a lack of memory or concentration

(line 26): "You *did* manage to remember quite a bit of this, Michael—a very powerful and dramatic book that should always be read as a reminder of what humans have done to one another."

Because of a heightened awareness of race and class differences in the U.S., most discussions of response to SESD writing such as Michael's, in teachers' lounges, newspaper columns, and L1 literature, have been more volatile and more manifestly political than discussions of responses to ESL writing. For example, Allen Ballard (1973), a former head of the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) Program at the City College of New York, chided the young white radical teachers in Mina Shaughnessy's basic writing program for their hands-off (what I am calling "separatist") policy on the different grammatical features of the texts of African-American students. Accusing these teachers of not correcting features because they bore the guilt of white racism, he urged an assimilationist stance that would result in the eradication of SESD traces in the writing of African-American students. Like many educators and parents, he does not want African-Americans to be left behind due to the discrimination they might face from potential employers and the mainstream public because of the potentially stigmatizing features of their language. A separatist response to this common position, reflected in the CCCC's statement ("Students' Right to Their Own Language," 1974) is that employers and the public must be encouraged by the English-teaching community to *change* their attitudes and biases and regard content and deep structure, not form and surface structure, as the bases of communication. This ongoing discussion of the appropriate stance to SESD writing, too complex to retrace here, periodically resurfaces in the media as a "literacy crisis" and in the L1 literature as a reaction to the media's crisis-fabricating.

THE POLITICS OF RESPONSE TO WRITING

The issues surrounding response to the (L1) texts of SESD writers like Michael are politically charged with questions of identity, autonomy, and opportunity, but as I have shown, response to L2/ESL texts, such as those by Takaro and Susan, has political implications as well; the nature of a particular response to a text and a writer suggest a stance toward linguistic and cultural assimilation. Indeed, the entire ESL teaching/learning endeavor, both inside and outside the university, is as politically charged as L1 teaching/learning; it is just that the sociopolitical implications need to be openly articulated and discussed, as I have begun to do. ESL teachers need to be aware of the politics of their stances toward ESL writers and realize that a continuum of choices is available to them. They can choose responses based not only on the L2 development of ESL students, but also on the kinds of political messages their responses invariably suggest to students—messages about acculturation. Because it is impossible to separate language issues from their political contexts, and because the international and national "macropolitics" affect the "micropolitics" of the relationships among teacher, student, and text, it is

important for L1, L2/ESL composition, or any endeavor concerned with English language teaching to acknowledge and make explicit the sociopolitical implications of response to writing.

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APPENDIX A

The Writing of Takaro, an International Student

"Two Motherlands"

1 　　　　　　　"Futatsu no sokoku"
2 　"Two mother lands" is the most impressive novel I've
3 read recently. The scenes are U.S., the pacific islands,
4 and Japan. The main character is Kenji Amou, who is a
5 second generation Japanese immigrant. He was born in
6 California, and his parents send him to Kagoshima, Japan,
7 where they came from, for learning Japanese spirit and
8 culture. So, Kenji became a complete bilingual. This
9 character put him in a difficult situation in coming war
10 between U.S. and Japan. Kenji got a job at a local
11 Japanese news paper for Los Angels area, but the war broke
12 out and he was sent to a kind of concentration camp only
13 because he is a Japanese though he has an American
14 citizenship. However, his attitude is always reasonable
15 though he made a lot of dispute with the camp authorities.
16 A U.S. interigence officer sees through his talent and
17 reliability, and persuaded Kenji to join the U.S.
18 military as a Japanese teaching instructor, translator,
19 interpretator, and interigence officer.
20 　He is distressed about what his identity is and he
21 joins the U.S. army after all. He knows Japan will lose
22 sooner or later, he wanted to prevent Japan from its total
23 corapse. He was assigned to the front of Pacific islands,
24 and then, after the victory of the U.S., goes to Japan as
25 a monitor of the translation of the Tokyo trial, which
26 judges war criminals. From Kenji's view, this trial is
27 not fair, and the American authority who occupies Japan
28 try to use this trial politically to carry out the
29 occupation. Kenji's distress and fatigue make him kill

30 himself, at last.
31 　The existence of such Japanese-Americans are not known
32 well. Their role during the war was tremendous because
33 they are the bridge and they know both sides. This
34 extreme situation is not occuring in today's U.S.-Japan
35 relation, but I guess some element is existing all the
36 time. The concept or notion of "nation states" separate
37 the people and their thoughts. The nations' borderlines
38 are clearly on the map, but actually today's big
39 multinational enterprises activity is crossing those lines
40 all over the world. This novel is tragic because the
41 main characters so clinged the notion of "nation" or "two
42 governments." I prefer the word "mother land" to "state."
43 This novel's title, two mother lands" don't tear him
44 apart, but "two states" do.

APPENDIX B

The Writing of Susan, an Immigrant Student

"A Sense of Place"

1 　My native soil could be Korea since I was born in
2 there and raised in there; a beginning of my childhood.
3 Since I was a little, I haven't been to any places except
4 around seoul, and mostly around my neighborhood. I don't
5 have a significant place to show the part of me. Maybe I
6 haven't paid close attention to where I was and how
7 it might have affected me.
8 　I lived in a neighborhood with a lot of kids around my
9 age. Without very much separation between boys and girls,
10 we all gathered around and played active games, like hide
11 and seek, tag, blue light, red light etc.
12 　Usually our playing time was set, after dinner.
13 Around that hour everybody who want to play should come
14 out by the post, which was close to my house. I remember
15 with my brothers, I used to hurry up with the meal to be
16 on time for a game. Even though, it was pretty dark, the
17 electric light on the top of the post helped us to see
18 where we were going. We could not go very far, for the
19 safety that we always drew the line to never go over that
20 line or else one is out of the game.
21 　Each game, we had a policy, but it was fair enough to
22 enjoy the game.
23 　After the game, everybody would go back home and ready
24 for school tomorrow.
25 　The reason we set the time of playing at night was,
26 everybody would be free by then. Finish school work or

27 other things during the day and enjoy the free time after
28 dinner while adults watched television for themselves. It
29 was a pretty well neighborhood.

APPENDIX C

The Writing of Michael, a Standard English as a Second Dialect Student

The Diary of Anne Frank

1   The Ann Frank Diary was a good book to read, it contain
2 actall footage of what happen when Ann Frank lived in
3 Germany. It was war time when Hitler and his troops where
4 at war. Ann Frank and her people were helled against
5 their will and could not be seen or troop was going to
6 caputure as prisinor. Ann and her family were hiding in
7 an atic of an abanded building that had allready been
8 bomb. While the was going on, Ann would always listen to
9 the radio to hear what Hitler was saying to the people.
10   Ann knew that Hitler was a bad person and that he
11 would use people and his own family to get what he wants.
12 Ann was always thinking about hope, praying that his would
13 all come to an end. The people that Ann was with took in
14 as their own they had a son named Peter and everyday Ann
15 and Peter would talk about the way things were. Ann lost
16 her family so she really did not have any place to go.
17 But when Peters family took her in she had better relief
18 of haveing people around her because she thought she was
19 really going to be lone and would not have any person or
20 place to turn to. Ann and Peter got to know each other so
21 well that they began liking each other. Since war was
22 upon them started keeping a Diary and she would put down
23 every thing, that happened she even put Peter and his
24 family their. Ann was a very bright girl she would tell
25 stories to keep things off your mind. She knew games that
26 past the time away. I really do not remember the rest,
27 but, I do know that Anns Diary was found and a publisher
28 took the Diary and made a book out of it.
29   The hole book was effective because she was writing
30 about her being in hiden. She lost her family, before
31 Peter took her in she thought she was going to die because
32 she couldn't get food and she did not know how to servie
33 in a war. The book made me think, what if I was in her
34 place, how strong would I be, would I servie. Ann Franks
35 Diary was one bad book that I really like.

19   The Impact of Writer Nationality on Mainstream Teachers' Judgments of Composition Quality

DONALD L. RUBIN AND
MELANIE WILLIAMS-JAMES

For many postsecondary ESL teachers, the ultimate mark of success is to see their students integrate with no disadvantage into mainstream English instruction classes (Land & Whitley, 1989). Indeed, some intensive English programs may evaluate their effectiveness in part by tracking the passage of their "graduates" through regular (i.e., non-ESL) writing classes. And yet many ESL teachers figuratively hold their breath as they release their students into that mainstream. Often their trepidation is not a matter of doubting their students' abilities. Instead, ESL teachers fear that their students are stepping into an environment which has little time, little expertise (see Clair, 1995), and perhaps too little interest in supporting nonnative English Speaking (NNES) students (Braine, 1994). Some ESL educators fear that too often NNES students experience loss of confidence and an increase in alienation in mainstream English composition classes (see Silva, 1994; Zamel, 1995).

Were writing assessment somehow a value-free endeavor, were it a matter of measuring easily verifiable indices of performance, then perhaps ESL professionals would have less justification for their fears. But writing assessment is notoriously nonsystematic. A considerable body of research in that tradition documents the rather erratic responses to student writing of both English L1 teachers (Huot, 1993; Rafoth & Rubin, 1984) and ESL teachers (Vaughan, 1991, Zamel, 1985).

Teachers' ratings of student writing can be influenced by extraneous individual differences like students' names (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer, 1963) and students' physical attractiveness (Seligman, Tucker & Lambert, 1972). Composition assessment is also influenced by cultural identity factors like students' ethnic background (Piché, Rubin, Turner & Michlin, 1978) and speech style (Seligman et al., 1972). Studies of written language and attitude indicate that teachers tend to assign lower quality ratings to papers they believe have been written by members of low prestige social groups.