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"Difference in/at the center" a transnational approach for mobilizing international multilingual graduate writers' writing assets during writing instruction.

Olalekan Adepoju
University of Louisville

"DIFFERENCE IN/AT THE CENTER"

A TRANSNATIONAL APPROACH FOR MOBILIZING INTERNATIONAL

MULTILINGUAL GRADUATE WRITERS' WRITING ASSETS DURING WRITING

INSTRUCTION

By

Olalekan Tunde Adepoju
B.A./Ed., University of Ilorin, 2012
M.A., University of Ibadan, 2015

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A Dissertation Approved on

June 26, 2023

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DEDICATION

To my MUM and late DAD:

Your immense sacrifices are not without rewards!

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First, I acknowledge God, who continues to be the source of my inspiration and guidance, especially throughout this PhD program.

I want to also thank my participants who were so generous to share their time with me by volunteering to help me make sense of my research project. I appreciate all the international multilingual graduate participants, including Yohimar, G-Code, Sato, Sadek, and Gan for indulging my numerous emails and phone calls; thank you for always responding and answering my questions. Likewise, I thank the writing consultant participants—Eli, Yuan, Brice, Kylee, and Ben—for being so enthusiastic about this project; many times, your level of enthusiasm assured me that this project is doable and timely. I do not take the fact that you all made time to meet together with me for granted despite your busy schedules during your first year at the university.

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ABSTRACT

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This research project presents an empirical exploration of how the writing assets possessed by international multilingual graduate writers impact the theory and pedagogical practices in writing studies, especially regarding the approaches to teaching writing. Extant scholarship in writing studies, especially on second language research/teaching, translingual writing practices, and asset-based writing pedagogy has engaged issues of difference in language, race, culture, as well as funds of knowledge, highlighting the impacts of these differences on the academic success of non-native English speakers in US schools and colleges. My dissertation builds on these trends and highlights the narratives, perceptions, and experiences of international multilingual graduate writers and writing consultants at the University of Louisville's Writing Center to contribute a new, reflexive way of viewing writing differences in our work with students who are from countries other than the US.

I employed a qualitative study that is informed by in-depth interviews with five international multilingual graduate writers and two focus group discussions with five writing consultants. I subjected the data I collected from my participants to analytical interpretations using the theoretical lens of the transnational writing framework as well as rhetorical empathy. The alignment of both frameworks is evident in how rhetorical

empathy becomes a heuristic tool that writing instructors can use to successfully navigate the contexts of their teaching, either writing centers or writing classrooms—which I argue have increasingly become transnational in nature. Through analysis of international multilingual graduate writers' interviews and review of their observation data, I show that they are aware of the difference between their prior writing orientation and their current writing situation in the US. Regardless, they possess some knowledge of how writing works, influenced by their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical competencies. These competencies are leveraged as assets that they possess and would reveal to their writing consultants as long as an atmosphere that welcomes a discussion of their writing assets and tends to allow them to guide us on what we can do with these assets is cultivated. Likewise, I submit that writing professionals (instructors and consultants) need to start to reimagine every encounter of writing instruction the transnational engagement that ties people and places together across borders and adopt a rhetorical empathy stance to create opportunities for changing the Subject and the Other in terms of the knowledge of academic writing. Finally, I offer implications to this research and concluded by offering rhetorical empathy's applications in writing studies, especially in writing classroom contexts with a suggestion for a move away from having different sections of college writing class and toward making all college writing courses multilingual sections.

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Since the era of open admissions as well as the influx of international students into US

colleges in the 1970s, the field of composition studies has continued to address diverse

ways of teaching and researching writing practices. Over the years, writing instructors

have vigorously debated the content and purpose of writing instruction. While some have

advocated for writing about social issues in an effort to prepare students for citizenship in

a democracy, others have prioritized the need for students to draw on personal themes in

their writing to promote students' growth as individuals. Writing about literary texts as a

means of enculturation has been the major preoccupation of other instructors. Gold and

Hammond (2020) explain these competing ideas on what to teach in writing classrooms

(which have increasingly become multilingual and multicultural) is an extension of the

history of US writing instruction. Meanwhile, as the US writing classroom has become

diverse, studies have sustained calls for more attention to a consistent retooling of

framework and strategies for writing instruction.

In the 2017 *CCCC Statement on Globalization in Writing Studies Pedagogy and
Research*, writing researchers are charged to extensively examine "how writing studies

may transcend 'traditional' borders along national, cultural, or linguistic lines employing

a variety of methods that foster responsive global exchanges among teachers and

scholars of writing" (np). The statement was concluded with some advice for writing professionals to conduct and situate their research in the context of globally diverse sites. My study attempts to respond to this call by examining how international multilingual graduate writers work with writing consultants to navigate the US writing center as a transnational space, focusing on the attendant writing differences (such as rhetorical, linguistic and cultural differences) of academic transition in their efforts to function effectively in the US academic writing.

The major incentive for this study is the possibility to keep learning to transform the writing instruction in the writing center specifically and composition program generally through the experiences and narratives of international multilingual (graduate) students. Bruce (2009) had earlier explained that the practice to keep working and to keep learning is necessary as each new day potentially brings one more student/writer closer to understanding and enjoying the process of accomplishing the goal of learning to become a better writer. In essence, achieving this learning-to-transform practice means directors, administrators and tutors should experience their writing center environments and practices through the eyes of their international multilingual writers, thereby flipping the subject of producing knowledge of academic writing practices as a means to improve the writing teacher's pedagogical skills.

This notion of learning to transform aligns with the new orientation in transnational writing education that emphasizes the need for writing researchers to examine the perspectives of the participants (for instance, international multilingual writers) in efforts to realize a more dynamic, sophisticated, nuanced and context-sensitive view of language and cultural difference and its implication for successful writing

instruction (You, 2018; Haerazi, et al., 2018; Ene et al., 2019). Therefore, in focusing

attention on the international graduate students themselves, writing instructors and

researchers would realize that many international multilingual graduate students wanted

help more with writing support than language support. Such writing support takes a

broader view to addressing "assumptions and resentments regarding language and

language ideologies" (Sharma, 2018, p. 69) as well as cultural issues such as privacy,

pride and respect (Phillips, 2008; Bruce, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The expectation for graduate students to effectively function as members of their

disciplinary community continue to characterize the nature of graduate education,

especially in the US. In the context of international multilingual graduate writers, this

expectation adds to the plethora of issues and challenges they face as newcomers into the

US academic system. More specifically, navigating the standard academic writing in the

US writing context proves daunting for most international multilingual graduate students

as their writing is mostly perceived as being "shaped by their respective cultures and

languages, requiring inordinate effort to reorientate to other discourses" (Canagarajah,

2002:13). Canagarajah, emphasizes that such "difference-as-deficit and difference-as-

estrangement are somewhat limiting perspectives" (p. 13) on the writing ability of

multilingual writers.

Furthermore, some other concerns such as inadequate preparation in reading and

writing large amounts of text; lack of confidence as well as insufficient familiarity with

US academic writing conventions remain prevalent among international multilingual

graduate students (Morita 2000; Tardy 2004, Sharma, 2018). Nevertheless, the increase in international students in US institutions of higher learning presents an opportunity to think deeply and critically about working to establish an academic community in which international students can engage with culturally relevant writing instruction and to connect with each other intellectually and socially (Shapiro, Farrelly and Tomas, 2014). As writing professionals, these aims can be pursued by listening to and learning from this population of writers in our work with them, that is, engaging their writing differences and leveraging their funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005) for an improved framework of writing instruction.

Extant studies have suggested how writing center practitioners can engage issues of difference in language, race, culture and gender to address oppressive circumstances that these differences may warrant (Davila, 2006; Bruce, 2009; Denny, 2010; Faison and Trevinõ, 2020). Some of the approaches suggested include recruitment of staff from diverse backgrounds; staff training that emphasizes greater awareness about systematic oppression as well as increased reflective practices by writing center staff. Moreover, Faison and Trevinõ (2020) opine that writing center practitioners need to "shift the way we orient to writing centers, so that writing center research may begin to undo its hidden curriculum" (105). Quoting Lindsay-Dennis's threefold recommendation for this re-orientation, Faison and Trevinõ note that writing center practitioners are called upon to conduct research that focuses on the experiences of historically marginalized bodies working and receiving assistance/service in the writing center; value the experiences of people of color (POC) within a cultural context; and consider the experiences of POC both valid and measurable (p. 105). Yet to date, there has been little in-depth qualitative

analysis of narratives provided by international multilingual graduate writers on how the manifestations of their writing assets can be better recognized and harnessed by writing center practitioners specifically and writing professionals generally.

This current study, therefore, focuses on international multilingual graduate writers who though constitute a minority population in the institution is one of the major populations of those who receive assistance in the writing center. My research pays attention to what writing center practitioners might learn from not only the narratives of but also interactions with international multilingual graduate writers, specifically exploring how centering the linguistic, rhetorical and cultural experiences of international multilingual graduate writers impacts how to rethink both the writing support offered, and the quality of writing instruction provided. More importantly, in fronting the experiences of the international multilingual graduate writers and their writing tutors viz-a-viz how difference is negotiated in the center, this study highlights the need for writing center theory and praxis to move from a desire for systemic change toward an action-oriented reflexive, supportive framework that enhances a stance of rhetorical empathy in writing center work.

Hence, in this study, I explore the values of transnational writing education and rhetorical empathy in the context of international multilingual graduate writers using the University Writing Center. The aim is to examine how writing professionals[1], including writing center consultants, can start to reimagine the framework/best practices for

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[1] For my study, I conceptualize writing professionals as those who train/teach people on developing or honing their writing skills and research writing practices. This category of writing professionals includes, writing instructors, and writing center consultants.

working with linguistic, cultural and rhetorical differences of international students from an asset-based perspective. This aim is with the view to describing the relevance of the transnational writing framework to helping international multilingual graduate students mobilize their full-range assets as writers, including those they bring from a prior educational and writing background. Essentially, the goal of this research project was to both explore how scholarship on transnational writing framework can be extended to the work we do in writing centers as well as how writing studies can be impacted by the writing assets possessed by the diverse population of students in US higher education, including international multilingual graduate writers.

Specifically, the study pays attention to how writing tutors negotiate linguistic, cultural and rhetorical differences in working with international multilingual graduate writers. The findings of this study, it is hoped, will help to advance more nuanced theoretical conversations and to develop more effective pedagogies regarding transnational writing in the field of composition/writing studies at large. By showing how transnational practices involves a range of linguistic and cultural resources from across national and cross-border groups and settings (in the case of international multilingual graduate students), the study will offer the field of composition and rhetoric a framework for assessing and improving translingual discourse and pedagogies with a transnational understanding, ultimately leading to a radical change in our teaching practices.

Research Questions

In this study, three (3) major research questions guide the discussions in this study. These questions are segmented to not only examine issues related to writers, writing consultants

and the writing center but also unearth effective conceptual framework for understanding the relationship among the three categories.

1. To what extent do international multilingual graduate writers' writing experiences affect their writing consultations?

   a. What linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences do international multilingual graduate writers demonstrate during writing consultation?

   b. In what ways are these differences manifested and/or understood as writing assets?

2. How might writing center consultants work with the linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical experiences manifested by international multilingual graduate students?

   a. How do writing center consultants describe linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences when working with international multilingual graduate students?

   b. In what ways do writing consultants draw on the framework of transnational writing practices in their work with international graduate writers?

   c. In what ways can rhetorical empathy inform the writing center's framework for leveraging international multilingual graduate writers' writing assets?

3. How can the writing center move from acknowledging writing differences to centering differences?

a. What strategies for facilitating interaction across differences in writing center consultations can be developed using a mix of rhetorical empathy and a transnational writing framework?

Contextualizing asset as a conceptual term for this study

Asset, a popular term in the field of Economics and other business-related disciplines, is referred to as a group of resources or substance with economic value that an individual, organization, or country owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide a future benefit. This understanding of assets highlights not only importance of value and benefits of the substance itself but also the necessity of agency by the possessor of the substance. Assets in this study, thus, refer to the array of resources and strategies possessed by writers which, depending on the situation, the writer may choose to exhibit or not exhibit during their writing consultation. The personalizing character of an asset as well as its potential for negotiated inquiry makes it a suitable keyword for contextualizing this study. In essence, the construct of an asset in this study puts into consideration international multilingual graduate writers' possession, awareness and deployment of their language, rhetorical, and cultural orientations, experiences and competencies while navigating the academic writing process.

Perspectives in the fields of writing studies, especially second language writing research have often categorized the contextual understandings and experiences multilingual students bring into the writing class as assets. Second language scholarship on assets has focused on the deficit view or strength view of these understandings and experiences possessed by multilingual students (Leki, 2001; Marshall and Marr, 2018).

While a deficit-oriented view inhibits writing instructors from recognizing the students'

assets and expertise, a strength-oriented view ensures that instructors respond positively

to the manifestations of this asset as the students negotiate writing situations. However, to

work with this asset, however, the writing teacher or instructor has to possess a

functioning awareness of the complexities of language, rhetoric, and culture, especially

how these complexities shape writing.

Commenting on these complexities, Shapiro, Farrelly and Tomaš (2014) affirm

that international students can offer new or underrepresented perspectives on course

materials which helps to enrich the tutoring experience for both the tutor and writers.

According to them, these perspectives are assets that international students are able to

contribute toward the promotion of diversity and global citizenship at our institutions

(84). As such, a greater awareness of what international students bring to the classrooms

is necessary in efforts to adequately mobilize and leverage them for successful writing

instruction. However, this awareness and successful mobilization of

international/multilingual writers does not occur by default. More reason why Marshall

and Marr (2018) recommend that instructors need to be trained and supported to "better

bring together disciplinary content, writing, and understandings of the multilingual

development of their students and the assets they bring to classes" (42).

My study is not only motivated by Marshall and Marr's conceptualization of

assets but also interested in perusing the manifestations of these international multilingual

graduate students' assets during writing situations and how writing instructors can be

better trained and supported to work with the manifestations of these assets. Coleman and

Davis (2020) note that such an asset-based perspective is in contrast with traditional

tutor/teacher-centered pedagogy but instead considers "students' backgrounds, cultures, abilities, and emerging competencies" (80). Hence, I define transnational writing assets in this study as the writing skills and competencies that international multilingual graduate students have garnered from their transnational backgrounds which they wittingly and unwittingly leverage while engaging in new writing situations, including their engagement with writing professionals (teachers and consultants). As my data chapter would reveal, these students had already exerted so much labor in building their writing skills from the bottom up in terms of their awareness of rhetorical, linguistic and cultural awareness. And based on how the manifestation of their competencies is welcomed and honored, they decide who sees which of their writing assets, for how long, and what anyone who sees them can do with them.

Ultimately, adopting an asset-based perspective to transnational practices in the writing center helps to highlight how writing consultants can be better equipped to develop and implement tutorial strategies that account for the idiosyncrasies of international multilingual graduate writers. Specifically, it will help to account for how writing center consultants can better consider motives, blind spots, and prejudice as a means to engage across differences.

Study design

This study draws from narratives offered by both international multilingual graduate students pursuing a degree program at the University of Louisville and writing tutors at the University of Louisville Writing Center. Five (5) international multilingual graduate students and five (5) writing tutors were the participants in this study. I employed various

means for collecting data which included observation of tutoring sessions, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Also, I collected drafts writers worked on with the writing tutors.

To collect my study data, I divided the process into three categories. The first category included data collected from a non-participatory observation of writing sessions. As a non-participatory observer, I video-recorded writing consultations between an international multilingual graduate writer and a writing tutor from start to end. Among other things, the video-recording method of data collection provides an avenue for observing more embodied actions as well as for its playback potential to revisit information repeatedly as desired. While rewatching these video recordings, I took notes of some comments and questions that will drive my discourse-based interview with my participants. I also gathered drafts the writers are working with the tutor to improve on to assess the writers' understanding of the kind of suggested revisions and examine textual features that motivate their approach to revisions from an intertextuality perspective. Likewise, the collected textual document further enhanced the interviews with international multilingual graduate writer participants. All of these were used to determine how the writer and the writing consultants are negotiating differences as an asset to achieve successful writing practices.

For the second category, I conducted follow-up interviews with international multilingual graduate writers. The follow-up interviews focused on discussing my observations from the first category. Additionally, other questions related to how international multilingual graduate writers understand themselves as writers and the writing process were asked during the interview. To this end, I engaged the writers in

discussion on how they perceive the language and cultural differences in their writing and how these differences impact their conversations with their writing tutors. We also discussed specific revisions they have made to their draft and see if their awareness of writing differences influences how they approach these revisions. For the third category of data I collected for my study, I facilitated two (2) 60-minute audio-recorded focused group discussions with writing tutors. The first focus group occurred before the observation process. Toward the end of the spring semester, I conducted the second focus group when all writing sessions has been observed. During the focus group discussions, I sought comments from the consultants on how they perceive and work with the assets and resources that international multilingual graduate writers bring to the writing center as they hope to engender successful writing education.

Thereafter, I triangulated these pieces of data, and, using a grounded theory approach, I coded the interviews and focus group discussions for concepts in my research questions and identified emergent themes. Data from the writing observations and collected texts were used in discussing the themes. More details about the method and methodology I adopted in this study can be found in chapter two.

Literature review

In this literature review, I provide some contextualizing information about international multilingual (graduate) students, focusing on the impacts of their mobility across cultures and languages on writing studies. Likewise, I offer a general overview of transnational writing theory, addressing the uptake of the theory in the field of writing studies, rhetoric and composition. More specifically, I explore the perspective of transnationality in the

context of the writing center, identifying how writing centers can be seen as transnational spaces. Likewise, I describe the transnational agents inhabiting the transnational space of the writing center. Here, I examine the writing center-writing consultants-international multilingual graduate writers triangle and its implication for understanding transnational influences, relations, and dispositions evident in the space in the form of attitudes, perceptions, relationships, and identities.

International Students Mobility and Transnational Writing Education

The history of international student mobility can be traced as far back as the early second century (Bevis and Lucas, 2007; Akanwa, 2015). As Bevis and Lucas reveal, "attendance rolls of city-state schools of philosophy and rhetoric attest to the admission of foreigners in comparatively large numbers" (p. 15). In recent times, globalization efforts have continued to encourage the internationalization of higher education around the world. Students have become more mobile as they seek further education in countries notable for their research base and funding opportunities, thus highlighting the significance of mobility to the definition of international students. Largely defined, international students are those who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study (OECD, 2021).

The number of globally mobile students has consistently increased within the last decades. According to the statistics report by OECD (2021), more than six (6) million tertiary students crossed a border to study in 2019, symbolizing twice the number of international student mobility in 2007. De Wit et al., (2013) also note "even countries that used to send large numbers of students abroad are increasingly also becoming recipients

of international students, while the growth of education 'hubs' in recent years in the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere is also providing new destination options for mobile students" (p. 13). All of these emphasize how studying abroad has not only led to an increasing circularity of students in search of access to high-quality education but has also become a competitive economic venture for destination countries.

Over the years, studies have discussed the determinants of international student mobility flows around the world, most notably, economic, educational and political factors (DeVoretz, 2006; Agasisti and Dal Bianco, 2007; Hao, 2013; OECD, 2021). As discussed in these studies, increasing need of knowledge-based and innovation-driven economies; quality of the higher education institutions and availability of financial aid as well as government policies that encourage cross-border mobility for education ((DeVoretz, 2006; Hao, 2013) and more recently, technological (i.e., the spread of the Internet and social media) and cultural factors (i.e., use of English as a common working and teaching language) (OECD, 214) have continued to serve as the driver for international student mobility.

In US institutions specifically, there is a consistent influx of international students as these institutions seek to increase revenue and ensure diversity. The US is one of the major destinations of choice, especially in science and technology at master's and doctoral education levels (National Research Council, 2005; De Wit et al., 2012). Mallett, Haan and Habib (2016) state that "as far back as 2012, eighty-four (84) percent of US institutions of higher education perceived a growth in internationalization efforts at their institutions" (118). Although the US did not witness growth in foreign student population until late 19th century due to restrictive immigration laws (Bevis and Lucas, 2007), US

immigration laws and educational policies became less restrictive in the 20th century, thereby encouraging more international students to choose the US as the destination for their higher education pursuit[2]. The EducationUSA, for instance, is a US institutional network of over 430 international student advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories responsible for promoting higher education to students around the world in efforts to help US higher education community meet their recruitment and internationalization goals (EducationUSA, n.d.).

A combination of institutional and external factors has shaped the internationalization agenda, especially in the US. Choudaha (2017) identifies three major waves of international student mobility into the US to show that "while interest for gaining global educational experiences remains strong, the needs and profile of students continue to change" (p. 831). According to Choudada, the first wave is characterized by "the increasing demand for highly skilled talent for economic and technological development" (p. 826). During this period, enrolment of international students increased in fields such as science, technology, and engineering as destination institutions readily provide funding in these areas of study.

The second wave of international student mobility was shaped by the global financial recession of 2008. During this period, institutions experienced severe budget cuts, and scholarship funding was limited. As a result, many institutions expanded

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[2] Nevertheless, events such as the 9/11 attacks and President Trump's Administration Executive Order on Travel Ban, popularly known as the 'Muslim Ban' in 2017 have led to more restricted visa issuance policies and ultimately precipitated a temporary decline in international student enrollment in the US.

enrolment for self-funded international students, which McNamara (2018) argues was brought about by higher education's turn to corporate, revenue-driven logics. The third wave is shaped by a combination of recent trends in the US economic and political climate which have led to "demographic shifts and the emergence of new destinations for international students" as well as "increasing expectation of career and employability outcomes among international students" (pp. 830-831).

A crucial event not mentioned in this period but equally important to the third wave is the COVID-19 pandemic which considerably restricted cross-border movements. The reality of the ongoing pandemic has had considerable implications for international student mobility as destination countries are either just partially reopening their borders or struggling with unstable regulations for the safe enrolment of international students. Following Choudada's conclusion, however, it is imperative to focus on the changing dynamics of international student mobility in the US so that institutions innovate ways to not only grow international student enrollment but also balance it with corresponding support services that advance student success.

The mobility of international students across borders has emerged as an important field of study in writing studies specifically in efforts to address issues related to academic preparedness and support services for international students. These additional support services ranged from academic services like language and writing support to non-academic services like career and counseling (Heng, 2018, 2019; Sharma, 2018). Focusing specifically on international graduate students, Sharma explains that certain challenges are "unique or more intense" (p. 38) for this category of students, and necessary interventions are needed to improve practices and policies related to the needs

of international students. Some of these challenges identified by Sharma include ideological differences among disciplines that have a serious impact on international students; the tendency to focus on the most visible challenge such as language proficiency while ignoring the broader context of students' academic and sociocultural adaptation; and misalignment between how conventional writing programs support them and their complex writing needs (p. 38).

Although Heng (2019) cautions against homogenizing the experience of international students in the US, some of his study's findings provide relevant interventions to the challenges highlighted by Sharma above. For instance, faculty members can design culturally responsive pedagogies to enhance both the faculty member and student experiences; career guidance offices can collaborate with international student offices to offer more career counseling support; or faculty members can work with staff from writing centers to share their observations about how student background influence writing styles.

Since my study is focused on writing practices and administration, more attention is given to the differences in language practices and sociocultural identities that impact the academic adaptation and success of international graduate students in US institutions. You (2018) approaches international students' academic adaptation and success from a transnational writing education perspective, focusing on the need for cross-border practice, space, identity, and disposition in writing education (2).

(International) Graduate Student Writing: Expectations and Interventions

Writing is central to the nature and purpose of graduate education and to student progress toward the degree and beyond (Curry, 2016, p. 80). This suggests that one of the main areas of expertise graduate students are expected to possess (and continue to refine) is the ability to write for academic or professional purposes. The assumption is that graduate students must have undergone a series of writing practices before beginning graduate school and as such "figured out everything they need to know about writing" (Williams, 2018, p. 105). Put differently, graduate students are expected to have learned basic writing skills during their high school and undergraduate years.

Regardless of previous training, however, academic writing continues to present daunting issues to a variety of writers. Some of these issues are accessing the codes of the discourse community; deciding when to attribute a word or an idea to another writer, and when not; writing with authority; how to quantify knowledge claims and how to craft an appropriate identity that appeals to the audience among others (Starke-Meyerring, 2011; Curry, 2016; Phillips, 2017). A more rigorous concern for graduate students is establishing an identity that position them as possessing sophisticated skills in academic writing. This concern is necessitated by the fact that graduate student writing presents a gateway through which graduate students develop and display an identity as scholar or researcher; which Curry (2016) describes as a means of "disciplinary becoming" (see also Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Starke-Meyerring, 2011; Swales and Feak, 2012). Aitchison and Lee (2006) opine that graduate students are often concerned with the complexity of writing process, which includes "questioning, thinking, learning, knowing, engaging, positioning, becoming and writing" (p. 268). In terms of the complexity of the writing

process for graduate students, Cox (2018) also adds that "the stakes of graduate writing are high" (p. 156). As she rightly posits, crafting effective graduate-level writing means "knowing how to effectively use mentor texts during writing process, construct writer-responsible texts, and use stance-talking language" (p. 156); all of which adds to the complexities prevalent in academic writing at the graduate level.

However, nothing seems to prepare this group of students for this unexpected change (and need to adapt) to their writing style and tone. Curry affirms that "not all students, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds have been asked to produce certain genres before reaching graduate school" (p. 80). As a result, many graduate students are faced with feelings of strangeness, crises of confidence, conflicts of identity and the need to discover the rules of an unfamiliar world (Starke-Meyerring, 2011; Williams, 2018). These complexities are warranted by the academic conventions of graduate school that reshape the student's understanding of self from consumer to producer of knowledge; from novice to disciplinary experts; and from student to author (Aitchison and Lee, 2006; Park and de Costa, 2015). Therefore, the expectation is for graduate students to learn to create a professional academic writing persona, take an authorial voice/stance, which Swales and Feak (2012) describe as creating in writing a credible image as a competent member of your chosen discipline" (p. 1).

An attempt to craft in writing this credible image of a scholar presents a daunting challenge for most international students who encounter difficulty in adjusting their practices on multiple dimensions: linguistic, rhetorical and cultural (Curry, p. 86). Most international multilingual graduate writers who come to the US for their studies have learned the English language and writing practices in their home countries but have great

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difficulty expressing their ideas in English with the clarity needed to succeed in a graduate program. Although international multilingual graduate students were expected to complete written assignments by following the rules of the academic community, as were expected of domestic graduate students (Park and de Costa, 2015), the difference between the rhetorical traditions informs how writers write, and complicates the writing challenge for international multilingual graduate students.

Programmatic interventions

As it is all but clear that graduate students generally, and international multilingual graduate writers specifically, continue to struggle with graduate-level writing, therefore, writing instructors, graduate advisors and administrators should take on the responsibility to develop necessary support mechanisms for these students. Extant studies have focused on how graduate writers can be supported either by their faculty mentors/advisors specifically (Aitchison and Lee, 2006; Ross et. al, 2011; Casanave, 2016; Sharma, 2018) or by the institution broadly (Rose and McClafferty, 2001; Gillespie, 2007; Snively, 2008; Phillips 2016). Ross et. al report that although advisors do not necessarily "know how to teach writing skills" (p. 14), most graduate students in their study aver that their advisors play a crucial role in helping them develop academic writing, howbeit through non-specific writing, and feedback on drafts (19). Other programmatic interventions are geared towards supporting graduate student writing by developing an institution-wide writing support curriculum/structure.

Rose and McClafferty (2001) describe a graduate-level writing course targeted at all students at UCLA. In their article, they discuss the possibilities of teaching writing in

graduate education, detailing their experience as instructors of a graduate writing course. Reviewing data collected through recorded classroom discussions, written evaluations of the writing course and participant observations, Rose and McClafferty discover that a targeted graduate-level writing course is beneficial both to the students and their program. From their study, Rose and McClafferty find out that students learned the interrelation of formal and rhetorical elements of writing; understood writing not only as craftwork but also as a method of inquiry. Likewise, students gained a better understanding of the role of the audience; as well as how writing affords them multiple identities such as critic and scholar. Sundstrom (2016) however provides a cautionary tale regarding barriers to institution-wide graduate writing instruction. According to her, these issues include lack of vision, unrealistic expectations from departments/advisors to help the students, budgetary constraints, as well as conflicting academic cultures (pp. 200-202). These issues are evidence that emphasizes the need to develop more stable institutional structures to facilitate institution-wide support for graduate student writing.

One of the institutional structures that has proven reliable in supporting graduate students is the writing center. The writing center has become increasingly relevant as an institutional space designed to provide support services not only to undergraduates but also to graduate students. As noted by Phillips (2016; 2017) however, attention to the specialized needs of graduate students was scant until around 2007 because of the assumption that both graduate students and undergraduates have similar writing concerns and tutors (mostly undergraduates) are well-trained to provide the necessary support (p. 160). Over the years, more studies have paid attention to the development of dedicated graduate writing centers that support graduate students (Gillespie, 2007; Phillips, 2016).

According to Phillips, graduate writing centers are important because of the differences in "the role of writing for graduates versus undergraduates as well as differences in the complexity of their respective writing tasks" (p. 160).

Similarly, Gillespie describes the creation of the Graduate Writing Consultant initiative as one other writing support program designed by the writing center to help writers succeed. In this program, graduate students from diverse disciplines are selected through a process of collaboration between the programs, the graduate school, and the writing center. These selected students are then trained to work with their colleagues on writing in specialized genres for their disciplines (p. 2). More recently, a proposal for institutionalizing multilingual writing centers was forwarded by Lape (2020) to cater to the plurality of writers that seek writing support in the writing center. Lape emphasizes that multilingual writing centers are necessary to "build bridges to a multicultural and multilingual world" but to also serve as "sites where students develop intercultural competence and linguistic awareness" (p. 23). Put together, all of these are initiatives institutionally developed by writing centers to support graduate students to become effective in producing graduate-level writing.

As research has shown, international students often visit the writing center for a variety of reasons; some visit because they or their instructors perceive that they need to improve their writing skills and/or their second language ability; others visit to seek help with the US cultural/rhetorical traditions of writing (Williams, 2002; Brauer, 2009; Simpson 2018). Detailing the distinct needs of multilingual graduate writers, Simpson (2018) notes that writing tutors should focus more on the complexities of multilingual graduate students' linguistic proficiency, cultural views of authority as well as the

conundrum of plagiarism. Sharma (2018) avers that "educational and leadership-driven approaches are found to be less prone to inadvertently reinforcing ideologies about language and writing, especially in relation to international students" (p. 74). Following this, the writing center—an institutional establishment that provides writing education (Bouquet and Lerner 2008)—is well positioned to support international graduate writers in navigating their unique writing needs. Even though writing tutors may not know the details of the tradition that has influenced an international graduate writer throughout their writing development, in listening to learn from such an international writer, the tutor can develop expertise in working with them (Bruce, 2009). Brauer also adds that writing tutors need to show during the tutoring session that "we acknowledge and honor the existence of those cultural roots" and ways of writing as well as composing text in a language foreign to the international graduate writer "does not mean having to give up one's native writing traditions" (p. 190).

Furthermore, Sharma (2018) explains that institutional writing support that fosters agency tends to encourage the international multilingual graduate student to become an effective writer. Drawing on the concept of agency, Sharma explains that writing support programs that best serve international multilingual graduate writers are those that "provide them with information, opportunity and skills for finding and using support and resources" (p. 127). This approach is necessary because, as Sharma finds out, "international students generally are able to express their personal agency when they can actively negotiate their positions in particular contexts" (127). Hence the more writing professionals facilitate international multilingual graduate students' ability to explore and exploit support and resources, the better the support. Additionally, Cirillo-McCarthy, Del

Russo & Leahy (2016) affirm the need for a holistic multilevel effort to reevaluate, reframe and reimagine writing centers' approach to working with international multilingual graduate writers, specifically from a deficit to a positive view. To do this, the authors note that writing administrators and tutors should rethink and reframe their mission statements, discussions around the hierarchical structure of writing concerns, and the development of a writer's autonomy if they are to foster an inclusive environment for international multilingual graduate writers (p. 69).

In essence, the discussion here has shown that the writing support needs of graduate students, particularly international multilingual graduate writers are often ignored or limited because they are already assumed to be experts in their fields' genre and disciplinary conventions. Existing studies have argued that many graduate writers do not receive the mentoring and support necessary to access this academic writing genre (Micciche and Carr, 2011; Cirillo-McCarthy, Del Russo & Leahy, 2016). More so, this assumption about writing expertise complicates the graduate writing experience for many international students who not only need writing support but also education about writing practices in the US and in varied contexts. My study provides a timely intervention by focusing on writing support provided by an institutional structure such as writing centers as well as how tutors and administrators navigate such support in their work with international graduate writers by leveraging the transnational writing orientations possessed by this group of writers. As Bruce (2009) recommends, my research focuses on how writing center tutoring and teaching practices can best serve our international multilingual graduate students as findings will engender a reformulation of instructional

practices to appropriately work with and better educate international graduate students about institutional writing expectations and support.

Furthermore, in her 2017 study, Phillips examined the writing center experiences of two international multilingual graduate writers to find out the necessary writing support that should be offered as their disciplinary identities shifted. Her study reveals that as the writers move from identifying as novice writers to disciplinary experts, developing their scholarly identities in writing practices, the kind of writing support they seemed to need also shifted. Basically, these writers moved from needing support with vocabulary, stance, and basic genre knowledge among others, to needing support beyond writing, essentially support on how to become successful scholars who can meaningfully contribute to their fields through original research. Phillips concludes that "these shifting needs then suggest potential changes on the part of writing centers," some of which include "making discipline-informed feedback available in any way possible and supporting writers' language growth and development of academic style" (44). I consider Phillips' (2017) study to be a very crucial foundation for my study which seeks to explore the narratives of international multilingual graduate writers regarding how to welcome and engage the transnational writing assets they bring to us as writing educators. Therefore, considering the largely minimal research available to inform the growing support for (international) multilingual graduate students in writing studies, therefore, my research extends Phillips' findings with a major intervention on how writing centers can better support international multilingual graduate writers by learning about and from their narratives of actual experience with writing instructions. In the next section, I describe

the theory of transnational writing education and its interventions in the field of writing studies.

Overview of Transnational Writing Framework

In light of our changing world and the global turn, new frameworks for understanding the treatment of nation-states have been identified. In a recent publication, Canagarajah (2020) explains that the "contemporary developments in globalization have reminded us that our social relations and identification practices transcend the nation-state" (p. 5). Such transcendence is described from a spatial perspective in that the boundaries that limit our social practices are exceeded through a transnational frame. As Canagarajah examines further, this transnational frame should be understood in terms of 'spaces' rather than 'places' (p. 5). As opposed to a physical place that may be "bound by the laws and policies of the nation-state," transnationalism is a "virtual, social, constructed and emergent space" (5).

Although Hesford (2006) does not apparently approach the concept of transnational from a spatial perspective, his submission identifies one of the effectual activities in this 'virtual' space. Specifically, he notes that the transnational space "tie people and places together across borders to create opportunities to craft both effective analysis, ethical responses and political opposition to the material ramifications of globalized power" (521). In essence, the fruits of globalization such as migration and technology have compressed our understanding of social relations to transcend beyond legitimate boundaries of physical locations into a negotiated space that has been

developed to accommodate this change in social relations, this being a manifestation of transnationalism.

You (2018) adopts this perspective of transcendence to international students' academic adaptation and success, focusing on the need for cross-border practice, space, identity, and disposition in writing education (2). You defines transnational writing education as "efforts made to enable students to recognize, negotiate with, deconstruct, and transcend national, ethnic, and racial boundaries in the teaching of writing, ultimately cultivating flexible and responsible global citizens" (p. 2). According to him, the migration of people and literacy practices in globalized setting provides a way to "understand, cross and sometimes transcend the boundaries that have circumvented students' reading and writing" (p. 5). These boundaries, particularly have implications for how international students assess their understanding of academic performance, writing identities and other social relations. Heng's (2018) study also shows that finding ways to transcend these boundaries will improve intercultural and intellectual understanding between international students and both local students and faculty members in terms of their perceptions of, provisions for, and relations with these international students.

Furthermore, You characterizes the transcendence as a move toward a transnational turn in writing education, noting that such a move "enables the teachers and students to construct identities beyond territorialized lingua-cultural norms" (8). There are key constructs highlighted as paramount to a transnational writing education; they are translingualism, transculturalism and cosmopolitanism/interculturalism (You, 2). While translingualism and transculturalism promote a fluid and hybrid boundary among lingua-cultural practices and across modes of representation in human communication,

cosmopolitanism or interculturalism depicts a cross-border disposition to be inculcated in teachers and students (4-6). A transnational perspective thus enables us to "perceive human connectedness as being deeply underpinned in the various accents, styles, and uses of language in everyday life and literary culture" (You, 6). Hence, instead of the difficulties experienced by international students in their negotiation of monolingual practices, their linguistic and cultural differences should be approached as matters to be respected and appreciated (Horner and Trimbur, 2002; Flower, 2004; You, 2018).

My study borrows insights from You's theory of transnational writing to articulate what the intersections of language practices, cultural background, and rhetorical orientation of international multilingual graduate writers mean for their adaptation to and success in the US academic writing culture. Moreover, the transnational writing framework is adopted in this study because its focus is not limited to language support for international graduate writers but is extended to incorporate holistic writing support that considers an awareness of linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences. Although graduate students are tasked to produce academic writing in standard English, which invariably creates an imagined Anglo-American audience with specific rhetorical expectations (Schreiber, 2018), the goal of a transnational writing framework is to help writing instructors understand the need to both acknowledge the ideology of dominant standard language to writers and respond to the writers' writing practices that transgress linguistic, cultural and rhetorical boundaries.

As Schreiber explains further, transnational writing pedagogy does not hold back the codes of power (standard academic English) from students who need or want them but rather interrogates the nature and origins of those codes. The author avers that as

writing instructors, "we need to break down for ourselves and for our students the myth of the monolingual audience—to recognize, deconstruct, and transcend monolingual assumptions and to view language standards as always negotiated, rather than fixed" (p. 246). Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur (2011) approach this negotiated language practice from a translingualism perspective and aver that transcending monolingual assumption means that difference in language is seen not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing nuances in writing, speaking, reading, and listening (303).

Following this perspective, international multilingual writers are often able to write themselves into a new intellectual and professional status, be hyperaware of the audience and articulate similarities and differences among writing styles when they are allowed to draw on their linguistic and cultural resources in writing (Leonard, 2013). Therefore, adopting a transnational writing framework, specifically the translingual and intercultural approaches, in this study ensures that I emphasize the implications of noticing and working with international multilingual graduate writers' prior linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural awareness during writing instruction/tutoring as they seek to navigate and write themselves into the writing tradition of US academic culture.

Furthermore, as international mobility of students has come to characterize the US higher education scene, scholarship has also continued to explore how students will increase their global awareness and intercultural competence critical for not only adapting to their new academic culture but also functioning in this interconnected world (Heng, 2018, You, 2018). Nevertheless, the field of writing studies has often paid negligible attention to understanding how this experience may shape their reading and

writing across languages and cultures (You, 12). The project I propose here aims to close this gap by grounding my research in these transnational constructs, mainly translingual and intercultural practices, as means to not only examine international graduate students' understanding and experience of differences in writing practices but also develop best practices that writing professionals can adopt for supporting and working with differences during writing instruction.

Transnational Dispositions in Rhetoric and Composition

Generally, scholarship in rhetoric and composition emphasizes the need to see the transnational perspective as an "active site of engagement" (517) as opposed to its mere conflation with globalization; reiterating Canagarajah's space-place distinction of transnationalism. Recognizing transnational practices as a site of engagement, thus, affords the field of rhetoric and composition/writing studies a lens for understanding the connection between the influence of the local and global forces of power, culture and language. You (2018) opines that in the field of composition/writing studies, transnational dispositions "enable the [writing] teachers and students to construct identities beyond territorialized lingua-cultural norms" (8). Likewise, Hesford (2006) affirms that this spatial framework for approaching transnational social interactions has broadened not only the notions of composing practices and critical literacies but also engender the formation of new critical frameworks that challenge the dialectic of recognition (namely the binary frames of subject/object, self/other, and Western/non-Western) that have long dominated the field of rhetoric and composition. (796-797).

Additionally, this understanding of transnationalism as sites of engagement engenders broader and more effective methodologies with which the field can critically examine the changing world of literacy practices. In essence, instead of the traditional thinking of literacy as located, the transnational work challenges the binary frames of subject/object, self/other and Western/non-Western as well as how the changing geopolitical arrangements continue to influence sociocultural engagements (Hesford, 2006; Dingo, Riedner & Wingard, 2013; Canagarajah, 2020). There have been calls for such sociocultural engagements in writing/composition instruction if we, as a field, are ever going to effectively achieve the goal to internationalize the teaching of writing (Schaub, 2003; Donahue, 2009; Thaiss et al. 2012).

Recent scholarship in the field of writing and composition studies has begun to pay keen attention to how the field can expand its horizon in terms of space and time, thereby making writing classrooms a site of global engagements. Donahue (2009) had earlier recommended that the field open up "our understanding about what is happening elsewhere to adapt, resituate and decenter our contexts" (215). This position is predicated on the fact "many of US' composition theories and conceptualizations have already been grounded over decades and 'internationalized,' in the works of scholarly authors from other countries from a variety of fields other than is designated as 'composition'" (223). But the inability of US scholars to effectively collaborate on or 'hear' work across borders creates blind spots impeding the effective discovery of differences. In a later publication, Donahue (2016) suggests a "'trans-d' rather than 'compared'' (149) approach to engaging across borders. According to her, natural human instinct when it encounters new contexts or ways of thinking would want to compare to note differences

or even what is lacking (149). However, adopting a 'trans-d' approach allows writing scholars a rhetorical flexibility in their understanding of writing and writing research outside their usual context. This approach is a move towards opening up our deep understanding as the world shifts and slips.

Basically, opening up our understanding means adopting a transnational disposition that continues to influence our engagements with scholars, students and writers from other parts of the world. A transnational disposition to writing practices, Martins (2015) explains, considers "activities, programs and institutions that involve students and instructor/faculty from two or more countries working together and highlights the situated practices of such efforts" (2). By working together, each party is able to understand the influences that shaped their way of thinking and writing.

Creating a Transnational Space in the Writing Center

The writing center is an ideal place to address the writing concerns and challenges of a variety of writers, mostly because tutors are trained to meet the writers where they are in terms of language, style and rhetorical practices. In his oft-cited essay, North (1984) emphasizes that the paramount role of writing centers is to "make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction" (438). Although North's idea would later be challenged, revisited, and rethought in efforts to correct its limiting perspective to writing center work and scholarship (North, 1994; Bouquet and Lerner, 2008), the educational approach to writing instruction articulated earlier continues to resonate among writing (center) professionals. Basically, as Gillespie, Gillam, Brown and Stay (2002) prefaced in their edited collection on *Writing Center Research*, writing

centers have increasingly become both sites of writing instruction and research. (pp. xii-xiii). As sites of instruction and engagement, writing centers necessarily offer writing support and feedback in response to the specific needs and circumstances of writers on their writing. As research sites, writing centers allow for knowledge-making by a community in a collaborative way (North, 1984; Gillespie, 2002).

This consideration of writing centers as research sites can be traced to North's (1984) charge that writing center professionals should invest in research practices that are "neither simple nor integrated…and works that test writing center assumptions" (29-30). North states that to do this kind of work, writing center researchers "will need, as with the case studies, to create a methodology…" in an effort to both "improve practice and a way to defend that practice to a skeptical audience" (30-33). Since then, scholars have continued to recognize the writing center as a research site for knowledge-making. Gillespie (2002), for instance, remarks that the writing center is "beyond the house lore…(but) moves from lore to theory to research question and back to lore again" (50). This constant questioning of our practice, Gillespie explains, ensures that the knowledge made in the writing center is accessible and has implications not only for the "survival of the writing center community but also to the larger community of learning, to the community of rhetoric and composition as well as to the community of learning centers" (50).

Writing center scholarship continues to respond to calls to both research and critique the everyday practice in the center. These studies have focused on interactions among writers, tutors and administrators (Shamoon and Burns, 1995; Carino, 2003; Thompson, 2009; Olson, 2013) as well as writing center's interaction with other

instructional programs and structures (Bannister-Wills, 1984; Gillespie, 2009; Pemberton, 2018). These scholarly conversations on writing center practices have, therefore, offered a critical lens for surveying the range of work done in the center as well as for approaching the center as a transnational space for knowledge making.

Writing center scholarship has always paid attention to the influences of language and cultural difference among native and non-native English speakers/tutors in the writing center, however, much of this discussion has taken the 'comparative' route instead of a trans-d route. (Severino, 1993 Leki, 2001; Thonus, 2004; Simpson, 2018). Focusing on multilingual graduate writers, Simpson avers that "not only must writing center professionals understand the demographics and career goals and trajectories of multilingual graduate students using the center, but they must also account for their distinct linguistic and writing needs" (p. 69). Simpson's explanation reaffirms Olson's (2013) earlier submission that for writing centers to effectively serve international multilingual writers, writing center professionals must first reexamine what they think they know about multilingual writers and how this category of writers deploys their linguistic and cultural knowledge in writing.

More recently, Abraham and Kedley (2021) propose a more radical approach to working with differences in the writing center. In their study which focuses on a community-based writing center, they put forward a translanguaging approach as a means of working with multilingual students who attend community-based writing centers. Abraham and Kedley recommend that center's actors who are not multilingual should learn about translanguaging practices… or participate with community members doing language every day, from shopping at stores to attending local religious services" (64).

All of these efforts show the varied perspectives taken by writing center professionals and research in rethinking difference from a 'trans-d' perspective, specifically exploring the writing center as a contact zone as well as sites of engagement across cultures (Severino, 2002; Lape, 2020; Aksakalova, 2021).

Carol Severino applied both Pratt's concept of contact zones and Anzaldua's concept of borderlands to explain how writing centers are interdisciplinary spaces where "diverse cultures, languages, literacies, and discourses meet, clash, and grapple with each other'" (231). In Olga Aksakalova's (2021) account, all forms of communication in her writing center occur in more than one language and cut across different cultures. She termed this a transatlantic disposition. This disposition extends Donahue's trans-d space wherein engagements across cultures and languages are fluid, situated and negotiated. According to Aksakalova, a transatlantic writing center adopts the transnational orientation in its conception and establishment. Here, "services are offered in several languages… all agents of writing center work are placed into *linguistic* and *cultural* borderlands, as it destabilizes the concept of a dominant language and culture" (69).

Transnational Agents in the Writing Center

As stated earlier in this chapter, writing centers offer support and feedback to writers who bring in specific concerns about papers and writing. Both the writer and the tutor work together as credible agents in the writing center space to ensure meaningful interaction and successful tutoring. Writing centers are a distinct site where transnational negotiations and multi-level meaning-making activities occur among people who often possess different writing, rhetorical and cultural experiences. Transnational agents in the

writing center are both those who possess transnational identities, that is, the writers who are non-native and those who work with these non-native writers to become better writers. In essence, those referred to as transnational agents are the international multilingual graduate students and the writing consultants who engage each other in the writing center; a transnational space.

Noteworthy is the fact that international multilingual graduate writers who come to writing centers do not have a monolithic profile. They come with a variety of writing assets, including linguistic, cultural and rhetorical assets. Studies have shown that these international multilingual graduate writers come to the writing center because of their expectations—which they hope match with what the tutor would offer them. Similarly, their perception of the usefulness of (as well as motivation to return to) the writing center is largely dependent on how much they perceived that the success (or otherwise) of the tutorial relates to their writing assets.

In 1993, Judith Powers detailed reasons for rethinking how tutors conference with ESL writers in the writing center. She critiqued the notion that ESL writers only need writing tutors to serve as 'cultural informants' rather than 'collaborators' during tutoring sessions. Instead, she affirms that writing tutors can better work with international multilingual writers to develop their writing in English only if "we understand what they bring to the writing center conference and allow that perspective to determine our conferencing strategies" (46). Nakamaru (2010) also suggests that writing center tutors in US higher education should increasingly become more aware of the various ways language affects L2 writers' texts as that helps to reveal the nature of the strengths and weaknesses of the international multilingual writer.

In conclusion, international multilingual graduate writers are important transnational agents in the writing center because they can influence tutoring strategies through a perspective that transcends writing and rhetorical boundaries. Likewise, the writing consultant is also a critical agent because, being the direct recipient of this influence on tutoring strategies, they are able to interrogate, discourse and deconstruct the entrenched monolingual views of language standards.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the qualitative process for investigating the focus of this study. To

ensure the quality of the findings of this study, I ensured to address the theoretical lenses

that underpin certain decisions I made regarding methods of gathering and analyzing the

research data. To ethically recruit participants as well as to avoid misrepresentation of the

qualitative data collected from the study's participants among other considerations, I

realized the need to approach this research process both theoretically and systematically.

Therefore, in this chapter, I describe the methodology, methods, ethical considerations,

and positionality. First, I explain the underlying theoretical perspective that informs my

choice of research methods. Then, I examine my approach to qualitative research

methods that I have utilized in this study, including recorded consultations, in-depth

interviews, and focus group discussions. Next, I expound on the theoretical framework

adopted for this study namely, the transnational writing framework and rhetorical

empathy. Lastly, I briefly discuss ethical considerations and my research positionality.

Broadly described, research methodology is the underlying theory and analysis of

how research does and should proceed (Kirsch and Sullivan, 1992). It is an approach that

specifies how research questions should be asked and answered, including worldview

considerations, general preferences for designs, sampling logic, data collection and

analytical strategies, guidelines for making inferences, and the criteria for assessing and

improving quality (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, 27). In conceiving how this present study would proceed in terms of research questions and other considerations, I adopted a mix of methodological approaches, including a qualitative methodological approach and a text analysis approach. These multiple methodologies not only enabled me to frame my research questions and ways to answer them but to also respond to Riazi et al.'s (2018) call that writing research on non-native English speakers use integrated research methodologies.

Qualitative research, Creswell (1998) explains, is an inquiry process of understanding social or human relations and problems. Here, the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. Moreover, qualitative research can provide a nuanced understanding of complicated phenomena (Creswell,1998; Wu, Wyant and Fraser, 2016). Wu, Wyant and Fraser (2016) further argue that researchers who use qualitative methods often seek to gain insight into the ways in which behavior, beliefs, customs, and cultures interact. This conceptualization holds true for understanding the negotiated practices apparent in how writing tutors interact and work with the writing assets that international multilingual graduate writers bring to the center. For my project which seeks an in-depth and detailed understanding of these negotiated practices, I adopted qualitative research methods in my research investigation. Patton (2002) avers that qualitative methods typically "produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases to increase the depth of understanding of the cases and situations studied" (p. 14). Hence, qualitative methodology as adopted in this study

helped to uncover the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, lived experiences, and writing culture of my research participants in a naturalistic manner.

This eclectic mix of methodological approaches was suitable for my study which takes a transnational perspective to exploring both narratives about how writing consultants negotiate writing differences in working with international multilingual graduate writers and discursive manifestations of these differences in their writing and during tutorial conversations. More specifically, these methodological approaches provided me with the necessary tools for not only theorizing new ways of imagining our work with international multilingual graduate writers but also developing interventions whose application is not limited to writing center instructors but extended to writing education within and outside the classroom.

Research Methods

This section introduces the methods for my research. I describe my research site, justifying the choice of the writing center as the research site. Also, I describe my study's participants and recruitment strategies, methods of data collection and analysis as well as ethical concerns. Smagorinsky (2008) has noted that the Method section is the epicenter of any research because of the alignment it provides in terms of how research questions are answered, how the study's theory is framed as well as how results are rendered. The method section, Smagorinsky continues, is crucial to research as it can serve as the point of origin for the ways in which the other sections of the manuscript find their thrust and organization as to make apparent the theoretical perspective adopted in the study (407-

408). Hence, I present this information about my research methods here to discuss the alignment in how I conduct my research, interpret, and write the results.

Research Site, Participants and Design

The site for this study is the University Writing Center at the University of Louisville. The writing center is generally regarded as a setting for writing education both in training new writing tutors to work with a variety of writers as well as in helping writers become better at writing. As a setting that promotes writing education, the writing center serves as a viable site for understanding the framework for working with international multilingual graduate writers for multiple reasons. First, research has called for more attention to writing centers as research sites to investigate the complexities of knowledge-making endeavors in the center and its attendant impact outside the center (Gillespie, 2002; Brady, Singh-Corcoran and Holsinger, 2018).

In addition, the writing center's philosophy focuses on valuing the writer's learning in a one-on-one situation as it helps to meet the writer where they are in terms of their expertise in writing practices. Unlike the classroom setting therefore, the writing center as a site of research affords the researcher more nuanced perspectives on what not only the setting of writing instruction but also the lived experiences of tutors and writers (Lerner, 2002; Bruce, 2009) mean for fostering writing education within and beyond the context of the writing center.

Before seeking volunteers from my participants, I went through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process to ascertain the protocol and ethical considerations necessary for working with human research participants in my field. After the IRB

approval was granted, I started participant recruitment at the writing center site both for the writing tutors and the international multilingual graduate writers who use the writing center and the writing tutors who work with these writers.

<u>Group 1: International Multilingual Graduate Students</u>

The first group of research participants is international multilingual graduate writers who come to the writing center to seek help with their writing. Studies have shown that many international students frequently visit the writing center for two reasons: either because they or their instructors perceive that they need to improve their writing skills or because of their second language ability (Williams, 2002; Shapiro, Farrelly and Tomas, 2014). (International) graduate writers are considered in this study because, unlike undergraduate writers whose curriculum includes academic writing instruction, graduate students, both domestic and international are not formally educated on academic and research writing practice at any point during their graduate education career. Moreover, like I have pointed out earlier in my literature review, the peculiarities of the US rhetorical tradition of academic writing bring about more confusion for international graduate writers; hence the need to study and develop necessary interventions that promote transnational writing practices.

The group of international multilingual graduate writers for this study was recruited from different graduate programs at the University of Louisville to afford the study a large pool of perspectives on the writing assets possessed by these participants and the impacts of the assets on their writing practices. I emailed the Listserv of the University of Louisville's International Student Scholars explaining the nature and focus

of my research as well as how they are required to engage with the research process in terms of consent and time commitment. I also designed informational fliers and shared them with writers who identify as international multilingual graduate writers. The flyer included the researcher's name and contact information, the purpose of the study, the role of the participants, and the participant's compensation. The fliers were shared electronically on the University of Louisville's International Students and Scholars Listserv multiple times to reach a good population of the international multilingual graduate student community on the University of Louisville campus. Likewise, the fliers were made available at the front desk of the University Writing Center to advertise the research study to international multilingual graduate writers who come to the writing center. Additionally, information about the study was shared by the researcher through word of mouth. I shared information about participant recruitment at gatherings of fellow international multilingual graduate students.

After about five (5) international multilingual graduate writers had been recruited I emailed them an electronic copy of the consent document. In the email, the process of informed consent was explained by me. After the consent forms were signed, I followed up with details of the data collection process. I sent out an email indicating the consultation session to record, and time options to set up the interview. Below is an excerpt from the email I sent to them:

> I am writing to let you know about a research study that examines
> how language and cultural differences of international multilingual
> graduate students are mobilized and leveraged during writing
> center consultations. My aim is to explicate new methods and

theories to improve the teaching of writing. This study is being

conducted at the University of Louisville by Olalekan Adepoju

under the direction of Dr. Bronwyn Williams. This investigation

will involve a video recording of your writing center session as

well as a recorded interview with the researcher to ask about your

experience for 20-30 minutes. The researcher will also collect texts

you work on during the observation. Following the interview, the

investigator will transcribe the interactions and code all identifiable

information of both the research participants and the researcher.

This transcript will then be coded to identify themes for how

international multilingual graduate writers describe their

experience of the writing center consultations.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may choose

not to take part at all and if you decide to be in this study, you may

stop taking part at any time. Participants will be asked to sign a

form consenting to their understanding of the project and their

participation in the study. During the interview, you may decline to

answer any of the questions at any time if the questions make you

uncomfortable. Once the meeting has ended, your active

participation in the study will likewise end.

Before the initial observation is conducted, informed consent was again explained, and a

copy of the signed consent forms was returned to the participants. To better understand

how these participants perceive themselves as writers, it is necessary to note that my

study's participants come from different regions of the world, including Africa, South America, and Asia. However, despite representing different nationalities, talking with the participants during interviews reveal that these group international multilingual graduate writers share commonalities in terms of their understanding of what constitutes their strength and weakness in writing. Nevertheless, the difference identified, which also reinforces the goal of this research, was regarding how they talk about themselves as writers, especially how they describe their strengths and weaknesses as writing assets.

Below is the demographic information that summarizes the profiles of the international multilingual graduate writers who participated in my study.

Name	Gender	Country of Origin	Academic Program	Nature of the English Language Use
Yohimar	Male	Venezuelan	Language Literacy, Literacy Cultures and Communities	Non-native speaker
G-code	Male	Nigeria	Computer Science	Non-native speaker
Sadek	Male	Bangladesh	Entrepreneurship	Non-native speaker
Gan	Male	China	Applied and Industrial Mathematics	Non-native speaker
Sato	Female	Brazil	Social Work	Non-native speaker

Table 1: Demographic information of international multilingual graduate writers

Yohimar is a Venezuelan Ph.D. student in the languages and curriculum instruction program in the College of Education, Language Literacy, Literacy Cultures and Communities. He has been in the U.S. for six years. He was a college professor in Venezuela, where Spanish was the predominant language. On coming to the U.S., he had to learn to write academically in English. He describes his writing style as a concurrent process of reading and writing.

G-code is from Nigeria. He is a computer science and engineering Ph.D. candidate. As a computer scientist, he was not exposed to academic writing as they mostly write computer programming codes. G-code's first exposure to academic writing was in a business writing course. He defines his writing style as storytelling.

Sadek is from Bangladesh. Before coming to the U.S., he worked professionally in Bangladesh, India, and China for ten years before joining the Ph.D. program. He is an Entrepreneurship Ph.D. student at the College of Business. Sadek believes he needs to write better because he makes a lot of grammatical errors, but working with the writing center has helped.

Gan is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in Applied and industrial mathematics. He is from China. Gan sees himself as more of a creative or impulsive writer. He writes by trying to imitate a similar writing style or framework.

Sato is from the Amazon North of Brazil. She is a Social Work PhD student. Sato acknowledges that English writing is more difficult for her due to some factors. Besides English not being her first language, she made a switch from Business to Social Work.

This switch posed some difficulties with learning academic writing in English and the terms in her new career.

Group 2: Writing Center consultants

The second group of research participants is writing tutors who serve the needs and concerns of these international multilingual graduate writers. The writing tutors are graduate students in the University of Louisville's English Department who have been trained on writing center theory and practice—a graduate-level course that introduces and equips the writing tutors with the necessary pedagogical foundation and strategies to effectively work with writers. The following is a summary of the profiles of the five (5) writing consultants who participated in this study:

Yuan is a master's student in the English department. He is from China and holds a bachelor's degree in English from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He worked at the University Writing Center as a writing consultant and uses his experiences as an international multilingual student to support writers' concerns on writing issues such as organization, thesis, and audience awareness.

Kylee is a Louisville native, and master's student interested in children's literature, American literature, and contemporary fiction. She completed her bachelor's degree in English at the University of Louisville in 2020. In her free time, Kylee enjoys reading for pleasure, cross-stitching, re-watching Parks and Recreation, and spending time with her dog, Merlin.

Eli is an M.A. student of English student at the University of Louisville. Eli graduated from Bellarmine University in 2019 with a Bachelor's in English and Minors in History and Peace Studies. During her time as an undergraduate, Eli worked in the Bellarmine University Writing Center as a Writing Center Consultant, Interim Writing Center Coordinator, and Assistant Director of the Writing Center. As an undergraduate, she also completed an Honors Thesis that investigated the ways in which identity is affected when a young person becomes a refugee.

Brice earned both his B.A. and M.A. in Applied Linguistics, which revealed a love for translingual literature. He also taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and Civics to refugees and secondary migrants for two years. He's fascinated by the intersection of linguistic and spatial identity.

Ben is a master's student in the English program at the University of Louisville. He is a native English speaker of the English language, and his interests are in Women's and Gender Studies. He worked as a peer support specialist.

This group of participants had been recruited on a voluntary basis. As the researcher and co-worker in the writing center, I made a presentation in one of their Writing Center Theory and Practice (ENGL 604) classes to orient them toward the objectives of my study, my methods and methodology as well as the group of participants in the study. After the explanation, I sought their participation in the research. After receiving approval from the IRB, I asked for volunteers among the writing tutors during the first couple of weeks of the Spring semester and communicate the following to them.

"I am interested in studying how a transnational writing

education can help foster language and cultural assets of

international multilingual graduate writers through

rhetorically empathetic writing instruction. Therefore, this

semester I am planning on doing a study where I will

record writing center consultations and have two 60-minute

recorded focus group discussions with writing tutors. If you

are interested in helping me with this research, I would

very much appreciate it. However, please do not feel any

pressure to take part. If you choose to take part in this

study, you have the option of having a pseudonym in the

final research to help ensure confidentiality. Also, if at any

time during the research, you decide you do not want to be

part of the study anymore, you can withdraw and no

research you were involved in will be used. Please let me

know if you have any questions. Thank you so much and I

look forward to your feedback."

The 5 writing consultants who volunteered to participate in this research are Ben, Eli,

Yuan, Kylee, and Brice. These participants belonged to the same cohort of students in the

English master's program at the University of Louisville. At the time of recruiting them

and collecting data for this research study, they were all in the first year of their program

and have both participated in numerous writing center pedagogy training and worked in

the Writing Center for at least a semester. Out of the 5 participants, only one (Yuan) is an

international graduate student (to whom the English language is non-native) while the other 4 participants are native English speakers. I should also note that for the purpose of this study, I observed consultations between writers who have worked together recurrently. For instance, prior to my study, Yohimar and Brice had always worked together recurrently on her writing projects; similarly, Sadek mostly made writing consultation appointments with Eli. Hence, I did not influence any of the consultations nor pair writers with writing consultants; instead, I was able to leverage the ongoing consultation relationship between both the writers and their respective consultants. While the focus group discussions with writing consultants focused primarily on their experience working with their respective writers over time, I also encouraged the writing consultants to reflect on other useful experiences of working with international multilingual graduate writers since they started working as writing consultants in the Writing Center.

The methods I used for data collection included observation of tutoring sessions, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The study data was collected from (five) 5 international multilingual graduate writer participants and five (5) writing consultant participants. The study data is divided into three categories:

Category 1: Non-participatory observation; in-depth interviews with participants (writing tutors and international multilingual graduate writers); textual artefacts

As a non-participatory observer, I videotaped writing consultations after necessary consent has been taken from both the writers and the tutors. At least, a session was recorded for each international multilingual graduate writer participant. In total, I

observed four (4) hours of writing consultations. Among other things, the video-recording method of data collection provides an avenue for observing more embodied actions as well as for its playback potential to revisit information repeatedly as desired. Owing to the fact that rhetorical empathy involves ways in which tutors try to best anticipate what communicative approach will be most effective, I believe video recording benefited this study. Mainly, it was helpful to study such anticipatory moves in form of silences, gazes and gestures, among other nuances that take place during conversations that might remain uncaptured by only having the audio available to me as a researcher.

Likewise, I took notes of some comments and questions that informed my in-depth interviews with my participants. I also gathered drafts the writers are working with the tutor to improve on to assess the writers' understanding of the kind of suggested revisions and examine textual features that motivate their approach to revisions from an intertextuality perspective (see below for a discussion of this analytic approach). Likewise, the collected textual document further enhanced my second phase of interviews. All of these were to determine how the writer and the tutors are negotiating differences as an asset to achieve successful writing practices.

Category 2: Follow-up interview with international multilingual graduate writers.

The follow-up interviews focused on discussing my observations from Category 1 processes. I engaged the writers in a 20–30-minute discussion on how they perceive the rhetorical, linguistic, and cultural differences in their writing and how these differences impact their conversations with their writing tutors. I discussed specific portions of the draft they worked on during the non-participatory observation in an effort to see if their

awareness of writing differences influences how they understand their consultation as well as how they approach future revisions. For this category of data collection, I collected a total of six (6) hours of interview data. The following is the loose set of questions I developed to guide the interview conversation:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. Where are you from and what program are you in?

2. Would you like to be identified by your real name or would you prefer a pseudonym?

3. How would you describe yourself as a writer and how you acquired your writing skills?

4. What kinds of writing have you done previously? How did you approach it?

5. What kind of writing do you do now and how are you approaching it? Could you describe if there is any difference in both experience?

6. Could you describe what you find particularly easy or challenging about the kind of writing you do now as a graduate student?

7. How did you know about the writing center?

8. Could you describe the overall experience you had during this consultation?

9. What were some of the most memorable parts and why?

10. How would you describe the way you felt coming into this consultation vs. how you felt after the appointment?

11. How would you describe the way your consultant responded to your questions and concerns?

12. How well do you feel like your consultant listened and were attentive to your needs?

13. To what extent did cultural differences influence your interaction with your consultant

14. To what extent did language differences influence your interaction with your consultant?

15. To what extent do you or your writing consultant understand these language and cultural differences as assets to facilitate during your writing consultation?

16. To what extent were your concerns addressed in the consultation irrespective of the differences you had to negotiate?

17. Is there something you would like to share that was not covered in the interview with regard to the theme that would be helpful for me to know?

Category 3: Focused group discussion with writing tutors.

Five (5) writing tutors volunteered to participate in this research study. To understand tutors' perspectives on working with international multilingual graduate writers in the writing center, I facilitated two (2) 60-minute focus group discussions with the five writing consultants, totaling two (2) hours of focus group discussion data collected. I sought comments from the tutors on how they perceive and work with the assets and resources that international multilingual graduate writers bring to the writing center as they hope to engender successful writing education. The first focus group occurred before their consultation with an international multilingual graduate writer. Another focus group took place after all recorded consultations have occurred.

To achieve the first focus group discussion, I emailed the consultants individually to collect possible times and days that might work best for them to meet for the discussion. I collated the days and time preferences and used those to schedule a time that works best for everyone. The first focus group discussion helped to introduce the tutors to theoretical orientations guiding the research such as transnational writing and rhetorical empathy and assess their knowledge, attitude, and strategies for working with writing differences in terms of rhetoric, language, and culture. The following are the questions that guided our conversation:

1. What is your general understanding of language and cultural differences? Why is it valuable to consider these during consultations?

2. How do you think empathy can be rhetorically enacted when negotiating language and cultural differences of writers?

3. To what extent do you see such rhetorical empathy being enacted in the University Writing Center? This could be a general culture or the way consultations are conducted.

4. Do you see rhetorical empathy as something you already enact in your own writing center consultations? If so, how? And if not, why not?

5. To what extent do you think intercultural awareness and language differences improve writing center consultations?

6. How helpful do you see rhetorical empathy as a framework for developing transnational writing practices in the writing center?

7. Is there something you would like to share that was not covered in the interview with regard to the theme that would be helpful for me to know?

After the first focus group discussion and the consultants have had more time to be more involved in the theoretical underpinnings of the research through formal and informal conversations (in the writing center's backroom—this is a common room where all the consultants hang out as they prepare for their consultations), I reached out to the consultants for a second focus group discussion. I followed a similar scheduling approach by emailing them to confirm a good time to meet. Our second focus group discussion was held on Microsoft Teams to accommodate participants' availability, especially since the group discussion occurred some weeks after the semester had ended. The goal of the second focus group discussion was to assess the extent to which tutors' understanding of working with differences have shifted as well as the values they think rhetorical empathy brings as a framework for developing transnational writing practices in the Writing Center.

The following are the questions that guided our conversation:

1. After having collaborated with me and your colleagues, are there any ways you see or understand rhetorical empathy differently? What is your general understanding of the concept now? What exactly do you see as its central values?

2. Are there any places during the consultation where either you or the writer could have enacted rhetorical empathy more? If so, where, and what do you imagine this might have done for the consultation?

3. To what extent do you see rhetorical empathy being enacted in the University Writing Center? This could be a general culture or the way consultations are conducted.

4. To what extent do you think intercultural awareness and language differences improve writing center consultations?

5. How helpful do you see rhetorical empathy as a framework for developing transnational writing practices in the writing center?

6. Is there something you would like to share that was not covered in the interview with regard to the theme that would be helpful for me to know?

At the end of the data collection process, I gathered a total of twelve (12) hours of recorded data. To transcribe my data, I downloaded the audio file and uploaded them to a secure transcription service called Temi (temi.com) for a fee. The transcription service generated verbatim transcripts, but after the verbatim transcripts were generated, I read and edited the whole transcript. After identifying the transcript excerpts to use, I did a more thorough clean-up, refining them to remove redundancies, silences, and other phonetic components and made them easy to read. Finally, I wrote reflexive memos throughout the data collection process. My memo included my thoughts and feelings about each interview/focus group discussion experience as well as my struggles in making sense of the data.

Methods of Data Analysis

This study employs the analytical tools of the constructivist grounded theory to develop a context-specific framework (Charmaz, 2014) for data analysis. Charmaz explains that a constructivist grounded theory allows the researcher to interact with the data and participants in a way that goes deeper than surface meanings. Glaser (1978) emphasizes that grounded theory helps researchers to ask the most paramount question, that is, "what

is happening in the data?" Essentially, the researcher looks for views and values, and facts; this is done by looking for beliefs, ideologies, situations, and structures. Babcock (2020) notes that grounded theory is perfectly suited to writing center studies as it promotes exploration of interactions that are very human-involved and rife with experience, actions and individual subjectivity (110).

Using grounded theory, I was able to assign meanings to the codes and develop an explanatory theory from the analysis. As Corbin and Strauss explain, grounded theory helps to generate new knowledge and deeper understanding because it tends to go beneath the everyday surface understanding of the data (51). To generate such a deeper understanding, Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) explain that "at least a two-step coding process is required: (1) initial or open coding and selective or focused coding" (356). During the initial/open coding phase, I read the interview transcripts thoroughly and began to make analytic decisions on what I thought of the data. Afterward, I coded the transcripts by assigning qualitative descriptors to the texts to retrieve salient information in the data set. For the selective/focused coding process, I grouped the codes to eliminate redundancy and as Charmaz and Belgrave suggest, I used the most significant initial codes to "sort, synthesize, and conceptualize large amounts of data" (356).

Approaching my coding exercise from these two steps was helpful to generate themes with which I developed a narrative story for the analysis. Again, since this study is approached from a grounded theory perspective, I needed to check for biases and avoid including preconceptions about the phenomena of my research in the analysis. To achieve these, I wrote reflexive memos that explain my data collection process, my thoughts and feelings about each interview/focus group discussion experience as well as my struggles

in making sense of the data. I would always return to my memo writing to sort out confusions and use them as subtexts to make sense of my analysis.

In this study, I also drew analytical insights from transnational writing practices as well as rhetorical empathy. The applied exploration of differences in transnationalism as represented in issues of translingualism (Horner et al. 2011; Canagarajah, 2013) and intercultural pedagogy (Connor, 2004, 2011; McIntosh, Connor, and Gokpinar-Shelton, 2017) aided my explanation of the transnational processes, action, and/or interactions that have potentially shaped (and/or continues to shape) my participants' perceptions of difference in writing practices. Lastly, this study heavily relies on Blankenship's (2019) notion of rhetorical empathy. Blankenship notes that the practice of rhetorical empathy is one that shifts from the rhetorical goal of changing an Other to the goal of understanding an Other, thus 'changing the subject' (5). For this study, I approach rhetorical empathy as a critical heuristic to help make meaning of how the transnational writing assets possessed by international multilingual graduate writers are viewed, welcome, and engaged by writing consultants (and other writing professionals alike) while operating within the transnational spaces such as writing centers.

In the Introduction to her book "Changing the Subject: A Theory of Rhetorical Empathy," Lisa Blankenship notes that exploring empathy is valuable especially in transnational locations in order to "ethically engage with one another across pronounced differences" (5). These engagements across differences are prioritized in this study because of the necessity to find practical ways of opening up possibilities for educating, knowing, persuading, and connecting where before there may have been only division and impasse in terms of the flow of academic writing instructions. Eric Leake (2016) also

avers that "empathy can be a means of invention, a way of considering audience and situation, as well as a tool for revision and critical analysis because of its possibilities and liabilities as a means of persuasion" (3). Empathy becomes rhetorical in the teaching of writing because of its potential for persuasion wherein judgment of writing is suspended while understanding or belief of the Other is elevated above rejection (Leake, 4; Blankenship, 9).

To fully function within the purview of Rhetorical empathy, Blankenship opines that the Subject (of knowledge production/writing instruction) must first and foremost be willing to deeply listen to the Other's narratives based on personal experiences. Not only that but such a Subject must be interested in treating "individuals as real people with stories and motivations of their own behind their writing concerns rather than responding with patronization and anger or relying on logical arguments to refute stereotypes and ignorance" (101). Scholars have paid attention to Rhetorical listening as a valuable approach that prioritizes understanding and valuing diverse perspectives (Ratcliffe 2005; Valentine, 2017). The major consideration here is that rhetorical listening goes beyond simply hearing what someone says, rather it involves empathetically attending to their words, experiences, and emotions in order to build bridges of understanding. According to Blankenship, the notion of rhetorical empathy builds on the tenets of rhetorical listening but extends it by incorporating the necessity of the change that must occur to the Subject by taking a rhetorically empathetic stance. This stance entails "feeling with instead of feeling for the experiences of the Other (Blankenship, 6) or as Leake puts it: "understanding with a person, not about him" (5).

Furthermore, Blankenship makes a categorical differentiation between empathy and other words of emotions such as pity and sympathy. According to her, "pity and sympathy are more culturally loaded terms than empathy in their associations with patronization, colonization and a somewhat removed experience of an Other's plight" (5). Unlike pity and sympathy, an approach of rhetorical empathy involves giving up power in certain ways. Basically, when we decide to listen to someone's stories and attempt to discern what is motivating them, we choose to be vulnerable—a move that can be productive for anyone but that is obviously riskier and more costly for those in nondominant subject positions (Blankenship, 121). Therefore, taking a rhetorical empathy stance enable a change in the subject that produces the knowledge of academic writing, and such a stance, according to Blankenship's conclusion "is a source of agency for people in non-dominant positions precisely because of the connections rhetors (speakers/tutors) make with the Other (for instance, international multilingual graduate students) through narrative and emotional appeals" (102).

In conclusion, to achieve this stance as writing professionals, there is a need for critical consideration of empathy in our negotiations with the Other, especially international multilingual writers. Blankenship submits that an approach based on rhetorical empathy rests on the premise that listening precedes empathy, and empathy precedes understanding. Without understanding, no progress ultimately can be made in working with the Other. Adopting this approach as a heuristic for analysis in my study thus affords me the opportunity to consider how writing center consultants—and in extension writing instructors—can better consider motives, blind spots, and prejudice as a means to engage and learn across differences (11). Exploring my study from the ambits

of Blankenship's rhetorical empathy means I can unearth avenues for creating openings for engagement and learning from the narratives provided by both the writing consultants and the international multilingual graduate writers. With such knowledge, I am able to provide interventions on how we can start to see difference differently, that is, moving from a deficit-view of difference to an asset-based-view of difference (put in another way, moving from difference-as-deficit to difference-as-asset).

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher, I recognize that I come to this study with multiple positionalities that could impact the research process. I am a straight, male, able-bodied, black African, specifically from Nigeria. Also, I occupy the position of assistant director for graduate writing in the writing center. Most importantly, I am an international multilingual graduate student who has lived the struggles and experiences of a typical international student attempting to navigate both the institutional system and academic writing practices of US institutions. I am aware that these positionalities accord me certain biases that can influence how I approach collecting and interpreting my data. However, to mitigate the effects on these biases on my research, I continually engaged in reflexivity by discussing my own experiences and how these experiences inform my interpretation of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell and Poth, 2016). To engage in reflexivity, I kept memos and observational field notes. Memo writing enabled me to reflect on my research experience and start to identify themes across the data, and the observational field notes helped me keep a record of events and interpretations during the observations, interviews and focus groups.

Furthermore, the researcher is aware that these biases could lead to 'bad news' in rendering and interpreting the information shared by my participants. Newkirk (1996) explains that every qualitative researcher is susceptible to 'bad news' regardless of how ethical the story they want to tell is. Bad news occurs when the research participants find themselves, their actions and their beliefs, constructed in ways other than they intended, other than as they perceive them to be (Newkirk, 1996; Brown, 2005). However, to balance the interpretation and final rendering of my study's data, I engaged in member checking to solicit comments and feedback from participants on my emerging findings. As rightly averred by Maxwell (2013), member checking helps to "rule out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have about what is going on" (p. 126). Hence, adopting member checking helped ensure that my participants are aware of the possibility that my rendering of them "may be partially or wholly negative" (Newkirk 1996:3) while providing them with the opportunity for a 'dissenting' voice to be included in the final text.

Ethical Considerations

Participants' contact information used in this study was provided by the University Writing Center. For interviews, personal information and directly identifying information in data were redacted to the participant-specified level. Whether completely confidential with the use of pseudonyms and the removal of directly identifying information in data, the decision was made by the participant and honored by the researchers. The raw and transcribed audio and video data was stored in a secure password-protected folder on the University of Louisville CardBox storage device. Only the researchers had access to the data. Efforts were made to keep all personal information such as names, addresses, phone

numbers, or email addresses confidential. All signed documents and notes were password protected on the University of Louisville CardBox drive. The notes will be stored for five years after the study is completed. Furthermore, informed consent documents were shared with the participants prior to engaging them in this research project. The consent document included the study's description and a consent form to be signed. Before the interview and focus group discussions were conducted, informed consent was again explained, and a copy of the signed consent forms was returned to international multilingual graduate writer participants.

CHAPTER 3

NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCE IN THE CENTER: PERCEPTIONS AND

EXPECTATIONS

International students in US institutions are mostly understood as needing specialized

support services, both academic (such as language and writing support) and non-

academic support (such as career and counseling). Sharma (2018) submits that these

support services are inevitably required not because of the intellectual inadequacies of the

international students but because they are operating in a different academic culture, thus

making their needs "unique or more intense" (p. 38). Some of the challenges identified by

Sharma include ideological differences among disciplines that have a serious impact on

international students; a tendency to focus on the most visible challenge such as language

proficiency while ignoring the broader context of the students' academic and

sociocultural adaptation; and misalignment between how conventional writing programs

support them and their complex writing needs (p. 38).

In *Shifting Supports for Shifting Identities,* Philips (2017) explains that

multilingual graduate writers face specific writing challenges because they are "often still

learning American English and have usually had less exposure and instruction in U.S.

academic writing and rhetoric" (p. 41). Philips notes that as these multilingual graduate

writers gradually become incorporated into the discipline by contributing through

academic writing, writing professionals must also 'shift' the kind of support they offer

group of writers. In this chapter, I discuss how international multilingual graduate writers describe themselves as writers, writing strategies that they developed over time as well as their expectations when working with writing tutors/instructors. From the narratives shared by these international multilingual graduate writers regarding their experience in the writing center, the chapter will highlight what we as writing professionals can learn from the narratives to inform how we rethink the kind of support to offer international multilingual graduate writers. Consequently, in this chapter, I will first describe how international multilingual graduate writers described their writing practices, then I will present an overview of the challenges they face while navigating US academic writing practices. Next, I will examine the writing assets possessed by international multilingual graduate writers who participated in my study to cope with these writing challenges. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by exploring perceptions of international multilingual graduate writers regarding how their writing assets are welcome, honored and leveraged during writing center consultations.

Doing (academic) Writing as an International Multilingual Graduate Writer

All the participants in my study affirmed that they have always been active in writing practices in some capacity, either writing in their native language or writing in the English language. Also, they have all accessed different genres of writing such as business report writing, technical writing, and email writing as well as writing for an academic audience and writing code—a technological process of drafting instructions for the computer on what to do. Regardless of the kind of writing they did, my participants agree that they find writing easy when they do it either in their native languages or when they do not have to follow strict academic writing rules and conventions. Basically, they

report that doing academic writing in the US as international multilingual writers comes with some level of difficulty

For instance, when the international multilingual graduate writer participants were asked how their writing experiences in their home country compare with their experiences navigating US academic writing, Yohimar, a PhD student from Venezuela starts by providing a description of self as a writer.

> First, writing before I came to the US was something I used to do easy, I think. I've never been a writer that is used to academic jargon. Like, I have always wanted to be clear [so that] anybody can understand what I'm writing. [Because] when I was in Venezuela, I was also an academic. I worked for a university as a professor for eight years before I came here. So, I was used to academic writing in Spanish. [Yohimar]

Yohimar emphasizes the fact that prior to starting her graduate education in the United States of America, writing was easy for her. Yohimar identifies a number of factors that contributed to such ease she experienced in writing. Notably, these factors include writing in her native language, being a university professor, and writing without academic jargon. Yohimar notes that a combination of these factors made a significant difference in how she understood herself as a writer in the past and how she understands herself as a writer now. Worthy of more inquiry is Yohimar's use of the phrase 'used to' meaning that writing was an easy activity she typically did in the past. This description presupposes that Yohimar no longer finds her writing activities as easy as before, mainly because of the change in her writing situation—that is, the US writing context.

This transition in academic writing practices invariably necessitates a shift in her self-identity as well, essentially from a scholar to a student learning the codes of academic writing. Yohimar, who had earlier described herself as a scholar and expert in

academic writing in the Spanish language, has now found herself navigating a new academic writing situation where she needs to write in the English language. This new situation, therefore, means a shift in her self-identity from a scholar to a learner of academic writing in English. This shift to a learning phase is important because, as Sharma (2018) explains, to function effectively in English academic writing, international students necessarily need to learn (and learn about) graduate-level writing (90). Specifically, learning about what Yohimar refers to as 'academic jargon' as well as the academic culture they engage in.

Writing in one's native language is less cumbersome because the writer does not have to be extra cautious of the rules, conventions, and rhetorical patterns of the language in which they are writing. For instance, a native English speaker ordinarily possesses an innate system of how the language works in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and meaning. Hence, such a native speaker would better articulate their ideas in writing than non-native English speakers who have a different level of competence in the language. This same description applies to Yohimar who possesses a native competence in Spanish and was used to academic writing in Spanish. Not only was Yohimar writing in Spanish, but she was also an experienced University professor in Venezuela, a country where the official language is Spanish. As a university professor, Yohimar taught, conducted research and communicated her research findings in the Spanish language. As emphasized earlier, writing in a language that is native to the writer enables the writer to be more confident in their writing, hence Yohimar's description of her writing practices as easy prior to changing linguistic and cultural terrain.

Similarly, Yohimar seems to have distinguished between doing academic writing in her native language and in English. She notes that she has "never been a writer that is used to like academic jargon," suggesting that doing academic writing in the Spanish language is less complicated than in the English language for her basically because she does not incorporate academic jargon in her writing project while in Venezuela. However, based on her experience reading and writing academic papers in America, she soon realized that she would need to use discipline-specific registers in her writing. While academic writing has been defined and discoursed from multiple perspectives such as Thaiss and Zawacki (2006)'s description of academic writing[3], Yohimar's distinction of the nature of academic writing offers a lens to understanding her challenges with doing academic writing in her new writing environment. Sato, another participant in this study, corroborates Yohimar's perspective on the place of jargon in academic writing. According to Sato, doing academic writing in English "is more difficult" compared to writing in her native language which she finds easier. One of the points of difficulty is approaching and understanding the use of jargon in academic writing. Sato affirms:

> The way that I approach [academic writing] is…so you have some jargons, some words that's very typical in that area. As in social work, you have some jargons that's very typical. So, this is my strategy, you know, if something is new in my area, I tend to look for articles, academic writing articles and read and try to capture the structure of the paper. [Sato]

As Phillips (2017) avers, most international students' success in writing practices is based on their diligence to develop strategies to overcome writing challenges. For Sato (and

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[3] Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) describe academic writing as a piece of writing that satisfy three standards: (i) has clear evidence in writing that the writer(s) have been persistent, open- minded, and disciplined in study; (ii) prioritizes reason over emotion or sensual perception (iii) has an imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response (pp. 5-7).

most participants in this study), she clearly realized the reading strategy was necessary to help reduce her anxiety about accessing and utilizing the jargon and structure of academic writing in her discipline. Before she produces any piece of writing, Sato reports that she will read a bunch of articles to use as a model for her own writing. This is probably why Sato describes herself as a reader (not a writer) because she spends so much time reading enough academic articles in her field to use as a model for her own writing. In the following section, I discuss briefly strategies developed by the international multilingual graduate students I interviewed as they navigate writing in the US academic setting but first present an overview of the challenges they encounter.

From Experience to Assets: Understanding International Multilingual Graduate Writers' Writing Strategies

Approaching writing as a process is one of the writing pedagogies identified in writing and composition scholarship. Donald Murray (1972) affirms that focusing on process is beneficial both to the students as it helps them own their truth and voice as well as the teacher who develops the skill to be a responsive listener. Ann Raimes in her 1987 study of ESL college writers observed that ESL writers spent less time during the prewriting process; they only focused on reading and rehearsing the assigned writing topic. However, for the writing process, these writers often devise strategies such as planning, rehearsing, rescanning, reading the assigned topic, revising, and editing.

In 1995, Leki adds more strategies ESL writers use during writing activities. Some of the standout strategies include clarifying strategies, relying on past writing experiences, taking advantage of first language/culture, using current experience or

feedback, looking for models, accommodating teachers' demands, and resisting teachers' demands among others (240). Moreover, an important finding, which my study also argues, is that "these ESL students came to their studies in the U.S. with a battery of well-elaborated strategies for dealing with the work they would face here" (253). That is, their previous writing situations and experiences have equipped them with assets that they can easily adapt to their new writing situation in the US. Leki affirmatively submits that the students "consistently showed themselves to be resourceful, attentive to their environment, and creative and flexible in their response to new demands" (253).

For many international and multilingual writers and as revealed in my conversation with my participants, these writers invest a lot of effort and time working through their writing processes to develop their writing strategies. For instance, Sato recounted that she sits with her computer "and spend hours to try to write using some standard academic language… academic language is even difficult, you know, more difficult; so I need more time." She added that it is a bit of a struggle for her to produce writing as such she does not compare herself with her American friends when it comes to writing.

> I used to say to my friends, you guys, Americans, if you sit in [front of] a computer, you spend two hours to write a paper. Wonderful! I spent at least, two to three times more than that, you know? Because it comes with a lot of struggles. Academic language is even more difficult, so I need more time. [Sato]

Sato's comments reveal the extent of labor she invests in developing a meaningful draft in response to the institutional requirement of graduate school education, that is producing academic writing. From this excerpt, Sato emphasizes the investment of not only mental and intellectual labor but also physical labor. She felt stressed because, even

though she had to do twice or even three times more than her domestic student counterpart, the outcome of the labor does not always just in the writing she produced. One of the recurring causes of this writing difficulty is limited vocabulary in English; nevertheless, language merely just seems to be the vehicle for communicating these emotions, struggles and labor. As described by Sharma (2018), often times when international students express anxiety about their English language competence, "they may be simply feeling stressed or out of place" (88). For Sato (and many international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research), writing in the English language is a primary source of anxiety that leads to a variety of physical and emotional responses.

As such, due to the difficulty encountered as well as her limited language ability in English, she discovered that to strengthen her writing ability, Sato necessarily must spend more time than usual, reading and using writing models, among others. Leki (1995) had earlier argued that to better work with ESL students in developing their writing practices, we need to consider "what these students already know how to do consciously or not;" that is, asking questions about the writing strategies they already possess from previous writing situations. As stated earlier, participants in this research reported that they have some form of writing experience, either in their first language or in the English language. Not only do they have these experiences, but they have also developed strategies to make their writing work well. G-code, while talking about his writing experience noted that

> "My first experience with writing was we took a business class in school, and I had to do a lot of writing. And it was a difficult experience to actually pass that course." [G-Code]

The difficulty, as G-code would reveal later, was not caused by his lack of familiarity

with how writing works because according to him, being a computer science major meant

he wrote a lot of codes and some technical writing assignments such as writing a report

"to describe what was your thought process on how you wrote your code." However, the

difficulty in his experience was because he was operating within a largely different

writing genre than what he was used to. As such, he could not easily figure out the

structure, stance, and style, among other writing components he needed for his new

writing situation. These difficulties outlined by the participants inevitably serve as

constraints to writing effectively.

Nakamura (2010) identifies a lack of lexical facility, lexical flexibility, and lexical

intuition" as the major constraints to international students' effectiveness in writing.

These constraints are often "due to a lack of vocabulary… inadequate access to

alternatives… and lack of ability to judge what 'sounds right' or what does not (105).

Recognizing the extent of these constraints, many international multilingual writers in my

study employ different strategies to improve their writing. While the majority of these

international multilingual graduate writers focus on the constraints caused by language

differences, this study, like the findings in other studies, emphasizes that there are in fact

other forms of differences that serve as obstacles to students' comfort and success in

academic writing in English, some of which will be explored in section below.

Also, for these various forms of difference, there are corresponding strategies that

the students have knowingly or unknowingly developed to cope with them. Mu (2005),

for instance, conducted an extensive review of major writing strategies employed by

ESL/EFL writers, synthesizing a total of thirty (30) strategies identified in previous

studies on ESL writing strategies. Mu subsequently subsumed these strategies into five (5) categories referred to as the taxonomy of ESL writing strategies. These strategies include rhetorical strategies such as the use of L1 (the writer's first language) in writing, metacognitive strategies such as planning; and cognitive strategies such as generating ideas. The other strategies are communicative strategies which comprise avoidance and reduction techniques, and social/affective strategies such as resourcing and getting feedback.

My study extends these classifications by approaching writing strategies from a transnational perspective; that is, explaining how international multilingual graduate writers negotiate and translate their prior language, cultural and rhetorical experiences into transnational writing assets to cultivate flexible but meaningful writing practices. While my findings show correlations with Mu's taxonomy, especially in how rhetorical strategies are enacted, my study offers a transnational lens for examining these writing strategies in ESL research. Using a transnational lens means that attention is paid to the influences of translingual and intercultural practices on the writing strategies international multilingual students devise to cope with writing differences. The writing strategies that I will discuss in this section are categorized into linguistic strategies, rhetorical strategies and (inter)cultural strategies.

Linguistic strategies

The most prominent challenge for international and multilingual writers when they attempt to write in English is how to navigate the linguistic resources available to them for meaning-making. Current conversations in ESL writing practices have placed

language issues at the core of the challenges faced by international/multilingual writers, especially sentence-level issues (such as grammatical and lexical concerns). In fact, when most of my participants discussed their writing ability with me, they noted their lack of sophistication, sounding wordy, and lack of enough grammatical repertoire to fully express themselves when writing in English.

> First of all, I think I don't write well, so that's my perception about my writing. That's one of the reasons I try to be in the daily habit of writing. I make a lot of grammatical mistakes, obviously because I'm a non-native speaker. [Sadek]

Evidently, these concerns are not specific to non-native English-speaking students as other students, including those for whom the English language is native, note similar writing concerns. Nevertheless, a closer look into this concern reveals that many non-native English speakers continue to navigate layers of writing anxieties such as a lack of depth in understanding a subject matter, and inaccurate translation of ideas they have in mind into writing, among others. Sharma reiterates this idea in his discussion of the model of writing support needed by international students. Sharma explains that competency in English evidently leads to some writing challenges; however, the context in which these challenges arise and manifest usually suggests that these students "need more than linguistic support such as understanding the subject matter or its social/cultural setting" (89).

Nevertheless, these participants identified unique strategies they have mastered to cope with these linguistic issues. Some of them report as follows:

> I feel like I learned how to write based on the material that I read and feel resonated with. So consciously or unconsciously, I would use the words that impressed me before or the idea or the statement, and then incorporate

[them] into my own writing but most of my writing styles are pretty straightforward I think, like there are not many modifiers, descriptions or I don't know. [Gan]

I had to learn how to paraphrase, how to not plagiarize other people's work, which was a lot of dictionary [use]. I had to like passwords through the dictionary…like, oh, what is the synonym for this word? What is a phrase that I can use here? [G-Code]

As shown in the excerpts above, the participants, being aware of the difficulty operating in their new writing situation, began to devise strategies for building their lexical and grammatical strength. Lexical/grammatical concerns are one of the challenges faced by international and multilingual writers in the US. Gan, for instance, mentioned that his style to write in a simple and straightforward manner is strategic as such a practice enables him to avoid the use of a lot of modifiers that might lead to a loss of meaning in his writing. While these concerns are not limited to this group of writers, many international and multilingual writers concern themselves with linguistic issues in their writing because, as Nakamura (2010) avers, they are "not only practicing the craft of writing and finding their voice but also engaging in language learning" (98) —which includes learning to make accurate lexical choices in their writing.

Furthermore, both Gan and G-code devise working strategies to deal with lexical issues in their writing. Lexical issues rank top in the list of language concerns confronted by international multilingual writers when writing in English. Many often choose the avoidance strategy, that is, using only lexical items they are familiar with while avoiding vocabulary that could complicate meaning in their writing. This kind of avoidance technique was employed by Gan who only attempts to write in a simple and straightforward manner. To him, modifiers complicate his writing, especially for

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academic writing, and in order to get his intended meaning out, he prefers to write without using many modifying words such as adjectives.

Gan further explains that this technique appears formulaic to him and he developed his academic writing style from his experience as an Applied and Industrial Mathematics major. According to him, the writing style in his major is mostly analytical, structured, and straightforward, using "simpler words" and that in "serious mathematical writing, you won't use analogous words to explain/describe [a] concept"—'analogous' words, being explicit modifiers and descriptors. G-code, on the other hand, was more adventurous in that he seldom applies the avoidance technique like Gan did. Instead, G-code leverages the resources available to help him navigate the vocabulary and lexical concerns. Often, he will use the dictionary to help clarify word meanings, collocations and synonyms to help him achieve an effective paraphrasing.

Beyond devising strategies to cope with lexical concerns, most international multilingual graduate writers I interviewed described how they adapted certain strategies to address global-level concerns in their writing such as structural coherence and organization.

> … you have to connect so many information. So that is difficult, but I am learning to enjoy [it], because it's like playing [a game of] chess. So, you put some information to make sense with another information. If you don't make sense, then you change the pieces. So, I learned how to enjoy that at this time. [Sato]

For Sato, putting information together to form an effective and clear narrative in her writing is like playing a game of chess, an interesting analogy to reveal how she works through her writing process. This analogy points attention to paramount aspects of Sato's

writing process, for instance, prewriting activities such as idea mapping. For instance, she said "you have to connect so much information…to make sense with another information. [And] if that doesn't make sense, then you change the pieces." As a result of such an idea-mapping activity, Sato could generate multiple ways of saying what she intends to say in her paper just like a chess player might think about multiple moves in advance. Likewise, in using such an analogy, Sato emphasizes the fact that international graduate writers might require some form of patience—just as chess requires a lot of patience—while working through their drafts because of the need to constantly change pieces of information to ensure clarity in their writing. Sadek, another participant in this study, describes his technique for organizing the information in his paper using a template he got from his academic supervisor.

> I have a template in my mind when I write an introduction or abstract, so that template is kind of grounded from my supervisor's instruction. We think about a paper we need to write in four paragraphs…. So like I have a template set and whenever I read any paper, I see that, okay, [how] are they addressing these four things. So I use that. I think I use that so religiously that it's almost in my head that whenever I start [to write]. [Sadek]

We can infer from these excerpts that these international multilingual writers are well aware of their language abilities and how that could impact the organization and structure of their writing; hence the need to devise strategies to help cope with these concerns. Essentially, since this study is not a comparative/contrastive study aimed at understanding how the experiences of international multilingual graduate students differ from their domestic counterparts, I am more focused on describing the peculiar and emergent patterns of writing strategies that the international multilingual graduate writers devise when they encounter graduate-level writing in the US. Hence, while these

strategies may not be peculiar to international multilingual graduate writers, these writers had to leverage some writing practices from their writing/cultural background to deal with their new writing environment. Most importantly, these highly deep and internalized strategies are writing assets that should be engaged when providing writing instructions to this category of graduate writers.

Rhetorical strategies

Barbara Kroll (1990) emphasizes that "writing proficiency exists on several different planes" (40) and navigating such writing proficiency often proves challenging to writers who use English as a second language (ESL) because "they operate within a complex system of discourse and rhetorical rules to which they have had limited exposure" (41). Participants in my study reported that they employ various strategies to attain some level of effective writing proficiency, basically focusing on the interaction between composing a text and communicating the ideas in the text. Moreover, beneath this complex interaction are the distinct rhetorical competencies leveraged by international multilingual graduate writers to achieve meaningful writing practices. For instance, some of the participants describe how they try to "resemble" another paper they have encountered in their respective graduate programs. This move toward resembling or mirroring an existing paper is popularly referred to as the modeling strategy in writing studies. Gan and Yohimar report thus:

> If you talk about like essays or project for the course, I would definitely try to resemble an existing [paper] while I work on a similar topic and try to follow the framework, and then maybe fill with my own constructions, or change of subjects or, emphasis and probably use simpler words [Gan]

> … like you also want to resemble what you read in journals that the majority of people are reading. [Yohimar]

Interestingly, both participants used the word 'resemble' to describe their process of modeling the structure (and most times, content outline) of scholarly works in their discipline. While modeling essentially focuses on using an existing text as a template for structure, form and organization, the international multilingual graduate writers I interviewed conceptualize their own resembling strategy as an attempt to ensure that their essay is a rough copy of the model articles. Although similar, these participants seem to be making a distinction between modeling and resembling. While a modeling practice is more descriptive as it provides explicit guidance for generating ideas on what to write about using a model artifact, a resembling practice is prescriptive in nature as it allows the writer to reproduce (through direct imitation) a copy of the existing artifact. As Gan noted, he breaks down the model paper into different bits and thereafter fills the blanks with his own sentence constructions, using simpler words and changing the subject or topics of discussion. Although it is seemingly impossible to achieve this direct resemblance, attempting to attain such writing proficiency highlights the significance of rhetorical competence in academic writing in English to international multilingual graduate writers.

Furthermore, this rhetorical strategy to resemble model articles shows the writers' level of awareness of the audience and genre. Yohimar, for instance, feels the need to adopt this resembling technique because she recognizes "the expectations of people who are reading your work… you feel those expectations of academics." Recognizing the expectations of her academic audience, she is compelled to cater to these expectations by aiming to sound 'academic' and 'sophisticated' through her language use. Despite this

consideration, Yohimar was unable to define what sophistication means or should look like in her writing; however, such perspective reinforces the distinction between good and bad academic writing: That is good academic writing sounds sophisticated while bad academic writing does not sound sophisticated. Similarly, Gan's response also highlights an awareness of the specific writing genre and topics of discourse he's operating in. He states that he tries to resemble existing papers on a similar topic, showing an understanding that academic writing is not a one-size-fits-all activity. This understanding is significant because it shows Gan's generic awareness that different topics have different ways of approaching them.

Beyond the rhetorical move toward resembling model articles, some of the participants explained that they also attempt to model other writers and their writing styles. When discussing this nature of modeling with me, Yohimar described how her encounter with a non-native English-speaking professor at a conference made her decide to model the professor's writing style. Following her subsequent meeting with the professor as well as reading the said professor's work, Yohimar reports that:

> We personally had a zoom meeting because we have the same research interest and she's from Japan. And when I was reading [her] book, I was looking at her language use and I said, well, this is someone who made it. And she sounds very clear. She sounds very right. And she sounds like English is her second language. And I say, I want to be like that. [Yohimar]

As a rhetorical strategy of finding commonalities, Yohimar's attempt at modeling the professor's writing style stems from her recognition of commonalities shared between both individuals namely, sharing similar research interests, being an international researcher, and using English as a second language. These commonalities offer Yohimar

some level of confidence in her abilities to develop meaningful academic writing that encourages her voice.

Furthermore, the ability to engage in translation is a peculiar rhetorical asset exhibited by the international multilingual participants engaged in this research. Translation is an active cognitive activity done by these participants to discern the common ground between the languages with which they express themselves. Translation is an active cognitive activity done by these participants to discern the common ground between the languages with which they express themselves. Peter France (2005) submits that translations are basically rhetorical acts. When approached from the perspective of rhetoric, translation becomes an "act conditioned by considerations of the audience for whom they are imagined" (256). For instance, most of my research participants affirm that they think in their native languages and represent their thoughts in writing using the English language. Oftentimes, this process of translation is recursive, challenging, and frustrating basically because the participants are mostly navigating multiple language systems in an effort to develop a meaningful written piece. To this end, Gan notes that:

> At first, I think in Chinese. So, I would try to translate some vocabulary that I feel uncertain about into English. It just sounds not quite right. And then I feel angry about my own writing style. And then I switch back to Chinese later on. I just feel like, oh, it's a hurdle I have to crossover. [Gan]
>
> … something, if I'm so confused about something I want to write, I write in Spanish first. And then I find a way to say that in English. If I'm very confused about something I want to say, or I rephrase it in my head in Spanish. [Sato]

Navigating language systems of Chinese and English means that translation efforts afford international multilingual graduate writers a mechanism to cope with the constellation of emotions that characterized their writing practices in the English language. As reported

by Gan, he felt uncertain about the choices of words that would sound good for a specific writing assignment he was working on, which ultimately then left him frustrated. Similarly, Sato also often felt confused about how to represent her thoughts in English. The rhetorical act of translation then become a means to process these emotions, positioning themselves cognitively as both the author and translator of the writing activities.

Occupying these dual rhetorical positionings affords them a mechanism for coping with the confusion and feelings of uncertainty that arises from writing in English because they can always switch from their native language as they think through how to say what they want to say. While this demands a lot of labor on the part of the international multilingual graduate writers (just like other coping strategies described above), such translation work helps them to keep the authenticity of the message and address the audience appropriately. As noted by both participants, they 'switch' back to their home language to make sense of what they had attempted to communicate in the English language, to reduce the confusion and frustration as well as to figure out the common grounds for translating expressions in both language systems.

Noteworthy is the fact that most of these struggles are a result of performing standard academic writing practices. Gan noted that academic writing is a totally different kind of writing that requires some level of analytical ability which he was not used to due to his writing background. He affirmed that he did not learn English to write academic essays but due to his current academic situation, he needed to navigate the standard academic writing practices in order to be successful in his graduate studies. One of the ways he approached this was to "just start to write something analytical first

following some standard statements." However, this kind of struggle does not surface

when he did personal writing because such a writing genre afforded him the flexibility to

operate within the language systems available to him, a translanguaging practice that will

be discussed in the section below.

Another important rhetorical strategy devised by most of my research participants

is the read-to/and-write strategy. This rhetorical strategy is reported as a necessary

activity to achieve effective writing. Essentially, these international multilingual graduate

writers emphasize that for any given writing project such as a literature review, they have

to read a lot of articles not only to model the structure (as described earlier in this section)

but to collect significant information from these texts/articles to use in their own draft.

Yohimar and Sadek, for instance, separately mention that there are specific ways of

writing in their respective disciplines, and to meet such writing expectations, they need to

read a lot of such discipline-specific articles as it is necessary to help them compose

meaningful sentences. Specifically, Sadek notes:

> Like in our field, every sentence, almost every other sentence needs a
> citation. That basically means one academic paper in good journal needs
> almost a hundred citations. So, it means I need to read at least 60 papers to
> write something. So, if I read 30 papers, maybe only five papers will
> become relevant to that [topic]. [Sadek]

For Yohimar, she not only needs to read a lot of academic works before developing her

draft, but she also performs both activities (that is, reading and writing) simultaneously.

She states:

> But one thing I have learned about myself is that my process is like [that
> of] a lot of people sort of like read and write, like read and then they write,
> for me I have to do this thing at the same time. Like if I'm like writing a lit

review for example I need to be reading and writing at the same time. [Yohimar]

Yohimar had earlier stated that writing was easy for her before she came into a graduate program in the US, mostly because her prior writing experience did not feel compelled to incorporate jargon and complexities that characterize academic writing in the US. That is, while being an academic, Yohimar's writing experience in Spanish did not necessarily follow the structure and style of US academic writing. However, when she eventually started to write in English, she had to learn the English language skills, specifically reading in order to effectively function in US academic writing. Eventually, what this read-to-write strategy afforded this group of international multilingual graduate writers is the ability to paraphrase, produce analytical writing and make meaning of complicated texts. As she would explain later in our conversation, she engages in the rhetorical strategy of reading and writing simultaneously because that is the only way she could make logical connections among the pieces of scholarship she intends to synthesize. According to Yohimar's vivid description, she either printed out the scholarly articles or has them on her computer screens as she gradually maps the connections in each text. Although her action mirrors note-taking, Yohimar instead avers that she engages in drafting a rough synthesis using an outline she had earlier created while reading around the topic.

As many participants in this study noted, not being familiar with the genre of literature review generally and using sources specifically meant that they needed to devise a strategy to cope with the expectations of graduate-level writing. In essence, this read-to/and-write activity is understood as an approach for making meaning of the connections among complicated texts. Hence, to cope with the new reality of writing with

discipline-specific vocabularies and contexts, Yohimar and most of my research participants actively engage the English language skills they have learned and adapt them to how they read and write genre-specific texts in their respective disciplines.

Cultural strategies

Other strategies employed by my participants to cope with academic writing in the US are rooted in their cultural practices. They mostly take advantage of their home culture to make sense of and compare writing instructions. Studies have shown that it is beneficial for writing instructors to leverage the cultural repertoires multilingual students bring to writing contexts because such cultural knowledge will help them to reflect and make comparisons as they operate in English academic writing (Blau, Hall & Sparks, 2002; Gentil, 2018). In Leki's research, this cultural reflexivity enabled the Taiwanese participant to perform effectively during writing activities. According to him, the student would "repeatedly compare new information (e.g., how people shop in the U.S.) to what she already knew" (248), thereby approaching the writing task from a more nuanced perspective. The international multilingual graduate writers in my study also adopt certain cultural influences to approach their writing practices. The cultural strategies employed by some participants in this study include the cultural act of storytelling and an indirect approach to communication.

Storytelling is the major cultural strategy used by my participants to describe their writing practices. G-code, a doctoral student in the computer science department, had already explained that due to his area of study, most of the writing he used to do was either to develop algorithmic codes or compose a report for a project. However, since one

of the requirements for graduate programs is dissertation writing, G-code had to devise a means to ensure an effective writing process. One of the ways he approached it, according to the interview discussion, was to conceive of his writing as a form of storytelling.

> I also came to the understanding that it [my writing] was like writing a story. Like whatever paper, you are writing was like writing a story. So, I just had to figure out how I wanted my story to be, you know. Start off with bullet points… I want my story to start [like] this and end [like] this… and this is to introduce people to all of these characters in the story and then lead them to the final conclusion, which is like the moral of the story. [G-code]

The act of storytelling is a popular cultural practice in the participant's home country because of its importance in entertainment, teaching morals, and transmitting family/cultural histories from generation to generation. For G-code, storytelling was an entertaining act for him growing up because his parents as well as elderly individuals in his neighborhood were always telling him (and his peers) stories to teach cultural and behavioral lessons. In the excerpt above, G-code is not only interested in telling a 'story' but also interested in ensuring that all the parts of the 'story' (or writing) are present for cohesion and meaning-making. In developing the story, G-code brainstormed the overall message of the story (that is, the thesis of the paper); outlined the major discussion points using bullet points; decided on the information to go into his introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion. A metacognitive activity such as this draws from the writer's cultural ability based on their experiences, contexts and audience expectation.

G-code adds that growing up in Nigeria and watching a lot of movies taught him how to summarize the key actions in the movie, thus increasing his ability to recount the

summarized version of the movie to his friends in a way that the friends will understand the movie without even watching it.

> I mean, in my country, we call them [movie summaries] gist. And for instance, I would watch a movie and I'd have to narrate this movie to a friend. Narrating a one-hour, 30-minute movie was not going to be feasible, but you had to put in the drama, I mean just talking about the important parts. And because this person you're narrating to never watched the movie, you had to portray all of the nuances and the action and the drama just so that this person feels like they have watched this movie. [G-code]

As revealed in the excerpt above, G-code's narration activity can be understood as a way to develop not just his ability to summarize larger texts but also his cultural ability to address the important parts of a writing piece in a way that readers will understand his perspective.

This approach is quite profound because as G-code will explain further, he is more of a talking person than a writing person. He says, "I could talk about my research for days, right…about what it is I'm doing and what it is I want to do." Hence, approaching his writing as a form of telling a story means he could translate the cultural ability to tell a story into his writing practices. Although not as paramount to him as to G-code, Sadek explains his writing practice as telling a story. He shared that when writing, "you are not only writing, but you are also telling a story which needs previous knowledge to build up." Essentially, participants' approach to portraying all of the nuances of the story they are telling easily becomes a writing asset with which they are able to figure out writing practices such as thesis statement, coherence reverse outline, topic sentences, and transitions among others.

Another cultural perspective some of my participants highlighted was the cultural mode of indirectness in communication, which informs how they approach their writing in English. Sato notes that in her native language (Portuguese), it is easy to play with words to serve any kind of writing purpose, regardless of the genre. Likewise, Gan mentions that Chinese writing is repetitive, and his writing is reflective of this practice. Unlike Western academic writing culture that prioritizes directness, these participants approach their writing differently, leveraging their cultural understanding of indirect modes of communication and the use of figurative language to provide adequate contextualizing information, show politeness and sound elaborate.

> My cultural background as a Brazilian, we play a lot with words… And I used to say that Portuguese is a very beautiful language. We play music, we play poetry. [But] I see that English is very straightforward. [Sato]

Here, Sato provides a description of the properties of her native language which mostly informs how she approaches writing. Oftentimes when she writes in Portuguese, she writes using flowery and figurative language in a way that combines her cultural ways of communicating (that is, playing with words) and her approach to writing (that is, indirectness). Similarly, Gan, a non-native speaker of English describes what the cultural system of how writing works in his native language affords him:

> Chinese writings are pretty repetitive. I wrote in Chinese in my free time…as a way to recall [events], like a log of documentation, to briefly summarize what happened in my life and my feelings, there isn't much analytical things. [Gan]

Gan is using 'repetitive' here to signal that, unlike the Western cultural system that is linear and straightforward, his Chinese writing system tends to be indirect and roundabout. De Vries, Kimberly in 2002 recounts when "writing teachers advise students

to be parsimonious with words, to avoid clutter," they are merely perpetuating the Western cultural system of academic writing which does not consider other cultures present in their classroom. However, understanding how to transcend this cultural boundary means inviting the cultural ways of indirect writing as described above by Sato and Gan, which Fox (1994) also affirms "not to be the result of inexperience or confusion, but of training and purpose, for they have been brought up to value a subtle or roundabout communication style as polite and sophisticated" (14).

Worthy of note, especially for writing professionals is what happens when these participants leverage this cultural style of writing in their academic writing practices in English. Sato recounted that she has not been successful the few times she has attempted to use these kinds of flower/figurative language in her academic writing in English. In her words, "I don't feel confident in playing with English words. So, I try for myself. And when I finish and read [it over], I just say, oh, this is not good." Gan also explained that he would only use 'analogous' (by which he means figurative or indirect language) in his personal writing but "in a serious mathematical/academic writing, [I] won't use analogous argument to explain the concept." This suggests that these international multilingual graduate writers are not able to tap from their cultural understanding of setting effective context, sounding elaborate, or showing politeness, which in turn may not help their confidence in academic writing.

In finding ways to help this group of students connect the cultural realization of their prior writing practices to what obtains in US academic writing, we, as writing professionals, must be committed to tapping into these writers' fund of knowledge, especially regarding the cultural system of writing. That is, paying attention to other non-

Western cultural systems of academic writing. This work requires what Flower (2003) calls an inquiry-based approach to reading differences. According to Flower, an inquiry-based approach calls for "a deliberate meaning-making activity in which difference is not read as a problem but sought out as a resource for constructing more grounded and actionable understanding" (40). As a result, we are able to talk across differences of cultural systems of writing, as well as "listen, question, and stand 'ready to pursue' the complexities of other people's (cultural ways of) reading of the world" (Flower, 64).

In essence, these assets discussed show multiple ways international multilingual graduate writers manifest their knowledge of and approach to writing. Oftentimes when their writing consultations leverage these manifested assets, they report that the consultation is more effective. On the flip side, when their consultations are approached primarily on what the consultant thinks they need, neglecting the value in discussing their writing assets, these international multilingual graduate writers often describe the consultation as not adequate/effective. In the following section, I will present some international multilingual graduate writers' narratives regarding their experience in the writing center viz-a-viz how they communicate their writing assets during writing instruction.

International Multilingual Graduate Writers' Narrative on Writing Center experiences

As noted in the previous section, the international multilingual graduate writers revealed the different strategies they developed (either from their prior writing background or as they attempt to navigate their new writing orientation) and deployed to cope with the new

writing practices they are exposed to in the US. While some of the strategies shared are

not peculiar to this group of international multilingual graduate students, the

manifestations of the strategies only reveal the complexity of practicing writing in a

different linguistic, rhetorical and cultural setting. In this section, I will briefly examine

what my research participants tell me about their writing center experiences as well as

describe how they approach discussing their writing assets with the writing tutors they

worked within the writing center. The goal here is to highlight the importance of paying

attention to the transnational writing practices manifested by the writers as well as the

implication of valuing their experiences with writing instruction.

The international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research

reported varying experiences using the writing center. Scholarship on multilingual

writers' use of the writing center emphasizes that international/multilingual students visit

the writing center either because they or their instructors perceive the need to improve

their writing skills. For my participants, this notion holds true also as they choose to visit

the writing center in part to satisfy their professors' recommendations but also as a

personal decision to improve their writing ability in an unfamiliar writing orientation

(Williams, 2002; Salem, 2016). From seeking help on surface-level concerns such as

grammatical correctness to higher-level concerns of rhetorical appropriateness and

audience awareness, most of these writers affirm that the writing center has been 'very

helpful' [G-code], 'good, simple and structured' [Gan] and 'attentive' [Sato].

G-code considers his experience particularly 'very helpful' because his consultant

was attentive not only to his writing concerns but also to how writing works for him (that

is, telling a story). He recounts: "…with my consultant, I think storytelling plays a part in

that and being able to tell her the story of what I'm writing…" Leaning heavily on his cultural asset of storytelling, G-code manifested this asset to help achieve two things. First, such asset manifestation helps him to provide the consultant with contextual knowledge about his writing project. He notes: "being a computer science major and writing a paper in computer science, how does somebody who has no background in computer science understand what I'm wanting to write?" To him, his ability to tell the consultant the story of the writing project is a necessary step to achieving an effective consultation as the consultant is better prepared with the requisite context to work with him.

Second, the manifestation of G-code's cultural asset of storytelling helps him to communicate to the consultant how he wanted to be assisted. He adds that: "[I] basically explain to her that this is the story I'm trying to tell. How can you help me tell that story?" Here, G-code's specific request means that he wanted writing assistance beyond surface-level concerns of grammar and punctuation. Rather, he is interested in more global issues like developing an effective script for the story and structuring the story meaningfully among others. G-code concludes that the consultant understood his approach "perfectly which was very helpful because, with her understanding of the story I was trying to tell, she was able to provide help with writing."

G-code's experience does mirror the experience of most international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research as they all positively described their writing center experience in terms of how much of their writing assets were incorporated into their writing session. In contrast, one of my participants noted one instance of unsatisfactory writing center experience during her initial consultations. The writer

explained that the experience was unsatisfactory because her writing assets were not

embraced during the consultation, resulting in the consultants working with the writer

based on what they thought the writer (being an international multilingual writer) wanted,

basically linguistic issues. In essence, the expectations this participant had and

communicated to the tutor were not addressed. She describes her expectation for coming

into her writing center sessions thus:

> A lot of time you see how I schedule my appointments. I always say
> clarity. That's one of the things that I want help with because sometimes I
> have an idea in my mind. [Yohimar]

However, the first couple of consultants she worked with had approached the

consultation by focusing on sentence-level issues such as correcting grammatical issues.

Yohimar states:

> "The first few times I came to the writing center (and I'm going to be
> honest about it), I [thought] this is not useful. I don't come here for
> someone to check my commas and like my grammar."

Yohimar's experience suggests a tension between the manifestation of her writing asset

and her perception of successful writing instruction. Unlike G-code's 'very helpful'

writing center experience that accommodates and values his transnational understanding

of how writing works for him, Yohimar's initial experience was unhelpful because her

transnational understanding of how writing works for her was not considered during

writing instruction. Nevertheless, Yohimar's experience became better when her

consultants began to listen to her and work with her from a place of prioritizing her

transnational writing assets.

Furthermore, as an expert in bilingual practices, Yohimar discussed her writing assets and the kind of writing support she wanted from a translanguaging perspective. In this sense, her focus is mostly on the process of interchanging linguistic practices such as translation and meaning-making practices between two languages. She notes that "people [monolingual writing tutors and her American professors] don't have any idea of the process that you go through when you write in English and another language." In this excerpt, Yohimar was referencing her translanguaging process, thus setting the context for how she preferred to approach her writing center interactions, that is, from a translanguaging orientation.

For Yohimar, translanguaging entails her cognitive process of switching from one language to another in an effort to either comprehend a writing instruction or produce a written language in a target language such as English. As Kalan (2022) affirms, "translanguaging is mostly about language," meaning how the linguistic resources available to the international multilingual graduate writers in my study become complicated as a result of "moving between cultural, intellectual and discursive spaces" (68). Garcia (2013) also explains that "translanguaging is rooted in the principle that bilingual students select language features from a repertoire and soft assemble their language practices" (np). As a bilingual, Yohimar is able to select language features from both Spanish and English to help her when she is faced with certain writing challenges. For instance, she reports that:

> If I'm so confused about something I [want to] write, I write in Spanish first. And then I find a way to say that in English. If I'm very confused about something I want to say, I rephrase it in my head in Spanish. And then it's illuminating that I can then say it in English too. [Yohimar]

Here, Yohimar engages her translanguaging process to 'soft assemble' her language practices as she switches from one language to another in order to achieve the clarity necessary for the writing situation. Essentially, this complexity means that Yohimar (and as other participants in this study revealed) requires more than a focus on language forms and functions when they work with a writing consultant. Rather, they require support that prioritizes their writing experiences as well as the manifestations of their writing assets (be it rhetorical, linguistic or cultural assets). As she explains further, "Some people are not aware of all those [translanguaging] processes that you go through when you write right in English." Hence, approaching writing consultation with this process in mind is a move toward rhetorical empathy wherein the writing consultant/instructor approaches their work with an international multilingual graduate writer with genuine curiosity, imagining themselves from the international multilingual graduate writer's shoes instead of responding with assumptions of the kind of writing support (mostly patronizing grammar help) need by the writers.

For other participants like Sato who did not practice academic writing in her first language (Portuguese), they affirm that to value their transnational writing assets, the consultants need to be open-minded. By being open-minded during writing discussions, the consultants will realize that the only knowledge of academic writing possessed by international graduate writers was learned in English, and navigating the practice of such knowledge might be challenging. Essentially, not having the support of academic writing background in their native language heightens the anxieties about academic writing in English. Sato notes that:

> … we learn it [writing academic paper]. Seriously, I don't know how to write a paper (an academic paper) in Portuguese. But I know how to write in English. [Sato]

Therefore, a practice of open-mindedness is required of the consultant to better work with this population of writers. Being open-minded means that such a consultant becomes exposed to and accepts the varieties of languages possessed by individuals with whom they work which, Sato says, will help to ensure a consultation session that is meaningful to the international multilingual graduate writers. Sato affirms that "if you understand that each person that enters the writing center, has a different cultural background, this is a big asset…" Referencing assets, Sato explains that her cultural and language background is a big asset the consultant can listen to, learn from and leverage for an effective consultation. She notes further that when such acts of listen, learning and leveraging happen, the consultant can then start to help the writer "frame it [writing ability], educate us, recognizing that we [international multilingual graduate writers] have some limits."

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on international multilingual graduate writers who come to the writing center to work on their writing. An analysis of the interview conversations reveals their perceptions, experiences and expectations from their consultations. The analysis highlights the creative strategies used by this group of writers to cope with the seemingly different and challenging academic writing situation in which they engage in the US. Sharma terms these creative ways international students use to work through their writing as 'hacking' (143). According to Sharma, hacking describes "ingenuity and creativity, appropriation and improvisation that international students adopted in order to overcome

challenges or solve problems" (143). In my study, I understand these creative improvisations as emanating from their background orientation and understanding of how writing works in their native context. Recognizing that these hacks are sourced from competencies, I have termed them writing assets, a concept that describes the language, rhetorical and cultural knowledge that these invest in supporting their writing practices, both while working on their writing or talking about their writing.

These assets engender a negotiated inquiry as these writers enter into their writing consultations. By its nature, an asset is not always made public, but the possessor may decide who sees the asset, for how long and what they can do with the asset. Although these writers do not overtly exhibit these assets during their conversations with their consultants but only discussed them with me during one-on-one interviews, this study argues that writing professionals might need to rethink their work with international multilingual graduate writers from an asset-based perspective. By approaching writing instructions from a standpoint that welcomes a discussion of their writing assets, these international multilingual graduate writers tend to allow us as writing professionals to see the writing assets that work for them and guide us on what we can do with these assets. In the next chapter, I will examine writing tutors' descriptions of their work with international multilingual graduate writers to highlight how we can facilitate interaction across manifested differences in the writing center.

CHAPTER 4

DIFFERENCE AT THE CENTER: FACILITATING A TRANSNATIONAL WRITING

PEDAGOGY IN THE WRITING CENTER

The writing center is an ideal place to address the writing concerns and challenges of a

variety of writers, mostly because writing consultants are trained to meet the writers

where they are in terms of language, style, and rhetorical practices. In his oft-cited essay,

North (1984) emphasizes that the paramount role of writing centers is to "make sure that

writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction" (438).

North's idea would later be challenged, revisited, and rethought in efforts to correct its

limiting perspective to writing center work and scholarship (North, 1994; Bouquet and

Lerner, 2008). To add to the critique of North's idea regarding the goal of the writing

center, I submit that not only does the concept of changing the writer appears limiting,

but it also does suggest that writing difference is a deficit that generates ineffective

writing practices.

As my study, and this chapter specifically will prove, if there is anything that

needs to be changed in the way we approach writing instruction, it is how we welcome,

honor and engage the manifestations of the writing assets possessed by writers, especially

international multilingual graduate writers. Nevertheless, the educational approach to

writing instruction articulated earlier continues to resonate among writing (center)

professionals. In this section, I present narratives provided by five (5) writing consultants

regarding the goals of writing center practices. Raymond and Quinn (2012) explain that the writing centers' success in achieving our goals is likely to increase in direct proportion to the centers' ability to recognize the students' goals. Therefore, to ascertain the effectiveness in achieving the writing center's goal, I will investigate some convergences and divergences in the narratives of both groups of participants (writing consultants and international multilingual graduate writers) regarding how they describe the goal of their work in the writing center.

This chapter focuses on the focus group discussions I conducted with five (5) University of Louisville writing center consultants. Out of the 5 participants, only one is an international graduate student (to whom the English language is non-native) while the other 4 participants are native English speakers. The aim of the focus group discussion was to understand their perception of writing differences (linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural) in the writing center as well as how writing consultants can rethink their work with these differences. Writing difference is a conceptual theme that resonates throughout our conversation with all my research participants. Not only do they recognize differences in the writing center as an institution (in terms of personnel, clients, and training), but they also submit that to move writing center theory and praxis forward, a more concerted effort is necessary to front differences as a valuable institutional framework.

Hence, in this chapter, I will examine the goals of the writing center from the writing consultants' perceptive, noting their perceptions reinforce, expand or negate international multilingual graduate writers' narrative on their goals for coming to the writing center. Also, I will investigate how the transnational writing framework is

manifested through translingual and/or intercultural practices (You, 2017), especially in how the writing consultants describe their perceptions of the international multilingual graduate writers they engaged. Likewise, I will discuss the values of approaching the writing center as a site of engagement and the attendant intercultural possibilities such an approach offers writing center praxis. In the following section, I explain the goals of the Writing Center from the perspective of the writing consultants who participated in my study.

Beyond teaching writing skills: Writing Consultants' Narrative about the Goals of Writing Center Practices

To open this section, I'd like to provide some institutional context that highlights the values of the Writing Center as well as the nature of pedagogical the consultants receive prior to working with writers in the university community. Firstly, the Writing Center at the University of Louisville values human connectedness in its approach and philosophy to writing tutoring. Like many writing centers, the University of Louisville Writing Center is a welcoming, inclusive and accessible space where writers from diverse backgrounds feel comfortable bringing their writing projects. Moreover, its human connectedness nature is manifested in its philosophy of teaching writing, which prioritizes the writing process instead of the writing product. Essentially, writing consultants are trained to engage in a dialogue with writers to help them develop their writing and to become more effective and confident writers. This writing training is offered to every writing consultant at the Writing Center in efforts to prepare on varying aspects of writing center theory and practice. These consultants attend an ENGL 604 course (Writing Center Theory and Practice) weekly to discuss a variety of composition

and writing center literature as well as discuss issues raised in weekly work in the Writing Center.

Together, these training and policies are informed by longstanding scholarship on tutorial training (Bishop, 1988; Newkirk, 1989; Williams Jessica 2005); identity and power in Writing Center consultations (Boquet, 1999; Carino 2003), consulting strategies for international/multilingual/ESL writers (Fox, 1994; Reynolds, 2009, Rafoth, 2015) as well as the role of style and grammar instruction in the Writing Center (James, 2003; Gillespie and Lerner, 2008; Micciche, 2004), among others. While these policies are institutionalized for approaching, training, and assessing writing center work, writing consultants are at liberty to flexibly conduct their consultations as long as such flexible practices are within the institutional considerations of writing center praxis. While a departure from the policy is not a common feature, tensions in how well the consultants connect to those policies and training is largely not impossible. That said, the discussion here reflects the opinions of the writing consultants regarding how they either approach their writing center work or how writing center work should ideally be approached. Ultimately, the writing consultants' goal is to help the writer by responding to their writing concerns to the best of their ability, Hence, their comments on the goals of the writing center as well as the transnational values of writing center work are analyzed from that perspective.

Basically, all the writing consultants agree that one of the crucial goals of the work they do in the writing center is to offer writing support and feedback in response to specific needs and circumstances of writers on their writing. That is, writing consultants

provide specific writing instructions to teach the writer some writing skills that will help them in their current and future writing assignments.

> …the writers can have me as a reader for their work so that they can listen and look [out] for some review suggestions. And the other thing is that they might. just need some guidance to understand the norms of academic writing. And I think most people are good at writing in casual occasions, but they do not know what is required in the university. [Yuan]

Based on the excerpt above, both writing consultants address the educational goal of writing center practices. By providing "guidance to understand the norms of academic writing," Yuan is here suggesting that providing instructions on the writing standards required to effectively function in academic writing is a necessary aspect of the writing center's goal. The educational approach suggested by Yuan is anchored on the philosophy of adaptability in which writers can adapt their writing practices from one writing situation to another—here, academic writing. Yuan noted that most people are "good at writing in causal occasions," meaning that these writers are competent in writing to communicate in a non-academic form. Hence, to guide them into the standard required, writing consultants (and other writing professionals alike) can adapt some tools in the writer's antecedent writing situation (writing in casual occasions) and use as a means to provide instructions for the target writing situation. This adaptability practice inevitably prioritizes the writing assets that the writer brings to writing consultations which can prove effective in achieving a successful writing consultation.

Furthermore, because of the nature of writing center consultations (one-on-one as opposed to the classroom setting), Kylee affirms that to fulfill the educational goal of the writing center requires writing consultants "to step in and help out" as writing instructors cannot possibly reach every student in the writing classroom.

> I think maybe institutionally one of the goals of the writing center is to try to fill the gaps that can't be met in a classroom. You know, like when one person is in charge of 25 to 30 people, they're not going to be able to catch every error or instruct every student on their individual needs. [Kylee]

Of major importance here is Kylee's comment to "instruct every student on their individual needs" which might not be particularly addressed in the writing classroom. Ben adds to Kylee's comment, noting that "we help implement the skills that professors teach and kind of fill in those gaps" in a way that makes sense to the writer. Essentially, all the consultants agree that achieving the educational goal during writing consultation is an important piece of writing center practice.

For international (multilingual graduate) writers, the writing consultants add that it is necessary to look beyond just teaching writing skills and consider how we can approach talking about transfer, interference, and manifestation of cultural differences in their writing, especially from the perspective of their professors. Kylee reported a case of a writer she worked with and although the writer writes eloquently, the writer's professor commented that the piece of writing was incoherent, mostly because of the cultural anecdotes the writer used.

> … I worked with a writer; she had basically been told that her writing was incoherent, but then when I worked with her, I thought that it was quite eloquent and well-put together. And so there was clearly like her professor who had read the paper was noticing the cultural differences in her writing. [Kylee]

According to Brice, such a comment does not consider the fact that the writer has the technical ability to engage in meaningful writing. Hence, the goal of the writing center consultation must include ways of talking about cultural transfer in writing to both writers and faculty members. Yuan states some examples of the elements of transfer as

including "beating around the bush and not wanting to call a spade a spade." Certainly, an endeavor that focuses on rethinking transfer will help international multilingual graduate writers to equip them with tools and confidence in writing. Kylee expresses that the confidence is necessary to allow the international multilingual graduate writer to actually like lean into their writing methods and to help them transfer that onto the page in a way that was going to be true to what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it but would also meet requirements that their professor wanted. And for the faculty, rethinking transfer in their students' writing will help them avoid wrongly labeling them and their writing, a practice that can impact the motivation of such students in terms of writing.

Both Better Writing and Better Writers: Addressing the Tensions in the Writing Center's Goal from the Perspective of International Multilingual Graduate Writers and Writing Center Consultants

The international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research affirm that they choose to visit the writing center in part to satisfy their professors' recommendations but also as a personal decision, and their goal for most visits is to improve their writing ability as they navigate the unfamiliar US academic writing environment. Moreover, further discussions with the writing consultants show that what achieving this goal of writing improvement means for international multilingual graduate writers varies from one writer to another writer, including international multilingual graduate writers. Whereas many consider help on surface-level concerns as writing improvement, others judge their writing improvement based on how much their writing process improves. Nevertheless, this variation leads to tension in how writing consultants

enact their pedagogical training, especially regarding the goal of asking questions and

offering suggestions that will help writers understand how to make their own work

strong. Eli identifies this tension in her comment below:

> I think it's rare that our goals and the goals of the writers align because I think generally the writers just want a good grade or better written paper for their professor and they see the writing center as a stepping-stone to a good grade, but then all of our pedagogy centers around upsetting that and focusing on helping writers develop as writers. [Eli]

However, for many international multilingual graduate writers who are constantly

concerned about interferences of their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical background on

their academic writing in English, such tension arises in how they align their goal for

coming to the writing center with the poster educational goals of the writing center (that

is, teaching writing skills to make better writers not better writing). Referring back to

international multilingual graduate writers' comments during interviews, some of them

aver that they come to the writing center to have their grammar (and other sentence-level

mistakes) corrected so that they can achieve better writing that meets their supervisors'

standards. Sadek states that: "The feedback I get from the writing center, I would say it's

more on grammar" and he would prefer to work with a specific consultant who can read

his paper quickly and catch those surface-level concerns. In Sadek's words, "…she is

able to read seven, or eight pages in an hour. She corrects a lot of my mistakes. So, I

think these are good." This writer outright judged the success of his writing center

session on producing better writing and is essentially not focusing on the writing skills

that can enable him to become a better writer.

From Eli's perspective, this writer's goal conflicts with the writing center

pedagogy in which they are trained to upset writers' hyperfocus on producing good

writing during the session but instead work toward helping writers develop as writers.

Raymond and Quinn state that for writing support to be effective, writing center

consultants work with the goal of honoring the writer's concerns and allowing the writer

to direct the session. As the writing center consultants also suggested, one of the ways to

mitigate this tension is to not deflect the sentence-level concerns to achieve the writing

center's longstanding pedagogical goal. According to Kylee, while it might be a good

practice to deflect international graduate students' concerns sometimes if they're like

hyper-focused on something that is not a concern, we should be careful of just moving on

with the session without briefly checking to discuss their frustrations as that might mean

reinforcing the stereotypes that suggest we know about international multilingual

graduate writers' writing concerns more than they do. She notes further that:

> I think it's important when they do open up and say like, well, I'm really
> worried about this sentence or this construction or my flow from
> paragraphs, because, a professor, a mentor said this was a problem. I think
> it's important though, to not disregard that either and say, well, it is not a
> problem. Let's move on to something else because then they are just going
> to feel frustrated and confused. [Kylee]

In addition to Kylee's comments above, Brice also explains that most times, international

multilingual graduate writers are aware of their blind spots, mostly in terms of grammar

such as article placements and the use of prepositions. For such writers, the goal of

visiting the writing center is to work with a writing consultant to identify and fix their

surface-level concerns. Upsetting such a goal that the writer considers will improve their

writing might be frustrating to the writer since the concern, according to Brice, might not

necessarily be motivated by insecurity regarding writing.

In essence, what I gathered from both groups of participants, achieving better writing is as good a goal as being a better writer. While the former is a manifestation of the latter, for international multilingual graduate writing producing better writing is a steppingstone (which will help to allay the confusion) in navigating US academic writing in English as they move toward being confident better writers. Instead of a focus of our writing center praxis on 'not/but' (that is, teaching writing skills to not just produce better writing but become better writers), we as writing center practitioners can begin to shift our focus to both/and (that is, teaching writing skills that equip the international multilingual graduate writers to both produce better writing and become better writers). In the next section, I present a narrative of what working with writing differences looks like in the writing center, especially as it operates within the larger institution of higher education, to discuss how requirements of writing standards might be disruptive to writing center work.

Something Missing? Working with Writing Differences in the Writing Center

The discourse surrounding working with international or multilingual students has always focused on helping the students to not only navigate the unfamiliar writing conventions in English academic writing (Leki, 2009; Phillips, 2017) but also navigate institutional challenges in academic writing practice, primarily 'the politics of the conventions of 'educated' English' (Lu, 1994; Matsuda, 2006; Bouman, 2009). Although speaking directly about composition studies, Smitherman (1999) explains that we need to recognize students' own patterns of language and incorporate such linguistic diversity into the composition classroom. In so doing, we are able to heighten consciousness of

language attitudes; promote the value of linguistic diversity and convey facts and information about language and language variation.

On a more general institutional level, however, more critical attention should be given to this ongoing issue of new and different brands of students, including international multilingual students, who spoke languages that reflect a different class, race, culture, and historical experience in the US higher educational system. Although a lot has been said regarding how to move ahead of the curve and start to implement decisive actions in such a way that language differences are welcome and honored (Matsuda, 1999; Horner and Trimbur, 2002; Kinloch 2005), my goal for this section is to highlight that more work is still required if we are serious about moving from a lip-service to practical decisive action that explores new ways of engaging across differences to creates openings and possibilities where before there may have been only division, confusion and impasse.

One specific institutional challenge identified by one of my focus group participants is the culture of higher education that requires a specific standard for academic writing and success, thereby creating an image that 'something is missing' in the writing practices of international multilingual graduate writers. Instead of reimagining writing among undergraduates or graduate students in higher education as a multilingual encounter (a site of engagement) where the presence of language differences is the default, the assumption that there is one standard academic English continues to obstruct the manifestation of the full range of the writing assets (as described in chapter 3) possessed by international multilingual graduate writers. During one of the focus group

interactions with writing consultants at the University of Louisville, Eli (one of the consultants) notes that

> …another thing that I've observed with graduate students who are multilingual writers is that independent of their English skills and abilities, they are kind of caught up in the higher education culture of there's something missing. [Eli]

Academic writing practices in the higher education system continue to perpetuate monolingual assumptions in teaching, research, and publishing. While scholars have argued against this perspective on writing (Severino, 1993; Lu, 1994; Matsuda, 2006), noting that such a monolingual idea does not encourage students' voice and writing assets, college professors continue to demand that international/multilingual students in their class sound in a certain way. This expectation not only stifles creativity in writing but also subjects international multilingual students to an unending pursuit of the missing element in their writing. The quest to attain this standard heightens the feelings of anxiety about writing reported by the international multilingual writers who participated in my research. Because of this move to reach this implied standard of academic writing, they are always approaching their writing as well as their writing consultation from the mindset of something is missing.

As Eli explained further, these international multilingual graduate students summarily disregard their writing abilities—they neither focus on their rhetorical orientation of how writing works for them nor do they tap into their understanding of linguistic forms and functions—and instead attempt to "want to sound like a native English speaker" in their writing. Their understanding of linguistic forms and functions is an outcome of international multilingual graduate writers' educational experience in

language and writing practices. As many of my international multilingual graduate writer participants mentioned to me during the interview, they have received some formal instruction on language and writing in English. However, because conversations and research around the teaching of US academic writing still lean heavily on issues of language and cultural difference and do not explore differences in educational experiences, this knowledge of writing is generally not given the same attention as language or cultural interference in their writing. As a result, when they come to the writing center, their major focus is to solve the 'problem' of sounding like a non-native speaker of English.

While the culture of higher education reinforces international multilingual graduate writers' anxiety regarding sounding 'sophisticated' or like a native speaker, it should be noted that certain actors within the institution wittingly or unwittingly cause these students to embrace this dystopian idea of pursuing the missing piece in their writing. The writing consultants who participated in my study reported that while they see their work as mostly "helping implement the skills that professors teach and kind of fill in those gaps" [Ben], many international multilingual graduate students the tutors work with alluded to how their professors/supervisors wanted them to sound a specific way in their writing, invariably reinforcing the monolingual practices that prioritize academic writing in standard English.

> A writer I worked with…her first comment was my thesis advisor said that I, my paper sounds like I speak Japanese or Chinese for my first language. [Ben]

> I think about one particular writer I worked with, she was Korean. She had basically been told that her writing was incoherent. There was clearly her

professor who had read the paper was noticing the cultural differences in her writing. [Kylee]

As a result of this, when many international multilingual graduate writers come to work with writing consultants, their primary concern is to finetune their English writing and make it sound sophisticated or native-like. In the previous chapter, I detailed how most of this study's international multilingual graduate student participants reach toward sophistication in their writing and when they are quizzed on what sophistication looks like, they reported wanting to sound like the polished article they read in journals, sound like a native speaker of English or write using complex language and sentence structures.

According to the writing consultants, many of the international multilingual graduate writers they worked with already sound sophisticated in their writing. For instance, when commenting further on the writing style of the international multilingual graduate writer from Korea, Kyle affirmed that the professor might have judged the writer's writing incorrectly because "when [she] worked with [the writer], [she] thought that it [her writing] was quite eloquent and well put together." Nevertheless, the mindset of 'something missing' continues to stifle their self-confidence in their writing. Ben vividly explains this mindset as follows:

> …ultimately the writing is really really good [but] this desire to overcompensate and sounds smart is what's getting in the way. The desire to sound like somebody that they're not, or to sound like a sophisticated intellectual and really they already sound that way. [Ben]

As explained in the excerpt above, the feeling that something is missing in their ability to compose sophisticated academic writing means that international multilingual graduate writers scramble to attain an efficient level of writing expertise that they already possess. Ben highlights the desire to overcompensate for the missing piece in their writing

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practice as an effect of this scrambling, which invariably constrains their expression and writerly identity. International multilingual graduate writers tend to overcompensate by focusing on surface-level issues in their writing such as the desire to use high-sounding/grandiloquent phrases and idiomatic expressions, a behavior which many of the international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research attested to exhibiting in their writing.

The tension thus arises because while international multilingual graduate writers might approach their writing from this grandiloquent perspective, mainly to establish their confidence in writing, the tutors opine that such practice, though might be helpful on the surface, could lead to producing incoherent sentences or paragraphs. Yuan notes that an international graduate writer he once worked with would always "compose very complicated, long sentences…and beat around the bushes and cannot call a spade a spade." I described in Chapter 3 how some international multilingual graduate writers attempt to resemble other scholars' writing styles they characterized as complicated and sophisticated. In so doing, the writing consultants I engage in this study state that international multilingual graduate writers tend to sound like somebody else in their writing.

> I've seen that manifest mostly in people saying, I just want to sound like a native English speaker… And, you know, there's not one particular way that a native English speaker sounds. [Eli]

Eli's comment that native English speakers do not sound in one particular way is pertinent and helpful in educating the writers. But for people anxiously figuring out what is missing in their writing practices, international multilingual graduate writers might not really consider such a statement while expressing their writing concerns and frustrations

to the consultant. To international multilingual graduate writers, sounding like a native

English speaker in their writing is necessary because of their writing contexts and outlet

for disseminating their writing, which requires a certain level of native-like standard of

writing. Brice explains that one of the international multilingual graduate writers he

worked with understood this monolingual politics of writing and disseminating written

products and made the conscious effort to sound in a way that will afford her an entry

into this, thus playing the politics.

> I think certain people are very aware of the language politics they're
> interacting with. Like Yohimar, whom I worked with on her dissertation is
> aware of the fact that her lack of formality and language is going to be
> viewed as like lack of mastery of language. [Brice]

Furthermore, navigating this politics of one standard language of academic writing makes

some international multilingual graduate writers defer their agency in terms of making

certain drafting decisions to their writing consultants, mainly because they are native

English speakers. Eli continues her comment by stating regarding such an experience as

follows:

> I was working with somebody who seemed like they had really high
> anxiety. I don't know if it was a general thing or just surrounding this
> assignment. And this writer said, well, which one is right? And I said,
> whichever one you want. And they said, no, no, which one is right; which
> one is going to make me sound like a native English speaker? [Eli]

As noted by Eli during our conversation, it became an ethical dilemma for her because,

on the one hand, she did not want to impose a choice when clearly both choices are

correct, but on the other hand, the international multilingual graduate writer wanted her

writing to sound like a native English speaker and the one person that can help ensure

that is the writing consultant. This deliberate request by international multilingual

graduate writers to take away their voice in an effort to sound like a native English speaker is also a clear indication of wanting to appeal to the monolingual culture of academic writing that their professors also perpetuate. Together, these factors are some of the things missing that writing consultants reported that international multilingual graduate students continue to pursue in their writing. However, the writing consultants affirm that much of the work they also do is undoing the narrative of monolingual practices in writing, which unfortunately has not been effectively successful.

Moreover, it should also be noted that while the act of overcompensation can be considered an asset based on how the international multilingual graduate writer discussed their writing assets in Chapter 3, the writing consultants might understand it differently because they think the international multilingual graduate writers already possess the ability to sound intellectual. The disconnect here then is not about something missing but more about a missing link of communication where the international multilingual graduate writer and the writing consultant probably do not share the same orientation for approaching their writing assets viz-a-viz their writing needs. As I have explained in this study, writing assets are those writing skills and competencies that international multilingual graduate writers have garnered from their backgrounds which they wittingly and/or unwittingly leverage while engaging in new writing situations. One of the most important considerations in this asset-based writing understanding is that the possessor of these assets determines who sees which of their writing assets, for how long, and what anyone who sees them can do with them.

Hence, the missing link seems to be the international multilingual graduate writers' unwillingness to share their writing orientation as well as the writing consultant's

inability to engage the writer on their writing assets, so as not to come off rude or intrusive. Most of the writing consultants who participated in this study agreed they would need more training on the best practices to approach such discussions in a way to create a safe and welcoming situation where the international multilingual graduate writers can freely share their writing assets, including how they seldom overcompensate for writing weakness. Specifically, my study affirms that to be able to do the work necessary for engaging across writing differences in the writing center, the writing center consultants must be better equipped to consider motives, blind spots, and prejudice that they might hold about the writing practices of non-native English writers.

Furthermore, the fact that international multilingual graduate writers continue to pursue something that is missing in their writing practices means that most of them would prefer to work only with native English speakers. As noted by international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research, they prefer to work with a native speaker of the English language because the person would possess the kind of native mastery of the language that will benefit their writing to be error-free and sophisticated. Sadek, one of the international multilingual graduate writers I interviewed for this research, mentioned it to me upfront that the reason he did not ever make any writing appointments with me was because he discovered that I am a non-native English speaker. Regardless of the 'background checks' that he did that confirmed to him that I am studying for a PhD in English and that I possess a good mastery of how writing works in various genres, Sadek noted that he deliberately chose people from the US—those to whom English is native —as his writing consultants because they can better tell him how to correct his errors and non-standard expressions.

Moreover, Yuan, an international graduate student who works as a writing consultant also states that there is an uneven distribution in the number of native and non-native writers who make writing appointments with him. While both experiences are not an absolute reflection of how international multilingual graduate writers approach making writing appointments, it shows their motivation for attaining the missing thing in their academic writing practices in the US. Whereas one international multilingual graduate writer noted that she would rather make an appointment with a non-native English-speaking consultant because of the mutual understanding of writing differences, another writer affirmed that he only makes writing appointments with native English-speaking writing consultants because of his perception that, to sound like a native speaker in his writing requires him to work with a writing consultant who is a native speaker. The latter category, nevertheless, is evidenced in how most of the international multilingual graduate writers approach their writing appointment as well as how writing consultants who participated in this study described their perception of 'something missing' during writing consultations with international multilingual graduate writers.

As emphasized by Grimm (2011), "writing centers function within a tapestry of social structures, reproducing and generating systems of privilege," and although "writing center mottos are constructed with the best intentions, there are still ripples of disguised privilege" (32), as well as inadequate awareness/preparation to work with differences at the center. Moreover, Olson (2013) reminds writing consultants that they might be susceptible to perpetuating the unequal power distributions in which multilingual writers are frequently embedded, thus remaining complicit in the maintenance of monocultural and monolingual power structures in the writing center. However, to undo the

reproduction of the faulty systems, writing centers and writing consultants are required to open up their understanding to constantly consider the influences of our engagements with writers from other parts of the world. This consideration of influences is a transnational disposition that we should pay critical attention to both in writing centers and in writing classrooms. Like Martin (2015) affirms, such transnational disposition necessarily considers the sites, activities, and programs to highlight the situated practices in such efforts. By working together, each transnational agent (writing consultants and international multilingual graduate writers) is able to understand the influences that shaped their way of thinking and writing in an effort to challenge the binary frames of native/non-native and Western/non-Western orientation of writing.

As a transnational agent in the writing center, the writing consultants are expected to be increasingly aware of the effects of language on how international multilingual graduate writers write (and talk about their writing (Nakamura, 2010). Likewise, they are expected, as Powers (1993) recommends, to also serve as collaborators during writing consultations through the instructions they offer. In moving our practices (and international multilingual graduate writers) towards 'something available' (instead of something missing), we should create the kind of atmosphere that welcomes and honors the manifestation of the writing assets they bring to the writing consultations. Among others, creating such an atmosphere could be simply stating directly how the English language has so many varieties, and while the writing consultants might be native English speakers, they only speak a variety of the English language.

Essentially, approaching the writing consultation with an explanatory work highlights their awareness of the linguistic injustice in academic writing warranted by the

differences in language, rhetoric, and culture, noting that none of the language varieties is supposedly superior to the other. Similarly, the writing consultant might create an atmosphere that welcomes international multilingual graduate writers' writing assets by requesting that the writers connect their previous experience in writing education with the current writing situation in terms of the examples they use while explaining their writing practice. Such an atmosphere will make the international multilingual graduate writers feel confident to share their linguistic, rhetorical and/or cultural understanding of how writing works. It will also make the writing instructions we offer effective since it is approached from a transnational writing asset-based perspective. In the next section, I focus on how the writing center as a site of linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural engagement can help to cultivate practices that prioritize writing assets of our international multilingual graduate writers.

Centering difference: Imagining writing Centers as Transnational Sites of Engagement

Recognizing the need for transnational practices in the writing center is crucial for ensuring successful writing instruction and engagement, especially in our increasingly internationalized US academic institutions. Gillespie, Gillam, Brown and Stay (2002) submit that writing centers have become both sites of writing instruction and engagement which offers writing support and feedback in response to specific needs and circumstances of writers on their writing. Beyond just understanding writing centers as sites where multiple interactions about writing occur, we need to also consider critically the intercultural and translingual practices that are at the center of most of the engagements in the writing center. As I stated in Chapter 2, these intercultural and

translingual practices are the major construct on which my study is grounded as they are the means to also develop best practices for supporting and working with differences during writing instruction.

Considering the diversity in the population of writers and consultants in our writing centers as well as the direction in which writing center scholarship is advancing (Faison and Trevinõ, 2020; Abraham and Kedley, 2021; González & del Carmen González Videgaray, 2022), I argue that we need to reimagine the writing center as a site where (linguistic, cultural and rhetorical) difference is the basis for our work. As Bergmann (2010) observes, because of their distinct, unconventional place in the academic landscape, writing centers are sometimes seen as marginal or marginalized because most of their institutional roles and practices set them outside of regular academic life. Nevertheless, she posits further that being on the margins of institutional practices can "open up some time and space with which to develop new ways of thinking, learning, and interacting, and can foster engagement with institutions outside the university" (160). These possibilities for opening up new ways of imagining writing centers includes centering writing difference in terms of language, culture, and rhetorical orientation as well as approaching our praxis in the center as a form of transnational engagement.

Reimagining the writing center as a transnational site means incorporating holistic writing support that considers awareness of language, cultural and rhetorical differences among the writers. The transnational orientation I discuss here mirrors Pratt's (1992)

notion of contact zones[4]. However, my study differs from the idea of "asymmetrical

relations of domination" and power imbalance that occur in the contact zone. As the

discussion in this section will show, writing centers as transnational sites must value

human connectedness as well as partnerships that encourage international multilingual

graduate writers to explore their writing assets. Hence, the discussion here is a call to

action regarding ways writing centers and the consultants can navigate their practices as a

transnational engagement as they hope to better serve international multilingual graduate

writers as well as the increasingly diverse population of writers who visit the writing

center.

The writing consultants in this study described the Writing Center as a

transnational site of engagement because it is a safe space for writers, especially

international multilingual students who are unsure of how to navigate their linguistic and

cultural practices in the US. Likewise, from the writing consultants' explanations, their

experiences with cultural exchanges and transnational practices in their work with

international multilingual graduate writers also suggest that the Writing Center is a viable

transnational site for meaningful engagement regarding writing practices. The writing

consultants' comments reflect the Writing Center's value for all writers and all learning

styles, respecting writers' use of their home languages and world Englishes. Essentially,

this value affirms the Writing Center's commitment to ensuring that the Writing Center

space is an effective transnational site that welcomes engagements across linguistic,

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[4] Pratt (1992) defines *contact zones* as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination-like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths" (34).

cultural, and rhetorical boundaries, thereby cultivating transnational literacy practices that empower both the writing consultants and international graduate writers to operate efficiently in the transnational site.

As a safe space, one of the writing consultants reported that some international multilingual writers visit the writing center to not only navigate their academic writing practices but also develop a sense of community. Writing centers are characterized by their welcoming, warm and un-intimidating nature. This narrative is especially important for international multilingual students who are in the US with almost everything appearing unique, different and strange to them. Such students immediately would look for a safe space where they can feel welcome and learn about the academic writing practices in the US, and writing centers are one of the places they go for such resources. Yuan provides a report of an international multilingual graduate writer who had great anxiety about navigating the US academic writing practices but would always come for writing center sessions to chat with consultants on strategies to improve his English and, generally, to achieve some sense of community with the writing center. Yuan states that:

> … he was very anxious and he told me that he had no friends and no roommates around in the US, so whenever he came to us [writing center] here, the main purpose is that he can have someone to talk. [Yuan]

Yuan affirms that the writing center becomes one of his safest places to go on campus because his engagement with the consultants gave him a chance to improve his English and meet new people. Although this experience might not be peculiar to only international multilingual graduate writers, however, being an international scholar in a US academic system means that the writer necessarily has to mediate a number of factors, including his transnational identity in order to thrive in the institution. The

writing center thus offers itself as a site that encourages such mediation of transnational identity, leading to a feeling of safety and satisfaction. As observed by You (2019), one of the features of transnational practice is human connectedness that transcends national, racial, or linguistic boundaries. By welcoming and creating a space for international multilingual graduate writers to share their stories and build community, the writing center can effectively be considered a transnational site of engagement.

The practice of (inter)cultural exchanges as well as engagements cross-culturally is another major consideration for writing centers as transnational sites for writing instruction. In 2003, Flower explains that to achieve any form of cultural exchanges during writing instruction, the differences in as well as complexities of cultural practices should be seen as a resource for constructing more grounded and actionable understanding" (40). Specifically, talking across differences depends on an ability to listen, to question, and to stand 'ready to pursue' the complexities of other people's (cultural ways of) reading of the world" (64). When asked to what extent they see the writing center as a site of engagement among people who do not really share similar culture and language and other practices, consultants affirm that most of their work with international multilingual graduate writers has been educating because they could develop their knowledge and awareness of literate practices from the perspectives of their writers' cultures.

Specifically, Eli reported that an international multilingual graduate writer she worked with many times embodies what Flower refers to as "talking across differences" as both the writer and the consultants had to listen to each other's cultural ways of approaching a phenomenon such as economies and festivities.

> I worked with Sadek several times throughout the year…he's doing a project that concerns economies that are really different from the economy in the United States. So, a lot of like the first couple of sessions really was so much explanation that had to go into his project and some cultural scaffolding that he had to do [for me] on his part before those sessions started. And he was a strong teacher anyways. [Eli]

The experience here shows the value of transnational writing practices which highlights the need to learn along with students as they are able to teach us how they want us to approach the difference in writing abilities. For Sadek, providing an explanation of the economic practices in his home country, Bangladesh is a valuable cultural scaffolding example that opens up common ground possibilities for Eli in assessing and negotiating meaning-making practices in her work with the international multilingual graduate writer. According to Gay (2002), cultural scaffolding entails "using students' own cultures and experiences to expand their intellectual horizons" (p.109). The way Eli has described it here, such a cultural scaffolding experience did not only help Sadek figure out how his home country's economy compares with the US but also lead to a greater understanding for Eli to make meaning of Sadek's writing concerns and assignment expectations. In providing cultural scaffolding, Sadek was able to take control of his or her own learning by referring to his cultural understanding of economic practices in Bangladesh. Such cultural understanding (which Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, (2005) also referred to as funds of knowledge) remains valuable both to the writers who are able to connect their lived experiences to instructions they receive about writing and writing consultants who after a better understanding of these cultural components are equipped on ways to practically and meaningfully leverage the experiences during writing instructions.

Eli shared more insights into the importance of partnering with the international multilingual graduate writer to achieve the cultural understanding necessary for a

successful consultation. During one of her consultations, she worked with an international multilingual graduate writer who was composing personal statements for a medical residency program. According to Eli, this writer wanted to bring their cultural heritage and background into the essay, but they were not quite sure how to do it. This concern effectively became the most important aspect of the consultation as both the writer and the consultant engaged in a practice of dialoguing across cultural information. Eli notes that:

> A lot of that [dialogue] involved asking the writer to tell me everything that they would want the committee to know and then trying to figure out together where our cultural gaps would be. [Eli]

This experience reported by Eli reinforces Flower's (2003) idea that a focus on cultural ways of knowing during writing instruction not only "sparks intercultural dialogue but also constitutes a literate practice that tries to elicit differences without polarizing people" (45). At the end of such a session that involves dialogue that transcends cultural borders, Eli notes that the experience was always a really interesting challenge as it always yielded pretty different results. Other ways these cultural exchanges manifest to improve writing consultants' literate practices on cultural orientations possessed by the international multilingual graduate writers include, sharing information about religious celebrations and invitations to cultural exhibitions.

> I worked with Chinchao throughout the semester on her thesis. And she invited us to her art and cultural exhibit that she was putting on. So, it was certainly a bit of an exchange in terms of me learning from her and her cultural and artistic productions. It was very significant in terms of you know me receiving cultural exchange. [Ben]
>
> …at the end of the fall semester, when there were holidays that I was celebrating, he asked how I celebrated those and then he was celebrating Ramadan this year. So, we were talking about Ramadan and how he was

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> tweaking his celebrations to also finish up the school year. So, we were able to talk about cultural exchange in the academic setting, but also a little bit personally. [Eli]

The fluidity in the conversations between international multilingual graduate writers and their writing consultants as reported in the excerpts above is a significant aspect of operating in a transnational site. Achieving this transnational practice in the writing consultants' work with international multilingual graduate writers means that the writers are able to deploy their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical competencies in these cultural discussions as assets to improve their writing center experience. For instance, experiencing the art and craft of Chinchao's home country will afford Ben the opportunity to become aware of the writer's heritage and learn about meaning construction from the writer's worldview through art forms. While the results of these experiences vary depending on the person (writing consultant and international multilingual graduate writer), negotiating cultural experiences is a mainstay for describing writing centers as transnational sites of engaging and cultivating practices that extend across (inter)cultural borders.

Yuan emphasizes the value of having writing consultants who are competent in more than one language and culture as such practice obviously moves writing centers toward achieving transnational writing practices that cross the borders of language and culture. He mentioned that:

> I think if the writing center consultants have learned some second language other than their mother tongue, they might construct this linguistic and cultural awareness between the different languages. And it might be helpful in particular, if this consultant shares some cultural background with the writer… it might be helpful for them to conduct the consultation better. [Yuan]

According to Yuan, being Chinese himself and working with a Chinese writer with whom he shared some level of linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical common ground made the consultation more productive as he is quick to see areas of concern that can be explored and discussed with the writer. For instance, Yuan noted that the Chinese writer he worked with would write with a mindset to imitate the writing style used by professionals in their academic field, focusing extremely on crafting long and complicated sentences. As explained by Yuan, due to the writer's hyperfocus on long and complicated sentences, the writer easily makes grammatical errors, especially since their awareness of English grammar is comparatively weak.

> … I can notice why Chinese writers sometimes write in specific ways because the awareness of [English] grammar is comparatively weak in a Chinese writer's sense… But then, we can compare these two languages to make them notice that they actually can apply the rules [in their mother tongue] to English. [Yuan]

Noticing this pattern, Yuan reported using his metalinguistic awareness of grammar in Chinese and English to explain the source of the writer's errors. Yuan was able to approach the consultation from this perspective because of his grounding in the language the writer uses as their first language. Crucial to achieving this comparative work is the translingual practice of seeing language practices that might work differently in both English and Chinese. In describing such language practices, Yuan was able to provide what scholars note to be an orientation to language and language relations rather than a set of practices of a language as opposed to others (Horner, 2016; Mao, 2018). Yuan's comment on finding ways to apply the rule from the writer's native language to English, thus, becomes a clear indication of how the difference in how grammar works (in

Chinese and English) can serve as a resource for meaningful engagement on functioning

in a language that is not native to the writer.

In emphasizing the importance of linguistic difference and how recognizing it

might be a meaningful resource, Brice suggests that writing consultants need to partner

with international multilingual graduate writers to learn from and along with them,

especially because of the meta-linguistic competence they bring to the writing center.

Brice states that:

> I think a big part of intercultural awareness is meta-linguistic awareness.
> So that's something that multilingual writers bring into a session. And I
> think often consultants don't have that meta-linguistic awareness to meet
> them. [Brice]

A vital lesson from Brice's suggestion is to value partnership in learning, that is,

constantly connecting with the writers to learn from and along with them and using

differences as a resource for achieving a meaningful writing center experience. Writing

on the need for centering partnerships in writing center work as a means for critical

engagement, Nichols and Williams (2019) affirm that although writing centers are

institutionalized parts of many colleges and universities, they often are grounded in

values and practices that offer the possibility of collaborative work both internally among

writing center staff (including writing consultants) and writers as well as externally with

community partners. In the context of International multilingual graduate writers, many

have been grounded in the linguistic practices of the English language, especially

grammar rules and conventions as a result of learning the English language as a

course/subject. This understanding helps to describe the forms and functions of different

aspects of their writing, there are noticeable concerns about how these rules are applied.

Hence, it is necessary for both the writers and consultants to bring their (meta-linguistic and innate) awareness of how the English language works during the writing engagement.

Approaching perspectives that promote translingual and intercultural awareness in working with international multilingual graduate writers will help to further promote transnational practices in the writing center. As Lape (2020) explains in her book on internationalizing the writing center, a translingual and intercultural approach helps writing centers "interpret the conversations between writers and tutors–ones in which the writer and tutor routinely move between languages" (p. 29). Affirmatively, Lape (2020) emphasizes that writing centers themselves (and not just the writers who inhabit them) need to become multilingual. I borrow from Lape's submission and recommend that conversations around making writing centers become valuable transnational sites should focus on two major things. First writing centers should equip consultants with strategies and guidelines to effectively work with writers whose language and culture are different from theirs, and second, writing centers that offer tutoring in languages other than English should be developed as they will better serve the needs of second and foreign language writers. Whereas developing a multilingual writing center might be the ultimate move toward recognizing writing centers as transnational sites of engagement, my study finds out that we can start to embrace the values of transnationality in writing center work by evaluating our engagements in cultural exchanges between consultants and writers as well as shifting the focus to partnering with the 'Other' (instead of educating the 'Other').

Ideally living on the "margin of dominant institutional culture" (Bergmann, 160) should mean that we, as writing center practitioners understand the challenges,

opportunities, and tools that enable survival on the margins. Building on Hesford's comment that the transnational space "tie people and places together across borders to create opportunities to craft both effective analysis, ethical responses and political opposition to the material ramifications of globalized power" (521), I submit that it is not enough to only offer writing support based on transactional practices that focus mainly on 'something missing' in the writing of international multilingual graduate writers. Rather, writing center practitioners should envision their praxis as operating within a distinct site where transnational negotiations and multi-level meaning-making activities occur among people who often possess different writing, rhetorical, and cultural experiences. Operating in such a transnational site, therefore, means that writing center practitioners (both administrators and consultants) become critically aware of the need to both acknowledge the ideology of dominant standard language to international multilingual graduate writers and respond to the rhetorical affordances of their writing assets that transgress linguistic, cultural and rhetorical boundaries.

In the next section, I examine how rhetorical empathy can help to foster intercultural and translingual engagements that occur in a transnational writing center. Specifically, I report how writing consultants describe the manifestation of empathy in writing center practices as well as in their work with international multilingual writers. The section will end with best practices for opening up our praxis in the writing center and becoming more aware of our own motives, blind spots, and stereotypes, especially in our approach to issues of linguistic, cultural, and rhetoric differences in the writing practices of international multilingual graduate writers.

Embracing rhetorical empathy as a Thriving tool in a Transnational Writing Center

In writing center scholarship, listening is regarded as one of the important tools for the collaborative nature of writing center work (Morse, 1989, Williams Jessica, 2005; Gillespie and Lerner, 2008; Adepoju, forthcoming). Gillespie and Lerner specifically note that when listening to our writers talk about their writing concerns or read their papers, writing consultants should not jump into a section but first pay attention to the entire conversation. In patiently listening, scholars have found out that writing consultants are able to take good notes, have a precise impression about the whole paper/concerns and thus realize the paper's main problem(s).

As explained by Gillespie and Lerner, this idea of listening is effective when the goal is to change the writers' understanding, approach, or methods of writing. However, reflecting on the notion of rhetorical empathy, a critical heuristic for connecting with writers, specifically international multilingual (graduate) writers, changing the writers to become better writers and producers of good writing is as important as having the writing consultant changed as well. Such change is generated when writing consultants are able to "feel with (and not feel for)" (Blankenship, 6) the transnational experiences of international multilingual graduate writers. The writing consultants who participated in this study also agree that ideally, writing center theory and practice should set a culture of empathy, especially because of the nature of writing center work that requires close individual connections. Ben states that:

> I think the personal level of writing centers requires us to be more empathetic. And part of the reason is the individuality of the writing center consultations. [one of] the expectations of a writer working with an individual in the writing center are to be a little bit more empathetic with

me than when I am turning in a paper to this teacher who embodies the larger institution. [Ben]

As suggested by Ben, the lore of writing centers should necessarily prioritize empathy because when writers visit the writing center, making them feel better about their writing practices should be of paramount importance to us. Unlike how their professors will engage their writing, writing center consultants bring in a more personalizing approach that might require some level of connection. Nevertheless, most of the writing consultants in my study reported that empathy is hard to define, particularly in their work with writers. According to the writing consultants, their perception of practicing empathy entails being kind, people-pleasing, celebrating writers' strengths and centering the writer as the one who dictates the session proceedings. Some of the

> Empathy is hard to define. So, it's more like having an awareness of that. And I think if we are sincere that we are going to help this writer in a very kind way, and that is enough already. [Yuan]
>
> When I outright disagreed with her [a writer's] instructor for a comment of her sounding a certain way… I guess that's one technique. I celebrate those strengths and just show how successful they already are and you should be incredibly proud of yourself for being where you are right now. [Ben]

From Ben and Yuan's descriptions, empathy is analogous to caring for and encouraging the writer in a warm and kind way. Most importantly, Yuan mentioned the value of being aware of writing center practices that prioritize care during interactions with writers in an effort to produce positive emotions from the writer regarding their writing. This awareness is particularly important when working with international multilingual graduate writers who mostly approach academic writing in English with some level of anxiety due to considerations of linguistic, cultural and rhetorical differences. Hence, Ben's idea is to not only celebrate their writing strengths but also to repurpose negative

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feedback on their drafts and instead focus on what they are doing well. Other writing

consultants note what practicing empathy in their writing center work looks like as

follows:

> I think something that I have noticed is what I would call people-pleasing. How much of a people pleaser the consultant is, really changes their approach to working with writers. So, I consider myself to be a big people pleaser. I'm not going to sit down in a session and tell a writer you need to change all of this because it's bad, or it doesn't work. [Kylee]

> My inclination is to put the writer in the driver's seat and take cues from them and let them kind of set the tone in the pace case. And also, I've met writers who seem pretty uncomfortable with that, and they just want me to tell them what to do. So in those cases, I try to strike a balance because by doing what they ask that I am letting them set the tone, but also I guess it's a lot of taking myself out of it. [Eli]

A people-pleasing attribute possessed by Kylee necessarily makes her to be involved in

her writers, offering them the tools to change their writing practices in gradual steps.

Such an approach used by Kylee possibly would generate an emotional response of

happiness for the writer because as Kylee note further, she will try everything to please

the writer and not offend them because of the understanding that "the writer is super

connected to her writing." Similarly, Eli's approach to make the writer direct the agenda

of the session has been widely recommended as an effective practice for ensuring a

successful writing consultation. However, in rethinking the writing center as a

transnational site of engagement and rhetorical empathy as a tool for achieving such

experiences of writing that crosses boundaries of language, culture, and rhetoric, it is

pertinent that reconsider the motives and blind spots regarding certain pedagogical

decisions we make during writing consultations, especially with international

multilingual graduate writers.

Therefore, I argue that on a closer look, what the writing consultants consider as empathy in writing center work is more or less what Blankenship refers to as 'pity' or 'sympathy' that occurs when the subject "feels for" the Other. While empathy signifies" immersion in an Other's experience," sympathy involves a "somewhat removed experience of an Other's plight" (5) and could be an act of patronization. Noteworthy is Kylee's statement on change that should happen to the writer (and the writer's draft), not the change that must happen to the writing consultant in terms of 'feeling with' the writers. Likewise, rhetorical empathy does not ask us to take ourselves out of the picture as Eli stated. However, a stance of rhetorical empathy will require us to put ourselves in the shoes of the writer; that is putting ourselves right back in the picture and deciding to change the subject that produces knowledge about academic writing during the consultation. This perspective is even more emphatic for international multilingual (graduate) writers because most times, they do not want to drive the session because of their expectations that the consultants are more knowledgeable about the subject of academic writing than they are. In such a situation, suggesting that the writer lead the session can be counterproductive.

Therefore, such a people-pleasing approach (noted by Kylee) or focusing on strengths (as stated by Ben) will not be considered a rhetorical empathetic move; rather it shows that the writing consultant is sympathetic to the writer and their emotional response, which might not generate the kind of transnational engagement required for successful writing center session. A sympathetic approach that only feels for the predicaments of operating in a monolingual institution as a multilingual, multicultural individual does not set an atmosphere in which the international multilingual graduate

writers could be vulnerable enough to share their writing assets because such sympathetic approach might communicate an act of patronization or make them feel being judged or being pitied.

As I have explained in earlier chapters, the writing assets possessed by international multilingual graduate writers are the transnational tools they bring with them to writing center engagements. Depending on how comfortable they are during the engagement, international multilingual graduate writers determine who sees which of their writing assets (either linguistic, rhetorical, or cultural assets), for how long, and what anyone (here the writing consultants in the writing center) who sees them can do with them. For instance, when Kylee explains that it might be quite difficult to trace specific sources of writing concerns of some international graduate students, especially when they do not want to share the sources. She also notes not wanting to push the writer hard but would provide ample opportunity for the writer to share the sources of the writing concern if they want to. However, there was no further engagement for measuring the writer's concern. This absence of conversation about why the writer is hyper-focused on a writing concern might be caused by many factors, one of which is the anxieties around writing in a new and different cultural and writing orientation as explained in earlier chapters.

Nevertheless, neither the writing consultant nor the international multilingual graduate writer is able to move forward with resolving that writing concern of not wanting to sound offensive. In essence, the writing consultant could not move the session forward because the international multilingual graduate writer did not share their writing asset with the writing consultant; thus, making that part of the session unresolved. The

important question rhetorical empathy would want us to ask is not how we (as writing consultants) can change the writer to share the stories behind their writing concern but how we can use such moments for our change in the way we position ourselves (as the subject of academic writing knowledge production) against the international multilingual graduate writer.

For writing center consultants, changing the subject might mean imagining a role reversal practice where they put themselves in the shoes of the international multilingual graduate writers who have not only undergone meaningful academic writing education in a different writing context but also necessarily navigate the linguistic practices of more than one language. Such deliberate practice brings us to the understanding necessary to welcome and work with the writing assets that international multilingual writers possess. Essentially, rhetorical empathy can offer us actionable strategies to make international multilingual (graduate) writers share the stories beneath their concerns. For instance, providing an atmosphere that welcomes the opportunity to understand the kind of writing education such international multilingual graduate writers have received and how if they are occupying the position of a writing consultant, what response would they wish to provide to their writing concerns. By changing the subject of knowledge-making about writing practices, the writing consultant can begin to work with the international multilingual graduate writer's perspectives and justify such view as one of the possible ways to address the writing concern.

Like Blankenship explains, such rhetorical empathy practice of changing the subject results in "an atmosphere of trust in which students felt they could share their stories and views without being judged" (9). The writing consultants might be able to use

certain information from the international multilingual graduate writer's views on the writing concern as a means of explaining what obtains in the US writing situation. By so doing, the international multilingual graduate writer understands that their writing assets are welcomed and considered in the kind of responses they receive from the writing consultant while the writing consultant also begins to understand the writer as a real person with real histories, stories and motivations for writing.

Such an empathetic stance becomes rhetorical as we are able to persuasively connect with the Other, here international multilingual graduate writers whose transnational experiences with academic writing have equipped them with tools that writing consultants can learn from. To feel with means writing consultants make a conscious choice to move beyond listening from a privileged standpoint but toward listening so that they can be changed in the way they approach writing practices of people different from us in terms of language, rhetoric, and culture. Like Blankenship, I also refer to this conscious and deliberate practice as a form of 'changing the subject' of the knowledge (of academic writing or how the writing consultation should go) from the writing consultants to the Other, that is, international multilingual graduate writers.

Furthermore, working with a more-informed understanding of rhetorical empathy, I asked the writing consultants during the second focus group discussion to reflect on the enactments of rhetorical empathy in the writing center and its importance in improving writing centers as transnational sites of engagement. Some writing consultants explain that from their experience, empathy (as a notion that describes our feeling with the Other) is largely non-existent in the writing center. Other writing consultants note that when

empathy does manifest, it is seen as a patronizing practice to make the writer feel good about themselves and their writing.

> I would say that empathy is not really a part of writing center culture, even though we like to say it is. We talk a lot about its importance, but I don't know that anybody can give a great definition of what that looks like, and because of that I don't think it is really trained. There's a lot of discourse surrounding it, but it doesn't point towards anything. [Brice]

> I've observed instances where well-meaning writing center consultants have done things that they probably thought were demonstrating empathy, and that I, an outsider, thought they were being patronizing. And I don't know how much of that just has to do with hierarchy within the writing center. And or just kind of the hierarchy of academics bleeding through, into those sessions. But, I think empathy kind of flies out the window a lot. [Eli]

Whereas Brice perceives that empathy is lacking in writing center work because it is an emotion that you either have or you do not have as an individual, Eli suggested that what many refer to as empathy in their writing center work is mere patronization practice used to effect change in the writers. For the writing consultants, as they have now recognized that what they considered empathy is best described as sympathy, pity or patronization, they need to rethink how they approach their work with writers, especially international multilingual graduate writers. Although Brice mentioned that empathy in the writing center is often a lip-service issue, there is the need to consider Eli's point on how hierarchy within the writing center continues to influence writing instructional practices, including in the writing center. As explained earlier, if the writing center is considered as marginal or marginalized because most of their institutional roles and practices set them outside of regular academic life (Bergmann), then writing centers best understand what it feels like to be on the margins and how to challenge factors that constantly position writing centers on the margins of institutional hierarchy.

As such, employing empathy in writing center work is a critical move toward destabilizing the hierarchical formations that wittingly or unwittingly occur in the writing center, especially between international multilingual graduate writers and their writing consultants. Instead, a rhetorically empathetic practice would ask us to adjust our position to learn along with the writers, making ourselves vulnerable and trying to understand what motivates them (not just understand what they are saying). The essence of rhetorical empathy is an awareness of difference (in how we read and write the world). Therefore, rhetorically taking an empathetic stance is a critical effort that can help writing centers not only open up our understanding regarding how to approach writing differences but also open up possibilities for better ways to read and engage the writing assets international multilingual graduate writers bring to us.

Basically, the writing consultants who participated in this study deciphered that although their writing center training has equipped them with tools to ask the necessary questions and offer suggestions that will help writers understand how to make their own work stronger, they might require more training to do their work from a rhetorically empathetic stance. Whereas emotions cannot be taught in a way that the writing process would be taught, the writing center can achieve a culture of empathy. This culture of empathy can be achieved by recognizing its importance in writing center work and how operating within an institutional system (that continues to categorize writing differences from either a good or bad writing perspective) might make it difficult to fully actualize an empathetic stance. Beyond this, writing center administrators can also become more strategic in differentiating between 'feeling for' the writer and 'feeling with' the writer, and incorporating how this difference can be approached during writing consultations.

According to Blankenship, adopting a stance of rhetorical empathy is "vital for people with privilege; it is no longer an option" (11). She notes further that such a stance "can help those with little power and privilege sustain efforts to fight the status quo and to maintain perspective" (11). For instance, writing centers occupy a strategic position and possess some power and privilege in the academic institution, regardless of their marginalized considerations. Hence, incorporating rhetorical empathy as a critical part of writing center culture will enable us to advocate for our international multilingual graduate writers especially as they navigate the uncertainties and challenges of academic writing in the US. Not only that, a rhetorically empathetic stance will also afford us the framework to rethink the writing center's lore of making better writers. If we are ever going to meet our international multilingual graduate writers where they are and work with them to become better writers, rhetorical empathy offers us tools to become better writing consultants/tutors as well in that we are not only changing the writing practices of international multilingual graduate writers but we, as writing consultants, are being changed as well.

Reflecting on my engagement with the writing consultant participants in this study regarding rhetorical empathy, I submit that they are not able to articulate the meaning of rhetorical empathy and its place in the writing center culture probably because of their lack of awareness of the process and practices of navigating multiple language systems. Moreover, many participants do not have the multilingual/multicultural competence to function in more than one language, cultural and rhetorical systems. As a result, participants are not equipped with the tools to function empathetically and change the subject of knowledge production in academic

writing. Whereas in writing center theory and practice, the need to listen to the Other to transform our practice is prioritized, but how will this be achieved if we do not have more consultants who are constantly navigating multiple systems of language, culture, and rhetoric nor engage in tutor training on rhetorical empathy?

In conclusion, engaging in and enacting rhetorical empathy is difficult and requires a lot of hard work; however, it is important and achievable. That is why this study is a timely effort to incorporate rhetorical empathy into our practice as a critical means of engaging across writing differences, thereby acknowledging the value of writing centers as transnational sites and reinforcing an asset-based view of differences in our praxis. Essentially, as scholars continue to explore the values of transnational writing framework in the field of writing centers as well as rhetoric and composition, it is necessary to incorporate rhetorical empathy in the philosophy, and pedagogy of writing centers which this study has effectively described as a transnational site of engagement.

Concluding Remarks: Developing a Framework for Transnational Engagements in the Writing Center

To bring the discussion in this chapter to a close, it is imperative to examine the interrelationship that obtains among the transnational agents (namely, writing tutors and international multilingual graduate writers) in the transnational site of writing centers. Basically, I conceptualize the writing center–writing consultant–international multilingual graduate writers triangle as a conceptual framework for understanding and sustaining transnational engagements in the writing center. Each factor in this triangle is responsible for promoting transnational literacies as well as negotiated meaning-making practices across differences in language, culture, and rhetoric. Below is a figure that

depicts this triad of interrelationships with the most important transnational product (that is, writing differences) at the center.
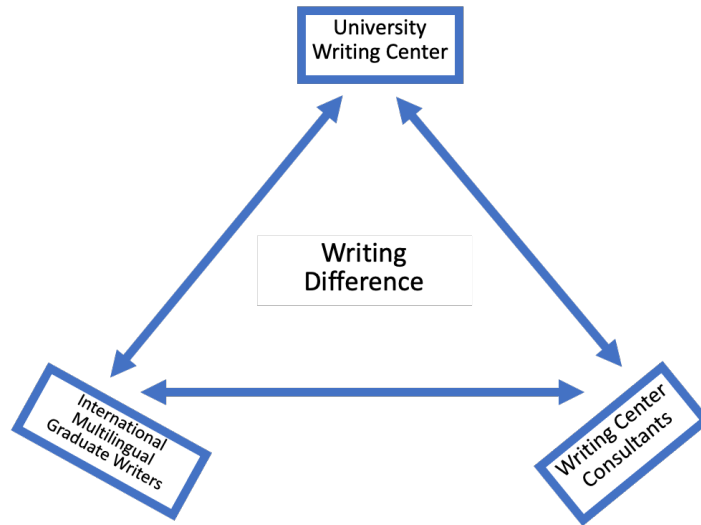

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for transnational engagement in the writing center

In the figure above, writing differences (manifested in terms of linguistic, cultural and rhetorical differences) is the instrumental link that connects both the transnational site with the transnational agents. It can also be seen from the arrows that the relationship between each part of the triad is dual-directional, a give-and-take situation where one box impacts and is impacted by the other. This interrelationship is further discussed below.

The university writing center impacts international multilingual graduate writers by offering a space where they can cultivate their academic writing practice in the US (and other relational issues) without the fear of being judged. As I have pointed out in this study, international multilingual graduate writers visit the writing center with a plethora of anxieties on how to navigate the US writing situation and the interventions provided by the writing center are crucial for impacting them and setting them up for

success in the US academic writing. Nevertheless, the writing center is impacted by international multilingual graduate writers because they not only afford writing centers an avenue to develop transnational literacies in writing center work but to also promote decolonial thinking in the writing centers.

Furthermore, there is an ongoing relationship between the writing center consultants and the writing center. However, the perspective this study contributes to this relationship reinforces the need for rethinking our practices as transnational resources for meaningful writing center work. Critical to this two-way relationship between the writing center as a transnational site of engagement and the writing center consultants (as transnational agents) is the requirement to provide the necessary tools to work with the transnational writing assets writers bring with them to the writing center. Basically, incorporating rhetorical empathy as a heuristic in the writing center pedagogical tool is a move toward empowering the consultants to become more aware of and engage with the translingual and intercultural competencies that international graduate writers bring to them in the writing center.

By becoming increasingly aware of these competencies, writing center tutors can better welcome and work with the manifestations of the writers' linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical assets. On the other hand, writing center consultants also impact practices in the writing center by centering writing differences at the core of its philosophy. For writing centers, centering writing differences goes beyond acknowledging and welcoming writers from different writing and national backgrounds. It also involves being impacted through the contributions and engagements of writing consultants from different language, cultural and rhetorical backgrounds. Such engagement will enable

writing centers to effectively deconstruct and transcend monolingual practices of academic writing instruction.

The two-way relationship between the writer consultants and international multilingual graduate writers is a critical mainstay in this triad of interrelationships within this conceptual transnational site. As this study has shown, both transnational agents impact and are impacted by each other. Whereas international multilingual graduate writers influence tutoring strategies through perspectives that transcend language, cultural and rhetorical boundaries, writing consultants, being the direct recipient of this influence, are able to interrogate, discourse and deconstruct the entrenched monolingual views of language standards. Welcoming and utilizing the writing assets international multilingual graduate writers bring to writing consultations is necessary for centering writing differences in writing center praxis not only to change the writers and make them become better writers but also to change the writing consultants and become better writing teachers.

As a framework for transnational engagements, I argue that writing differences is the primary component that drives the transnational practice in the writing center. Writing differences are manifested in how linguistic practices, cultural orientation and rhetorical awareness of international multilingual graduate writers intersect with the affordances of the US academic writing. Through this intersection, especially in the transnational site of writing centers, writing differences are foregrounded to challenge the dominant monolingual assumptions of writing as well as the binary thinking of the subject (writing consultants)/object (international multilingual) in terms of academic writing knowledge production during writing instruction. In essence, one of the best

practices necessary to work with international multilingual graduate writers is to make them legible as producers of meaning who leverage their writing assets during academic writing instructions. Moreover, it is imperative that this knowledge production is accommodated into the writing support offered by writing consultants. In so doing, not only are writing professionals (including writing teachers and consultants) able to change the subject of knowledge production from consultant to writer but they are also able to approach writing consultations from an asset-based perspective, which as I proposed in the introductory chapters, is a necessary component for an effective transnational writing pedagogy in the writing center.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The goal of this research project was to both explore how scholarship on transnational writing framework can be extended to the work we do in writing centers as well as how writing studies can be impacted by the writing assets possessed by the diverse population of students in US higher education, including international multilingual graduate writers. Extant scholarship in writing studies, especially on second language research/teaching (Harris and Silva, 1993; Morita, 2000, Bruce, 2009), translingual writing practices (Horner et al. 2011; Canagarajah, 2013; Ene, McIntosh, and Connor, 2019) and asset-based writing tutoring (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Shapiro and MacDonald, 2017, Coleman and Davis, 2020) has engaged issues of difference in language, race, culture, as well as funds of knowledge, highlighting the impacts of these differences on the academic success of non-native English speakers in US schools and colleges. My study was motivated due to the absence of critical effort to examine narratives of international multilingual graduate writers on how the manifestations of their writing assets can be better recognized and harnessed to ensure effective academic acclimatization to the US academic writing situation.

The inclination for this research was further entrenched when I discovered that the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) has also made such

curiosity about the values of transnational practices one of its foremost intellectual discourses. Specifically in 2017, the *CCCC released a Statement on Globalization in Writing Studies Pedagogy and Research*, charging writing researchers to extensively examine "how writing studies may transcend 'traditional' borders along national, cultural, or linguistic lines employing a variety of methods that foster responsive global exchanges among teachers and scholars of writing" (np). I consequently conceived of this statement as an opportunity to conduct and situate my research in the context of globally diverse sites (an institution within the US higher education system) and contribute valuable interventions on rethinking our academic writing practices to cater to an increasingly internationalized US higher education.

For my research project, I have chosen the Writing Center as the contextualized globally diverse site. As a diverse site, the Writing Center not only promotes engagements among people (writers and consultants) of different background but also welcome all writers and all learning styles, respecting writers' use of their home languages and world Englishes. As my study reveals, the Writing Center is a worthy transnational site of engagements about and beyond writing as it cultivates transnational literacy practices that empower both writing consultants and international multilingual graduate writers. Choosing the Writing Center as the contextualized site for this study was also guided by the assumption that writing centers are sometimes seen as marginal or marginalized because most of their institutional roles and practices set them outside of regular academic life (Bergmann, 160). My study is interested in the transnational writing assets possessed by international multilingual graduate writers (writers who are predominantly on the margins of US academic writing practices), correlating the

experiences of both the transnational site (the Writing Center) and transnational agents (international multilingual graduate writers) in terms of the practices of navigating life on the margins affords the undeniable possibility for reimagining the theory, philosophy, and practice of writing centers.

Generally, the analyses of participants' data (both interviews with writers and focus group discussions with consultants) reveal the need to rethink how writing centers are imagined, including the work we do in the writing center. Specifically, reimagining the center as a transnational site where linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences are navigated as well as rethinking the roles of the writers and consultants as transnational agents in this site affords us the opportunity to engage across differences and successfully connect better with writers, including international multilingual graduate writers. The findings of this study show that international multilingual graduate writers, through their writing education and orientation prior to encountering academic writing in the US, have acquired writing skills and strategies to help them cope with various writing situations. I have termed these strategies as transnational writing assets in this research. The idea of transnational writing assets emanates from the understanding that international multilingual graduate writers operating within the US academic writing situation are transnational entities who have not only crossed racial, national, and ethnic borders but also language, cultural, and rhetorical borders in their academic pursuits in the US. The shifting writing practices and differences in writing orientation warranted by the transnational movement, therefore, means that international multilingual graduate writers necessarily need to leverage their understanding of how writing works in their native context to devise strategies to cope with their new academic writing situation in the US.

Their transnational experiences regarding language, rhetoric, and culture become assets that they invest in their writing practices, both while working on their writing or talking about their writing.

Beyond this conceptualization of transnational writing assets, my research study explored the manifestations of international multilingual graduate writers' assets during writing situations and how writing instructors can better work with the manifestations of these assets. Reckon that the notion of asset confers the power on the possessor of said assets to determine who sees which of their writing assets, for how long, and what anyone who sees them can do with them. Hence, for writing centers (as well as writing practitioners) to critically achieve the goal of supporting writers from diverse writing backgrounds, there is a need to pause and reflect on our practices in efforts to figure out the best ways to welcome, honor, and engage the manifestations of the writing assets possessed by writers, especially international multilingual graduate writers.

From analyses of interviews with international multilingual graduate writers, I found out that they share their stories and vulnerabilities about writing with their writing consultants without restriction when they feel like the consultant has created an atmosphere that welcomes, honors, and meaningfully engages their stories. From their stories, writing consultants would understand and interrogate the underlying writing assets possessed by the writers. For instance, in Chapter 3, international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this study mentioned linguistic assets such as avoidance strategy in writing; rhetorical assets such as resembling existing writing forms; and cultural assets of conceiving writing as a story-telling form as strategies they employ to cope with the academic writing situation in the US. Working with this understanding, I

conclude that writing professionals must rethink their work with international multilingual graduate writers by adopting an asset-based writing tutoring approach. By approaching writing instructions from a standpoint that welcomes a discussion of their writing assets, these international multilingual graduate writers tend to allow us as writing professionals to see the writing assets that work for them and guide us on what we can do with these assets.

Reflecting on my interactions with the writing consultants, I conclude that consultants must reimagine their approach of connecting with the transnational writing assets exhibited by international multilingual graduate writers during writing instructions. I submit that adopting rhetorical empathy is critical for responding to this call to action. Operating within the ambits of rhetorical empathy means that consultants are equipped with heuristic tools for not only changing the writers to become better writers and producers of good writing but also becoming changed in the way we feel with (and not feel for) the transnational experiences of international multilingual graduate writers. As detailed in Chapter 4, while a multilingual/multicultural competence is evidently important to function empathetically, acknowledging the need to adjust our positions during writing instruction, learning along with the writers, making ourselves vulnerable and trying to understand what motivates them (not just understand what they are saying) is a valuable step toward rhetorical empathy. In so doing, writing centers can begin to open up more possibilities and better ways to read and engage the writing assets international multilingual graduate writers bring with them.

My research also adds international multilingual graduate writers' narratives of actual experience with writing instructions to the growing body of research on supporting

(international) multilingual graduate students in writing centers. First, my study is motivated by my personal experience as an international multilingual who not only found the Writing Center as a site of incredible academic support but also had to quickly figure out how to extend similar support to other international multilingual students I encounter within and outside of the Writing Center space because of my transnational identity. In Chapter 4, I reported that the transnational space ties people and places together across borders to create opportunities. Through specific comments made by writing consultants, one of the opportunities created is that both the writers and consultants can bring their (meta-linguistic and innate) awareness of how language works during the writing engagement. This implication could be taken as a heuristic for generating tutor-training questions for consultants to think through as they hope to negotiate multi-level meaning-making activities such as lexical/structural appropriateness and error analysis during consultations.

Furthermore, this research project also supports scholarship on transnational writing in that my findings contribute to the conversations on what differences in translingual practices, and intercultural orientations of international multilingual students mean for their adaptation to and success in the US academic writing. Adopting a transnational perspective in writing studies is gradually becoming influential because it affords the field a framework for transcending monolingual practices in writing education and prioritizing human connectedness through various accents, styles, and uses of language in everyday life and culture. What this means essentially for the field is that instead of the difficulties experienced by international students in their negotiation of

monolingual practices, their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences should be approached as matters to be welcome, respected, and appreciated.

To these ends, another major finding of this project proposes that conversations on writing support should move away from the notion of "something missing" and consistently move toward "something available" in the writing practices of students, including international multilingual students. To achieve this proposal, both writing practitioners and students would come together and understand their roles as transnational agents, and critically deconstruct the influences that shaped their way of thinking and writing as a way to challenge the binary frames of native/non-native and Western/non-Western orientation of writing. This need to rethink and challenge the monolingual norms makes Ghimire and Wright (2021) assert that transnational efforts are difficult. Nevertheless, one of the benefits of adopting transnational practices in writing classrooms or writing centers is that every agent within the transnational site is open to learning more Englishes as well as how writing works in those language systems. To this end, my intervention of rhetorical empathy in this research can serve as a potent heuristic tool to navigate the complexities of transnational writing classrooms, especially in the field of rhetoric and composition.

Though my research project primarily focused on transnational engagements in writing center work, my study also highlights a crucial implication of rhetorical empathy as a conceptual framework for transnational research and teaching of writing in the field of rhetoric and composition. Scholarship on rhetorical empathy focuses on changing the subject as means of being critically aware of the necessity of difference (Eric Leake, 2016; Blankenship, 2019). The findings of my research project extend this rhetorical

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empathetic approach in that it centers writing differences as transnational assets that the international multilingual (graduate) students utilize to for producing knowledge of academic writing. Essentially, when the subject of producing knowledge of academic writing is changed to the students, writing and composition instructors are able to approach writing education from an asset-based perspective, a necessary component for an effective transnational writing pedagogy in composition studies.

While it is understood that the dynamics of working one-on-one with writers in the Writing Center space is different from teaching 20-25 students in a writing classroom, the findings of my study are still applicable to writing instructors (and the writing classroom). Basically, instructors can start to rethink their curriculum to include more readings that highlight the personal stories of transnational authors and encourage students to write from their transnational experiences, offering multiple perspectives to understanding a certain writing topic based on their linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical experiences. Many of the international multilingual graduate writer participants in this study highlight how they enact the rhetorical act of resembling the writing style, tone, and structure of established scholars who had written about a similar topic they are exploring. What this means for our students when we create a transnational experience for them is that they can easily be encouraged to write effectively based on a similar model they have read or discoursed during classroom engagements.

Likewise, cultivating transnational practices in the classroom means providing empathetic feedback on students' drafts. Empathetic feedback approaches students' writing projects by putting ourselves in the shoes of the students, welcoming their views (even though we might not agree with them) as one of the many possibilities for

understanding a concept—what I explained in Chapter 4 as focusing on something available. Moreover, acknowledging the possibilities of such multiple perspectives initially makes it easy for our students to also welcome and work with the feedback we offer without the feeling of being judged. In so doing, instructors are able to create an atmosphere of trust in which every student understands that they can share their views, stories, and motivation, especially as they navigate the transnational writing space. Similarly, such an atmosphere of trust also enables instructors to learn along with the students, making themselves vulnerable by listening and trying to understand what motivates them (not just understanding what they are saying/writing).

Finally, the implications of my study generally point to a radical change in our teaching practices, especially the teaching of college writing in US higher education in that they highlight the importance of developing and facilitating multilingual writing/composition classrooms. A multilingual writing classroom is just not another section of college writing like the ESL section, rather the composition classroom is developed as a transnational space that welcomes students from across boundaries of language, culture, and rhetoric. I believe the field of rhetoric and composition studies is increasingly working on this path as many institutions seem to be discontinuing the developmental writing section in which some international multilingual students are placed. Nevertheless, to genuinely achieve the goal of internationalizing our writing classrooms and firmly eradicating monolingual writing education, composition studies is charged to make all college writing sections to be multilingual to allow for holistic cross-fertilization of academic knowledge/experience that engages linguistic, cultural, and

rhetorical differences. Basically, the most valuable thing we can do for our students as writing teachers is to embrace transnational writing practices[5].

Limitation of Study

Reflecting on my experiences throughout this research project, I understand that there are possible grey areas that might limit the generalizability of my research findings; nevertheless, I am enthusiastic about the applicability of the research findings to not only writing center work but also to composition classrooms generally. Moreover, I hope that outlining these grey areas might be helpful to scholars conducting similar projects in the future. First, I understand that international multilingual graduate writers do not have homogenized profiles since their experiences and relationship with writing differs. My interactions with the international multilingual graduate writers who participated in this research reveal this consideration as well. Having writers from different regions/continents, including Africa, Asia, and South America in this study may have warranted that I am not able to explore the detailed nuances of their prior writing education/orientation viz-a-viz their writing experiences in the US and how that influences their academic success. To mitigate this challenge, I could have recruited participants from similar countries or regions while describing (and outlining the strategy to reach out to) the population for this study. For instance, I could have looked at the data of international students at the University of Louisville and focused my research on probably the fastest-growing international population in the institution. Such effort would

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[5] To explore the strategies for creating and embracing a multilingual writing classroom, read Ordeman, William, ed. Creating a transnational space in the first-year writing classroom. Vernon Press, 2021. It is an edited collection that has varying topics on creating transnational spaces through course design and ethnographic reflection. It also includes issues of transnational assignment design.

have enabled me to identify the commonalities in their writing experiences and develop a more comprehensive understanding of their writing assets.

Another measure I would have adopted is to conduct a longitudinal study of my participants, for example over a course of a school year. However, due to the constraint of time, I could only engage my participants over a period of a semester. Approaching my study from this methodological approach would have enabled me to track the developments and/or changes in the writing behavior of international multilingual graduate writers as well as in the tutoring behavior of writing consultants. Likewise, a longer time with the writing consultants who participated in this research would have meant that they are well knowledgeable about the theoretical framework guiding the study. If I had to redo this, I would plan my time appropriately so I can ensure I sort out every factor (such as funding and IRB considerations) that would enable me to start the research process early. Likewise, I would have incorporated more readings on issues of rhetorical empathy during my guest lectures in the ENGL 604 course.

Finally, a small sample size of 5 international multilingual graduate writers and 5 writing consultants means that a relatively small amount of generalizable conclusions can be drawn from the study. Looking back, I would have focused more energy on participant recruitment, sharing details of the project not only electronically via email LISTSERVS but also by visiting different in-person gatherings of international multilingual graduate students to talk about my research study. Nevertheless, I am thankful for those who willingly participated in my research and helped to make sense of how the field of writing studies and writing center can better serve and promote the experiences of international multilingual students in US institutions of higher education.

Looking Forward: Suggestions for Future Research

Transnational writing practices ask us to recognize, negotiate with, deconstruct, and transcend national, ethnic, and racial boundaries in the teaching of academic writing. Scholars have identified such practice as a move toward decolonizing academic writing pedagogy (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Agboka, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). A view that relates to my research study was raised by Canagarajah (2023), who affirms that "decolonization practices make space for various languages and cultures by linking underlying knowledge systems" (3). In recent times, there has been an increasing move toward examining a reflexive framework that promotes decolonizing work in the writing center. Hence, in the future, I plan to contribute to scholarship on decolonizing writing center work by researching the transnational literacies that narratives of international multilingual graduate writers afford our theory and practices in the writing center.

Furthermore, rhetorical empathy is a valuable tool for driving transnational practices both in the writing centers and writing classrooms. Blankenship also alludes to how instructors can initially adopt a "fake-it-till-you-make-it approach" since a direct empathetic approach may not be deeply ingrained in some people but could through habit such empathetic practice can be formed (9). In contrast, one of the writing consultants who participated in this study mentioned that as humans you are either empathetic or not empathetic. Hence, future research can explore and/or complicate the concept of developing the nature of empathy during writing instructions. Also, if empathy is as rhetorical and valuable as I have argued in this study, future research can examine the labor requirement of feeling with (being empathetic) the experiences and concerns of our students considering the time and mental energy exerted to achieve such practice.

Lastly, future research can look into the differences in analyzing qualitative data derived from interviews and focus group discussions. The dynamics of a research interview and its one-on-one nature means that the researcher and the study participant can go in-depth while attempting to address an interview question. However, since focus group discussions always involve multiple people, it might be difficult to go as in-depth as it obtains in interviews, especially if you want to ensure that no one participant dominates the discussion and that everyone shares their views in equal proportion. Hence, future research can explore these dynamics and offer strategies for equitable practice in both qualitative means of data collection.

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Adepoju, Olalekan T. Discourse functions of modal verbs 'will and shall' in Christian
prayers. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies.* 2:4. (2016a): 1096-1107

Adepoju, Olalekan T. Euphemistic metaphor in Nigerian newspaper obituary
announcements. *Ife Studies in English Linguistics.* 12:1. (2016b): 69-80

Book reviews

Adepoju, Olalekan T. (2022). [Book Review of "Internationalizing the Writing Center: A
Guide for Developing a Multilingual Writing Center," Noreen Groover Lape, Parlor
Press LLC (2020), p. 205.] *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 55, 100878.

Adepoju Olalekan T. 2021. "Students- how to put your PhD to work: A collaborative
book review". Published by Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and
Collaboratory (HASTAC).
https://www.hastac.org/blogs/dgreatlekan/2021/03/16/chapter-5-students-how-
put-your-phd-work 2021

Non-peer review works

Adepoju Olalekan T. Listening to Learn: Tutoring Unfamiliar Writing Genre. Published in
University Writing Center Blog.
https://uoflwritingcenter.com/2022/04/11/listening-to-learn-tutoring-unfamiliar-
writing-genre/ 2022.

Adepoju Olalekan T. "ENGL 101: Narrating the Argument Essay (Adapted from Rachel
Rodriguez's Assignment)." Cardinal Compositions 4 (1). (2020): 11.

Adepoju Olalekan T. "Rethinking tutor-writer engagement in asynchronous consultations: A conversational approach to recurring written feedback appointments." Published in *The Dangling Modifier.* https://sites.psu.edu/thedanglingmodifier/category/fall-2020/page/3/. 2020.

Adepoju Olalekan T. Writing Center Tutoring in the Time of Pandemic: A Focus on Written Feedback as a Conversational Space. Published in University Writing Center Blog. https://uoflwritingcenter.com/2020/09/08/writing-center-tutoring-in-the-time-of-pandemic-a-focus-on-written-feedback-as-a-conversational-space/ 2020.

Adepoju Olalekan T. Rethinking Writing in the Digital Age: Implications for Writing Center Tutoring. Published in University Writing Center Blog. https://uoflwritingcenter.com/2019/11/18/rethinking-writing-in-the-digital-age-implications-for-writing-center-tutoring/ 2019.

Conference Presentations

"Understanding the ideological force of graduate application materials: A rhetorical genre study of personal statement prompts" Accepted for co-presentation with Joseph Sharp at Conference on College Composition and Communication, February. 2023.

"The future of our field: engaging international graduate students' narratives about writing practices from a transnational perspective." Accepted for presentation at Conference on College Composition and Communication, February. 2023.

"Mobilizing/Engaging international graduate writers' lingual-cultural assets during writing consultation: A transnational approach to writing center practices" International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Online Collaborative Conference, March 2022

"Linguistic Politeness in Asynchronous Writing Center Consultation: A Focus on the Headnote Genre" National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW), November 2021

"Spatial Metaphors in Official Mission Statements of Humanities and STEM-related Disciplines in Select ACC Schools" Conference on College Composition and Communication, April 2021. (Presentation accepted for original conference program but was dropped for program adjustments made due to COVID-19 pandemic)

"Discursive Practices in Asynchronous Consultation: Implications for Peer Tutoring" Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference, February 2021

"Question and Response Strategies on Social Media: An Analysis of Deviations among Netgens" International Conference on the Humanities and Development in Africa, organized by the Department of History, University of Ibadan. July, 2017

"Handling Public Faces: A Discursive Analysis of 2015 Presidential Media Chat" Faculty of Arts Third Biennial International Conference, University of Ibadan on 'Polity Debacle and the Burden of Being in Africa'. March 2017

Teaching and Tutoring Experience

University of Louisville
Department of English, Classes Taught
ENGL 102: Introduction to College Writing—ESL section (Fall 2022)
- Freshman research writing course specially designed for ESL populations; focused on persuasive writing, explanatory writing, and popular culture

ENGL 306: Business Writing—Asynchronous Online (Summer 2022)
- Junior-level online writing course focused on the rhetorical construction and circulation of business documents for diverse audiences.

ENGL 102: Intermediate College Writing—Asynchronous Online (Summer 2020)
- Freshman online research writing course focused on the research process, including qualitative research design and methodologies.

ENGL 102: Intermediate College Writing (Spring 2020)
- Freshman writing course focused on the research process, including research design and methodologies.

ENGL 101: Introduction to College Writing (Fall 2019)
- Freshman writing course focused on persuasive writing, explanatory writing, and information literacy.

English Studies (De Overcomers Model College, Ibadan, Nigeria)
- Senior-level secondary school class in Nigeria focused on preparing students for passing the West African standardized test called West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

University Writing Center, University of Louisville (2019- 2022)
- Consulted individually with graduate and undergraduate students on writing of all types at different stages of the writing process either synchronously or asynchronously.
- Worked with a team of 15 other consultants who collectively conducted 1200 onsite and online sessions for students and faculty of the institution in the 2019/2020 academic session

Certifications and Professional Training
Writing Response-ably: Training for Graduate Students. Watson Conference, University of Louisville, 2021
Cultivating Digital Literacy. Issued by Adobe, 2021
Online Writing Instruction, Issued by University of Louisville Composition Program, 2019

Administration

University of Louisville
Assistant Director of Writing Center for Graduate Student Writing (2020 – 2022)

- Mentored new Writing Center tutors. Facilitated faculty and graduate student writing groups.
- Planned and coordinated writing center events such Dissertation Writing Retreats.
- Designed and led presentations on writing topics (audience ranging from 10-50).
- Collaborated with director to deliver guest lectures in the Writing Center Theory and Practice class.
- Updated the writing center website with resources for dissertation writers.

Service

University of Louisville
Graduate Ambassador, University of Louisville Graduate School
Graduate Student Co-coordinator, Discourse and Semiotics Workshop
LCLC Conference Session Chair, 49th Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900.
Review Editor, Cardinal Compositions
Peer Mentor, Department of English, University of Louisville

Academic Profession
Bedford New Scholars Advisory Board Member, Macmillan Learning, USA
Reviewer/Assistant Editor, International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education
Reviewer, Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis
Proposal Reviewer, 2022 NTCE Annual Convention Proposals
Graduate Student Representative, Non-native English-Speaking Writing Instructors (NNESWI), USA
Research Fellow, University of Ibadan Research Foundation, Nigeria

Louisville Metro
Adult Exchange ESL Instructor, Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM)

Scholarship, Academic Awards and Honors

Scholarship and Academic Award
- **Graduate Student Scholarship***,* School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, (2019-2022)
- **GNAS Research Grant,** Graduate Network in Arts and Sciences, University of Louisville (2022)
- **MAGS Research Grant***,* Multicultural Association of Graduate Students, University of Louisville (2022)
- **Graduate Merit Award***,* University of Louisville Graduate School (2019-2022)
- **Bedford New Scholar***,* Macmillan Learning (2022- 2023)
- **Presidential Diversity Supplement Award** (2022)

Awarded to students whose research or other professional development contributes to or is centered on diversity and inclusion.
- **Ben Rafoth Graduate Research Grant** (2022)
  International Writing Centers Association funds for graduate research
- **Academic Merit Award, National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing** (2021)
  Awarded to emerging scholars based on academic merit and relevance of research to the way the writing center field may change in the future
- **HASTAC Scholar**, Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (2020-2022)

Honors and Recognition
- **Graduate Students Dean Recognition, University of Louisville** (2022)
  Recognition for dedication to professional development and success as graduate student

- **Certificate of Excellence, University of Louisville Graduate School** (2022)
  Recognition for academic milestone of doctoral candidacy and being in good standing towards the completion of the doctorate degree
- **Student Champion, University of Louisville** (2021)
  Award presented by the President, University of Louisville, in recognition of going beyond and above expectations to provide support to students in the university.

Workshops

"Making it work: Navigating agency while exploring new research practices during pandemic" (Presenter). *Organized by University of Bristol School of Education, England. May 17, 2022*

"Grant Writing Workshop" (Facilitator). *Organized by Graduate School, University of Louisville. March 7, 2022*

"Academic Writing: Strategies and Resources for Science Writers" (Presenter). *Organized by Doctor of Nursing Practice Students Advisory Council. February 17, 2022*

"CV/Resume Workshop" (Facilitator). *Organized by School of Public Health & Information Sciences. November 15, 2021*

"Introducing Writing Center in the Health Science Campus" (Presenter). *Organized for PhD students in School of Public Health & Information Sciences. September 20, 2021*

"Literature Review Workshop" (Facilitator). *Organized by Graduate School, University of Louisville. February 10, 2021*

Professional References

Dr. Bronwyn Williams
Professor and Endowed Chair in
Rhetoric and Composition
Director, University Writing Center
University of Louisville
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Dr. Andrea Olinger
Associate Professor and Director of
Composition
Department of English
University of Louisville
502-852-3051
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Dr. Michele Foster
Professor and Henry Heuser Jr Endowed
Chair for Urban Education
University of Louisville
510-592-4546
michfost@gmail.com