

1-1-2013

Student and Instructor Perceptions of the Use of Online Translators in English Composition

Caroline L. Baker

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Student and instructor perceptions of the use of online translators in English Composition

By

Caroline L. Baker

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts
in English
in the Department of English

Mississippi State, Mississippi

May 2013

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2013

Student and instructor perceptions of the use of online translators in English Composition

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Title of Study: Student and instructor perceptions of the use of online translators in English Composition

Pages in Study: 108

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Given recent calls for university composition policies that are informed by the actual practices and populations of students at a given institution (Tardy, 2011), this study investigated student and instructor perceptions and attitudes toward using online translators (e.g., Google Translate or Babelfish) for composition assignments. The study analyzed interview data from four international students and three English composition instructors to understand how the use of online translators was explained, justified, and contextualized by these two groups. This study revealed that although both students and instructors believed that online translators afforded an opportunity for language learning, the participants still aligned with dominant ideologies of plagiarism and were wary of the use of these services. In conclusion to the study, recommendations were made for instructors to moderate more in-class discussions about the use of technology during the writing process and to define the appropriate and inappropriate uses of such technology more clearly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Lyn Fogle who has taught, encouraged, and directed me at every stage of writing this thesis from brainstorming to completion. Her patience, insight, and persistence have not only refined this piece of writing but have also refined me as a writer and as a scholar. I hope this thesis reflects the invaluable education she has given me.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Ginger Pizer and Dr. Rich Raymond, for their comments and feedback that helped me polish this piece of writing. I am leaving the English Department with the utmost gratitude for the professors, instructors, lecturers, and teaching assistants, all of whom have helped shape me into the teacher, student, scholar, and person I am today. Their support for every phase of this project has overwhelmed me. This thesis would not exist without the encouragement of Dr. Shalyn Claggett whose mentorship allowed me to see the potential and the desire within myself to undertake this task. In the same vein, I would not even be in graduate school without the support of Dr. Tommy Anderson who fostered a drive in me to learn from the very beginning of my English studies.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me a love of language and learning at a very young age.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In English composition classes over the past three decades, technology has demanded that certain teaching practices change (Selfe & Selfe 1994). Stapleton (2010) identified a wide range of digital composing practices (Wikipedia, Google Scholar, spellchecker and grammar checker, thesaurus, concordance, online dictionary, online translators etc.) that have quickly become available to students and have had to be incorporated into the Composition curriculum. The advent of these new technologies has affected changes in methods for teaching English Composition as the ways in which learners engage with writing processes have changed (McGee & Ericcson, 2002). Changes in technology and the ready availability of online resources have also instigated new discussions about language policy and the definitions of plagiarism in university composition classes. All students have many resources (both digital and physical) available when composing. More specifically, as university composition classrooms become increasingly multilingual due to the recruitment of both international students and U.S. students who regularly use more than one language (Matsuda, 2006), teachers must consider how second language writers navigate an abundance of resources including dictionaries, thesauruses, and translators. Although some research has promoted discussing the use of digital tools (such as spellcheck) explicitly in class (McGee &

Ericsson, 2002), practices such as the use of online translators by second language writers while composing often goes unmentioned in the literature. Furthermore, instructors may be less educated on the practices of second language writers and ask themselves which practices should be allowed or encouraged.

One practice that second language writers are known to engage in, but has been little studied, is the use of online translators (such as Google Translate) to facilitate writing essays and compositions in English. The use of online translators poses a conundrum for English composition students and instructors because it can be potentially interpreted as a type of plagiarism (or “unauthorized assistance”ⁱ) while at the same time it may provide potential benefits for language learning and the writing process second language writers (Garcia & Pena, Niño, 2009; 2011; Pena, 2011; and Williams, 2006). In fact, in cases where a student might be the only speaker of his or her first language in the English Department, resources such as translators can be vital since first language support is not possible. This study addresses these questions by analyzing interview data from international students who self identified as having used online translators for English composition classes and English composition instructors who have worked with international students. The study examines how online translator use is explained, justified, and contextualized by these two groups in order to inform composition policies and encourage students to learn writing skills that will be useful outside of the composition classroom. In doing this, the study carefully analyzes participants’ discourse about the use of online translators and reveals their alignments toward dominant ideologies of plagiarism. Further, the study situates the practice of online translation into a larger body of research on digital composing practices to better understand students’

practices and ideologies in the twenty-first century classroom. Additionally, this study acknowledges and documents the presence of multilingual students in composition classrooms and encourages instructors to align teaching practices with current research in the field.

Second language writing

Students who are enrolled in a composition class of a language that is not their first language can be described as second language writers (Matsuda, 1999). Language backgrounds of second language writers may vary; some students may have been educated in U.S. high schools (also referred to as Generation 1.5 students), and some may be international students living in the U.S. while receiving a college degree. Because of varying backgrounds, second language writers enrolled in composition may have different understandings of expectations and acceptable practices when writing essays. Similarly, the needs and goals of second language writers enrolled in composition may vary. Ideally, composition instructors would adjust teaching practices to better meet the needs of multilingual students who might be in the process of learning English but also have more linguistic resources to draw from than monolingual students.

The presence of second language writers in mainstream composition classrooms is growing, but this growth is not always acknowledged by the administrators of composition programs who often do not have training or a background in second language writing. Matsuda (2006) identified several ways that mainstream composition programs “deal” with ESL students, including ignoring the issue altogether, weeding out ESL students in the admission process, using a composition placement system, or outsourcing the teaching of ESL students to writing centers or other similar resources.

These strategies work together to make it appear as if language issues are not an issue in the mainstream composition classroom, a phenomenon that Matsuda termed “linguistic containment” (p. 641). Whether or not second language writers are acknowledged by composition programs, many composition instructors are teaching second language writers (Matsuda, 2006, p. 637). Additionally, very few universities adequately prepare composition instructors to deal with ESL students (Matsuda, 2006). This lack of training, according to Matsuda (2006), stems from what he has identified as the “myth of linguistic homogeneity,” or the “tacit and widespread acceptance of the dominant image of composition students as native speakers of a privileged variety of English” (p. 638). Recognizing the needs and practices of second language writers may help to change the misconception of the English-only demographic of composition classrooms.

One way that composition programs could begin to acknowledge second language writers is through policies that take the needs of these students into account. Tardy (2011) stressed the importance of composition programs “reflecting on what they do and why they do it in relation to language” in order to “better represent their language practices and beliefs through active language management” (p. 655). Tardy encouraged composition programs to have written statements informed by the actual practices of students and instructors at a particular institution. She encouraged research at the local level to inform policies; for example, she discussed one way that the needs of multilingual students might be met by allowing the use of multiple languages while drafting or even the use of multiple languages in the final draft at her institution. These local language policies may be explicit, such as policies found on the syllabus, or they may be implicit policies that are not written down but rather are found in “underlying

ideologies and practices, thereby often referred to as ‘tacit’ or ‘de facto’ policies” (Tardy, 2011, p. 639). Online translators may be one site in composition program policies where there is a disconnect between second language writers and composition instructors. For example, instructors might understand the use of online translators to be unhelpful and even outside of the bounds of academic integrity, while students might find it useful and acceptable. Studying the use of online translators will provide better insight to the composing practices of second language writers, allowing teachers to make more informed decisions regarding composition policies.

Literacy (and composition instruction) as a social practice

This study takes a practice approach to literacy in which “reading and writing are ... located within the real social and linguistic practices that give them meaning, rather than, ... as in much educational discourse, represented in idealized and prescriptive terms” (Street, 1995, p. 3). The use of online translators is a literacy practice in the students’ day-to-day lives. Applying Street’s approaches to the composition practices of second language writers in composition classes, we can consider how students *are* composing rather than focusing on how students *should* be composing. By looking at how students already use literacy skills, teachers could help students bridge the gap between day-to-day practices and the expectations of academic writing. For example, students might use online translators (among other digital resources) when communicating online, and only when participating in academic discourse communities do they find the use of them to be questionable. Because of the accessibility of online translators, I anticipated students using online translators when communicating through social networking sites and also when browsing the internet. However, what I found and

what I demonstrate in the analysis below is that students understand that using online translators effectively requires a certain skill set. There are understood limitations of these services and understood benefits among students who use these services. There is also an understanding among users of which services are most effective and easiest to access. However, knowledge of the permissibility of online translator use for academic work, if it is permissible, varies.

Composition teachers have choices to make regarding online translators: allow or forbid, encourage or discourage. In addition to investigating students' perceptions, this study also uncovers the underlying ideologies informing the perceptions of these services. Although studying the perceptions of this practice may seem like a narrow focus as it magnifies only one composing practice out of many, it may provide a view into how teachers perceive second language writers and if they are aware of their presence in the classroom. This study can also give instructors information about how the services are perceived by students, which can in turn inform their policies. Although one focus of the study is looking at online translators in order to consider local language policies as Tardy (2011) promoted, the use of online translators also engages broader topics such as the connection between literacy and technology, the writing processes of second language writers, and also academic discourse socialization.

Academic language/discourse socialization

In keeping with a practice oriented approach, the use of online translators can also be seen as a form of language socialization. Second language writers, like many other composition students, must be socialized into their academic discourse communities (and this process is often collaborative and conflicted as novices can socialize experts) (Duff,

2007). Writing for academic purposes requires a different variety of English than the variety of English used on social networking sites or other forms of written communication. Students must learn the appropriate vocabulary, register, structure, and conventions of academic English. In a study of Japanese women enrolled in a university in Canada, Morita (2004) highlighted the importance of students negotiating identities and language competence in order to participate in those communities. The use of online translators may be one resource that second language writers utilize to help them participate in academic discourse communities.

One strand of research relevant to the current study investigates academic language socialization from the perspective of plagiarism and transgressive citing practices. Because citation is a discursive convention, citation is also a site of socialization; failure to cite correctly can signal one's identity as outsider. However, students, through practice and correction from experts, can learn this convention. Several studies have suggested that incorrect citations that often lead to plagiarism accusations are an important part of the learning process: students learn to cite through trial and error (Abasi, Akbari, & Graves 2006; Nilsson, Eklof, & Ottosson 2009; and Pecorari, 2003). These studies advocate for more leeway for students who are learning to write within the academy. Some students negotiate discursive identities associated with their citation behaviors through performance. Harwood and Petric (2011) found that students could enact various roles through their citing behaviors in order to match the expectations of their teachers. That is, they might cite sources that they did not consult in order to appear as well-read or informed writers to their audience. Similar to students' use or misuse of

citation, the use of online translators may be denied (or admitted) by students to meet their teachers' expectations.

Academic language socialization is not restricted to just the classroom. Nam and Beckett (2011) identified various on-campus resources used by second language writers in language socialization such as writing workshops, writing centers, other forms of tutoring, advisors, and faculty. Nam and Beckett found, however, that students often were hesitant to go to peers and teachers for help, preferring instead solitary activities like reading and writing, which provide a method of self-socialization. There are also digital resources available, and Stapleton (2010, 2012) identified the new resources available to second language writers as they transition from pen-and-paper composing to digital composing. Stapleton generated a questionnaire about electronic resource use that 30 ESL graduate students completed and found that students were relying on digital resources to “plan, translate and revise, i.e., compose different from the way they would have written in a pen and paper [environment]” (p. 164). Online translators may be one resource to help students participate in academic discourse communities as a tool of self-socialization that can be practiced in private and is easily accessible.

Translation services have had a significant presence online for over a decade; their convenience and accessibility have only increased their popularity (Gaspari & Hutchins, 2007). There is a significant body of research about the benefits and dangers of the use of these services by foreign language students. Not only is the use of online translators debated, the use of translation or the use of a student's first language is also contested. However, several studies on second language writing have suggested that use of a student's first language, either in written or mental translation or in prewriting, is a

beneficial strategy for language learners (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Liao, 2006; Uzawa, 1996; Woodall, 2002). Similarly, some research has identified the use of online translators as a useful learning tool for writing as it provides a type of scaffolding when composing (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Pena, 2011). Other researchers have claimed that manipulating text generated by online translators increases language awareness (Niño, 2009; Williams, 2006), another important aspect of language learning. Despite findings that online translator use can facilitate language learning, some researchers have questioned whether or not it constitutes plagiarism (Harris, 2011; Somers, Gaspari, & Niño 2005). Because translation is often an integral part of foreign language classrooms, outsourcing homework to online translators circumvents the purpose of some assignments by having the machine do the work for the student. Despite attention to online translators in the foreign language learning research, there is little to no research done on the use of online translators in the context of composition classes. Because translation is not part of composition curricula (i.e. students are not often asked to translate as part of the composition class), the threat of plagiarism in this context seems incongruous because students are not outsourcing their homework to a machine. However, this conflict between online translators as a tool for language learner and online translators as an instrument of plagiarism is still present in the composition context.

With this discussion as a backdrop, this study examines the use of online translators to provide insight into the digital composing practices and academic discourse socialization of second language writers. More specifically, this study sought to answer three questions:

1. What motivates second language writers to utilize online translators for composition?
2. How do students and instructors talk about the use of online translators?
3. What are the ideologies that underlie this talk?

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide the background research for the study. In developing this study, research on second language writers in composition and on language policies in composition was considered in addition to studying academic discourse socialization and digital composing practices. Finally, research on online translators was gathered in order to better understand the practice. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative study which analyzed interviews of four composition students and three instructors. Chapter 4 provides the discussion of the student and the instructor interviews in which I discuss recommendations for training instructors based on the findings of the data analysis. Chapter 5 provides implications and conclusion and situates the findings more globally in understanding second language writing practices in the digital age.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying the use of online translators in composition classroom is interdisciplinary in nature and can thus be contextualized with research from the fields of both composition and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) /applied linguistics. This chapter attempts to situate the practice first into the larger issue of how composition programs deal with the presence of second language writers. I then discuss the use of online translators as a tool for language learning in order to demonstrate how students might benefit from this practice and how we, as teachers, can encourage students to best use the resources available to them. Finally, I will consider how the academic discourse socialization of second language writers is both similar to and different from their monolingual peers in composition and how the use of online translators can be considered a digital composing practice.

For many monolingual English speakers in the U.S., it seems commonsense that composition classes be taught in English. However, as I've already described, there has been significant work done by institutions in order to minimize language difference in U.S. composition classroom (Matsuda 2007). Matsuda suggested that this "linguistic containment" can happen through the admissions process, through composition placement (ESL courses and remedial courses), and through referring students to the

writing center when issues do arise. Because of this “myth of linguistic homogeneity,” many composition programs are not training instructors to teach second language writers (Matsuda, 2006, p. 638).

Such a myth can be disproven at institutions by local research. In order to study the language policies at her institution, Tardy (2011) developed a student survey followed by student interviews in order to better understand the language background of the institution's first year writing students and their perceptions of language policies. Tardy also generated a survey that was completed by all faculty members and conducted teacher interviews with 18 teachers. Tardy found that despite the fact that 21% of students surveyed identified their home language as one other than English, teachers and students had concerns that "demonstrated prominent myths regarding language, literacy, and language learning" such as a belief that "an English Only environment is most beneficial to second language development" (p. 653). Based on these findings that suggest prevalent monolingual ideologies, Tardy highlighted a "need to equip teachers with broader knowledge of and strategies for addressing language in general and working with multilingual writers in particular" (p. 653). She pointed to this study as a model of local research for institutions in order to change assumptions such as “the myth of linguistic homogeneity” (Tardy, 2011; Matsuda, 2006).

In the last decade, there has been a push in composition research to acknowledge multilingual writers. Horner and Trimbur (2002) pointed out the tacit policy of “unidirectional monolingualism.” Unidirectional monolingualism refers to the understanding that U.S. composition programs push students to learn English and only English while devaluing the multilingual resources at their disposal. Horner and Trimbur

also suggested that composition teachers should consider ways in which multilingual students can use their languages in their classes. This suggestion is further fleshed out by Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimbur (2011) who argued for a translingual approach to teaching multilingual students rather than accepting a “linguistically homogenous” norm. The translingual approach involves viewing bilingualism or multilingualism differently: instead of the former understanding of second language learners as having a deficit, the translingual approach considers the knowledge of multiple languages a “resource for producing meaning” for these students (p. 303). These authors also argued for continued professional development for teachers in what they call language difference, including more interaction with foreign language departments. On an institutional level, they also suggested that English or Rhetoric and Composition graduate programs should take the foreign language admission requirement more seriously so that graduate students (who typically serve as teaching assistants for composition classes) will have a better understanding of multilingualism and language learning if they themselves are required to be proficient in a second language.

More broadly, some scholars have argued that research on academic discourse should consider multilingual writers differently as well. Canagarajah (2006) identified three possible ways researchers and teachers might perceive language differences of multilingual students: the “interference” model where any variation in their writing is due to their first language fundamentally shaping them as writers; the “correlationist” model where students’ writing in their first language is studied before their first language is used as an explanation for variations in their second language writing; and the “negotiation” model (proposed by Canagarajah, 2006) which emphasizes the way multilingual writers

move between or switch languages in their writing processes. Canagarajah, a Tamil/English bilingual, offered the case of Sivatamby, another Tamil/English bilingual who writes scholarly articles in multiple languages, as a model for how to study multilingual writers. He considered three of Sivatamby's academic articles on the same topic (one written in Sri Lankan for local audiences, one written in English for local audiences, and one written in English for a foreign audience) and found that Sivatamby was both creative and critical in the choices he makes as he switched language. According to Canagarajah's findings, the anticipated audience was more relevant to the choices Sivatamby made than the language or culture. Additionally, Canagarajah found that when Sivatamby did violate rhetorical conventions, they were intentional, and possibly, transformative. For example, Canagarajah noted that the rhetorical convention of declaring and filling a niche is not a priority for Tamil speakers. None of Sivatamby's articles, even the one written in English and published in Sweden, used this convention. Canagarajah argued that Sivatamby was aware of this convention (and pointed to other ways Sivatamby caters to a Western audience as evidence), but he chose to "retain certain other features of his preferred discourse even as he writes to the Western audience" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 598). Canagarajah offered these findings as not just a model for research on multilingual writers, but also as evidence for why multilingual writers should be viewed as having additional resources, not deficits. Such studies can help transform the predominantly monolingual ideologies of English composition instructors.

In line with Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011), Matsuda (1999) pointed to the lack of preparation of English Composition teachers to deal with second language writers, the roots of which may stem from the split of Rhetoric/Composition and TESOL

as disciplines. Matsuda (1999) suggested that the professionalization of TESOL as a discipline has isolated composition teachers and ESL teachers, and although TESOL teachers already rely on composition as a discipline, now teachers of composition must begin to pay attention to TESOL as a discipline to inform teaching decisions because of the growing number of ESL students enrolled in mainstream composition classes.

Building on the work of Horner, Trimbur, and Matsuda, among others, Fraiberg (2010) suggested a merger of Composition and TESOL in addition to other areas of language instruction. Fraiberg noted that the separation that currently exists in the two disciplines presupposes a more binary distinction than actually exists. Fraiberg pointed out that Rhetoric/Composition studies have predominantly focused on English writers while TESOL and applied linguistics as disciplines have largely ignored the process of multilingual writers, focusing instead on the product.

Students using their first language for second language writing

TESOL research has, however, acknowledged the use of translation in the composing process of language learners. The benefits of the practice of translation are debated by teachers of second language writers. However, research suggests that translation is an important part of the multilingual writing process. Cummins (2007) attacked several myths of teaching second language writers, myths that he termed “monolingual instructional assumptions” (p. 221). Although some of these are more pertinent to the TESOL or foreign language classroom (such as instruction should only be in the target language), he identified one myth that is especially relevant to the current study: “translation between L1 and L2 has no place in the teaching of language or literacy” (p. 222). Cummins suggested alternative theoretical approaches to teaching

language learners that are not grounded in monolingualism. He concluded with a salient point: “students’ L1 is not the enemy in promoting high levels of L2 proficiency; rather, when students’ L1 is invoked as a cognitive and linguistic resource through bilingual instructional strategies, it can function as a stepping stone to scaffold more accomplished performance in the L2” (p. 238). This perspective offers the possibility for considering the use of online translation as a valuable resource in the second language writing process, as some of the participants suggest below.

Similarly, Woodall (2002), Uzawa (1996), and Liao (2006) all have viewed translation as a possible resource for second language writer’s writing processes. Uzawa’s (1996) qualitative study involved 22 Japanese post-secondary students who were learning English as a second language. Uzawa asked the students to write an essay in Japanese and English and used a think-aloud protocol, asking students to put their thinking process in spoken words while writing. Uzawa also analyzed interviews and the writings. Uzawa found that “translation [while writing] and L2 writing tasks are helpful for learning and improving a second language” (p. 288). In a protocol analysis of 28 written assignments by second language writers, Woodall (2002) looked at written language switching. He found that beginning language learners relied more heavily on first language use when writing. However, Woodall did suggest that second language writing instructors encourage use of student’s first language “strategically” and offered planning or prewriting as one example. Most recently, Liao (2006) used questionnaires to study translation in the learning processes of Taiwanese college students. In this study, most students reported that translation was a beneficial practice for learning. Liao described translation as a having a “facilitative role” (p. 209). However, Liao

acknowledged conflicting views about translation's affect on language acquisition; students feared that using translation might "cause interference," "inhibit their thinking in English" or encourage the assumption of "a one-to-one correspondence of meaning" (p. 209). Liao was not offering students' perceptions as proof of translation's efficacy or benefits for language learning, but he was offering student "insights" so that teachers may "integrate these insights into their teaching," more specifically, so teachers will be "more aware of the instances when translation can be beneficial as students try to develop their English language system" (p. 210). Similarly, the current study offers student perceptions so that teachers can integrate them into their teaching and become more aware of the positive ways students can use online translators.

Regardless of whether or not written translation is happening, mental translation may still be a part of second language writers' processes. Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001) found in a study with thirty-nine French language learners that most students wrote better essays when they wrote directly into their second languages rather than writing in their first languages then translating. However, they also found that even when they were writing directly into their second languages, mental translation was still occurring due to the stronger link between concepts and students' first languages. They argued that pedagogy should consider the practice of mental translation and should include a discussion of the benefits and weaknesses of the practice in the classroom. Further, we don't know how third party machine translation factors into these processes or if it is useful to second language writing students.

Online Translators

In order to better understand the practice of using online translators, I will provide a brief history of free online machine translation, its reputation, and research on its use. Online translators such as Babel Fish or Google Translate have a pervasive presence on the internet. Babel Fish was the first in 1997 to offer free machine translation (MT) (Gaspari & Hutchins, 2007). Gaspari and Hutchins were critical of the tendency for users to seek to discover the flaws of online translators and exploit them: “numerous commentators have enjoyed finding fault with online MT.... The principal method is to input sentences which contain one or more ambiguous words or ambiguous syntactic structures. Naturally, the results are garbage” (p. 3). However, these authors also saw the possibilities of online translators, one of which is enabling communication (pointing to the ease with which one could use online translators during online communication). Hampshire and Porta Salvia (2010) developed a ranking system for online translators based on the Human Likeness Approach and performed a test on English-Spanish translations with 10 online translator services. Their results suggest that although some services are better for particular types of use--for example, Babylon was the highest scorer in regards to idioms--Google Translate has the highest aggregate score. These studies suggest that using online translators most effectively requires an understanding of online translators.

Although use of online translators is widespread, there is little research done of the use of these services (Gaspari & Hutchins, 2007). Gaspari and Hutchins (2007) collected data regarding the use of online translators from Babel Fish, FreeTranslation, and Systran, and found that most users are only using the services to translate single

words or short phrases (similar to using a dictionary) and suggested that this is a result of users already having knowledge of the target language. However, Gaspari and Somers (2007) partially discourage using online translators as a dictionary as that use assumes a one-to-one language equivalent, calling it a misuse of the services despite 62.5% of their university participants stating that they used the services for just that. However, like Gaspari and Hutchins, they acknowledged that this type of use by students who have knowledge in both languages may be more viable as they would be able to better judge the output.

Online translators and foreign language writing

There has also been research conducted on the use of online translators by students enrolled in foreign language classes. Harris (2010), a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in Japan, wrote that online translator use is incompatible with process pedagogies in EFL classrooms. Harris saw online translator use resulting in the loss of a “valuable opportunity of learning how the language functions” (p. 28). However, several studies have demonstrated how online translators can become a part of second language learners’ writing processes. For example, Niño (2009) showed how using online translators can teach students how to better manipulate the language through editing online translation input and also output. In a qualitative study looking at student and tutor perceptions of online translators, she found that students gain a greater linguistic awareness and learn the nuances of the target language when they manipulate the input and output from online translators. In a pedagogically-centered article, Williams (2006) also noted how students can gain linguistic awareness from using online translators. For example, Williams suggested that using online translators may “force students to think

about language as a communication tool, not as a set of decontextualized vocabulary words or phrases” (p. 574). He also pointed out that by discussing both the appropriate uses of online translators and their limitations, students can gain electronic literacy.

Similarly, Garcia (2010) and Pena (2011) found that online translation use helps beginner and intermediate language learners communicate more and better by providing a means of scaffolding for the student to continue building on. Pena’s study focused on the use of information and communication technology tools in a group of college students taking a Spanish foreign language class. Pena surveyed students on the advantages of online translators as a tool for language learning. One student noted it is a “fast effective way to learn new vocabulary” while one student pointed out that it “gives you a guide as to what to write” (p. 66). However, one student acknowledges “that you still have to fix up the text because it isn’t always correct” (p. 66). Overall, students found using online translators a “positive” experience. Garcia’s study (2010) used screen recordings of Spanish foreign language students performing assignments. One group used online translators while the control group wrote without these tools, and then the groups switched and the group who had previously used online translators wrote directly into L2. Two outside markers evaluated the assignments. Garcia found that online translator use provided better quality in the assignments. Garcia also looked at the number of words in each assignment and found that the assignments written with the assistance of online translators were, on average, longer. Ultimately, Garcia argued for a place for online translator in the writing process of language learners because students were able to produce not only more text, but also higher quality text.

Online translators and academic integrity

Although previous studies have shown that using online translators can have positive academic benefits for second language learners (Niño, 2009; Garcia, 2010; Pena, 2011), online translators are also often associated with academic dishonesty. Harris (2010) grouped the use of online translators with “plagiarism and assignment borrowing” and suggested that teachers should “inform students through a variety of means (including course-initial announcements and syllabi) that unless there is a specific purpose for them, MTs are unacceptable and will have a detrimental effect on the learning process” (p. 28). Harris is not alone in his association of online translators with plagiarism; there have also been studies that first define online translator use on translation assignments as academic dishonesty and then explore ways for teachers to identify online translator output through certain types of errors that online translators are more likely to make (Somers, Gaspari, & Niño, 2005). However, this discussion has been relegated to research done on foreign language classes and may be premature for English Composition where multilingual writers do not have access to assistance in their first languages.

Academic discourse socialization

Academic discourse socialization is one area where research in composition and TESOL inform one another. A central goal of composition programs is to socialize first year students into the academic discourse communities of their institutions. As Patricia Duff (2007) pointed out, all newcomers, not only second language writers or international students, are socialized into academic discourses. She also notes the long-term effects of such socialization, “importantly, it [academic discourse socialization] continues for all

academics and members of society throughout our careers” (p. 01.8). Although often conceived of as merely Standard Written English (SWE) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Duff noted that academic discourse is not just a variety of language. Instead, students are socialized into “new, multimodal, intertextual, heteroglossic literacies and repartee” (Duff, p. 01.4). While composition focuses heavily on the written forms of discourse, Duff noted that other forms do exist, pointing to both oral presentations and social or interactional contexts. Duff encouraged instructors to consider the needs of students after they have completed that particular course—what she calls the “afterlife” of academic discourse socialization—and ask themselves if they have equipped the students with those skills (p. 01.13). She further suggested that “language professionals need to better understand the actual discursive practices and requirements of various fields (and activities) and the experiences of participants who are being socialised through course-related activities, and consider the possibilities of enhancing those experiences as well as students’ potential” (p. 01.14). This study seeks to provide teachers with insight about online translators and where they fit into the academic discourse socialization of students. Such practices can have the kind of “afterlife” that Duff refers to as the participants in this study suggest they use online translation in their everyday communication and will potentially use it as part of their professional work as they learn new discourses, registers, and ways of communicating.

While Duff’s (2007) article encouraged instructors to reflect on their practices, Morita’s (2004) case study highlighted students’ perspectives on their discourse socialization. This case study of the academic discourse of six Japanese female graduate students at a Canadian university provided pedagogical insights for classrooms partially

made up of second language learners. Morita acquired self-reports and interviews from the Japanese students and observed classroom interactions. Informed by Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice, the study viewed "learning as a socially situated process by which newcomers gradually move toward fuller participation in a given community's activities by interacting with more experienced community members" (Morita, p. 576). Morita found that students had a hard time "negotiating discourses, competence, identities, and power relations so that they could participate and be recognized as a legitimate and competent member of a given classroom community" (p. 583). More specifically, Morita found that "the individual student's participation had a reciprocal relationship with her sense of competence produced in the classroom" (p. 596). Morita also pointed to the power that teachers, or experts, can have in a learner's academic socialization by describing how a teacher legitimized a student's silence by acknowledging the student's silent participation. The findings from Morita's study can be usefully applied to understanding how instructors can legitimize the practice of using online translators in order to empower second language writers' socialization, as we will see in the case of one student, Amanda, below. In addition, both Duff (2007) and Morita (2004) called for teachers to become more reflective about classroom practices.

Academic discourse socialization involves negotiations between student and teacher and also internal negotiations in the student and the teacher. Morita encouraged teachers to look what practices students actually use or need outside of or after they leave the classroom. Investigating the ideologies and attitudes of instructors is one way to promote reflection.

Students enrolled in composition are negotiating learning the discourse of the university classroom with the desire to merely fulfill their teachers' expectations. This is demonstrated through several recent studies. In a study of university students' use of in-text citations, Harwood and Petric (2011) found that students could enact various roles through their citing behavior in order to match the expectations of their teachers. This was an interview-based qualitative study of two post-graduate second language learners who provided their perspectives on citations in their own assignments. Regardless of sources actually used, students cited sources in order to portray certain images of themselves. For example, one student made sure her sources matched the sources mentioned in class. Using citation to achieve a certain image was more important than citing actual sources used; that is, citation has become a mechanism for constructing a certain "good student" identity. Harwood and Petric argued that their analysis of citation as performance demonstrates that citation is a "situated, social act" (p. 85). According to Harwood and Petric, citation "may allow [students] to present themselves as more knowledgeable, diligent, or critical than they actually are" (p. 85). Some scholars argue that students should be given more leeway in the process of learning how to cite. Abasi, Akbari, and Graves suggested that students accused of plagiarism are often socialized into their discourses at varying levels and "support recent calls to view student textual plagiarism as an issue of learning and development rather than one of moral transgression" (2006). Pecorari (2003) also suggested that students must learn how to cite sources through trial and error. Further studies have found that students' claims of the "right to learn" through mistakes in citation (that resulted in charges of plagiarism) created a "learner" subject position for students facing charges of plagiarism (Nilsson,

Eklof & Ottosson, 2009). The learner positioning would allow students more leeway in learning what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Scollon (1995) further complicated the concept of plagiarism from a cross-cultural perspective: “the concept of plagiarism is a shorthand compilation of a rather hefty set of assumptions about who should or should not have the right to use discourse to create individual, autonomous voices in a society” (p. 23). Scollon (1995) also noted that ideas about plagiarism and originality of speech are culturally based. The importance that some cultures (including the dominant culture of the U.S.) place on originality of speech is not present in all cultures. It is possible that international students have different interpretations and perspectives on the use of online translation related to cultural differences.

Self socialization online

These issues point to a need for a better understanding of how international students use online technologies in their writing to meet the norms of their new academic communities of practice. In Nam and Beckett’s (2011) study focusing on five Korean ESL graduate students’ use of resources in second language socialization, the students “understood the need to socialize themselves into American academic writing discourse to meet the university’s requirements.” The students, however, did not always utilize available resources. Nam and Beckett found that students were less likely to utilize social resources (peers or even writing center tutors) and were more likely to benefit from intertextual resources (reading and writing)—essentially solitary activities. Nam and Beckett suggested that students were reluctant to utilize peers or other people as a resource due to their “their cultural and their linguistic insecurity.”

In thinking about why students might turn to online translators as a tool of self-socialization, convenience and accessibility are key factors. However, if we consider the internet as a “place,” it might be a safer place for second language writers to learn as opposed to the composition classroom. In her study on the use of information and communication technology tools, Pena (2011) suggested that the use of these digital tools “provides [...] flexibility in time and location and increases motivation and engagement in authentic communication in the target language in comfortable learning environments” (p. 66). Second language writers are like their monolingual peers in that they are all novices in the academic discourse community; however, unlike many of their peers in the composition classroom, they are also having to “negotiate” their multilingual experiences (Canagajarah, 2006).

The learning potential of the internet is demonstrated in Lam’s (2004) study on chat rooms and language socialization. Lam (2004) studied two Chinese/English speaking immigrant high school students and found that a Chinese/English chat room, for these students, served as a key site of language socialization. They were more likely to practice English in a digital setting rather than at school where they lacked a community to identify with. This digital setting provided the students with more agency as they were able to codeswitch between the two languages and create a Chinese-English language variety. Lam found that although the girls were “eager to speak English” they had “difficultly interacting with English speakers in the school” (p. 50). However, in the chat room, “they had an easier time starting and carrying on a conversation without worrying about the mistakes they made” (p. 51). Lam argued that the chat room provides a safer environment for “learning and practicing English” (p. 49). Lam also found that the girls

were able to construct a bilingual identity in the chat room and achieve agency through reaching insider knowledge and also a position where they could participate in contributing to the chat room's ever changing code.

Lam (2004) stressed the importance of “understand[ing] language socialization as a site of struggle where language practices are governed by and used to produce configurations of power that determine the norms of conduct, and where the diverse affiliations or socialization experiences of the learner interact with each other to influence how the learner is socially positioned in any specific language learning context” (p. 46). As such, academic settings, with relationships of power between not only teacher and student but also peer to peer, might be less conducive to the second language writer's socialization than digital settings. The safety of the chatroom, or the internet more broadly, may be a reason students turn to online translators as a means to scaffold their own English language writing without overt criticism or ascription of “difference” by instructors and other students.

Digital composing practices

Considering students' composing practices—that is, how students use reading and writing outside of academic purposes—forces us to look at how students read and write online. As mentioned earlier, the accessibility and convenience of digital tools, including online translators, are also reasons for second language learners' use of these services. Stapleton (2010) and (2012) acknowledged the need for students to understand appropriate use of these new practices and argued that teachers need to understand these practices in order to better teach students about their use. Stapleton (2010) explored to what extent second language writers have incorporated digital resources into their

composing practices by researching the composing practices of one second language writer as she wrote a 4000 word essay by using logs, a questionnaire, and interviews. Comparing this digital composing process to the traditional pen-and-paper process, he found that the two were significantly different and calls for further research exploring the different cognitive processes required for both. Ultimately, Stapleton argued that the digital resources available to second language writers might free up cognitive energy that may then be used for different aspects of the writing process such as research. Following this belief, Stapleton's (2012) questionnaire-based study of 30 second language learners in graduate school found that a majority of the students surveyed used Wikipedia, spellchecker, grammar checker, online translators, and search engines when composing (p. 158). He suggests that the use of these digital tools while writing may be freeing up cognitive processes. Stapleton also suggested that "the copying and subsequent manipulation of pre-existing chunks of text (often to avoid plagiarism) also involve a different skill-set than what is needed for the raw translating of ideas into text 'from scratch'" and encouraged further research so that teachers can better instruct students of the "dos and don'ts of this way of composing" (p. 165).

The argument for teachers to familiarize themselves with the technology to which their students have access is not new. For Selfe (1999), McGee and Ericsson (2002), technological literacies are political. If we consider the use of online translators in this light, we will see that the policies regarding the use of these services are always informed by ideologies. The current study sought to uncover the ideologies underlying the policies of three individual instructors regarding the use of online translators by international students in their classes. Selfe (1999) stressed the importance of composition instructors'

education in new technologies: “Composition teachers, language arts teachers, and other literacy specialists need to recognize that the relevance of technology in the English studies disciplines is not simply a matter of helping students work effectively with communication software and hardware, but, rather, also a matter of helping them to understand and to be able to assess—to pay attention to—the social, economic, and pedagogical implications of new communication technologies and technological initiatives that affect their lives” (p. 232). Only when instructors are able to understand and think critically about new technologies are they able to teach their students to do the same. If we consider what McGee and Ericsson (2002) suggested to writing teachers in their critique of the grammar checker in Microsoft Word, explicit instruction in the use of the service can result in a greater linguistic awareness (in this case, of grammar) and also an awareness of the politics of prescriptive grammar and plagiarism; that is, an awareness of the social forces shaping what is considered correct and incorrect.

Because composition classrooms are seen as being made up of predominantly monolingual students, monolingual policies and practices are prevalent. Therefore, online translators, despite their potential for language learning, may be seen as a tool of plagiarism instead of a resource for language socialization. Students are socialized into their academic discourse communities in a variety of ways, some preferring more solitary resources (like digital resources including online translators) for socialization opposed to teachers or peers. Instead of punishing students when they fail to understand the conventions of academic discourse that might suggest that use of online translators is plagiarism, instructors should consider that participation happens in varying ways and might also consider legitimizing the less prevalent ways in order to empower students.

Additionally, instructors should work to understand the changing technology that students are using to compose.

Encouraged by Tardy's (2011) plea for local research to inform local policy, this project is an attempt to reflect on the current policies and the underlying assumptions that we, as composition teachers, have about multilingual students. This study reflects on the presence of second language writers in composition classes, the academic discourse socialization of these students, and how these students situate the practice of online translators.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Responding to Tardy's (2011) call for research of local practices, this qualitative study's data set is made up of semi-structured interviews of students and instructors at one large university in a rural setting in Mississippi. Because my goal was to find out more about perceptions of online translators rather than actual use patterns, a qualitative analysis of interviews was chosen. As Mackey and Gass (2005) pointed out: "Interviews can allow researchers to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, such as learners' self-reported perceptions or attitudes" (p. 173). I chose to use semistructured interviews, in which "the researcher uses a written list of questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). Atkinson (2005) noted that such qualitative research is "maximally flexible, maximally adaptive to the always-in-progress, always-in-flux individuals-in-society and social situations it attempts to study" (p. 63). Atkinson also noted that we should approach interview data with a "healthy skepticism toward the exact nature and status of the information resulting from such interviews" (p. 53). Therefore, the interview data from this study was carefully analyzed rather than taken as accurate reflection of actual use of online translators or instructors' actual classroom policies and practices.

Researcher and development of study

The research questions for this study originated from my own experiences teaching in the Composition classroom. As a first year teaching assistant, I taught Basic English (EN-0103) and had several ESL students. Although teaching assistants at this university do go through a week-long orientation, second language writers were never addressed in these sessions. When I had questions pertaining to the needs of these students (e.g., how to address the misuse of articles when grading), I was able to ask both the Director of Composition and the Rhetoric/Composition professor. However, when one student described how her writing process involved using Google Translate, I struggled to situate this practice in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, benefits and pitfalls. I knew about the “dangers” of the internet (such as paper mills, abundance of inaccurate information, or the ease with which students can copy and paste a source without citing), and I knew that for foreign language classes, Google Translate could fall into that category. However, I felt that it was different for composition. In collaboration with the Rhetoric/Composition professor, I allowed the use of online translators for the student in my class. Feeling a need for empirical research in the area, the following semester, as part of a class project for EN-6623 Language and Culture: Bilingualism and Bilingual Societies, I surveyed composition instructors on their understandings and perception of the use of online translators. The idea for this thesis came from the research and data from that project. I found a significant amount of research concerning the use of online translators in foreign language classrooms, but there was minimal empirical research done on the use of online translators by second language writers in the composition classroom, a topic I felt needed to be addressed.

Eligibility for the study and recruitment

For the current study, I recruited both composition instructors and second language writers in order to triangulate viewpoints (Morita, 2004). Upon IRB approval, I recruited students for the study through email distribution lists, flyers, and word-of-mouth recruitment through other instructors and professors. I contacted international student organizations and also relevant university departments and requested that they send a copy of my recruitment email to their e-lists. I also sent an email to composition instructors asking for help recruiting. Instructors passed recruitment information along to any interested student. The help from instructors proved vital as all four student participants mentioned at some point that their instructor had a role in their receiving the recruitment information. Participation, however, was entirely voluntary and no incentives were given by instructors to those who participated in the research. In addition, I also used flyers. These flyers were placed on campus in public places such as the student union, library, and post office and also on bulletin boards in classroom buildings. I also put flyers on doors of local restaurants.

Instructors were recruited primarily through emails and, again, word of mouth within the department. Because I am a graduate student in the department, almost every instructor participant already knew me and, to varying degrees, my research interests.

Eligible students were second language learners of English currently enrolled in composition at this university or who had taken at least one course in the series (Basic English, Composition I, or Composition II) at this university. Instructors must have had at least one second-language writer in the last five years enrolled in one course in the

composition series. Both instructors' and students' names were changed upon transcription.

Participants

Students

Four female students participated in the study. Three student participants were enrolled in the ESL section of Composition I; these three students were all in their first semester at MSU. One student participant was a sophomore enrolled in mainstream composition after having taken Basic English and Composition 1 her freshman year. Two students spoke Korean as their first language, one student spoke Punjabi, and one spoke Flemish.

Table 1 Student participants

Participant	First language	ESL Section?	Years at MSU	Composition Courses	Languages
Magnolia	Korean	ESL	1	Comp. 1	Korean, English
Amanda	Punjabi	No	2	Basic, Comp. 1, Comp. 2	English, Hindi, Punjabi
Kate Kim	Korean	ESL	1	Comp. 1	Korean, English
Helena Cox	Flemish	ESL	1	Comp. 1	Flemish, English, French, Latin, German, Spanish

Instructors

Instructor participants had a wide range of experience. One participant was a teaching assistant in her second year teaching, and the others had more experience with ESL training. Instructor participants were predominantly monolingual.

Table 2 Instructor participants

Participant	Position	Years of Experience	Languages
Anne Craig	Lecturer	4	English, limited French
Livvie	Lecturer	7	English, Moderate Spanish
Ellen	Teaching Assistant	1	English, Basic French and Spanish

Data collection

Eligible participants took part in semi-structured interviews. I developed two sets of topics: one for students and one for instructors. Student topics included the writing process, L1 use during writing, perceptions of online translators, descriptions of how they use online translators, and opinions on the permissibility of online translators (Appendix A). Instructor topics included past experiences with second language writers, recommended resources for second language writers, opinions on the permissibility of online translation, and perceptions of how they believe students use online translators (Appendix B). I tried to cover the same topics in each interview, but I also wanted to be able to explore other topics that came up as the participants responded to the open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to better understand the background of each student as writer and each instructor as a teacher by engaging them with topics of their interest.

Although all instructor participants were aware that I was also a composition teacher, I did not choose to reveal my status as a teacher to the student participants. In part, I did this to minimize the hierarchal relationship that is already present in interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 658). By minimizing this distance, I hoped to reduce the “halo

effect” that Mackey and Gass (2005) described as “what happens when interviewees pick up cues from the researcher related to what they think the researcher wants them to say, thus potentially influencing their responses” (174). One former student of mine (Amanda) knew that I was a composition teacher, and I believe that our prior student-teacher relationship made her more willing to share with me as I discuss in the analyses below.

I viewed interviews as a “negotiated text” and a site of collaborative meaning making (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Mann, 2010; Pavlenko, 2007; and Prior, 2010). To better understand how students and instructors arrived at their current understandings of the use of online translators, I tried to elicit stories and examples from their past experiences with these services. According to Hyland (2005), these types of narratives, which are collaboratively constructed during the interview, provide a type of access to student perceptions

Using interviews demands analysis that considers the context in which the narratives occur. Pavlenko (2007) encouraged analysis to take the “linguistic, rhetorical, and interactional properties, as well as the cultural historic, political, and social contexts in which they were produced” into account because these “shape both the tellings and the omissions” (p. 181). This requires the analysis to spend more time describing the context and interaction of the interview (Mann, 2010; Prior 2010). Additionally, paying attention to the way the interviewee shapes his or her narrative in response to the social context allows the researcher to “recognize[e] the unique and common ways in which speakers are agentive, creative, and competent social members and language users” (Prior, 2010). In the analysis of the instructor interviews, I pay special attention to the contexts of the composition program at this university. I provide background information about the

course sequence and about teacher training in order to better recognize how their answers respond to the particular context of this program.

The analysis of the interview data is aimed at uncovering “insider’s understanding” of the use of online translators that students have. Regarding instructors, Casanave (2005) suggested that “if we examine our textbooks and course syllabuses, for example, we may find evidence that our teaching activities are implicitly grounded in a narrative of learner development” (27). I believe the same is true for course policies, especially those concerning online translators. Our policies, explicit or implicit, are grounded in our understanding of learning and various language ideologies that we may or may not be aware of. Therefore, I tried to encourage instructors to consider why they would or would not permit or encourage the use of online translators.

Although the types of narratives that my interviews elicited are unable to represent a true account of how these services are actually used, as Casanave (2005) pointed out, the point of the narrative is not “to portray the truth of what happens in our writing classes;” instead, “they underlie a kind of structural plotline that guides and frames how we conceptualize the purposes and activities” (p. 28). These narrative responses, therefore, are able to provide insight into the understandings that inform student use of online translators and also instructor’s policies regarding those services. Such perspectives are important because they can help policy makers and instructors pinpoint areas where there is a mismatch between student and instructor perceptions and/or understandings.

Language

Interviews were conducted in English because it was the primary language researchers and participants had in common and the interviews centered on experiences from the English composition classroom. However, interviewing the students in English may be a limitation of the study because English was not the first language of any of the student participants. If students had the opportunity to talk about online translation use in their first languages, they might have shared different stories or perspectives.

Location

Interviews were conducted at a location of the participants' choosing. If participants had no suggestions, I suggested meeting at one of two local coffee shops. Although a public location, the interviews were able to remain relatively private at the coffee shops. However, several instructors chose to meet in their communal offices. For one instructor, meeting in the office drastically affected the pace of the interview. It was much quicker than the other instructor interviews, possibly due to the distractions and lack of privacy inherent in the office space. For the other instructor, meeting in her office was more private than the café as we were alone the majority of the interview.

Transcription

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interview with Inqscribe (software developed for transcription purposes) using transcription conventions taken from Tannen et al. (2007) (Appendix C). Upon transcription, participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms of their own choosing or, if they did not suggest a pseudonym, one that was assigned.

Coding

Brice (2005) defined coding as the “active process in which researchers identify salient patterns or themes by reading through data reiteratively and then attempt to explain them by looking for connections among the patterns and the context” (161). In this type of open coding, coding schemes emerge from the data (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In coding the student data, I looked for stories about use of online translators, whether by the student or one of her peers, and how the student described how online translators should be used. I coded instructor interviews in a similar way to student interviews; I looked for stories about actual student use or other stories from the classroom, instructors’ perceptions about online translators’ potentials and pitfalls, and then how instructors made or enforced policies regarding online translators.

Analysis

Focusing on the ways students and instructors presented the use, reputation, and permissibility of online translators allowed me to explore their perceptions of the use of online translators instead of relying on their descriptions as an accurate reflection of the actual use of online translators. What emerged in the analysis of the student participants’ data was the discursive construction of themselves and their actions in composition through three main strategies: (a) the construction of others’ use, (b) the representation of their own use, and (c) how they described the relationship between authority and the use of online translators. For the instructors’ data, I focused on (a) their description of their preparation or experience, (b) examples of policies regarding online translators, and (c) conflicts within the interviews. Understanding that the statements made in my data were part of an interview—a social event separate from the composition classroom—also

informed my analysis. I was conscious of my position in the interview and how my position as an instructor of composition might have influenced the interview, for example realizing that my position may make students fear admitting to a practice that has been discouraged by a previous instructor.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I first look at student perspectives of the use of online translators, focusing on short narratives about their peers' use of online translators, then on the participants' described uses of online translators, and finally, on how the participants constructed their instructors' perceptions of the use of online translators. Then, I move to instructors' perceptions, first considering how instructors felt unprepared to make policies regarding online translators, then examples of policies that instructors provided, and finally, conflicting ideologies in their descriptions of online translators. Ultimately, I hope to show why there is a need for open conversations regarding the use of online translators (along with other digital practices) between students and instructors.

Students' perspectives

In this section, I first consider how the student participants construct the use of online translators by other students, then how they construct their own use of online translators, and finally how they construct the use of online translators in relation to authority. In doing so, I hope to explore two conflicting ideologies about online translators that were held by some students simultaneously: the translator as affordance for language learning and writing process versus the translator as an instrument of plagiarism. In looking at how students portray themselves in relation to others and also

authority, I will demonstrate how students can exhibit agency by using online translators, position themselves as more fluent writers by their described uses of online translators, and also portray themselves as an ideal student by situating their online translator use within the boundaries academic integrity.

Constructing use by the other

I asked students both about their own use of online translators and the use of online translators by their peers. However, some students were more comfortable discussing how other students use online translators than discussing their own practices. Although I tried to position myself as accepting of the use of online translators, students seemed most comfortable describing others' use of online translators before they came to this university, perhaps because of the low stakes afforded by the distance in time and place. In describing the use of others, student participants aligned themselves with the instructors in their narratives, suggesting an internalization of ideologies that discourage the use online translators.

Kate Kim, and also Helena Cox, told stories of a student using an online translator for his or her whole essay, a use that they found unacceptable. In examining these short narratives, I will be looking at how the student identifies the user of online translators, how the use is being described, the reaction or response to the use, and finally, the setting in the storyworld. As Casanave (2005) pointed out, narratives (stories or description of events told chronologically) shape our understanding of actions; that is, for Kate Kim, her peer's use of the service shaped her understanding of the permissibility of online translators, and, also, this story is shaped by her understanding of the permissibility of online translators. Kate Kim used the story to position herself as a more competent

English language learner while Helena Cox notes that she “didn’t approve” of using online translators in the way she describes.

Kate Kim’s story of her peer’s use of online translators came at the end of the interview, after I had identified myself as a teacher of composition. In identifying myself as a composition instructor, I tried to make it clear that I supported the use of online translators. I told her I had students who had used Google Translate for their classwork and made sure to state that it was helpful for them. In Kate Kim’s narrative, however, the use of online translators is constructed as negatively perceived by both the teacher and Kate Kim.

Excerpt 3.1 I really laugh at him

Kate Kim: And then some people are not really good at English -they just Using Google Translator in Korean essay first-first and then they translate it in-

Caroline: The whole essay??

Kate Kim: Yeah they just submit it and <laughs> and of course professor angry because they're really messy.

Caroline: Yeah.

Has that happened at this university?

Kate Kim: No of course not in Korea.

Caroline: In Korea that happened?

Kate Kim: In Korea uh it's not a really credit subject.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim: It's not really credit lecture but if they took some kind of class?
And they- I saw some guy using that one but I really laugh at him
because it's really me- it didn't make sense at all the whole paper
right.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim described the use of online translators by a student who was “not really good at English,” immediately establishing a tone of evaluation, or at the very least a hierarchy in terms of language ability and positioning herself as more competent English language user. Her story about the student writing an essay, using an online translator to translate it in its entirety, and then turning it in exemplifies what appears to be a fear of composition teachers. In keeping with this perception, it is something two instructor participants in this study also mentioned as an example of unacceptable behavior. In this story, she describes her teacher as being *angry*. Kate Kim attributes the professor’s anger to the final paper being “really messy.” To Kate, however, this behavior is laughable because the whole paper “didn’t make sense.” The concern here seems to be about the quality of the work turned in. This statement again positions Kate, in terms of English writing ability, as a more competent English language learner who can evaluate the quality of the machine translation output. Interestingly, when I ask her if this happened at this university she responds “no of course not.”

Helena Cox, the student from Belgium, shared a similar story. Like Kate Kim’s, this story took place in her home country.

Excerpt 3.2 I didn't approve of that

Caroline: Do you know other people who use it [translators]?

Helena Cox: We all do it in- in like um I remember when um uh we have to take French anyway in Belgium because it's one of the m- uh the languages in our nation.

Caroline: Right.

Helena Cox: And um the- the scientists uh in our class because we had a class of lots of people- science people, Uh they they aren't that fond of French and they would just- just type the- the Flemish uh text in it and they would just translate it to French by uh using Google Translate <laughs>.

Caroline: And they would turn that in as their homework?

Helena Cox: Well some of them did.

And that was- I- I didn't approve of that but it's- it's their choice <laughs>.

In this instance, a group of students were using online translators. Helena began by identifying herself with this group: “We all do it.” She then shifted away from the use of “we” and identified the group of students as “scientists” who “aren't that fond of French” (the target language in this case). Her shift away from the first person plural pronoun might suggest a reluctance to discuss her own use of online translators and

instead keep the story about other students' use. Although Helena Cox made it clear that there is a relationship between their attitude towards learning French and the use of online translators, it is not clear whether or not their use is an act of defiance or just a result of their lack of motivation towards learning French, a required language in Belgium. Either way, Helena Cox distanced herself from these students by making it clear that she "didn't approve of that."

Both Kate Kim and Helena Cox used the narrative to establish a hierarchy; for Kate Kim, this hierarchy is identifiable as one of language ability. For Helena Cox, it could be language ability, but the statement about approval could also suggest a hierarchy in regards to integrity by positioning herself as someone who follows the rules unlike these peers and is more willing to learn French. Through these narratives, Kate Kim and Helena Cox revealed their own interpretations or anticipations of attitudes of the teacher or instructor toward online translators and then align themselves with that perspective. Thus stories about others' use functioned to position the participant as both a better English language writer and a good student for aligning with supposed academic norms in the interviews.

Students' talk about their own use

The students' descriptions of their own use contained more conflict than the description of the use by others. Many students gave conflicting answers regarding their own use of online translators. Students do, however, reveal that they see limitations to the use of online translators and suggest practical uses.

Kate Kim initially denied use only to later reveal use. Her contradictions might suggest that she was not willing to discuss her use of online translators initially.

Excerpt 3.3 I'm rarely using Google Translator

Kate Kim: About words so I using dictionary rather than Google translator.

Caroline: Yeah yeah,

Um so. do you think Google Translate would ever be helpful for you when you're writing an English essay.

Kate Kim: No it would be helpful but I'm not really oftenly using Google translator.

Caroline: Did you ever use it while you were in Korea?

Kate Kim: I use it when I uh to find find some- yeah,
I'm rarely using Google Translator.

As the conversation progressed, she affirmed her rare use of online translators again.

Caroline: Is this like a common practice to use Google Translate?

Kate Kim: Mm: ((pause))

Yeah I have. actually I'm rarely using Google Translate.

Caroline: You're rarely using Google Translate right?

Kate Kim: Yeah I rarely use translator but I . am around me I'm never seeing someone use Google Translator to write an essay or like that.

In this excerpt, Kate Kim hesitated to even answer, perhaps because she's already answered this question. When she did answer, she began to say, "I have," but then interjected with "actually" and said she rarely uses it again. This changes later in the interview. In Excerpt 3.4 Kate indicates that she uses the service "sometimes" as opposed to "rarely" in Excerpt 3.3 above. Here she is talking about using the translator in

reading rather than writing. This justification might suggest that Kate Kim finds it more acceptable to use online translators to help her take in text rather than produce text.

Excerpt 3.4 Because I have to read

Kate Kim: yeah so that's why I'm sometimes using Google Translator,
 Because I have to read a lot of things.

Despite volunteering to participate in an interview about her use of online translators related to composition class, Kate resisted talking about online translators several times in the interview. I will demonstrate below that teachers have ambiguous policies about the permissibility of online translators. If Kate Kim is picking up on this ambiguity, it makes sense that she would be hesitant to explicitly admitting her use of such services for composition.

Students talk about using online translators while reading

Although this study intended to elicit more information about how students use translators when generating texts, students volunteered more stories about using it to go from L2 to L1—for example, when searching the internet or reading like Kate Kim described. As reading is a part of the writing process and reading is a part of the composition class, this practice is relevant to our understanding of translator use in composition.

Excerpt 3.5 It can pop up with my mother tongue

Amanda: When I'm reading and it doesn't make sense to me,
 And even I put it in dictionary and I can't understand what it
 means,

Caroline: Right.

Amanda: And that time Google Translate helps me,
It can pop up with my-my mother tongue.

This student situated the use of online translators in reading as an activity; for this student, the translator functions as a supplement to her own knowledge of the language and a dictionary.

Kate Kim further described her use of online translators when reading; when I prompted her again to discuss her use of online translators, she quickly clarified that she used them to translate material she was reading, not material she was writing. Because she was not using it generating texts, it is not considered as plagiarism.

Excerpt 3.6 It's not adequate

Caroline: Um so you told me in the email that you have used Google
Translate before?
Is that right.

Kate Kim: I have what?

Caroline: You've used Google Translate before in the past?

Kate Kim: Yeah,
Not for writing an essay.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim: But I just - when I search the internet,
I-if I can't find some document and I can't understand because the
document has a lot of difficult words.

Caroline: Mmhmm.

Kate Kim: But the Google Translator is not, actually it is not um ... adequate to understand the whole essay.

This student acknowledged the shortcomings or inadequacy of Google Translate while reading; her evaluations of the language production of the online translators positioned her as a competent second language reader.

In the same way that Kate Kim pointed out the flaws of online translators when going from L2 to L1, several students pointed out the same thing when going from L1 to L2.

Magnolia, a first year student from Korea, was one student who pointed out the system's flaws or shortcomings, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the service's limitations.

Excerpt 3.7 It doesn't really translate well

- Magnolia: Yeah I've tried to use it,
But it doesn't really translate well.
It-it just come up with like different ideas that I wanted to say so I
just /??/
and look up the dictionary and make my own sentence.
- Caroline: Have you ever tried Google Translate just for one word at a time?
- Magnolia: Um:: yeah.
- Caroline: Yeah.
- Magnolia: It works.
- Caroline: It does?
- Magnolia: But when I write full sentence it doesn't work.

Although she was still hesitant to admit to using online translators, this student felt that using Google Translate for words was effective, but not for whole sentences. This understanding was typical among the participants. Students tended to have a nuanced understanding of the limitations of online translators. The students interviewed, at least, have a more complex understanding of the use of online translators than the instructors interviewed gave them credit for as we see below.

Excerpt 3.8 They're worse than me

Caroline: I mean would you encourage any of your friends to use Google Translate?

Magnolia: I would encourage if it comes with the, good sentence or that, the idea that

I wanna go with,

But it translates very weird!

Like it doesn't look sentence.

Caroline: So what do you think is the difference there?

Magnolia: Google Translations:

I think they have to improve the translating thing.

Caroline: Yeah.

Magnolia: That-Google Translate cannot translate,

They're like worse than me.

Caroline: So do you feel like your other classmates might use Google Translate.

Magnolia: They might feel the same way.

Caroline: That you do?

Magnolia: They: they might try it but they just figure out it's not really good way. This excerpt reveals Magnolia's understanding of the limitations of online translators, and it also demonstrates a sense of agency in her statement that Google Translate is worse than her own production. Like Kate Kim, her ability to evaluate and judge the output from the online translator reveals her negotiating her own need for help with her own language abilities, ultimately establishing her own competence.

Kate Kim mentioned the inaccuracy or awkwardness of the translations and discusses editing the output from the online translator. This process of editing the output, according to Niño (2009), is conducive to language learning and writing. Niño found that manipulating the input and output from online translators gives students greater linguistic awareness and helps them learn the nuances of the target language. This is echoed in Kate's statements below.

Excerpt 3.9 Not really accurate

Kate Kim: Oh yeah I have to change it a little bit because <laughs>
sometimes it
show up really a make sense sentence.

Caroline: So how are those not helpful?
Those websites?

Kate Kim: Uh: It is not really accurate.

Caroline: Ok.

Kate Kim: Right.

So that is not uh not really helpful.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim: I can't depend it to whole my things to Google Translator because they have some error.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim: In their sentences so I have to look over again through another dictionary to write why-why Google Translator using that word?

In Excerpt 3.10 Kate Kim suggested that it is a “definite procedure” to edit the output.

Excerpt 3.10 Definite procedure

Kate Kim: Right it is definite procedure to fix their sentences because it need it!

It is not perfect.

Caroline: Yeah.

Although Kate Kim viewed the process as additional work (having to use Google Translate *plus* another dictionary), she may still be learning through this process and constructs these practices as active parts to her writing process.

Although Kate Kim seemed comfortable with editing the output, one student was more hesitant to work with the digital resource. Like many of the instructors discussed below, Helena Cox, an international student from Belgium, also described online translators as providing very “literal” translations that were not useful without being manipulated.

Excerpt 3.11 Do it yourself

Caroline: Ok so I know that you said uh Google Translate wasn't always very accurate?

Helena Cox: No it's very literal

Later, she added:

Helena Cox: Yeah I mean sometimes it does but if you- if you want to trust it for a complex sentence it's- it's better to just translate the words itself.

Caroline: Right.

Helena Cox: And then- do it yourself.

Caroline: So kinda like get the puzzle pieces.

Helena Cox established authority by being able to revise the output, and she seems cognizant of the learning opportunity afforded by this process. However, this is not Helena Cox's preferred way to write. Helena Cox was also the only student interviewed who was an English major. She highly revered literature and traditional forms of literacy—hand writing and reading physical books.

When asking if she used digital dictionaries, she said no and explained:

Excerpt 3.12 I like the feeling of a book

Helena Cox: Um, yeah cause I know why I do it but the feeling of a book, It makes me feel like it's really reliable.

Caroline: Yeah.

So having like the hardback in your hand.

Helena Cox: Yes.

I think I really trust it because it's edited it's- it's probably the same way with um electronic dictionaries but still a book,

I can go back to it.

Helena Cox's responses shed light that though the prototypical students (Matsuda, 2006, pg. 639) that we imagine may prefer digital resources, some students still prefer and trust books over digital resources.

In looking at how students describe their use, I have demonstrated how Kate Kim was hesitant to discuss her use of online translators, how several of the students identified the weaknesses of online translators and how they were still able to use online translators strategically, and finally, how online translators work alongside other resources. These excerpts reveal how students felt the need to position themselves in relation to what is often portrayed as an illegitimate practice by constructing their use as limited and within the bounds of academic integrity.

Constructing a relationship to authority

In Kate Kim and Helena Cox's narratives about others using online translators, they were able to align themselves with their assumptions about teachers' opinions on using online translators; however, all four students provided details about how they used these same services. This section looks at how students describe their own use of online translators in relation to authority figures; in these excerpts there are explicit references to a teacher or plagiarism. The same way that negative attitudes emerged through the students' retelling of other students using online translators, their perception of its permissibility also influenced their responses to my question about whether or not they

would feel comfortable telling their teachers that they had used online translators on an assignment. There were three perspectives that emerged: anxiety about ownership, anxiety about online translators' accuracy, and finally, confidence in its permissibility. In several instances, these perspectives were ultimately related to experiences in their English classes.

Helena Cox, the first year student from Belgium who valued books over digital resources, explicitly identified the ownership issue, identifying using online translators as plagiarism. She also identified the plagiarism anxiety in the U.S. as more prevalent than in Belgium.

Excerpt 3.13 Tremendous focus on plagiarism

Caroline: Do you think here teachers- what do you think teachers here would think about it?

At this university-

Helena Cox: I don't think they would approve of it because I noticed uh the focus on plagiarism.

It's: tremendous.

Caroline: Yes.

Helena Cox: It's really-it's really big deal over here.

Caroline: Yes.

Helena Cox: I mean it's also in Belgium but I really feel- I would never plagiarize anyway but,

Caroline: Yeah.

Helena Cox: I really- I'm much more careful over here.

Caroline: Yes.

Helena Cox: You never know what could happen I think.

Caroline: So how do you think it's been made clear to you that it's a big deal here?

Helena Cox: Well I'm- every single uh class starts off with plagiarism, And I went to this um I went to this presentation about it for extra credit actually.

Caroline: Yeah.

Helena Cox: But anyway. It was useful so.

Caroline: Yeah.

Helena Cox: Uh yeah. It really-

Caroline: It was a presentation about like academic integrity-

Helena Cox: Yes.

Caroline: Or something.

Helena Cox: It was. in McCool was it um it was in the first weeks,

Caroline: Yeah.

Helena Cox: Uh the punishments that you can get, It's scaring me.

Caroline: Yes.

Helena Cox: I don't want to do anything wrong so,

Caroline: Yes I know.

So do you think Google Translate would like fit into that?

Helena Cox: Well I think- I think it's kind of related.

Although Helena Cox pointed out the plagiarism anxiety here, she explicitly noted that she would never plagiarize. As Scollon (1995) pointed out, ideas about plagiarism and originality of speech are culturally based. The importance that some cultures (including the dominant culture of the U.S.) place on originality of speech is not present in all cultures. Similarly, Helena Cox noted at least the local attitudes towards plagiarism. She drew attention to the “tremendous” focus on plagiarism. First, she brought up the emphasis that instructors place on plagiarism: she notes that “every single class starts off with plagiarism.” She also noted the focus the institution (that is, the university) places on plagiarism when she references the presentation about academic integrity that she went to for extra credit. In fact, this presentation fit into a larger academic integrity awareness program at this university. Both of these factors work together to draw her attention to the “punishments that you can get” and thus scare her, suggesting that perhaps the “tremendous” focus on plagiarism discourages students from using literacy practices such as Google Translate.

At first, Kate Kim, a first year student from Korea, was concerned with the teacher’s perception of the accuracy of the translation, but embedded in this answer is a fear of getting caught, suggesting a forbidden action.

Excerpt 3.14 She will not trust it

Caroline: Um so what do you think your comp teacher- how do you think she feels about,

Google Translate or,

Kate Kim: Oh: maybe she will not believe that, right?

Caroline: She will not what?

Kate Kim: She will not trust it.

She will not trust it?

Caroline: Would she be ok with it if you did?

Kate Kim: Oh: Mm:

I'm not sure about Americans can . check is it from Google Translator or not.

Caroline: Yeah.

Kate Kim: But mmm:

Caroline: But what if you told her?

If you said,

I used Google Translate.

How do you think she would respond?

Kate Kim: She doesn't like it because she also maybe in my opinion she will not believe it also so.

Kate Kim's response on one level is about how she perceives her teacher to have concerns about the translator's accuracy: "she will not trust it" or "she will not believe

it.” On another level, however, she was not sure if “Americans can check [to see] is it from Google Translator or not,” which suggests detection and/or secrecy. It is interesting that she said “Americans,” rather than teachers or instructors. This word choice may suggest a perceived cultural difference in the detection of the use of online translators. Additionally, although Kate Kim did not say she believes using online translators is prohibited, she wondered if a document could be checked to see if online translators were used, suggesting that she would not be explicit in discussing such a practice.

Magnolia, a first year student from Korea, identified an anxiety about the ownership of the output from online translators.

Excerpt 3.15 My own words

Caroline: Would you feel comfortable like telling your teacher that you used that?

Magnolia: Not really <laughs>

Caroline: Why?

Magnolia: <laughs> cause I've tried to use it but it wasn't really good so I'd rather not say the Google Translation things like that.

Magnolia: Because when I write- when I use the Google Translation? It's just like using whole sentence from the internet.

Caroline: Yeah.

Magnolia: So it doesn't really- is my own words or sentence,

Caroline: I-yeah

Magnolia: So, even though I use Google Translation things,
If it comes up with something sentence,
I try to like, change it too some how.

Although the first explanation Magnolia gave regards her teacher's understanding of the online translator's accuracy, she supplemented it with a hesitancy regarding ownership. She described using sentences from the translator as being "just like using whole sentences from the internet," a statement that suggests an anxiety about ownership, and to some level, plagiarism. Therefore, she was editing the output for two reasons: concerns about its accuracy and concerns about plagiarism. In editing the output, she was not only improving the quality, but she was also ensuring that the "ownership" of the words is no longer in question.

Although Kate Kim, Magnolia, and Helena Cox's answers touched on plagiarism and ownership of words or thoughts, none of them seemed to be confident in approaching a composition teacher to talk about Google Translate or other online translators. Amanda, the only participant who is not in her first semester, however, reported having conversations (student initiated, not teacher initiated) with her teachers about using these services and receiving a positive response.

Excerpt 3.16 Using your thoughts

Caroline: Uh, what do you think your composition teacher thinks about
Google Translate?

Amanda: Um she - she never told me about that.

Caroline: She's never told you?
Well do you feel comfortable going to her and telling her that you used it?

Amanda: Yeah I tol- I told her yes-today only

Caroline: Ok what'd she say?

Amanda: I told her that I wrote paper but my English is not that much clear so I used that Google Translate and other stuff.

Caroline: And she said that's good?

Amanda: She was like yeah if it's helping you that's good.

Caroline: Yeah.

Amanda: Yeah.

Caroline: Yeah.

Amanda: It's-it's-she was like as far as you're using your thoughts it's good.

Amanda's portrayal of her teacher focused on the ownership of her thoughts. She highlighted the fact that she owns the thoughts. If the thoughts are hers, then using an online translator is acceptable. While Kate Kim worried about the ownership of the *words*, Amanda was concerned with the ownership of the *thoughts*.

Amanda, the student who was most comfortable asserting that teachers have no problem with the use of online translators, had been advised and empowered to use these services by her high school English teacher in her new school in the U.S.

In the introduction, I suggested that online translators might be a resource for self-socialization because of their privacy and easy accessibility, which minimizes the risk for embarrassment resulting from language differences present in the classroom. The data

from student interviews further supported this perspective. Amanda, for example, revealed in her interview that speaking and writing in class are difficult for her.

Excerpt 3.17 Because I can't speak

Amanda: That there are many things in my mind,
But I can't express.
Like sometimes people when I'm around people in class?
They're saying wrong things,
like it's not ethical but, because I can't speak I can't say to them.

She also fears writing assignments that will be peer reviewed in class.

Excerpt 3.18 I can write for myself

Amanda: But when it's short thing I am scared of writing though to show the
people,
I can write for myself-I write diaries .
But that's for myself not for anyone else because I feel
embarrassed when someone read it,
For my grammar English thing.

Amanda's experience shows that although classrooms are often the sites of language socialization, second language writers may feel embarrassed or stigmatized when they speak or write in front of their monolingual peers. As Nam and Beckett (2011) pointed out, students often prefer solitary resources for language socialization because of insecurities about their language abilities. In excerpt 3.17, Amanda discussed how she

resolved the conflict she felt about using English in the public space of the classroom or with the teachers through self-help aids such as a dual language dictionary.

Excerpt 3.19 You should help yourself

Caroline: So how did you find out about Google Translate?

Amanda: My teacher- high school teacher, Mrs. Smith, she told me,
When I first came here?

Caroline: yeah?

Amanda: I have- I have trouble with conjugation,
I don't speak that much,
And then, uh I was- I was having thoughts in my mind,
And she can see that I'm trying- I'm struggling with,
And I always say like half sentence and not a full one,
And she was like you should help yourself and-
And she gave me like Punjabi to English dictionary.

Caroline: Mmhmm.

Amanda: And then she gave me, she gave me Punjabi to English dictionary
when I was writing paper.

Caroline: Mmhmm.

Amanda: It was in my high school and then she-she told me about this stuff.

Amanda noted that because she had “trouble with conjugation,” she didn’t “speak much” even though she was having “thoughts in [her] mind.” She connected this frustration with her teacher’s suggestion of resources such as a Punjabi to English dictionary and online translators. For this student, Google Translate was a resource for

language learning in a similar way to a Punjabi to English dictionary. As Stapleton (2010; 2012) found, Amanda had several digital resources available to her during her writing process. The practice of using online translators was condoned by her high school teacher, and her perception of it in college still reflected her high school understanding. Because Google Translate was introduced to her by an authority figure in high school and thus legitimized, she felt comfortable with its acceptability and claimed the authority to use it in her academic classes. Since high school, she has been able to talk with her composition instructors about this practice. This student was also enrolled in my Basic English class two semesters before this interview where she told me how she used online translators. She chose to talk to her teachers about how she used online translators and found continuing approval. She received “permission” to use in high school and now works to make instructors understand. This is an example of how a learner can achieve agency and transform practice with the guidance and assistance of an “expert”. In fact, she, unlike some of the other students, felt comfortable recommending this practice to another student.

Excerpt 3.20 Go there type in everything

Caroline: So do you have other friends who like um use Google Translate?

Amanda: I told my friend when she came here- my roommate?

Caroline: Mmhmm.

Amanda: She was struggling from the same like she-she asked me for peer review,

Caroline: Mmhmm.

Amanda: Her teacher told her to take peer review home like roommate or something

Caroline: Right.

Amanda: And then there were some mistakes like I did,
And I told her she /???/ we moved like at same time,

Caroline: Yeah

Amanda: So I told her to use like all of this stuff.

Caroline: So what did you tell her to use?

Amanda: Ok I told her uh Google Translate OK go there type in everything.

Caroline: yeah,

Amanda: And she was like OK thank you.

Caroline: yeah.

This student's ongoing dialogue about the use of online translators reflects the positive outcome of a classroom that encouraged multilingual writers to use resources outside of those used by their monolingual peers. The complex interaction and negotiation of one student with multiple teachers and instructors demonstrates how agency can be transferred and socialized, which can lead to change that is perceived to be beneficial to the learner. This student's representation of her conversation with her instructor about the use of online translators was open, honest, and acknowledged boundaries. She recognized the importance of the thoughts being her own.

The interviews revealed that students were willing to identify unacceptable use of online translators (turning in unedited online translator output as a final draft), and these students elaborated through a narrative about a peer. In these excerpts, both students

aligned their position on online translators with their teachers' positions. Second, I found that students all noted limitations of online translators. They agreed that they could not turn in a draft that was completely made up of unedited online translator output in a composition class, and these attitudes were ratified by reference to teachers' assumed opinions or positions, again, demonstrating that the students attempt to align themselves with instructors' positions on such issues. Last, studying how students explicitly constructed their instructors' view on the use of online translators revealed that students did not feel comfortable discussing the use of online translators with their instructors, partially due to their perceptions of the accuracy of online translators, but largely due to associations of online translators with plagiarism. Such fears of plagiarism were discouraging students from taking full advantage of the use of online translators as a resource. The one student who was the exception had the practice condoned by a high school teacher and has since initiated conversations about this practice with her composition instructors. As this student, Amanda, demonstrated, some second language writers may not feel comfortable using English—written or spoken—in the audiences of U.S. classrooms predominantly made up of monolingual English speaking students. Her teacher recognized her need for additional resources and suggested two solitary resources—online translators and a Punjabi-English dictionary. Would all instructors at this institution have prioritized her need for assistance while still encouraging her to use her own ideas like Amanda's teacher? The next section looks at instructor perceptions of the use of online translators.

Instructors' perspectives

Several recurring topics emerged in the interviews with instructors: discussions about the instructor's inexperience or lack of preparation to work with second language writers in general, a willingness to work with students who do engage in this literacy practice through out-of-class discussions and permitting limited use, and negative attitudes surrounding the latter. By focusing on these three areas, I hope to demonstrate why both the teacher and the student would benefit from an open conversation regarding online translators and other digital literacy practices both of second language writers and all first year writers.

Lack of preparation

Like other universities mentioned in the literature review (Tardy, 2011), the university in which this study takes place does not provide any mandatory training for teachers relating to teaching second language writers. All three instructors interviewed for the current study were either graduate students at the university or had received Master's degrees at the same institution. Therefore, I consider the training and professional development of the composition instructors in two parts: the university's graduate curriculum and the composition workshop held at the beginning of every school year. Part of the requirements for the teaching assistantships available to graduate students at this university include service in the university's writing center and also a writing center tutor training course. Graduate students in the writing center do come in contact with second language writers, so the writing center course provides a unit on tutoring ESL students. This may be the only training graduate students get regarding second language learners despite the fact that all are required to teach all three courses in

the composition series (Basic, Composition 1, and Composition 2) and may have second language writers enrolled in all three classes. The second aspect of training, or rather, professional development, consists of a week-long orientation for new teachers at the beginning of the fall semester. Veteran or returning teachers also must attend one day of the week-long orientation. During this orientation, the Director of Composition provides an overview of the composition sequence and the individual courses, leads a grading session, and guides syllabus planning. Additional speakers are also invited from a variety of offices on campuses such as athletic academics, student support services, the student attendance office, and sexual assault services. However, there is no speaker from the campus's English as a Second Language (ESL) center and the topic of second language writers is altogether absent from this orientation, most likely because instruction on teaching second language writers has not been considered a need. The lack of instruction on second language writers may also be due to the university offering ESL sections of the composition sequence, which is taught by an instructor trained in TESOL.

Preparation and support for teaching second language writers was a topic discussed in all three instructor interviews. Instructors made policies regarding second language learners at times despite feeling unprepared. However, two instructors felt that experience with just one or two ESL students has adequately prepared them for making policies for other second language writers.

Excerpt 3.21 First semester I taught

Anne Craig: I've also had one student who asked me if it was ok to run through it and ... <sighs> I have to remember the policy—

This was the first semester I taught so I wasn't sure what to do exactly.

In this excerpt, Anne Craig was discussing the first time a student mentioned using an online translator to her. She did not cite her lack of training or preparation; instead, she mentioned her lack of *experience*. She was not sure what her policy should be because “it was the first semester” she taught. However, she had experience with language learners in her past; she had taught elementary-aged English language learners. She just did not know how to translate that experience to a composition classroom when she was making policies regarding online translators.

Excerpt 3.22 I felt unprepared

Caroline: Did you feel unprepared to make that decision?

Anne Craig: I did um the only time I had worked with ESL students beforehand was when I was teaching children.

Caroline: right.

Anne Craig: In the questionnaire I filled out I was like the little bitty-you know like the oldest one in that class was 5th grade.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: And so I had some experience so at least I could understand what the concept it was,
How hard it was for them to go back and forth.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: So I understood that part.

But other than that I had no clue as to how to do it to make it for composition course.

Caroline: Yes.

Anne Craig: Where you're being graded on how well you can write in the English language.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: So I-yeah-I felt pretty unprepared as far as that-

Anne Craig's only preparation for teaching language learners came from a non-university related activity. It was only due to her experience that she had an understanding of the process of language learning, not from her preparation or training from the composition program.

Similarly, Ellen felt unprepared her first semester, but after teaching one second language writer felt more prepared for her next semester teaching a class with a second language writer.

Excerpt 3.23 I definitely wasn't prepared

Caroline: Um so did you feel prepared to deal with second language writers? Did you know about language acquisition?

Ellen: No. I wasn't .. I definitely wasn't with my first uh my basic student prepared.

I'm more prepared now with the comp. student.

Although the experience with one second language writer might make one more comfortable making policy, one instructor still voiced a desire to have more training

available for teaching second language writers. When talking more broadly about having second language writers in the classroom, Livvie felt that maybe the conversation should start in the orientation workshops. However, she does credit the writing center experience with providing knowledge about second language writers.

Excerpt 3.24 Hey ESL students

Livvie: You know and maybe that needs to happen in in like the um in our when we get together at workshops, at the beginning of the semester.

Caroline: Yeah.

Livvie: You know like Hey ESL students um this is how we need to handle them.

Caroline: Yeah.

Livvie: So I think like I said I think it's really good that um the grad students have to go through the writing center process.

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: And they learn about those kinds of things but maybe that needs to be like a small discussion maybe not a day or an hour but a small brief overview of dealing with ESL students.

Because even as I think as a TA I had ESL students as well.

Livvie included the last statement because TAs usually only teach one section of composition per semester at this university. Although the presence of second language writers is not explicitly acknowledged by the program, Livvie was implying that most

likely, such a session would have immediate relevance for many teachers. Further affirming this suggestion, all of the instructors participating in this study had contact with more than one second language writer in class. Admittedly, instructors who volunteered for this study did so because of their experience with second language writers in their classrooms.

In light of findings with students and importance of translators in the learning/writing process as well as establishing authority as a writer, we need to think about how to educate instructors about the use. In the absence of official policies about language and literacy, communities often form *de facto* or implicit policies (Shohamy, 2006). Because the composition program at this university does not have a policy regarding the use of online translators, I expected these implicit policies to vary from teacher-to-teacher; however, I also found that at times, one instructor's policies might change depending on the student. First, I am going to present several policies of instructors regarding the use of online translators. The policies themselves suggest that instructors are positioning themselves as open but restrictive at the same time. This conflict is mirrored in their discourse about the use of online translators. In the next section, I will provide examples of conflicting discourse about the use that demonstrates that, despite policies that do not explicitly prohibit the use of online translators, instructors use prohibitive language when providing narrative examples.

That's okay, but...

The three instructors I interviewed had varying levels of teaching experience, but they also had varying experiences with students using online translators. Because of this, there was very little overlap in the specifics of the policies they described putting in place. One

common pattern was instructors qualifying their acceptance of the use of online translators. In this section, I have grouped the instructors' responses about policy by first considering various suggestions instructors made, secondly, how they qualified their allowing the use of online translators, and third, a specific recurring recommended use of online translators: that is, using online translators to translate directions.

Livvie, the instructor with the most experience using online translators herself, thought that using Google Translate was acceptable when prewriting, but it was not acceptable when writing the final draft.

Excerpt 3:25 A really useful tool

- Livvie: I think it gets the overall idea across
And in my case it helped me to pinpoint areas that I was weak in
- Caroline: right
- Livvie: So I feel like it can be a really useful tool um
But I feel like that students should use it for um . like if they're
trying to maybe translate their prewriting into something not
necessarily like writing their paper in their native language and
then putting it into Babelfish

Livvie, in this excerpt, acknowledged the learning potential of Google Translate and suggested that it can provide an awareness of a user's linguistic ability. However, Livvie also stressed that it is not acceptable to turn in an essay entirely written in a student's first language and then translated by Google Translate, a practice that both students and instructors felt was not permissible.

Anne Craig, an instructor with four years of experience, recommended for the student to generate the text in English, use the online translator to translate to his or her first language, and then use the online translator to translate the first language back into English, allowing the student to double check his or her language use. This process, commonly referred to as “round trip translation,” is a common practice in online translator use, but researchers disagree on its effectiveness. Hampshire (2010) developed a ranking system for machine translators that used round trip translation as a criteria, but Gaspari and Hutchins (2007) asserted that this is a “technique without any solid theoretical or empirical evidence,” suggesting that the services are not designed for this type of exercise and such an exercise will not provide accurate results. Despite conflicting research, Anne Craig believed that round-trip translation was a viable tool for second language writers when I asked her if online translators could be a valuable part of a second language writer’s process.

Excerpt 3.26 Moving back and forth

Caroline: So when you think about these services like Google Translate just off the top of your head where would you think that would fit into this writing process?

Anne Craig: The writing process?
I could see ... maybe typing up your first draft, putting it into Google Translate, kinda like what I did with my /??/?/ student, Translating it into that language make sure everything translated to your language- to your ideas.

Caroline: Yes.

Anne Craig: And then moving back and forth.

Caroline: Ok.

Round trip translation is not the only strategy that Anne Craig suggested; she also touched on the possibility of students using online translators to develop a type of scaffolding, such as what Garcia and Pena (2011) suggested. Garcia and Pena found that students using online translators are able to generate more and better writing. Anne Craig suggested that for more advanced English language learners, using online translators as a type of scaffolding is a viable, and permissible, strategy.

Excerpt 3.27 Bones and skin

Anne Craig: If its- uh- if they're a higher level speaking uh I don't know what the term is for that one actually,
But- if their English skills are high enough to where they know how to go through and edit themselves on that.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Then that's adding a layer to that,
It's not just depending on the translator by itself.

Caroline: So it's kinda like maybe editing the output.

Anne Craig: Yes.

Caroline: What comes out.

Anne Craig: Yes.

[they can use it to-

Caroline: [and that makes it more] acceptable?

Anne Craig: Yes the um the analogy would be like they're using that to build the bones.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: And polishing it up the skin.

Caroline: Yes.

Anne Craig: With their editing abilities.

Caroline: A type of scaffolding?

Anne Craig: yes [exactly]

Anne Craig's bone and skin analogy stressed the importance of a student engaging with the output from the online translator. Anne Craig recognized the student's involvement and ability in this scaffolding process. This practice of editing the output corresponded with what students said about their own use of Google Translate.

While Anne Craig felt that second language writers that are proficient in English were better equipped to more fully use online translators, Livvie, a more experienced instructor, felt that the converse was true. Livvie believed that students enrolled in composition (in contrast with students who are still enrolled in the ESL program) should not be using online translators.

Excerpt 3.28 I don't feel they should be relying on those

Caroline: So I guess if you had a student who was writing and I know there are lots of other ways you could use translation services, But they're writing would you encourage them to use software like Babelfish or Google Translate?

Livvie: I feel like at. . . I feel like if they're in the ESL center,

Caroline: Ok.

Livvie: then that's a possibility depending on their level.

Caroline: Ok.

Livvie: But I think once they are integrated into like a Comp. 1 or Comp. 2 class

I don't feel like they should be relying on those.

Although Livvie felt that students enrolled in composition should not be relying on online translators, she was hesitant to say she would forbid it. When asked if she would have a problem with it, she instead emphasized what she sees as superior alternatives, sidestepping an actual judgment.

Excerpt 3.29 I would recommend tutoring

Caroline: Um so is there a type of ... if somebody did it would you have problem with it?

Would it- you know?

Livvie: No I don't think I would have a problem with it.

Caroline: You just wouldn't recommend-

Livvie: I would recommend tutoring.

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: So that we could look at how you literally translated the words over and how we can make that um . . . make you think about more easily in English.

But also how we can make your wording not so awkward and explain the process.

Ellen, a teaching assistant with two years of experience, also offered preferred meeting with second language writers individually opposed to other resources.

Excerpt 3.30 Working with me

Ellen: Um when grading papers particularly if I saw misuse of common phrases and stuff that you only learn with practice with English I would offer to you know have a session with them to explain.

Caroline: Ok.
So more work with you?

Ellen: Yeah.

Caroline: Would you ever recommend the writing center to them?

Ellen: I recommend the writing center too but um . . . specifically they needed help with certain things and I thought it would be more beneficial to work with me.

Translating Instructions / Directions

Some instructors also brought up students translating instructions or directions.

Excerpt 3.31 Never appropriate for a whole assignment

Caroline: Um do you think there's an appropriate time that second language writers could use these services?

Ellen: I think so I think um in particular maybe translating assignments?
Just to-

Caroline: Like the instructions?

Ellen: The instructions and even if they're having trouble um maybe with certain concepts.

Caroline: Ok ok.

Ellen: But it's never appropriate to use it for a whole assignment.

Ellen's shift from condoning the use of online translators for directions to her assertion that "it's never appropriate [...] for a whole assignment" positioned her at once as open to the idea of online translators, but still the encourager of academic integrity. The latter seems to be a safe statement for both students and instructors. Even barring the question of academic integrity, turning in an essay that is entirely unedited output from an online translator would be riddled with errors. Furthermore, students all affirmed that they would never (and for English Composition, could never) turn in an essay entirely translated by Google because their language ability far surpasses the unedited output. A statement like Ellen's does, however, avoid the question of how is the service best utilized. In fact, for the students interviewed, a ban like this would hardly affect them, as they do not wish to use online translators in this way. The effect it might have, however, is to discourage students from using online translators in a way that encourages learning or feeling comfortable about discussing this practice with instructors.

Anne Craig revealed that she might encourage some composition students to use Google Translate and not others. One factor in this was how long the student had been in a university setting.

Excerpt 3.32 Too much weight

Anne Craig: So we reached the agreement that the student could use the translator for everything they needed?

But if it was an in-class assignment they could only use their little pocket translator.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: That I had already approved.

Caroline: Yeah.

Anne Craig: And so if it was a homework assignment they could do it with the understood agreement that they would first write it in English then translate their English to their home language and then the home language back to English to make sure everything fit.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: But they had to try to do the assignment in English completely in English first.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: So that one worked out ok.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: But then I felt like I was putting too much weight on the student,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: And I felt like the student could handle that one because this was a very good student who came and who had already earned like two degrees over in China.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: And was just coming back to make sure they could earn an English degree so I felt like that student could handle it.

I wouldn't do it with a very first semester college student,
Just because that's a lot of responsibility to put on one individual
student.

Caroline: Yes.

Anne Craig: I would still feel comfortable doing like translate the instructions
but not their actual assignments.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig felt that this student's experience in an academic environment prepared him or her to use online translators responsibly. This student seemed to be an exception. This instructor's policy was that, barring special circumstances, students should only use online translators for instructions; that is, students should translate the instructors from English into their first language. For Anne Craig, a uniform policy regarding online translators was not feasible. Instead, it was on a case-by-case basis.

All the instructors agreed that there were circumstances in composition when using online translators would be acceptable or even beneficial. However, instructors qualified their acceptance with either restrictions on which students would be permitted to use it or restrictions on what is permissible to translate.

Language of prohibition

Although none of the instructors interviewed stated that they prohibited the use of online translators, at times the discourse about the use of online translators suggested that they were doing just that. In this section, I include excerpts that demonstrate that despite the instructors all positioning themselves as open to this possibility, they too are affected by conflicting ideologies. First, I discuss an instructor who found it problematic when

using online translators results in a student's writing not sounding like his or her voice. Then, I consider how an instructor thought students should "admit" to using these services. Third, I will provide an example of how the use of online translators can get positioned as a negative practice, or a practice of the inexperienced: an instructor noted that students are "proud" to leave this practice behind. Fourth, I look a hypothetical writing center session that one instructor described that explicitly relates the use of online translators to plagiarism. Finally, I consider a teacher who developed policies in order to prevent students from using online translators.

A key element in online translators for Anne Craig was whether or not the writing sounds like the student's "voice." This anxiety about how a student's writing sounds paralleled with Magnolia's concern that using the output from online translators would not be considered her words. Anne Craig compared the use of online translators by second language writers to the use of the built in thesauruses in word processors by composition students.

Excerpt 3.33 It doesn't sound like them

Caroline: So how do you feel about students using thesauruses?

Anne Craig: I'm perfectly fine as long as they look up the word.

You can look up a word through a thesaurus then look up that word through a dictionary.

Caroline: Then use it?

Anne Craig: Yes then use it because you've expanded your knowledge,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: So it's not just click. you know right click,
Thesaurus that word looks bigger.
Click that word.

Caroline: Yeah so a student who did that habitually like several times per
page-

Anne Craig: Yeah.

Caroline: Like just right clicked and inserted a larger word,
That would be problematic for you?

Anne Craig: That would be problematic,
Because then it doesn't sound like the student's voice.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: It doesn't sound like them,
It doesn't reflect their knowledge of the issue.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: Just like an ESL student.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Where if they used translator but don't smooth things out or if
words are different it's not reflecting their knowledge of the
English language.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Just like the native speaker's lack of knowledge of the English
language.

Caroline: Yeah that makes sense.

The discourse used here (specifically, “reflecting their knowledge”) is often part of the discourse surrounding plagiarism (Harwood, 2010). For example, having someone edit a paper can be considered plagiarism because it does not reflect a student’s knowledge of grammar and mechanics. This instructor’s attitude toward online translators and thesauruses raised two questions. First, if a student’s voice can change with the use of thesauruses and online translators, how do we determine what is a student’s voice without discouraging growth? Secondly, how do we, as teachers, police what words “reflect [a student’s] knowledge of the language?” Are we using the common sense idea that “you just know” (if a student wrote it or not) as a gatekeeping device? This anxiety about a student’s writing reflecting his or her knowledge can also be associated with the Western ideologies privileging originality that Scollon (1995) noted.

While discussing policies regarding the use of online translators, the idea of full disclosure of student use came up. Anne Craig’s described policies included a conversation with the instructor before using online translators to write. Throughout the interview, Anne Craig provided prescriptive uses of online translators that at times seemed conflicting. This tension was also evident as she thinks students should discuss using online translators on the assignment with the teacher. Most noticeably, her use of the word “admit” made the action sound prohibited, even if her policy is open to the use of online translators.

Excerpt 3.34 Admit it beforehand

Anne Craig: If it was one of these assignments where I gave you the assignment and you had to turn it in two weeks later and I didn't see anything in between,

then I'd feel like you almost need to go teach- if I were a student in that circumstance.

Go tell the teacher here's what I'm gonna do is this ok.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Because they're not seeing the process,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Then I'd have like you know that would be a bigger issue I think.

Caroline: Ok.

Anne Craig: If they would just go and admit it beforehand,

Caroline: Yeah

Anne Craig: Before it- let the know what's going on.

Rather than just you know this person who can hardly speak English fluently then turns in this great paper, Something's going to look suspicious.

Researchers agree that conversation about the use of online translators is beneficial for students (Williams, 2006; Pena, 2011; Niño, 2009), but positioning this practice as something to “admit” rather than something to describe or discuss suggests it’s a prohibited, or at least discouraged, practice and creates a further distance from the literacy practices students use in their private lives and those utilized in composition.

When asked if she remembers any specific incidents where a student described using a service like Google Translate, Livvie, an instructor who has experience using online translators from studying abroad, positioned the use of online translators as something that students are proud of when they leave it behind, adding to the

assumptions that it is best for beginning students. Additionally, when she described that she finds that “most of the time with ESL students what I find is that they wanna take that extra time to do it the right way,” presumably, the “right way” is not using online translators.

Excerpt 3.35 Sense of pride

Caroline: Yeah uh has a student ever told you about using a resource like Google Translate or BabelFish?

Livvie: Um yes I have actually had um students-um one instance comes to mind um probably from about three years ago,
Um . . . and one of my students said she- she said you know I - this was my first paper that I wrote in English and did not use a translator for,
And so that to me admitting that was amazing.
Because I know that um when I would learn a second language that's something I relied on heavily.

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: Um and so when I see that students aren't using that um and admitting that they're not using it,

Caroline: Right.

Livvie: I feel that they have a lot of sense of pride in that.

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: But students that usually use like Babelfish or something,
Isn't that one of them?

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: Um sometimes their-their language is awkward a lot of times,

Caroline: Yes.

Livvie: Um but most of the time with ESL students what I find is that they wanna take that extra time to do it the right way.

Caroline: Right.

Livvie: So I feel like a lot of times they're trying to use English instead of translating.

Another way that I saw the prohibitive attitude of some teachers towards online translators came out in Anne Craig's hypothetical writing center session (one based on past experiences), claiming at one point it does feel like cheating despite the fact that she has herself encouraged it in the past.

Excerpt 3.36 Feeling like you're cheating

Caroline: Right.

So do you feel like uh that topic of like translating comes up in the writing center at all?

Anne Craig: I don't think we- encourage it at all.

And part of it is because we're not sure what their instructor is gonna think about it.

If we tell them like hey you should probably try to run through this,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: Some of them- like freeze.

I mentioned it to one student like well did you try this word like
what word would you say in your language,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: To try to relate- even though I have no clue what she's saying.

Caroline: Yeah.

Anne Craig: Maybe if she can do the-the process of what a translator does in
her mind,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: With one individual word,
It could help her come up with the answer.

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: But she's so worried about going back to the native language that
... her teacher has told her strictly you know you cannot use this
do not use this do not use a translator,

Caroline: Right.

Anne Craig: That she freaks out about going through that same process even if
she's doing it in her head.

Caroline: Right.

So why do you think teachers are hesitant to -

Anne Craig: because you do have that option of like feeling like you're cheating

Caroline: Yeah.

Anne Craig: Almost.

And-and on some levels it would be.

Caroline: Yeah.

Anne Craig: Definitely.

If you're supposed to be doing it with your own ideas then it does feel like cheating if you're translating or something.

Although when I asked this question, I was intending to elicit information about the relationship of online translators and the writing center, this instructor instead talked about mental translation. Surprisingly, this teacher identified a resistance to using translation (and translators, as there is a slippage between the two in this excerpt; at times she refers to the act of mental translation and others the use of online translators) in not only the teachers, but also the students. She noted that, in this hypothetical situation, the student's teacher has said "you cannot use this do not use this do not use a translator" which, in turn, scares the hypothetical student out of mental translation. Such ideas about mental translation are grounded in monolingual ideologies and likely not based on research about second language acquisition.

She also noted, in regards to the translators, that there is at least a shadow of plagiarism. Although the question started with me asking why she thought teachers would resist their use, she ended up asserting her opinion as well—"and on some levels it would be" because "if you're supposed to be doing it with your own ideas then it does feel like cheating if you're translating or something." This statement contradicted Amanda's understanding that even if she used an online translator, the ideas are still hers.

Finally, I found that one instructor plans activities to force students not to use outside resources. Although Livvie revealed in Excerpt 3.23 that she thought using translators would be helpful during prewriting, she also revealed in the interview that she develops assignments specifically to encourage students *not* to use translation.

Excerpt 3.37 Timed writing in class

Livvie: Because some classes I'll make them write in class and so they have to use English.

Caroline: Right.

Livvie: and so I think that that encourages them like when you work on timed writing in class ,
I feel like if you have ESL students that encourages them to use the language and not rely on the translation.

Such types of writing assignments distance students from the literacy practices that they use daily and force them to rely on nothing but the pen and paper. Livvie noted that these types of assignments prepare students for in-class essays or short answer questions on tests; however, this usefulness is contained to the education system. Although assignments like these might be intended to “level the playing field” by eliminating outside resources, the composition classroom is an English-only space that puts multilingual writers in a disadvantaged position from the beginning.

Overall, these findings suggest that the instructors interviewed would value additional training or support for teaching second language writers and that although instructors want to work with students who use online translators, they are also conflicted

about the same services because of fears of plagiarism and also concerns about the services' effects on language learning.

In light of the tensions resulting from conflicting ideologies that emerged from the interview data from both students and instructors, English composition programs should provide instruction and support for teaching second language writers along with explicit policies about the use of online translators and other multilingual resources that are grounded in research and designed to best meet the needs of second language writers whose writing processes are entirely different from that of monolingual writers.

Legitimizing the use of online translators while acknowledging the need for certain boundaries can improve communication between students and instructors while making both parties feel more confident in the teaching and learning processes in the composition classroom. Furthermore, legitimizing the use of such a multilingual resource may help establish the composition program, traditionally an English-Only space, as a safe learning space for second language writers.

Recommendations

First and foremost, following Tardy (2011), I recommend an open conversation about online translators, along with the use of other digital technologies, and the writing practices of second language writers more generally in the writing programs. This conversation needs to begin both within the department and also in the classroom. Anne Craig and Livvie both had conversations with students about the services, but they waited until the students came to them and initiated the conversation. As seen with Amanda, the student who was best able to articulate the potentialities and pitfalls of online translators,

teachers can initiate this conversation without letting a student “off the hook” as far as writing goes and might in fact deepen the learning/writing process.

As Livvie suggested, one way that a conversation could begin within the department would be a brief module on second language writers in the composition classroom during the composition orientation. In order for us as teachers to be able to guide students in how to best understand technologies like online translators, we have to first understand these same technologies as Selfe (1999) suggested. Furthermore, we must work to make sure our information about technologies stays current. Although Livvie and Anne Craig mentioned having used the services themselves, both of their experiences were years ago. Also, including a discussion of second language writers in either the composition workshop or written composition policies would allow the department to integrate focused instruction with what is already happening in the classroom. Additionally, a more concrete system of recordkeeping of student demographics would help us better understand who the students are at this university. Outside of enrollment numbers for ESL sections, the presence of second language writers is based primarily on anecdotal evidence.

At the classroom level, teachers might do the following:

- Discuss the use of online translators with second language writers
- Moderate classroom discussions about the use of technology in the writing process (the use of digital thesauruses, dictionaries, spellcheck, online translators etc.)
- Create a class contract that defines appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology such as online translators

- Develop a revision strategy writing assignment where all students describe their revision processes and second language writers describe their use of or revision of online translator output

The goal of these recommendations is to help align student and instructor perceptions of the permissibility of online translator use in the composition instructors. Ideally, doing so would release students from these conflicting ideologies concerning plagiarism and would release instructors from ideologies of monolingualism.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to examine how the use of online translators is explained, justified, and contextualized by composition instructors and students. I found that both students and instructors believed that using translators facilitates language learning and use but also believed translators could be an instrument of plagiarism. Prior research has found that online translators, among other digital resources, can help second language writers both in terms of language learning and writing processes as well as providing access to valuable socialization processes in ESL and foreign language classrooms (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Niño, 2009; Williams, 2006). The findings from the current study, however, suggest that although students and instructors in English composition classes were aware of some benefits of these services, they experience conflict when justifying their use in relation to the dominant ideologies of plagiarism that valorize individual work. In looking at the data from student interviews, I first found that students were willing to identify an unacceptable use of online translators (turning in unedited online translator output as a final draft) when discussing the use of online translators by their peers, but they gave vague answers on what were acceptable uses for their own writing. All students, however, agreed that they could not turn in a draft that was completely made up of unedited online translator output in a composition class. I

also found that three students did not feel comfortable discussing the use of online translators with their instructors, partially due to their perceptions of the accuracy of online translators, but largely due to associations of online translators with plagiarism. The one student who was the exception had the practice condoned by a high school teacher and has since initiated conversations about this practice with her composition instructors.

In the data from instructor interviews, I found first that instructors made policies regarding online translators while feeling unprepared to make decisions regarding second language writing. Second, I found that instructors had a hard time identifying acceptable practices but were able to identify the same unacceptable practice that students identified—turning in an essay composed entirely of unedited online translator output (which, according to student data, is an unlikely use). Finally, I found that although no instructor said explicitly that they would not permit the use of online translators, two instructors used language of prohibition when describing incidents from their classroom.

From these local findings, I made several recommendations both at the classroom and institutional level. The two, however, influence one another. Christine Tardy (2011) argued that “classroom change is most likely to occur when program faculty are involved, when they work with administrators to articulate, reflect on, and, where appropriate, transform their local practices” (p. 635). Studying student and instructor perceptions of online translators raises questions about how we as composition teachers are embracing technology and also how we are viewing multilingual students. Continuing reflection on how students and classes are changing will help ensure that our syllabi and policies promote learning for all students.

More broadly, these student perceptions reveal that students may turn to online translators as a more private resource for language socialization (and thus one that minimizes risk of stigmatization). Understanding translators in this way may motivate teachers to legitimize this practice in the same way that Morita (2004) found that some instructors legitimized the silence of second language writers in classroom discussions in order to empower them. By legitimizing the use of online translators, teachers may encourage some second language writers to participate more fully in the composition classroom.

Additionally, these findings suggest that despite students' anxiety over the relationship between online translators and plagiarism (which is likely attributable to the academic discourse socialization of these students and university setting), they are choosing to use these services. As a result, instructors might also be socialized by students like Amanda who, encouraged by her high school teacher's advice to use online translators, now initiates conversations with their instructors about these services, resulting in a deeper understanding of the writing processes of second language writers. Paying attention to the needs and practices of students may help us reimagine the prototypical students at our university; that is, the makeup of our classrooms that guide us as we plan our syllabi for a student population that is increasingly diverse (Matsuda, 2006).

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

1. I see you took composition at MSU, tell me about your experience in that class.
2. Can you tell me how you went about writing a paper/essay in your composition class?
3. How do you use your first language when writing a paper in English?
4. Tell me about how you used Google Translate or BabelFish.
5. How do you think those websites are helpful when writing a paper?
6. Are there any ways that those websites are not helpful?
7. What do you think your composition teacher thinks about websites like Google Translate?
8. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INSTRUCTORS

1. Can you tell me about your experience with second language writers in your composition classes?
2. Do you have any knowledge of second language writers using machine translation services such as Google Translate or BabelFish? If so, tell me how you believe these services are used.
3. How do you think this service fits into a second language writer's writing process?
4. Would you encourage students to use these services? Why or why not?
5. How do you think second language writers could best utilize this service?
6. What dangers or pitfalls could these services have for second language writers?
7. Is there anything you want to add?

APPENDIX C
TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS (Tannen et al., 2007)

((words))	Double parentheses enclose transcriber's comments, in italics.
/words/	Slashes enclose uncertain transcription.
Carriage return	Each new line represents an intonation unit.
-	A hyphen indicates a truncated word or adjustment within an intonation unit, e.g., repeated word, false start.
?	A question mark indicates a relatively strong rising intonation (interrogative)
!	An exclamation mark indicates rising intonation (exclamatory)
.	A period indicates a falling, final intonation
,	A comma indicates a continuing intonation
...	Dots indicate silence
:	A colon indicates an elongated sound
CAPS	Capitals indicate emphatic stress
<laugh>	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises, e.g., laughs, coughs, crying.
Words [words]	Square brackets enclose simultaneous talk
[words]	

ⁱ The university at which the current study was conducted prohibits the use of "unauthorized assistance" in the honor pledge.