Ideologies of Language, Authority, and Disability
in College Writing Peer Review

by

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## DEDICATION

For CJK, TJK, and HJK.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABSTRACT

Peer review is intended to help students develop authority over the texts they produce and support them as they position themselves as new members of scholarly or professional communities. Despite the important role peer review plays in composition pedagogy, research on peer review has declined since the 1990s, and few recent studies examine how ideologies around social diversity and standard language shape peer review. Does peer review work as intended for all students, or can it reproduce the same social hierarchies it seeks to destabilize? To address this question, this dissertation uses qualitative methods to explore language, identity, and diversity in peer review, focusing on two sections of a first-year writing class at a diverse and non-selective regional university in the Midwest. Through an analysis of ethnographic observations, audio-recordings of peer review, longitudinal student interviews, and course materials, the study shows how face-to-face peer review is fraught with the intersecting effects of ideologies around language and identity.

This dissertation posits that *authority* in peer review is a relational phenomenon that depends on a *multifaceted* construction of standardness in the writing classroom, where social categories are marked and maintained in relation to standardized English, whiteness, and normalcy in ability. Analysis of peer review conversation alongside interviews with students *about that conversation* allows yields thick descriptions of student experiences that illuminate the interplay between individual perceptions of authority and the larger social forces that shape such perceptions of authority. When students were marked as non-standard—via their written *or* spoken language(s) and their racial appearance—their access to authority in peer review was constrained. Students marked as standard, however, claimed an unwarranted authority in relation to their peers. An additional key finding concerns ideologies of disability in the *temporal space* of peer review. When students were marked as deviant (e.g., too slow), time emerged as a phenomenon based in social dynamics and timeliness (kairos) that affected the authority of an utterance. This analysis illuminates what before were the unseen effects of *normate time* on peer review, alongside ideologies around language and race, contributing to current scholarship on authority, translingualism, disability studies, and antiracist pedagogy.

Given these findings, instructors can plan for students to undermine the goals of peer review by mimicking the hierarchical authority of their instructor, assuming a problematic caregiving stance relative to their peers, or disregarding or sidelining feedback from peers whose writing is seen as deficient or whose language or ability is marked as nonstandard or deviant. In not preparing for such challenges, instructors risk condoning harmful ideologies around writing and identity. Further, given the stigma of markers of temporal deviance, developing tools to help students govern the pace of conversation can authorize students to participate fully in group work. Such tools can also reinforce a non-hierarchical mode of collaboration, wherein students claim equal time, labor, and authority. Theorizing inclusive models of collaborative learning in general will require an intersectional approach that considers time, identity, and power.

**INTRODUCTION**

Peer review, a collaborative learning tool that emerged in the 1980s as a response to the failure of traditional writing pedagogy to meet the demands of students hitherto excluded from higher education (Bruffee; Trimbur), is intended to help students cultivate a sense of authority over the texts they produce and to support them as they position themselves as members of scholarly or professional communities. Research from the 1980s and 1990s showed that with preparation, peer review (PR) could improve the quality of student writing by destabilizing hierarchies that limited student authority (Berkenkotter; Stanley; Nystrand; Gere and Abbot) and supporting students as they develop their authority as new members of academic discourse communities (Bruffee *A Short Course in Writing: Composition, Collaborative Learning, and Constructive Reading;* Corbett et al.; Gere; Hyland and Hyland *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*). Yet, research from the 80s and 90s also showed that PR could reproduce the inequitable effects it intended to mitigate, not only between instructors and students, but between students, especially around gender (Spear; Stygall), race (Fox; Villanueva), language difference (Allaei & Connor; Matsuda & Silva), and ideological difference (Trimbur; Myers; Lunsford; Horner). Given this conflicting research—and given that PR is still a widespread practice in the writing classroom—questions about equity in peer review remain vexing. Does PR work as intended for all students, or can it reproduce the same hierarchies and systems of oppression that it seeks to destabilize?

Despite these questions, peer review has received little scholarly attention in recent years, especially in terms of students' perspectives on social difference (Kerschbaum "Avoiding the

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Difference Fixation: Identity Categories, Markers of Difference, and the Teaching of Writing"). Recent scholarship around the counterproductive effects of monolingualism (Ruecker), racism (Kerschbaum; Jackson), gender dynamics (Tomlinson), and disability (Corbett) in PR might signal a renewed interest in this area, but scholars agree that more research is needed to understand whether PR works as intended in linguistically and racially diverse classrooms (Kerschbaum *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference;* Leverenz "Peer Response in the Multicultural Composition Classroom: Dissensus—a Dream (Deferred)"; Moss et al.; Ruecker; Stygall; Trimbur "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning").

Linda Fernsten suggests that questions about how difference might affect peer review never became a central concern in the emergent writing process pedagogy of the 1980s. She writes, the "voices of the Eighties that had questioned aspects of power relations in peer review, addressing issues of cultural difference and the silencing of some voices, seemed hardly audible above the joyous cacophony of Process Writing enthusiasts" (35). Of the voices that might have risen above the "cacophony," Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford's might have had a good chance.

Published in 1990, Ede and Lunsford's *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* raises a number of questions about power relations in peer review, which they position as a sub-category of collaborative writing. For example, they pose the following questions:

> How do issues of gender, race, and class impinge on collaboration? To what extent can—and should— collaborative activities attempt to highlight or address inequities of gender, race, and class? (115)

Questions such as these about the effects of social difference on collaborative learning activities like PR elicited little empirical attention, as Fernsten's assertion suggests. In the paradigm shift away from the instructor-central model of education, these questions were never addressed. Ede and Lunsford's questions remain largely unaccounted for in both the literature on PR and its

everyday application. The notion of planning for social diversity in PR remains sadly novel. As a result, we know little about what goes on as students sit down to offer and receive feedback on their writing and how ideologies around difference might affect peer review interaction.

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My interest in PR is rooted in my experience speaking with undergraduates about race, writing, and collaborative learning. Doing interviews for a research project on undergraduate student activism around the *Being Black at University of Michigan Movement*, I heard from students about the linguistic and racial discrimination they had perceived in the classroom, *especially when they were asked to collaborate on writing projects and in peer review.* As I listened to students speak about their experience, it seemed that peer review could be a site in which my scholarly—and personal—interests in language diversity, critical whiteness theory, and antiracist pedagogy could support a theoretical and pedagogical intervention.

When I conducted an informal round of preliminary interviews in order to learn more about peer review, I found that the questions that had animated scholarly debates on PR in the 1980s and 1990s were still very much unresolved not only on a theoretical level, but also were still shaping the encounters of students. The two students I interviewed, both African American males, remarked that although the racial dynamics of peer feedback were "covert" and "subtle," "when grades [were] at stake, people [were] less PC, more blunt," the dynamics "more obviously racialized." [1] One student spoke about feeling that his feedback was not "counted" in the same way as the White students'. The students also highlighted the psychological burden of questioning whether criticisms were motivated by racism or not, suggesting they felt the need to

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[1] Although the student was speaking about collaborative writing, not peer review per se, I maintain that processes of peer review are inherent in all collaborative writing contexts, though not, perhaps, as reified as they are in the composition classroom.

"prove" themselves in group writing contexts because they felt that their peers had negative perceptions of their ability to write academically. From these informal interviews, a question began to emerge, one that would later shape the dissertation: if students feel their feedback is discounted because of their racial identity, *who* counts as a *peer* in *peer* review, and how is *authority* in peer review connected to ideologies around identity and language?

As I embarked on a formal, IRB-approved pilot project, my interest in PR, as a site of conflict, gained momentum. The pilot study yielded more data that suggested that ideologies around race and language affected PR discourse in ways unexplored in the literature. Unlike in the informal interviews I had conducted, the data from the pilot included the material of PR itself—student drafts, written peer feedback, and transcripts of the PR discussion. This enabled me to account for the perceptions of students alongside the drafts and transcripts of their PR sessions. For the pilot, I recorded and observed PR conversation in an intermediate writing class, conducted formal interviews with six students, asked them to reflect on their experiences during PR, and collected student writing and documents related to their review sessions.

My analysis of this data surfaced more questions around power and identity in PR. For example, one student, an African American female, Alexandria, commented on her experience in PR, bringing up gender as a key factor in how students negotiated:

> The alpha males feel that in order to show that they are smart they need to lead everything. That's really annoying. If someone were to lead the conversation in a way that still enabled others to contribute and feel included, I feel that's totally fine.

When I asked Alexandria to say more about what she meant by "alpha males," she added race and class to the conversation about gender. In her experience, "alpha males" are white, upper-class, and, to use her word, "sheltered." She made it clear she was referring to a specific student, Jake, a white male, in her PR group, whose presence had an exclusionary and silencing effect on other students. Alexandria remembered her session with Jake as part of this larger pattern,

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arguing that despite Jake's attempt to "lead everything," she still made a comment on his paper that her peers agreed with and that he eventually accepted.

Jake, however, had a very different view of peer interaction in general and of his interaction with Alexandria in particular. Referring specifically to Alexandria, Jake said,

> This girl I took no advice from. You can tell before [from reading her paper] she didn't understand the prompt, so for the most part her feedback is going to be garbage. She made a suggestion that everyone in the group disagreed with.

Here, Jake figuratively discards Alexandria's feedback, a move that at once *excludes* her voice in the conversation and demonstrates that he does not see value in making his peers "feel included," to use Alexandria's phrase. He also judges Alexandria's credibility as a peer reviewer based on his low opinion of her writing, a judgement that echoes the experiences of other African American students who reported similar deficit views of their capacity to write academic genres. Further, in Jake's recollection of the PR session, the whole group also disagreed with Alexandria's feedback. This is at odds with Alexandria's recollection as well as the transcript of the PR session, which shows that although Jake resisted Alexandria's feedback, the other students supported her feedback, finding alternate ways of framing it to Jake in order to persuade him that Alexandria's point was valuable.

The point I wish to highlight here, and the reason I have presented this brief analysis of PR discourse, is the extent to which students perceived their experience in PR as fraught with the intersecting effects of ideologies around language, race, class, and gender, all of which come into play as students decide whose feedback should be taken up and whose feedback should be discarded. As the project moved forward, I began to discern that the larger issue that shapes these considerations of the effects of PR is authority, as taken up between students and by instructors in the writing classroom. What does it mean to be an author, to claim authorship, or to exercise authority over a text? Whose voices are authorized in the writing classroom, and why?

As I concluded my pilot study, and began collecting data at a different research site, these questions, focused mainly on race and language, remained salient. The new research site, however, included several students who identified as disabled. Disability as a category of difference, with its own set of ideologies, emerged as a factor in how students negotiated about authority in PR, as the non-disabled students marked their disabled peers in class interaction and to me in interviews. To be frank, this was a surprise to me. No students had identified as disabled in my pilot; at the beginning of my study, no research focused specifically on neurodiversity in PR existed. Thus, neither my pilot study, nor my review of the literature had prepared me for the presence of students who identified as cognitively disabled.

However, disability is not a rare or isolated phenomenon in the college classroom. In 1998, at least 9.4 percent of college first-years identified as disabled (Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson). The most recent statistics indicate that in 2012, 11 percent of undergraduates identified as disabled (U.S. Department of Education). Since many disabled students do not report their disability, the percentage is likely much higher (O'Shea and Meyer). The presence of students who identified openly—to me in interviews and to their peers and instructors in class discussion—as disabled, pushed me to account for disability alongside student perceptions of linguistic and racial diversity. Indeed, an analysis of the role of disability in PR became a central task, and a central scholarly contribution, of the dissertation.

This is also an opportune moment to highlight what my analysis of Alexandria and Jake's interaction suggests implicitly: that in addition to race and language, other social categories, such as gender and class, were factors in PR discourse. A confluence of factors, then, were at work in PR discourse. This presented a theoretical and methodological challenge, and, simultaneously, an implication about the intersectional effects of difference in PR. Where I had prepared to account

for the overlapping effects of race and language, accounting for such a mix of intersecting variables seemed a daunting task. I resolved this problem by choosing to focus on diversity in language, race, and ableness while also highlighting instances when other factors, mainly gender and nationality, became relevant. In Chapter 2, I offer a detailed explanation of how I approach the analysis of race, language, and disability. *Overall, this dissertation suggests that authority in peer review depends on a multifaceted construction of standardness in the writing classroom, where social categories are marked and maintained in relation to standardized English, normalcy in ability, and whiteness.*

**Chapter Roadmap**

In Chapter 1, "A Legacy of Peer Review in Writing Studies," I provide an overview of the theoretical and pedagogical history of peer review in the field of Writing Studies. This overview leads into my research questions, which then serve as a point of departure for the study. In Chapter 2, "Design and Methods," I present the epistemological orientations that drive and justify the methods of this dissertation. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of my own positionality, racial and linguistic, alongside the challenges of attempting to conduct qualitative research on ideologies of race and language.

Together, Chapter 3, "'Whose Feedback To Go With': Authority in Speech and Writing" and Chapter 4, "'Almost Too Perfect': Authenticity, Plagiarism, and Authority, demonstrate the influence of ideologies around language standardness. Chapter 3 traces a pattern by which students appraised one another's authority in PR: in some instances, students used written English to assign a relational authority to their peers; in other instances, they used spoken English to assign authority. The Chapter then outlines the impact of those ideologies on the authority of students whose language is seen as marked against a standard. These constructions

of standardness remained largely unspoken and invisible, but they shaped student interaction: the more standard, the more authority; the less standard, the less authority. With few exceptions, this pattern was pervasive.

Chapter 4 continues this line of enquiry, but engages questions of authenticity and plagiarism, as they emerged when students perceived a disconnect between spoken and written English. That is, if students *heard* an accent in spoken language, then they expected to *read* a similar kind of accent, signaled by grammatical error. If they did not perceive such error, they suspected plagiarism. Chapter 4 shows that standard language ideology did not work alone, as the sole factor in PR authority. Chapter 4 also raises questions about the workings of nationality and whiteness in addition to language ideologies as students appraised one another's status as American citizens, an appraisal in which standard language and whiteness signaled Americanness while their binaries signaled recent immigrant status, a position that held less authority. *In both Chapters 3 and 4, authority was a highly contingent, highly relational phenomenon, that was related to language standardness as well as other ideologies that construct whiteness and Americanness as a standard. Claiming standardness in language and claiming Americanness were moves that bolstered authority in PR.*

Chapter 5, "'A Hard Time Understanding': Disability and Kairotic Space, examines yet another construction of standardness. Here, I add normalcy in ability and normalcy in the temporal space of the classroom to the conversation about standardness in language. I argue that when students' cognitive status was marked as different, often through speech or writing, then their peers often took up what I call a *caregiving* role in relation to those they perceived as their disabled. Students positioned as caregivers spent more time *reviewing* than *being reviewed* while their marked peers had less time to assert authority as peer reviewers. The effects of time were not limited to a question of quantity. Time emerged not only as a measure of passing moments, but

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rather, as a phenomenon based in social dynamics and timeliness that determined the authority of an utterance. The lopsided power relations of PR, then, could be read as a problem of *temporal access*, as students who identified as disabled attempted to make their voices heard by saying the right thing at the right time. I also trace the effects of whiteness, as an ideology that intersects with ideologies around standardness in language and normalcy in ability.

In the final chapter, "Implications," I offer a synthesis of the findings, followed by a series of theoretical implications that question the use of PR when instructors are unwilling or not able to acknowledge the possibility of lopsided power dynamics. This moves me to a set of pedagogical suggestions. I conclude by suggesting further lines of enquiry. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that authority is a relational phenomenon, fashioned between students in the moment-to-moment moves of PR discourse. An important implication emerges: just because authority is relational does not mean students did not use it hierarchical ways. Students still measured their own authority in fine increments compared to their peers, locating themselves as below, above, or equal to their peers. In this measuring, many students who did not see themselves as good writers or good speakers, and therefore doubted their own ability to give feedback, still acted hierarchically in relation to their peers.

I close this introduction by acknowledging that while the dynamics of PR were often extremely problematic, many students showed a tremendous amount of resourcefulness, empathy, and intellectual acuity in their PR groups. Students stayed late to continue their reviews, pushed back against negative stereotypes that connected identity categories to writing ability, made rhetorical and temporal space for their peers to participate in PR, and supported one another's ideas. Students were kind and generous with one another, building trust but also taking control of PR in ways that suited their local and individual needs. Students heeded peer feedback and revised accordingly. Students engaged in productive debate over the larger arguments of

their papers. While such equitable and useful PR interactions do not *cancel out* the interactions that deauthorized students, they do suggest that if PR pedagogies can account for the combined effects of ideologies around race, language, and ableness, students can learn to claim a non-hierarchical authority as they give and receive feedback in their groups.

# CHAPTER 1. A Legacy of Peer Review in Writing Studies

> *One of the most perplexing gaps between theory and practice*
> *in teaching writing is the use of peer response groups.*
> –Karen Spear

I begin this chapter by providing a definition of *peer review.* PR is parallel to *collaborative writing* and *peer tutoring.* In composition studies the three terms draw generally on the same body of scholarship and research (for example, Bruffee, Gere, Vygotsky). Yet each has its own purpose, depending on local context. A peer review session in a first-year writing course is very different from the interaction between a trained peer tutor, who sees other students at the Writing Center. The work of a student group whose instructor has assigned a group project that requires multiple students to compose and submit one text is yet again very different. What they all have in common is the assumption that writing is not, or should not, be a solitary process. Each requires its own kind of collaboration, in which students negotiate, thereby becoming authors and authorities of their writing but also learning, ideally, that all learning is dependent on social contact (Ede and Lunsford).

Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford note that the term "'collaborative writing'" appears in many different settings and in narrow —and often conflicting— definitions" (15), but in writing studies, "has until recently most often described peer evaluation of individually written drafts" (15). Yet, for some scholars in the general field of teaching writing, especially in professional and technical writing, the term can still include critiquing a peer's draft or multiple people working on a single written product, as drafters, revisers, or editors. With these disciplinary variations in mind, Ede and Lunsford put forward a deliberately general definition for

collaborative writing that includes peer review: "any writing done in collaboration with one or more persons" (15).

PR, as a mode of peer-to-peer feedback, is referred to through a number of terms in academic contexts. First, it will be useful to establish a distinction between what I call *professional peer review*, which denotes the feedback process for "refereed" publications or promotion and tenure in academe, where "peer" means professional members of the same area of study (Berkenkotter; Weiser),[2] and second, *student peer review* as a collaborative learning tool in a classroom setting, where "peer" means classmate. Carol Berkenkotter provides a succinct definition of the former kind of review, arguing that it "can be seen as a social mechanism through which a discipline's 'experts' maintain quality control over new knowledge entering the field" (245). As Berkentotter suggests, in professional peer review, the purpose is explicitly one of assessment of knowledge and gatekeeping to a field's discourse. In contrast, the goal in student peer review is to use collaborative learning theory to support students as they develop their skills in college-level writing. However, the binaries between "expert" and non-expert (i.e., student) and inclusion and exclusion that animate Berkentotter's definition lead to larger questions around discourse, control, and power that are also present in student PR, although they occur in very different contexts and for different reasons. This dissertation shows that as in professional peer review assessment and gatekeeping do come up in student PR, but as seemingly unintended consequences of negotiations around authority.

Another difference between student and professional peer review is the number of possible terms that can be used to refer to them, respectively. Whereas professional peer review

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[2] For an overview of professional peer review, see *College Composition and Communication's* "Symposium on Peer Review" from 2012 (63,4).

is a relatively fixed term, without many alternate terms that suggest similar processes, student peer review appears in the literature in a variety of ways.[3] Sonya Armstrong and Eric Paulson locate five terms in the composition literature: *peer review*, *peer response*, *peer editing*, *peer evaluation*, and *peer critique*. Based on a limited analysis of the uses of the terms in the composition literature, they argue that *peer review* and *peer response* both focus on holistic rather than sentence-level concerns, but that peer response is more focused on audience response and student-driven discussion, while peer review is more focused on disciplinary discourses and classroom activities. *Peer editing*, they argue, refers to feedback more centered on surface level concerns, often employing a list for students to check each other's citation style or formatting. *Peer evaluation* differs from the above three in its focus on assessment rather than feedback, often using Likert scales or yes/no questions to rate or score student work. Armstrong and Paulson argue that peer evaluation can allow students "to view their own papers, and their classmates' papers, from an alternative perspective— namely, that of an evaluator or assessor, such as their instructor" (404). Finally, they note that *peer critique/criticism* is often indistinguishable from peer review, though the connotation of "critique" or "criticism" can suggest to students a negative process of error-hunting. While Armstrong and Paulson's article is useful in its attempt to account for what they claim are the five most commonly used terms and the different pedagogical approaches each designates, it is not comprehensive. For example, it excludes the terms *peer assessment*, *workshop*, and *collaborative writing*, which are also prevalent in various sub-fields of composition studies and English studies.

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[3] A further difference can be seen in the historical exigency of student versus professional peer review. The latter dates to scholarly societies of 18th century England, while the former, in its current version in the composition classroom, became popular in the 1980s.

My own review of the literature shows there is so much slippage and overlap between the terms that they are nearly meaningless beyond their immediate contexts. In this dissertation, I refer to student-to-student feedback processes simply as *peer review*, or PR, since it is the more general and widespread term. In this generalizing move, I follow Stephen J. Corbett, Michelle LaFrance, and Teagan E. Decker and Mellisa Huffman. Corbett et al. use the term, "collaborative peer review and response," using both the most prevalent terms (review and response) and adding "collaborative" to designate it as a collaborative learning tool. Huffman chooses "peer feedback," like Corbett et al., circumventing the theoretical and pedagogical implications of choosing either *review* or *response*. If writing teachers seek to *authorize* students, as writers and reviewers, it seems best to use the term that suggests the most *authority*, which is *peer review,* not *peer response*. This choice allows me to position student peer review alongside professional peer review in a way that suggests commonality rather than difference.

One further distinction is necessary. So far, I have described PR in a strictly academic setting. Yet PR also happens outside of academic contexts, as writers come together to give and receive feedback on an array of genres in groups or with individual friends (Gere; Moss et al.; Spigelman *Across Property Lines: Textual Ownership in Writing Groups*). Anne Ruggles Gere argues that there are two general categories of writing groups: self-sponsored (or autonomous) or school-sponsored (either semi-autonomous or non-autonomous). As is clear, school-sponsored PR occurs in school settings in which students are involuntarily grouped together, while the former occurs voluntarily. According to Gere, the extent to which groups are autonomous, semi-autonomous, or non-autonomous determines the levels and kinds of authority that operate in the group. Gere writes,

> When groups form voluntarily, authority originates in individual members who
> choose . . . to give, temporarily at least, authority over their writing to others. These

autonomous groups stand in contrast to those convened involuntarily—usually in classrooms—where authority originates outside the individual members. Here it is the teacher or other individual charged with directing activities who has the authority to initiate group work. (4)

In non- or semi-autonomous groups, authority is related explicitly to institutional power, not only in terms of "directing" or "initiating" the peer groups, but also in terms of the expectations that students will need to fulfill as both writers and reviewers. When school-sponsored groups learn (or are allowed) to be semi-autonomous, they can begin to resemble self-sponsored groups, and they become more effective in giving and receiving feedback. However, as Gere suggests, while members of voluntary groups make a choice to give authority over their texts to their peers, such is not necessarily the case for involuntary groups, where members may not grant their peers authority over their texts. Further, because the instructor retains the authority to control group work, peers may prioritize instructor feedback over peer feedback, undermining the PR process. In this study, when I refer to PR, I am referring to the school-sponsored variety. As I argue below, even when autonomy is constrained by institutional forces, authority is still a matter of negotiation, as some students are able to claim it more or less effectively than others.

Before I move to my methods, theoretical framework, and findings, I address the following questions: What does the literature already say about authority in peer review? What does it say about social difference, and specifically, differences around written and spoken language, in PR? What does it say about the role of other social factors, such as ability, that might affect how students claim authority in PR?

**Authority, Authorship, and Authenticity**

When, in college classrooms, instructors assign PR activities in order to decenter their own authority and model a more social theory of writing, students often resist. This resistance is based in the notion that authority resides (as a relatively fixed and measurable power) not in

students, as novices, but in instructors, as experts, invoking the problematic cliché of the "blind leading the blind." This view of authority depends on hierarchical and individualistic notions not only of the student-instructor relationship, but also the process of writing itself, e.g., an individual student writes for an individual instructor, who is authorized to assess that writing (Bruffee "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind'"). PR, in nearly any form, begins to disrupt this dynamic. Yet, instructors who seek to decentralize authority may find that students will de-authorize their peers as some students did in this study. That is, despite the institutional authority that instructors may wield to require students to participate in PR, that authority is actually quite tenuous; instructors cannot force students to carefully consider peer feedback. For this reason, undermining PR is not difficult. It is simply the choice to not listen, to participate only for the grade, or to dismiss it out of hand compared to instructor feedback.

This basic problem is related to larger questions around authority that have long concerned scholars in composition studies, where work on classroom discourse invites wider debates about authorship, capitalism, and intellectual property (Ede and Lunsford "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship"; Grobman; Mortensen and Kirsch; Penrose and Geisler; Spigelman *Across Property Lines: Textual Ownership in Writing Groups;* Trimbur "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning"). Summarizing, the work of the field, Laurie Grobman writes,

> Research in composition and rhetoric has addressed notions of authorship and authority in myriad ways: intellectual property issues, "ownership," plagiarism, collaboration, intertextuality, professional communication, destabilization of the author function, the "death of the author," and feminist and multicultural challenges to "the death of the author." (178)

Adding to this, Mortensen and Kirsch argue that "in the literature of composition studies, mention of authority is so frequent as to demand an assessment of its status, of how it functions for those who talk and write about acts of composing" (556). What, then, does it mean to be an

*author*, to claim *authorship*, or to exercise *authority* over a text, in general, and, of course, in the context of PR?

Authority is a vexed and vexing term. On one hand, it suggests domination, institutional or individual, while on the other, it suggests the possibility of collaboration and knowledge-making, so that to *authorize* students is to *empower* them as writers in relation to both their peers and their instructors. The purpose of PR, after all, is not to reproduce hierarchical power dynamics, nor is it to empower some students over others. Rather, one of the defining goals of PR is to support students, especially minoritized students, as they learn the conventions and ways of being in academic discourses. As Kenneth Bruffee writes, "By helping one another feel more comfortable crossing [discursive] boundaries, [students] initiate one another into the larger discourse communities they are joining" (47). Thus, collaborative learning strategies like PR empower students to "initiate" each other instead of relying on an instructor for this initiation. Following Peter Mortenson and Gesa Kirsch, Lunsford argues that in order to move beyond conceptions of authority as based in power, control, and individualism, instructors should attempt to model—through collaborative learning techniques such as peer review—a conception of authority based in knowledge, creation, and collaboration.

However, when questions of authority occur in proximity to writing, as they do in the context of PR, the relation between authority and authorship becomes more problematic. If, as Candace Spigelman argues, "classroom writing groups are, in fact, a way to help students gain textual authority by identifying themselves and each other as writers" ("Habits of Mind: Historical Configurations of Textual Ownership in Peer Writing Groups" 253), then the move to

claim authority depends on students' willingness or ability to identify each other as authors.[4] Indeed, not all students in this study identified themselves or their peers as such. This suggests that authority in PR is *relational* in the way it is claimed amongst students themselves. As Stuart Greene notes, authority is "always provisional" and that it is "a relational term that calls attention to the fact that writers are always situated within a broad sociocultural landscape" (213).

I refer to *authority* in broad terms as the capacity to be seen as a competent source of knowledge and power in the writing classroom. To claim authority is to be willing to use this knowledge and power to persuade in PR. Since authority in PR depends on the power relations between instructors and students, on one hand, and, on the other, between students, authority is also *relational* in the way it is claimed amongst students themselves.

Following the concern that Spigelman brings up about "textual authority," I take up *authenticity* as the capacity to be seen as a "real" writing peer, as a "real" audience for writing, in short, as an author. Although the American Heritage Dictionary defines *authenticity* as "conforming to fact and therefore worthy of trust, reliance, or belief," I take up the term in the same relational sense as above. Here, what matters is the *perception* and *performance* of authenticity. Yet, there are two dimensions to the notion of authenticity that played out in PR groups: not only was there a concern about which students were perceived as *peers*, as a real audience, there was also a sense that suggests plagiarism, since some students assumed that others were not the real writers of the texts they brought to peer review. Thus, authenticity is about the connections between audience, identity, and literacy.

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[4] As Anne J. Herrington and Deborah Cadman put it, "the primary concern when initiating peer review in a class is not to teach students how to critique written drafts—that's secondary; it is first to create a class-room environment where we give students the gift of having some responsibility—some authority for their own learning" (184).

As I will show, the following questions loomed large in my analysis: what counts as an *authentic* audience in the writing classroom? Who can be seen as an *authentic* peer? Whose writing is seen as authentic (i.e., original rather than plagiarized). Who has *authority* in the context of PR and what kind of authority is it?

These questions expose a lack of consensus on what authority is and what it should be in the classroom. Mortensen and Kirsch argue that composition studies "struggles with two fairly distinct views of 'authority,' yet the term is trusted as stable and uniform by a range of authors who otherwise appear to hold differing assumptions about the nature of language and the world" (556). One view is "assimilationist and one is "resistant." They note that

> While both views assume that authority attends the negotiation of power within the
> context of communities, they diverge in assumptions about how communities function
> and, consequently, how authority is to be defined and engaged. . . . In one view,
> community evolves from consensus and authority compels assimilation. That is,
> individuals gain discursive authority by submitting to the explicit and tacit conventions of
> the community. . . . An alternative view is more suspicious of authority: assimilation is
> seen as uncritical accommodation of authority. Thus, a properly critical stance toward
> authority warrants resistance to the hegemony of conventional ways of knowing. (556-
> 557)

Mortensen and Kirsch argue that John Trimbur's arguments for a rhetoric of "dissensus" comprise an example of the resistant model of authority, while David Bartholomae, in his early work, represents the assimilationist model. However, Mortensen and Kirsch argue, both of these models are limited by their conceptualization of authority as fixed and able to be possessed by writers. In other words, they are both "autonomous," constrained by their inability to escape the ideological and hegemonic forces that maintain hierarchical notions of authority. Mapping out the problems with these autonomous models of authority, they argue for a "dialogic" model "as one way to move beyond a notion of authority based on autonomy, individual rights, and abstract rules . . . toward a model based on dialogue, connectedness, and contextual rules" (557). A dialogic model would work against hierarchical enactments of power by articulating an ethical

commitment to group dynamics: "A dialogic model of authority addresses such asymmetrical power relations by linking them to an ethical concern for the well-being of community members" (558). While such an "ethic of care," as they call it, is potentially problematic since caring itself can be construed as hierarchical, e.g., nurturing, they maintain that it is possible to avoid paternalism and gendered notions of authority, thereby destabilizing autonomous notions of authority as based in coercion and hierarchy. Since "care inheres in people and, therefore, assumes community as it first domain" (565), non-hierarchical relationships become easier to envision. Authority, in its autonomous and monolithic form, begins to lose its grip on interaction. Further, in providing a contrasting model, hierarchical relations are made visible, and in their visibility, they are destabilized, since students would have a metalanguage for the kinds of authority they want to exercise.

Lunsford takes up this dialogic model in "Refiguring Classroom Authority," arguing that in order to move beyond conceptions of authority as based in power and control, instructors can model a non-hierarchical version of authority. Indeed, since the 1980s, instructors have attempted to enact this model of authority in their classrooms through collaborative learning techniques such as peer review. Mortensen and Girsch's intervention maintains a distance from the everyday interactions of classroom discourse. As they acknowledge, the next step in enacting a dialogic model of authority—"to investigate the discursive practices writers use to invoke authority and the ways readers judge and respond to that authority" (568)—returns us to the classroom, the focus of this dissertation. As I show in my review of the literature on PR, few studies of classroom discourse have examined the "discursive practices" that animate authority in PR. Although claiming authority as a writer is always a relational process (i.e., a process that depends on power relations), that process is different when it takes place, on one hand, in the

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physical solitude of writing alone or, on the other, in a classroom context, where authority is built on the process of judging and responding as potential authors or authorities.

My point here is that claiming authority also occurs as a more private act. For example, in "Reading and Writing without Authority," Ann M. Penrose and Cheryl Geisler argue that students will not authorize themselves as creators of knowledge, even as they compose and revise outside of group contexts. This denial of authority, they argue, stems from traditional models of schooling that position students with little authority in relation to the subject matter they are learning about and in which learning occurs in a transactional model, where students are vessels to be filled with the "true" knowledge of their instructors or that of the authors whose ideas they must attempt to master.

In this model of knowledge production, there is little space for students to claim authority, no opportunity, as in the Burkean Parlour, to enter the conversation. As Penrose and Geisler argue based on two case studies, in order for a student "to take authority in this or any other situation, she needs to believe there is authority to spare— that there is room for many voices. She needs to understand the development of knowledge as a communal and continual process (517). Here, authority remains a relational act, but also involves a kind of self-authorship or self-authorization that seems both unfamiliar and uncomfortable to many students. Penrose and Geisler argue that collaborative learning can allow students to view knowledge production as a "communal and continual process."

Yet Penrose and Geisler, like Kenneth Bruffee, present an idealized version of PR, in which all instructors assume that student voices carry equal authority. Indeed, as my findings show, students may claim a kind of repressive authority as they mimic autonomous notions of authority that they encounter in the classroom and in their work. The empirical data shows that

empowerment through "peer interaction" or "group decision-making," as Penrose and Geisler suggest is possible, may not only fail to address the kind of epistemological problem that Penrose and Geisler propose to redress, but may have the opposite effect. My findings show the actual social process of assigning authority, the lived relations between writers and the context of their contact, can further empower students who already hold privileged positions by virtue of their social and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, PR does not just fail, as in *not work*, it fails by further exacerbating the original problem. In other words, if authority is a goal of PR, the a failed outcome of PR might simply be that students do not gain authority. However, there is also the possibility that PR will actively de-authorize students, leaving them in a worse situation that began.

Further, in nearly all schooling contexts and certainly in the college writing classroom, PR, as a collaborative learning tool, is at cross-purposes or in contrast to notions of what it means to take up authorship and authority through writing. Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede argue that despite the efforts of some teachers to engender a collaborative approach, "day-to-day writing instruction in American colleges and universities still reflects traditional assumptions about the nature of the self (autonomous), the concept of authorship (as ownership of singly-held property rights) and the classroom environment (hierarchical, teacher centered)" ("Collaborative Authorship" 425). Again, PR, as an intervention in epistemological and social inequality, finds itself in the backwards position of producing results that are diametrically opposed to its goals. In short, Karen Spear's 1988 observation that "one of the most perplexing gaps between theory and practice in teaching writing is the use of peer response groups" (i), still holds true.

**Research on Peer Review**

Although peer review is a widespread pedagogical practice in the U.S. writing classroom, it has not attracted sustained scholarly attention. Indeed, empirical research on PR has declined drastically since the 1990s (Ching "Peer Response in the Composition Classroom: An Alternative Genealogy"; Flynn; Haswell; Kerschbaum *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference*). This decline is clear in a number of ways. First, there is no comprehensive review, recent or past, of the literature on peer review in composition.[5] Further, in *Peer Pressure, Peer Power: Theory and Practice in Peer Review and Response in the Writing Classroom*, an edited collection published in 2014, Steven Corbett, Michelle LaFrance, and Teagan Decker remark that theirs is the first collection devoted purely to PR in writing courses. PR is also difficult to locate in the influential overviews of writing studies as a field. For example, Robert J. Connors's *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy* (1997) contains no index entry for "peer review" or any of its adjacent terms. Likewise, *The Norton Book of Composition Studies*, edited by Susan Miller and published in 2009, contains no entry for *peer review* in its index*,* though it does include limited entries, from the 1980s, for similar terms. Taken together, these absences are indicative of the way in which composition scholars have treated PR, generally, and especially, after the 1990s—that is, as a given. Brammer and Rees suggest that this ubiquitous acceptance has made it "practically instinctive" (71) for instructors, perhaps rendering it less visible as a research topic, since what is "instinctive" is generally harder to position as an object of study. As I will show, the state of the literature implicitly supports that assertion.

At the same time, PR has not been altogether absent from composition research since 2000. Scholars focused on L2 composition, community college composition, and digital modes of PR have continued to focus on PR. Journals such as the *Journal of Second Language Writing*,

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[5] See Chang for a review of the scholarship on L2 peer review contexts.

and community college journals, such as *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, have

published research—though in the latter case, mainly non-empirical—on pedagogical strategies

for PR. In contrast, from 1990 to present, few articles centered on PR have appeared in *College*

*Composition and Communication*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Rhetoric Review*, or

*College English*.[6] Further, just one of these articles, Kory Ching's 2007 "Peer response in the

composition classroom: An alternative genealogy" in *Rhetoric Review*, was published after 2000.

Computer mediated peer review has also attracted the attention of researchers interested in its

purported efficiency in large lecture classes or MOOCs, where instructors have not been able to

respond to such a large amount of student writing (Bradley; Cheng et al.; Hoffman). There has

also been much interest in PR as a complementary mode of assessment to be used alongside

automated writing evaluation technologies (Balfour; Cho et al.). Yet this focus on computer

mediated peer review, however useful as tool of pedagogical efficiency or evaluation, does not

address the urgent need for research that investigates the face-to-face or in-class modes of PR

that are still common (Bradley; Cheng et al.; Hoffman) in composition classrooms across the

U.S.

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[6] In addition, there has been discourse-based analyses of postsecondary peer review from scholars in applied and educational linguistics. There has also been some work in the K-12 field of literacy studies (see Hoogeveen and van Gelderen for an overview) that illuminates issues of difference in peer interaction over writing. For example, Shelley Peterson and Theresa Calovini find that social ideologies (gender, race, ethnicity, class, socioeconomic status, and age) affected the dynamics of student talk. Peterson and Calovini used a combination of critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics to show how student's "moves" in conversation were based in "the ideological content of student discourse (the underlying assumptions about the topic under discussion) and the social organization of the discourse (who has rights to speak about what)" Bradley, Linda. "Peer-Reviewing in an Intercultural Wiki Environment-Student Interaction and Reflections." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 34, 2014, pp. 80-95..[6] Though valuable, the work in the K-12 field is largely outside the realm of composition studies. With its vastly different institutional and pedagogical contexts, this review of the literature cannot usefully contain sources from K-12 fields.

In addition, recent mentions of PR are often subsumed under larger research areas, as in scholarship about writing groups (Moss et al.), collaborative writing (Ede and Lunsford "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship"), and related work around authorship and textual ownership (Spigelman *Across Property Lines: Textual Ownership in Writing Groups*), as well as considerations of social diversity and the effects of discrimination in the writing classroom (Kerschbaum *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference;* Ruecker). These appearances suggest that PR as a classroom practice remains central, but marginalized as a primary research topic.

The decline of research on PR, together with its marginal status in recent scholarship, has meant the most urgent and compelling questions around PR have yet to be investigated empirically. In the late 1980s, as compositionists accepted peer review as a key—and perhaps the most visible—enactment of collaborative learning pedagogy, the conversation shifted to questions of how dominant ideologies around social difference retain—and perhaps increase—their dominance within the classroom. That is, in addition to continuing to promote strategies to destabilize the power dynamics of instructor-centered and product-based classrooms, researchers began to explore the power dynamics between students themselves, a move that complicated the binary between instructor agency and student agency.

Indeed, in their introduction to their 2004 edited collection, *Writing Groups Inside and Outside the Classroom*, Nels Highberg, Beverly Moss, and Melissa Nicolas pose the same questions that researchers had raised in the 1990s. Pointing to a persistent gap in the literature, they write, "we want to know more about how social markers impact the ways in which groups function, or fail to function. . . . In successful writing groups, how are issues of race, class, and gender negotiated?" (251). Clearly, questions from the 1990s had not been sufficiently addressed. They conclude that "we assume that writing groups can work, but we know not to

accept them blindly" (10). This conclusion echoes Fox's critical ambivalence from the 1990s that

positions collaborative learning a potentially counterproductive pedagogy, especially considering

its lofty goals of empowerment. In the next section, I examine the origins of PR, as a

collaborative learning tool. This examination helps contextualize the larger review of the

literature that follows.

*Theoretical Roots of Peer Review: Collaborative Learning as Anti-Authoritarian*

In this section, I position PR as a key pedagogical practice of collaborative learning.

Indeed, in the literature, there is a slippage between PR and collaborative learning. For example,

as Corbett, LaFrance, and Decker introduce their edited collection on PR, they move seamlessly

between a discussion of collaborative learning and PR more specifically:

> Much has been written on the value—both pros and cons—of collaborative peer review
> and response (CPRR) in the writing classroom since Kenneth Bruffee's first edition of *A
> Short Course on Writing* in 1972. The practical and theoretical potentialities and
> complications involved in the arts of peer response bring some key concepts in the
> teaching-and-leaning of writing to light: collaboration and appropriation versus
> plagiarism; process vs. product . . . (1)

Here, they nearly conflate PR with collaborative learning, Bruffee's larger project. Or, rather,

they locate PR as a material result, perhaps the most identifiable, of Bruffee's general argument

about decentering instructor authority. That is, since the subject of Bruffee's work is student

collaboration in the context of writing courses, PR emerges as a central activity, one for which

instructors must plan carefully, even on the basic logistical level of how to manage the exchange

of writing between students. Then, of course, instructors must think through the larger challenge

of introducing the very notion that every student, not just the instructor, will be acting as an

authorized reader and authorized writer. In PR, Bruffee's larger theory of collaboration is tested

in practice, and if it does not work there, where else shall it be used? Indeed, considering the

stakes of PR, where else is it as important? Students may work regularly in groups, for example,

on specific assignments or on presentations, but when we consider the larger purpose of PR, it is there that all theory on collaborative learning comes to the fore. It is where, as it were, the rubber meets the road: the most direct means of transport for collaborative learning pedagogy.

Therefore, my purpose here is to both disentangle PR from collaborative learning by arguing that PR is a most compelling and high-stakes enactment of collaborative learning, and that PR as the field knows it, grew out of collaborative learning theory, but also shares roots with the age-old practice of collaboration in writing groups. Given that the goal of this dissertation is to revisit PR as a space of negotiation and conflict, it is important to interrogate the theoretical underpinnings of PR, much of which depend on the myth of egalitarian power relations between students. Below, I argue that PR is historically and theoretically nested within the larger literature on collaborative learning and needs to be considered as a key embodiment or manifestation of collaborative learning, writ large.

In the 1970's and 1980's, the work of scholars such as Kenneth Bruffee, John Trimbur, and Peter Elbow led to the acceptance of peer review as a keystone of collaborative learning. This is not to suggest that collaborative, peer-driven models were invented in the latter half of the 20th century. As Anne Ruggles Gere reminds us, "Writing groups are new and old" (9). Gere shows that the history of writing groups reaches back well into the 18th century, when literary societies sponsored their own groups, and through the 19th century, when colleges and universities sponsored writing groups. By the 1880s, writing groups could be found in secondary classrooms, and by the 20th century, writing groups were being used in expository writing courses, though limited until the 1930s by a narrow focus on grammatical correction (Eades; Engbers; Harris; Holt; Ransdell; Stallings and Formo). Gere notes that "writing groups persisted without flourishing in the first five decades of this [the 20th] century" (28), but by the end of the

1960s, there was renewed interest in writing groups, as American educators were influenced by British and continental pedagogies, and writing groups thrived[7], along with scholarly interest in them. In the 1970s, "three times more articles on writing groups were published . . . than in either of the two preceding decades" (Ching "The Instructor-Led Peer Conference: Teachers as Participants in Peer Response"). By the end of the 1980s writing groups had, in Gere's words, "come of age" as an accepted and widespread pedagogy in college and high school writing classrooms across the US. Given this long history and the intense scholarly interest throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the recent absence of work on PR is all the more surprising.

In the U.S., collaborative learning pedagogies were a response to open admissions in the 1970s, itself a consequence of the civil rights movement. As John Trimbur writes in 1989, "I think it is not accidental that collaborative learning emerged initially within open admissions programs, as part of a wider response to political pressures from below to extend literacy and access to higher education to black, Hispanic, and working-class people who had formerly been excluded" (Trimbur 60). Bruffee too notes that the roots of collaborative learning[8] for compositionists in the US were intertwined with institutional responses to *difference,* in the form of massive demographic changes in the college classroom:

> The origins of collaborative learning] lie in the nearly desperate response of harried colleges during the early 1970s to a pressing educational need. A decade ago, faculty and administrators in institutions throughout the country became aware that, increasingly, students entering college had difficulty doing as well in academic studies as their native ability suggested they should be able to do. Of course, some of these students were poorly prepared academically. Many more of them, however, had on paper excellent secondary preparation. The common denominator among both the poorly prepared and the seemingly well-prepared was that, for cultural reasons we may not yet fully understand, all these students seemed to have difficulty adapting to the traditional or "normal" conventions of the college classroom. (637)

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[7] See the work of Macrorie, Moffet, and Murray.
[8] For more on the roots of collaborative learning, which reach back into the 1950s work of British educators, see Bruffee (Mankind) and Gere.

The roots of 20th century collaborative learning, then, are intertwined with considerations of what Bruffee refers to as "cultural reasons," or racial, linguistic, or socioeconomic difference. Once writing instructors realized that their students were no longer best served by traditional writing pedagogies, collaborative learning became an alternate option. In their preface to Bruffee's textbook *A Short Course in Writing: Composition, Collaborative Learning, and Constructive Reading*, Harvey Kail and John Trimbur position collaborative learning as an alternative to "hierarchical, atomizing, authoritarian, disabling, and just plain ineffective" traditional pedagogies (29). During the 1970s and early 1980s, Bruffee helped destabilize what he called "authoritarian-individualistic" ideologies, embedded in traditional pedagogies, that were contributing to the poor performance of this new demographic of students.

A key argument, then, in presenting collaborative learning as a viable alternative was to locate it in contrast to "authoritarian-individualistic" ideologies.

> We do not ordinarily recognize collaboration as a valid kind of learning. Traditionally, indeed, collaboration is considered irresponsible; in the extreme, collaboration is the worst possible academic sin, plagiarism. We ordinarily expect a student to talk mainly to the teacher, write to the teacher, and, surely, determine his fate in relation to the teacher, individually. (636)

Here, Bruffee's discussion of collaborative learning refers directly to the activity of PR, as students navigate the boundaries of plagiarism and collaboration or develop a sense of their peers as an audience for their writing. Gere also points to the problem of individualistic views of authorship and writing: "Theories of collaborative learning, then, build upon an opposition to . . . the highly individualistic view inherent in traditional concepts of authorship and emphasize communal aspects of individual life" (75). Here again, collaborative learning is intertwined with the basic action of PR: to trade writing, trade feedback, and by doing so, complicate the question of individual authorship.

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In order to make an argument against "authoritarian-individualistic" notions of writing and authorship, proponents of collaborative learning embraced a social constructionist view of writing pedagogy. In a social constructivist view of literacy and epistemology—as opposed to Cartesian views of object vs. subject that lead to individualistic views of knowledge and literacy—knowledge is socially constructed, literacy and writing alongside it. Gere writes, "If we accept the idea that language is socially constituted and that the 'sense' of words (as Vygotsky uses the term) emerges from the context in which they are used, then dialogue becomes more than a preliminary to writing; it is essentially the whole activity" (88-89). Therefore, collaborative learning pedagogies, and the writing groups that comprise a key role in their realization, become necessary to the composing process itself. Here, PR is a necessary vehicle for the larger goals of collaborative learning.

This social theory of learning allowed proponents of collaborative learning to make three interrelated arguments. First, collaborative learning allows students to recognize and cross discoursal boundaries more effectively. Bruffee sees group work as a portal for students to enter new discourses:

> Collaborative learning teaches students to negotiate the boundaries between the everyday, home and hangout languages they already know and the more precise, or specialized, academic language they need in order to nest their small, local community within increasingly larger knowledge communities. By helping one another feel more comfortable crossing boundaries, they initiate one another into the larger discourse communities they are joining. (47)

For Bruffee, peer groups, though not necessarily peer review groups, are a vehicle that can introduce students to the discourse of the academy and the professional world. According to Bruffee, a central goal of collaborative learning is "to provide a context in which students can practice and master the normal discourse exercised in established knowledge communities in the

academic world and in business, government, and the professions" (Mankind 644).[9] In PR

groups, surely this practice should not involve the silencing and sidelining of some student

voices while other student voices dominate.

Secondly, collaborative learning, through the social contact it encourages, allows students

to reach their highest potential as writers. In this argument, compositionists have drawn on

Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). That is, when students are engaged by

problems that they might not be able to solve on their own (their "actual development"), but

might be able to solve collectively (their "potential development"), students are in an optimal

situation for learning. As Vygotsky writes, students' capacity in the ZPD "might be in some

sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone" (85).

Traditional pedagogies, then, were excluding a major factor in educational development: group

interaction. Bruffee notes that "The teacher's job is to design tasks that help people discover and

take advantage of group heterogeneity and thus, by expanding the group's collective 'zone of

proximal development,' to increase the potential learning power of every individual in the

group" (xx). In addition to the ZPD, Vygotsky argues that cooperation is necessary for students

to absorb new strategies and knowledge that they can then use on their own:

> Learning awakens a variety of internal development processes that are able to operate
> only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with

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[9] For Bruffee, this argument is based in part on the work of philosopher Richard Rorty, who conceptualized knowledge not as an "accurate representation of reality" but as a socially constructed agreement about what to believe is true. An important vehicle for Rorty's argument is the two-sided construct of "normal" vs "abnormal" discourse, in which the former is "any discourse [that] embodies agreed-upon criteria for reaching agreement" and the latter is discourse that "lacks such criteria" (11). Normal discourse is perceived as truthful discourse not because it is objective but because it is agreed-upon by a community. Rorty positions traditional philosophy, rooted in Greek thought, and carried through history by Kant, Locke, Descartes, and others, as a social attempt to reproduce the primacy of "normal discourse." For Rorty therefore, the search for "objective knowledge," foundational and universal, is really an exercise in differentiating what is "normal discourse" against what is "abnormal discourse."

his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (90)

Internalization allows independent action. Other compositionists, such as Martin Nystrand, have used Vygotsky's theory to argue that peer review can become such a ZPD. Collaborative learning therefore supports students as they use their experience in groups to become more independent thinkers and writers. Gere sums up these first two arguments when she asserts that writing groups are "essential because learning to write means learning to use the language of a given community, and writing groups provide a forum in which individuals can practice and internalize this language" (96).

The final major argument for collaborative learning is related to the first two: the writing groups on which it depends help students learn to recognize the social, rather than individual, underpinnings of knowledge production and authorship by forcing students to negotiate the meaning of their writing with an audience of their peers (Gere). This means that students must look outside their intentions for the meaning of their writing, moving beyond an ego-centric view of meaning, so that "collaboration ameliorates alienation by reorienting writers toward their readers" (Gere 68). This reorientation is important because it helps students develop an awareness of audience, and an awareness of their position as writers in academic contexts. Further, in collaborative learning, peer groups create an audience beyond the instructor, thereby encouraging students to see themselves as part of an academic, and, as I will argue below, an authentic and empowered audience. The effect of these arguments is to decentralize power and authority, positioning teachers as "organizer[s] of people" at "the perimeter of the action" (Bruffee 637). These theoretical bases support a successful argument against a common criticism of collaborative learning: that students do not possess the knowledge to support each others' learning, and collaborative learning activities therefore would be an exercise in "the blind

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leading the blind," to return again to that cliché. Instead, argue the proponents of collaborative

learning, if instructors want students to see themselves as authors in relation to their peers and in

relation to their instructors, instructors must rearrange the epistemic center of the classroom, so

that, instead of the problematic figure of the "blind leading the blind," students are seeing,

hearing, and feeling members of a community of status equals with something to offer their

peers, via feedback, empathy, or comfort. But, as Bruce Horner argues in the late 1990s, it is

precisely in this imagining of "community" that collaborative pedagogies "run into trouble"

(514).

As much as the roots of collaborative learning invite a discussion of difference between

students, Bruffee and his contemporaries avoided a focus on it. However, once collaborative

learning gained acceptance in mainstream composition discourse in the 1980s, critiques emerged

that concerned issues of power, ideology, and difference. John Trimbur, Greg Myers, Lisa Ede,

Andrea Lunsford and others questioned Bruffee's foundational assumptions around the effects of

collaborative learning. Their critiques, however, do not question the essential goals of

collaborative learning; instead it is clear that their critiques are meant to improve peer learning

rather than undermine it. For instance, Trimbur, writes that he hopes to "rehabilitate"

collaborative learning by attending to the power dynamics between students and instructors but

also between students.

Yet for Bruffee, the advantages of collaborative learning hinge on the binary between

student and instructor power, not fully accounting for student relationships. He writes,

> Besides providing a particular kind of conversation, collaborative learning also provides a
> particular kind of social context for conversation, a particular kind of community—a
> community of status equals: peers. Students learn the "skill and partnership "of re-
> externalized conversation, writing, not only in a community that fosters the kind of
> conversation college teachers value most, but also in a community that approximates the

one most students must eventually write for in everyday life, in business, government, and the professions. (85)

In his assumption that the students are a "community of status equals," Bruffee cannot account for the effects of ideology within peer groups. Indeed, his positioning of students as status equals depends more on the notion of instructor hierarchy, that is, since instructors are not status equals, students are. Heterogeniety among the students is therefore a non-issue. Trimbur complicates this assumption by pointing out that

> We cannot realistically expect that collaborative learning will lead students spontaneously to transcend the limits of American culture, its homogenizing force, its engrained suspicion of social and cultural differences, its tendency to reify the other and blame the victim. (603)

If these same ideologies are present in peer groups, Trimbur argues, a failure to account for them will create the illusion of what he calls a "utopian discursive space that distributes symmetrically the opportunity to speak, to initiate discourse, to question, to give reasons, to do all those other things necessary to justify knowledge socially" (613). An assumption like this will simply reinforce the status quo, in which dominant voices carry authority, and 'other' voices are forced into silence or acculturation. Trimbur concludes by adding an explicitly critical component to collaborative learning:

> To develop a critical version of collaborative learning, we will need to distinguish between consensus as an acculturative practice that reproduces business as usual and consensus as an oppositional one that challenges the prevailing conditions of production. The point of collaborative learning is not simply to demystify the authority of knowledge by revealing its social character but to transform the productive apparatus, to change the social character of production. (612)

For these reasons, Trimbur argues for a "rhetoric of dissensus" that problematizes idealized conceptions of consensus but does so by recognizing the forces that constrain discourse in the first place. He argues that dissensus can help students see difference as generative rather than something to be elided, avoided, criticized, or erased. In Trimbur's words, "In its deferred and

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utopian form, consensus offers a way to orchestrate dissensus and to turn the conversation in the collaborative classroom into a heterotopia of voices—a heterogeneity without hierarchy" (615).

Given the authority of dominant modes of knowing and writing, a singular focus on consensus may enforce rather than destabilize that authority. Trimbur argues for a critical version of collaborative learning by framing dissensus rather than consensus as a method for not only positioning authority as socially constructed, but by opening up the process of knowledge production to include non-dominant, hitherto unauthorized voices.

Even as Trimbur's critique of Bruffee's models of collaborative learning ends on this positive note, especially visible in the notion of "heterogeneity without hierarchy," Trimbur also writes that he agrees generally with the less forgiving critique of Greg Myers, who argues that Bruffee's general avoidance of issues of power and difference in the construction and internal workings of peer groups, whether they are conducting PR or working on another task, is a major and perhaps unworkable problem. In essence, Myers, like Trimbur, challenges Bruffee's assumption that students will all have access to the same amount of authority; if they do not, common sense suggests that some student groups will reproduce repressive ideological structures rather than help students join new discourse communities. He argues that,

> Bruffee suggests in another article that social differences are incidental to the process of education and should drop away if the students share an educational goal. . . . This is an attractive and idealistic vision, but it assumes that knowledge is outside the realm of these people's social differences. (167)

Myers is wary of Bruffee's suggestion that students will be willing or capable of "leaving their social differences behind," and he is also wary of Trimbur's suggestion that dissensus can create space for non-hegemonic modes of knowledge production. At the time, Myers's argument was forceful enough for Ede and Lunsford to take it up: "Myers is insisting that those interested in collaborative learning step back and ask what such learning will be used for, what aims and

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purposes and motives are served, who will and will not count as a collaborator (and why), where power and authority are located" (115). Summing up the state of the field in the mid-nineties, Thomas Fox writes of collaborative learning, "I had to give up the notion that collaborative learning is automatically a democratic and transformative process. And so have many others. Discussions of collaborative learning are not what they used to be" (111).

That is, discussions of collaboration learning had begun to account for power dynamics not only between instructors and students, but between students as they worked together, building consensus or dissensus. Fox notes the paradoxical results of collaborative learning, which in his paper included group work and a feedback session between a student and Fox, who is acting as a "non-grading tutor." His conclusion highlights the newfound complications of considering student power relations:

> So far I'm afraid that I've argued for two conflicting viewpoints: that collaboration reproduces social inequalities and that collaboration makes for opportunities to challenge these inequalities. In my own classroom practice, collaboration remains an unpredictable practice, giving both unexpected rewards and disturbing results. (119)

These critiques apply not only to Bruffee's work in the 1980s, but also to his work in the 1990s, when he began to acknowledge these limitations. Yet, even when Bruffee highlights difference as a factor, he seems to downplay its effects. At the very least, he turns to other priorities. For instance, he writes,

> Teachers organizing consensus groups have to keep all these variables in mind—degree of heterogeneity, group size, ethnic background, phases of work, and so on. When collaborative learning "just doesn't work," any number of factors may be in play. . . . Very occasionally, teachers may have to suggest some basic rules for respecting others in conversation. Some students maybe have to be told explicitly not to interrupt when others are talking or to maintain disagreements firmly but not patronizingly, angrily, or obstreperously (Bruffee "Collaborative Learning and the" Conversation of Mankind"") (29)

Here, in 1999, Bruffee seems to bring up the impact of social relations, but then relegates it to a fact of life—part of the scenery that we must simply accept. Moreover, his use of the phrase

"very occasionally" suggests that the effects of difference and conflict are rare, not *always already* there, as critical theorists argue. And although Bruffee references Trimbur's criticisms of his earlier work, Bruffee still remains generally unmindful of the effects of difference in collaborative learning.

So far, I have focused on Kenneth Bruffee's work to articulate the debate in the field around collaborative learning pedagogies. This is not to suggest that Bruffee was the lone voice advocating for collaborative learning that seemed unmindful of social difference. Peter Elbow, like Bruffee, does not focus on the problem of authority within and among peers; questions of authority, as is true for Bruffee, remain between students and teachers, not among students themselves. In terms of diversity and ideology, the Elbow's teacherless class model is not foolproof, but it is, according to him, generally ideology-proof. For Elbow, writing groups can overcome the forces of ideology as they embrace the benefits of a diverse set of reactions and comments. Participants engage on neutral ground where conformity is the result of "insecurity or fear"—individual reactions that are disconnected from larger belief systems. Conflicts over difference and ideology are the exception rather than the rule. Here, Bruce Horner intervenes, pointing to both Bruffee and Elbow's idealistic notions of power:

> While peers can be useful resources for each other in their mutual efforts at learning, for example, they can be so only if they become the right sort of peers engaging in the right sort of "conversation," and this requires the direct or indirect "structuring" of their conversations by the teacher ("Collaborative Learning" 644). Thus, as in Elbow's teacherly efforts to enable students as individuals to grow "wild," hierarchical power relations in collaborative pedagogies operate to produce a "controlled" environment for egalitarianism. ( )

Horner argues that egalitarianism is a hopeless prospect here, and specifically referencing PR, argues that this paradox "rests uneasily beside Bruffee's most promising argument for the socially transformative effects of his pedagogy, that collaborative learning models not only "how knowledge is established and maintained . . . [but also] how knowledge is generated, how it

changes and grows" (647). That is, if collaborative learning is to authorize students as creators of

knowledge, a more critical view of power relations is a sine non qua of collaboration.

Nevertheless, by the mid-1990s compositionists had, in general, turned away from these

questions, as the number of empirical studies of PR declined (Kerschbaum). While proponents of

collaborative learning from the 1980 and 1990s have done valuable work, they do not foreground

issues of identity based-difference in the context of PR. In this dissertation, I argue that a social

view of knowledge, literacy, and authority must lead directly to an examination of interpersonal

dynamics of PR, an examination, in other words, of the machinations of community and identity

in the classroom.

*Peer Review in Practice*

By and large, Composition Studies has accepted peer review as a potentially useful

pedagogical tool. Researchers have shown that with training, PR can be a useful and equitable

space (Berg; Connor and Asenavage; Stanley; Zhu). When well-prepared students carry out peer

review, it can become an "important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts

towards the capability for effective self-expression" (Halasek; Karen Spear). Research has also

shown that peer review can increase the usefulness and relevance of peer feedback and improve

the quality of student revision (Clifford; Danis) while at the same time improving

communication skills (Mendonca and Johnson).

However, in terms of its impact and utility, researchers have pointed to several persistent

problems, including a narrow focus on sentence-level grammar over global concerns (Leki) and

(Kurtyka and Haley-Brown), a distrust of peer feedback leading to a preference for instructor

feedback (Sengupta), the potential for peers to give misleading feedback to writers (Bedore and

O'Sullivan; Belcher; Brammer and Rees; Fernsten; Spigelman "Habits of Mind: Historical

Configurations of Textual Ownership in Peer Writing Groups"), a loss of writerly autonomy

during peer review (Leverenz "Collaboration, Race, and the Rhetoric of Evasion"; Karen Spear), and a tendency for students to adopt deficit-oriented stances as they mimic or attempt to reproduce instructor authority (Eades; Engbers; Harris; Holt; Ransdell; Stallings and Formo).

Researchers have found that peer reviewers take on a number of different stances and roles. Many studies provide taxonomies of peer stances and the following feedback (Gere and Abbott). Mangelsdorf and Schulmberger categorized the reviewer stances of 60 L2 freshmen writers from 60 countries into an "interpretive," in which students imposed their own ideas about the topic onto the text; a "prescriptive" stance, in which students expected the text to follow a prescribed form; and a "collaborative" stance, in which students tried to see the text through the author's eyes." They conclude that most students do not use a collaborative stance, opting instead for a less useful prescriptive stance. They also note that a collaborative stance was correlated with high grades, more sophisticated and coherent feedback marked by empathy. Villamil and De Guerrero built on Mangelsdorf and Schulmberger's work, but present different findings around the nature of social collaboration. They found that dyad work was commonly less authoritative and more collaborative than Mangelsdorf and Schulmberger suggested. And they hypothesized that their sample of students, 54 intermediate ESL students from Puerto Rico, exhibited cultural characteristics that prized group work and collaboration, unlike the students that Mangelsdorf and Schulmberger used in their study, who, as a heterogeneous group of L2 students, might not have shared similar cultural expectations around stance.

In another study of peer reviewer stance, (Hyland and Hyland "Feedback on Second Language Students' Writing" 1) found four stances: authoritative, probing, collaborative, and interpretive. Their study revealed that many L2 students see themselves as critics or error hunters rather than collaborators or co-writers, a finding that corroborates Mangelsdorf and

Schulmberger's conclusion that students can often take a prescriptive and error-focused stance. In a more recent examination of student comments, Rysdam and Johnson-Shull (2014) coded anonymous PR of L1 college writers into categories: "failure/meanness, non sequitur, authentic, praise, guidance, correction." They found an inordinate amount of student comments were "cruel," suggesting that when feedback is anonymous, it is often deficit-oriented, prescriptive, and needlessly insulting. Rysdam and Johnson-Shull hypothesize that this "culture of negativity" in peer response is an imitation of teacher feedback. (I discuss this phenomenon below.)

Addressing the problem of students mimicking instructor authority, Karen Spear argues that because "collaborating with peers is relatively unfamiliar in comparison to the leader/follower or teacher/student relationship" (62), students will act as a "teacher surrogate" rather than "peer collaborator" (55).

> Partly because they have no other models of school experience on which to draw, partly because they received unclear or misleading cues from teachers, writers and readers alike define their roles in response groups along the familiar terms of the teacher/student relationship. As it is played out in groups, this relationship is often anxiety-ridden and somewhat antagonistic; it is based on the stereotype of the teacher as authority figure who dispenses knowledge and passes judgment on the struggling student. So ingrained is this stereotype that it can block the emergence of genuinely collaborative relationships and the very different modes of interaction these relationships involve. . . . Students tend to assume these stereotyped roles with the writer playing the student and the readers playing the instructor. (54)

Thus, "to initiate group work teachers need to replace students' automatic assumption that they are to become substitute teachers" (54). She further argues that "the danger [of PR] is that the teacher has merely embodied his or her authority in the more effective guise of class consensus. This guided consensus has a power over individual students that a teacher cannot have alone" (159). PR, then, acts as a rhetorically coercive tool, allowing some students to claim and exersize authority in the instructor's stead, thereby unauthorizing, or, at least, limited the empowerment of their peers. Spears incisive analysis, however, stops short of confronting

ideological consequences of students acting as surrogate teachers. In other words, she stops short

of considering *which* students will be most convincing, and why, when it is their turn to play

surrogate teacher.

*Studies of Difference in Peer Review*

In her 2006 article, "Peer Response: Helpful Pedagogy or Hellish Event" Linda Fernsten

provides a point of departure for examining difference in peer response. She writes, "when one's

language is substantially different from what is familiar to peer responders or if writers perceive

themselves to be socially or culturally distanced from their responding peers, the process can be

nightmarish" (38). This assertion, though useful, is based on brief narratives about how two

students of color and one writing faculty member of color experienced peer review as a deeply

uncomfortable process that was related to their ethnic and linguistic identities compared to those

of their peers'. As evidence, she presents the following quotation from a student of color:

> I hate watching someone evaluate my writing because of the remarks and comments. . . .
> It makes me feel very low, meaning unable to write anything well. . . . I am an individual
> that has strong feelings for my writing. . . . I am a writer that likes to express my
> childhood stories to those that can relate to my childhood stories. I have a difficult and
> different life from many American kids. . . . I hate in-class group work that includes
> students reading other students papers. . . . The reading might tell me that my paper needs
> specific corrections but at the same time the reader say in his or her mind that my writing
> is weak, poor. I only ask people that know me first and my writing to read my writing
> because they have a better understanding of my writing. . . . I do not feel uncomfortable
> around them when they are helping me . . . but I do feel uncomfortable around those that
> I don't know when they are reading my writings.

I include this longer quotation because it is one of the only examples of direct testimony

concerning difference, from any student, not least a student of color, that I can locate in the

literature on PR. Fernsten's article is compelling in the ways that it resurrects initial questions

about how students experience peer review as a *contact zone*,[10] replete with all the power

dynamics that inform the discourse of any classroom space. Indeed, Fernsten calls for more

research around the dynamics of peer response: "There is so much about peer response we need

to know if we want to use it successfully in our classes, including power dynamics, culture,

writing history, and academic norms" (40-41). Fernsten's call, now nine years old, remains

generally unaddressed.

At this point it is important to note that while Fernsten's article is clearly focused on peer

response, Fernsten collected this student's testimony while conducting research on a topic that

did not take peer review as its focus. Furthermore, Fernsten's admitted purpose in the article is

not to present qualitative or comprehensive research on peer response, and therefore, the research

is not empirical. Rather, her purpose is to present vignettes that raise questions. Fernsten's study

points to two problems in the PR literature: first, there is little empirical research on the role of

difference; second, most studies that focus on difference begin with more general questions, as is

the case for Fernsten's study. This means that investigations of difference in PR, since they do

not begin by conceptualizing collaborative learning or PR as a site of conflict, are unable to

situate themselves fully in the long history of collaborative learning and the debates around it.

Another example of this lack of focus on PR is Stephanie Kerschbaum's book, *Toward a

Rhetoric of Difference*, 2014, which is the most comprehensive recent work on peer review,

difference, and student interaction. Indeed, as far as I can tell, it is *one of the only*, if not *the only,*

book within composition studies to analyze how difference operates in PR. Yet like Fernsten,

Kerschbaum is not focused on PR as a site of conflict but on a larger examination of *difference—*

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[10] See Pratt's notion (1991) of the classroom as a "contact zone," Fox's argument (1990) for
composition studies as "cultural conflict," and Mina Shaugnessy's construal (1977) of basic
writers as "outsiders."

expansively conceived to include *differences* of opinion, *differences* of sociocultural identity, and *differences* tied to notions of dis/ability. Her research questions ("How do students engage difference in higher education?"; and "What role—if any—does writing play in students' engagement with difference?" (16)) bear this out. It also bears remarking that Kerschbaum focuses on difference not only in the composition classroom, but in the larger context of the university's discourse around diversity. My point here is not to diminish Kerschbaum's work, but rather to show that an analysis of peer review was not Kerschbaum's primary goal in her book. Despite this, Kerschbaum's analysis stands as one of few recent studies of peer review and difference in composition studies.

What is clear from Kerschbaum's analysis is that power dynamics do exist in peer response groups, and can be traced through discourse analysis. Kerschbaum shows how in one group, two students were able to claim the authority necessary to position themselves as more competent writers than a third student, whose grammatical and semantic choices are positioned as incorrect and unclear. Kerschbaum's most important finding might be that although students are "verbally silent" on issues of difference, their interaction in peer review groups suggests an ongoing struggle to "establish desirable positions alongside their classmates and to construct identities that their peers would find persuasive" (18). This positioning, she argues, depends on interconnected markers of class, race, and educational achievement. In analyzing these moments of positioning and identity construction, Kerschbaum is able to begin to make visible "some of the many forms oppression and resistance can take in everyday interaction" (148). These analyses of difference, however, are constrained by their inability to access student perception. Student discourse is then artificially separated from the local context of student experience.

Another recent study of difference in PR is Todd Ruecker's, whose 2014 paper explores "the power imbalances in linguistically diverse peer review groups" (91). Unlike Fernsten and Kerschbaum, Ruecker does begin with PR as his site of analysis. Ruecker's own study, "Analyzing and Addressing the Effects of Native Speakerism on Linguistically Diverse Peer Review" seems to be nearly alone in its pursuit of difference as a key factor in peer review. Ruecker argues that the myth of linguistic homogeneity shapes PR interaction, so that non-native speakers feel unauthorized to give feedback to their peers, especially in terms of sentence-level issues, instead commenting on global concerns. Native speakers, however, focused on sentence-level concerns, acting as copy-editors in seek of error. He argues that most research "[fails] to recognize that linguistic diversity is increasingly becoming a major part of mainstream writing environments in US colleges" (91). For example, in 2014 Todd Ruecker identified Wei Zhu's study from 2001, "Interaction and Feedback in Mixed Peer Response Groups," as one of few recent substantial studies to focus on linguistic difference.

In order to locate other studies of linguistic difference in PR, we must return to the 1990s. As I have suggested, although critical questions around peer review emerged in the late 1980s, little research addressed those questions. However, in L2 composition studies, however, these questions were just gaining traction. Subsequently, researchers in L2 composition have led the way on investigations of linguistic and cultural difference in peer review. [implications of this shift?] As Hyland and Hyland note, "There has been a great deal of discussion about the relationship between culture and feedback, especially in terms of peer feedback. Cross-cultural issues are seen as an especially important consideration when organising ESL peer response groups" (23). This discussion, however, has occurred without a consistent focus on the action of PR. For example, Allaei and Connor note that "conflict, or at the very least, high levels of

discomfort may occur in multi-cultural collaborative peer response groups," but their article is not about PR and does not directly analyze PR interactions. In her 2016 meta-analysis of the L2 peer review literature, Carrie Chang highlights a general lack of research focused on issues of linguistic and cultural difference in peer review. Pointing to the work of Gayle Nelson (Nelson; Nelson and Carson) and her colleagues, which she asserts veers into cultural stereotyping, she calls for a re-examination of past work on the dynamics of peer interaction in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous groups.[11]

A light handful of research addresses explicitly the effects of race on PR interaction. The thread that runs through them is the empirical observation that classrooms, their students, their teachers, and their activities are never neutral. As theorists from the 1990s had warned, ideologies of identity, literacy, and, ultimately, authority, undermined attempts at both consensus and dissensus. Instead of helping students develop a sense of audience, a sense of authority, or a way of connecting with and supporting their peers, PR deepened division, authorized students who could effectively manipulate dominant ideologies around writing, and compelled students to ignore their instructor's directions. In her article on PR in a prison writing class, Rebecca Jackson shows how collaborative pedagogies that depend on the notion of "status equal peers" fails when students will not compromise their own adherence to larger systems of social ideology:

> One of the most important things these students tell us is that collaborative pedagogies are never ideologically neutral, despite what idealized portraits of collaboration and community would have us believe. Like all classroom practices, collaborative pedagogies advance a particular view of students, teachers, classrooms, and schools—about how

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[11] My review of the literature supports this assertion, and while researchers have noted that what works in L1 contexts will not necessarily work in L2, and vice-versa, and further, that what works in homogenous groups may not work in mixed L1 and L2 groups, this research still assumes a context with L2 writers from different backgrounds rather than a mix of monolingual and multilingual students.

students lean, about what they should learn, about appropriate teacher-student and student-student relations. (28)

Adhering to prison culture, in its hierarchy and social division, students rejected the very notion that PR could be a neutral activity. As Horner pointed out, collaborative pedagogies get into trouble with their conception of "community."

Carrie Leverenz takes Bruffee, Trimbur, and Myers out of the theoretical into the practical in her study of a college writing PR group. She finds that a white female, Beth, is able to claim power by drawing on her authority as an English major, her insistence that her peers read and respond to the text in line with the tenets of New Criticism, and her insistence that issues of race are not present in the text that class is responding to. Beth dominates the two other members of her group, both students of color. Leverenz writes,

> And the member who had the greatest power was the one best able to articulate the authoritative and exclusionary rules of the "normal" discourse of the community and to use those rules to reject and hence silence the "abnormal" discourse of her group members. As a result, no "rhetoric of dissensus" made it possible for the group to talk productively about their differences because the rules of "normal" discourse had already determined that differences must be treated hierarchically. Although students recognized that their reading and writing were different, they could think about those differences only in terms of what was right and wrong. (184)

Even with instruction designed to elicit dissensus, an acculturative and silencing consensus emerged. Leverenz concludes by noting that Beth's "voice" is not just an example of a dominant way of knowing; it bears an "unsettling" similarity to the voice of an instructor who "maintain[s] the status quo and silence[s] difference":

> After all, Beth's claim to authority in peer responding was based on her certification by the institution; she had taken the university's peer tutoring course and had been authorized by the institution to advise other students about their writing. . . . Beth took the position of the skeptical academic reader who requires textual evidence in order to be convinced. (176)

Problematically, Beth's authority is strengthened when she is put into her PR group. Where before her contributions to the wider discourse of the classroom were often challenged by

students of color who did not share her opinions, in her PR group, she found little opposition. In its small group setting, PR provided a forum in which Beth was able to project her power more effectively than in the wider space of the classroom. Further, this study is notable because we see a student embodying a larger institutional authority that circumvents her instructor's individual authority. That is, in ignoring or failing to enact a "rhetoric of dissensus," she deauthorzes her instructor while authorizing herself. Gail Stygall, also finds that an attempt to relocating authority from teachers to students in the form of PR does not necessarily lead to inclusive discussion. She concludes that "when an instructor withdraws, hierarchy and inequality may reappear" (253). She argues against unstructured, untrained peer review groups because of their potential to "jeopardize the participatory learning" (253) of women and other historically marginalized groups.

To sum up this review of the literature, many questions around peer review remain unaddressed. In their 2006 review of the literature in L2 composition, Hyland and Hyland ask, "How far does culture play a part in student responses to feedback?" (83). To this question about difference, they add the following assertion: "Related to these issues, we also need research which tracks how, why and when writers respond favourably to oral and peer feedback over prolonged periods, particularly as writers' beliefs are likely to play an important part in this" (96). My review of the literature suggests that empirical studies of these questions of culture and ideology are few and far between. The result is that much of the literature is comprised of snapshots and vignettes, often without clear grounding in methodology or epistemological transparency. More importantly, PR continues to be a pedagogical move employed by instructors who have not thought through the troubling theoretical and empirical problems of PR.

Considering the significant body of past and recent research on the general practice of PR as a collaborative learning pedagogy, the questions this project addresses and the gaps it attempts to fill are not themselves new. As I have shown, scholars have already raised vital questions around the role of difference in peer review, and a handful has sought empirical answers. It is clear, too, from the existing research, that difference can and does affect peer interaction. To deny this is to risk a colorblind or difference-blind view that undermines efforts to create equitable and useful collaborative pedagogies. Therefore, given this knowledge, it now might be time to end the debate on *whether* peer review is affected by difference (or whether it can work) and embark on new investigations of how and why it does or does not work for today's college students, for whom issues of racial, linguistic, and cultural difference are amplified by the current political and social climate in the US. This project, then, picks up that conversation, dropped in the 1990's, 25 years later, by responding to Fox's call for instructors "to enter into the complexities of collaborative leaning and help discover analyses that explain the means by which students dominate each other and, ultimately, create classroom practices that make the most of the progressive opportunities of collaborative learning" (121).

But this study not only addresses "the means" of domination in PR, it also brings intersectional, longitudinal, and ethnographic methods to the table, methods that have not been used to examine PR. These methods shift the ground on which previous studies, both old and new, stand. For example, where Ruecker, Leverenz, and Stygall look at difference, they do so focusing on one general social category. In the present study, by contrast, I examine multiple modes of communication (e.g., spoken and written) alongside multiple social identities (e.g.,

disabled and non-disabled; nationality, immigrant profile, and racial formation)[12] in PR. This method allows me to complicate and deepen critiques of collaborative learning, moving beyond the conclusion that PR, even when designed with equity in mind, harms as much as helps students in their efforts to claim authority and improve their writing.

**Research Questions**

In this dissertation, I explore the structural and individual dynamics of PR discourse, paying close attention to student perceptions of authority and power. My focus is on locating and tracing the ideological processes that shape how students negotiate about their own and others' authority, taking PR as a site to carry out this analysis. The first question takes authority as a point of departure. The second question focuses the examination on language, since, as I suggest in this introduction, the basis for authority in this context is largely linguistic, as the subject and the object of PR is written language, so that to claim authority is to claim expertise as a writer and speaker. The relation between *authority* and *language* shapes PR discourse, as I argue below. In the final question, I allow for an intersectional view of social difference that moves beyond a focus on language. However, in order to maintain analytical and theoretical coherence, I pose the final question in relation to language. I do not, for example, analyze the role of disability without referring to language as a signifier. The questions are as follows:

1) **How is authority perceived and negotiated in peer review discourse?**
   a) Whose voices do students perceive as most dominant during peer review and why?
   b) How do students work to build and maintain authority in peer review discourse?
   c) What effect do these perceptions of authority have on peer review discourse?
2) **How are language ideologies expressed in peer review discourse and to what effect?**

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[12] I do not consider explicitly categories of age or gender. I plan to pursue these categories in further research.

a) How do students describe their own varieties of spoken and written language in peer review contexts?

b) How do students describe the responses of their classmates to their own varieties of written and spoken language?

c) How do students respond, and explain their responses, to the varieties of spoken and written language of their classmates?

d) What effect might these descriptions and responses have on peer review discourse?

3) **What other ideologies of difference (e.g., around language, race, or disability) might be intertwined with expressions of language ideologies in peer review discourse?**

a) What aspects of social difference (their own and others') do students describe in navigating peer review discourse?

b) How do students make connections between language and social identity in peer review contexts?

c) What effect do students think social difference might have on peer review discourse?

In order to address these questions, I conducted a semester-long qualitative study of peer review discourse in the college writing classroom. The study includes student interviews, class observations, recordings of peer review discourse, and document analysis (I discuss methodology in detail below) and contributes to the ongoing scholarly discussion about linguistic and cultural difference by examining how language ideologies are expressed, along with other ideologies of difference, in peer review discourse.

Since language ideology provides a way to appraise a person's social identity by judging language and vice-versa, analyzing language ideologies as expressed in student talk helps address the question of how students make connections between identity and language, both spoken and written. This, in turn, provides new insights into questions of power and authority in peer review discourse, where language ideologies, as 'common sense' about what counts as 'good' writing and what counts as 'bad,' can be used to discredit the writing and feedback of some students while bolstering that of others. In focusing on both *how* students talk about their

experiences and *what* they say about peer review, this study investigates how student perceptions in and around difference informs classroom power dynamics.

The study has several implications for classroom practice. First, by learning more about how peers speak and write to each other, and how they think about identity and writing, instructors can develop critical peer review models based in antiracist, linguistically inclusive pedagogy. My assumption is that investigating how students navigate issues of difference (their own and others') in peer review— and what ideologies may be at work in their interactions—is a first step in laying the groundwork for classrooms in which diversity is both assumed and welcomed. Moreover, this work helps expose a covert dimension of discrimination in and through language ideologies in U.S. college writing classrooms.

Importantly, while I frame this research by assuming that discrimination, as a result of social difference, is an ever-present force that shapes the experience of all humans (see Ladson-Billings and Tate), I also am mindful of Mary Bucholtz's warning that "researchers must find ways to uncover the workings of race empirically without simply stipulating its relevance as a theoretical given" (244). Indeed, while some students did not describe racial difference as relevant, difference in gender, age, and cognitive ability did impact their experience with peer review. Students also pointed to interpersonal dynamics as factors in their negotiations around feedback. This research, therefore, remains grounded first in the lived experience of students and their individual perspectives. However, this attention to individual students and their experience does not rule out a theoretical framework focused on language that investigates discourse as mediated by locally perceived and experienced ideologies around social difference. The potential usefulness of this research lies in its ability to show how ideologies of difference work—at a

systemic and individual level—in a context that has been neglected by researchers, without simply assuming, albeit for good reason, the presence of discriminatory ideologies.

**CHAPTER 2. Design and Methods**

I begin this chapter by presenting the two theoretical frameworks— (1) theory from linguistics in the form of standard language ideology, markedness, and indexicality and (2) critical whiteness theory—that guide my analysis of authority in PR discourse. I show how these frameworks are interlocking and I demonstrate how they are useful in addressing this study's specific research questions. Following this, I present a full discussion of the study's design and methodology.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

A central task of this study is to analyze student interaction across social difference, with a focus on linguistic and racial difference. Accounting for dynamics around both race and language is not a new theoretical challenge in the fields of Writing Studies and Linguistics, since, as Mary Bucholtz argues, "ideologies of race are also ideologies of language, an unsurprising convergence given the long-standing association between ethnoracial and linguistic differentiation promoted both in early linguistic theorizing and in (other) nationalist projects" ("Nerds" 87). If ideologies of race and ideologies of language are and have been intertwined, accounting for both becomes a methodological and analytical necessity, and scholars from both fields have found productive, interdisciplinary approaches to accounting for the effects of racial and linguistic differentiation, or, to put it more directly, discrimination.

In this study, the framework of critical whiteness theory works with the framework of language ideology to support a multi-faceted analysis of authority in PR. Before I discuss the details of each theory, I want to point out that because of the elastic and evasive qualities of

whiteness, the effects of language ideology on PR were much more consistently visible.

Borrowing Toni Morrison's term, whiteness *haunts* this analysis, sometimes moving into a more

visible form, as when students make explicit claims about their own or their peers' cultural or

national identities, but often staying well-hidden in the fabric of interaction around language and

power.

*Language Ideology*

For the purposes of this study, I define language ideology as common-sense ideas about

language that not only privilege one dialect or language over another, but also subordinate the

sociocultural identities of some speakers. Common sense, here, is sense that is commonly

accepted rather than accurate, and can be used for discriminatory purposes. This definition builds

on work by Jane Hill, Bethany Davila, and Rosina Lippi-Green. In *The Everyday Language of*

*White Racism*, Hill uses the construct of *language ideology* to analyze the (re)production of

racism. She starts by defining *language ideologies* as "ideas about language itself that are shaped

by political and economic interests" (31). This is a broad definition, and reflects a general

awareness of power dynamics, but then, as she develops the idea of *interests* and *common sense,*

she writes:

> Ideologies of language often appear to us as forms of common sense. . . . But as we
> explore the possibility of political and economic interest in ideology, we find that
> "common sense" has had that status because it defines a group of people whose interests
> are advanced in believing it, and not because it is necessarily true or even likely. (34)

Common sense, then, is not a neutral, apolitical phenomenon, but one related to the struggle for

group dominance. From there, Hill makes the connection to White racism: "We can look at how

the ideology of 'Standard' works and how it is entwined with White racism by starting with a

belief about correctness that is shared very widely by White speakers of American English: that

'double negatives' are incorrect" (35). Hill then shows how judgments about double negatives

are also discriminatory judgments about the logic and intelligence of the groups that use negative concord. I lead with Hill's introduction to language ideology to show how racism is intertwined in language ideology.

In the context of this study, Hill's work on correctness and standardness in language allows for a nuanced view of how students negotiated about authority, especially when the capacity to claim what Hill shows to be a racialized notion of standardness and correctness shaped PR.[13] In this study, I take up the concept of language ideology "[as] a much needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality. . . ." (Woolard and Schieffelin 72). In PR, language ideology acts as such a bridge between what might be called micro interactions around language and the macro social dynamics around authority. Further, this study focuses on a certain kind of language ideology, standard language ideology (SLI), which is of particular relevance to the composition classroom.

Lesley Milroy argues that "the chief characteristic of a standard [language] ideology is the belief that there is one and only one correct spoken form of the language, modelled on a single correct written form" (174). This means that all "nonstandard" constructions, which are only nonstandard in their contrast to a socially constructed standard, are deemed incorrect. SLI has been used by dominant groups to attempt to standardize the cultural and linguistic practices of dominated groups. Lippi-Green argues that "SLI is concerned . . . with the elimination of

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[13] Hill's definition of language ideology is just one in a larger conversation about language ideology, an area of scholarly focus that emerged from the fields of sociocultural linguistics and cultural studies in the 1990s (Woolard and Schieffelin). Although what scholars mean by *ideology* is highly variable (i.e., from more neutral to more critical), most scholars agree that ideology is "rooted in or responsive to the experience of a particular social position" (Woolard and Schieffelin 58).

socially unacceptable difference" (173). As I have suggested, SLI is an especially important language ideology in this study because students relied heavily on notions of correctness in order to appraise and claim authority in PR. Thus, SLI, in the context of the writing classroom, is a dominant ideology of language, one with coercive power.

In this project, I define SLI as common sense about the characteristics of written and spoken discourse appropriate to the writing classroom, and about speakers who do or do not use the standard. If the composition classroom is a space in which SLI, together with "English Only" ideologies, remain dominant, as Bruce Horner and Paul Kei Matsuda, and others have argued, it is crucial to draw on scholarship that seeks to understand the workings of these ideologies. Further, in considering the many social groups that interacted in this study, SLI maintains its power through the perception of a standard as both neutral and "unaffiliated" with any one social group. Therefore, as Bethany Davila points out, SLI masks power relations by marking some students as *other*, while standard speakers remain neutral.

Indexicality and markedness

Related to language ideology is the construct of *indexicality,* a more fine-grained tool to trace connections between identity, ideology, and linguistic form (Silverstein). Bucholtz and Trechter write, "the connection between identity and [language] ideology is established through the process of indexicality" (9). Indexicality allows people to view certain linguistic forms as typical of a certain social group, and in doing so, attach certain social meanings to language. Specific words or grammatical constructions become signs of social identity; cultural beliefs about linguistic forms are then attached to people who use them. For example, a US southern accent (in the US) can index politeness or low intellectual ability, and so relies on pre-existing stereotypes of people from the south.

It is important to highlight that the indices that connect language and identity are inherently unstable and contextual. For this reason, J.M. Hughes and Karen Tracy argue that "indexicality is also fundamentally ambiguous and open to reinterpretation" as "different contextual parameters are mapped onto one another and actors, places, practices, and moments in time are imbued with meaning" (5). Barbara Johnstone and Scott Kiesling produce such qualitative evidence of this mapping and layering when they assert that indexicality is determined not only by larger indexical patterns or stereotypes, but also by the "lived experience" of individuals. That is, while specific linguistic characteristics can become common-sense signifiers of certain social groups, Johnstone and Kiesling find that individuals within communities of practice still create meaning in unique ways:

> It is people's lived experiences that create indexicality. Since every speaker has a different history of experience with pairings of context and form, speakers may have many different senses of the potential indexical meanings of particular forms. Indexical relations are forged in individuals' phenomenal experience of their particular sociolinguistic worlds. (29)

To put it another way, indexicality depends on having specific referents, specific indexical entries. Individuals carry their own figurative books with unique figurative indices.

In the context of this study, participants index each other using their knowledge of the local Arab and Arabic-speaking population, in which there exists a social hierarchy that places speakers of Yemeni Arabic as having the least amount of prestige, while speakers of Lebanese Arabic had the most, though surpassed by Arab-Americans who spoke with what the participants called a "Dearborn Accent." This Dearborn Accent is way of speaking English that does not index foreignness through a non-English accent, but rather, is a dialect of English that incorporates what the participants described as an Arabic "intonation" as well as colloquialisms in Arabic, a kind of code-meshing.

The Dearborn Accent, therefore, holds a kind of cultural prestige, since it signals that a speaker is not a recent immigrant (a status referred to as "boater" by the community), but rather a native member of Dearborn's hybrid culture: both Arab and Arabic *as well* as American and English.[14] Thus, for students familiar with this indexical field of Arabic, specific attributes, in language and in identity, are available for reference. For monolingual English speakers, however, this indexical field does not exist. For the latter group, an Arabic accent is marked against the norms of the U.S. college writing classroom, or it may index both a general and individual notion of Arabic-speakers as foreign or culturally different. The ways in which indexicality affects authority are therefore multiple and dynamic, and since indexicality is connected to language ideology, questions of power and hierarchy are never far.

In general, then, indexicality is not just a semiotic system. As Hughes and Tracy point out, it is also a "social process that works to position actors within interactional and ideological frameworks in which some enjoy more access to resources than others" (5). John Baugh and Bethany Davila in their respective scholarship both outline the effects of indexical processes in which language evokes racist ideologies. The point here is that indexicality can work to both constrain and enable access to authority, especially—as I show below—when the ability to speak and write Standard Edited American English is entwined with access to authority.

Another tool to understand the relations between identity and language is markedness. Markedness helps theorize the socially constructed binaries that function as sorting mechanisms between what is valued and expected and what has less value and is deviant. Peter Groves makes the connection between markedness, language, and ideology clear when he writes, "Because the

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[14] According to a professor of Arabic at the University, the Dearborn Accent is recognizable to Arab-Americans across the U.S., in much the same way a Southern English accent is to American English speakers.

semantic opposition of unmarkedness and markedness influences our perceptions of naturalness and deviance, it forms part of the tacit system through which ideology is inscribed in language" (Groves) (online citation). Ideology is inscribed when language is marked as standard or non-standard, prestigious or not, correct or incorrect. An example Groves uses is the opposition of *author* and *authoress*. The latter is marked because it is unexpected; it is unexpected because social norms cause us to think of authors as males and not females. Ideology around gender is thus inscribed in language through binary markedness.

A key aspect of markedness, however, is that while *authoress* is marked by the suffix, *author* is also marked by its absent suffix. Therefore, no language is actually unmarked. "'Unmarked [linguistic] forms' are really just normative forms, that is, representing social and political prestige" (6), writes Donald Rubin. Because of this, as Rubin argues further, writing is "never devoid of social marking, never really unmarked" (6). Standard Edited American English, then, as a standard dialect for academic writing, may at first glance seem unmarked, or neutral, but it is marked by its prestige because it works in opposition to non-prestige dialects of English, such as African American English, which is marked as non-standard.

Indeed, markedness acts as a bridge between language ideology and racial ideology. In "The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness," Bucholtz argues the following.

> The ideology of racial markedness therefore has as a corollary an ideology of linguistic markedness. In particular, the difficulty (which afflicts only white people) in seeing whites as racialized is matched by the difficulty (again, only for whites) in hearing white speakers' language as racialized: as specifically white rather than neutral or normative—or standard. In such an arrangement, unmarked status confers power by allowing whiteness to move through the social world ghost-like, unseen and unheard, evident only in its effects. (87)

In this depiction of markedness, whiteness, like, standardness, is unmarked to white people, and as I show below, unmarked in the context of the writing classroom. Thus, markedness acts as a

sorting mechanism between groups, one that privileges the marked status of whiteness and standardness. Finally, because Standard Language Ideology enforces a perception of a binary choice between correctness (i.e., standardness) and incorrectness (i.e., nonstandardness), markedness as a concept is aligned with SLI. Indexicality, though, moves beyond a binary choice by presenting a series of associations between language and identity, associations that in the context of this study remain hierarchical but not binary.

Markedness, as I take it up in this dissertation, is a process of differentiating what is neutral, expected, and privileged from what is not *in a specific context,* often using a binary system. Since the context of PR is the writing classroom, non-English accents and errors in standard English grammar are marked as outside the norm. Importantly, just as authority is dependent on context, markedness is as well. Bethany Davila notes that because "local conceptions of standardness and expectations for student writing are constantly shifting, context greatly influences the relationship between un/markedness and non/standardness" (114). Thus, what appears to marked in one context might not in another, where ideologies have different effects on discourse.

Let me conclude this discussion of indexicality and markedness by noting that these processes are related in that both connect identity to language and vice-versa. As interlocutors *mark* or *index* linguistic features, they make connections between language and identity. Indeed, as Davila shows, language *marked* as standard or nonstandard *indexes* particular social identities and not others. In general, then, markedness as a construct depends on a contrast to an imagined and local norm (e.g., if the writing classroom is a space of SEAE and whiteness, all linguistic and racial difference will be visibly marked), while indexicality uses linguistic form to refer to specific social identities, from gender, to race, to nationality. Although all language is marked in

some way or another in relation to prestige, as Rubin argues, language marked as standard (e.g., SEAE in the writing classroom) still remains less visible than language that is marked by nonstandardness. Thus, while all language *in the writing classroom* is technically marked and indexed, perceived nonstandard or deviant linguistic forms are often more visible in their markedness or indexicality than other forms. To return to Bucholtz's analysis of whiteness and language, "the difficulty (which afflicts only white people) in seeing whites as racialized is matched by the difficulty (again, only for whites) in hearing white speakers' language as racialized: as specifically white rather than neutral or normative—or standard." Yet, as I show below, the perception of white speakers' language as *neutral, normative, or standard* was also shared by students who did not describe themselves strictly as white and whose language was marked in the writing classroom as nonstandard, incorrect, or accented. In the writing classroom, then, speakers and writers who may be marked as non-white still viewed SEAE as non-racialized, as neutral.

*Critical Whiteness*

Adding critical whiteness theory to the concept of language ideology allows for an analysis of wider questions around racial and cultural difference that are intertwined with perceptions of language. Studies of critical whiteness (CW) has in the past 25 years emerged as its own interdisciplinary field that critiques white power and privilege (Haviland). According to Kennedy, Middleton, and Ratcliffe, scholars in English Studies first took up critical whiteness theory following Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, which positioned whiteness "as a cultural and racial category [that] functions within US language use and haunts US people, literature, and institutions" (360). Kennedy et al. also note that CWS is rooted in critical race theory (CRT), which was born in the 1970s as legal scholars of color such as Derek Bell and Richard Delgado asserted that dominant praxis around law and

race was unable to account for the effects of racism in US society. Tara Yosso, writing from the field of education, positions CWS as part of an intellectual genealogy, alongside "TribalCrit," "LatCrit," "AsianCrit," and FemCrit," all of which are subsumed under CRT. Although Yosso's delineations suggest a hierarchy and separation, she is careful to note that "CRT's branches are not mutually exclusive or in contention with one another" (72).

In the field of Writing Studies, CW is useful in understanding how students, who are in a context that values college literacy practices, claim, reject, or resist these views as they negotiate in peer review groups. As Catherine Prendergast suggests in *Literacy and Racial Justice*, education and literacy are seen as 'properties' of whiteness.[15] Examining student perceptions of authority, then, is productively done within a theoretical framework that acknowledges the power of whiteness as a process and a system *that works through language* to valorize certain voices, ontologies, and epistemologies over others. If whiteness positions non-whiteness as *other*, and therefore as unauthorized in the classroom, CW can help us understand how and why this occurs. In a peer review context, CW helps illuminate how students struggle for authority across boundaries of difference, and how they explain their authority.

In addition, CW can help make visible counter-narratives from students whose experience with their peers questions the paradigm of peer review as a common sense pedagogical tool. CW helps theorize the ways that students—who are able to move within and across whiteness as a dominant force, and are therefore able to step outside the perspective of whiteness into liminality or spaces of alterity— offer a "wide angle vision" (Ladson-Billings and

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[15] Critical race theorists have viewed whiteness itself as a property with monetary and social value Woolard, Kathryn A. and Bambi B. Schieffelin. "Language Ideology." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 23, 1994, pp. 55-82, doi:10.2307/2156006.. Literacy and education, therefore, are two specific sites of white property.

Tate IV) of peer review interaction. Finally, in destabilizing the power of whiteness, CW methods also provide space for White students to take up reflexive practice that might help them question common sense ideas about race and language. Thus, despite the general dominance of whiteness in composition studies and in many other institutional contexts, CW makes space for whiteness to be understood as a contingent and unstable force.

Several key themes emerge from the literature. First, whiteness can be understood not only as a social identity but as an ideology. Definitions of whiteness connect to Lopez and Landsman's views of *race* as ideology, process, and construct. For example, Ruth Frankenberg defines whiteness as both a *system* and as a *process* that allows "racism [to] be conceived as something external to us [whites] rather than as a system that shapes our daily experience and sense of self" (6). More simply, McIntyre defines whiteness as "a system and ideology of white dominance that marginalizes and oppresses people of color, ensuring existing privileges for white people in this country" (3). Adding to this, Kennedy et al. see whiteness as a "neutral category," which marks and decenters any other social category. Thus, markedness works as a linguistic and racial process that differentiates perceived as non-standard language features from standard and non-white phenotypes from white phenotypes.

In her study of how White high school students constructed notions of racial difference through language, Mary Bucholtz writes, "understanding whiteness requires attention to two different aspects of this racial category: its power to authorize the subordination of other racialized groups, and its variability and even instability in specific cultural contexts" (*White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* 15). She lays out six characteristics of whiteness, three to explain the basic view of whiteness as structurally dominant and three to explain whiteness as locally constructed and unstable. First, Bucholtz argues that "whiteness is

hegemonic" because it carries its power through ideology rather than physical force, and since ideology becomes common sense, the dominance of whiteness becomes common sense. This leads to the second characteristic: that "whiteness is unmarked." Here, the crucial effect is to mark non-whites as "other," and thus as subordinate, which maintains the hegemony of whiteness. Marking non-whites as "other" leads to the third characteristic of whiteness: that it is "cultural absence." This has the effect of rendering whiteness invisible while marking non-whiteness as culturally visible. The remaining three attributes of whiteness make up the second basic aspect of whiteness as unstable and locally contingent: "whiteness is situated and situational" (Bucholtz *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* 16). This means that the effect of whiteness varies by actor and by context so that it is dominant in some instances and less dominant in others. Building on this trait, Bucholtz argues that "whiteness is multiple" (Bucholtz *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* 16-17). That is, there are multiple ways to be White, each affected by other identity characteristics such as class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, region, and others. Lastly, "whiteness is unstable" because of the many paradoxes and contradictions it must contain. Bucholtz is careful to describe whiteness as a flexible, porous, and locally contingent force rather than a fixed and monolithic system.

Drawing from these definitions, I define whiteness as an ideology, with local and global manifestations, that maintains white dominance in structural and individual ways, and allows White people to justify their dominance, even as they (1) appropriate cultural items from people of color, (2) claim that they are not themselves racists, and (3) participate in systems that uphold structural inequality by arguing that structural inequality is a result of the cultural and individual deficits of non-White people. This definition draws on Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's conception of a *racial ideology*, which he defines as "the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain

and justify or challenge the racial status quo" (9). A key function of whiteness, then, is its explanatory power—its ability to become common sense. In sum, CW proposes that in order to study the effects of race and racism, researchers need to take account not only the experiences of the racialized, marginalized *other*, but also the experiences of White people who perceive and enact their whiteness in a range of ways.

Bethany Davila builds on this notion of racialized language ideologies in her examination of how college writing instructors used language features to attach racial, class, and gender identities to anonymous student writers. Davila's work presents an example of the power of these two interlocking frameworks. She finds that ideologies of standard English and ideologies of whiteness "worked in tandem" by allowing instructors to associate SEAE (Standard Edited American English) with well-educated and middle-class Whites. SEAE marks Whiteness as normative and neutral, while perceptions of grammatical error and non-standardness were connected to students of color. Like Davila's, my project is focused on language as a point of entry into an examination of difference. Tracing what Carmen Fought calls the "linguistic correlates of being white" (117) means relying on theoretical frameworks that account for the ways that language is a primary aspect of perceptions around race.[16] Together, these frameworks allow me to investigate how ideologies around race are not only omnipresent in social interactions but also (re)produced by everyday linguistic choices.

The intersectional nature of the framework is also flexible enough to account for other ideologies around difference and standardness that, as my research questions indicate, shape PR.

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[16] It is important to note Woolard and Shieffelin's warning that "… simply asserting that struggles over language are really about racism does not constitute analysis" ibid. This framework is not designed to present a simplistic view of race and language, in which all struggle over language can be *revealed* as racial struggle. Instead, the interesting question is *how* and *why* indexicality works in the ways it does.

Bucholtz reminds us that language ideologies are "not in fact about language . . . but are in the service of other, more basic ideologies about social groups, which they cloak in linguistic terms" (*White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* 9). Thus, common-sense notions of what is standard and what is not are linked to, or in service of, other ideologies around social identity.

**Methods**

In this study, my overarching goals were to use PR discourse as a site to examine how students appraise each other's authority as writers and reviewers and how ideologies around difference affected the PR process. Since my questions concerned not only *what* was occurring in PR discourse, but *how* and *why*, I chose to use qualitative methods that would allow me to interview students about their experiences in PR, their notions of authority in the writing classroom, their notions of language diversity, and their notions of PR itself—as part of the writing process and as a heterogeneous point of contact with other students. In addition to learning about these student perceptions, I observed the discourse itself as it occurred during PR in order to make connections between student beliefs and student discourse. Finally, I mapped the material effects of these perceptions and actions during PR, i.e., the writing and revising that students performed. In short, I required access to a sample of students willing be to interviewed and observed, and who would consent to the collection of their writing. Collecting these three streams of data allowed me to present a "thick" view of PR, one based in the local contexts of the institution, the classroom, and the peer review group. Further, in order to develop a nuanced understanding of PR, I chose to carry out my interviews, observations, and document collection in two separate writing classrooms. I collected the following data from a regional university in the Midwest:

- observations of every meeting of two sections (18 students each) of an intermediate college writing course;
- interviews with students three times each over the course of the semester about their linguistic backgrounds and their experience in peer review;
- all relevant course documents (e.g., student writing and peer review documents);
- audio-recordings of every peer writing group over the semester.

These qualitative methods allowed me to observe how students created meaning around language and identity in the specific context of peer review. Since ideologies of difference are (re)constructed around discursive interaction, my methods allow me to gather and analyze these interactions in PR.

*Research Site*

I collected this data at a public four-year university in the Midwest, MidWest University (MU). According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, MU is "medium full-time, inclusive, higher transfer-in." This classification means that at least 80 percent of the undergraduates are full-time students, that the institution is not selective[17] in its undergraduate admissions, and that at least 20 percent of entering undergraduates are transfer students. The vast majority of students are residents of the state in which the university is located. In terms of race-ethnicity, 65.8 percent are White; 2.8 percent are Black; 4.7 percent are Hispanic; 24.4 percent are Asian; 33.5 percent total minority (The Chronicle of Higher Education). Although no statistical data exists on language background, I observed that much of the student body is multilingual, with many speakers of Arabic. This demographic is reflected in the students whose sections I observed.

MU offers a variety of writing course for undergraduates. In order to address my research questions, I recruited participants from a mid-level writing course. Based on my pilot data, I

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[17] Carnegie uses three categories to describe institutional selectivity based on standardized entrance exams: (a) "Inclusive": no percentile; (b) "Selective: 40th to 80th percentile of selectivity among all baccalaureate institutions; (c) "More selective": 80th to 100th percentile.

hypothesized that students in a mid-level course (with the term "intermediate" in the title, and which was numbered at the 200-level rather than at the 100-level), as opposed to a first-year writing course, would have more experience with PR in writing courses as well as across the curriculum. These students, I hoped, would be willing to offer their opinions about PR by drawing on extensive experience, rather than only what they had experienced in secondary English spaces. I gained access to these sections through a contact in the Department of English, an experienced instructor, who agreed to let me use their[18] 2XX classroom as a research site. This contact also introduced me to a colleague who was teaching another section of the same course. The colleague subsequently allowed me to collect data in their classroom as well. Here I provide an overview of 2XX, detailing how and why students enrolled in it. As will become clear, student enrollment has direct bearing on students' notions of their expertise as writers and peer reviewers.

As the instructors informed me, the course number and title—reflective of an intermediate course—actually functioned as a semi-developmental first-year writing course for transfer students who had attempted to transfer credit for previous coursework that would have satisfied the MU's first-year writing requirement. By naming the course as they did, the English department attempted to avoid signaling to students that their previous coursework counted for nothing. That is, if a required course were labeled as "introductory" or "basic," students would feel they had wasted their financial and personal resources. At the same time, the communication students received regarding their performance on the writing placement exam indicated that their score was too low for their previous coursework to 'count.'[19]

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[18] I use the "singular they" construction here in order to better protect the identity of the instructor.

[19] I was able to see a sample message that students receive about their placement.

Students enrolled in 2XX via two basic routes, via specific program requirements (e.g., the education major),[20] or placement. In the latter case, students were either placed as (1) transfer students in their first year at MU, who had already taken at least a semester of post-secondary writing instruction at a community college; (2) home-schooled and other students using 'dual enrollment' to attempt to satisfy the writing requirement[21] (FTIAC); or (3) students beyond their first year at the U who placed into 2XX when they first arrived on campus and had waited to take the course. 2XX contained a high percentage of students in their first semesters at the U who were transferring from local community colleges, and who had taken first-year composition but who had, in the university's terms, "performed poorly" on MU's placement test. The sections also contained transfer students who had received notification of their placement, but had waited until their second, penultimate, or final year to satisfy the requirement, while still performing in at least satisfactory ways in the more advanced writing they were required to do in their majors.

For the instructors as well as the students, 2XX therefore occupied a liminal space in the U: not developmental, not first-year writing, but also not intermediate, since it served a developmental purpose for transfer students and students who had attempted to complete their first-year writing requirement before arriving on campus. The liminal status of 2XX was reinforced by its course description, which does not clarify the placement system, the course's focus on transfer students, or its role in fulfilling the first-year writing requirement. Interviews indicated that many students thought of the course as "remedial," since it was connected to the

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[20] Majors (in education and social services) were required to take 2XX, regardless of placement and regardless of whether they had taken the first-year writing sequence.
[21] One of the instructors called these students "FTIACS," an acronym that stands for "First Time in Any College." This term appears to exist as a way for institutions to refer to "true freshmen" rather than transfer students, especially in institutions with a sizable percentage of community college transfer students.

placement test. Indeed, most students displayed a level of annoyance and confusion about their placement into the course as well as the specific goals of the course. Like the students, I was at first unclear about the institutional role of 2XX; I had not designed my study for students in their first semesters, nor had I designed the study for transfer students. I was therefore surprised to note that the vast majority of the 36 students (18 students per section) in the two sections reported transferring from a community college. Only two reported being in their first year in a post-secondary classroom.[22]

Most of the students (at least 20 of 38) reported that they would be graduating between 2016 and 2018, which suggests that they had, counting from the beginning of fall 2016, anywhere between one and five semesters (2.5 years) before graduation. Three students reported their intention to graduate in 2019, two in 2020 (and one reported that his intention to graduate in 2021, anticipating that in addition to community college experience, he would take longer than four years to complete his degree).

These basic statistics[23] suggest that the vast majority, at least 90 percent, of the students in the sections had experienced post-secondary writing instruction of some kind by the time they enrolled in 2XX. Only two reported they were experiencing post-secondary writing instruction for the first time. My original intent to carry out my research with a sample of students who were not first-years was therefore realized. Indeed, the students reported much experience with PR in previous courses at the U and in their community college writing courses, and in talking about their experience in 2XX's PR, they were able to call on previous experience.

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[22] Of the 36 students in the sections, three declined to provide data about their path through higher education.

[23] Nine students chose not to report their anticipated graduation.

*Participant Recruitment*

In order to recruit students, I asked the two instructors to allow me to explain my project and hand out a consent form and questionnaire that asked students to supply basic information about their demographic background. Both instructors agreed. On the second day of class, I introduced the study, informed students that their instructors will not know if they have agreed to take part in the study, that their participation will have no effect on their course grade, and that they will be free to leave the study at any time. I handed out consent forms and a questionnaire (see the appendix) that gave students the option of either agreeing or declining to participate in the interview portion of the study. I explained that I would be conducting a series of interviews, and that students would receive $25.00 per interview. In each section, 17 of 18 students signed the consent form. The two students who declined to participate in the study both agreed to let me audio-record their peer review sessions with the agreement that I would not analyze their voices, papers, or interactions, or otherwise include them in the study.

Table 1: Class A Partipipants

| Class A | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pseudonym** | **Race / Ethnicity** | **Languages** | **Gender** | **1st Gen** | **Transfer** | **Age** | **Inter-views** | **Disability** |
| Aurora | Mexican | Spanish, English | f | n | y | 42 | 3 | n |
| Cee | African American | English | f | n | y | -- | 0 | n |
| Daria | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |
| Elle | African American | English | f | n | y | 24 | 1 | n |
| Eric | American | English | m | y | y | 29 | 2 | n |
| Fatima | -- | Arabic, Spanish, English | f | n | y | 49 | 0 | n |
| George | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |
| Himmat | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |

| James | Caucasian | English | m | n | y | 20 | 3 | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jimmy | Black/Jewish | English | m | n | y | 22 | 1 | y |
| Joseph | White | English | m | y | y | 22 | 3 | y |
| Kady | African American | English | f | n | n | 18 | 3 | y |
| Kevin | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |
| Lyla | Black | English | f | n | y | 22 | 3 | n |
| Marie | mixed race: white, black, Native American | English | f | n | n | 19 | 3 | n |
| Mona | Arab American | Arabic, English | f | n | y | 23 | 1 | n |
| Nathan | White | English | m | n | y | 19 | 3 | n |

Table 2: Class B Participants

| Class B | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pseudonym | Race / Ethnicity | Languages | Gender | 1st Gen | Transfer | Age | Inter-views | Disability |
| Abdul | Arab American | Arabic, English | m | y | y | 23 | 1 | n |
| Adam | Middle Eastern | Arabic, English | m | n | y | 20 | 3 | n |
| Arafat | Arabic, Muslim | Arabic, English | m | y | y | 23 | 3 | n |
| Asim | Caucasian | Arabic, English | m | n | y | 21 | 0 | n |
| Ayman | Arabic and Muslim | Arabic, English | m | n | y | 24 | 0 | n |
| Bryan | African American | English | m | y | y | 22 | 0 | y |
| Elana | Arab-American | Arabic, English | f | y |  | 25 | 3 | n |
| Ghaaliya | -- | Arabic, English* | f | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |
| Hassan | -- | Arabic, English* | m | -- | -- | -- | 0 | n |
| Jane | Caucasian | English | f | n | y | 54 | 0 | y |
| Malcom | Arab, Iraqi, American | Arabic, English | m | n | y | 24 | 3 | n |
| Retaj | Arabic, White | Arabic, English | f | n | y | 27 | 3 | n |
| Sadid | Born in the USA | English, a little Arabic | m | y | y | 20 | 0 | n |
| Sam | Caucasian | English | m | n | y | 26 | 0 | n |

| | | Armenian, Arabic, Sryeany, English | | | | | | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tom | Armenean | | m | y | y | 28 | 1 | |
| Tracy | Caucasian | English | f | y | y | 46 | 3 | n |
| Zahra | White | Arabic, English | f | y | y | 28 | 0 | n |

I then contacted all the students who indicated that they were available to be interviewed. In inviting every student to participate in an interview, I was acting on one of the instructor's warnings that most of the students were extremely busy—having to balance their university work with other commitments, such as jobs and family—and may not be available to take part in three interviews each over the course of the semester. The warning proved valid, as several students who participated in the first round of interviews (10 students from Class A and eight students from Class B) chose not to continue into the second (eight students from Class A and six from Class B) and third rounds (eight students from Class A and four from Class B). In total, I conducted 54 interviews over the course of the semester. The table below shows that seven students from Class A and four students from Class B participated in all three interviews, with Adam and Malcolm from Class B sitting for two interviews each. Altogether this gave me a group of 11 students, for whom I had more than one interview. The students in 2XX were diverse in terms of racial-ethnic identity, language background, age, gender, family education history, and able-bodiedness.

Table 3: Peer Review Groups

| Class A | | | Class B | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PR 1** | **PR 2** | **PR 3** | **PR 1** | **PR 2** | **PR 3** |
| James | James | James | Tom | Tom | Bryan |
| Fatima | Himmat | Himmat | Asim | Arafat | Jane |

| Joseph | Joseph | Joseph | Retaj | Retaj | Retaj |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|        |        |        |       | Ayman |       |
|        |        |        |       |       |       |
| Geoge  | Elle   | Elle   | Tracy | Tracy | Tracy |
| Lyla   | Jimmy  | Jimmy  | Arafat | Abdul | Tom  |
| Nathan | Nathan | Nathan | Malcolm | Elana | Sadid |
|        |        |        |       |       |       |
| Jimmy  | Daria  | Daria  | Adam  | Adam  | Adam  |
| Aurora | Aurora | Aurora | Ayman | Ahmed | Zarha |
| Mona   | Lyla   | Lyla   | Elana | Sadid | Arafat |
|        |        |        |       | Sam   |       |
|        |        |        |       |       |       |
| Eric   | Eric   | Eric   | Bryan | Bryan | Elana |
| Himmat | --     | --     | Ahmed | Ghaaliya | Asim |
| Daria  | Kevin  | Kevin  | Ghaaliya | -- | Ghaaliya |
|        |        |        |       |       | Ayman |
|        |        |        |       |       |       |
| Marie  | Mona   | Mona   | --    | Zarha | Hassan |
| --     | George | George | Sadid | Asim  | --    |
| Kady   | Kady   | Kady   | Jane  | Malcolm | Abdul |
|        |        |        |       |       |       |
| SA     | Fatima | Fatima | Sam   | SA    | SA    |
| SA     | Marie  | Marie  | Zarha | SA    | SA    |
| SA     | Cee    | Cee    | Abdul | SA    | SA    |

*Data Collection*

<u>Interviews</u>

    I conducted three rounds of interviews over the course of the semester. In general, the

goal of the interviews was to record a description of the lived experiences of students (Kvale and

Brinkmann), and to learn about how students make meaning around difference within PR

contexts. The first interview followed a semi-structured interview protocol and lasted one hour.

In the first round of interviews, I asked students to discuss their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, their feelings about their writing abilities, and their thoughts and previous experiences on and with peer review. Overall, the aim of the first series of interviews was to build trust and rapport with students. Considering the sensitive nature of my research questions, it was especially important for students to get comfortable speaking about their backgrounds and their writing with me. Finally, I chose to carry out these first interviews before the class did PR, which allowed me to learn about how students had experienced PR in the past and how they expected it to experience it in 2XX. A pre-PR interview also allowed me to consider what expectations students had for PR.

The second round of interviews followed the class' first peer review session. In these interviews, I asked students to discuss their experiences in the recent PR sessions. If appropriate, I showed them transcripts from the sessions, and asked them to comment on specific interactions. My aim was to uncover what social dynamics (in terms of standard language ideologies, and other social factors) the students were navigating as they participated in the review session. I also asked students about any potential differences between the written feedback they received from peers and the spoken feedback during the review session. This question allowed me to understand the discursive differences between what students felt comfortable saying to each other versus what they felt comfortable writing to each other.

The third interview took place after the semester's last round of PR sessions, at the end of the semester. The interview protocol for these last interviews was informed by my analysis of data from the second interview, but the aim was again to uncover ideologies of difference by asking the students how they perceive themselves and others as peer reviewers. In these third interviews, I asked students again to talk about what they were feeling and thinking during

certain points in the peer response sessions. I also asked students to reflect on their experience in PR over the course of the semester. Since class was over, these interviews had the potential to help clarify remaining questions about PR. Even though I assured students that I would not discuss their interviews with their instructors or their peers, the third and final interview might have felt safer for students, since they would no longer see their classmates regularly and their grades had been submitted. In these last interviews, I carried out member checking, asking students to revisit previous questions, and previous moments in the PR transcripts, and confirming my understanding of their overall experiences in PR. By the end of the semester, I had recorded 43 interviews with students, with 11 students completing three interviews each over the course of the semester.

Observations

In addition to these interviews, I observed all sessions of the two sections. My rationale for observing two classes, not one, was that if I want to recruit 12 students for three interviews each, I assume that a pool of two classes (about 40 students) will be necessary. A larger pool gave me greater flexibility to recruit additional students, if need be. This arrangement allowed me to become conversant in the class discourse and pedagogy without limiting myself to a pool of one class.

I was also present for any session in which the instructor introduced assignments that will undergo peer response, presented information or directions about the process of peer response, or used peer response groups as a learning tool. Observation allowed me to learn about the general discourse of the classroom, including terms, modes of argument, and areas of academic focus that might inform how students give and receive feedback about their work. The observations of the peer response groups also allowed me to see any other significant non-verbal moments of interaction that could affect the discourse. Observations also allowed me to become a familiar

presence in the classroom, which helped me build trust and rapport with the students. During observations, I took field notes of the classroom discourse, which I then used to help analyze interview data and transcripts of peer response.[24]

Audio-recording peer response sessions was a logistical and technical challenge, but one that allowed me to collect a wealth of data that I used to learn about the overall culture of peer response in the classroom. For each PR session, I set up microphones for each group, had the groups spread out as much as possible. I turned on each microphone before giving it to a student to carry over to their group. I instructed students to leave the microphones on, and that I would collect them at the end of class. This allowed the students to not worry about turning the mics on or off. It also enabled me to pick up the conversation that occurred right before and right after the PR sessions, as well as any conversation that developed after students had finished their group work. After each PR session, I collected each mic. Using a sticky note, I wrote the names of the students whose voices I had recorded. I then transferred the audiophiles to my laptop, deleting them from the mics and discarding left over notes or names. With the exception of the first round of PR in the two sections, which I transcribed myself, I had the audiophiles professionally transcribed. By the end of the semester, I had collected roughly 36 hours of audio-recorded PR. And since, with the exception of one week, I had attended every class meeting, I had field notes from 84 hours of classroom observation.

Course documents

I gained access to all drafts of papers of all the students who consented to take part in the study, along with any feedback they gave or received throughout the semester. I also collected

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[24] Atkinson and Coffey suggest that observations allow researchers a more complete understanding of a phenomenon when compared to studies done on interviews alone because they provide researchers with a tool to compare interview data against observable dynamics.

copies of the assignment prompts, syllabi, and other salient documents, such as peer review guidelines. These documents allowed me to contextualize the peer discourse and the data from the interviews and observations. With the exception of one student in each section, I was able to collect all available written artifacts for all the students over the course of the term. For each section, this included two drafts for each of the three major papers for which students carried out PR. This meant that I collected close to 204 student papers, at least 100 documents that contained written PR comments. For one section, I was also able to collect all instructor feedback on the major papers. Finally, I had access to the grades for each major paper of all the students I interviewed. For one section, I had complete access to all course grades.

*Data Analysis*

Data from the interviews and the observations I coded and analyzed using a combination of constructivist grounded theory and discourse analysis, which included the constructs of indexicality and language ideology. Grounded theory seeks to build new understandings, based on the experiential knowledge of participants, of a phenomenon, and may be used when existing theory (such as critical whiteness theory or theories of language ideology) has not been brought to bear on a phenomenon or a specific context (Creswell). I turn to grounded theory because my research questions are focused on the shared experience of PR discourse. In coding, I first applied an open coding method (Maxwell, 2012) in order to accommodate as much as possible the participants' own voices on the subject of PR. In this initial coding, I created a list of kinds of interactions. From there, I combined, collapsed, and identifed key themes and categories in the data. This kind of grounded theory is *constructivist* because, as Creswell, explains, there is "a focus on theory developed that depends on the researcher's view, learning about the experience within embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships, and making visible hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity" (65).

In addition to these methods of coding, I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyze data from the interviews, observations, and course materials. As Ruth Wodak states, CDA supports the analysis of "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, power and control when these are manifested in language" (quoted in Huckin et al. 107). CDA is also appropriate for analyzing a range of data types, from interviews, to classroom observation, to course documents. In the immediate context of this study, CDA is useful in analyzing the language that students use to describe their own linguistic identities and those of their peers. Attention to lexicogrammatical choices may be especially important in the context of this study, in which labels, such as *white*, *black, Euro-American, Caucasian, African American, Chicano,* signal ways of making meaning. As Barbara Johnstone points out, "deciding what to call something can constitute a claim about it" (48). CDA, then, can help analyze how students choose to refer to their identities and languages and to those of their peers in the context of peer response.

CDA is also well-positioned to code for the presence of ideology in peer review discourse. Identifying an ideology is complex. First, since my data depends heavily on the questions I pose in the interviews, I designed interview protocols that attempt to surface ideologies. Questions that probe the underlying logic of statements were useful here. For example, I asked, "can you tell me a little more about why you think that's true?" Since ideologies are cloaked as common sense and conventional wisdom about a group or object, participants often depended on stereotypes, or personal experience that supports stereotypical images. If language ideologies are based in folk theories, those folk theories should be readily recognizable. In addition, a *sense* that is *common* to a group, or a piece of *wisdom* that is *conventional* will not be grounded in evidence outside itself. Just like there is no evidence for a

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myth, there is little evidence for an ideology beyond the ideology itself. In short, I designed my interview protocols to make data analysis easier by including questions that elicit answers based in common sense.

As I analyzed the data, there were several ways that I searched for ideologies. First, I coded for assumptions that rest on dominant ideas about social groups, in much the same way that Peterson and Calovini did in their study of ideology in peer interaction. Using grounded coding methods, I discerned categories of student talk: such as when students claim authority about certain subjects; when they challenge one another or disagree; when they give up authority; when they are silent; when they make assumptions about meaning. These categories pinpointed the presence of ideologies by exposing common sense notions of identity and writing. Once I had these categories, I was able to quantify and qualify how often students used each category (e.g., caregiving, and like Sommers and Lawrence, note when patterns corresponded in some way to student identity).

The multiple sources of data – from interviews, observations, and course materials – along with the theoretical frameworks of language ideology, theory paired with discourse analysis, allowed me to triangulate the data. Triangulation, "or the combination of methodologies in the examination of the same phenomena" (Denzin 234), allows researchers to limit and account for bias. It is especially important in this study, since I alone collected the data. Not only does triangulation check researcher bias, it provides a means for assessing validity. In addition, I performed member checks by repeating my understanding of what the students were communicating during the interviews. I also was able to check my understanding by following up in subsequent interviews. As Maxwell notes, feedback from informants can be used as evidence for the validity of the study. This allows me to consult with students to ensure that their

voices are not misrepresented, while at the same time allowing them to reflect critically on themselves. Member checks also allowed me to balance CDA-related analyses in order to avoid mischaracterizing the language, thoughts, and feelings of participants. A final note on the generalizability of my analysis. Unless otherwise stated, my conclusions apply to both Class A and B, though when I delve into the dynamics of relational authority in specific groups, my conclusions are limited to that specific group.

*Subjectivity and Positionality*

Throughout my data collection, analysis, and drafting, I maintained a stance of reflexivity and an awareness of how my own subjectivity—as a White, male, middleclass, speaker of Standard English, and researcher from University of Michigan—affected how I interacted with participants and the data I analyzed (Peshkin). As Milner notes, "in the process of conducting research, dangers can emerge when and if researchers do not engage in processes that can circumvent misinterpretations, misinformation, and misrepresentations of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems" (388). Cynthia Dillard further argues that researchers need to "carefully examine [their] own motives, methods, interactions, and final research 'reports' – and seek understanding and meaning-making from various members of the social and/or cultural community under study" (673). Member checking and data triangulation are just first steps in the larger responsibility researchers must have towards the communities they examine. I certainly recognize that the U, as a community of scholars, students, and staff members, deserves my unwavering respect. It was an honor for me to carry out my research in its Composition Program. As I have shown, my research methods were designed to allow me to embed myself in the community, thereby giving me the chance to contextualize my analysis. Below, I address the dangers of a-contextual analysis.

I am aware that in the past, White researchers have done epistemological violence to the communities they have studied. I hope that an iterative process of reflexivity helps minimize misrepresentation and claims of objectivity. At least, these practices allow me to stay vigilant, stay grounded in the acknowledgement that discrimination is a durable aspect of U.S. society that informs all interaction. Marjorie Devault argues, "researchers should treat questions of racial-ethnic positioning as integral to the developing analysis in a qualitative study and that "hearing" race and ethnicity in our talk with informants requires active attention and analysis rather than passive listening and recording" (613). For me, active attention means reflexive attention. In addition to a reflexive stance, I strive to develop what Dalia Rodriguez calls "procedural consciousness" as I build relationships with students. A "procedural consciousness," which is especially important when study participants are members of marginalized groups, involves cultivating a "deep understanding about the racialized participant, giving one's participant all the humanity he or she deserves" (494). This practice also means empathizing with students, and being as sensitive as possible to issues of discrimination. This also means that as I collected data, I was careful not to assume issues of racial and linguistic identity where students do not. That is, I needed to make ample space for non-racial power dynamics and the likelihood that students describe successful, positive interactions during peer response. This caution turned out to be well-founded. Students did not talk explicitly about race; instead, when students referenced race, they did so by referring first to linguistic and cultural diversity.

**Research Challenges and Ethical Considerations**

I want to be clear about the difficulty I faced in eliciting comments from students about the role that *any* kind of difference played in peer review. As Mica Pollock finds in *Colormute:*

*Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School,* interviewing participants explicitly *about* race is often a fruitless pursuit.[25] Pollock tells a humorous story about her effort to ask about race:

> When Rob, a self-described "black" teacher asked me over lunch one day if he could help me do any of my research, he started laughing, his mouth full of pink milkshake, as I reminded him that the official research question on file with the district was "How people talk about diversity." What's so funny?" I asked. "People don't talk about that! That's 'We are the world' stuff!" he said, shaking his head. (47)

Pollock sees that Rob is right as participants responded with ambiguity, contradiction, and evasion:

> An adult request for students to directly sum up the relevance of race to student life, I realized quickly as a researcher, seemed just as likely to prompt tongue-in-cheek dismissals as affirmative analysis. . . . Interviewers often appear to forget the particularly strategic nature of race talk, which contends always, even when unprompted, with the pervasive American ideology that race should *not* really matter, or matter only at certain times. (50)

This quotation highlights how talking about race is always "strategic"—the result of a purposeful navigation through the whitewater of context and ideology (and of discourse). As Pollock realizes that "prompted race talk was always particularly packaged for the researcher" (10), Pollock solves her methodological problem by refocusing on the labels that school people use in casual conversations to describe their interactions with others, and how those labels shift according to subject matter, audience, and rhetorical/linguistic situation. Considering Pollock's experience, I was careful not to mention certain terms, such as "race" and "ethnicity" unless students bring them up. Instead the protocols will be designed to elicit comments around such terms as language, friendship, comfort, and authority. Indeed, I found that asking about language often led to fruitful discussions of difference.

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[25] Mary Bucholtz faced a similar challenge in her study of white high school students' race-talk. She takes care to never bring up the topic of race, and enquires about race only after students have mentioned it first.

Furthermore, students engaged with peer review in very different ways. Some were averse to moments of disagreement; others found PR either very useful or not; others had more experience in the kind of group dynamic that PR creates; some were willing to discuss difference as connected to PR and some were not. I attempt to account for these differences by creating an open space for students to situate their own experience with PR. Throughout the data collection process, I positioned myself as a listener and a learner rather than an expert or a composition instructor, staying grounded in the local context of student experience. Indeed, Bucholtz argues explicitly for approaches that are sensitive to local context around race and language:

> Both linguistic and nonlinguistic research on race talk that is not informed by ethnography risks collecting superficial or decontextualized accounts of race as well as treating racial processes in a monolithic and over-determined fashion, thereby missing the ways that racial projects are locally specific, fragmented, and potentially unstable. ("'It's Different for Guys': Gendered Narratives of Racial Conflict among White California Youth" 386)

Although my approach is not purely ethnographic, Bucholtz's warning about a-contextual analysis, together with her warning about applying theory about potentially racialized interaction in deterministic, fixed ways, is extremely important for me. In my analysis, I encountered many factors that overlapped with race, or worked as proxies for race. To bring ideology into the conversation about identity, then, needs to be done in a way that credits individual ways of being and individual struggles with ideology as common sense about race or language. That is, while individuals react in a range of ways to diversity, there are still overarching ideologies that shape their reactions.

Creating a space for students to be candid about their perceptions and feelings in PR was of utmost importance to me. My presence in the classroom, together with the rapport that I built over the course of three interviews, allowed students to maintain overtly critical stances on their peers, their instructors, and the general process of PR. In order to assure students that their

perspectives were not misrepresented, I employed member checking in, which I carried out during interviews. This allowed the students some control over how their comments will be perceived by others. I maintained student anonymity by not allowing instructors to know which students are participating.

Another ethical issue that I encountered involves the perpetuation of discriminatory ideologies. In some cases, my questions caused some students to make derogatory remarks about certain groups. In those cases, I learned to keep asking questions rather than accepting a student's assertion. For example, many students of Arab descent claimed they could automatically tell the difference between Arab students from certain regional, religious, and cultural backgrounds. When this happened, I took on the role of student, prompting the participant to describe how they made their judgment, and then asking questions about exceptions. I always made it clear that I did not accept their generalizations. I was careful to maintain my vocal questioning in these moments, because, as Charles Gallagher points out, silence might be take on a function of "inferential racism" (74), in which silence or non-reaction is understood to be agreement. This was difficult terrain. On one hand, I did not want to make my participants feel like they were tell me what I wanted to hear; on the other, I am unwilling to be party to discriminatory dialogue. When I perceived explicit moments of discrimination, I assumed best intentions, and kept probing for explanations. In one case, an Arab-American student claimed that most Black people are rude and "disrespectful" in the way they speak. In this case, I kept asking questions, without signaling that I agreed.

**CHAPTER 3. "Whose Feedback to Go With": Authority in Speech and Writing**

**Introduction**

In this chapter, I focus on the processes students used to appraise one another's authority in peer review (PR). These processes often depended on perceptions of the "level" of a student's written and spoken English, as measured through perceptions of standardness and correctness. Students viewed standard edited American English (SEAE) as an indicator not only of "high level" academic writing, but also of authority in PR. In general terms, students whose writing was seen as lower-level had less PR authority. However, students also used each other's *spoken* English as an indicator of authority. These speech-based appraisals took Standard English as their point of comparison, so that non-standard features, including 'accents,' often signaled deficiency in both writing and authority. Further, spoken indicators of PR authority were embedded in identity—that is, based on their perceptions of their peers' *speaking*, students made assumptions about cultural identity and writing proficiency, which, in turn, shaped their views of PR authority. Although the PR guidelines in Classes A and B required students to write in response to their peers' work, *speaking* was an integral part of the action of PR, whether students were conversing about their papers or reading their papers aloud, as they were required to do in many cases.

How students attributed authority to their peers, then, depended largely on appraisals of *both* written and spoken English. Whether speech or writing or a combination of the two had a larger role in shaping authority was determined by the specific context of the PR session. In some interactions, students focused on writing as a predictor of authority, while in other

moments, they used accent or signs of cultural affiliation (to be defined below) as a factor in judging PR authority. In short, perceptions of language and identity, as expressed through writing or speech, shaped PR authority. That is the central claim of this chapter.

Before turning to the analysis of interviews and PR discourse that support this claim, I introduce broad categories of authority-making which function as the analytical framework for the chapter. These categories capture moments of interaction; in this sense, the categories attempt to analyze the processes students used to judge each other. It is important to note that the categories are not meant to label the students themselves, nor are they meant to suggest rigid attitudes toward authority. The categories function more like range of "moves" a student might make, depending on context, to appraise authority. Furthermore, the categories do not comprise a fixed binary; instead, the larger project of this chapter is to articulate the interplay and overlap between these categories.

In the first category, *Authority via Writing* (AvW), authority was derived mainly from appraisals of written English—higher level writing allowed more authority for its writer. This writing was seen as grammatically correct, standard, or "normal." AvW processes drew heavily on standard language ideology around written language and correctness. The second category, *Authority via Speaking* (AvS), took a perception of standard speech as the primary indicator of authority. A key difference between these ways of appraising authority lies in AvW's emphasis on writing "level" as a predictor of credible feedback, regardless of language background. AvW processes positioned writing expertise, signaled first through standardness, as a precondition for trustworthy feedback. In other words, it was writing *first*—not 'accent,' not skill in spoken English—that helped determine authority.

It is important to highlight the notion that despite their differences, both the AvW and AvS processes depended on language ideologies that established a spoken or written standard as measure of authority. Since SEAE acted as the standard for written work, standard language ideology (SLI) played an important role in AvW processes. AvS processes depended on an interrelated kind of language ideology that centered Standard English, in its spoken form, as the dialect of authority. Both processes, though focused on standardness, were equally invested in the dominance of English monolingualism. That is, the processes positioned English as both normative language and normative dialect.

Before I turn to analysis that illustrates these categories, I highlight some further limitations of this analysis. First, while the data suggests that these processes of authority construction were present in some form across most of the PR groups, they differed in their expression and their consequences so as to make them highly distinctive. This is because each group generated its own mitigating factors from the local identity categories of each group's members (e.g., linguistic background, race, gender, culture, disability, regional affiliation, immigration status). For example, in the AvS process, students appraised one another's dialects of Arabic as connected to nationality, cultural affiliation, and religion and they appraised one another's accents in English to predict how long they had been in the USA or whether they were native speakers of English. In many cases, the notion of an "American" identity as discernable via language and race, was a marker of authority, as students made assumptions about one another's clothing and skin tone, which were attached to certain cultural identities (I expand on this theme where relevant). In some cases, they connected language to gender and age characteristics. Given the nearly unlimited number of identity-based factors, a taxonomy of

processes was unhelpful. Instead, my analysis uses the two broad categories of speech and writing to reveal the ways that authority was a *relational phenomenon.*

Second, questions of language and identity were entangled in a number of other factors, such as individual personality, as self-described "shy" students interacted with more forward students or students took a dislike to one another.[26] On top of these factors, students had differing ideas about the goals and usefulness of PR, and they often argued about the instructor's expectations, and about the "rules" of writing, both in terms of grammar and in terms of more global concerns, such as argumentative structure and genre. While it is challenging to account for all of these factors simultaneously, the AvW and AvS processes provide a productive framework to examine these interactions over writing.

A direct implication of my argument about SEAE and the AvS and AvW processes involves the amount of authority the instructors and their PR guidelines possessed. In most cases, my analysis revealed that AvW and AvS, each in their own way attached to SLI, exerted more influence on student interaction than the authority of the instructor. For example, students regularly flouted the instructor's directions to not focus on sentence-level or formatting errors. SLI, then, as realized in the writing classroom, manifested in a hierarchical authority that largely sidelined the authority of the instructors. As soon as students saw themselves as error hunters and "teacher surrogates," to use Karen Spear's term, prioritizing the sentence-level, PR became a space in which authority depended on grammatical correctness, or the capacity to claim a kind of grammatical superiority. In this chapter's implications, I also argue that *authorship, authenticity, and authority,* are linked not only in terms of their shared etymological roots, but also in the

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[26]While an investigation into these interpersonal factors would be a potentially useful way of understanding PR, this dissertation confines itself to examining social categories and language.

ways that students made assumptions about *authorship*, which rendered the writing in question either *authentic* or not. As I show in the following chapter, judgments of authenticity then had consequences on perceptions of authority.

**Authority via Writing (AvW)**

This chapter focuses on the PR sessions in Class B. Over the course of the semester, the students carried out PR three times, before each due date for their major papers. During each session, the instructor broke the students into new groups, so that, in general, students worked with different peers for each session. The instructor's goal, as told to me, was to get students out of their "comfort zones" by pairing them with new people and in mixed gender groups. Another key similarity over the three PR sessions was that PR was always held during class time, and was always the last activity, often taking place from 7:45pm to 8:50pm, as the class met from 6pm to 8:50pm every Monday evening. The final paper was then due the following evening at 11:59pm, meaning that students had little time to revise. In all sessions, the students did not read their peers' papers before class, but rather in class, following along as the paper was read aloud.

The first session took place at the end of October. The instructor placed students into groups of three, handed out the PR guidelines (see appendix B), and briefly explained what students should do. Students then found an individual in their group to trade papers with. They read the paper, and then wrote a response. Many of them then simply asked another student for a paper to review. Some students were able to give oral feedback as well. By the students' accounts, it was confusing and hurried, with some students unable to receive feedback. There was very little conversation, but I managed to record a series of 3-5 minute conversations between dyads. I was also present for this session and able to make field notes. I then transcribed the audio-recordings and coded them. Although this analysis does account for these

conversations, it focuses more on the second and third PR sessions, which were very different from the first.

In the second session (see appendix B), groups of three students read their own papers aloud to each other, and then discussed each paper. Some students chose to stay in the classroom while others chose to leave the classroom. I ensured that each group had an audio-recorder, and was able to tape each group's conversation. I also took field notes. The guidelines suggested that students give positive feedback, and then discuss the larger argument of the paper, comparing their perceptions of it and suggesting possible ways to improve it. Students were then to turn their attention to concerns such as "organization/paragraph length, clarity, formatting, etc." Following the discussion, students were to write a 300 word "revision plan" for their own essays. The guidelines also offered extra credit for revision plans over 350 words. The students were then to upload their revision plans to the class website.

This process was identical in their third PR session, except for one important detail. In red font at the top of the page, the following words appeared: "Each author will have his/her essay read by another group member." Whereas in PR 2 students had read their own papers aloud to their peers, in PR 3 students had their papers read aloud by a peer. Again, students formed groups of three, choosing to stay in the classroom or find another space. I ensured each group had an audio-recorder, and I made detailed field notes during the session. During PR 3, the instructor, running out of time, announced to all the groups that the "revision plan" was no longer necessary. Instead, students were to keep discussing the papers.

Students were faced with an overwhelming amount of feedback in PR. For many students, it was a challenge to decide whose feedback would be most useful. In order to decide whose feedback to prioritize, students often used the AvW process in their decisions. A key

aspect of the AvW process was the term "level." It appears numerous times in the interview data, as I asked students whose feedback was most helpful. When students spoke about the "level" of their peers, they were referring to their skill in SEAE.

In many instances, there was a perception that "good" writers of SEAE would give them "good" feedback. For example, Adam, an L2 writer, used the AvW process to attribute or deny authority to his peers. For Adam, the value of PR feedback "depends on the person who's doing [it]." He continued, "That's the most important factor. If I'm doing it with people of the same level, if I do it with Arafat and Ayman, I would think that I would get zero percent benefits out of it, because we're all on the same level, but if someone else is doing it for me, then I'll feel like I'm getting benefits out of it." According to Adam, Arafat and Ayman were at the same "level" as him. Therefore, their authority was diminished.

Arafat articulated the AvW process by talking about a friend who arrived from Yemen three years later than he did. Arafat's point was that even though the friend "had a hard time pronouncing [English] words," his grasp of English grammar surpassed Arafat's. Thus, for Arafat, there was no direct connection between written and spoken skill in English: difficulties in pronunciation or the presence of a notable accent did not signal weakness in SEAE. Arafat compared his friend to one of his peers, Adam, also an L2 writer. Pivoting to PR authority, he described Adam as "really good" because of Adam's strong grasp of SEAE. Arafat followed these assertions by concluding that "If you get with people that are good in English, and they're not going to waste your time and make you fall behind; they will give you more support, and make your paper better, and get you a better grade." At this point in the interview, we had established that when Arafat talked about being "good in English," he was referring to being good at grammar, a key step in achieving *linguistic neutrality*, to return again to Davila's phrase.

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Arafat's further suggestion here is that a PR partner like Adam would be able to improve his grade. (I discuss the question of grades as connected to PR below.) The AvW process, then, positioned writing expertise, signaled first through standardness and correctness, as a precondition for trustworthy feedback.

Retaj, also an L2 writer, made similar claims that tied authority to writing level: "I'm starting to see that the people whose their level in English very good, I get benefit more than the people who is the same level as me because I see the different when I stay for the last group with the two Yemeni guys." Here she was referring to the same two students that Adam referred to, Arafat and Ayman, whose writing was seen consistently as weak, which meant their authority in PR was correspondingly weak. Tom, another L2 writer was also in the group[27] with Arafat and Ayman, and his authority is also largely discounted for the same reasons. For Retaj, the consequence was that "[she] didn't get anything" from the PR session.

However, Retaj and Adam, along with other students, saw some of their L2 peers as having a lot of PR authority. For example, Retaj saw Asim as "really good in grammar" and "really strong" in writing, again conflating grammatical unmarkedness and skill in writing. Because of this, Retaj was explicit in prioritizing Asim's feedback over Tom's:

> Tom, I believe that he's the same level as mine so his advice wasn't that much. I think, was some commas and space between the title and the first paragraph. He's focusing on this stuff more than the core of the paragraph. Asim give me a very good—show me the thing that I have to fix. When I did my paragraphs I just go with Asim.

Below, Retaj expanded on how Asim's feedback was more valuable than Tom's:

> If I jump from point to point without like we can say translation word or something like that, [Asim] told me, "No, you need to go smoothly. You can't jump from sentence to sentence like that. Also, you have some problem in grammar, sentences." For example, he was talking in different tense. Sometimes it was in past, sometimes in present, so you have to stick from the beginning to the end of the paragraph the same tense.

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[27] This group included Retaj, Ayman, Tom, and Arafat.

Asim's feedback, valuable because of Retaj's appraisal of his writing as higher-level than hers, was useful for revising the structure of her paragraphs, not just details like spacing and comma placement that Tom focused on.

Since Asim, Tom, Ayman, and Arafat were all L2 writers, it is apparent that Retaj's judgment of their authority was based first in their writing, and second, if at all, in their speech, which was characterized by an Arabic accent and non-standard grammar. Indeed, when I asked Retaj which students have had the most useful feedback, she listed Sam, an L1 writer, and Ghaaliya, a Gen 1.5 writer, in addition to Asim, "because they know more [about English]." In short, Retaj used the AvW process to prioritize some peers' feedback over others'.

*Retaj, Arafat, Ayman, and Tom*

So far, I have relied on interview data to illustrate the AvW process. Below, I turn to some moments in the PR discourse that illustrate this pattern. The first occurred in Retaj's second PR session, when her group included Arafat, Ayman, and Tom. This took place before my interview with her in which she spoke about her peers. The moment in question is brief, and it requires some context. During this PR session, the students read their own essays aloud in groups of three to five students and then used the PR guidelines (appendix B; review for WA 5) to respond orally, not in writing, to each of the essays. Finally, based on their PR discussions, the students were to write a "revision plan" of "about 300 words," for which they would receive an unspecified number of points that would count toward their final grade. In addition, the instructor offered them extra credit for revision plans over 350 words.

Arafat read his paper first, followed by Ayman, Retaj, and Tom. After Retaj read her paper, the group ignored the PR guidelines. Instead of "discussing a few positive attributes of the essay," which was the first step in the PR process, Ayman pointed out that Retaj's paper was not

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long enough to fulfill the requirements. The group talked about this for about a minute before Ayman, feeling the group was running out of time, turned to Tom and said, "It's your turn, buddy." Before Tom could respond, Retaj cut in, asking, "Is there anything I need to improve it?" The group then had the following interaction, which supports this chapter's over-arching claim about the AvW process:

> Ayman: I'm going to be honest with you. I really like your essay. Your essay is formed the way the real essay should be.
>
> Arafat: Yes, should be.
>
> Retaj:  I know, you're going to tell me that and [the instructor] is going to give me 70.

At this point, Retaj discounted Ayman and Arafat's PR authority, as she stated that she does not believe their assertions that her paper is "formed" well, since she expected to receive a fairly low grade. In response to Retaj's comment, the group laughed. Tom then tried to offer some useful feedback, but his feedback, which concerned how the instructor was expecting the students to refer to previous assignments in the current paper, (e.g., "assignment number X" or the "previous assignment") was rejected by Ayman and Retaj. Tom, conceding the point, said to Retaj, "then, you're in good shape, I guess." After this, Tom, Ayman, and Arafat briefly remarked on how some of Retaj's paragraphs looked too short, without articulating why they thought the length was a problem. Retaj accepted this feedback, though she signaled that she was already aware of this issue. After a couple of minutes, the group moved on to Tom's paper.

This interaction shows that Retaj did not expect substantive feedback from Arafat or Ayman, whose writing level, according to Retaj, was not advanced enough to warrant PR authority. It is also clear that Retaj did not receive much substantive feedback. Instead of discussing the strengths and weaknesses of her paper's argument, as the PR guidelines suggested, her peers focused on lower-level concerns secondary to the larger goals of PR: to give

the writer feedback on how to improve the paper by "[pointing] to *specific* areas of the essay where the argument got off track and [discussing] how they could be improved" (appendix B; PR for WA 5). It is important to note that although the group did not follow the guidelines, and was pressed for time, Retaj attributed the lack of useful feedback to her perception of the group's weakness in writing. When I asked her how she would improve PR, she consistently mentioned the "level" of her peers' writing as the most important factor. Finally, Retaj's response to her peers' assertion that her paper was "formed" well highlights the disconnect Retaj perceived between her peers' feedback and her instructor's. Where her peers say that her essay is essentially good, she argues, her instructor is likely to think otherwise. Thus, in addition to the AvW process, the disconnect that Retaj perceives between her peers' feedback also serves to *de*authorize her peers' feedback.

*Adam, Arafat, and Zarha*

In the next example of the AvW process, a student accepted the feedback of one peer over another based on the AvW process. It is important to point out that the feedback offered included both sentence-level and global concerns. The session in question took place in Class B, during the third and final round of PR. The group was comprised of Adam, Arafat, and Zarha, all L2 students. Readers will recall that Arafat had spoken highly of Adam's writing skill. This is in contrast to the ways that he spoke about Zarha, whose feedback was seen as untrustworthy because of Arafat's perception of her as a low-level writer. In the exchange below, Arafat discounted Zarha's suggestion about a question of grammar in SEAE, embracing Adam's suggestion instead, despite the fact that Zarha's suggestion had merit. This interaction occurred in the context of a different set of PR guidelines than the PR example above, in which, instead of

each student reading their own papers aloud, students had their papers read aloud by their peers. Otherwise, the guidelines were identical.

In this interaction Adam had just finished reading Zarha's paper aloud. As he read, he stopped to make suggestions about grammatical issues, so that his reading proceeded haltingly. For example, in the excerpt below, he helped Zarha make her pronouns consistent. She accepted his correction.

> Adam: "Those values help us to learn, develop, and grow. It helps us to communicate with each other." You see how you're talking about more than one value, you said, "Those values help us to learn, develop and grow."

> Zarha: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Should be not it, they.

Adam's reading of Zarha's paper was filled with moments like these, in which Adam corrected Zarha's writing. Adam's efforts to help Zarha with her writing were not sanctioned by the PR guidelines, which expressly instructed to students to "avoid conversations about sentence-level issues unless a sentence interfered with your ability to understand the overall argument." Adam, however, paused at every sentence-level error he recognized, without considering Zarha's larger argument. The way that PR unfolded in this session is similar to how it did in Retaj's group, as the students disregarded the PR instructions, effectively de-authorizing the instructor's directions in favor of the AvW process.

The moment I want to focus on occurred when it was Zarha's turn to read Arafat's paper aloud. Like Adam, she offered feedback on grammatical form, but whereas Adam's corrections were accepted, hers were not. This is not to say that her suggestions were always incorrect. In fact, in the excerpt I present below, her question about Arafat's grammar, was, from an SEAE point of view, valid. Despite this, Adam and Arafat chose to reject it.

> Zarha: "Privacy is the right to keep personal matters as a secret." As a secret. Do you think "a" secret?

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Adam: "As a secret." That looks fine.

Zarha: "A" should be like, for name?

Arafat: As a secret.

Adam: Privacy is-

Zarha: As a secret?

Arafat: Yeah, it makes sense.

The question here was whether "as a secret" is standard or correct. Zarha certainly questioned it. She focused on "a" as a potential problem. Indeed, the sentence could have been revised to the following: *Privacy is the right to keep personal matters secret.* It is also possible that the sentence could read *Privacy is the right to keep personal matters as secret.* Whatever her thinking was, it was not wrong for her to question the usage, especially given the context of the PR session, where grammatical correction was a primary activity. Nevertheless, her authority was diminished to the point that Adam and Arafat were able to overrule her. Zarha conceded the point, and they moved on, repeating the pattern of Zarha suggesting a grammatical fix and her peers rejecting it.

Indeed, Arafat and Adam attempted to stop Zarha from making her recommendations. After a few more moments like the one excerpted above, Adam said, "Probably, we shouldn't focus so much on the grammar, [the instructor] said. Unless like a sentence where we can't read it." At this point, Adam returned to the original PR directions that he himself had not been following in his reading of Zarha's paper.[28] When Zarha continued to comment on grammatical issues, Adam responded: "I think for grammar, all of us need to go to the writing center

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[28] He might have been misinterpreting the instructor's directions about attending to sentence-level problems only when they interfered with the larger argument, not with the clarity of individual sentences.

anyways. The main point is the format of the essay." Zarha chose to ignore Adam's point, even with its face-saving gesture that positioned all of the members of the group as in need of grammar instruction. The group continued to negotiate about grammar, with the same result: Zarha was over-ruled and they were not able to talk about Arafat's larger argument. In these moments, Arafat used the AvW process to sideline Zarha's comments. When I asked Arafat directly about these moments, he maintained that Zarha's comments on grammar needed to be checked against Adam's, since he trusted Adam more, according him a greater amount of authority during PR.

In his interview with me, Arafat expressed impatience with Zarha as a peer reviewer, even saying that she caused the group to fall behind. He was explicit in his dismissal of Zarha's feedback: "Let's say, you said, you're failing the class and you go do a peer review with Ayman and Zarha. You would get help, but not that much." Arafat's point is that any feedback is better than none, but Ayman and Zarha would be the least helpful people to supply that feedback. Since Arafat's calculus for judging feedback depended on an assessment of SEAE via the AvW process, he had every reason to discount Zarha's feedback: his perception of Zarha's deficient skill in SEAE had just been confirmed during Adam's public corrections of her writing. The more Adam corrected Zarha, the more her authority was diminished, via AvW.

A key aspect of this example is that although Zahra's comments were not only about grammar—an area her peers had essentially disqualified her from commenting on—they were always met with resistance. For example, at one point, she questioned Arafat's decision to provide extensive background on a certain subject. At first, Arafat and Adam both disagreed with her. However, when Adam changed his position, having decided that Zarha's point was valid, Arafat then accepted the point. In general, then, Arafat's perception of her as a low-level writer

determined the amount of credibility her feedback held; only when Adam agrees does Arafat reconsider.

A final consideration here is the role of gender in Arafat and Adam's responses to Zarha. While not the focus of this analysis, gender, as a category of social identity, could have also played an important role in Zarah's group, as well as in other PR groups. While neither Arafat nor Adam brought up gender as a factor in their interaction with Zarha, and I did not interview Zarha, the ways in which Zarha was silenced by her peers is consistent with the literature on gender and collaborative learning. In particular, Stygall's findings—which I acknowledge in my review of the literature—about how untrained PR can "jeopardize the participatory learning" (253) of women, seem salient here. Although Zarha participates, her *participation* is itself threatened in the section's untrained PR as her peers attempted to silence her. Further, given that other women in the study, specifically Retaj and Elle, reported that gender was a factor in how they negotiated in PR, I use this opportunity to highlight the role of gender in constructions of relational authority in PR, supporting Stygall's and others' findings. I also wish to note that the present analysis cannot support a comprehensive examination of the ways in which ideologies around gender make authority, in its hierarchical and traditional form, more readily accessible to men than women. Despite this study's theoretical boundaries, I continue to note the influence of gender as it appears in this analysis, since, as is the case with the other categories of social identity I account for in the study, the role of gender, like standard language ideology, depends on context.

My goal in presenting these two examples of the AvW process, as seen in Retaj's group and Arafat's group, is to illustrate the ways in which students appraised each other's authority in PR so as to discount, nearly *in toto*, the feedback from students whose writing was they deemed

incorrect or non-standard. Indeed, Zarha's feedback was more valuable than Adam and Arafat allowed; likewise, Adam's feedback, though qualified by the AvW process, was not always "correct." Further, Retaj's *immediate* dismissal of her peers' feedback might have prevented a fuller and more useful discussion about paragraph length and structure. These examples show how proficiency in SEAE was a key factor in building and maintaining authority. Moreover, the general homogeneity of the groups (as the students were all L2 writers, native speakers of Arabic, recent immigrants from the Middle-East, and transfer students) meant that other identity-based factors that could affect the AvW process, such as language background, played a less important role. In the next section, which examines the Authority via Speaking (AvS) process, this is not the case.

These examples also show that PR guidelines can have little impact on the action of PR itself, as students decide for themselves what to prioritize and whose voices carry the most authority. In these cases, the interrelated assumptions that students will follow directions, especially concerning how they are to deal with sentence-level errors, and why it is important to comment both on what "works" in an essay and what does not, proved to have little impact on peer review. In fact, coding of the PR transcripts showed that very few students in the class followed the directions, preferring instead to negotiate about the kinds of issues found in the examples above: formatting, grammatical correction, and word count.

Most importantly for this study, these assumptions helped create a situation in which some students were able to claim more authority than others based on perceptions of their grasp of SEAE. Peer review became a space in which the perception of "good" writing and "good" grammar was instrumental in sidelining the feedback of some students while accepting the feedback of others. This was not the intended consequence of the PR guidelines, which were

designed to facilitate an inclusive conversation about how to improve the arguments of the papers, not a conversation about grammar in which only some students were authorized to speak.

In other words, PR, as practiced in the Class B, invited students to judge one another in ways that were at odds with the general goals of peer review: to provide a non-hierarchical, collaborative space that decenters the authority of the instructor. Finally, when students were required to read papers aloud, the consequences of the AvW process became more magnified, as students argued about grammatical correctness in ways that always privileged one student's opinion over other students'. As Adam corrected Zarha, he effectively built his authority while detracting from hers. This was visible in the way that Adam's critiques on grammar, and on other larger concerns, were accepted while Zarha's were dismissed. Had the students read silently or in advance of the PR session, Adam's corrections might not have been so blatant. The resulting conflation of grammatical correctness and credible feedback might not have been so robust.

In the next section, I examine the process through which students assigned authority to their peers through an appraisal of spoken language. I argue that AvS processes are somewhat more inequitable than AvW processes because they attribute authority based on speech, which often became a proxy for nationality or culture. Authority is then attached to dominant nationalities and dominant cultural identities, further solidifying the link between SEAE and identity.

**Authority via Speaking (AvS)**

AvS processes were based on ideological connections between spoken language and authority. In this section, I present an analysis of two interactions that centered speaking, and speech, as the primary indicator of PR authority. The examples show different ways in which students used the AvS process. In the first example, I analyze an interaction between Elana, a

Gen 1.5 writer, and Ayman, an L2 writer. Both the interviews and the PR transcript showed that Elana attributed little authority to Ayman, whose speech and reading aloud she viewed as deficient. In the second example, we follow Retaj in her final PR session with two different students, Jane and Bryan, both L1 writers. I suggest that Retaj connected *a perception of* an American English 'accent' with higher expectations for feedback, both in terms of grammar and general aspects of writing such as structure and clarity. Ultimately, she was disappointed by the feedback she received from Jane. The AvS process is complicated by Retaj's views on Bryan, whose status as an L1 writer did not set up an expectation for PR authority. I discuss this complication below. A quick note on the set up for these two sessions: both occurred in the final round of PR in Class B. Instead of reading their own papers aloud, students had their papers read aloud[29] by another member of their PR group.

*Elana and Ayman*

Ayman's reading of Elana's paper is the central action of this analysis. Ayman, who described himself as "Arab and Muslim," was 24 years old and was a math education major who planned to graduate in 2018. His cousin, Arafat, was also in the class. From my observations, and from my interviews with Arafat and Retaj, I know Ayman is a fluent speaker of Yemeni. The other members of the group, Ghaaliya and Asim, played a peripheral role in this analysis because they left the group early and were not present for Ayman's reading and review of

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[29]Reading aloud is a specific literacy performance, one that can elicit judgements of a reader's skill in writing, reading, and speaking. Students know that if they do not read "fluently," they may be categorized as "remedial" or otherwise deficient (Pough; Borkowski). Brenda Jo Brueggemann and Georgina Kleege evoke Erving Goffman's theory of stigma and markedness in their discussion of attempting to "pass" as able-bodied by avoiding tasks such as reading aloud in class. The difference between marked speaking and marking reading aloud raises a number of questions that remain generally unaddressed in the Writing Studies literature. In this dissertation, I focus on student perceptions of markedness in general, since I found that appraisals of reading aloud and speech were similar.

Elana's paper. Elana and Ayman became a dyad. There is strong evidence that issues of speech—that is, issues around "standard" English—were a factor from the very beginning of the PR session. These issues (1) structured the order in which students reviewed each other's papers, (2) shaped the dynamics between Elana and Ayman, and (3), shaped Elana's appraisal of Ayman's authority. Standard language ideology (SLI) and a focus on grammatical correctness also played a part in the relations in question. I should mention here that my analysis is derived from analysis of the PR audio-recordings as well as three interviews with Elana. I was unable to interview Ayman; a limitation of this analysis is that it cannot account for Ayman's perspective. Most significantly for this study, Elana perceived Ayman's difficulty reading aloud as an indicator that his feedback would not be credible. Further, since Elana did not mention Ayman's writing as a factor in her appraisal of Ayman's authority, I argue that Elana used Ayman's skill in reading English aloud as way of appraising the quality of his feedback.

First, regarding order of review, the PR transcript shows that Ayman did not want to read aloud to the group. "I want to be the last one so I can't read. I don't want to read," Ayman said as the group was deciding who would go first. In arranging for himself to read last, he maximized the chances that there would not be enough time for him to read an entire essay. Ayman's plan worked. Ayman did indeed go last, and was not able to finish reading Elana's paper. Further, in a crucial moment of Ayman's reading, when he mispronounced a word, drawing Elana's laughter (I examine this moment in detail below), Ayman remarked, "I'm glad that I read it now and not before." At this point in the PR session, Ghaaliya and Asim were gone, and only Elana remained. From the context of his utterance, it is evident that Ayman was relieved that his mistake, and Elana's reaction to it, was not witnessed by a larger group. By reading last, Ayman was probably attempting to save face.

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Regardless of Ayman's actual motive, Elana remembered Ayman's bid to position himself as the final reader. Elana attributed this bid to his status as an L2 speaker. In the interview following the PR session, Elana said, "Yeah, and sometimes it's hard for them, like if there was an outsider in the group that wasn't familiar with the way that we speak if English isn't our first language. Maybe he feels uncomfortable reading in front people." Further, she stated that she also prefers not to read aloud, adding, "especially if they [English learners] struggle with the language, they probably don't want to either." Thus, for Elana, Ayman's reticence indicated a "struggle" with English that could be embarrassing. In these statements, Elana also positioned herself as someone who is used to relating to L2 speakers. As I will argue below, Elana saw herself as authorized to make light of Ayman's reading errors because of her family connections with L2 English speakers.

According to Elana, Ayman's inability to read her paper aloud in a fluent manner meant that he could not have understood it, and therefore, would be unable to give her substantive feedback on it. Whether Elana is correct in her prediction or not, it is clear that Elana is using the AvS process to appraise Ayman's authority. As Elana put it, "I feel like [Ayman] struggles a little bit with reading other people's things. . . . Plus he's probably not comprehending while he's reading. . . ." In order to illustrate how Elana came to see Ayman in this way, I present a sample of the interchange between Elana and Ayman. In the excerpt below, Ayman was reading Elana's paper aloud.

> Ayman: The study showed that when tactful assessment is decide—discerned, emotional support is evaluated almost as positively as the observed tag of support. This is to show that when something as simple as a huge, a hug or kiss is one thing.
>
> [Laughter]

Ayman: Offering, offering. I'm glad that I read it now and not before. Okay. Offering to wash the dishes or a—

Elana: I can't—because you said, "huge." I can't—oh my God. Okay go, cause like when you think of "huge" and —[laughter]. Okay, go ahead.

Ayman: That's why I went back and said a hug.

Elana: That's okay, keep going.

Ayman: When only clean dishes are wanted, a hug or kiss might be used to discount to show us that being emotional supportive can come a long a way with the same relationships from a—say that word.

Elana: Deteriorating. [laughter]

Ayman: Deter, whatever.

Elana: Yeah, that's a hard word. I'm so bad at pronouncing them, too.

A pattern developed in which Elana supplied the pronunciation for words that Ayman could not easily read. As Elana supported his reading, she made moves to reassure him but she also could not contain her laughter when Ayman pronounced *hug* as *huge.* Ayman stopped reading to explain that he knew that the word was *hug* not *huge*, and, I mentioned above, said that he was glad he was not reading in front of Ghaaliya and Asim. Elana's laughter marked Ayman as a beginner in English who needed to be coached through college-level vocabulary. But it also brought up complex dynamics around Elana's experience with language learners. As I show below, Elana's personal experience as the daughter of English learners figured prominently in her relations with Ayman.

As she reflected on this moment in subsequent interviews, Elana explained that since her mom, as an L2 English speaker, also makes these kinds of mistakes, she is used to encountering moments like this. In an attempt to elicit Elana's perspective on Ayman's reading, I asked, somewhat problematically,

> If it hadn't been you listening, say it had been someone who doesn't know Arabic and only speaks one language, someone who's just a normal person off the … a normal person in the university, and it was Ayman reading, do you think, you know—

My question was problematic because of my use of "normal," which casts monolingualism as the social norm, reifying monolingual language ideologies and pushing multilingualism to the margins. I pause to make this reflexive comment to illustrate the power of these ideologies on discourse; indeed, as I analyze the ways in which these ideologies shape action, I, as researcher, cannot claim neutrality. As I stumbled through my question, Elana interrupted me to say:

> I feel like they wouldn't understand, or they'd be more like, I don't know, they wouldn't be like, "Oh, okay it's his second language." They'll be like, "Oh, why is he reading like that?" Or like, "Why doesn't he know, and why is he in this class?" I feel like because I know, it's not something new to me. Because I'm exposed to it all the time. My mom had to learn English when she came here. Still to this day, there are some words she'll say funny.

Indeed, in her narrative about this moment, she suggested that she was not laughing at Ayman in order to express disdain or discomfort. In fact, according to Elana, her laughter was derived from an intimacy with other moments like this. Elana "thought it was hilarious because sometimes everyone mistakes specific words like huge, hug." That is, she was "exposed to it all the time" by her family members.

Because of her own background, Elana imagined that she *understood* Ayman's situation better than others would. She even suggested that, unlike her, another listener would have questioned Ayman's place in the class. In contrast to this fictional listener, Elana positioned herself as a patient and understanding PR partner, especially in her comment where Elana aligned herself with Ayman by saying, "I'm bad at pronouncing them, too." By "them," Elana was referring to more complex words in English, and therefore was aligning herself as someone who is not expert in English. There is the subtle suggestion of her own multilingual identity.

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Further, later in the interview, Elana talked about how she is used to making light of mistakes like this. To her the "funny" or incorrect pronunciation of a word warrants actual laughter:

> Yeah. It's funny because I also, like when my mom says something, I'll be like, "No mom, that's not how you say it," or you said it wrong, and it'll be funny because you know what they're trying to say, but it'll just come out a different way. Yeah, so that's why I thought it was funny. I wasn't trying to be mean, because I know so many people who— like my mom and my parents don't speak perfect English and I'll laugh.

What is "funny" is therefore both a marker of multilingualism and a reaction to it. As I have argued, Elana's reaction to Ayman's multilingualism was based on her own experiences as a member of a multilingual family.

Despite Elana's good intentions, there is evidence that Ayman was affected by the episode. As he continued to read her paper aloud, Elana continued to help him with pronunciation. But there came a point when Ayman simply said, "we're done," even though there was still a little time left in the class.

> Ayman: This also reduce the chance of the relationships coming to end. *We're done. We're done.*
>
> Elana: You don't want to continue it?
>
> Ayman: No. It's just that I got to leave in three minutes. I'm sorry.
>
> Elana: Okay. What do you think of the beginning? Is it good or?
>
> Ayman: I be honest with you. I don't like both, even mine. I don't know if we're allowed to use quotations in the introductions because it mentions introductions. Yours, it doesn't have introductions, that's what I like. You mention a thesis. You have that thesis. You kept arguing the purpose ...
>
> Elana: Oh, like the other side?
>
> Ayman: What's that?
>
> Elana: Saying that without the security or the emotional support.
>
> Ayman: You mention it in this in the rest of the ...

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Elana: Yeah. I do. I talk about it.

Ayman: Yeah, so I mean, to me it's fine. I don't know.

Elana: Okay. Is there anything that seems bad in it, so far, or?

Ayman: The citations.

Elana: I know. I didn't do them yet.

Ayman's difficulty reading aloud in English is again clear in this excerpt. After Ayman announced that he was "done," Elana solicited his feedback. But his feedback, first about her thesis, and then about her works cited page, became a source of confusion; as Elana put it during our interview about that PR session, with multilingual students, "I don't know what they're trying to tell me." This was evident in their exchange above, when Elana did not seem to understand Ayman's critique, and then Ayman did not seem to understand her question. Then Ayman seemed to suggest that the introduction was "fine" even though he seemed to be critiquing it a moment earlier. Then, when Elana asked about anything else she could improve, Ayman simply said, "the citations." After Elana explained that she had not completed the citations yet, the discussion about citations ended. In Elana's memory of the exchange, she received no useful feedback despite her efforts to get feedback from Ayman: "[He] just was like, 'Okay, okay. Enough,' but I wanted to kind of see what they were going to tell me, because I turned it in as is, again." Elana's frustration is clear, as she talked about receiving no useful PR in this, the third PR session, or in her other PR sessions.

As Elana assessed Ayman's ability to furnish trustworthy feedback, she also utilized standard language ideologies. Reflecting on her experience with Ayman, and other multilingual writers, she said: "I feel like they don't really understand my paper or how it's supposed to be written or what it's supposed to look like for them to give me proper feedback." First, Elana's

point about her peers not understanding her paper is connected to her initial concerns about Ayman not "comprehending" her work as he was reading it aloud. Elana's focus on what is "proper" pointed to the effects of a standard language ideology. Elana's suggestion is that reading comprehension (not "understanding") is tied to misunderstanding of style ("how it's supposed to be written") and form ("what it's supposed to look like") that results in feedback that was not "proper." That is, she was worried that her peers would give her *improper* feedback because of their unfamiliarity with the genre conventions and standards of academic English.

Indeed, the effects of standard language ideology on the AvS process were manifested in how Elana thought about the goals of PR. For Elana, the goals of PR were at odds with the goals inherent in her instructor's PR guidelines. In the PR guidelines, the students are to:

> 1. Share with the group what you think of the essay's argument. Discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing interpretation of the argument. Then address any confusion or questions you had about the argument. Point to *specific* areas of the essay where the argument got off track and discuss how they could be improved.

> 2. Avoid conversations about sentence-level issues unless a sentence interfered with your ability to understand the overall argument. In that case, try to explain why and how to address the problem.

Yet, according to Elana, the goals of PR should be to "We should focus more on trying to help the person make their essay sound normal. . . . Get it to sound like a good essay, fix the sentences that make no sense."

The emphasis on *sounding* "normal" and *sounding "good"* points to a binary construction that supports the distinction between what is standard and what is not, or what is correct and what is incorrect. To sound normal, then, is to sound standard; to sound abnormal, or "funny," as she put it referring to her mother's errors, is to sound nonstandard. *It follows that PR should be used as a standardizing tool, as a way to eliminate the errors that index difference.* The notion of *sense* also relevant here. Since Elana saw the writing of multilingual students as nonsensical, or

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as she put it, "all over the place," the work of peer review should be to *normalize* it. Elana's goals for PR, then, seem to be opposed to the PR guidelines, which ask students not to *normalize* or *standardize* one another's writing, but to negotiate about how to improve the arguments of their peers' writing.

It is worth recounting the moment during PR that Elana was reflecting on when she made her statement about PR goals. It was a disagreement she had with Ghaaliya, which occurred before her exchanges with Ayman. The conflict began when Ghaaliya was responding to Asim's paper. Her argument was that Asim's paper was missing a clear thesis statement, and because of that, was not fulfilling the assignment. Elana challenged her, arguing that she did not understand the assignment in this way, and had written her paper like Asim had. The group was unable to resolve the dispute, which ended when Asim said that he would rather take a bad grade on the paper than revise it, since he was pressed for time. In retelling the story of the conflict, however, Elana was clear that this kind of questions should not be the focus of peer review. To her, the question of whether the essay should be driven by a thesis statement or not was not the kind of question that could profitably be posed or answered in PR. Instead, as I have shown above, she argued, the students should be focusing on "making the essay sound normal."

But the question of whether the paper should be thesis-driven, or should be driven by some other organizing principle, is exactly the kind of question that the PR guidelines were asking the students to address, for this would surely be part of considering "the essay's argument." Indeed, the students were holding the kind of conversation that would allow them to follow the PR guidelines: to (1) "discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing interpretation of the argument" and (2) "address any confusion or questions you had about the argument." Two questions arise from the gulf between what the guidelines suggested and what

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Elana took away from them. First, what might have led Elana to her conclusion that PR was not for exploring differing views of the essay's argument? Second, how did authority play out in this disagreement?

In response to the first question, Elana spoke repeatedly about her belief that disagreement during PR would be waste of time, since there was no reason for any of the students to believe another student. Why would they believe another beginner, and on what authority? For these reasons, Elana expressed a belief that arguing is a useless activity in general, since there was no way for students to agree on who might be right or wrong, and no reason for anyone to concede to another's point. Therefore, PR should concern itself with what students can say for sure—where there is a "right" or wrong" answer. Elana saw sentence-level problems in this light, and therefore as something PR might address. Larger questions, however, were not, since she did not give herself, let alone her peers, enough authority to answer them in a trustworthy manner. "We're all beginners." The result was that students may read for errors, as they often did, provided they are deemed good enough writers to claim that authority, but they may not address content because that is too advanced. This dynamic plays out in the group's disagreement. They essentially agree to disagree, without resolution. For Elana, the consequence of this disagreement, and PR in general, has been to obfuscate rather than clarify her revision process. Ghaaliya's argument caused her to doubt herself, but was ultimately unconvincing. In her words, PR was a "setback," regardless of the authority of her peers.

I want to close this analysis of Elana's group by complicating the distinction between AvW and AvS. Although the AvS process was primary in Elana's interactions with Ayman, in speaking about her general experience with multilingual, less advanced writers, Elana also makes connections between speaking and writing. The result is a generalized attitude that informs her

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judgments of her peers. To be clear, I have argued there is a useful distinction between the appraisals that students like Retaj and Adam used, where the primary criterion was *writing*, and the kind of *speaking-based* appraisals that Elana used in her interaction with Ayman.

Below I present a moment in which the boundaries between AvS and AvW are blurred. This excerpt is from my last interview with Elana. We were talking in general about L2 writers. I was trying to confirm my understanding of her point of view, and she jumped in to make her point.

> Ben: Okay, so because they are struggling with their reading and writing, is it fair to say you're not that inclined to like—
>
> Elana: Yeah, because English is their second language. . . . Even in their papers, you can tell they write it in a different way, or they even say it in a different way. Instead of saying something the way like they'll think it in their mind, the way they want to say it comes out differently.
>
> Ben: Right.
>
> Elana: Yeah, so I don't know. I feel like sometimes that's my biggest thing. In that class, I felt like when people would give me their peer-review or whatever they needed to say, I don't know. I didn't understand your paper or what you were trying to say, so I'm not gonna really change my whole paper because you said change it, or change something.

Elana talks about what she sees as the internal process of English learners, in which what they mean to say gets expressed in a "different" way. This "difference" is negative because it leads to confusion, or her inability to understand their writing. Further, "saying" and "writing" become intertwined: Because "their" speaking is confusing, as well as "their" writing ("I didn't understand your paper or what you were trying to say"), "their" feedback holds little authority. What began as AvS has become intertwined with AvW, so that Elana's appraisal assumes that they are interconnected. In other words, a non-English accent suggests little PR authority. It is important to note that Elana's appraisals seem to proceed from a judgment of speech and

speaking, which she used to categorize students as either native or non-native speakers of English.

So far, I have argued that the AvS process shaped the dynamics in Elana's group. Attached to that process were questions of affiliation around language learning and culture, questions around language ideologies, and questions around the goals of peer review. How does authority become contingent on the goals of PR? If the goals are rooted in standardization and error correction, students *seen to* possess less advanced skills in written or spoken English may not be able to wield much authority. On the other hand, students seen to possess the standard, or to embody the standard, can wield that authority over their peers.

*Retaj, Jane, Bryan*

It is this latter kind of authority that I use to conclude this section. Retaj assumed that her peer, Jane, an L1 writer, would be able to give her valuable feedback. When I asked why she made this assumption, Retaj said, "When I do peer review with the American people, I expect more from them." Retaj used a variety of identity-based markers to make this assumption about Jane's nationality, which she then connected to credible PR. Asked to describe what she expected, Retaj responded, "In terms of sentence arrangement, in terms of topics, ideas, maybe they kind of like, for example there is something—[like a] fragment." When Jane did not deliver useful feedback, Retaj was disappointed. She remarked to me that she was surprised to find that she had received more useful feedback from her L2 peers; this was, in her phrase, "the opposite" of what she had expected.

Jane's writing was not included in Retaj's appraisal of her PR authority. In this interaction, writing, as a skill, was secondary to speaking and its attendant connections to Americanness. In essence, Jane *looked like* she should be able to give good feedback to Retaj. Moreover, it is worth pointing out here that Retaj's goals for PR were less in line with Elana's

and more in line with the instructor's as seen in the guidelines. Retaj certainly hoped for feedback on sentence-level errors, but she also hoped for feedback on "topics and ideas." In short, the credibility that Retaj conferred onto Jane, based largely on her speech and appearance as "American," extended beyond grammatical correctness and standardness. I circle back to this PR group in the next chapter, because, as I argue, much of the interaction is shaped not only by Retaj's expectations of Jane, but also on her expectations of the other member of the PR group, Bryan, who identified himself to Retaj as a student with autism. I argue that his disability had significant effects on Retaj's construction of authority. I explore these issues in detail in the following chapter. For now, my goal has been to present Retaj's expectations about Jane in contrast to the expectations she had for her other PR partners, which, as I argued above, were based in the AvW process. Retaj's interaction with Jane also serves as a contrast with Elana's interactions with Ayman: the latter assumes deficit, while the former assumes skill. Further, the links between linguistic neutrality, whiteness, and Americanness are clear in Retaj's expectations of Jane. Indeed, Americanness, as intertwined with SEAE, was an important factor for some students in evaluating their peers' feedback. Below, I highlight this sub-theme as it arises from the local context of each PR group.

### "I don't ever feel qualified to read it": Self-authorization in PR

In addition to judging the authority of their peers, the interview data showed that students also appraised their own authority as peer reviewers. These perceptions of their own authority were entwined with conceptions of themselves as speakers and writers of English. In this way, they also used the AvW and AvS categories to appraise themselves. For example, students used the AvW process to argue that since their writing was not very strong, they had little to offer during PR. For example, Nathan said "I'm so bad at [writing] myself, I always need other

people. . . . I don't enjoy doing peer review because I'm afraid I'm going to mess you up more than help you, like I don't ever feel qualified to read it." Other students, such as Tracy and Aurora, also used the language of qualification to articulate their view of their own PR authority. Indeed, given the context, *qualification* and *authorization* seemed nearly interchangeable, though students never used the terms, *authorized* or *authority.*

This lack of *qualification* was generally linked to a perception of deficient ability in writing. Despite the fact that many of the students were in their third or fourth years, the students I interviewed spoke about writing as a "struggle," locating themselves as mid-level writers or "beginners" who sometimes needed help with grammar. For example, Joseph said, "I kind of find it as a struggle really. It's hard. . . . I tend to make some errors in how I use my verbs, most likely in a past tense." As he described his own writing ability compared to his peers, Joseph argued that he and his peers were not yet successful "meeting the standards of English," by which he meant SEAE. While Joseph did not make a direct connection between PR authority and SEAE, he, like many of the other students, established proficiency in SEAE as the goal of the writing course.

Elana made the AvW process clear when she talked about how she did not expect her peers to see her as authorized to give feedback:

> I don't feel like they're going to just go and listen to my feedback, and I feel like they'll just do their own thing. Review their paper on their own, and then just submit it, or submit the exact same way it already was. I don't really feel like they're really going to listen to me, and be like "Oh yeah, okay well they said this, so I should listen to them." Because what if they think that my writing isn't good?

Elana's quote shows that students can be quite anxious about how their peers will respond to their writing and their feedback during PR. The possibility of her peers judging her writing deficient ("Because what if they think that my writing isn't good?") then meant they would

discard her feedback. This puts immense strain on the PR process, as students wonder if their peers will count their feedback as valuable based on a judgment of their writing.

Further, Elana's comment suggests that the AvW process, turned inward or outward, can undermine the goals of PR by suggesting to students that they must be able to judge their peers' writing before they can accept their advice. Judging writing is, of course, a fraught task, one that in these cases, almost always depended on perceptions of what is recognizably "standard" or "normal" or not. Elana's reasoning shows the power of the ideologies that support the AvW process: that authoritative writing will presage authoritative feedback; that SEAE is authoritative; that students who demonstrate unmarked SEAE are generally more authorized than others to give feedback (Retaj's views of Bryan complicate this statement, as I have shown). Elana's question about whether her writing is 'good enough' to valorize her feedback is related to the discussion around writing level.

One consequence of this appraisal was a feeling of discomfort, not only for students who self-identified as lower-level writers, but for their higher-level peers, who must decide whether to accept their peers' feedback. Retaj talked about this double-sided discomfort when she argued, on one side, that it would be "hard" for her to give feedback to Ghaaliya, a writer that Retaj saw as higher level than her. Retaj said:

> It's going to be very hard for me if I —one of the [students] like Ghaaliya want to see paper because they are here and they have a lot of—**I think it's going to be hard for me to judge them.** Maybe I'm not going to even have to understand what they are trying to say. Maybe if I perceived it wrong. Maybe she going to tell me that's not what [she is] meaning. What I am meaning is blah, blah, blah, blah. Maybe it's going to be a little bit challenging. [my bolding]

Retaj doubted her own ability to comprehend Ghaaliya's writing. She worried that her advice would be unhelpful or inaccurate, and Ghaaliya would then need to reject her advice. On the other side, Retaj talked about how she felt that higher-level writers would be less "comfortable"

when faced with the feedback from a writer who might be at a lower level. According to Retaj, this lack of comfort stemmed from having to negotiate with someone who, because of their lower level, seemed unauthorized to give feedback. She described the following interaction with Asim:

> The people who is more advanced is going to be a little bit more uncomfortable. I think I did with Asim. In first beginning he wasn't very comfortable with me when I talked to him about—when I explained to him why I did this and why I did this. He said, "Oh, okay, so you think I have to make the sentence at the beginning," because I told him that he was ordering the paragraphs in a way that it [interrupted] my thought when I read his paper . . . so I told him that, no, this paragraph should be in the end and the last paragraph should be in the middle. That's why when I read and then like you were stuck on something here and you cut it here and then you come back to the same area. That's not going to work. This is not going to work. He was like—the first meeting he wasn't comfortable with me.

In Retaj's narrative, Asim is first uncomfortable because he has used the AvW process to conclude that her feedback is potentially unreliable. This then meant Retaj felt like she had to prove herself as a credible source of feedback, negotiating with him about why she felt that he should restructure his paragraph. As Retaj attempts to prove that her feedback is credible, she is in a sense burdened by the responsibility to defend her ideas.[30] Asim is likewise burdened by the problem of choosing whether to accept or deny her feedback. From Retaj's point of view, it seems like the AvW process would potentially lead to Asim to reject her feedback, yet, working against the logic of the AvW process, she still attempted to claim authority in the act of persuading him to restructure his paragraph structure.

Retaj's effort shows that while the AvW process might structure PR discourse, it does not preclude so called "lower-level" writers from taking up authority in persuasive ways. Indeed, when I asked Retaj to elaborate on why she felt like Asim was uncomfortable with her, she

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[30] It is interesting to note that her recollection of her feedback suggests that the feedback was strongly worded ("That's not going to work. This is not going to work."), with little room for negotiation.

responded that even though Asim might see himself as a "good writer," he was still willing to accept her advice.

> Ben: Why do you think he was not comfortable? He didn't trust you or you think—
>
> Retaj: Maybe he was like he see that he's in a good point, he's a good writer. Maybe he was comfortable with his paper before I told him that. Then when I told him that, in the first beginning paragraph, I told you talk about stuff. He said yes. I said, "Okay, so you do the last one in the same point, so it should be write about under it. It shouldn't be in the last." Then he said, "okay."

While he ultimately accepted her advice, there is a certain amount of discomfort that comes with having to revise at all, when he might have been already "comfortable with his paper" before the PR session.

Discomfort, then, is related to the dymanics of power and authority in PR, and although lower level writers are in the uncomfortable position of proving the validity of their feedback, higher level writers are also uncomfortable. This suggests that authority in PR does not in itself bring comfort with it; instead, differences in authority, derived from a perception of differences in writing level, can render all writers uncomfortable. For writers, like Retaj, who see themselves as lower-level, the discomfort could be related to the effort to persuade others to value their feedback; while for writers like Asim and Ghaaliya, the discomfort could be related to the negotiation itself—from having been positioned in a way that would mean having to reject feedback.[31]

Of note is that in assessing themselves as peer reviewers, most students used the AvW process primarily, but that did not rule out the AvS process altogether, as some students also considered their own ability to speak Standardized English as a key factor in their authority. For example, for Aurora, PR was "hard" not only because she felt unauthorized as a writer of SEAE,

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[31] Unfortunately, I was not able to interview Asim or Ghaaliya about their experiences.

but also as a speaker of English. She also pointed out that PR was a new phenomenon to her, making her feel unprepared to take part.

> [PR] is hard. For me, it was something new. I'd never done these peer reviews. It was kind of hard and I was afraid that I wasn't going to be able to help my other two peers, because English isn't my first language. I was kind of hesitating to go through this, because it's something different, especially when it's not your first language. It's kind of, you don't want to make mistakes or do something wrong that maybe affect their papers or essays.

Aurora's status as an L2 writer is an issue for her as she thinks about her own PR authority. Like the other students whose statements I have analyzed in this chapter, she did not feel authorized to give feedback, and she feared that her feedback would be 'wrong,' which would then negatively "affect" her peers' writing. Aurora's comment about how PR was a new process is also noteworthy, since other students did not mention this as a factor in how they perceived themselves or their peers.

One implication of this analysis of self-authority is that students may not see PR as a skill in itself—to be practiced—so that more practice in PR might increase their authority. Rather, they seemed to view their own and others' PR authority as derived only from facility in writing SEAE or speaking Standardized English. PR authority, then, relies less on practice and experience and more on current perceptions of writing skill. Underlying the AvW and the AvS process is the notion that PR is about the knowledge and authority to *correct* other students' writing, whether that correction takes the form of standardizing grammar or restructuring the argument.

If students understand PR as an exercise in student-led correction, then the students' worries about their own lack of authority in written and spoken English and the related discomfort that structures asymmetrical relations of authority make sense. For these students, *to*

*correct* is to exert an authority based in facility with SEAE, as well as in the ability to negotiate about it in a dialect of English privileged in the institution of higher education.

Past experience with PR becomes irrelevant, and indeed, only Aurora mentioned experience in PR as factor in her lack of authority. This also points to the difference between how the instructor of Class A viewed PR and how the students viewed it. Whereas the instructor made several statements about how they expected the students to gain confidence and ability in PR, as I have shown, the students did not talk about PR in these terms. One result is that as students assess themselves and their peers, their authority was established accordingly, and though Retaj's example shows that the AvW process is not iron-clad, it is still difficult to overcome.

In addition to these authority-making processes, the institution's own mechanism for writing placement had a notable impact on how students conceived of themselves as peer reviewers. According to many students, Composition 2XX was a "remedial" course that positioned students as either "beginners" in writing or deficient in some way. Indeed, most of the students harbored substantial frustration about their placement into the course. These frustrations caused some students to mock both their placement in the course and the course itself. Talking about an interaction with Sam, another student in the class, Tracy said,

> Sam was like, you know what? This is my own fault, because I blew off the test. I was hungover and now I'm punished for it. . . . We'd laugh at him. He's like, what are you in for? He kind of made a joke about it.

Joe's joke evokes the complex machinations of college writing placement, in which students are confined ("What are you in for?") and penalized for their sub-par writing before being allowed to continue their studies. While there is no space here for an extended conversation about the

placement process of 2XX,[32] I will only point out that the institution's placement, while extremely complex, worked *with* and not against the students' conceptions of PR authority as tied to proficiency in written and spoken dialects of English. That is, despite the significant confusion about the placement process, and the numbers in the title of the course, 2XX, which suggested a mid-level writing course, students understood that their placement in the course represented the institution's appraisal of their writing as low-level. This institutional appraisal would then seem to work alongside their own appraisals, strengthening the AvW process.

One exception to this argument is James's positive view of himself as a writer, despite his placement. As other students suggested that their placement was an unwelcome surprise, and that the course had caused them to doubt their abilities as writers, James was buoyed by his high grades and his perception that he was able to 'help' his peers improve their writing. Yet, James, as a monolingual L1 writer, also had a high opinion of his capacity to speak and write in English. Unlike many other students—native speakers of English and non-native speakers alike—he shared no stories about feeling put-down or criticized in relation to his language. Indeed, his experience was the outlier, as most of the other students, including Malcolm, Abdul, Tracy, Retaj, Elana, Joseph, Arafat, Lyla, Elle, Kady, Aurora, Nathan, Jimmy, and Adam, were able to share memories that involved either instances of linguistic discrimination or instances of significant self-doubt around language. A quick example: Tracy described her dialect of English

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[32] Confusion around the institutional placement process was a clear theme in the data—no student was able to fully understand why they were taking the course. Elana and Tracy said clearly the course was a general waste of their time, and although they were in the course as a result of the requirements of their majors rather than their performance on a writing placement exam, they still saw themselves as weak writers. Both describe struggling to write in academic contexts, and both describe their home languages as in deficient terms. For Tracy, her English is "garbage." For Elana, her Arabic is "broken." Further, both of them have been told repeatedly that they speak English with an accent.

as "garbage"; Elana described her Arabic as "broken"; Malcolm, Abdul, Aurora, Arafat, and Adam all recalled being mocked or insulted for the way they spoke English with an accent; Lyla, Kady, and Elle all described the travails of code-switching between Standardized English and Ebonics; and while Nathan described his speech and writing in mixed terms, he also called himself a "bad" writer. No causative link is possible here, but circumstantially, the AvS process might have had a larger impact than I was able to discern on how students viewed their own authority with language, and thus their authority in PR.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that students used the AvW process to rate their peers' authority, focusing on their perception of proficiency in SEAE as a necessary qualification for trustworthy feedback. In other moments, students put more stock in evidence around proficiency of spoken English, using AvS processes to appraise their peers' PR authority. Finally, there were several cases in which students accounted for both speech and writing in their appraisals of feedback. Elana combined assumptions about writing skill and speaking skill with assumptions about PR authority. For Elana, the most important factor in PR was whether "you speak **or** write the language well or not" (bolding mine). Though Elana's attitude towards authority was based in appraising both the speaking and writing of her peers, it tended to swing towards either writing or speaking depending on the context.

Elana also asserted that instructors do not always understand the "confusing" predicament of PR, in which students must struggle to understand the feedback of their peers, both written and spoken:

> I feel like the main thing is the language, that part plays a big role. I don't know, if you were in a group and you'd think like, "Okay, am I gonna take this person's advice?" I don't know if you put yourself in our shoes sometimes. . . . It's confusing. I don't know what they're trying to tell me.

Elana's assertion speaks to the difficulty of creating PR models that encourage students not to make unwarranted assumptions about each other's literacy skills, given the ways that students used the AvW and AvS processes to judge one another and themselves.

A central goal of this dissertation is to investigate how ideologies of difference are intertwined with expressions of language ideologies. While analysis of the interview data showed that all of the students who identified as multilingual in Class B saw tight connections between their culture and their language, many were also were unwilling to locate any facet of difference other than linguistic difference as a factor in their PR experiences. For example, Elana's view was that cultural difference was not an important factor in peer review interaction. At the end of our third and final interview, I felt that I had built up enough rapport with Elana that I put the question to her directly. I asked: "do you think that the different backgrounds and the people in the class affect how peer review goes?" Elana's response recentered linguistic proficiency, spoken and written, as the primary factor that shaped peer review:

> Affects it? Maybe a little bit, but not ... I don't feel like the culture really plays a big role. I feel like it's more of like if you speak or write the language well or not. That, yeah. I don't think really your cultural background really plays a big role, because you can also have someone who's not from a different cultural background that still doesn't know what they're doing.

Elana argued that her struggle would be the same regardless of the language or cultural background of her peers. Apparently, Elana did not see her reaction to Ayman's mispronunciation of "hug" as "huge" as connected to her linguistic *and* cultural identity. She used the following example to make her point: "If I speak to someone who's Romanian, they speak it also, like the English, it's like broke English" her struggle would be similar to the one she faced with Arabic speakers. In short, she argues that L2 writers, no matter their native language, are unauthorized to provide feedback; further, she, as a beginner, is not positioned to act as an authorized peer reviewer who can standardize or fix their incorrect language. AvS and

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AvW processes therefore enforced standardized English as neutral and unmarked in the classroom, differentiating other dialects and languages.

Of note is the way in which Elana interprets "different backgrounds" as a question of nationality. Her example of a "Romanian" student with "broken English" suggests that all students with language marked as non-American will lack the skill to be able to contribute in PR. This points to an important but subtle implication of this study, one that threads its way through each chapter: that Americanness, as an ideology aligned with monolingualism, serves to complicate the ways that students negotiated about authority in PR. Though not a part of the scope of this dissertation, Americanness nevertheless plays a role, especially as it relates to language ideologies that position monolingualism as unmarked and neutral in relation to other languages and dialects. As Bethany Davila puts it, "the assumptions and beliefs that allow for expectations of monolingualism are intimately related to rhetorical constructions of SEAE as linguistically neutral" (Davila "The Inevitability of "Standard" English: Discursive Constructions of Standard Language Ideologies" 130). In short, during PR, students derived much authority from their facility with the norms of written and spoken English, and on their capacity to remain, as Davila writes, "linguistically neutral." Americanness helps students claim such a linguistic neutrality.

Finally, this chapter shows that standardness in writing suggests authority via the AvW process, but that perception is secondary to the effect of a perception of non-standardness in speech. AvS, then, seemed like the best "test" of authority, since writing could be composed with help from peers, friends, family, or through illicit means. Speech, however, seems less fallible, leading students to make assumptions about the authenticity of their peers' writing. Regardless of the communicative medium (writing or speaking) that the processes prioritized, both were

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ideological because they derived their power from an array of interlocking beliefs around written and spoken communication, with standard language ideology playing a foundational role in how students built, maintained, or lost authority as peer reviewers. That is the overriding argument of this chapter. In the next chapter, I pursue this line of enquiry by examining notions of authority in relation to notions of authenticity. I also continue to highlight instances when Americanness intersects with notions of authenticity.

**CHAPTER 4. "Almost Too Perfect": Authenticity, Plagiarism, and Authority**

**Introduction**

As I argue in Chapter 3, students made assumptions about their peers' authority based on an appraisal of both the speech and writing. Thus, I have so far theorized authority mainly in the sense of power and credibility—of authorization. In this chapter I argue that students also made assumptions about the *authenticity* of their peers' writing. In some cases, students concluded that their peers' writing was inauthentic, meaning plagiarized. When the authenticity of writing was in doubt, so too was the authority of the writer during PR.

In this chapter I explore the connections between authority and authenticity, presenting an analysis of two cases in which students perceived a disconnect between their peers' speech and their peers' writing. In both cases, the students I interviewed, Tracy and Malcolm, suggested that their peers' writing was too advanced for them to have written it alone. Relying on a perception of their peers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they assumed that their peers' writing would be marked by non-native features in the same way their spoken English was. This way of thinking about writing and speaking was indeed different from the ways in which other students, such as Retaj and Arafat, allowed for a disconnect between speech and writing, so that accented English did not negate the possibility of unmarked writing. The first task of the chapter, then, is to show how Tracy and Malcolm understood the connection between authenticity and authority in PR. As marked speech set up an expectation for marked writing, what effects did this connection have as students attempted to claim authority in PR?

The second task of the chapter is to show how, over the course of the semester, these connections between perceptions of authenticity and authority changed. Below, I argue that Tracy and Malcolm's views of their peers were flexible. This flexibility was visible when Tracy and Malcolm modified their perceptions after they were faced with evidence that suggested their assumptions about their peers' writing were inaccurate. Their modifications, however, allowed them to retain their general view of the connections between writing and speaking. Thus, as I detail below, the underlying logic maintained its power despite these modifications.

Further, while Malcolm and Tracy both marked a disconnect between their peers' speech and their peers' writing—a disconnect they used to claim their peers' writing was inauthentic—they were referring to different cultural frameworks as they made and revised these perceptions of authenticity. Malcom's position as Arab-American and a bilingual (English and Arabic) speaker allowed him to refer to his cultural knowledge to *index* his peers, which I argue shaped his view of his peers' authority and authenticity. In contrast, Tracy was marking her peers' multilingual background in general, unaware of their specific dialects of Arabic or their specific regional affiliations. As a White monolingual English-speaking female without access to the indexical field that Malcolm sees, Tracy used larger ideologies around mono- and multilingualism in her conceptions of her peers' authority and authenticity. A comparison of Tracy and Malcolm's notions of authenticity illustrates the ways in which *both* larger ideologies around language *and* "in individuals' phenomenal experience of their particular sociolinguistic worlds" (Johnstone and Keisler 29).

Below, I examine first how and why Tracy saw Abdul's paper as inauthentic. I turn then to Malcolm's views of the authenticity of Asim's writing. Both cases illustrate how perceptions of authenticity shaped PR authority. After I examine the ways that Tracy and Malcolm

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constructed authenticity and authority, I turn to an examination of how their perceptions of the authenticity and authority their peers changed when they received new information about their peers' literacy skills, and I argue that the underlying ideologies around language and authority remained intact even when writing was shown to be original, that is, authentic.

**Marking Disconnections**

Before I present an analysis of Tracy's experiences with Abdul and Elana, it is necessary to provide some context, first on the PR group, and second on Abdul's own perceptions about himself as a writer and speaker. Although I was not able to carry out a post-PR interview with Abdul, I interviewed him before his session with Tracy and Elana, both of whom I interviewed three times, with the second interview occurring after their PR session with Abdul. Although the analysis is limited by the lack of Abdul's perspective, it is also supported by the data from my first interview with him. In the analysis below, I use the transcript data to supplement the narratives of Elana and Tracy. Elana, Tracy, and Abdul were in a group in Class B's second round of PR, when students were to read their own writing aloud to their peers. After discussing each essay, the students were to write a 300-word revision plan. Here, I focus primarily on Tracy's experience, though at points, I include material from my interviews with Elana to provide another point of view.

Now I turn to a brief overview of Abdul's linguistic background, which is relevant to my analysis as Tracy appraises the authenticity of his writing together with the authority of his feedback. Abdul, an engineering major in his final semester at the U, was a first-generation college student whose family emigrated from Yemen when he was an infant. He described himself as "Arab American" and a speaker of Yemeni Arabic. Abdul also talked about his general difficulty speaking both Arabic, at home, and English at school and at work:

I had a hard time speaking English, like I had braces on and I started mumbling. . . . I spoke English, don't get me wrong, but it's just, um-ahhh, like I mumbled a lot and people didn't understand me. . . . That, that was mostly why my language barrier was very bad. I was a little shy to talk because I mumbled a lot.

His experience with his "language barrier" seemed related to his "mumbling," as well as to his "shy" personality.[33] Abdul also spoke about his unconscious practice of code-switching between English and Yemeni Arabic.

It's mostly the last person that told me that was four years ago, but it was back when I was like mumbling. They were like, "Are you changing your language or something. Are you speaking Arabic right now, because I'm not understanding you." I'm like, "Uhh, no." I'll say words that are not I guess—there's words where we combine English and Arabic words together and just mix them up and I would say those kind of words, and like think it, like I'll start a word where ahh I thought was an Arabic word. I never knew was an English word. It was slang I guess. I found out after and I'm like, "oh," like it was a shock to me, you know?

Abdul found himself between English and Arabic, so that when he learned he was code-switching, it came as a "shock." Moreover, Abdul mentioned his "mumbling" as a further communication barrier. Abdul also experienced what he called a "barrier" in his spoken Arabic. He explained that although he and his wife both speak Yemeni Arabic with their families, his mother-in-law doubted that Abdul's fluency in Arabic.

In short, Abdul reported that his relationship with writing—and with language as a whole—has been one of struggle. Others have continually categorized Abdul's written and spoken English, along with his spoken Arabic, as deficient. The struggles he reported extended into his peers' perceptions of him as a speaker, writer, and peer reviewer. That is, for his peer review group, the barriers of which he spoke were not past phenomena; rather, I argue, they

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[33] In addition to Abdul's quiet demeanor, which I also observed in the classroom, I marked Abdul's speech as "disfluent"— containing filler words (the repetition of "and everything" and "umm-ahh"), as well as false starts, mumbling, and stuttering. Indeed, there were several instances in which I had trouble understanding Abdul as we talked in a quiet room. Even with the benefit of the recording technology, there are still clauses from the interview (see the third line above) and the PR transcript that remain incomprehensible to me.

played an active role in peer review. Since Abdul came to the U.S. when he was an infant, he may be called a native speaker of English, or a "Gen 1.5" writer.

Yet, according to Tracy, there was a disconnect between Abdul's ability to read his paper aloud in English, on one hand, and his written English on the other. Indeed, she hears a disconnect between *how* he reads and *what* he reads, which made her doubt the authenticity of Abdul's paper. As she argues,

> His paper was very technical. I wanted to ask him, and I should have, but I didn't because I thought, well, I better not. I wanted to say, "Do you know what half of these words mean?" Because I didn't know what a lot of these words mean. I wanted to say, "Do you know?" I thought, well, he probably does, so I don't want to challenge his intelligence, but it was very textbook written. . . . **Just because when he was reading them, he didn't know what the words were.** (my bolding)

Tracy doubted that he wrote his own paper, and she also doubted that he knew the meanings of the paper's words. Tracy was unable to see Abdul being able to write something that seemed to her to be "textbook written." His disfluent reading and speech seemed to negate this possibility. In other words, Tracy perceived a disconnect between Abdul's identity as a multilingual speaker and his ability to write in a style she described as "textbook." Further, Tracy made a connection between Abdul's ability to read his paper aloud and his intelligence and knowledge. To make this connection, she used the following logic: if "textbook written" suggests intelligence, and Abdul could not read his paper aloud, he was not intelligent enough to write it (or, perhaps, to read it aloud). At the same time, Tracy seems to contradict herself, saying, he "probably" knows the words, and then turning to "but it was very textbook written." Here, Tracy marked Abdul as an L2 writer and speaker, whose grasp of English is tenuous as best.

Because of this markedness, Tracy assumed that Abdul used either an automatic translator or had someone translate his paper from Arabic to English. For her, this would explain the disconnect between Abdul's reading and his writing. As she put it, "I kept thinking, 'All

right. Where did he get this from? That's not his own made up words.' Do you know what I'm saying? Then I thought, 'well, maybe it is. Maybe somebody helped him translate.'" Again, Tracy suggests that Abdul's writing was inauthentic. Either it is completely plagiarized ("where did he get this from?") or it is the product of translation, having been written in Arabic first and translated to English, which might explain its "textbook" style ("Maybe somebody helped him translate"). In any case, Tracy doubted the authenticity of Abdul's writing because of her perception of Abdul's marked reading aloud. By marking Abdul's fluency in reading aloud, Tracy used the AvS process much like Elana did with Ayman. However, where Elana judged authority, Tracy judges both authority and authenticity.

Moreover, Tracy's assumptions about Abdul take on a racialized resonance, pointing to the differences between their cultures and their languages. The racialization of Adbul is clear in Tracy's further description of her reaction to Abdul's writing and reading:

> At first, I did when I read it, honest to God. I thought, "who the hell wrote this paper?" I think Elana, although she would probably never say that, because she is like the sweetest person in the world, but we both were looking at each other kind of crazy and . . . like you can barely speak English right now talking to us, and I hope that doesn't sound racist or anything like that.

Tracy's awareness that her statements might "sound racist" demonstrates the connections she seemed to make between linguistic identity, racial identity, and authenticity. Indeed, to accuse Abdul of being "barely" able to speak English seemed to strike Tracy as potentially racist. Here, perceptions of racial identity and L2 status are conflated: to mark someone as an L2 speaker is also to mark them as non-white. Since, as I have argued, ideologies around language are largely inseparable to ideologies around race, it makes sense that Tracy would be wary of her statement about Abdul's language, since his racial identity as an Arab, with a darker skin tone, has already positioned him as marked in the writing classroom.

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Tracy even recruited Elana's reaction as supporting evidence for her statements about Abdul, yet in her interviews with me, Elana did not cast doubt on the authenticity of Abdul's writing. Elana, in contrast, found Abdul's writing confusing but his spoken language, in conversation and in reading, clear. About her interaction with him, Elana said, "When he talks, I understand him, but his ideas [in his writing] sometimes, I feel like I just don't understand what he's trying to say." Elana's assertion that Abdul's conversational English is understandable, but his writing is not points to both a difference and a key similarity between her perception of Abdul and Tracy's. Where for Tracy, Abdul's writing is "textbook written" and therefore generally clear, for Elana, his writing is confusing, so much so that she despairs of her ability to give him useful feedback. The similarity, however, lies in the following: even though Tracy finds Abdul's reading "barely understandable," and she marks instances where his writing is incorrect, she still maintained, like Elana, that she could understand his conversational English.

In a sense, then, Tracy positioned Abdul in a paradoxical situation, first via his writing, and second via his spoken English. In his writing, his paper is "textbook written" since stretches of it seem too correct and advanced for him to have written. At other points, though, she marked his L2 status through specific examples of error in his writing. For example, she picked out the following sentence that she commented on during their PR session: "I stand on him not being guilty." Below, I include a short segment from my interview with Tracy that shows how she marked Abdul's writing and conversational speech:

> Tracy: Okay, so this one. "I stand on him not being guilty." Yeah, maybe, "I stand behind him," right? I stand on him, so that's why. Then I thought, "Well, that's from translation."
>
> Ben: Yeah, because you can get what he's trying to say.
>
> Tracy: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and that's what I said. Somebody that doesn't know that he is not an English speaker might be like, "What the hell is this person saying?"

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Ben: What kind of accent do you think he has when you just listen to him talk, like, if you couldn't see his face, or you didn't know?

Tracy: He speaks clear. He doesn't really have a heavy Arabic accent.

Tracy was picking up on inconsistencies within his paper, some stretches of which (a) might have seemed plagiarized in that they were grammatically correct, or (b) might have seemed incorrectly translated, since, as she suggested, "I stand on him not being guilty" might have been a flawed rendering of the preposition in *I stand behind him not being guilty*. Yet in his conversational English, Tracy asserts that Abdul "speaks clear" with little accent, which reflects the fact that he started speaking English at early age. When he reads, however, his English is "barely understandable." Thus, Tracy noticed what seemed to her inconsistencies in Abdul's speech (conversation versus reading aloud), as well as in his writing ("textbook" versus errors she marked as L2). These inconsistencies pointed to the possibility that Abdul's writing was inauthentic. In short, Abdul's reading aloud is marked, as well as his writing, which is both flawed and too textbook. Yet his conversational speech is clear and generally unmarked.

Finally, it bears mention that Tracy never doubted the authenticity of Elana's paper. This is remarkable because Elana, a multilingual speaker of Arabic and English, occupied a similar position as Abdul. First, Tracy recounted that she had been in the same education class with her previously, and recalled that Elana was a very 'good' student: "I know what an overachiever she was, and I know that she's very serious in her studies." She also remarked on the high quality of Elana's writing recounting to me her thought process as she read Elana's paper during their PR session: "I was reading her paper, like, *Oh my God, Tracy, this is so good*. Then I'm reading mine like, *Oh, I missed the mark."* In Tracy's mind, Elana was an advanced writer. In the terms of the previous chapter, Tracy is also using the AvW process to locate Elana as an authoritative peer. Finally, Tracy did not mark Elana's speech in any way. Elana's speech and Elana's writing,

then, were unmarked, and thus authentic. Therefore, in the particular context of this PR group, Tracy marked Abdul in nearly opposite terms as she marked Elana, despite the fact that both Elana and Abdul described themselves as Arab-American. What I mean here is that markers in language play a large role in relation to markers of race. In other words, the social category of Arab-American did not automatically mark students in ways that undermined their authority; rather, language, through the AvS and AvW processes, was a primary factor that influenced notions of authenticity and authority.

How in this case did perceptions of authenticity and multilingualism shape the group's negotiations? If, for Tracy, Abdul had trouble reading English aloud, and did not write his own paper, then it stands to reason that his feedback would hold little authority. Indeed, Abdul's lack of authority was a theme of the PR session: Abdul made several suggestions about both Elana and Tracy's papers, all of which they rejected. When I asked Tracy how helpful the PR session had been, she said that Elana was helpful, but Abdul was not. Elana also commented explicitly on Abdul's feedback, saying, "Yeah, so just kind of things that didn't matter, Abdul was pointing out." As I argue in the previous chapter, for Elana the most important factor in PR was whether "you speak or write the language well or not." Elana described all the feedback she received from her multilingual peers as confusing and counter-productive, but she made no assumptions about whether the writing was authentic or not. It is important to note here that several L2 writers were seen as proficient writers and credible peer reviewers, but they had to prove their trustworthiness by demonstrating a grasp of SEAE, while the students who appeared to be American and monolingual English speakers did not.

My argument here is that Abdul's credibility as a peer reviewer had already sustained damage before the group considered his suggestions. As my analysis of Tracy's comments

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shows, Tracy attributed the disconnect between Abdul's reading and writing to his multilingual status. In Malcolm's group, questions about multilingualism, authority, and authenticity also drove the PR process. As with Tracy and Abdul, Malcolm also found his peer Asim's writing to be too "perfect" to have been written by him alone. The same general logic applies: Malcolm marks Asim as L2, and then assumes his writing should be similarly marked. When it is unmarked, Malcolm suspects plagiarism.

However, there are important and revealing differences between the ways that Malcolm deemed Abdul's writing inauthentic and the ways the Tracy deemed Abdul's writing inauthentic. Since Malcolm's group chose not to read their papers aloud,[34] Malcolm did not use Asim's reading fluency to judge his authenticity. However, it was still Asim's speech that Malcolm indexed as L2. According to Malcolm, Asim spoke with an Arabic accent during their PR session, revealing his L2 status. Further, as I show below, Malcolm indexed Asim's accent as Lebanese Arabic, a particular accent that indexes certain affordances and limitations in the local Arabic-speaking community. Tracy's marking of Abdul's accent was much more general; according to her, it was Arabic in general, not a dialect of Arabic of a certain culture and region. Finally, although Malcolm resisted his peers' comments, he did ultimately accept Asim and Zarha's substantial critiques on his paper. This stands in contrast to Elana and Tracy's rejection of Abdul's feedback. In short, then, both Asim and Abdul are seen as inauthentic writers because of the perception of mismatch between their ability to speak or read English and their ability to write it, but the ways their peers come to this conclusion varied.

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[34] Instead, the group exchanged papers, read silently, and then took turns giving and receiving feedback. In our interview, Malcolm reported that he was unaware that the group was not following the directions.

Before I present a full analysis of authenticity and authority in Malcolm's group, context is necessary. First, Malcolm and Asim were together for one PR session, which also included another Arabic-speaking student, Zahra. Their PR session occurred in Class B, in the second round of PR. The PR guidelines, then, were identical to the ones that Tracy, Abdul, and Elana used. Since Asim and Zahra took part in the study but declined to be interviewed, much of the analysis is based on pre- and post- PR interviews with Malcolm.

One further piece of context is necessary: biographical sketches of Zarha, Asim, and Malcolm. Zarha was a biological science major who anticipated graduating in three more academic years (2019). She was 28 years old, identified as "White," and grew up speaking Arabic. Because she is Retaj's cousin, I can say she was a speaker of Yemeni Arabic. In class, she wore a hijab, pairing it with less conservative clothing. She spoke very little in class and was a full-time student. Like almost every other student in the class, Zarha transferred to the university from a local community college. She was not sure if she is first-generation student, as her brother and father were both enrolled in post-secondary schooling. Asim was a mechanical engineering major who anticipated graduating in two more academic years (the spring of 2018). He was 21 years-old, identified as "Caucasian," was not a first-generation student, and grew up speaking Arabic. He was a full-time student who rarely spoke in class and transferred from a local community college. As I suggested in the AvW section of this chapter, Asim was perceived by many of his peers to be "very good in English," as Retaj put it.

Malcolm was an electrical engineering major who anticipated graduating in one academic year. He was 24 years-old, and when asked to describe his identity, wrote, "Arabic, Iraqi, however, I've lived in America my whole life." Malcolm was born in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia during his family's journey to the US. He and his six siblings have lived in the Detroit

metro area since he was two years old. In terms of his language, Malcolm described English as his "native tongue" and the language he uses to communicate with his siblings. He was also fluent in Iraqi Arabic, speaking it mainly with his parents and extended family. Malcolm reported that others hear a Dearborn accent[35] in his English. When I ask him if many people hear his accent, he responded: "I wouldn't say actually an Arabic accent. I would say a Dearborn accent. . . . So, you'll notice a lot times, you know, Arabs even though they're from Iraq or Yemen, we'll all generate the same accent. It's weird." Malcolm preferred to keep Arabic and English separate, never mixing them. He described being harassed about his Arabic accent in high school by peers from Lebanese families. He described his writing as "decent." Malcolm also described divisions and hierarchies within his local Arab community. These hierarchies and divisions came into play as he described his interactions with his PR group.

I begin this analysis by presenting an excerpt of my interview with Malcolm. Unprompted by me, Malcolm argued that Asim's paper was so grammatically correct that Asim could not have written it himself. Our conversation leading up to the following exchange concerned how much time the students had to revise their papers after their PR session.

Malcolm: I read Asim's paper, and it was almost perfect.

Ben: Yeah, I heard you say that in the group. I heard him say, "Yeah, but tell me something, because I have to write something for the revision plan."

Malcolm: Right. I didn't believe that he wrote it. . . . It was almost perfect. I don't know. The way he talks to me, it doesn't seem like he can write that well.

Ben: Can you talk a little bit more about that, the way he talks?

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[35] Many of my participants spoke about what they called the "Dearborn accent." I also spoke to an assistant professor of Middle Eastern Studies who confirmed that the Dearborn accent is recognizable to other Arabic and English speakers across the US. The accent has not garnered much scholarly attention, but according to others I interviewed, the accent includes code-meshing moves as well as intonations that reflect Arabic speech patterns.

Malcolm: He'll speak with accents, and usually in accents, there's only a fragment of a sentence. I want to give you an example of something. I'm trying to figure out how to put it into context for you. He'll put a word where it shouldn't be into the sentence, or put a word before or after another word.

Ben: I see.

Malcolm: Yeah. He does this when he speaks.

Ben: You think maybe you would be a little surprised if his written English were so perfect?

Malcolm: Yes.

Ben: Is that what you mean?

Malcolm: Yes, exactly. Too perfect.

Unlike in Tracy, Elana, and Abdul's group, in which the students read their papers aloud, Malcolm never heard either of his peers read aloud. His assumptions about Asim, then, relied on their conversations in PR and in and around class. The outcome, however, is generally the same, as Malcolm, like Tracy, argued that Asim's paper was inauthentic. Malcolm made the connection between speaking and writing clear when he said, "The way he talks to me, it doesn't seem like he can write that well." When I asked him to illustrate his point, Malcolm argued that because Asim's spoken English seemed grammatically flawed, it followed that Asim's writing would reflect that same kind of imperfection.

Further, it is worth examining the term that Malcolm chose repeatedly to describe Asim's writing. Here, "too perfect" suggests grammatical correctness. And it suggests that Asim's multilingualism must manifest itself through *im*perfection, or incorrect usage. In other words, because Asim's writing was unmarked by linguistic difference, or was *too* standard, Malcolm concluded that Asim could not be the sole writer of his essay. With Zahra, however, Malcolm heard no disconnect between her spoken and written English; both were marked by grammatical

error and both were accented, as it were. Zarha's writing, then, was authentic, while Asim's was not.

How then, did perceptions around authenticity affect the authority dynamics of the group? For Malcolm, the situation is complex. On one hand, he noted the disconnection between Asim's speaking and writing, as well as the connection between Zahra's speaking and writing. Ideologies around multilingualism might have cast doubt on the feedback of his peers. Indeed, when Asim and Zarha argued that his paper did not fulfill the requirements of the assignment, Malcolm negotiated with them for several minutes. It was clear that Malcolm was not inclined to believe his peers' feedback.

On multiple occasions, Malcolm resisted his peers' feedback in ways that suggested that he did not trust them at first, because of their multilingualism. He then positioned them as needing to prove their argument to him. On the other hand, after much negotiation and disagreement, Malcolm accepted his peers' feedback. In accepting their feedback, Malcolm demonstrates that a deficit view of multilingualism threatens to— but does not necessarily—lead to a dismissal of PR authority. Here is the transcript of that negotiation, quoted in full but broken into sections, in order to illustrate the extent to which Malcolm resisted his peers' feedback:

Asim: My main comment, to be honest, is I don't see your claim.

Zahra: Yeah, that's what—you talk more about the story.

Asim: Yeah, you're telling the story—

Zahra: You should do—

Malcolm: Were we supposed to make a claim in that one? Because I thought it was more of a research paper.

Here, Asim and Zarha agreed that Malcolm's paper does not contain an arguable claim and is instead taking more of a narrative construction. Malcolm, cutting off Zahra, disagreed, arguing

that his structure fit the "research paper" genre of the assignment. Again, his peers disagreed

with him:

> Asim: No, the paper was—
>
> Malcolm: Right, but weren't we also researching on what we thought? Then if you guys keep reading to the conclusion, I did make the claim on what I thought.
>
> Asim: Yeah, listen, if you make the claim in the conclusion, then your body paragraph is just very—
>
> Malcolm: Yeah, so. First, I—
>
> Asim: Your main point of this essay should be the claim, not the— what's your position here?
>
> Malcolm: In the thing, when he tells you write the paper ... He tells you to make a claim. What are the people feeling? How are the people feeling about it?
>
> Zahra: Yeah, but you're telling the story wrong.

Malcolm resisted Asim's argument, as Zahra agreed again with Asim. Asim then made a move

to soften his argument, saying, "I didn't finish reading, but I'm just saying throughout. I'm

halfway through, and obviously—" but he was cut off by Malcolm who continued to disagree:

> Malcolm: I do make my claim in my conclusion. You guys think I should make a claim in the beginning and continue on to it?
>
> Zahra: I think the conclusion should be what is going to happen in the future.
>
> Asim: Yeah
>
> Malcolm: Oh, really?
>
> Zahra: Yes, and then the introduction and the body is your claim, why you are saying Snowden is a hero. Why? You have your point. Not his story. Why he's a hero because he's protect us, blah, blah, blah, and this and that.
>
> Malcolm: I gotcha.
>
> Zahra: If he's not, why? Because he's going to accept the—

At this point, Malcolm began to signal that he was ready to accept his peers' feedback, as Zahra takes the lead in arguing that Malcolm should make a claim in his introduction, and then point to the future in his conclusion.

Again, Asim made a move to soften his criticism, cutting off Zahra to highlight a positive attribute of Malcolm's paper:

> Asim: You did a pretty damn good job explaining what happened to him. I didn't know this was, going to Hong Kong and all these files—
>
> Malcolm: I must have misread—
>
> Zahra: Your misunderstanding exactly which—
>
> Asim: You went off-track from the actual point of this. Don't give him [the instructor] this.
>
> Malcolm: I thought it was research.
>
> Zahra: No, don't tell about his story. Just why you're with or why you're not with him. That's it.
>
> Asim: Plus using the whatchcallit—
>
> Malcolm: This is not a research paper.
>
> Zahra: Exactly.

As Malcolm continued to process the possibility that his peers were offering creditable feedback, Zahra and Asim worked together to convince Malcolm that his paper needed heavy revision, with Asim even asserting that Malcolm should not hand in the paper as it is ("Don't give him [the instructor] this"). Then, after a several exchanges about citation form, Malcolm, as if to reassure himself, located the essay guidelines and read them aloud, concluding, "Yeah, you guys are right."

Despite Malcolm's initial resistance to his peers' feedback and his portrayal of his peers' writing as either inauthentic or grammatically incorrect, Malcolm did not discount his peers'

advice based on his appraisals of their spoken or written English. This suggests that, for

Malcolm, grammatical correctness was not the only measurement of either good writing or good

peer review. Further, it suggests that while a perception of inauthentic writing does not

necessarily override credibility in PR, it can force students to defend their comments in ways that

may not be necessary for students whose English is perceived as more standard and more correct.

For Malcolm at least, this was a successful PR session. I make this argument based on

Malcolm's own reflections. Describing the PR session, he argued that Zahra's paper needed a lot

of work in grammar and narrative, that Asim's paper was flawless, and that his needed the most

work, since he had misinterpreted the assignment prompt. Indeed, Malcolm claimed that Zahra's

paper needed so much revision that he was overwhelmed at the thought of giving her any

feedback at all.

> Zarha needed too much feedback. There was really too much to tell her, so we basically
> told her, "You need to work on putting in more content in there. You need to work on all
> the grammar, and you need to work on getting your stories straight," which is basically
> what we told her. Those are just the huge things that we thought were completely wrong
> with her essay. With Asim's, it was almost perfect. There was not very much to tell him.
> Then for me, I guess I had the most feedback, because I wrote an essay, and then there
> was mistakes, and then they could see where the mistakes were.

Malcolm further stated that the session was "helpful" to him. It is worth mentioning here that

Malcolm's response to Zarha's writing was similar to Elana's response to her L2 peers. Like

Malcolm, Elana feels unequipped to help her peers in PR. This points to a larger problem of self-

authorization alongside the AvS and AvW processes that I examined in the previous chapter.

The PR guidelines, which encouraged students to consider the overall argument of their

peers' papers, and also to "discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing

interpretation of the argument." This is what happened in Malcolm's review, as the group argued

about what Malcolm's argument was and what it should be. The "discrepancy" between

Malcolm and his peers' views not only about Malcolm's argument, but also about the genre of

the paper and whether it was appropriate for the assignment requirements, led to a fruitful

discussion.[36] Despite this fruitful discussion, the problem of authenticity remains, as Malcolm

conflates unaccented, standard speech with the expectation of superior writing ability.

**Shifting Appraisal, Ideological Persistence**

As I suggested above, students' views of authority and authenticity were not static. Tracy

and Malcolm both reconsidered their assumptions about the authenticity of the peers' writing,

but in doing so, depended on the same underlying ideologies connecting standard English with

standard writing that shaped their perceptions in the first place. Below, I examine how Tracy's

beliefs about Abdul changed over the course of the semester. I complement this examination by

showing how Malcolm also revised his views on Asim.

Despite Tracy's strong language regarding Abdul's speech, e.g., that he could "barely

speak English," and that his paper was inauthentic, she still maintained a level of empathy and

self-awareness in relation to him. For example, when Tracy was talking about Abdul in the same

interview in which she suggested he didn't write his own paper, she said,

> He could have had somebody helping him. . . . I don't know, but I thought, well, who am
> I? How do I know? Maybe it's because the English translation, it's hard for him to
> translate in English and he could have wrote it all out in Arabic and then translated it. . . .
> I thought, well, who am I to judge and question that it wasn't—but I thought that's pretty
> textbook stuff.

While she imagined this as one explanation for Abdul's difficulty in reading his own writing

aloud, since the essay might have contained unfamiliar words from the dictionary as a result of

translation, and she still doubted his ability to write in English, Tracy nevertheless suggested that

she could not know for sure about the authenticity of the paper ("who am I to judge"). She also

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[36] Further, it was important that Asim and Zarha agreed with each other. Without this consensus,
the review might have gone very differently. Indeed, the data showed that overall, students were
more willing to consider feedback if their peers were in agreement.

suggested here, and in other moments, that as a monolingual English speaker, she appreciated both the difficulty of learning a new language and the limitations of knowing just one. Indeed, even as Tracy imagined Abdul's multilingualism and disfluency as a deficit, she also seemed willing to concede that her perceptions were not always accurate. Tracy spoke about this explicitly in the course of recounting how her views of Abdul shifted substantially after a conversation with him and his sister Ghaaliya before the class's final exam.

In the excerpt below, as she recounted a story of her encounter with Ghaaliya and Abdul, she revised her earlier assessment of Abdul. When Tracy learned that his sister, Ghaaliya, was a "straight A" student, that she spoke "very clear" English, that they have a brother who is a brain surgeon, and that Abdul has an engineering internship lined up, she reimagined Abdul completely, admitting she might have misjudged him. Below, she walked me through her thought process.

> Tracy: But I'm thinking, hmmm, and then his sister, when she did speak, very clear, very—so then as I'm talking to him and all these things he's doing, like, well, look at him, little Mr. Smarty Pants.
>
> Ben: Like you were—is it fair to say—
>
> Tracy: Judgmental, yeah.
>
> Ben: As we all are. We judge people.
>
> Tracy: Yup. For some time, yeah. I think that's what I did, because really it was all technical. There was nothing, and I thought, well, you know what? He's an engineer. They're dry. You know what I mean?

As Tracy talked through her reassessment of Abdul, I attempted to check my understanding. I began my sentence with "Like you were," and then paused, and started the sentence again with "Is it fair to say." At this pointed Tracy was laughing. She cut me off to admit that she had been "judgmental." Attempting to encourage her to talk further about her judgment, I suggested that there was nothing special about her judgment.

Here, Tracy's view of Abdul shifted away from a dependence on a connection between his reading aloud and his writing to connections between his sister's ability to speak standard English, his siblings' academic achievements, and Abdul's intelligence. Before this information was available to her, Tracy spoke about Abdul's intelligence in ways that cast doubt on it. Readers might recall Tracy saying, "I don't want to challenge his intelligence, but it was very textbook written" in her initial appraisal of his Abdul's writing. But now, by calling him "little Mr. Smarty Pants," Tracy expressed both surprise but also a level of respect for him. Here, I am arguing that Tracy traded an appraisal process that equated spoken fluency with writing skill for one based in a notion of standard English as a marker of intelligence, together with academic and professional success. In this instance, standard language ideology worked by proximity and association, by marking not Abdul's language but his family's. In other words, once she was able to associate Abdul with standard language and academic success, Tracy no longer doubted his intelligence.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly for the topic of this chapter, Tracy no longer saw Abdul's writing as inauthentic. Tracy explained her initial beliefs about Abdul's writing by suggesting that his discipline as an engineer had, in a sense, misled her. That is, her perception of the writing as too "technical" or "dry" or "textbook" (she used "textbook" in close proximity to the other terms) was not the result of plagiarism or translation, but the result of Abdul's academic identity as an engineer. In addition, as she reflected on her conversation with him and sister, she said, "And I thought, *he's graduating, so he's a senior. He's been here for a while. He's got this paper thing down. He knows to put in the jumble jarbo."* Here, Tracy seems to be arguing that she had previously perceived him not as an experienced college writer who writes in the tone of his discipline, but as an inexperienced L2 writer.

Given the larger patterns around authority and authenticity in this study, would Tracy have received Abdul's feedback with more respect had she not assumed that his writing was inauthentic? Regardless of whether the PR session would have been different, Tracy's judgments around Abdul's writing worked not only against the larger goals of PR, as stated in Class B, but also against the ideals around authority, collaboration, and diversity that, in general, drive the widespread use of PR in the college writing classroom.

Malcolm's views on the authenticity of Asim's writing also changed, but not in the way that Tracy's did. Faced with evidence to the contrary, Malcolm never fully conceded that Asim could have written his own paper. Malcolm's reconsideration of Asim's authenticity occurred in a very different way than Tracy's. Whereas Tracy came to shift her beliefs on her own, through happenstance, I had a direct role in Malcolm's reconsideration of Asim. In fact, after Malcolm suggested that Asim's paper was "too perfect," I realized I had a choice. Seeing that the moment was one in which I might choose to challenge Malcolm's views rather than implicitly supporting them, I decided to search for the PR document that Asim wrote in class following his PR session with Zarha and Malcolm. I located it quickly, so that both of us could examine a sample of Asim's writing that he produced himself, without help and without other sources.

After a few minutes of reading Asim's short reflection on his PR session, Malcolm reversed himself. We had the following exchange:

Malcolm: Maybe he is just a really good writer.

Ben: Yeah, because it's interesting to think that people make those assumptions.

Malcolm: Right. I questioned him, too, on it. . . . Yeah, I told him, "Is this yours? Did you write this?"

Ben: Really? Do you know where he's from?

Malcolm: I think he's from Lebanon.

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Ben: Okay. Because this doesn't sound like ... He doesn't talk that much, so I can't quite tell—

Malcolm: If he has an accent. No, he has one.

Ben: He has one?

Malcolm: Yep.

Ben: You think he has a Dearborn accent?

Malcolm: It's not Dearborn. I don't think he's been in the state for too long. He has a full-on Lebanese accent, like Arabic.

Though Malcolm seems to have accepted the idea that Asim could have an Arabic accent and at the same time write in an "almost perfect" way, he suggested, following my question (which was connected to past talk about Asim's accent) that Asim was a recent immigrant from Lebanon. A Dearborn Accent, Malcolm told me, would have indexed Asim as having been born in the U.S., or, like Malcolm, as having arrived when he was very young.

Moments later, however, Malcolm modified his argument about why he thought Asim did not write his own paper. This time, the reason was less focused on grammatical correctness, and was concerned primarily with a perception that Asim seemed to hesitate when Malcolm asked him about his paper's claim. Malcolm interpreted this hesitation ("a really long time") as connected to his multilingual background. Asim's hesitation in explaining his argument became evidence that Asim did not write it:

> I asked him a question. I'm like, "What is your thesis statement?" This is why I was very suspicious. I'm like, "What's your thesis statement? What's your claim?" Then he took a really long time to answer the question, and then I was like, "What is it? Are you for Snowden or against him?" He got lost in his own words, maybe, and then he goes, "I'm both." I'm like, "You're making a claim. I think the claim should either be with him or against him, right?" . . . He goes, "No, if you read the whole essay, you can see that I'm with him, and then I'm against him." . . . He goes, "To some extent."

Because Asim "takes a really long time" and gets "lost in his own words" Malcolm became "suspicious" of him as a writer. Malcolm suggested Asim's ambiguous answers ("I'm both"; "to some extent") could be evidence that Asim did not write his paper. Although Malcolm conceded that "Maybe [Asim] is just a really good writer," he still retained his suspicions about the authenticity of Asim's writing.

This shows the flexibility and persistence of the ideological processes around authority and authenticity: they can accommodate both a focus on grammatical dissonance between writing and speaking, and a shift to a calculus based more on content and ideas. Asim cannot explain his ideas quickly enough; therefore, the paper is not authentic.[37]

Yet, even Malcolm's assertion that Asim *might be* a "good writer" depends in part on indexing his accent not just as Arabic in general, as Tracy did with Abdul, but as a Lebanese accent. My claim here is that Malcolm's certainty about Asim's non-Yemeni status might have informed Malcolm's views of Asim's authority and the authenticity of his writing. Since Asim was associated with a relatively dominant identity and a respected dialect of Arabic, it might be easier to accept that he would be good writer, despite Malcolm's suspicions about Asim's writing.

> Ben: Do you think he's from Lebanon because you discussed that, or he just seems like he is for some reason?
>
> Malcolm: I can't remember if we discussed it, but I'm almost certain he's from Lebanon.
>
> Ben: Because remember how we were talking about the stereotypes that go with each country?
>
> Malcolm: Right, no, I'm not stereotyping. I can almost instantly tell.

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[37] Again, my reaction was to look for evidence. I attempted to locate Asim's final paper, hoping that Malcolm can show me what he meant about the paper's ambiguous claim, but I could not locate it in time.

Ben: You know he's not Yemeni?

Malcolm: For sure. You know he's not Yemeni.

In order for Malcolm to allow for the possibility that Asim is a good writer, he relies on an

indexical field that involves a local hierarchy of the Arab cultural identities and their languages.

Over the course of the semester, Malcolm and several other students laid out the the local Arab

community has three regional, linguistic, and cultural affiliations: Lebanese, Yemeni, and Iraqi.

According to my study participants, the Lebanese are seen as the most "snobby" (Malcolm's

word), that is, the group with the most cultural capital.

In terms of Lebanese Arabic as a dialect, it also indexes a certain kind of "snobbiness."

As Malcolm put it: "So Lebanese [Arabic] would be equal to British [English]. Americans are

Iraqis, and the Mexicans are Yemenis."[38] Malcolm compared perceptions of Lebanese Arabic to

perceptions of an upper-class British accent. In the middle are the Iraqis, whose Arabic is like a

standard American English accent and who carry a medium amount of cultural capital. Lowest in

the hierarchy are the Yemenis, whose Arabic carries the same kind of negative language

ideologies as Mexican Spanish (see Hill). In addition, my participants talked about what they

called a "Dearborn accent."

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[38] These differences are not only discernable in the different dialects of Arabic, and their associations, but also through physical appearance, such as skin tone and clothing choices. According to Malcolm and multiple other students I interviewed, Yemenis have the darkest skin tone and Yemeni women tend to be more conservative in their dress in contrast to the other groups. Malcolm, who is Iraqi, described his clothes as "regular," which fits his position in the hierarchy. Said, who Malcolm placed as Lebanese, wore fancy clothing consistent with his position at the top of the hierarchy. Said, who is fair-skinned, nearly always wore a full suit to class. Ayman, who Malcolm placed as Yemeni, had darker skin and a medium length beard. Arafat has a similar skin tone and clothing style. Abdul, on the other hand, fits into the specific stereotype that Malcolm outlined for Yemeni men: in addition to having dark skin, he often wore what Malcolm called a "thug shirt."

According to the students, as well as a professor of Arabic I interviewed informally, a Dearborn accent, which is recognizable to Arab-Americans throughout the U.S., occurs when American English takes on the intonations of Arabic dialects, but not in a way that sounds like English with an Arabic accent. Rather, a Dearborn accent is a hybrid, equal parts English and Arabic, so that its speakers do not sound "Arabic" or "foreign," but also do not sound entirely "American." Their Arab cultural affiliation, then, finds shape in their way of speaking English. One participant, Mona, taxonomized the Dearborn accent into three categories that parallel Malcolm's division of Arabic dialects. According to her, there is the "boater" accent, that suggests a recent arrival from an Arabic-speaking country; a "ghetto" accent suggests working-class and Yemeni background); a "white" accent, closest to standardized English, suggests Lebanese background, and carries the most cultural capital. The "boater" accent suggests imperfect grammar, but not necessary cultural deficit, as in Asim's case. While Asim might have a "boater" accent, his cultural identity as Lebanese still located him atop the local hierarchy.

Malcolm's reading of Asim's writing as "too perfect," then, takes on a new valence: despite Asim's "boater" accent, it assumes the capacity to write well, since Asim's assumed Lebanese background is a privilege that mitigates his "boater" accent. In this way, Asim is not the same as Abdul or Ayman, whose Yemeni affiliation means their accents may be located as both "boater" and "ghetto." Indeed, this argument relies on a reading of the Yemeni Dearborn accent as "ghetto," which carries negative associations with both speaking and writing.

Further, since Malcolm reported that Asim located him as Lebanese, even though he is of Iraqi descent, Malcolm was able to claim the same social positioning as Asim. And although Malcolm said he has a Dearborn accent, his accent can be read not as "ghetto," not as "boater," but as "white."

Malcolm: He spoke to me once after a class. He thought I was Lebanese, too, so he was talking to me.

Ben: Really?

Malcolm: Yeah.

Ben: Why did he think you were Lebanese, you think?

Malcolm: I have no idea.

Ben: That's really interesting.

Malcolm: I corrected him.

Ben: What did you say?

Malcolm: I'm American. I'm American.

In these ways, Malcolm positioned himself as both "American" and Arab simultaneously, which fits with Malcolm's first description of himself: "Arabic, Iraqi, **however**, I've lived in America my whole life" (bolding mine.) Indeed, the term *however* presages Malcom's response to Asim that he is "American." This is not say that Malcolm's choice represents a downplaying or rejection of his Arab identity in favor of an "American" identity. But it does confound Asim's ability to index Malcolm's cultural background using the available local cultural frameworks. Malcolm's rejoinder that he is not Lebanese but American therefore does not disclose his Iraqi roots, which might place him below Asim in the local hierarchy, perhaps positioning Malcolm with less authority in PR.

**Conclusion**

My analysis of Malcolm and Tracy's perceptions of the authenticity of their peers' writing shows that authenticity and authority are linked in ways that can accommodate a variety of shifting factors over time. For Tracy, this meant standardness and intelligence by proximity, via Abdul's family, so that his sister's standard spoken English *repaired* the disconnect she

perceived between Abdul's spoken and written language. In Malcolm's case, Asim's writing remained suspect, though this was mitigated by Asim's positionality as Lebanese, and not Yemeni.

A key finding of this chapter is that perceptions of authenticity shaped peer review in ways that cast doubt on the authority of some students while bolstering the authority of others. It is important to note that I make these arguments not to suggest that these indexicalities played out in these exact ways for all the students of English 2XX. Rather, my argument is that these cultural frameworks structured PR discourse, and were used to make judgments about students as writers, speakers, and peer reviewers. It is also important to note that analysis of the attitudes about Arabic accents and dialects suggests that language ideologies in and for Arabic are not the same as in and for English. Dearborn accents, as well as the larger field of Arabic dialects, may not necessarily carry associations about intelligence as much as education level and regional affiliation.[39] Nevertheless, the students I spoke to espoused strong beliefs about the Dearborn accent and its significance as a cultural factor.

Several implications emerge from this analysis. First, in classroom settings that mix L1, L2, and Gen 1.5 students, students may hold assumptions that their peers have plagiarized their work, especially when students perceive a disjunction between spoken and written standard English. In many ways, this is a double-bind for L2 students. If there is no perception of a

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[39] For example, unlike language ideologies in and for English, language ideologies in and for Arabic, do not make clear associations between intelligence and dialect. Moreover, for the Arabic speakers in my study, language ideologies seemed less stable than in the English-speaking world. Associations between dialect and identity characteristics shift according to the politics of the Middle East. Further, one participant suggested that for Arabic speakers, language ideologies operate in much different ways outside of the Middle East. She argued that in the US, linguistic divisions between Arabic speakers played a less important role than they would have across seas.

disconnect, their authority is degraded by their spoken and written errors. If there is a disconnect in the form of "perfect" writing paired with "imperfect" speech, their authority is again in doubt. Interestingly, there were no instances of cases in which marked writing was seen in opposition to unmarked speech. An explanation other than plagiarism would be necessary here.

In other words, if a student's speech is seen as "perfect," but there were still errors in their writing, it is not perceived as plagiarism, since plagiarism suggests writing that is outside the capacity of a student, or writing that does not "fit" with that student's ability to speak standard English. Instead, the explanation might shift from *markedness* in the sense of deviance from the norms, to a view of *normal* error, of the kind that the term *typo* suggests. When the error is a typo, that the error is insignificant, the result not of deficit, but of a normal composing process in which mistakes will always occur. Finally, because of the perceived connection between writing "level" and PR credibility that I outline in the previous chapter, L1 writers may find their authority bolstered while L2 writers, regardless of their accents or perceptions of their speech, may find their authority degraded, if not because of marked writing but because of marked speech. These kinds of judgments—about authenticity and authority—are not what the instructor intended to facilitate through PR. If students think their peers are not presenting their own work, it might make sense to them to dismiss their peers' comments in PR.

An important implication of this analysis is that when the authenticity and authorship of writing are in doubt, it can follow that the authenticity of a *student* as a *peer* in peer review is also in doubt. Thus, students marked by L2 status may be seen as inauthentic peers. For example, until Abdul's identity as a successful student and his family's academic and linguistic qualifications come to light, positioning Abdul as an authentic peer, even one to admire, his writing is suspect to Tracy. Malcolm, however, continues to position Asim as a potential

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imposter, as an inauthentic peer, despite compelling evidence that Asim is in fact the author of his writing.

A subsequent implication, then, is that in some cases, perceptions of identity and language will not make space for students to claim either authenticity as writers or authority as peer reviewers. This is connected to the thread of Americanness that also runs through Retaj and Jane's interaction in Chapter 3, where Retaj expects more credible feedback from Jane since Jane is one of her "American" peers. The same relation, in the inverse, plays out between Asim and Malcolm, as Malcolm calls himself "American" and suggests that Asim's writing is inauthentic because of his status as a relatively recent immigrant. The theme of Americanness also surfaces in Tracy's views on Abdul, when she worries that her comments about the authenticity of his writing might be understood as "racist." That is, from her position as a White American, Tracy locates Abdul as foreign, as non-American, until Abdul's family, in their "clear" speech and their education levels, begins to locate Abdul as less foreign and more American. One implication of this chapter, then, is that the identity of *authentic writer* is aligned with a perception of Americanness.

A final implication from this analysis, especially of Asim, Malcolm, and Zarha's group, involves the role of *time* in the question of authenticity. I present this implication last because it connects to a central theme in the following chapter: how time, *and timing*, affect negotiations in PR. Indeed, Asim's "almost perfect" writing may have been the result of *more time and editing*, not what Malcolm saw as plagiarism. There is data from the PR transcripts to support this assertion. At two points during PR, once with Malcolm and Zarha, and once with a different group, Asim reveals that he composes his papers much in advance of their due dates, investing

substantial time in the writing process.[40] He makes this very point with Malcolm and Zarha. In response to Zahra's narrative that she had written her draft very quickly right before their current class session, he responds by saying, "Now I give you credit. You've had [only] 20 minutes," continuing, "It took me like three days to finish." Even though Asim asserts that he spent a lot of time on his paper, time and editing that might have explained the text's "almost perfect" quality, Malcolm does not hear this as a possible explanation.

This leads to a troubling conclusion: if second language writers spend much time and effort on their writing, there can be an assumption of plagiarism (e.g., Asim); if they spend less, and their writing is seen as riddled with error, their authority may be in doubt (e.g., Zarha). Further, the more time that Asim might have spent on his writing, the less Malcolm might have seen Asim as an authentic writer. I have already argued that a marked speech created an expectation for marked writing. Here, I want to suggest that this logic makes no affordances for time and the revision and editing that time allows. That is, it treats the composing process of spoken English, moving at the speed of conversation, as the same as the composing process for written English, which can accommodate a much slower tempo, not to mention the affordance of editing and revision.

In essence, Malcolm's implicit accusation of plagiarism is related to the notion that one's spoken voice and one's written voice are the *same,* in both production and in content. As I note

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[40] In a different PR session, when his peers question his main argument, Asim reveals once again that he put a lot of time into the paper: "As soon as he assigned it, I started to work on it the next day. I did three portions of it and then two days later I decided to get it out of the way. Tayib? [That it?]" When his peers joke that he needs to "redo" it, Asim responds, "I'd take a zero but I wouldn't redo it." The suggestion is that Asim puts so much energy into his writing that he is unwilling to revise based on his peers' feedback, not because he does not trust their feedback but because there is too little time between the PR session and the due date to make the revisions.

above, Malcolm interpreted Asim's hesitation during PR (when he took a"really long time" to respond to Malcolm's question) as a sign of both his lack of fluency in English and his lack of awareness of the content of his paper. These signs, for Malcolm, suggest plagiarism. This leads to the following implication: Malcolm marks Asim's *accent* as well as his *timing* as evidence of his plagiarism. In the next chapter, the time students take to write and to speak, the timing necessary to participate in PR, and the ways that student's spoken voices are perceived as 'normal' or not, become factors in how students judged one another's authority.

**CHAPTER 5. "A Hard Time Understanding": Disability and Kairotic Space**

While the principles, rules, and proscriptions that make up the art of rhetoric vary from one age to the next, rhetoricians and orators have always taken for granted that those who hoped to control the will of the audience had first to control their own voice and body.
–Brenda Jo Brueggemann

**Introduction**

This dissertation began with the question: *what does it mean to be an author, to claim authorship, or to exercise authority over a text?* In the previous chapter, I addressed this multifaceted question by exploring notions of authenticity and linguistic and cultural diversity in peer discourse. In this chapter, I turn to the role of neurodiversity in student interaction, focusing on how perceptions of disability affected negotiations about authority in PR. As I explained in the introduction, I make this turn to neurodiversity because the two sections of 2XX included several students who identified as cognitively disabled, and those students interacted regularly with the other students, and, as I show, the non-disabled students marked their disabled peers in class interaction and to me in interviews. Disability, then, as a category of difference, became salient to this study.

Perhaps unremarkably, then, the 2012 statistic I cited in the introduction (that one out of five students identify as disabled) is representative of the sample of students in my study, four of whom (out of 36), identified as disabled. The students, Jimmy, Joseph, Bryan, and Kady,[41] 11 percent of the group, spent at least 13 hours in active PR discourse over the course of the

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[41] Unlike the other students who identified as disabled, Kady's disability was 'invisible' to her peers. Therefore, there is less data on how her authority was perceived in relation to her disability.

semester. This meant that in the first class I observed (Class B), 33 percent of the students were in PR groups with Bryan at some point over the course of the semester; and approximately 75 percent worked with him in small group activities. In the other class I observed, Class A, 55 percent in all did PR with students who identified as disabled. At the risk pointing out what should now be obvious, even if students who identify as disabled are a minority, this minority *interacts* with the majority in the everyday exchanges of classroom discourse, as well as in the exchanges of PR and other collaborative learning activities.

Although this chapter's attention to disability does not preclude a concurrent examination of language ideology, it does require an additional theoretical framework. In this chapter, I take up work from disability studies to understand the role of neurodiversity in PR. I use disability theory in two ways. First, in the same way that markedness helps in analyzing ideologies around identity and language, disability theory provides a basis for an analysis of how common-sense notions of disability can shape PR discourse. Second, disability theory supports an analysis of the spatial and temporal aspects of schooling and literacy that impact peer interaction. More specifically, the work of disability theorists in composition studies sets up an analysis of how *time* affects the authority of an utterance.

Indeed, the thread that runs through this analysis is *time*— time to complete in-class PR questions, time to act as peer reviewer, and, most importantly in this chapter, time to speak at the right moment in the course of conversation so as to claim authority. In my analysis, I use classical theories of time—chronos (a span of measurable time) and kairos (an opportune or fitting moment to be persuasive)—as a starting point to investigate authority in PR. Below, I unpack these terms, supplementing them with Margaret Price's theory of "kairotic space," "the less formal, often unnoticed, areas of academe where knowledge is produced and power is

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exchanged" (n.p.). If, as Price argues, the defining attribute of kairotic space is "the pairing of spontaneity with high levels of professional/academic impact" (n.p.), this notion of *spontaneity* is key. A central argument of this chapter is that claiming authority in PR depends on being able to respond spontaneously at the expected speed of PR, that is, to make a comment at the right time so as to be rhetorically persuasive is to claim authority in PR discourse.

The interactions that occur in kairotic space are central to the writing classroom, yet as Price argues, kairotic spaces are understudied for two main reasons: first, collecting data in kairotic space is a challenge; second, and more importantly according to Price, the constraints of kairotic space are largely invisible to people who are already comfortable in kairotic space. "The importance of kairotic space," writes Price, "will be more obvious to a person who—for example—can hear only scraps of a conversation held among a group sitting at a table, or who needs more than a few seconds to process a question asked of her in a classroom discussion" (n.p.). In this chapter, I view PR as a kairotic space, but I also apply the construct of markedness in order to account for the ways that students marked and were marked against the backdrop of kairotic space. Thus, in this chapter, the first claim is that PR is a kairotic space, and, relatedly, that kairotic space often curtails students' attempts to claim authority.

The second claim of this chapter overlaps with the first. In looking at the effects of kairotic space on authority, I analyze a recurring dynamic that shows how students negotiated about authority in PR. I term this dynamic "caregiving"—a pattern of interaction in which students attempted to help or teach their peers, exert control over their groups, or facilitate group discussion.

Here, I argue that the ways that students took up their roles as caregivers in kairotic space varied. On one side of the continuum, which I refer to as *hierarchical caregiving,* students used

an individualistic kind of authority based in power and control to interact with their peers. This asymmetry in roles distributed authority in accordingly asymmetrical ways, as students positioned in need of care spent more chronological time *being reviewed* than *reviewing*, and had fewer openings to claim authority in the kairotic space of PR. On the other side of the continuum, *non-hierarchical caregiving* positioned authority in terms of collaboration. Non-hierarchical caregivers created the conditions for a more balanced distribution of time and PR practice, even as they attempted to help their peers. In short, these different modes of caregiving apportioned power and time in different ways, yet they were all, I argue, a response to linguistic and neurological diversity in the kairotic space of PR.

The third claim of this chapter is corollary to the second. Marking students' voices, and in some cases their writing, as signifying disability was key to the act of caregiving and the kinds of authority that students enacted in their groups. My argument here is that caregiving and markedness are tightly entwined processes. Students did not mark disability once, for example, at the beginning of the semester, but, rather, marked their peers continually, adjusting their stances as caregivers. Therefore, the data shows that caregiving and marking difference were continuous processes that often reinforced the authority of hierarchical caregivers.

Below, I set the stage for an analysis of authority in kairotic space by developing the notion of kairotic space as well as the notion of markedness within kairotic space. As I argue below, markedness is useful not only in making visible ideologies around writing and speech, but also ideologies around disability. I follow this theoretical orientation with an overview of how the students who identified as disabled saw their own language and behavior as marked in kairotic space. This overview is important because it lets disabled students articulate, in their own words, their negotiations in kairotic space. From there, I turn to a detailed analysis of

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*caregiving*, both hierarchical and non-hierarchical. In the conclusion, I present a brief discussion of the role of gender and race in caregiving. Finally, I lay the groundwork for a theory of *kairotic co-labor,* designed to mitigate the effects of hierarchical caregiving, helping enact collaborative learning models that, as Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford argue, can allow, "finally and fully, for the presence of others" (*Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* 126).

Before I proceed, let me illustrate these notions of temporality with a brief example from the data. When on one occasion the instructor asked Joseph, a student who identified as disabled, how PR went for him, he replied that he "just wish[ed] [he] had more time" to both respond to his peers' reviews of his work and to review their work. The instructor said that Joseph could continue his PR as homework, giving him more time. The point here is that though more time (in terms of chronos) might have been useful to Joseph, it would not have addressed the underlying constraints of kairotic space, as the following excerpt from Joseph made clear in an interview:

> What I find is a bit of a challenge is that I am trying to answer [peer] questions as fast I can, but I just have to think out my words before I actually use them, and that's quite of a challenge for me because I'm not much of a talker really.

In other words, it is not a matter of *more* or *less* chronological time for PR, but rather a matter of altering the flow of time to allow Joseph to contribute usefully to the conversation by addressing his peers' questions at the expected, or standard, speed, which requires Joseph to move "as fast" as possible to "think out" what he will say. This suggests that the instructor was thinking about chronos, when a consideration of kairos was also required. Further, when Joseph asserts that he is "not much of a talker," he draws attention to the constraints of kairotic space: the particular need to speak quickly and convincingly in the real-time exchanges of PR. Thus, when Joseph marks himself as "not much of a talker," this does not suggest that he is unable to communicate effectively in general. Rather, it makes visible the exclusionary norms of kairotic space.

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The transcript of James's PR interaction also shows that in his PR group, he had fewer chances to give his feedback from the peer reviewer position because his peer James controlled both chonological time, acting as peer reviewer for longer stretches of time, and kairotic time, controlling, in general, the tempo and course of the conversation. By controlling both dimensions of time relative to Joseph, James claimed and maintained a hierarchical authority in relation to his peers.

An important aspect of James's caregiving was his control of how much time he spent as peer reviewer. As he made clear multiple times in interviews, James was actively giving up his time to be reviewed. When I asked James to reflect on why he felt the need to give up his time, he responded in a way that shows how James saw himself as caregiver to his peers, both of whom he marked as deficient writers: "I just felt like they would have more trouble, so I'd like to help them out more than my own work. Just because I don't think I needed it as much as them. I felt like they needed more time, honestly." Here, James suggested, like the instructor, that what his peers "need" is more chronological time to be reviewed, yet, as I will show, what would have authorized them is both more chronological time to act as reviewers, and more kairotic time, or spaces in the conversation, to claim their full share of authority.[42] This brief example demonstrates the different affordances of chronological and kairotic time that comprise kairotic space.

Before I move to a more detailed discussion of kairotic space and markedness, I want to foreground one implication of this chapter: that being seen as a *peer* in *peer* review depends on both the ability to speak and write in unmarked ways, and on the ability to speak and write in unmarked ways relative to kairotic space. As Brenda Jo Brueggemann argues, "Western

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[42] James only felt the need to act as caregiver in the first two, and the not the third, PR groups. In the third group, James saw his peers as both proficient and undeserving of his feedback.

rhetorical tradition [insists] on interpreting selfhood in terms of speaking ability: in the rhetorical tradition, to be a 'self,' one must be able to 'speak' for that self" (25). While it is clear that abnormality in speech continues to be read as a sign of deficit (Dolmage; St. Pierre), Brueggemann's point allows us to see that speech, selfhood, and authority are related. When the capacity to speak persuasively depends on timing—as much *when* as *what*—questions of selfhood and peer status emerge. What this means is that if students cannot speak for themselves in kairotic space, the following question arises: will their peers see those students as 'status equals,' with valid feedback to offer? Thus, the lopsided dynamics of authority in PR can be read as a problem of *temporal access* that intersects with other perceptions around identity and literacy. In the same general way that the previous chapter contends that L2 status suggested a lack of authenticity, this chapter suggests that in order to be counted as a peer in peer review means being able to claim an unmarked standardness in language and ableness in kairotic space.

A useful contrast emerges in the difference between students who were seen as quiet and shy, and who might have been using silence as a strategic, rhetorical move in PR as well as in class discussion, and students whose language and behavior was marked by disability. Many students chose not to participate in class discussion. For example, James never voluntarily contributed to whole class discussion, also a kairotic space. His silence, however, was not seen as a marker of disability or deficit by his peers. When I asked students to comment on which of their peers might be good peer reviewers, many pointed to those who maintained a general silence during class discussion. Silence, then, did not suggest a diminished selfhood as a reviewer and a peer. Instead, some students said that the quiet students were smart to reserve their voices, to remain, as it were, above the fray. In the context of PR, quiet students were seen as "shy," but still potentially authoritative. Without markers of disability, then, non-participation

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in classroom discourse was understood as kind of rhetorical choice, not a sign of deficit, or a sign of an inability to enter the normate time of class discourse. This highlights the mutually constructed nature of markedness in time and in speech: not only a matter of if or how much a student speaks, but a matter of markedness in relation to kairotic space.

**Peer Review as Kairotic Space**

Kairos, often translated simply as the "right or proper time" (OED), reaches back into the Isocratean and Aristotelian traditions, where it had a more complex meaning (Covino and Jolliffe; Sheard). "Inherent in kairos," write William Covino and David Jollife, "is a sensitivity to the belief that in any situation where the potential for active communication exists, rhetors must consider whether, from the point of view of potential auditors, the time, the circumstances, and the intellectual and ideological climate are right" (81). Kairos, then, can be understood as socio-cultural timing that depends on an understanding of the norms and expectations of the audience, for the kairotic moment is never fixed. Rather, it depends on "reading" the audience to know when a communication act will be persuasive and being able to act in that moment.

If kairos is qualitative, then chronos is more quantitative: a measurable kind of time, as in an amount of time allocated to a task. In this context, chronos is a factor as far as how much time PR groups were given to do their work, and since students work at different speeds, chronos matters in discourse. For example, as students completed the instructors' PR questions, they made time to consider and synthesize their comments, preparing themselves to speak with authority in PR. They also gained the admiration of their peers, since in schooling, working quickly is generally equated with skill and intelligence, an assumption I discuss this below.

The consideration of time as a factor in classroom discourse is not new. Scholars in disability studies have long argued that schooling occurs in "normate time" (Thomson) as

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opposed to "crip time" (Kafer). Sami Schalk argues that crip time means "recognizing how expectations of 'how long things take' are based on very particular minds and bodies. . . . Rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds" (27). Normate time, then, is standard time that structures social expectations. Intervening in this problem of expectations around time in classroom space, Margaret Price writes,

> Students are expected to arrive on time, absorb information at a particular speed, and perform spontaneously in restricted time frames (as in discussions or peer response groups). . . . If we consider the position of the mentally disabled student in such a context, we can guess that this environment might feel anything but safe. (73)

Price cites several examples of these spaces, including conferences, student-instructor meetings, class discussion, and, notably, peer review. Price lists five criteria that together characterize kairotic space: "real-time unfolding of events, impromptu communication required or encouraged, participants are tele/present, strong social element, high stakes" (n.p.). Each of these criteria was certainly both required and encouraged in Classes A and B, not least since students were being graded on their performance as they attempt to give and receive feedback on papers that will count for a substantial portion of their final grades. A counter-example helps define the concept of kairotic space. Price uses an "informal study session" between friends as such a counter-example, arguing that despite its "real-time" speed and impromptu communication, the social element is more predictable and the stakes are lower. And while social norms still apply, they are mediated by an assumption of friendship that may not require the kinds of normative performance that a group context requires.

## Markedness in Kairotic Space

The concept of markedness that has so far guided my analysis is based in linguistics, but markedness theory has become a transdisciplinary framework. Mary Bucholtz asserts that

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markedness theory has been "usefully extended to a broader semiotic context to provide a model of cultural ideologies" ("The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness" 84). In the field of composition studies, markedness theory has been taken up to examine cultural ideologies around race and language (Davila "The Inevitability of "Standard" English: Discursive Constructions of Standard Language Ideologies"; Looker; Marzluf; Moss and Walters; Troutman) and ability (Kerschbaum *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference*).[43] In this chapter, I take up markedness to think not only about language, but also about ableness. As Groves writes, "markedness both constitutes and represents deviance: the marked signifier is formally deviant in terms of its unmarked counterpart, just as the marked signified includes deviance within its very signification" (n.p.). Disability, like non-standard speech, is always there to co-construct what is able-bodied or standard.

This chapter illuminates the workings of markedness in terms of language *and* in terms of ability in kairotic space. In relation to disability and language, to be an author—to be authorized—one's speech and one's writing must generally signify normalcy. This perception is embedded in Western culture and rhetoric, where language is appraised in direct relation to other judgments of intelligence, character, nationality, and race. As I argue, students were marked through the volume of their voices, the grammatical choices they made, the content of their utterances, and even in some cases, the "flow" of their writing. Simultaneously, they were marked by their relation to the "normal" timing of group discourse. In other words, perceptions of inflexibility, repetition, or slowness were all markers of deviance in kairotic space.

*Student Perceptions of Disability*

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[43]Rosemarie Garland Thomson refers to a parallel but different lineage of markedness when she invokes Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma, where to mark is to "name a potentially stigmatizable physical or behavioral trait," which is a process that "reflects the tastes and opinions of the dominant group [and] reinforces that group's idealized self-description as neutral normal, legitimate and identifiable by denigrating the characteristics of less powerful groups . . ." (31).

Four students self-identified publically or in private to me as disabled in the two sections of Writing 2XX I observed. In Class A, Joseph disclosed his disability to me in an interview, choosing not to elaborate further on his disability until his final paper.[44] Also in Class A, Jimmy disclosed his disability (epilepsy and related processing issues and speech impediments) to me in an interview as well as publicly—to his classmates and instructor—by writing about it extensively in his papers. Kady, also a member of Class A, described her struggle with a speech impediment for which she was placed in speech therapy and separated from her peers in elementary school. Although Kady was open with me about her speech, she chose not to disclose it to the class. In Class B, Bryan disclosed his disability (autism) repeatedly in open class discussion and PR. (Bryan agreed to participate in the study but declined to be interviewed.) These four students spoke about the ways their disabilities were a factor as they navigated college, in general, and as they participated in peer groups. Below, I outline their comments.

When I asked these students how they perceived their own voices, both written and spoken, their responses varied. Joseph did not talk about whether he thought his voice was different or marked for others, and he reported no instances of abuse or harassment based on his language, but he attributed his difficulty communicating in group contexts to his disability. The difficulty was rooted in his experience as a child, when he "behaved differently from many normal children [he] interact[ed] with day to day." This difficulty extended to his experience in PR. Talking about his time in PR, he said, "To be honest, when you're in a group for me, it's pretty hard to get my voice out towards the people involved really." Joseph described his own disability by talking about his difficulty "getting his voice out," which, he explained, meant

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[44] Because he chose not to disclose the details of his disability to me or his peers, I am following his lead in not disclosing it here. Joseph did sign a consent form outlining how his identity would be protected.

planning out his words and finding an opportunity in kairotic space to utter them without being interrupted.

Jimmy was aware that his voice was marked, noting in a paper that he "often struggle[s] with people's perception of [him] as how to present [him]self and [his] disabilities" and that he has "a hard time speaking /expressing [his] thoughts and ideas." When I asked Jimmy for an example of being judged, he recalled the abuse he faced over his voice: "Back in high school they thought I talked weird," adding that in high school students called him "Mr. Stutter Pants." Jimmy declined to be interviewed after his PR session, so I cannot report on his perspective on PR, but, as I show below, Jimmy's peers had strong responses to Jimmy's markedness in kairotic space.

In recalling her experiences with stuttering, Kady argued that in her experience, unmarked, i.e., standard, grammar and pronunciation did not cancel out other linguistic markers:

> Even if you are grammatically correct, with the pronunciations, if you stutter, or something like that, then people will probably still feel some of type of way, because they're like, "There's a problem with you. You have a problem." I figured that's just life, because you can't control how people feel and what they think.

Even when her voice was unmarked by grammatical nonstandardness, her voice was still marked by stutter, which then meant that she herself was marked as having "a problem." As I show, Kady's argument about the overriding effect of markers of disability was salient in how students one another's voices. Kady maintained an ambivalent attitude towards PR. Although she saw the potential value in it, suggesting that the best PR partners were "open" to giving and receiving feedback by using the term "porous" to describe this openness, she also spoke about feeling excluded and frustrated by the behavior of her peers. Notably, Kady's peers did not mark her

speech or behavior against kairotic space. Her disability, therefore, was "invisible" and while it may have structured PR discourse, that structuring was not explicit.

Bryan chose not to be interviewed, but he spoke openly about his autism in class. For example, in an exchange at the beginning of a PR session he and Retaj chatted about their shared experience of transferring to the U after three years at local community colleges. As they talked about their experience adjusting to the U, Bryan said,

> Actually, it's just the first semester. The only thing is your content of your character is different than mine. Because, see, for me, I'm the only autistic student that is attending the university like this. It's hard for me to get adjusted to the behavior norms. Not just the behavior norms but the norms in general of getting yourself prepared.

Retaj, responded, "Yup. That's hard here," and the conversation changed direction. Although they had not been talking about their "character," Bryan brought up his disability, suggesting that he was different because of his autism, but the same in terms of his potential as a student.[45] Bryan was aware of his markedness in relation to the "norms" of the university and the amount of preparation it requires. As this overview shows, despite their unique experiences, these students were all aware of the challenges they faced because of their marked status. How, then, did non-disabled students view their disabled peers? What did it mean to mark disability via voice, and what impact did it have on PR?

**Caregiving**

Before I move to analysis, I want to make a few notes about why I chose the term *caregiving*, which has two contrasting connotations. First, it implies a hierarchical relationship between caregivers and those labeled as in need of care. Second, it implies a relationship

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[45] Bryan seems play off of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous phrase about character in the following sentence: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the **content of their character**" (my bolding).

characterized by empathy and generosity. This juxtaposition is sometimes captured in definitions of the term such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s, in which *caregiving* is "characterized by attention to the needs of others, esp. those unable to look after themselves adequately; professionally involved in the provision of health or social care." While "attention to the needs of others" can suggests empathy and a less hierarchical relationship, the latter part of the definition centers a hierarchical relation between "professionals" (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers) and people positioned as patients. The action of caregiving, then, may not be hierarchical, as in instances of peers aiding and supporting one another without the assumption of deficit or deviance, but it is, I argue, always fraught with the possibility of skewed power dynamics. Indeed, the fraught duality of the term makes it appropriate to this analysis, since students saw their work as caregivers along these divergent lines.

*Hierarchical Caregiving*

In this section, I analyze caregiving by looking primarily at two PR groups whose dynamics placed them on the hierarchical side of the continuum. I want to note here that caregiving was motivated by a sincere wish to help classmates whose disabilities were especially visible in kairotic space. Yet hierarchical caregiving was contingent on perceptions of peers' needs as both more pressing than others' and as "different" from the norm. In other words, only in a setting in which students saw others as marked by deficit in difference or disability did students take action as hierarchical caregivers.

Communication Barrier

A theme across the hierarchical groups was the perception of a communication barrier. This perception of a communication barrier acted as an ongoing reason for hierarchical caregiving. In Group B (Jimmy, Elle, Nathan) and Group C (James, Himmat, Joseph), the barrier

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arose from the question of whether Jimmy and Joseph could understand the comments of their peers.

Table 4: Hierarchical Groups

| Group | Number of peer review meetings* | Participant Pseudonyms | Gender (self-described) | Cognitive Disability (self-described) | Race/Ethnicity (self-described) | Language (self-described) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Jimmy | male | yes | Black, Jewish | mono: English |
| B | 2 | Elle | female | no | African American | mono: English |
| | | Nathan | male | no | Caucasian | mono: English |
| | | | | | | |
| | | James | male | no | Caucasian | mono: English |
| C | 2 | Himmat** | male | no | --- | multi: ----, English |
| | | Joseph | male | yes | White | mono: English |

The question was not about whether the non-disabled students could understand feedback from their disabled peers (whether they viewed it as authorized or competent is a different question I address below). In James, Himmat, and Joseph's group, the barrier was a mainstay of the group's PR discourse. After a conversation in which James described his trouble communicating with Joseph, I asked James if there was a communication barrier with Joseph. He replied,

> Not so much understanding him. I'd say trying to get a point across to him, and how he took it, I guess you could say. I can't think of a certain example really. I know he's smart, but sometimes you try to get a point across to him, and he'd be like, "Well, no." It was hard to get him to realize.

While James made sure to note that he was not questioning Joseph's intelligence, he suggested that the barrier between them was uni-directional: only from him to Joseph, not from Joseph to him. Notably, the pattern applied only to James's perceptions of Himmat and Joseph. Whereas James repeatedly checked to see if his peers were comprehending his comments, often asking, "Do you see what I mean?", Himmat and Joseph never checked with each other or with James to ensure that their comments were being understood. James's language also suggests his more

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forceful effort at caregiving, as he "tries to get [Joseph] to realize" his comments, in the sense of ensuring that Joseph is comprehending the comments as well as the sense of attempting to make Joseph accept and act on his feedback.

Communicating with Joseph is a challenge, according to James, because of Joseph's different thought process, which is manifested in his different speech:

> I don't know if he has Asperger's or what? He's very—his thought process is obviously different. But yeah, definitely, he doesn't talk like, "Hey, how're you doin'? What's going on?" He's like, "Hello," and like—you know how Joseph is. It's very hard to explain. I don't know how I'd say that. I don't know how I'd categorize him.

James's assumption about Joseph's disability is related Joseph's "different" "thought process," as well as his overly formal communication: not the more informal "how're you doin'," with its contraction and its colloquial –*in* construction, but "hello," a more formal register. Thus, for James, Joseph's language was marked, but it was not marked by non-standard 'error' or by a non-English 'accent.' Rather, it was marked by a deviance from the social norms of informal peer-to-peer dialogue, a kairotic space which calls for grammatical constructions that suggest informality. Here, we see an overlap in markedness, as James marks Joseph's "thought-process," which as the transcript shows, often seemed slower than normal (that is, marked in kairotic space), as well as his language. Indeed, Joseph paused for stretches of time to plan out his words.

Despite James's struggle to "explain" Joseph, the most concrete way of referring to Joseph's disability and his "different thought process" was by referring to his marked language, which shows how Joseph's tenuous grasp of the social aspects of PR was also marked. Joseph's marked language makes visible the norms of what Price calls the "strong social element" of kairotic space. In the process of marking Joseph—the communication barrier, the abnormal language and thought-process— James was already claiming a hierarchical caregiving stance.

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In their group with Jimmy, both Elle and Nathan went through a similar process as they marked Jimmy and then assumed a caregiving stance toward him. When I asked Elle to "describe the dynamic of the group," she responded, "I don't know if Jimmy was understanding what we were trying to tell him about adding himself into it. I'm not sure." Nathan's description of Jimmy also clearly indicated that communication was a problem: "He had a very preset system that he, like I said, didn't share with anybody. . . . He just seemed very odd. . . . He had to have it so much one way, that it was too much. That's where it got bad." Jimmy's "odd" and "preset system" was marked in the kairotic space of PR. In response to these markers of disability, Nathan casts himself as caregiver.

During one interaction, in which, according to Nathan, Jimmy was expressing his frustration at another student for not following the PR directions, Nathan reported that he "almost had to step in and play adult, play teacher," continuing, "[Jimmy] wouldn't let it go. They couldn't play nice. It was really, really odd." Here, Nathan demonstrated his willingness "to play teacher" in response to Jimmy's "odd" behavior. As caregiver, Nathan positioned himself hierarchically—as the normal peer reviewer with normal feedback, while Jimmy was positioned as an "odd" peer reviewer with abnormal feedback. Following Nathan's comparison, Jimmy was playing the child or student to Nathan's role as "adult" or "teacher."

Jimmy's disability was constructed via his marked relationship with time, as he was positioned as developmentally stuck ("pre-set"). Interestingly, neither Nathan nor Elle were willing to speak openly about Jimmy's disability or his speech impediment, which Jimmy himself had pointed to as an aspect of his disability. They chose ignore or at least not talk about the markedness of Jimmy's language, while insisting, as Nathan does about his relationship with Jimmy, that "differences didn't matter. [Jimmy] took his lead a little different than I might have,

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but it worked." However, since Nathan felt compelled to "play teacher," Jimmy's "lead" was clearly more inexplicable and problematic than functional. It was, at least, fraught by this contradiction: both "different" and working, but also "odd" and "bad."

An example from Joseph, James, and Himmat's group also speaks to the kind of hierarchical and didactic caregiving that Nathan took up. Joseph had just asked his peers to tell him if there were "any sentence errors or grammatical mistakes" in his paper. One immediate effect of Joseph's request is that it caused Himmat to deauthorize himself on account of his L2 status. James, however, said he'd "take a look." He then responded by making a specific suggestion to Joseph about self-editing. My argument is that James's suggestion became coercive, demonstrating the workings of James's hierarchical and authoritative caregiving:

> Himmat: I don't know grammar. It's my second language, so.
> James: Yeah. I know I said this on—I think one of yours, just when you're done typing the paper, just read it out-loud. That's how you can catch simple errors, by just reading it out loud and stuff.
>
> Joseph: Well, to tell you the truth, I am quite uncomfortable doing that, really, particularly around people.
>
> James: Okay. I'm saying like when you're in your house typing this, like when you're typing your final version at your house you think it'd be a good idea to do that?
>
> Joseph: I suppose.
>
> James: Okay.

James repeated his suggestion about reading aloud as a way of correcting grammatical errors. When Joseph resisted James's suggestion, saying that he was uncomfortable reading aloud *both* in private and in the company of others, James then responded as if Joseph were not understanding him. In the audio-recording, James's voice took on a tone of exasperation as he spoke to Joseph.

Embedded in James's rhetorical question is an imperative, one that takes a didactic tone of authority ("you think it'd be a good idea"). Joseph's response ("I suppose") conceded the point, though in a hedged way that retained a degree of control over whether he would heed James's suggestion. This is not the discourse of "status equals," as James was both re-explaining his suggestion and reasserting his hierarchical authority over Joseph, who is positioned as a student or even child.

Stasis

Related to a perception of barrier was a perception of inflexibility and stasis in kairotic space. This is clear in James's response to Joseph in which James reasserts himself after Joseph's initial resistance about reading aloud. To James, Joseph's comprehension is blocked by disability, but he is also inflexible. Nathan also picked up on these signals of inflexibility, as when he describes Jimmy as "pre-set." James uses metaphors of inflexibility to describe Joseph, as when he observes how Joseph is "set in stone":

> Joseph kept talking about how—he would always tell me, every time, I needed a thesis at the beginning, and I would tell him you don't need one. And he's like, "Oh, you don't need one at the beginning?" And I was like, "Yeah, you don't. You can have it anywhere." Seems like he was very set in stone about how to write a paper. I was trying to hammer him out of that.

James even seemed mildly amused that Joseph seemed to keep repeating the same feedback. Of note is James's repetition about Joseph's inflexibility (e.g., he "kept talking; he "would always tell me"), which suggests that Joseph's disability is marked through his supposed repetition. While Joseph's inflexibility about thesis placement might be seen as a reflection of a generally fixed way of thinking about writing common to many novice writers, in this context it invokes an image of disability as deficit that needs to be "hammered out" or corrected.

These perceptions around barrier and inflexibity as markers of cognitive disability are embedded in larger disability ideologies. Disability has long been linked with metaphors of

stasis— so that people with disabilities are seen as "simple, one dimensional, dormant, stalled, and fossilized" (Kliewer et al. 175). Where Jimmy and Joseph are both "stuck" and "fossilized" as an immature students, Nathan and James play the role of adult teacher, moving with agility in kairotic space. These metaphors of stasis are also linked to time, where the disabled students are positioned as younger than or behind their peers. The way James reads Joseph's repetition is also loaded with temporality: Joseph's repeated suggestion about thesis placement is a sign of stasis, of not being able to move forward in time.

In this sense, James takes care of Joseph by marking Joseph's stasis and then, in the kairotic moment, reminding him patiently that "you can have [the thesis] anywhere." Moreover, James's effort to "hammer him out" is a caregiving move, as James attempts to free him from his stasis by hammering him out of stasis. We might also read this metaphor as an effort to re-form Joseph. In either case, James's phrase echoes and builds on ideologies around disability, where the disabled subject is to be remediated, medically or socially, in order to fit into a social construction of normalcy (Davis).

Had Joseph's point about thesis placement been delivered in a way unmarked by disability, it might have been more persuasive, since in the genre of writing assignments the class was involved in a thesis statement placed early would have been appropriate. Indeed, James's papers might have benefited from this suggestion. Yet, given the constraints of kairotic space, Joseph's voice carries little authority—certainly less than James carries. Joseph's feedback, in other words, is not dismissed because of a careful consideration of his suggestion about thesis placement. Rather, since James sees Joseph's repetition as a marker of disability, he discards Joseph's suggestion, as he told me he did with most, if not all, of Joseph's feedback. As I have shown in this section, markedness in kairotic space involved the related perceptions of barrier

and stasis, each contributing to a hierarchical caregiving that positioned disabled students as

encumbered with deficit, leaving them with little authority over their own texts or over their

peers' texts. In the next section, I extend my investigation of how time and authority worked

together to produce hierarchical caregiving.

Chronos and Kairos

James and Nathan both thought their disabled peers needed more chronological time.

Because of this, they actively gave up their time *being reviewed* in favor of spending time

*reviewing* their peers. It was James's view that his peers needed "more time" that resulted in a

disagreement with Joseph about whose paper the group should review first. This disagreement,

which I analyze below, shows how what seems like a negotiation about the order of PR is

actually a high-stakes negotiation about time, both chronological and kairotic, and authority in

PR.

> James: I have to leave early again, not too early, so let's just start with your guys' papers. [0:14]
>
> Himmat: That's fine [0:16]
>
> Joseph: Right. Umm. OK, Umm. [0:18]
>
> James: Want to start with yours Joseph? [0:29] Which one of you guys want to go first? [0:47]
>
> Joseph: Umm. How about we start with you really, just— [1:01]
>
> James: You want to start with mine? [1:03]
>
> Joseph: Mm-hmm (affirmative). [1:04]
>
> James: Okay. Yeah. Fine with me. [1:06]

James's logic reveals his caregiving stance in relation to kairotic space, as he suggests that

because he must leave class early, the group should start not with his paper but with either

Himmat or Joseph's. In suggesting that his peers be reviewed before him, James signals that his

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peers are in greater need than he is, and that it is his responsibility to review their papers before the group reviews his. The alternative logic, that James be reviewed first since he must leave first, provides a useful contrast here because it depends on an assumption of equity in which every member of the group can benefit equally from PR.

In order to verify my analysis of this interaction, I asked James to reflect on his disagreement with Joseph. He responded, "I just felt like they would have more trouble, so I'd like to help them out more than my own work. Just because I don't think I needed it as much as them. I felt like they needed more time, honestly." This response shows how James attempted to give up his time, based on a perception of his peers' deficit. James's perception of his peers' need, therefore, was the driving force behind this interaction.

Yet, as the excerpt demonstrates, although Himmat concedes to James's suggestion about order, Joseph resists. Indeed, Joseph's resists in two ways: chronologically and kairotically. First, he resists James's effort to redistribute chronological time by suggesting that James should go first. This move, which James seems surprised by ("You want to start with me?") works against James's efforts to exert hierarchical caregiving on the group by insisting that he and Himmat should have the chance to review James's paper. Second, Joseph pushes against the normate time that structures kairotic space, and, in doing so, began to move the group into an alternative temporality, or crip time. I have included the passage of time here in order to show how Joseph insists on an alternative pace. For instance, before and after James's question about who would "go first," there was 11 and 14 seconds of silence, respectively. In the 'normal' 'flow' of time, these pauses are 'abnormal.' Yet, both Himmat and James waited for Joseph's responses. Thus, despite James's initial effort to enact a hierarchical mode of caregiving, in these moments, his caretaking was destabilized by Joseph's disagreement and by the slowing of time. The group

proceeded to review James's paper, and Joseph was able to make several suggestions to James about his paper. In this way, Joseph claimed authority as a peer reviewer.

This exchange shows how authority, and its mutual construction with time, in hierarchical caregiving is actually fragile, a process of negotiation rather than a given. However, despite Joseph's resistance, James's efforts at caregiving were nearly impossible to thwart. Although James agreed to be reviewed first, he also made sure to conclude his peers' review of his own paper as quickly as possible, still managing to allocate a vast majority of chronological time to the review of his peers' papers. This suggests that while it is possible to negotiate about authority in kairotic space, students who see themselves as unmarked in relation to their peers can still enact hierarchical caregiving that deprives other students of the space to claim authority.

I move now to Jimmy, Nathan, and Elle's group to analyze another moment of negotiation around time and power in PR. This exchange builds on the previous example by showing first how chronological time was unevenly distributed, and second, how Jimmy's voice, marked in relation to his peers' voices, was silenced in the kairotic flow of time in PR conversation. It is in the manner of Jimmy's silencing that this example is different from the disagreement in James, Himmat, and Joseph's group that I have just analyzed. While James certainly claims and enacts more authority than his peers, he does not explicitly silence his peers. In the case below, Jimmy's peers do in fact silence Jimmy, depriving him of authority, while at the same time *treating* him as in need of guidance and hierarchical care.

Importantly, the interaction I examine below occurred when it was Nathan's turn to be reviewed, yet Nathan steered the conversation away from his own paper, focusing instead on instructing Jimmy on the minutia of how to use an online citation tool. Thus, when it was Jimmy and Elle's turn to act as reviewers, Jimmy was instead positioned as a pupil while Elle acted as

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teaching assistant to Nathan. It is important to point out that Jimmy did not ask about this citation tool, and when he suggested that he use the citation guide that the teacher had assigned, Nathan persisted in what amounted to a lesson in an online citation tool. When I asked Nathan about the discussion, he framed it as a move to help Jimmy have "success":

> Jimmy was having a hard time understanding [the citation tool]. That just took a little bit of time, walking him through. . . . He was interested on it, but he wasn't clicking with it at first. [We were] helping him to make sure he had the best chance at success and not just tell him, "Figure it out yourself."

Thus, Nathan gave his time away for Jimmy's benefit; his phrase, "best chance at success," suggests that Jimmy is in need of extra help, echoing rhetoric from school reform discourse focused on supporting "deficient students" (Pearl; Rose; Valencia). Nathan wanted to help Jimmy by making sure he *understood* and therefore did not have to "figure it out" himself. Nathan acknowledged the time it took to "walk him through" since it "wasn't clicking" at first. Jimmy's relation to time is marked here, as it takes Jimmy longer to "click" with it. Here, Nathan cast himself as the guide, which positioned Jimmy as the *guided*—as potentially lost and in need of a hierarchical hand, or in need of guidance in the kairotic space of PR.

After Nathan had spent the group's time guiding Jimmy, in painstaking detail,[46] through the citation tool, the group returned to the PR guidelines, which asked them to summarize what they learned from Nathan's paper and what they might use in their own revisions. Here was a chance for Jimmy to reclaim the authority of peer reviewer, despite Nathan's lengthy digression. Yet, as the excerpt below shows, Jimmy's attempts to claim authority, to add his voice to the conversation, were unsuccessful, as his peers did make space for him. As the excerpt shows,

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[46] The way in which the group interacts with Jimmy as they attempt to use the citation tool is also inflected by caregiving and a process of marking Jimmy, since Jimmy must ask repeatedly how to spell an author's name and how to navigate the citation tool.

Jimmy tried and failed three times to contribute to the conversation. Note that the longer m-dashes signal that a speaker has been interrupted.

Jimmy: So wait, umm, I learned that—

Nathan: Another weekend of writing papers for me.

Jimmy: I learned that they are definitely—

Elle: Last week I had two of them and then this week.

Jimmy: Oh, I learned that—

Nathan: There was the 15th and then the 16th and then the 22nd for me.

Jimmy asked the group to "wait" for him so that he could complete his thought, yet Nathan cut him off. Jimmy then continued to attempt to answer the question, but Elle was already responding to Nathan's comment. When Jimmy pushed forward with "Oh, I learned that," he was again interrupted by Nathan. Jimmy never got to present his idea. While interruptions were commonplace in the PR transcripts, this series of interruptions, or lost kairotic moments, stood out because they demonstrate how Jimmy lost his chance to act with authority as a peer reviewer. This example shows how Jimmy's peers enact a hierarchical notion of caregiving that first prioritized what Nathan imagined to be Jimmy's need for guidance on citation. As I have suggested, Jimmy did not seek this guidance. Instead, Nathan assumes it is his job to act as guide. By choosing to act as caregiver rather than accept feedback, Nathan enforces the existing effects of kairotic space. Indeed, he invents a way to act with authority, a move that leaves little time in a chronological sense for his peers to act as authorized reviewers. Nathan, and also Elle, then signal that Jimmy's feedback is unimportant. Thus they have dominated both kairotic and chronological time.

Conflation

Another effect of hierarchical caregiving in kairotic space is the conflation of markers of disability with markers of linguistic difference. This conflation was most visible in Joseph's group. I include an analysis of it here because it taps into a larger tendency in educational contexts to group students labeled as disabled with students labeled as English language learners (Elliot). Therefore, I argue, it is both connected to and reflective of a more widespread "treatment" of multilinguality and disability as interchangeable deficits (Wilson-Lewiecki, Brueggemann, Dolmage, Baril). This conflation[47] is evident in the excerpts I present below in which James not only conflates Himmat and Joseph as nearly identical in their disability and difference, he does so in direct relation to himself, as the "normal" and "standard" member of the group.

This conflation is evident in the following excerpt by James, who was talking about working with Himmat and Joseph. The key point here is that James marked Himmat's writing as "choppy" because of his L2 status, and then marked Joseph's writing as "choppy" because of what James, earlier in the interview, called Joseph's "Asberger's." In short, *choppiness* was a marker of both L2 status and disability.

> I'd read their papers before, and just the flow and everything was always— they had good grammar and sentences and stuff for the most part, just like how their paper would flow, it wasn't— I don't know how to say it. It just didn't flow, it was very choppy. I can **understand** how Himmat's was very choppy you know, just because English I don't think, is his first language. I don't know if it is or not. But Joseph, yeah, it just didn't flow good. If they were writing, "I went to the store, and then I went to my friends." It would be like, "I went to store, then friends." Sort of stuff like that.
> Interviewer: I see. That's Himmat or Joseph? Or both?
> James: Yeah. [meaning both]

When I asked James to clarify if he was talking about both of his peers, he made it clear that he saw them in similar terms. Himmat's L2 status was then understood as an impairment that

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[47] There is much to say about how disability and L2 status have been "treated" in school contexts. See Norbert Elliot's work on assessment.

resulted in the same kind of "choppy" writing that characterized Joseph's writing. According to James, their writing was "choppy" rather than flowing because of missing articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and the possessive form of *I*. Despite the conflation, James said he could "understand" why Himmat's L2 status would make his writing choppy, but the reason for Joseph's lack of "flow" was harder to articulate, even though James had already suggested that Joseph had Asbergers'. Thus, even though James saw a difference between the reasons for his peers' choppy writing, he still insisted on conflating the effect, even after I gave him the chance to describe how their writing might differ.

James also conflated Himmat and Joseph's capacity to comprehend his feedback. This claim builds on my earlier argument about the perceptions of barriers. Seeking to let participants be more direct in their assessment of themselves in relation to their peers, I asked students to imagine they were film directors and they were recreating their PR group for the camera. James described the following scene:

> There'd be one person, me, and then two other people who are, I don't know, I don't want to say kind of like lost, but just not on the same page as me. It's hard to understand, because I don't want to be like rude. . . . I would be a character who'd be more, I don't know, better at writing than them, and I was trying to help them out, but it was hard for me to understand [what to do]. I'd just be trying to get points to get points across to them, but I didn't know if they were knowing at all what I was talking about.

James immediately set himself apart from his peers, who are "not on the same page." James's assertion about not wanting "to be rude" suggests *rudeness* is a possibility here, since he was describing his peers in deficit terms. Perhaps naming his peers' deficits seemed "rude" to James. His efforts as "to help them out" were stymied by the communication barrier he perceived between himself and both Himmat and Joseph. Himmat, as an L2 writer, is thus effectively impaired in the same ways as his peer whose language is marked by disability rather than accent

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or nonstandardness. (There is also the same language of *guidance* that Nathan used to describe

his efforts to "walk [Jimmy] through," so that James positions himself as a PR guide.)

In response to James, I asked, "Then, how would you describe it from their point of view

you think?" James's response pointed again to these dynamics of conflation.

> James: I'm just talking at the phone on Charlie Brown, where it's—they'll answer the phone and it'll just be like, "Wa, wa, wa, wa." Basically like my lips are moving but nothing is coming across to them.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Both of them?
>
> James: Yeah, I guess in ways, because yeah there were times I felt like, especially with Himmat, I would say stuff to him, and then he just be like, "Okay, yeah." I didn't know I was talking too fast, or if he didn't know what I said, or if he knew what I said, and he was being truthful. It was hard to gauge. I didn't want to keep asking, "Do you know what I mean? Do you get this?"

When I asked if he was still referring to both his peers, James confirms that he was. While there

is a reason why James said Himmat would not understand him, the reasons for the troubled

communication with Joseph remain more difficult to articulate. In other words, James's

references to Himmat's perceived deficit as an L2 speaker and writer are more direct than his

references to Joseph's deficits, which are most clear when he references the possibility of

rudeness. In the scene James imagined, while James does his best to communicate with his peers,

all they hear is nonsense ("wa wa wa"), or silence ("lips moving but nothing is coming across to

them").

James's self-conception of his own normalcy also played a role in how he identified his

peers. He described his family and himself in the following way, which stressed his

"standardness" in both language and culture:

> My dad and my mom are both from here so we're not really any, we're just standard. Nothing too crazy cultural-wise. We're just normal, I guess white people. I don't know how to describe it. We're not really, have anything too cultural going on with us, just pretty standard lives, nothing too special honestly.

I include this quotation here in order to call attention to ways that James's self-description imagines Americanness and whiteness as "just standard" and normal, as opposed to what is marked as nonstandard, "cultural," or abnormal. Indeed, ideologies of whiteness—which, as I have argued in my theoretical framework, overlap with other ideologies around ableness and language—support James's description of himself as well as his capacity to differentiate himself from his marked peers.

To conclude this section, I have argued that in their groups, James and Nathan signaled they felt authorized to act as caregivers. The ways that Nathan responded to Jimmy's disability were generally consistent with James's caregiving response to his peers. There were, however, some key differences. Unlike James, Nathan did not see himself as authorized as a good writer by the instructor, reported receiving lower grades than he expected, and he put little stock in himself as a peer reviewer. This points to an important aspect of caregiving: that it works through a system of ideological marking that determines power dynamics. That is, in relation to Jimmy, as well as Elle, Nathan felt authorized to take on the role of caregiver. Further, hierarchical caregiving renders the effects of kairotic space even more exclusionary, since disabled students have fewer chances to claim authority. Hierarchical caregiving, then, highlighted the power of larger ideologies around authority in educational spaces, ideologies that compel unmarked students to take a paternalistic responsibility for their marked peers.

Moreover, in giving up their own time in order to help their peers, James and Nathan blatantly disregarded their instructors' directions for PR. In doing so, they asserted a kind of officially unauthorized power in the PR process. Thus, hierarchical caregiving exposes a paradox. On one hand, students mimicked the hierarchical structures of classroom discourse. On the other, the instructor's guidelines did not possess the authority to structure the students' time,

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as students redistributed it according to dominant ideologies around who was marked by deficit or need. A peer-to-peer relationship, then, became unlikely when able-bodied students in kairotic spaces assumed the stance of hierarchical caregiver.

*Non-hierarchical Caregiving*

In this section, I present analyses of two peer review groups that occupy the other side of the caregiving continuum. In their groups, Retaj and Aurora acted as caregivers, but in very different ways than Nathan and James. Where Nathan and James claimed what should have been their peers' chronological and kairotic time to act as reviewers, Retaj's and Aurora's groups maintained a balance of time and power. I begin this section by examining Aurora's group, which included Jimmy, as a counterexample to the analysis of Jimmy's experience with Nathan and Elle.

Table 5: Non-hierarchical Groups

| Group | Number of peer review meetings* | Participant Pseudonyms | Gender (self-described) | Cognitive Disability (self-described) | Race/Ethnicity (self-described) | Language (self-described) |
|-------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| A | 1 | Jimmy | male | yes | Black | mono: English |
|   |   | Aurora | female | no | Mexican | multi: Spanish, English |
|   |   | Mona | female | no | Arab American | multi: English, Arabic |
| D | 1 | Bryan | male | yes | African American | mono: English |
|   |   | Jane | female | no | White | mono: English |
|   |   | Retaj | female | no | Arabic, White | multi: Arabic, English |

I follow this with an analysis of Retaj, Bryan, and Jane's group, which also acts as a counterexample to the hierarchical caregiving I have presented thus far. As in the previous section, these two groups also provide contrast to each other, in addition to demonstrating the negotiations that occurred in non-hierarchical groups that included a mix of able-bodied and disabled students.

Aurora, Jimmy, and Mona's group convened for Class A's first round of PR (Jimmy was in a group with Nathan and Elle for the last two rounds). I begin this analysis with a point about how Aurora referred to Jimmy. In contrast to Nathan, Aurora openly acknowledged Jimmy's disability, saying "you know some people have some disabilities. You don't want to make them feel bad. To the contrary, and want to make them feel good. . . . I was really surprised that he is in this class, because his essay was really good for me." Here Aurora sees capacity rather than deficiency or abnormality in Jimmy and suggested she was surprised that Jimmy had not tested out of the class because of what she thought was his advanced writing. Indeed, Aurora's use of the term "disabilities" was an exception in the study: no other students used that term to describe their disabled peers. For example, where James and Nathan both seem at a loss for the language to describe their interactions with Joseph and Jimmy, Aurora talks about Jimmy in the following way:

> Jimmy was good. I know he's a hard worker. Yeah. It was good. . . . I think because of his health, he kind of repeat a lot the questions. . . . You need to repeat to him the answer a couple of times so he can understand. It's fine with me. I don't mind that. It's good. I'm glad if I can help, but it make it harder for you to get a feedback, and you give him a feedback, although his essay was really good. I really like his essay.

Here, Aurora acknowledges the challenges of working with Jimmy, but she also avoids the metaphors of hierarchical caregiving. Jimmy is not "lost" or in need of guidance. In referring to Jimmy's "health," Aurora finds a way to acknowledge Jimmy's disability that is not driven by deficit-thinking, since speaking of Jimmy's "health" has a more neutral connotation than referring to him as "odd." Thus, Aurora's less hierarchical approach to working with Jimmy is reflected in her language.

Further, while "health" points to a medical deficit, Aurora was following Jimmy's lead, as Jimmy wrote openly—in the paper Aurora read—about his struggles with the medical

consequences of what he calls his *disability*. Aurora's way of referring to Jimmy's disability can also be seen in relation to Jimmy's own representations of his disability. For example, he wrote,

> As for myself, I often struggle with people's perception of me as how to present myself and my disabilities. It seems at times others have a hard time relating to my disability because they do not know what to look for. There are triggers such as the glazed eyes and a blank stare, the eye blinking, lip biting or head bobbing or swaying during a seizure. I reflect on my experiences with my short-term memory and a few other deficiencies dealing with my communication skills. They need improving and I am working hard to do so. The struggle has been a long road.

This direct disclosure might have impacted Aurora's work with him, as Aurora would have been able to understand Jimmy's repetitive questions in relation to his problems with his short-term memory. In short, Jimmy gave Aurora the vocabulary to speak about his disability in ways that position him as a self-reflective and intelligent student. The papers that Nathan and Elle read for Jimmy did not mention Jimmy's disability.[48]

Although Jimmy's disclosure might have helped Aurora in her collaboration with him, Aurora also shows an empathy for Jimmy deeply personal on her part, making a connection between him and her daughter whom she described as having ADHD:

> That is the way [Jimmy's] mind work. It's slow, and I understand him, because my daughter, my middle one, she has ADHD. Her mind, it goes like too fast. Jimmy's mind goes too slow. I was kind of relating with him, because I was like, this is kind of my daughter, but the opposite. She goes too fast and she jumps from one thing to another. I'm like, slow down.

Although she called Jimmy "slow," marking him against the norms of kairotic space, she perceived that slowness in the same way she perceived her daughter's quickness: as a different rather than deficient pace that she can "understand" and "relate" to. Here, Aurora works against the effects of kairotic space by locating time as a relative phenomenon; being "slow" and being

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[48] How the content of student writing might have affected student perceptions of *authority* and disability is a potentially productive line of enquiry. However, in this dissertation, I focus primarily on the data from interviews and PR conversation.

"too fast" are both markers of difference, but in Aurora's description, they are a step away from deficit.

Here I turn to the transcript of PR conversation to illustrate how Aurora's perception of Jimmy's mind as "slow" did not cause her to assume a hierarchical caregiving role. For example, when Jimmy asked a series of questions about the instructor's directions for PR, Aurora addressed his questions without cutting him off, and without taking time away from his opportunity to act as a peer reviewer.

Jimmy: But how can I meet you on [online]? How can I chat with you on [online]?

Aurora: [The instructor's] making the groups [online], so you will see it in our names, so you'll look on our names.

Jimmy: I'm supposed to answer the questions like here?

Aurora: Yeah. Like I already finished hers so I'm going to give [it to] her.

In addition, my observation notes of this interaction suggest that the instructor's instructions were potentially unclear, as the instructor had not initially planned on using the class website to support PR. My point here is that while these questions seem repetitive and may suggest that Jimmy seems "lost," his questions reflect a legitimate request for clarity, one that Aurora addresses without judgement. Moreover, when Jimmy expressed frustration that his peers had written their reviews faster than him, saying, "I don't know how you guys finished so fast," his peers' reaction to this was to normalize the effects of kairotic space by pointing out that they had not been able to finish either.

Aurora made moves during the PR discussion that signaled a dynamic of agreement and collaboration with Jimmy, a pattern that did not occur in Jimmy's interactions in his other PR group. Here is an example that illustrates this dynamic. Jimmy and Aurora were discussing their

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third peer's writing, and they agreed that the paragraphs needed to be restructured in order to

help the reader follow the argument:

> Aurora: I will suggest you to break it in paragraphs to make it more easy to read, because you're reading something and then you don't where to stop and you kind of get confused.

> Jimmy: You kind of jump around to me.

> Aurora: Yeah.
> Jimmy: Like you're jumping around to me. Not to mention, there's no paragraphs on the second page.

> Aurora: Yes, just break it up.

> Jimmy: I mean I think we got where you come from, like back in childhood, OK, but you's jumpin round. That's what got me.

> Mona: Jumping around like how?

> Aurora: Like the first sentence you talking about what you want to be when you grow up and then you change it to when you move.
> Jimmy: It's like a day dream or something.

> Mona: Oh, ok. Got it.

This excerpt shows how Aurora and Jimmy worked as non-hierarchical partners to develop their

feedback and communicate it to Mona. Jimmy's critique about coherence builds on Aurora's

about paragraph structure. When Mona asksa question about Jimmy's comment, Aurora

responds, signaling her agreement with Jimmy and expanding Jimmy's comment about "jumping

around" so that Mona could understand. Jimmy's final comment sums up his and Aurora's

critique by comparing the structure of Mona's writing to the disjointed structure of a "day

dream," a simile that seemed to connect with Mona and that also reflected an appropriate view of

the genre conventions of the writing assignment.

In order to do this collaborative peer review, Aurora and Jimmy took on an authoritative

stance, but one that did not depend on domination or control. Rather, their feedback was based in

their shared experience as readers; they enacted a key goal of PR: to practice giving feedback,

not just learning to accept it. The context of their collaboration, with Jimmy's disclosure and

Aurora's empathetic connection to Jimmy, set the stage for this non-hierarchical arrangement. As

I have pointed out, Jimmy's disclosure, in this case, might have helped Jimmy's peers relate to

him in ways that did not reproduce discriminatory ideologies around disability or ways that

detracted from Jimmy's ability to participate in kairotic space.

I turn now to the second group, comprised of Retaj, Bryan, and Jane, from Class B. In

contrast, this group's solution to the challenge of PR, though closer to the non-hierarchical end

of the continuum, shows a problematic view of disability. Further, as I reveal, unlike Aurora's

collaboration with Jimmy in which they developed their own critique and persuaded the writer of

its credibility, thus decentering the authority of the instructor, Retaj called on the instructor to

support her authority. Retaj's choice to call on the instructor to help explain her feedback to

Bryan was motivated by a similar kind of communication barrier as in more hierarchical groups.

As Retaj suggested, she felt like she could not communicate with Bryan: "You cannot

talk to him in a way he can understand. I'm not talking something bad, but this is their

personality. I cannot deal with them in a good way."[49] Retaj reported that Bryan's disability was

a defining factor in the PR session. Retaj made the connections between speech and disability

clear in her thought process when she said,

> I noticed from the first day that [Bryan] has something weird. Maybe because he was
> like, sometimes he is talking too loud, and sometimes like he get very fired up or
> something when he's excited. That's what make me feel like there is something wrong
> with him but I don't know what is it.

Bryan's self-talk and the loudness of his voice were markers for Retaj; they differentiated him

because, in part, they were unexpected to her in a school setting; they certainly stood out in the

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[49] I attribute Retaj's use of the plural rather than singular pronoun here ("them" not "him") to error, but it is possible that she was generalizing.

kairotic space of PR. Retaj also pointed to Bryan's occasional "fired up" state, which also deviated from the norm. From these markers, it followed there was "something wrong" with Bryan, something she struggled to articulate.

While Retaj's view of Bryan seems more hierarchical here, as the barrier she describes seems based in a deficit view of disability, the way she interacted with Bryan occupied less temporal space and relied less on dominance than the more hierarchical groups. Further, Retaj's reliance on the instructor's intervention complicated the question of her own access to authority, the question which I discuss below. As she made clear in her subsequent interview, Retaj did not call the teacher because she doubted her knowledge. Rather, as she said, "I wanted the teacher to tell him about it. Maybe he's going to deal with him in a good way, maybe he can give him that good information in a way he understands it." Below, I analyze an interaction from the PR conversation that shows how and why Retaj chose to summon the instructor in a bid to assert her own authority.

The analysis reveals new themes around the negotiation of authority in PR. In one sense, Retaj relied on the instructor in claiming the authority necessary to critique Bryan's paper. If the goal of PR is to decenter the instructor and authorize students, this move undermines that goal. Yet, in another sense, Retaj can be seen asserting—and perhaps increasing—her authority, since she does not concede in her negotiation with Bryan. Instead, since the instructor agreed with her, she retains her authority, and was able to keep exercising it as she collaborated with Bryan to revise his draft.[50]

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[50] Furthermore, earlier in the PR session, Bryan had already asked the instructor to intervene after Retaj briefly questioned Bryan's in-text citation style. The instructor intervened, eventually agreeing with Retaj's point that Bryan's in-text citation form was incorrect. Thus, since there was already a precedent for this move, and it was in a sense normalized, when Retaj called the instructor in, she might have ceded less authority than she would have otherwise.

The interaction that led to this negotiation occurred when Retaj argued that Bryan should revise the structure of a paragraph. In order to make her argument, she said to him, "You cannot start a paragraph with a quotation. You need to do one or two sentences. An introduction and then the quotation and then you explain the quotation. You can't start the paragraph with one quotation." After some back and forth, Bryan said, "What? What do you mean?" Retaj responded by referencing what the instructor had been teaching about integrating and framing quotations before their PR session, but Bryan did not seem to make the connection. Retaj then summoned the instructor, saying

> You prepare the reader that you're going to quote something. Right? He has to show that he's going to quote something.

> Instructor: He does. He just does it after the quote. Which is okay except for the fact that it's at the beginning of a paragraph. It's probably a better idea to state who's speaking before the quote.

> Bryan: Okay.

> Instructor: That's just a matter of rearranging.

> Bryan: That's good idea.

By the end of this excerpt, Bryan had accepted the idea of introducing the quote in the way Retaj had initially suggested. Whether it was the authority of the teacher that convinced Bryan that he should revise his paragraph, or whether it was the instructor's ability to communicate more effectively with Bryan is impossible to say. I also wish to highlight the possibility that ideologies around gender could have affected how Retaj's feedback was at first rejected by her peers. Indeed, AvW or AvS might have also affected how and why Bryan resisted Retaj's feedback. These possibilities once again point to the complexity of how students built and maintained authority, as, in this instance, Retaj and Bryan could have marked each other in relation to ideologies around gender, language, and culture, in addition to disability.

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In any case, the instructor's intervention played a role in how Bryan came to view Retaj's critique as a "good idea." Yet Bryan remained confused about how he should revise his paragraph, saying,

> Bryan: So put the person's name before the quote and then—
>
> Instructor: In this case. You don't have to do that every time, but it's at the beginning of a paragraph.
>
> Bryan: Right.
>
> Instructor: Yup. [instructor leaves]
>
> Bryan: Okay, I'm just totally lost here.
>
> Retaj: Here?
>
> Bryan: Yeah.
>
> Retaj: Okay you can say—I'm going to give you an example. In his famous—what do you call the—speech. You can— comma, *Martin Luther King*. . .

Bryan's assertion that he remained confused suggests that he might have been pretending to "get it" in order to appear competent to the instructor. With Jane silent throughout this entire exchange, Retaj assumes a non-hierarchical caregiving stance in response to Bryan's statement about being "lost," asking "here?" She and Bryan then re-wrote the paragraph collaboratively.

Thus, despite the confusion and frustration they both felt during the process, Retaj and Bryan collaborated successfully on Bryan's paper. Using the section's PR guidelines as a starting point, this interaction between Retaj and Bryan could be read as a successful instance of PR. Although the students did not spend much time on Bryan's main argument, they had a substantive exchange about structure that directly referenced class material. Indeed, Retaj's willingness to work with Bryan after the instructor left shows how she saw herself as a caregiver.

However, it is important to note that Retaj still marked Bryan as an unreliable and non-authoritative PR partner. Describing her turn to be reviewed in her session with Bryan and Jane,

Retaj suggested that Bryan was fixated on his argument that her paper did not have a thesis. In her interview she said with exasperation, "He was just doing, 'no paper, no thesis.' I was like, okay." Here, Retaj marked Bryan's disability and said she felt powerless to communicate, as her "okay" signaled her disagreement and frustration. Bryan's disability was manifested in his repetition—as if he were "stuck" in the same way Jimmy and Joseph were. Here is an excerpt from their exchange in which they clashed over Retaj's thesis statement:

> Bryan: Yeah. Overall, I'm going to say one thing. I don't see your thesis.
>
> Jane: I didn't either and I wasn't sure where it was.
>
> Bryan: There was no thesis.
>
> Retaj: There was a thesis.
>
> Bryan: There was no thesis, no work cited page.
>
> Retaj: Mm-hmm (negative)

Retaj disagrees with both Bryan and Jane about whether Retaj had a thesis statement. The clash occurred without any of the students attempting to provide evidence for their assertions. Despite Retaj's rejection of her peers' comments, she was bothered by their agreement that her thesis statement was unclear. [51] In a later interview, she said:

> Honestly, I was a little bit upset because I think the thesis was the last one in the introduction. It was very clear. How come you didn't see it? Then when she said that she also didn't see the thesis, I was, "There is something wrong with my paper." That's why, it's not only him, it's both of them.

The implication is that Bryan's authority alone would not have been convincing to her, but since Jane also agreed, she had second thoughts. The transcript shows that despite her reconsideration

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[51] From my perspective, Bryan and Jane had a potentially useful critique of Retaj's thesis statement, which, in the draft they were reviewing, came after a series of broad and arguable claims. While Bryan and Jane were not 'wrong' about Retaj's paper, they did not explain their critique, and Retaj, in immediately rejecting their critique, did not ask them to explain what they meant.

in hindsight, she adamantly resisted their feedback at the time. Retaj's immediate rejection of her peers' critiques suggests that by that point in the PR, Retaj had little belief in their authority to give reliable feedback.

So far, I have shown how the question of Bryan's authority is entwined with Retaj's views of his disability, but I also want to highlight the ways in which Retaj viewed Bryan as a speaker and writer of English. That is, Bryan's identity as a native speaker and writer of American English should have contributed to his authority as a peer reviewer, especially given Retaj's use of the Authority Via Writing and Speaking processes, which caused Retaj to have high expectations for the native English speakers such as Sam and Jane. Why then, did Retaj have lower expectations for Bryan?

My claim here is that the combined effects of Bryan's racialized identity as an African American and his disability left him with little authority, less, in any case, than his peers. When the ability to speak and write Standad English was taken as a general sign of authority in PR, Bryan's lack of authority stands out. In one sense, a perception of Bryan's grasp of SEAE was canceled out by his identities as a disabled Black man. In other words, it was his racial identity, itself marked in the college classroom, that disqualified Bryan from being seen as a native speaker of English, with the attendant authority, since only whiteness was seen to be compatible with SEAE.[52] Indeed, the Arab students did not see themselves as students of color, preferring instead to describe themselves both as White and Arab-American. SEAE, then, is possible for a

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[52] The analysis is complicated by two additional factors that emerged from my interviews with Retaj. The first is based in Retaj's experience with disability. Her views on disability were mediated by her Arab and Islamic cultural beliefs, in which, according to her, disability is often concealed in the private sphere. Second, Retaj had problematic beliefs about the ways that African Americans speak English. To her, Black people generally speak English in "rude" and "disrespectful" ways, as compared to White people. She cited Bryan as an exception to this general rule.

student such as Asim, but not for Bryan. If Bryan's English had been marked by a nonstandard dialect,[53] I suspect his authority would have been even less.

In contrast, Jane's 'normal behavior,' her whiteness, together with her status as a monolingual English speaker, positioned her as the standard against which Bryan was made *other*. As Mary Bucholtz writes, "racialized language ideologies allow European Americans to imagine whiteness as normative, superior, and contrastive to minority linguistic and cultural groups" (14). Indeed, I would extend this point to include individuals like Retaj, who do not identify as "European Americans," but whose notions of difference nevertheless remain grounded in the "racialized language ideologies" that Bucholtz theorizes.

At the same time, Jane also had a perceivable disability. She attended class in a wheel chair for the entire semester, depending on an aide to wheel her into the classroom and then depending on her peers to open the classroom door during breaks. Yet, because her disability seemed physical rather than cognitive, and her speech was unmarked, it had no apparent effect on Retaj's appraisal of her PR authority. Instead, Retaj's appraisal of Jane depended on a deep-rooted ideology of disability that dichotomizes the cognitive and the physical. As Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson argue, "The mind/body split nevertheless persists in popular thinking and has several negative effects: It reinforces the deep prejudices against disabled people with mental illness and cognitive impairments . . ." (10). Although the wheel chair marked Jane as disabled, the "mind/body split" allowed her disability to be seen as physical rather than cognitive. Jane's authority was, therefore, untarnished in comparison to Bryan's.

**Conclusion**

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[53] If anything in addition to disability, Bryan's English was marked by hyper-standardness and nerdiness. See Eckert.

Viewing PR as a kairotic space illuminates what before were the unseen effects of normate time, alongside ideologies around language, disability, and race, on negotiations around authority. Wherein previous chapters, I have shown how ideologies around linguistic difference enabled some students to act, in Karen Spear's terms, as "teacher surrogates" (authoritative, directive) rather than "peer collaborators," as they attempted to correct their peers' writing, the emergence of markers of disability changed how students claimed authority over their peers and over their own work. This change is clear in the pattern of caregiving, itself a consequence of the constraints of kairotic space.

The implication is that *caregiving* is not the same as acting as *teacher surrogate*, though there are some overlaps. Caregiving, with its more medical and social service connotations, occurred outside the traditional construct of the teacher-student relationship because students are not simply correcting each other's work. As the examples from James's and Nathan's groups show, there was very little in the way of the direct correction that is characteristic of mimicking the teacher. For example, the ways that James and Nathan claimed authority was unlike what occurred in Arafat, Adam, and Zahra's group, where Adam claimed teacher surrogate status in order to correct Zarha's grammar, thus diminishing her ability to make authoritative comments. Neither James nor Nathan, nor other caregivers, ever corrected their disabled peers' grammar.

This difference between claiming authority as a teacher surrogate and claiming authority as a caregiver, on the hierarchical side of the continuum, has concerning implications. There is the suggestion that disability, while marked in language, signals a deficit that goes beyond language, and perhaps, beyond cultural difference as well. While ideologies around language also reach beyond language and culture, there is the notion that in remediating or standardizing language, one might somehow *remedy* the other deeper deficits that language difference signals

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or assimilate undesirable social characteristics (Lippi-Green). This is the notion that has shaped

educational language policy for decades: to teach SEAE in order recuperate the larger cultural

and intellectual deficits of those whose language has no cultural capital (Smitherman); failing

that, enforcing a standard dialect of English maintains the hierarchical status quo of various

cultural, ethnic, and racial groups (Sledd). In contrast, this notion is not present in disability

policy. Instead, since disability is already a medicalized deficit, it requires a more literal

remediation, a *medical* not *linguistic* remedy.

Thus, as hierarchical caregivers reproduce these invisible, divisive, and discriminatory

ideologies around disability, there is no need to address error in language. Caregiving, in other

words, is less about standardness in language and more about communicative, intellectual, and

behavioral normalcy. When James talks about how his peers needed more time, and when

Nathan talks about how he wanted Jimmy to be successful, they were both trading in this logic of

remediation that is not focused on language. Given this logic, it makes sense that more

chronological time, more guidance, would seem the remedy, not language correction.

So far, I have focused my analysis on linguistic and neurological diversity. However, as

my analysis of Retaj's group makes clear, other identity categories also played a central, though

less visible, role in authority dynamics: gender and race. James and Nathan, both white males,

acted as hierarchical caregivers, while Retaj and Aurora, both women of color, acted in less

hierarchical ways.

The division is clear, and the division works with dominant notions about authority itself,

since authority is marked as a largely masculine phenomenon "because men have traditionally

held most positions of authority and acts of asserting authority are often marked as masculine,

regardless of the actor's gender" (Mortensen and Kirsch 560). As Mortenson and Kirsch develop

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their notion of a "dialogic authority," turning to "an ethic of care" to destabilize hierarchical and masculine notions of authority, they argue that "we must recuperate authority by inflecting it with care" (565). Yet, as they acknowledge, such an inflection is also problematic since "defining the concept of care is no less problematic than defining authority. Care can easily lapse into paternalism—care imposed through authoritarian acts" (565). James's and Nathan's versions of caregiving are "lapsed" in this way, since they rely on a more authoritarian and masculine view of care. Aurora and Retaj, however, enact what might be seen as a more feminine view of care, a view that is, as Mortenson and Kirsch note, also deeply ingrained in ideologies around gender: the male as authoritarian and the female as caring.[54]

Nathan and James, however, are not just male; they are also white males, whose authority is bolstered by what Asao Inoue calls the "white racial habitus" of the writing classroom, where, as I have argued, standard English is aligned with whiteness and both are unmarked and generally seen as neutral. Since Nathan and James are both speakers of standard English, they can claim a multifaceted of privilege: maleness, whiteness, and standard language. As this chapter argues, they are also unmarked in terms of disability. Together, these characteristics certainly work with, and not against, the kairotic space of PR, itself embedded in the "white racial habitus" of the classroom, where James and Nathan embodied these dominant social categories. In contrast, all the other students had one or more identity characteristics that positioned them as at odds with the norms and expectations of classroom space. Yet as my

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[54] The dynamics of authority and temporality are also related to ideologies around gender, since, as I argue, authority is itself a gendered phenomenon. The students in this study did mention gender as a factor in the power dynamics of PR, and the data also showed a difference between all-female and all-male groups. Despite these themes, there was not enough space in this dissertation to account for these social dynamics. More research is therefore needed to understand potential overlaps between ideologies of language and ideologies of gender.

analysis of Retaj's views of Bryan illustrate, whiteness is a flexible attribute in PR that can be claimed by students, such as Asim or Adam, whose writing is more standard, but who in other contexts might be marked as non-white. Further, in PR negotiation, being marked as white holds the same if not more value as being marked as a writer of SEAE.

Of final note here is that Americanness, as an identity with strong ties to SEAE, also comes into play in this chapter, particularly for James in his interaction with Himmat, whose foreignness and linguistic otherness position him as in need of care. Indeed, returning to James's description of himself and parents as "from here" without anything "too cultural going on with us," it is clear that being marked as foreign and "cultural" suggests a lack of authority. As with Asim and Malcolm, Jane and Retaj, Bryan and Retaj, and Tracy and Abdul, Americanness works alongside whiteness and standard language ideology to bolster the *relational authority* of students who are able to claim Americanness relative to their peers. As I have argued above, the relation between Americanness and whiteness is demonstrated in Retaj's views of Bryan, whose identity as Black and disabled seems to negate the privilege of Americanness and SEAE. Thus, Americanness complicates the ways that students negotiated about authority in PR.

*Kairotic Co-Labor*

In accounting for the effects of multiple ideologies around difference, the theory of kairotic space allows for a capacious interrogation of how time, and timing, are influenced by social difference. For example, in Class B, when Elana and Ayman are in PR together, and Ayman, ashamed of his ability to read his own paper aloud, simply ends the session rather than face Elana's supposedly good-natured laughter, the effects of kairotic space are in force. Reading aloud is a fraught act, one that is also clearly spontaneous. Indeed, Ayman's reading is only marked because it occurs in a kairotic space. As he reads, a (dis)connect between reading and writing appears, leaving his audience to draw upon ideologies around speech and writing to

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appraise his authority.

How are we to imagine an alternative sequence of events? How does attention to kairotic space intervene in notions of neutrality and markedness? Returning to Price's description of kairotic space, how are instructors to intervene in "spontaneity" as it relates to "academic impact" in the time-space of PR? In choosing the label for this theory, I move away from the paradigm of *care* and *caring*, arguing that like the term *authority*, the concept of caring that inheres in *caregiving* or *caretaking*, cannot easily suggest a non-hierarchical view of peer interaction; it is weighed down by too much 'baggage.' Finally, I choose the term "co-labor" to signify the goal that students labor together, with equal chronological time and power.

At this point, I want to make clear that this working theory of kairotic co-labor is not an "accommodation" for students with disabilities or L2 students. It is meant for all students as a way to cope with the process of giving and receiving feedback in kairotic space. In kairotic co-labor, students make space for one another to contribute at their own pace (kairos), allow enough time (chronos) for their peers to finish their thoughts.

By acknowledging, at least theoretically, the effects of both kairos and chronos on student interaction, kairotic co-labor opens discursive space. In many ways, this is a revision of the "normal" "flow" of group interaction. In order to begin this process, instructors can introduce the notion of kairos and chronos, and then create a series of introductory rules to structure this new discourse. For example, instructors can equip students with ready-to-use phrases that signal whether (1) they need more time to process their peers' comments before responding, (2) they need to pause the conversation in order to write or otherwise render their thoughts, or (3) they need to rewind the conversation in order to contribute their idea. These signals could be delivered orally (e.g., "mind slowing down? I need a minute to think"; "can I press pause here?";

"wait, rewind"; "wait, rephrase") or via notecards with pre-written phrases that students can present to their peers as needed.

A key hypothesis of kairotic co-labor is that when students can control the pace of the conversation, they are more likely to feel like they have the authority to contribute to PR in the ways most comfortable for them. Further, given the power of "normate time," and the accompanying stigma attached to perceptions of temporality and intelligence (i.e., to mark someone as "slow" versus to mark someone as "quick-witted"), developing semiotic tools to alter the pace of conversation can authorize students who may otherwise choose not to participate. Helping students govern the pace of their PR discourse reinforces the notion of collaboration as *co-labor*, so that equal time suggests equal labor and an equal share of authority. Indeed, if the labor of peer review is the claiming of a non-hierarchical authority, then we can see inequities in time, both chronological and kairotic, as inequities in the labor of peer review.

Kairotic-co-labor, then, supports equal labor, but it need not do so in the strict confines of face-to-face conversation. Digital collaboration tools, such as Google Drive, allow students to occupy the same physical space as in face-to-face PR, but communicate in a medium that alters the pace of time. For example, if students use an online system to comment in 'real time' on their peers' drafts, students can draft their comments and responses without the pressure of having to find the right moment to make their comment orally. Instead of worrying about "thinking out his words" before he utters them, Joseph would be authorized to move at his own pace. Jimmy could have made his comment digitally, even if his attempt at making it orally failed.

# CHAPTER 6. Implications

By mapping the manifold ways in which authority defines people and relations of power—the discursive landscapes we and our students traverse—we can resurrect authority and make it more democratic, better suited to voices of both consensus and conflict.

-Peter Mortensen and Gesa E. Kirsch

There are three sections in this chapter. I begin by demonstrating how my findings chapters are linked by an analysis of authority, writ large. Indeed, the thread that binds the findings chapters is an analysis of the process of appraising, giving, and withholding authority in PR. In this first section, I ask, *given the ways that authority functioned in this study, what theoretical implications emerge?* From this consideration of theoretical implications, I move to the second section, pedagogy and practice, where I pose the following questions*: If a key goal of PR is to empower students in a non-hierarchical way, what can teachers gain from these findings? Specifically, what can teachers gain from reconsidering their assumptions about PR? And what can students gain, as writers, as, indeed, authors, if they reconsider their notions of authority in the writing classroom?* In the third and final section, I conclude by outlining areas for future research in both the immediate context collaborative learning and in the broader context of higher education. Thus, I move from a general synthesis of my findings to the theoretical and pedagogical implications, and further, to a consideration of future research.

Overall, this dissertation suggests that authority depends on a multifaceted construction of standardness in the writing classroom, where social categories are marked and maintained in relation to standardized English, normalcy in ability, and whiteness. Another theme of this analysis is that PR authority depends in large part on the question of understandability and

comprehension. If students are to do PR by discussing—and valuing—differing interpretations of each other's arguments, they will need to navigate the ableist ideologies as well as the language ideologies that support a perception of a communication barrier. That is, the barrier that students describe in their communication with students marked as disabled or multilingual is simply a given feature of the communicative landscape. Rather, as the product of ideology, the barrier is socially constructed. Rosina Lippi-Green's notion of the "communicative burden" helps shed light on this problem of barriers. Lippi-Green argues that speakers who can claim a dominant position in language, as, for example, a speaker of 'unaccented' standard English, tend to see their language as understandable while positioning another's language as incomprehensible, thus blaming a lack of communication on the other speaker. The "burden" of communication, then, falls to the speaker whose language is non-dominant in that context. If students are to collaborate in PR, they will require tools to navigate around inequitable communicative structures. If students do not have access to such tools, peer review discourse will continue to privilege the authority of certain students over others, and communication barriers will continue to be seen as a 'symptom' of unauthorized difference and deficit.

These hierarchical modes of PR discourse were a pattern, not a universal rule. A handful of PR groups managed to engage each other outside the pattern by enacting a non-hierarchical and relational mode of PR. In these cases, the groups were comprised of all women and always included one of two students, Aurora or Cee, both of whom were non-traditionally aged women of color. As my analysis suggests, hierarchical caregiving was associated more often with male students, who embraced an authoritarian way of caring for their peers. One implication here is that kairotic space is related to masculine norms of communication and interaction. Therefore,

gender, as well as a renewed focus on age and race, are potentially productive lines of future enquiry, building on the work of scholars like Karen Spear.

**Theoretical Implications**

In the section above, I have provided a synthesis of the dissertation's analysis, sketching out how authority functioned across the findings chapters and across the student population. I now turn to the following question: *Given the ways that authority functioned in this study, what theoretical implications emerge, or, in other words, what are the larger implications of this analysis of authority in PR groups?* As I have shown, peer review is a fragile process—easily sidetracked or undermined, and easily repurposed by students in ways that (re)produce problematic power dynamics among students and between students and instructors.

For this reason, I open this section with the following implication: as social divisions deepen in the U.S., or, at least, as we acknowledge the long-standing social divisions and the discrimination (re)produced in those divisions, peer review is a pedagogical and social risk. If writing programs or instructors choose to use PR, they can consider carefully how much energy they are willing to invest, for without a sizable initial investment in preparation, my analysis shows that PR may not work as intended. Even with such preparation, students may do as they please with the power they receive; and, like instructors, they will almost certainly bring to the classroom larger ideologies about language, identity, and authority. If instructors choose not to acknowledge those larger ideologies in relation to PR, they risk creating a space in which certain identities are privileged over others, even as instructors attempt to move their students in the direction of inclusion.

This implication of PR as risk extends into the bedrock of Rhetoric and Composition's tenets about writing as a recursive and social process that is shaped by the expectations of an

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audience in relation to the goals of the writer (Lunsford). The choice to use PR in class begins to expose the possible contradictions between the idealistic goals of writing instruction and the limits and constraints of classroom ideologies. In short, instructors may hope to *authorize* students, but the process of such authorization, via PR, is an uncomfortable one, not least because of the required effort to cede authority in ways that do not invite students to take on the role of "teacher surrogate."

Thus, one theoretical implication is that as scholars and instructors of Writing Studies continue to consider the effects of race, multilingualism, disability and other categories of social identity on writing pedagogy, existing theories that account for such effects need to include collaborative learning in general and PR specifically as a site of theoretical investigation. For example, what would a theory of PR look like if it were informed by Suresh Canagrajah's translingual theory, or Asao Inoue's antiracist pedagogy, or Melanie Yergeau's work on disability? The claim here is that these theories do not as of yet devote sufficient space to collaborative learning, even as they encourage students and instructors to engage one another on challenging questions around identity and writing. Indeed, one might argue that theories of translingualism, antiracism, and disability need to be tested in the real-time space of collaborative learning, where students would have to enact these theoretical and experiential stances. If, for example, a pedagogy of social justice cannot work effectively in the relative confines of collaborative learning or PR, what is its value as a pedagogical approach?

A related implication is that no ideology works alone in PR or in the negotiations around authority. That is, ideologies around race intersect with ideologies such as disability, gender, language. This calls for intersectional methods in further research about authority in PR, as I outline in the final section of this chapter. A final implication proceeds from ideologies of

standardness. So far, I have suggested that these ideologies shaped the ways that students negotiated their authority in PR. Here, I want to suggest, in addition, that given these ideologies and their manifestations, PR itself acted as a force of standardization and normalization.

That is, an implication of this study is that PR can be seen as a space that normalizes and standardizes languages and ways of being that are marked as deviant in relation to the norms of the classroom. Across the findings chapters, many students, as caregivers, sought to normalize their peers as writers and as individuals. Some of these students, such as James, embodied normalcy and standardness, and positioned their peers as in need of standardization. PR was a convenient, even common sense, space in which to attempt this standardization. Further, this study shows that inherent in the process of appraising—or perhaps assessing—is the process of *othering* itself, for standardization begins by marking the standard versus the non-standard, where the *other* is always-already non-standard.

Finally, there is the implication of an overall ideology that construes standardness as prerequisite to excellence (or high-level writing). Students help one another become more standard because standardness is seen as both prerequisite to and feature of excellence. Further, in the act of standardizing their peers, students can claim the authority of standardness itself. To be able to standardize, then, is to claim the privileges of standardness.

## Practice and Pedagogy

A common narrative is that the field of Rhetoric and Composition has struggled in its relationship to theory and academic research, on one hand, and its pedagogical imperative on the other (e.g. the institutional and ethical mandate to prioritize teaching versus the mandate to prioritize research). In many ways, this dissertation reflects this duality. It sits at the intersection of theory and practice. Theories of language ideology, of authorship, of power, of identity, of

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disability, of intersectionality, of literacy, of learning, of temporality, and of writerly invention and revision all shaped how and why students gave and received feedback in the ways they did. So too did the pedagogical choices instructors made about PR. Indeed, the disconnect or paradox of theory alongside practice shaped what instructors intended in PR and what actually played out in the PR groups. In other words, the theories that instructors used to design PR were in many ways, and with few exceptions, inaccessible to their students, who brought their own notions of authority and writing to their PR groups.

As I have argued, PR has the capacity to reinforce ideologies around standard English, around disability, and a plethora of other social characteristics that shape how students appraise each other. Instructors can therefore plan for students to undermine the goals of PR, by (1) mimicking the hierarchical authority of their instructor, (2) assuming a problematic caregiving stance relative to their peers, (3) disregarding feedback from any peer whose writing is seen as deficient or whose language or ability is marked in some way, or (4) otherwise asserting dominance in a manner that deauthorizes, silences, or sidelines some students but also authorizes others.[55] In short instructors should assume that students will bring in the ideologies that support these undermining moves. In not assuming such problems, instructors ignore some of the effects of difference in PR and in the classroom more generally. My suggestions for instructors, then, may offer little in the way of middle-ground: either PR is carried out in a way that engages questions of power, or it is not.

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[55]I am not arguing that all feedback should be heeded; of course, not all feedback is equally helpful. Instead, I am arguing that since authority and feedback have such a close relationship to social identity, instructors can assume that students will not accept feedback without considering social identity.

In this study, the instructors recognized the possibility of using PR to foster authority in and through cross-cultural dialogue. For example, according to the Class A's syllabus, PR was one of six "Course learning outcomes," so that "by the end of 2XX students will be able to: Give useful feedback in response to the writing of others." This goal is on par with larger goals such as being able to "Use knowledge of concepts like purpose, audience, cultural context, evidence (especially textual evidence), and rhetorical appeals to compose and revise academic genres effectively." Further, the instructor highlighted the importance of PR, pointing specifically to "learning to collaborate with peers across difference." In sum, PR was to function not only as a tool for writing development (for giving and receiving "useful feedback") but as a tool for learning to collaborate "across difference." PR's function, then, was social as much as academic. Despite these intentions, ideologies around standardness and normalcy presented a continuous challenge, leaving students to define for themselves—often in ways that drew on notions of standardness, correctness, and normalcy—what 'good' PR was, and who, accordingly, would be 'good' at it.

As my findings show, students worked across difference, but did so in ways that exposed underlying ideologies around disability, language difference, and more obliquely, whiteness. That is, since many students thought they were helping (i.e., caregiving in a hierarchical mode), the interaction of some groups could hardly be called collaboration. Indeed, if *collaboration,* in the context of the course syllabus, suggests a balance or sharing of power "across difference," then many groups were not collaborating, since one student's labor as a peer reviewer was valued more than another student's, especially when that labor proceeded from an assumption of deficit.

How, then, can instructors work against these dynamics? Accounting for standard language ideology, broadly conceived to include any deviation from an imagined norm in communication, can destabilize the hierarchical notions of authority. Indeed, hierarchical notions of authority depended on a baseline of standardness in language and communication for its (re)production. This dissertation also implies that providing detailed guidelines or directions for PR does not guarantee a collaborative enactment of PR. Other methods are necessary to train students in a less hierarchical practice of PR. One possible intervention is to model effective PR, as the literature suggests. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example, by having students create skits that enact the failure or success of PR. When challenging moments arise in their actual PR practice, students can learn to recognize them, and suggest circumventions or redirections. For example, instructors and students might think first about interruption as a signal of problematic power dynamics: what happens when a student is interrupted, or does not get to finish their contribution? Instructors can also help students confront the problem of consensus: what if you disagree with everyone or vice versa? How can the group move forward? Skits could provide a useful way to *show* rather than *tell* students about effective PR. Skits that involve turn-taking or interruption provide a clear illustration of the potential for PR, as a kairotic space, to reinforce dominant voices.

Further, time is a complex phenomenon in PR. In both findings chapters, time is a fraught variable. As I argued in the final section of Chapter 5, instructors might use the constructs of kairos and chronos to help make PR more inclusive, pointing out *enough time* also means leaving time within the "flow" of conversation for students to make their points. Giving students the language to name and recognize the effects of kairos and chronos can help them maintain their

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own authority. I wish to reiterate this point, since my more specific suggestions in Chapter 5 are not designed to account only for neurological diversity, but to all writing classrooms.

In first-year writing courses, instructors might attend carefully to chronological time by allowing *more than enough time* for each PR group. This suggestion seems like common sense, as thinking about time is a central aspect of class planning. Yet, the problem of time in PR points to the larger problem of taking PR as a matter of course rather than a high-stakes, challenging, and potentially counter-productive classroom activity. Instructors might consider deliberately allocating too much time to PR, since students often use the extra time to chat about their upcoming assignments, their social lives, or other topics, all of which can build interpersonal rapport, which, in turn, can improve the quality of PR. If students are to invest the time and energy needed to participate fully in PR, then they need enough chronological time, during and after PR, to act on what should be ideas for substantial revision. Without that time for revision, these students, who were used to balancing many academic, professional, and personal responsibilities, students often chose to hand in their papers with little revision.

For example, in Class B, the timeline also might have stymied the original intent of PR, as stated in the guidelines: to offer substantive suggestions for substantive revision. Since the students knew they'd have little time to revise, they might have been even more reticent about feedback of their peers in general. Since the PR session took place on Monday night, ending at 8:50PM, and the final paper was due the following night at midnight, the students had little time to revise. This timeline certainly impacted the revision processes of the students. For example, Malcolm said that because he had to study for an exam before the paper was due, he did not have enough time to revise his paper substantially. As we talked more about his revision process, Malcolm added, "I really wanted to make it more of my own opinion. I added a few things.

Where is it? I made a claim somewhere here." Malcolm was referring to a series of small but key revisions. For example, towards the end of his first paragraph, Malcolm added the following sentence that moved the paper away from the "research" genre and closer to the "opinion" genre: "I myself follow that claim." There were two other instances in which Malcolm made similar additions that took into account his peers' feedback. Save for these very small revisions, Malcolm's paper was identical from draft to final. Malcolm expressed frustration that he did not have time to make more revisions based on his PR session.

Instructor feedback and assessment are both threats to PR because they risk prioritizing instructor feedback over student feedback, recentering instructor authority even as the instructor attempts to decenter authority. For this reason, the question of instructor feedback in relation to peer feedback is a conundrum. While instructors can find ways to incentivize students to do PR, this study shows that extra credit is a poor way to incentivize students. By contending for extra credit, students in Class B suggest to their peers that they are not in fact an authentic audience. Instead the action of PR becomes refocused on their individual relationship with the instructor. If students race to get extra credit on their PR notes, they play the game set out before them: to gain points by using their peers' writing as vehicle to carry their individual grades higher. In the near-term, this action deauthorizes them in the eyes of the peers, who will suspect that the PR comments are not real, but written just for a grade. In the long-term, however, in the potential to gain a higher grade in the course, students gain the authorization of the instructor and university, even if that authorization is built on the ability to game the system in the ways the system allows itself to be gamed.

In courses that include second language writers or basic writing students, extra credit is especially problematic. The attempt at extra credit connects to worries about larger problems: the

possibility of failing the course. Also, for second language writers, there is the continuing threat of institutional censure and placement: if they were assessed as remedial, surely they were at further risk of failure. Extra credit, then, becomes doubly important, so too the idea that they were writers capable of meeting the instructor's challenge. To score extra credit would suggest mastery over deficit, standardness over non, mainstream over remedial status. Positioning oneself in this way might be a way to make a case against further remediation. Further, in classes that mix L1 and L2 writers, reading aloud can have an inequitable effect, as advanced English speakers, or even students who are skilled readers, gain authority by reading aloud while others lose authority. If students jockey to be last in line, as Ayman did, so as to participate less fully in the PR process, which depends generally on the willingness of the students to engage with each other, this will almost certainly affect the dynamics of authorization. Instructors should not force their students to read aloud.

Further, in planning assessment in relation to PR, instructors can ensure that their grading systems or rubrics are aligned with the PR guidelines. If, for example, instructors choose to use a points system for grading student papers, and such a system accounts for sentence-level issues, formatting, or citation styles, as well as more holistic aspects of student writing, instructors might expect students to claim authority by hunting for sentence-level errors that will help their peers gain points in those areas. Error-hunting might be especially attractive to students because, in addition to its familiarity as a deficit-oriented mode of teacher-student feedback, it allows students to provide feedback on less complex matters that nevertheless can help students improve their grades in an efficient manner. That they chose to focus on this makes sense. Given the notion that students do not possess the authority to critique each other's papers in terms of the larger ideas, and given the students' focus on writing "level," a focus on the more concrete

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considerations of "formatting," where there is a clearer right or wrong answer, allows students to maximize the effectiveness of PR in raising their grade. This dynamic unfolded in Class B, since the points system for each paper worked against substantial revision by valuing sentence-level correctness and formatting as 30 percent of the grade. Attending to sentence-level or formatting questions was therefore a productive use of energy.

Of course, in error-hunting, students might not attend to the larger goals of peer review: substantial global revision rather than "fixing" mistakes. If instructors choose to use such a grading system, they might consider creating a rotating student role in PR devoted to sentence-level concerns. This would work with rather than against students' urge to error-hunt by acknowledging that peers have the option to read for sentence-level problems. But attention to sentence-level problems would be contained, as it were, since one student would be responsible for such work. The role of error-hunter would then shift, so that no one student is always looking at sentence-level problems. Further, students, when faced with potentially misleading feedback, could consult a handbook or other resource that would either prove or disprove their peers' feedback.

A remaining paradox of PR is that it is meant to promote autonomy and authority, but is required by the instructor. In Gere's terms, class-sponsored PR aspires to semi-autonomy. There is, however, much space between semi-autonomy and non-autonomy. The question becomes, how can instructors give their students the most autonomy possible? Instructors might devise ways to allow students to choose their own groups, perhaps through a lottery in which students request which peers they'd like to work with. This can be done privately with the instructor, so that students are protected from feeling rejected or the classic school-yard scenario in which some students are picked first and some picked last.

Problems of hierarchical authority and ideology are rooted not only in larger societal ideologies, but also, as I have shown, in the specific context of the writing classroom, where feedback is driven by an attention to correction and peer relations remain inflected by an individualistic and hierarchical notion of authority. These specific ideologies around authority contribute to a disconnect between how instructors view PR (ideally, as a chance for students to claim a non-hierarchical kind of authority and authorship) and how students envision it (as a chance to help their peers by mimicking the hierarchical relation between teachers and students based on correction and standardization). How, then, can instructors address this disjuncture?

Instructors can begin PR by asking students to describe their previous experience with PR, as well as their conceptions of the goals of PR. This can be carried out anonymously to allow students to articulate their experience and conceptions as honestly as possible. Instructors can then address common experiences with and conceptions about PR. Doing this signals to students that their experiences matter in PR. Instructors can also introduce their own experiences with and conceptions of PR, in the classroom as well as in their academic careers. Instructors might use examples of peer review from the "real world" to show students that PR is a useful and necessary part of the writing process, not a way for the instructor to save time or not respond to student work. By mapping student views of PR, in their variation, alongside instructor views, students and instructors construct a common point of departure for PR over the course of the semester.

In order to further establish appropriate expectations for PR, instructors can provide a brief summary of the potential benefits and problems of PR, using both empirical research and student testimonials to make these claims. In naming of common pitfalls and benefits, instructors provide a series of way-points for students to use in navigating the complex straights of PR. This work also can provide a common language to speak about PR. For example, instructors can point

out that students benefit from PR by learning to give feedback with authority, but that the benefits of PR might be weakened when students use a hierarchical mode of authority.

Instructors also might point out that a focus on sentence-level concerns is less useful, since drafts are not finished products, and, besides neglecting a more advanced notion of revision, the effort students exert attempting to correct each other might be wasted in the long-run. The students in this study showed themselves to be excellent at prioritizing their academic tasks, spending no more time that was necessary, looking for extra credit when possible, and estimating how much their grade would improve against the effort of revision. In this canniness, students might be open to an appeal based on efficiency.

**Future Research**

Intersectional theory and methods, I argue, might be a productive way to account for the always overlapping consequences of social difference in PR. Here, I suggest that since there is no fixed link between language and identity or disability and identity, intersectional methods based in critical race theory and disability studies might work well with a translingual stance on authority in PR. That is, bringing translingual theory into conversation with intersectional theory might open new space for investigations of authority and difference in PR, because translingual theory can account for language difference, disability theory for neurodiversity, and critical race theory for race and gender.

As Devon W. Carbado argues, intersectional approaches are not limited to examinations of race and gender. Rather, intersectionality helps investigate "multiple axes of difference—class, sexual orientation, nation, citizenship, immigration status, disability, and religion" (815), as well as a "range of complex social processes—classism, homophobia, xenophobia, nativism, ageism, ableism, and Islamophobia" (815). While Carbado does not include linguistic difference

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in this sample of categories and processes, language, as a social marker and identity process, is an inherent part of many of these categories, e.g., class and classism, nationality and xenophobia, and disability and ableism. Studying it as a site of intersection, then, will add to existing work that charts power relations.

Furthermore, Carbado includes masculinity, whiteness, and heterosexuality—social categories that generally do not lead to oppression—as worthy of intersectional study:

> Framing intesectionality as only about women of color gives masculinity, whiteness, and maleness an intersectional pass. That, in turn, leaves colorblind intersectionality and gender-blind intersectionality unnamed and uninterrogated, further naturalizing white male heterosexuality as the normative baseline against which the rest of us are intersectionally differentiated. (Carbado 841).

That is, leaving the effects of white male heterosexuality, as site of "triply blind intersectionality" (818), unmarked and uncharted, allows them to remain invisible. In future studies, *speaker of standardized English* would add another layer to this calculus, since the standard is always at risk of becoming normative and invisible as it differentiates others. John Trimbur makes a parallel argument about standardization in language when he writes, "Standardization derives its authority not by discovering and codifying formal systems that somehow reside *inside* language but by going unmarked and escaping critical attention" (225). Tobin Siebers's argument that able-bodiedness acts as a "compulsory . . . baseline for almost every perception of human interaction, action, and condition" (1) also uses the metaphor of "baselines" and "standards." These parallel arguments show that scholars of intersectionality and scholars of language are already using a mutually compatible theoretical language to understand the workings of power. Future studies can build on this shared theoretical foundation.

# APPENDICES

Appendix A: Peer Review Directions for Class A

**Peer Review Directions for Class A**

*PR 1*

**Author's Name**:

COMP XXX/Fall 2016          **Reviewer's Name**:

Peer Review/Assignment #9

**In class, Tues. Oct. 25**

Author:  Think about what in particular you'd like your reviewer to respond to/help you to think about (e.g., an introduction that might be made more rhetorically effective; ways to strengthen your use of references or integration of quoted material; ways to more effectively or creatively use concrete and specific details, etc.).   Please be as specific as possible about those aspects of your draft here (citing page and/or paragraph numbers):

Reviewer:  Use another sheet if necessary.  **Be as specific as possible in your observations and suggestions to the author.**  Leave yourself at least 10 minutes at the end of class to return and *discuss* your reviews with their authors.

*Authors should submit their revised draft under "Assignment #9" before class next Tuesday. Next Tuesday please bring to class the reviews written for you, along with your first draft.*

*As the course introduction states, I will not accept a final draft of a formal essay unless it has been reviewed by 2 peers and then revised substantially, taking into account feedback you receive.  If in the rare event you feel you have not received adequate suggestions for revision during the peer review, before leaving class please talk to me so I can give you feedback.*

1) Please tell the author whether or not you think this draft of the essay begins to adequately fulfill the assignment: i.e., does the author make use of specific examples and concrete details from personal experience in addition to reference(s) to (direct quotations from) Slahi's book and at least one other resource as she examines her own experience with *communication, language, and learning or personal growth*? If the essay fails to answer the assignment broadly, give the author some initial advice on adjusting it.

2) Does this draft show evidence of the author thinking *rhetorically* - i.e., does it show evidence of the author making specific, rhetorical choices that help "connect" with his readers? Is the essay geared to an audience of college peers? What specifically in the draft makes you think so? For example, does the author use a personal story that these readers might *relate* to? How so?

3) Please think about the controlling idea or "meaning" (thesis) of this essay, and put it into your own words here. (Do not simply repeat the author's words; rather, paraphrase what you

think he might be trying to get across.)  As a reader, what do you find interesting about this idea?

4) Does the author go beyond telling her readers about her experiences to *showing them* what those experiences have meant through offering specific and concrete details?  Given what the author is trying to get across, does she choose details and examples effectively?  How so?  How might she strengthen her use of specific detail?  (Be as specific as possible here, pointing to places in the draft, suggesting wording, etc.)

5) Might the author consider using any of the rhetorical strategies described in the *Writing across Borders* video in order to more effectively or creatively "connect" with his readers?  How so?  In particular, might he consider organizing his essay differently, in order to more effectively "draw in" his readers?

6) This is an early draft and so the author almost certainly has work yet to do.  Keeping in mind the main idea of the draft, point to a few, specific places that leave you wanting to read more.  Which ideas or observations do you find especially interesting – places that might be worth extending or substantiating with further details or examples?  What questions could you ask to help the author do this?  Are there any places where the author needs to clarify what she is saying?  Give the author some advice for strengthening these sections.

7)  How might the author better use *Guántanamo Diary* (and perhaps the *Writing across Borders* video) as a resource for extending his ideas, or how might he use them in a new way? (Pointing to one or more particular passages in the reading and/or being as concrete as possible would be most helpful here!)

8)  Is quoted material integrated or 'framed' adequately (i.e., introduced and commented on) by the author's own words and ideas?  How might she improve her use of quotations?  (See DK Handbook pp. 182-183 for suggestions on "signaling verbs," "weaving" quotations into an author's line of thinking, etc.)

9) Now pay attention not only to what the author is saying but to how she is saying it.  In particular, give her some feedback on such aspects as paragraphing and organization, as well as

on *patterns* of error in grammar or punctuation.  Be as specific as possible with regard to how/where the author could improve such aspects.


10) Does the author use correct APA format for citing quoted, paraphrased or summarized material, and for a list of References?  Please give specific guidance in this regard.


11) Tell the author (and me) what you have learned about **writing and researching your own** essay through doing this review.


*PR 2*

Please post a completed draft. of your essay here, before the beginning of class on Tues. Nov. 15. (Assignment #11)

**Peer review rubric:  in class, Tues. Nov 15**

 Author:  Think about what in particular you'd like your reviewer to respond to/help you to think about (e.g., an introduction that might be made more rhetorically effective; ways to strengthen your use of references or integration of quoted material; ways to more effectively or creatively use concrete and specific details, etc.).   Please be as specific as possible about those aspects of your draft in a note to your reviewers.

 Reviewers:  **Be as specific as possible in your observations and suggestions to the author, and be sure to have completed both of your peer reviews before the beginning of class on Thursday Nov. 17.**

 *As the course introduction states, I will not accept a final draft of a formal essay unless it has been reviewed by 2 peers and then revised substantially, taking into account feedback you receive.  If in the rare event you feel you have not received adequate suggestions for revision during the peer review, please talk to me immediately.*

 1) Please tell the author whether or not you think this draft of the essay begins to adequately fulfill the assignment: i.e., does the author make use of specific examples and concrete details from personal experience in addition to quotations from both Slahi's and Junger's books and at least one additional scholarly source identified through the library's databases as she explores the question of what it means to "belong" in/to contemporary, U.S. society – or a particular

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community within U.S. society?  If the essay fails to answer the assignment broadly, give the author some initial advice on adjusting it.

 2) Does this draft show evidence of the author thinking *rhetorically* - i.e., does it show evidence of the author making specific, rhetorical choices that help him "connect" with his readers?  What particular rhetorical strategies does the author employ that you see as effective?  How might he make stronger rhetorical choices and/or use specific rhetorical appeals?  Be concrete.

 3) Please think about the controlling idea or "meaning" (thesis) of this essay, and put it into your own words here.  (Do not simply repeat the author's words; rather, paraphrase what you think he might be trying to get across.)  As a reader, what do you find interesting about this idea?

 4) Does the author go beyond telling her readers about her experiences to *showing them* what those experiences have meant through offering specific and concrete details?  Given what the author is trying to get across, does she choose details and examples effectively?  How so?  How might she strengthen her use of specific detail?  (Be as specific as possible here, pointing to places in the draft, suggesting wording, etc.)

 5) This is an early draft and so the author almost certainly has work yet to do.  Keeping in mind the main idea of the draft, point to a few, specific places that leave you wanting to read more.  Which ideas or observations do you find especially interesting – places that might be worth extending or substantiating with further details or examples?  Are there any places where the author needs to clarify what she is saying?  Give the author some advice for strengthening these sections.

 6) How might the author better use *Guántanamo Diary* and *Tribe* as resources for extending his ideas, or how might he use them in a new way?  (Pointing to one or more particular passages in the reading would be most helpful here!)

 7)  Is quoted material integrated or 'framed' adequately (i.e., introduced and commented on) by the author's own words and ideas?  How might she improve her use of quotations? (See DK Handbook pp. 182-183 for suggestions on "signaling verbs," "weaving" quotations into an author's line of thinking, etc.)

 8) Now pay attention not only to what the author is saying but to how she is saying it.  In particular, give her some feedback on such aspects as paragraphing and organization, as well as on *patterns* of error in grammar or punctuation.  Does the author use correct APA format for citing quoted material, and for a list of References?  Be as specific as possible with regard to how/where the author could improve such aspects.

 9) Tell the author (and me) what you have learned about *writing and researching your own* essay through doing this review.

In class Directions for PR #2:

**Step 1.** Start each **review** by discussing a few positive attributes of the essay in question. Be specific about which parts are working and discuss what the student's strengths are.

**Step 2.** Share with the group what you think of the essay's argument, **referring to question 3 of the peer review questions.** Discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing interpretation of the argument. Then address any confusion or questions you had about the argument. Point to specific areas of the essay where the argument got off track and discuss how they could be improved.

**Step 3:** Discuss the other issues that you commented on as needing work. Each point that a student brings up should be discussed by the group before moving on to the next issue. Each point should also be discussed in relation to specific areas of the essay. *AGAIN: Avoid conversations about sentence-level issues unless a sentence interfered with your ability to understand the overall argument.* These issues can be reserved for margin comments.

**Step 4:** Once all points have been covered thoroughly, the writer should ask any follow-up questions he or she has. The questions can be ones that he or she had before the workshop and/or questions that arose during the workshop.

**Step 5:** Once all students have been **reviewed**, use any remaining time to work on the issues that came up. You may look over your peers' feedback and ask more questions, freewrite about the argument, write a revision to do list, or work on clarifying areas that were pointed out during workshop.

*PR 3*

COMP XXX/Fall 2016
Peer Review/Assignment #12
In class, Tues Dec 6

Author:  Think about what in particular you'd like your reviewer to respond to/help you to think about (e.g., an introduction that might be made more rhetorically effective; ways to strengthen your use of references or integration of quoted material; ways to more effectively or creatively use concrete and specific details, etc.).   Please be as specific as possible about those aspects of your draft in a note to your reviewers.

Reviewers:  **Be as specific as possible in your observations and suggestions to the author, and be sure to have completed both of your peer reviews and posted them to your group's Discussions thread \*before\* the beginning of class on Thursday Dec 8.**

*As the course introduction states, I will not accept a final draft of a formal essay unless it has been reviewed by 2 peers and then revised substantially, taking into account feedback you receive.  If in the rare event you feel you have not received adequate suggestions for revision during the peer review, please talk to me immediately/before you leave class.*

1) Please tell the author whether or not you think this draft of the essay begins to adequately fulfill the assignment: i.e., does the author draw on at least 2 scholarly journal articles in order to *advocate for a particular position, or change in public policy or practice within contemporary, U.S. society – or a particular community within U.S. society of which she is a member?* Does the author also teach *a particular audience (which she has identified, one which goes beyond the audience of this class)* something new about the topic/area she has chosen? If the essay fails to answer the dual purpose of this assignment, give the author some initial advice on adjusting it.

2) Does this draft show evidence of the author thinking *rhetorically* - i.e., does it show evidence of the author making specific, rhetorical choices that help him "connect" with his intended audience? What particular rhetorical strategies does the author employ that you see as effective? Could he make stronger or more creative rhetorical choices for the audience he has in mind – *while also being sure to rely primarily on data and research, rather than on mere personal "opinion"?* Be concrete.

3) Please think about the controlling idea or "meaning" (thesis) of this essay, and put it into your own words here. (Do not simply repeat the author's words; rather, paraphrase what you think he might be trying to get across.) As a reader, what do you find interesting about this idea?

4) Given what the author is trying to get across, does she choose details and examples from her sources effectively? How so? Might she better use the *scholarly journal articles included in the draft, or might she search for additional articles*, in order *to* extend her ideas? (Be as specific as possible here, pointing to places in the draft, suggesting key words for a new search, etc.)

5) This is an early draft and so the author almost certainly has work yet to do. Keeping in mind the main idea of the draft, point to a few, specific places that leave you wanting to read more. Which ideas or observations do you find especially interesting – places that might be worth extending or substantiating with further details or examples? Are there any places where the author needs to clarify what she is saying? Give the author some advice for strengthening these sections.

6) Is quoted material integrated or 'framed' adequately (i.e., introduced and commented on) by the author's own words and ideas? How might she improve her use of quotations? (See DK Handbook pp. 182-183 for suggestions on "signaling verbs," "weaving" quotations into an author's line of thinking, etc.)

7) Now pay attention not only to what the author is saying but to how she is saying it. In particular, give her some feedback on such aspects as paragraphing and organization, as well as on *patterns* of error in grammar or punctuation. Does the author use correct APA format for citing quoted material, and for a list of References? Be as specific as possible with regard to how/where the author could improve such aspects.

8) Tell the author (and me) what you have learned about *writing and researching your own* essay through doing this review.

Appendix B: Peer Review Directions for Class B

**Peer Review Directions for Class B**

*PR 1*

## Review for WA #3
Due today

1. Write your responses **on a separate page** in well-formed and organized **sentences and paragraphs**, and clearly indicate the names of the reviewer and the author **at the <u>upper left corner</u> of your review, in the following way:**
   > Reviewer:  [YOUR NAME]
   > Author:  [THE NAME ON THE ESSAY YOU ARE REVIEWING]

   **Include the words *Reviewer* and *Author* as indicated above. <span style="color:red">This is the only identifier that you need at the top of the page, (which is different from the standard formatting on all other assignments).</span>**
2. Your review is a mini essay (sentences and paragraphs); do **NOT** include numbers or bullet points.
3. Each review must be about one full page of double-spaced text (around 200-300 words). Extra credit points can be earned for extra detail on any one review (350 words or more – about 1½ pages or more). In addition, extra points can be earned for writing more than two reviews. But keep in mind that points will be lost if you write a brief review (150 words or fewer – ½ page or less).
4. Read at least two drafts, and **write at least two reviews**, of the others in your group.
5. When you have finished writing a review, do these things:
   a. Upload it to Canvas>Assignments>"Review for WA #3" for your professor.
   b. Print it, and give that hard copy to the person it was written for (Author) and <u>discuss it</u> with him/her.
   c. Start this process over again with the other person in your group. If time allows, start a third review.
6. **Be sure that you leave today with the reviews <u>written for you.</u>**

**Review Prompts:**
Consider the assignment instructions:  does the author's essay adequately fulfill the requirements of the assignment?
 o Does the essay appropriately introduce an article relating to Edward Snowden and his leak of U.S. government documents with a signal phrase that includes

- author's full name,
- article title (in quotation marks),

- publication title (in italics),
- and date of publication?

- Is the article summarized clearly and sufficiently (2-3 paragraphs)?
- Is the author's response to the article clear, interesting, well-organized, and sufficient (3-4 paragraphs)?
- Is there a properly formatted Work Cited page at the end; see the sample paper at Canvas>Files>Resources and/or the Purdue OWL website if needed.

Give the author **specific feedback** on how/where to make adjustments on these points.

Can you point to any places that leave you wanting to read more? Pick out a couple of ideas which you find especially interesting, which might be worth extending or substantiating: **what questions could you ask** to help the author do this? How might the author use her personal experience or observations more productively?

Give the author some feedback on organization and attention to detail. For example, does it "flow" smoothly on both the sentence and paragraph levels? **Does the essay follow the formatting guidelines accurately?** How/where could the author improve such aspects?

Tell the author what you find most effective or interesting about the draft thus far. **Point to one or more specific words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and/or passages** in the author's essay and explain why you feel this way.

*PR 2*

## REVIEW FOR WA #5
## This review is very different from what you have done in the past.
## <u>The focus this time is on dialogue.</u>

## Read the following guidelines very carefully:

Each author will read his/her essay out loud (and also group members should read along on their copies). The others in the group will listen attentively and take "mental notes." Some suggestions for what to listen for are listed below.

After the reader finishes reading his/her essay, the group should have a discussion about that essay—see below again.

After the author feels satisfied that the conversation has provided "something to go on" in terms of revision (**10-20 minutes or so**), then exchange roles and repeat the same procedure until everyone in the group has read his/her essay and had a conversation about it.

---

Things to listen for and—and have a discussion about—during the review process:

**Step 1.** Start each review/conversation by discussing a few <u>positive attributes</u> of the essay in question. Be specific about which parts are working and discuss what the student's strengths are.
**Step 2.** Share with the group what you think of <u>the essay's argument</u>. Discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing interpretation of the argument. Then address any confusion or questions you had about the argument. Point to *specific* areas of the essay where the argument got off track and discuss how they could be improved.

---

**Step 3:** Discuss any other issues that the group brings up, perhaps about organization/paragraph length, clarity, formatting, etc. Each point that a student brings up should be discussed by the group before moving on to the next issue. Each point should also be discussed in relation to *specific* areas of the essay. *Avoid conversations about sentence-level issues unless a sentence interfered with your ability to understand the overall argument. In that case, try to explain why and how to address the problem.*

**Step 4:** Once all points have been covered thoroughly, the writer should ask any follow-up questions he or she has. The questions can be ones that he or she had before the workshop and/or questions that arose during the workshop.

At the end of this process, each author should **write a "Revision Plan"—a mini-essay (about 300 words)** detailing how **YOU** will proceed with revision and research ON YOUR ESSAY based on your conversation about your draft. Over 350 words will be assessed extra credit points. **This writing will be turned in on Canvas.**

*PR 3*

## REVIEW FOR WA #6
### The focus is again on dialogue,
### but the process is slightly different (in <span style="color:red">red</span> below).

### Read the following guidelines very carefully:

<span style="color:red">Each author will have his/her essay read by another group member</span>; the author and others in the group should read along on their copies). Those listening to the reader will listen attentively and take "mental notes." Some suggestions for what to listen for are listed below.

After the reader finishes reading his/her essay, the group should have a discussion about that essay—see below again.

After the author feels satisfied that the conversation has provided "something to go on" in terms of revision (**10-20 minutes or so**), then exchange roles and repeat the same procedure until everyone in the group has read his/her essay and had a conversation about it.

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Things to listen for and—and have a discussion about—during the review process:

Start each review/conversation by discussing a few positive attributes of the essay in question. Be specific about which parts are working and discuss what the student's strengths are.

Share with the group what you think of the essay's argument. Is the author's thesis clear? Discuss any discrepancies that arise between each differing interpretation of the argument. Then address any confusion or questions you had about the argument. Point to *specific* areas of the essay where the argument got off track and discuss how they could be improved. Discuss any other issues that the group brings up, perhaps about organization/paragraph length, clarity, formatting, sources (enough?), MLA style (citations and Works Cited page), etc. Each point that a student brings up should be discussed by the group before moving on to the next issue. Each point should also be discussed in relation to *specific* areas of the essay. **Avoid conversations about sentence-level issues unless a sentence interfered with your ability to understand the overall argument. In that case, try to explain why and how to address the problem.**

Once all points have been covered thoroughly, the writer should ask any follow-up questions he or she has. The questions can be ones that he or she had before the workshop and/or questions that arose during the workshop.

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At the end of this process, each author should **write a "Revision Plan"—a mini-essay (about 300 words)** detailing how **YOU** will proceed with revision and research <u>ON **YOUR** ESSAY</u> based on your conversation about your draft. Over 350 words will be assessed extra credit points. **This writing will be turned in on Canvas.**

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