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International teachers in the American classroom : deposing the myth of monolingualism

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INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

IN THE AMERICAN CLASSROOM:

DEPOSING

THE MYTH OF MONOLINGUALISM

By

JODI G. LEHMAN

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This dissertation, "International Teachers in the American
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is hereby approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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in the field of Rhetoric and Technical Communication.

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Abstract

An international graduate teaching assistant's way of speaking may pose a challenge for college students enrolled in STEM courses at American universities. Students commonly complain that unfamiliar accents interfere with their ability to comprehend the IGTA or that they have difficulty making sense of the IGTA's use of words or phrasing. These frustrations are echoed by parents who pay tuition bills. The issue has provoked state and national legislative debates over universities' use of IGTAs. However, potentially productive debates and interventions have been stalemated due to the failure to confront deeply embedded myths and cultural models that devalue otherness and privilege dominant peoples, processes, and knowledge. My research implements a method of inquiry designed to identify and challenge these cultural frameworks in order to create an ideological/cultural context that will facilitate rather than impede the valuable efforts that are already in place.

Discourse theorist Paul Gee's concepts of master myth, cultural models, and meta-knowledge offer analytical tools that I have adapted in a unique research approach emphasizing triangulation of both analytic methods and data sites. I examine debates over IGTA's use of language in the classroom among policy-makers, parents of college students, and scholars and teachers. First, the article

"Teach Impediment" provides a particularly lucid account of the public debate over IGTAs. My analysis evidences the cultural hold of the master myth of monolingualism in public policy-making. Second, Michigan Technological University's email listserve *Parentnet* is analyzed to identify cultural models supporting monolingualism implicit in everyday conversation. Third, a *Chronicle of Higher Education* colloquy forum is analyzed to explore whether scholars and teachers who draw on communication and linguistic research overcome the ideological biases identified in earlier chapters.

My analysis indicates that a persistent ideological bias plays out in these data sites, despite explicit claims by invested speakers to the contrary. This bias is a key reason why monolingualism remains so tenaciously a part of educational practice. Because irrational expectations and derogatory assumptions have gone unchallenged, little progress has been made despite decades of earnest work and good intentions. Therefore, my recommendations focus on what we say not what we intend.

Chapter One

An international graduate teaching assistant's (IGTA) way of speaking

may pose a challenge for college students enrolled in science, technology,

engineering, and math (STEM) courses at American universities (Rubin, 1997)

(Smith & al, 1992) (Gravois, 2005). Students commonly complain that unfamiliar

accents interfere with their ability to comprehend the IGTA or that they have

difficulty making sense of the IGTA's use of words or phrasing. These

frustrations are echoed by parents who pay tuition bills. The issue has provoked

state and national legislative debates over universities' use of IGTAs (Munro,

1995).

On the one hand, issues of accents, English proficiency, and teaching

styles different from those typically used in American classrooms are often the

center of opposition to the use of IGTAs. On the other hand, supporters argue

that IGTAs, given the appropriate institutional support, can gain language

competence and "American" pedagogical skills that advance their learning

experience as IGTAs. They also argue that American students, when given the

opportunity to be taught by an IGTA, are introduced to different world

perspectives and gain new understandings of how English is used, heard, and

understood around the globe.

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My dissertation work argues that universities cannot balance learning opportunities for 1) international graduate teaching assistants (IGTAs) whose first language is not English or whose English deviates from standard usage with 2) undergraduate students, whose first and often only language is English given prevailing and continually reproduced social myths that denigrate international students and teachers and perpetuate American monolingualism *unless* the social assumptions and cultural expectations that get in the way are recognized. My research implements a method of inquiry designed to identify and challenge these cultural frameworks in order to create an ideological/cultural context that will facilitate rather than impede the valuable efforts that are already in place. Discourse theorist Paul Gee's concepts of master myth, cultural models, and meta-knowledge offer analytical tools that I adapt in a unique research approach emphasizing triangulation of both analytic method and data sites. Using this research approach, my analysis examines debates over IGTA's use of language in the classroom among policy-makers, parents of college students, and scholars and teachers. Because my focus is not on students' experience of frustration, but on institutional implications, my research analyzes what these social groups say and how what they say influences learning opportunities and relationships between students and IGTAs.

Audience and Literature Review

In order to situate my study in current academic and policy discussions, I conducted a literature review across both scholarly and trade publications. Since my audience includes educators, literature reviewed includes, but is not limited to, the following journals and trade publications: *Modern Language Association (MLA)*, *College Composition and Communication* (*CCC*), *The International Educators (NAFSA)* publications, and *PRISM*—the "flagship" publication of the American Society for Engineering Education association. Below, I touch on current discussions from this literature as it influences the policies and practices of my field site, Michigan Tech.

MLA is subscribed to by teachers of English as a Second Language and the other modern languages. Subscribers often play a key role in helping students access and navigate between different orders of discourse. As a group of colleagues they influence language policy and pedagogical practices. [1]

CCC was chosen because it is one of the journals that inform the way faculty and graduate teaching assistants in the humanities understand, help to regulate, or challenge access to orders of discourse that are adhered to by the university. Because the concept of discourse is a natural area of study for the

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[1] Such as the TOEFL for learners of English or the *MLA* Cooperative Foreign Language Tests for students learning a language other than English.

interdisciplinary field of humanities, a theoretical framework can be built using the literature drawn from *CCC*.

NAFSA is an important site to draw literature from because many of the decisions made by international educators (which include study abroad directors, English as a Second Language teachers, and international programming coordinators) determine the type of opportunities provided to students and IGTAs, which ultimately provide or deny student access to international learning experiences valued by employers.

Lastly, in order to determine the type of learning experiences most valued by today's global employers, *PRISM* was chosen. The magazine is read by engineering faculty, engineering deans, and corporate executive who share a commitment to engineering education, such as:

- New instructional methods

- Innovative curricula

- Lifelong learning

- Research opportunities, trends, and developments

- Collaboration with government and industry

- K-12 outreach activities that encourage youth to pursue studies and careers in engineering.

  (http://www.asee.org/publications/prism/aboutprism.cfm).

This publication was chosen for review because it provides a pragmatic example for how engineering curricula and expectations are influenced by globalization. Globalization, in its most innocuous sense, refers to technology that has interconnected people, places, commerce, and culture.

In order to show how globalization impacts engineering education I offer a working definition of social capital. This working definition allows me to briefly outline the interconnection between symbolic capital and social networks and the relevancy of this on English debates involving IGTAs.

Working Definition of "Capital"

The New London Group (NLG) argues that schools play a critical role in determining students' life opportunities. According to the group of interdisciplinary scholars,

> schools regulate access to orders of discourse - the
> relationship of discourses in a particular social space - to
> symbolic capital - symbolic meanings that have currency in
> access to employment, political power, and cultural
> recognition (Luke, 2000, p. 18).

While I agree full heartily with the NLG's statement above -- on the importance of schooling in determining students' life opportunities -- I see value in replacing their use of the term *symbolic capital* with the concept of *social*

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capital. Although the concept of social capital is in its relatively early stages of theorization, the term offers a new way of thinking about the type of learning opportunities made available to students, both undergraduate monolingual students and multilingual IGTAs.

Unlike "symbolic" which implies that capital can be acquired through study of a subject, "social" implies that capital is acquired through interaction and relationships to and with the subject. Put another way, social capital is different from other forms of capital in that it resides in social relationships whereas other forms of capital can reside in the individual (Robison, 2002). For example, if a student learns principles of engineering and understands how to practice those principles she has acquired symbolic capital. In order to enact social capital, the student would not only need to be competent in engineering principles, but she would need to understand how those principles can be practiced in relationship to different cultures. Knowledge about different cultures relies on relationships with different groups of people who through their words and actions mobilize possibilities and enact constraints that shape political, economic, social, and ideological domains. The field of engineering is all too aware of how these factors shape the ways in which problems are addressed. "The days of 'one-size-fits-all' engineering are over," said Alan Cramb, past Dean of Rensselaer's School of Engineering.

Creating a water purification and desalination system for

the West Coast of the United States, for example, is an

entirely different task from creating a similar system in

India, or South Africa, as all nations have unique

infrastructures, energy landscapes, and regulations.

Localized solutions will require engineers who have an

intimate, firsthand knowledge of the country or region.

(RPI: News & Events, 2008)

Similarly, Bourdieu talks about "social capital" or "the aggregate of the

actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network

of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or

recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). While a comprehensive review of

literature is necessary for a more rigorous discussion of social capital, the above

provides a basic working definition of social capital for this research.

Learning Opportunities

The field of engineering has in the last five years made a conscious effort

to provide opportunities to students that offer not only international learning

experiences but opportunities for students to enact social capital. These

experiences place students in relationships with people from diverse (economic,

geographic/environmental, ethnic, and political) cultures. In collaboration,

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students work with local people to solve some type of engineering problem. In

surveying engineering programs at universities across the States, many boast of

being the first in the nation to offer programs that integrate international study

with a multi-national design team project. Some of these engineering programs

prepare students for international experiences with language classes and cultural

orientation classes, while others seem to do minimal pre-orientation work.

However, all programs seem to understand that the type of resources valued in the

field of engineering today depend much more on social skills than they did even a

generation ago. A recent PRISM article supports this claim,

> A generation ago, engineers rarely ventured overseas for
>
> jobs, much less for their training. International
>
> opportunities were out there to be sure, but most of the
>
> action was still largely within the United States' borders.
>
> This month's freshly minted graduates, on the other hand,
>
> will be hard-pressed to avoid the long arm of globalization,
>
> whether they work with teammates from another country,
>
> design products for foreign consumers or live and work
>
> abroad. "It's almost inevitable that engineers will be
>
> working internationally in some way, shape or form,"
>
> predicts John Grandin, director of the University of Rhode

Island's (URI) International Engineering Program. And

while more engineering programs than ever are offering

international opportunities to prepare grads through

coursework, study abroad, internships and international

teamwork, experts say the United States still has a long

way to go to meet the increasing demand for globally

competent engineers. (Loftus, 2007)

In summary the *PRISM* article, along with the majority of engineering

program web sites, show the importance of engaging in relationships

internationally that work to solve locally based, but globally connected, problems.

Quoted from the same article, Jeffrey Finn, an engineering manager for John

Deere based in Tianjin, China states,

The global pressures on business will force every U.S.

company to be competitive in the global market, or they

will go out of business. If an engineering graduate fails to

understand the global competitiveness of the world today,

they too will fail along with their company. Global

exposure in both education and work internships is critical

in breaking down cultural barriers so engineers can develop

innovative solutions for global customers. (Loftus, 2007)

More and more universities are recognizing the need to prepare graduates for today's global market, but what exactly that entails is still up for grabs. While it is cliché to talk about how small or "flat" the world has become, the affects of globalization on everyday life are increasingly evident. The Strategic Task Force on Education (NAFSA, 2003) asserts that our nation's universities "must respond to this reality by better equipping students to live and work in the interconnected world of the twenty-first century. We desperately need to understand other countries and other cultures—friend and foe alike." In 1990 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that among the nineteen universities across the world's most affluent and industrialized nations, America was the least committed to internationalism. A 2005 follow-up review shows little progress since their initial study (Teaching, 2009). Yet prospective employers of future university graduates expect change. According to a study by Texas A & M University (NAFSA, Internationalizing Campus, 2005) corporations and agencies look first and foremost at graduate vitas that detail:

- Bilingual, preferably multilingual, skills—with a preferences towards Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese

- Multicultural knowledge and experiences collaborating with individuals from different cultural backgrounds

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- Willingness and ability to work outside the United States

    (18)

It is quickly becoming evident that all students must graduate with global communication competence. The importance of educating graduates who are employable in today's global world has prompted many universities in the 1990s to develop strategic plans for assisting students in building a sophisticated "toolkit" they can use to market their portfolio of international knowledge, skills, and experiences to employers (Tillman, "The Right" 4). As one example, the Association of International Educators (NAFSA, Internationalizing Campus, 2005) recommendations for these institutional endeavors included:

- Proficiency requirements for the learning of foreign languages and knowledge of other cultures by Americans, which means making sure every college graduate achieves proficiency in a foreign language

- Promotion of study abroad for U.S. students

- Enrollment and support for students from other countries to study in the United States

But these recommendations do not necessarily translate into learning experiences that offer better understandings of our diverse world or promote responsible and respectful participation in it. In fact, 2006 study abroad statistics

show that on average only 15 percent of American students study abroad. Of that 15 percent, 60 percent study abroad in Europe (Loftus, A Broader Perspective, 2006). The above numbers suggest that Europe is often the most favored study abroad location. This has become a statistic of controversy among international educators who argue that universities need to do more to encourage students to study abroad in non-Western cultures.

It is important to encourage students to study abroad in countries like China and India, since both countries play an important part in our global world. However, it is inaccurate to assume that a student who studies in China will learn how to communicate with Chinese people in a way that initiates respectful and reciprocally beneficial relationships. Likewise, the same is true about a student who studies in Germany or Australia. What statistics fail to take into consideration is that experience (i.e. international graduate teaching assistantship or study abroad) alone does not provide social capital, but rather, it provides the *opportunity* to enact social capital.

Alice Kaplan describes, in her memoir *French Lessons,* her own study abroad experience at the Collége du Léman, located in France. She immersed herself in learning French and other languages and culture through human interaction. These networks of friends, in turn, led to invitations to homes around the world, and eventually to a series of job opportunities. She contrasts her

experience with a group of American girls coming from military families who had grown up in Saudi Arabia. However, this group of girls looked like they had "just walked out of a 1950s Sear's catalogue" (Kaplan, 1993, p. 50). They lived in their own imaginary American world. Her memoir is, for me, a perfect example of the distinction between merely "being there" and realizing the social capital potential in a situation.

Reports by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Bollag, 2004), the National Intelligence Council (2000), and the American Council on Education (Green, 2003) suggest that American students, as a whole, are "dangerously uninformed" about international matters related to Asia, home to more than 60 percent of the world's population. Our response must not be to introduce students to the rest of the world through textbook information alone. Nor is it adequate to simply send students abroad to China or India. Iris Marion Young suggests that democracy will increasingly depend on communication across wide differences of culture and social position. Awareness of differences, she argues, becomes critical to understanding meanings and perspectives that are beyond one another and not reducible to a common good (Young, 1997, p. 68). Studies have shown (Gilyard, 1991) (Delpit, 1995) (Lu, Living-English Work, 2006) (Mao, 2006) that differences too often lead to denigration of people through unrecognized social myths and cultural models that tacitly reside in the way we speak, think, and act.

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English is a site of ideological conflict, domination and struggle. The

hegemonic pull to standardize English suppresses efforts to accept a more

broadminded concept of World Englishes. English allows for communication

between people from different parts of the world, but it also helps reinforce

stereotypes by limiting knowledge about other languages and peoples. It makes

sense that in an effort to simplify communication in our global world, where over

6,912 languages are spoken, English is often used as the default language (Lewis,

2009).[2] However, this linguistic default masks a need for understanding social

differences and social subjects like the type Young refers to above.[3] Mary Louise

Pratt (2002) contends that American reliance on a Standard, unaccented English

has led some to a complacency or ambivalence toward other orders of discourse

that do not mirror those of Standard English.[4] In higher education practices and

policies, where monolingual assumptions operate both tacitly and explicitly, it is

easy to simply dismiss discourse that doesn't fit Standard English rules. As a

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[2] It is difficult to obtain an exact number for languages spoken in the world today because languages are not discrete entities. Instead, languages blur ethnic groups, geographical boundaries, political lines, and cultural groups.

[3] The idea of a "Standard" English is another issue of controversy, but a discussion that is more pertinent to research looking at US language policies. See *Language Ideologies: Critical Perspectives on the Official English Movement* by Roseann Dueñas González for a comprehensive study on "Standard English."

[4] This reference is taken from Mary Louise Pratt's essay "BUILDING A NEW PUBLIC IDEA ABOUT LANGUAGE", presented at the ADFL summer seminar in June 2002 http://silverdialogues.fas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/306/pratt.pdf.

consequence, English is maintained through practices and policies that classify

discourse in binary ways, such as; standard/nonstandard, correct/incorrect,

fluent/or not and literate/nonliterate. However, I am hopeful that a growing

amount of scholarship challenging dominant and restrictive attitudes about

Standard English approaches and perspectives will make a difference.

Pedagogical Implications of Multilingualism

> "Language lives on the borderline between oneself and the
> other, making the word in language half someone else's."
> (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294)

In introducing the July 2006 issue of *College English*, Bruce Horner

(College English, 2006) explains how the contributing authors are in consensus

that students need to learn to negotiate a variety of "Englishes," as well as, other

non-Western languages. Horner sees the authors of these essays challenging the

comfortable image of our classrooms and writing centers as sites "of simple,

homogeneous language use among linguistically homogeneous students" (570).

As a result of the work of Horner and Trimbur and the above mentioned work,

which all challenge the practice of monolingualism in the field of composition,

pragmatic changes and paradigm shifts have influenced how teachers in writing-

based classes teach academic English in relationship with diverse literacy

practices (Brandt, 1995) (Meyers, 1996) (Kutz, 1997) (Kutz, 1991) (Hesford,

1997) how writing center tutors bring tacit rules and expectations into explicit

conversations (Grimm, 1999) (Welch, 1997) (Fox, 1994) (Barron, 2003) and how

English as a Second Language teachers recognize the importance of fostering

spaces for interlanguage, appropriation, and biliteracy development (Conner,

1996) (Matsuda, Myth: International and U.S. resident ESL writers cannot be

taught in the same class) (Matsuda, Myth: International and U.S. resident ESL

writers cannot be taught in the same class) (Matsuda P. K., 2006) (Lippi-Green,

1997). While this scholarship has championed new perspectives and practices in

specific curriculum areas, in general Western cultural models of communication

competence still dominate higher education. One example of how this

domination manifests itself is in unfair expectations and assumptions regarding

communication between IGTAs and their students.

Over fifteen years ago, literacy scholar, Harvey Graff (1991) predicted

that "until the biases of literate culture are altered, communicative interrelatedness

will be obscured . . . if there is to be a 'new literacy,' it will develop *not* from the

death of print, reading, or writing in the face of technology's electronic challenge,

but from the *changing relationships* among communication technologies" (395).

Technologies, Graff points out, are anything but objective and innocent skills;

they encapsulate differences that are deeply embedded in history, ideologies,

power, and purposes.

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Fast becoming cliché, are discussions over how our electronically connected global world is changing relationships among economies. One result of these changing relationships among communication technologies, which is already being taken for granted, is the ability to communicate instantly across the globe. In the realm of pure technology, Carmen Luke (2000, p. 85) explains how the ways in which we construct ourselves – distinctions of gender, ethnicity, body shape or impairment, accent or speech styles -- don't matter. On the one hand, cybersociality frees up a whole range of cultural and gender politics. But on the other hand, the lack of embodied and gestural cues that accompany face-to-face communication can fail to alert us to the special circumstances or needs of the people we communicate with online. Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe address the flip side of cybersociality, explaining how the cultural ecology of literacy today consists of "a dynamic mosaic of patches, mini-self-organizing systems characterized variously by different languages and histories and locations, different discursive practices and digital environments, different belief systems and relationships" (629) (629). The recent proliferation of non-English use in cyberspace strengthens the mosaic of non-Western cultures represented, and the many forms of Englishes they use in relationship with their native languages and dialects. Unlike many American classrooms, new technologies validate the imperfect use of many languages; and users from around the world are taking

advantage of the fluidity of this linguistic space. As recognized discursive members, speakers of other languages are leaving their linguistic mark on new forms of cyberspace English. Why then isn't this same trend happening in our university classrooms, where Standard English still dominates? In order to answer this question, I draw from Bruce Horner and John Trimbur's (2002) essay, "English Only and U.S. College Composition"

A Historical and Theoretical Context for Monolingualism

Bruce Horner and John Trimbur's essay challenged the field of college composition and communication to reassess practices and policies that perpetuate American monolingualism and monoculturalism. Using a historical perspective, the authors chronicle what they define as "a chain of reifications of languages and social identity" through the modernization of the American university. From this chain of reifications, they outline the events that lead to the distinct disciplines and professions in communication, composition, modern languages, and ESL. These developments are then used by the authors to shed light on the pedagogical assumptions and practices, within and across those related but specific fields, which have led to what they call "a tacit language policy of unidirectional English monolingualism" (2002, p. 594).

Horner and Trimbur explain how in classic times, a student needed to know Latin or Greek in order to be admitted, excel, and graduate from a

university curriculum. In the late nineteenth century, this classical curriculum was replaced with a modernist itinerary. Degrees in the field of science and philosophy no longer required the knowledge of or required courses in Latin or Greek. Universities gradually began to determine admittance by English skills rather than ability to recite or use in oratory Latin or Greek, and thus the birth of the required-first-year composition course. As years progressed, the skills of classic rhetoric were replaced with mastery of written English. Greek and Latin were resigned to the discrete discipline of modern languages. In the words of the authors,

> English was elevated to preeminent status in the
> curriculum, and the other modern languages were, in effect,
> assigned their limited spheres of influence, territorialized as
> national literatures in their separate departments, where
> students encountered them as texts to be read, not living
> languages to be written or spoken." (2002, p. 602)

Learning a modern language became further relegated to a "nonintellectual, feminine activity" (2002, p. 603) or as The Yale Report of 1828 put it "a subject to be studied as an accomplishment, rather than as a necessary acquisition" (Graff, 1991, p. 36). From this move, modern languages no longer

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represented languages lived and spoken but rather "repositories of texts" and were justified as part of the university curriculum as "linguistic antecedents to English…assisting the learning of English—the mother tongue to which they remain alien and other" (Horner & Trimbur, p. 605). Horner and Trimbur make the rhetorical shift to showing how assumptions about language that were institutionalized during times of American imperialism, colonial adventure, and overseas missionary societies became sedimented in the way the field of composition thinks about writing pedagogy today (p. 608).

The result of this sedimentation includes hidden reifications of people and languages, which Horner and Trimbur argue ignore the fact that the formation of social identity is a process (p. 610). They further emphasize how "there is, after all, no clear point at which an individual can be said to be or not to be a speaker of a given language, just as there is no clear point at which someone can be said to have achieved literacy" (p. 612). Horner and Trimbur stress how the field of composition continues to tacitly uphold beliefs and practices, such as the convenient posturing of composition as a field separate from ESL and modern language, which support the perpetuation of a monolingual English culture. This is a critical argument as it points out how these reifications remain hidden in the historical development of the field of composition. Scholarship on identity has contributed to recognizing reifications of English and has encouraged those in the

field of composition studies to reconceptualize language and identity as a dynamic and socially constructed process within its own disciplinary boundaries (Street, 2007) (Street) (Street) (Cook-Gumperz, 2006) (Cooper, 1989) (Gilyard, 1991) (Dipardo, 1992) (Fox, 1994) (Rodby, 1992) (Brodkey, 1996) (Gee, 2007) (Bizzell, 1993).

Following Horner and Trimbur's challenge to rethink practices and policies that perpetuate monolingualism came timely discussions about cross-language relations (Silva & Matsuda, 2001) (P. K. Matsuda) (P. K. Matsuda) (Hawisher and Selfe) (Hawisher and Selfe) (Lu, Living-English Work, 2006) (Canagarajah, 2006). Many of these discussions were woven together in the July 2006 issue of *College English,* reviewed in detail below.

Much research has been given to the issue of bilingualism as part of, or in opposition to, how it shapes and is shaped by identity. Less attention has been paid to issues of monolingual policies and practices as they related to IGTAs and American students in the context of the university classroom. More specifically, in this issue Min Zhan Lu (2006) calls attention to radical steps taken by families and individuals who equate American English (a highly regulated order of discourse) with economical and social success (dependent on symbolic capital). Most poignant is her reference to a six-year old boy who surgically had the tip of his tongue cut off. The drastic action was taken by a mother who intended to

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eliminate her son's Korean accent, and improve his ability to speak American

English. According to Lu, such steps are reactions to false representations of

English, largely perpetuated in practices and policies that fail to acknowledge

English as a living language. These representations of English are wittingly, and

often unwittingly, brought about by:

> 1) English-only advocates whose policies falsely promise
>
> educational, occupational, and economical success;
>
> 2) Advocates against English-only policies who weigh the
>
> same promise of success against what English-only
>
> instruction can *not* do;
>
> 3) English users who conduct research on how diverse
>
> users have grasped their 'problems' with English-only
>
> instruction and;
>
> 4) English users who offer ways English-only learners can
>
> tinker with standardized usages they must "imitate" (607-
>
> 611).

Offering an alternative way of representing English, Lu suggests a

commitment to seeing English as a "living language." English, when

conceptualized as a living language, is shaped and reshaped, definitions are

always being tweaked to specific situations, and grammar expectations are pulled

in new, yet still recognized, directions. The dynamic nature of living English is highly useful in today's global world, where speakers from around the world add their flavor to the use of English. However, living English does not neatly conform to existing practices and policies of higher education that are informed by standard/traditional expectations of English. Many of these standard practices and policies still conveniently operate under, or in opposition to, English Only fallacies. This is problematic as it is becoming starkly apparent that in order to be functional as global citizens, even students from the United States need to be proficient in negotiating a repertoire of Living Englishes. In a world, which by the year 2050 will have 30 million more multilingual users of English over "native" monolingual users, Suresh Canagarajah rightly asserts that classes based on monolingual pedagogies and English-only policies disadvantage students (2006). Likewise, Paul Kei Matsuda (2006) points out how "the dominant discourse of U.S. college composition has not only accepted English Only as an ideal but it already assumes the state of English-only, in which students are native English speakers by default (p. 637). This is increasingly troublesome as the growing numbers of international students challenge this default classification.

Programs have been developed to support international students in their challenge to succeed at American universities. In 1911 Harvard segregated international students into composition courses designed specifically for

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international students. The University of Michigan offered the first English

Language Institute (ELI) in 1941. Today most public universities and many

private universities host some type of ELI program. Yet, as Matsuda points out,

an extra semester or two of language instruction is not enough to help students fit

the dominant image (p. 647). International students do not struggle because of

lack of intelligence or motivation, but rather their struggle is due to institutional

structuring, which is designed, organized, and implemented primarily with the

American student, who is familiar with American ideals, aims, history, and social

and political background, in mind (p. 645). It is important to decipher that

Matsuda is not arguing for abandonment of these programs, as he explains denial

of these types of support programs would only further marginalize students and

deny them opportunities to access orders of discourse and gain symbolic capital.

Rather, he suggests that all composition teachers re-imagine the classroom as a

multilingual space, where the default is not English but the difference in English

uses (p. 649).

Almost without exception, teachers assume that international students will

and should learn to speak and write Standard English. Judith Rodby (1992)

explains how this is a construct of English language, which assumes that a

language is forever finished with definite borders, a unified entity. She asserts,

and I agree, that what gives Standard English these definite (albeit fictional)

margins is the political power of those drawing the dividing lines. Rodby

encourages teachers to expose the fiction, questioning the reality of a monolithic

world?, and to present a view of language as heteroglossic rather than absolute

and pure (p. 65). However, a multilingual view of discourse, argues Trimbur,

needs to involve more than tolerance for discourse other than Standard English.

He believes that it also must include an additive language policy whereby all

students write, and learn in more than one language (2006, p. 587). While that

may seem unrealistic, it is a policy and practice already implemented by most

universities abroad.

As an example, Europe has been quick to adapt to globalization through

reforms in higher education, such as the BOLOGNA system. While this system

has introduced new practices and policies for higher education, it has

correspondingly changed the orders of discourse and how universities across

different countries regulate access to symbolic capital. Currently, 29 European

countries belong to the BOLOGNA system (Hobsons). In addition, more and

more Pacific Rim countries are adopting practices and policies from the

BOLOGNA system, which has resulted in an increase of international students in

the 29 European BOLOGNA countries.

BOLOGNA members and their followers use a credit transfer system that

facilitates student mobility. This allows, and in most cases requires, students to

study at multiple universities in at least two different countries. In addition, students are required to learn English, as well as one other language. Also understanding that graduates with international experience lead the competition in an increasingly global job market, many Asian and Middle Eastern universities have reformed their curriculum and evaluation methods to align more closely with Europe.

According to Mary Louis Pratt, American hostility towards languages other than English is a common misconception. A more accurate term, she believes, is American *ambivalence*. This ambivalence, Pratt rightly points out, has earned the U.S. the nickname of *cemeterio de lenguas*, a language cemetery (qtd in Trimbur, "Linguistic" 575). John Trimbur argues that the United States will be unable to change the status of monolingual practices and English Only policies until universities reconfigure language relations to one another. By this he means all students speak, write, and learn in more than one language and all citizens thereby become capable of communicating with one another in a number of languages. Such a policy, Trimbur further explains,

> goes beyond a discourse of linguistic rights to imagine the
> abolition of English monolingualism altogether and the
> creation in its place of a linguistic culture where being
> multilingual is both normal and desirable, as it is

throughout much of the world. If anything, the

multilingual language policy I'm advocating would loosen

the identification of language with racialized and ethnic

groups by putting multiple languages into circulation as

means of participating in public life and linguistic resources

of reciprocal exchange. (p. 587)

Other work in the humanities focuses on the importance of learning

relationships for broadening student access to different orders of discourse. In

particular, Helen Fox (1994) has been instrumental in emphasizing the importance

of relationships. She suggests in *Listening to the World* that if we, as literacy

educators and mentors, are to discern anything as elusive as the impact of culture,

we need to "become familiar with the individual students—their personalities,

their educational backgrounds, their levels of understanding and maturity—and

learn something about the cultures that have informed their assumptions, their

expectations, their views of themselves and the world" (p. 15). She emphasizes

the importance of understanding the impact of culture by reminding us of how

easy it is in our work with international students to "fix" writing errors first and

foremost. In contrast, it is more difficult to inquire, understand, and evaluate how

the writing used by the student makes sense to them from their discourse

perspective. As an alternative to the easy-fix-approach, she encourages writing

instructors and tutors to pay attention and learn how the world makes sense to international students in order to 1) broaden our own intellectual interests and capabilities and to 2) become more effective at helping international students adopt the communicative styles and habits of mind that will foster their success in our American system of schooling (p. 10).

While these two goals have guided my own writing center work with international students, they do not translate into practice as neatly as they appear in theory. For example, what I understand as a student's discursive choice (performance) in writing something that linguistically makes sense to them, will most likely, if not explained explicitly in their writing, be corrected by the teacher or marked wrong (an issue of competence) in relationship to the English Standard to which it is measured. The relationship between performance and competence is a complex intertwining of different orders of discourse, universities' regulation of discourses through policies and practices, and the desire of students to balance or mesh issues of cultural identity with opportunities for gaining symbolic capital. Untangling that web of relationships in a writing center session is difficult enough; unweaving that thread from the fabric of educational policies and practices is even more challenging. Yet it is a challenge educators must face if linguistic diversity is to become a valued competency. As long as English

remains the medium of instruction for American universities, the development of

a multilingual curriculum will be curtailed ((Trimbur, 2006, p. 584).

Suresh Canagarajah's 2006 *CCC* article, "The Place of World Englishes in

Composition: Pluralization Continued" specifically looks at ways the field of

composition can provide opportunities for students to negotiate multiple orders of

discourse, while gaining access to the type of symbolic capital valued in today's

global job market. Having learned English as a second language in Sri Lanka,

Canagarajah continued with his multilingual education, establishing himself as a

scholar who has taught at the University of Jaffna and currently teaches at Baruch

College; an award winning author on rhetoric and cultural theory which he writes

in both English and Tamil; and editor of *TESOL Quarterly*. His scholarship

illustrates how local Englishes are traveling through international media

technology, global networked communities of diverse people, and new

production, marketing, and business relationships (2006, p. 590). If students want

to be competent global citizens, he argues, even Anglo American students need to

be capable of negotiating a variety of Englishes as they are appropriated in the

context of other sociolinguistic experiences.

Canagarajah's article compels the field of composition to rethink English

as a plural language that embodies multiple norms and standards. English, he

argues, should be treated as a multinational language, one that belongs to diverse

communities and is not owned only by the metropolitan communities. He

challenges the traditional distinction between native/nonnative speakers of

English, offering alternative terms such as "balanced" speaker or "simultaneous"

bilinguality to refer to speakers who, from early childhood, learn English along

with another language. "Only the color of my skin would influence someone to

call me a non-native speaker of English—not my level of competence, process of

acquisition, or time of learning" (p. 598).

Canagarajah adopts Mary Louise Pratt's concept of contact zone as not

only an intercultural space of mediation, but also a place where ideology can be

appropriated. He explains how contact zone literacies resist from the inside

without the outsiders understanding their full import; they appropriate the codes

of the powerful for the purposes of the subaltern; and they demystify the power,

secrecy, and monopoly of the dominant codes (p. 601). As a way of

implementing the idea of code meshing, the author suggests using models of

diverse writing from minority scholars to illustrate what multilingual students can

achieve in their writing. While this approach is helpful for both teachers and

students, I am less hopeful that what we do in our composition classrooms and

writing centers will be enough to change the ideologically and historically

embedded trend of monolingualism that perpetuates American universities. For

that reason, I examine the debates over English instruction going on outside the

classroom: over policy resolutions in the public domain; among parents concerned about their undergraduate students' experiences; and among scholars and teachers concerned with pedagogy.

Overview of Chapters 2-5

The review above provides a theoretical framework for understanding why universities will never be successful in balancing learning opportunities between IGTAs and students, unless the social assumptions and cultural expectations that get in the way are recognized. I draw from Mary Louise Pratt's essay "Building a New Public Idea About Language," to summarize the finding of my literature review. Pratt challenges all people to learn to work in contact with multiple languages in every aspect of daily life. She argues that, "the lived reality of multilingualism and the imperatives of global relations both fly in the face of monolingualist language policies" (2003, p. 112). Like Pratt, I recognize the value of demanding multilingualism from the largely monolingual culture of higher education. Unlike Pratt, I do not see language learning as a solution to the problem of undergraduate students who fail to understand their IGTA. Instead, I see language learning as one approach toward better communication among students and their IGTAs. However, this approach cannot succeed under current social assumptions and cultural expectations that get in the way of such a viable approach to change. The problem is not monolingualism by itself. Rather it is the

events, practices, and beliefs that have shaped the discourse culture of

monolingualism. The solution therefore, is not to address the issue of American

monolingualism, but rather the assumptions and expectations that get in the way

of viable approaches to address all discourse issues, such as American student

monolingualism and IGTA English proficiency.

With this in mind, chapter 2 outlines a research method that provides the

necessary analytic tools for identifying social assumptions and cultural

expectations that currently get in the way of possible solutions. Because social

assumptions and cultural expectations reside, often unconsciously, in discourse

practices, I argue in chapter 2 that critical discourse analysis is the most fitting

research method. While my method uses well known concepts from James Paul

Gee, my research contributes a new way of using those concepts as analytical

tools. Each tool provides a layer of CDA necessary to critique and dismantle

taken-for-granted cultural frameworks, thus opening the way for existing

approaches to work toward solving the problem.

By adopting Gee's concept of a master myth (2007) as the first analytical

tool, Chapter 3 reframes a journalist's report on a public policy issue to identify

the polarized myths at the heart of the debate. Drawing from Trimbur and

Horner's history of monolingualism (2002), my analysis examines how the

politics of the debate play out, and asks the following questions:

- Why do a large number of people believe what they do?

- What beliefs contradict one another and why?

- And what public beliefs or master myths are strengthened through current university discourse?

Chapter 4 peels away the more general layer of analysis, and takes a step closer to investigate everyday talk in which the issue of undergraduate students who fail to understand their IGTA is discussed. This second layer adds an analysis of how everyday talk perpetuates what Gee refers to as cultural models. Gee's three principles of meaning making compliment his concept of cultural models (2007, pp. 102-103), providing additional analytical tools for parsing out bias in commonplace understandings of the academe.

Chapter 5, the final chapter of analysis, uses Gee's concept of meta-knowledge (p. 190) as an analytic tool to look at an online conversation between scholars. This data offers a particularly interesting layer to my CDA because, unlike the other two types of data, this discourse text is a conscious and overt attempt to be reflective and critical about the problem of undergraduates who fail to understand IGTAs. Meta-knowledge is best defined as knowledge about a subject that has been acquired through learning experiences. In the context of my CDA work, personal stories, scholarship, and research are examples of meta-knowledge. The question for this layer of analysis, therefore, is what meta-

knowledge is used in the scholarly conversation to identify and challenge theories of discrimination that perpetuate social theories and cultural models?

This leads us into chapter 6, which summarizes the findings from each of the three layers of analysis. Ultimately this chapter considers whether my CDA conclusions support my opening charge: *universities cannot balance learning opportunities for IGTAs with learning opportunities for undergraduate students until the social myths and cultural frameworks that are currently getting in the way are eradicated.* This chapter provides not only a recap of my findings, but also 1) details my research contribution to the field of humanities, in particular, and higher education in general; 2) discusses the limitations of my work, and 3) offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

The previous chapter provides a theoretical context for the type of social capital valued by our university communities and our global economy. As the demographics of both communities change, educators need to ask how we can provide opportunities for both students and IGTAs to tap into the type of social capital valued by members of the particular communities they seek to join. Unlike stock commodities, which are autonomous entities that can be bought and traded, social capital is based on the type of relationships individuals develop with others. Assumptions, biases, expectations, and beliefs consciously and unconsciously play out in interpersonal, and increasingly, in international discursive relations. Because of this, critical discourse analysis seems the most obvious way to research what happens and why when students fail to understand international graduate teaching assistants. Chapter 1's literature review is used to inform my research interpretations, in chapter 3-5, providing the "critical" part for my CDA.

The previous chapter's literature review provides a theoretical framework for why it is not possible to balance learning opportunities for American students and international students. More specifically, this framework explains how different sociolinguistic histories and universities current sociolinguistic

expectations make use of and shape social myths and cultural models that inherently produce stereotypes and judgments, which denigrate non-native English speakers, and ultimately lead to disproportionate learning opportunities. Chapter 2 explores how James Paul Gee's work helps to inform both a method and methodology most appropriate for my following CDA work.

In their book Methods and Methodology in Composition Research, Gesa Kirsch and Patricia Sullivan (1992) help make the distinction between method and methodology. . According to the authors, a *method* is the technique used to accomplish the research task. A *methodology* is the theoretical framework informing and framing the method itself. The following shows how my research approach draws heavily from James Paul Gee for a theoretical framework. And in addition to Gee's work, this chapter also illustrates how Pegeen Reichert Powell (Powell, 2004) , Keith Gilyard (1991), and Brian Street's (1995) work provide a methodology most like the one utilized in my own research.

Before discussing the specific methodology and method below, I introduce my three data sites are discussed. Discussion of the data sites (the *what* of my research) provides an understanding for the methodology chosen (*why*), as well as the specific method (*how*) to be used in the following research.

First Data Site: "Teach Impediment"

As I said earlier, three sites provided data for my research. Each set of data is interpreted using a different concept from James Paul Gee's book *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* as an analytical tool. Each site provides text data that is not only different in genre but also in target audience and participant representation. Gee's theories, ultimately, provide compatible lenses of interpretation for three very different sets of data. When combined as analytical layers as Gee does in his own discourse analysis, they provide a more comprehensive lens from which to study my research topic.

As explained briefly in the previous chapter, chapter 3 critically reviews an article, "Teach Impediment" by a well known journalist, John Gravois, from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2005). The article provides a particularly lucid account of the public debate over IGTAs. Ultimately, as Gravois details in his article, this debate has generated a state senate proposal, which called for universities to provide a tuition refund to any undergraduate student who could not understand their IGTA. For my CDA purposes, this data site is parsed out to provide the first layer of understanding, which dissects the grand narrative shaping my research problem. A grand narrative, discussed in detail later in this chapter, gives people a way to act, understand, and know that is socially accepted by a large group of people. In this particular case, the grand narrative influences

the beliefs, judgments, and assumptions (regardless of right or wrong) that influence how people think, understand, and act in discourse situations associated with IGTAs in an American university undergraduate classroom setting. Gravois's article serves as a data site to capture and assess critically this grand narrative.

More specifically, John Gravois's "Teach Impediment" article interprets North Dakota's State Representative, Bette Grande's mission to pass a bill (Teicher, 2005) (Okura) (Rubin, 1997). The bill would allow students to withdraw, without academic penalty, from a course taught by an IGTA. Furthermore, her bill proposed a tuition refund for students who felt they did not succeed in a class because of their IGTA's accented speech. Needless to say, after heavy objection from opponents, the bill failed to be passed. Gravois interviews higher education administrators like Dr. Craig Schell, the provost for North Dakota State University. According to Gravois, Schell believes his university already holds IGTAs accountable through language expectations. In addition to holding IGTAs accountable, Schell argues, that universities need to *also* hold American students accountable. While this task is much more ambiguous and complex, Schell suggests the lack of effort towards addressing this side of the problem may be one reason why miscommunication involving IGTAs and students remains an unresolved issue. From interviews with students, IGTAs,

and researchers, Gravois's article provides a useful interpretation of the research problem. His interpretation, written specifically for his audience of higher education professionals and scholars, offers one analysis of generalizations made in claims for and against universities use of IGTAs.

Because Gravois produces his account as part of the debate – in the heat of public discussion – his article is an especially useful data piece because it is itself part of the struggle and grand narrative.

Second Data Site: Parentnet

A different data point is used in chapter 4 to give more richness to my CDA analysis. In an effort to parse out multiple perspectives, that can be triangulated for validity purposes, this chapter looks at everyday conversation pulled from the second data site, Michigan Technological University's email listserve *Parentnet*.[5] Although considered public domain, use of this data site has been approved (see Appendix) by the University's Institutional Review Board, and by University Marketing and Communication (UMC).

Parentnet, established in the fall of 1999, is an email listserve hosted by the university. Anyone with a university password can join the listserve. This includes students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and parents. I joined the

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[5] Posts archived from this subject strand are available to the public at (http://www.mtu.edu/current/parentnet/archives/listserv/teachers.html).

listserve in January of 2000 when the discussion strand "Teachers who are hard to understand" first appeared. I was invested professionally and personally in this particular listserve topic as an instructor for university general education courses, a specialized course for international undergraduate students titled, "Composition for International Students", an ESL instructor, and a writing center coach/tutor for several IGTAs. As an administrator who has worked in an international office, and currently works in the Graduate School, I remain invested in this reoccurring listserve strand of conversation. The main participants on the listserve, however, are parents. Understanding that this discussion space is a wealth of cultural knowledge that could be used for research, I never submitted a post to the listserve but remained an unobtrusive observer. Because my research will ultimately serve *Parentnet* participants by providing the theoretical and pragmatic tools for universities to address concerns voiced by *Parentnet* participants, I feel my role as a "lurker" serves a broader purpose than just my own dissertation needs.

Mainly, parents use *Parentnet* to talk with other parents (and occasionally students, faculty and administrators) about topics related to sending their son or daughter to the university. Responses that are repeated by different participants indicate deeply embedded cultural beliefs, or beliefs about the world held by a particular group of people. Up until now, these beliefs have, for the most part,

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remained unexamined. Theories from Trimbur and Horner's history on

monolingualism, reviewed in chapter 1, provide an explanatory framework for

analyzing this second layer of data. This layers of analysis provides a richer

perspective on how cultural beliefs play out in everyday conversation, that

ultimately further prevent university efforts to balance learning opportunities for

IGTAs and their undergraduate students.

In benchmarking other universities, and in talking to Michigan Tech's UMC and

Enrollment staff, it was interesting to find that Michigan Tech was one of the first

university's to sponsor a parent listserve. In the generation of millennial college

students, whose parents are known for being over protective, and some may

argue, too involved in their child's life, it would seem that such a space would be

available at more universities. [6] However, after looking into this further it made

sense that many universities shy away from offering such a space because it is an

open forum with little content control.[7] The lack of editorial control in this type

of communication medium may be why, in 2005, the university replaced actual

parent archived discussion strands

(http://www.mtu.edu/current/parentnet/archives/listserv/) with common parent

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[6] I explain more about the millennial generation in the following chapter.
[7] The issue of parent listserves, such as *Parentnet*, is a research topic in and of itself. Currently, I am collaborating with UMC and Enrollment staff to prepare a conference paper about this subject.

questions (http://www.mtu.edu/current/parentnet/archives/). The latter are

somewhat scripted answers submitted by Michigan Tech students, who are hired

by UMC and Enrollment services, to respond to specific and reoccurring

questions from parents. Because of this *Parentnet* data from 2000 is archived on

the university web site, but the final three years were archived by me personally

for the purpose of this research. The difference between the archived parent posts

and student responses/blogs are shown in Figure 1.

Sample from archived parent post

Hello! I am the parent (mother) of a first-year student, and I'm a first-year parent. My firstborn (*G*) is attending MTU for the Mechanical Engineering classes/degree. We are from Flint, MI. I am sending this because I have "tons" of questions!!! 1) How much snow and cold temperatures do the kids really have to deal with? Can he still ride a bike in the winter months (as he claims he can)? 2) What is the most important thing (besides money) that I can send or do for my son while he is at MTU? 3) How much does it take (including hotel and meal costs) for him to take the charter bus home and back during school breaks? 4) If anything were to happen (accident wise), how would I know? (I guess I'm still nervous!) 5) Is drinking really a problem at MTU in the winter months as rumors say? These are a few questions, but if anyone would like to volunteer any other information, I'd be thrilled to receive it!

Figure 1: Contrast of Posts

Sample from student post/blog This past week in Houghton has been really beautiful and filled with snow. The campus is beginning to be transformed for Winter Carnival as the statues start to take form. According to Pasty Central (a website that has many local features on it) the total snowfall for the 2007–08 season (as of January 16, 2008) is up to 131.7." With the snowy weather this past week/weekend also came a drop in temperature with an extremely low wind chill. This article will discuss the weather and how important safety precautions are for everyone, as well as explain the winter activities that are taking place this year for Carnival.

Third Data Site: Colloquy Forum

The third data site is the Chronicle of Higher Education colloquy forum.

Forum data is authored by educators and scholars from different universities

around the world. Personal stories, scholarship, and research are examples of the

data. The online forum is facilitated by Dr. Rubin, a communication and

language professor from the University of Georgia. Colloquy participants include

university faculty, administrators, IGTA, and GTA. Data from the colloquy site

compliments previous data because it offers primary data explanations for social

beliefs, and comprehensive definitions of words used by *Parentnet* participants

and "Teach Impediment" interviewees. Because the tone of *Parentnet* is more

conversational, participants may not overtly think about the cultural models/social

beliefs that underlie what they say in their posts. For example, Gee uses the claim

'My cat is playing' to make clear how cultural models are often built on tacit

theories. He explains how 'My cat is playing' is:

>   untheoretical and just an obvious statement of what is in
>
>   front of my nose. But this is not true. I can only describe
>
>   the state of affairs this way by, however tacitly or
>
>   unconsciously, accepting certain generalizations. For one
>
>   thing, I must accept that the distinction between work (or at
>
>   least 'non-play') and play that is made about human beings

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can be made about cats. This is, like all generalizations,

open to discussion and debate. (2007, p. 12)

According to Gee any discourse, including listserve posts, is a theory about the world, the people in it, and the ways in which goods are or ought to be distributed among them (p. 191). Primary Discourses, he defines, as ways of communicating to which people are apprenticed early in life. Family, friends, geographical location, and beliefs largely shape Primary Discourses. Primary Discourses are significant because they constitute our first social identity, and form a base from which later Discourses are acquired or resisted. They also form our initial taken-for-granted understandings of *who* we are and *who* people 'like us' are, as well as what sorts of things we do, value, and believe when we are not 'in public'. Secondary discourses, as Gee describes as discourses "to which people are apprenticed as part of their socializations within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside of our home and peers" (137). Schooling is often the first place in which primary Discourse may conflict with most secondary discourses. Through a variety of sociolinguistic methods, Gee demonstrates how discursive conflicts, between Primary and Secondary Discourses, often become a problem for students. Gee's work challenges current research and pedagogy to make informing theories, and their underlying ideologies, overt. This, he argues, helps Discourse participants navigate the social

conflicts that hide themselves in stereotypes, values, and assumptions that

inevitably play out in language use (ix). His work was the impetus for developing

a program at Michigan Tech named IGTAAP. The individual who spearheaded

IGTAAP was, in turn, my inspiration for this research. Below is a brief history on

the development of IGTAAP, and how it helped me make sense of Gee's theory

through actual practice.

Why Michigan Technological University

Several years back, almost ten to be more exact, an adjunct teacher was

hired by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development (CTLFD) to

instruct a class of international graduate teaching assistants on the fundamentals

of American communication and classroom skills. When this position was shortly

thereafter vacated, the Director of the CTLFD asked the writing center to submit a

proposal for how this previously held position and class might be re-envisioned

from a writing center perspective. Assistant Director of the writing center, Sylvia

Matthews was given the task. At that time, I was working as a writing center

coach with several graduate international students and teaching Honors

Composition and Composition for International Students. Seeing how

constructive collaboration and reciprocal learning could be fostered between these

two classes, I cooperated with another graduate teaching assistant to produce

learning experiences between our Honors and International students.[8] Because of

my interest in working with international students and because of my respect for

Matthew's work ethic and creative energy, I eagerly volunteered when Matthews

asked if anyone was interested in helping with IGTAAP.

　　　While interviewing Matthews for my research, almost a decade after

IGTAAP was initiated, she paused briefly before admitting how this task was

entered into with some hesitation and nervousness. She wondered if this was

something the writing center should undertake. After all, was this writing center

work and what problems would it create and with and for whom?   Matthews felt

the writing center was a good place to work with IGTAs because the center

already worked with international students who were frequent and eager visitors.

This particular type of work, she explained, was unique because it was framed by

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[8] See my related publications: "Learning from Our Students", "How do We Relate in Today's
Global World", "Bridging Gaps Across Cultures," "Viewing Meaning Through Prisms of
Multiliteracies," "Speaking and Teaching Strategies," "How Do You Deal with ESL Students?
Deconstructing a Problematic Question…," "Learning From Each Other: Collaboration in First-
Year Composition"

an ideological approach to literacy rather than a skill based, technical approach.

Writing center work, at Michigan Technological University, is theoretically

informed by the work of James Paul Gee, Brian Street, The New London Group,

Helen Fox and others who have all helped define a new position, which

foregrounds Vygotsky's strongest conclusion. Weekly discussions between staff

members and student workers help connect writing center practices with theory

drawn from the above scholars, and others not mentioned here. As explained by

the director of the center, in her own book *Good Intentions*, this body of

scholarship all builds from the following premise "the intellect develops by

participating in human relationships, not by sitting on the sidelines and listening

to the rules being explained (1999, p. 89). In the afterword for the book, Nancy

Barron, a former coach in the writing center, explains what this requires.

> We need academics to bring their tacit rules and
>
> expectations into explicit discussions, to give us (minority
>
> students) a chance to hear and reflect on the thinking that
>
> produced the expectations. And for every successful
>
> student interaction, for every time an underrepresented
>
> student's words or actions contribute to a better
>
> understanding, those insights need to move outside of the
>
> writing center. The knowledge gained from one-to-one

work ought to be in the front, in the face of administrators

who may be deciding on funding, deciding on curriculum,

deciding on graduate school admissions. This readily

available knowledge has the potential to change the system

that emphasizes our differences in unproductive ways.

(Grimm, 1999, p. 128)

In part because of the one-to-one space, and in part because of the

theoretical mechanisms at play in this particular writing center, it worked well to

serve the goals of IGTAAP. For example, coaches were already helping

international students understand the assumptions and expectations of American

academic classrooms. Furthermore, the one-to-one approach coaches were able to

offer IGTAs not only made the students more comfortable but opened a space for

reciprocal learning. Coaches were often undergraduate students who genuinely

respected international graduate students for the knowledge and expertise they

held. Likewise, international graduate students respected their coaches' American

birthright, which inherently produces an idiomatic understanding of English. .

So after careful consideration of what it would mean to situate such a

project within a writing center, Sylvia Matthews's proposal for IGTAAP was

submitted. As many bureaucratic timelines happen, it was the week before school

started when she was notified that her proposal was accepted. This didn't give

Matthews much time to think through the practical details of what she would do and how. Fortunately, because she felt the model for the writing center itself was so strong, she was able to both intuitively and pragmatically model her project after it. Instead of assigning individuals to the position of IGTAAP coaches, Matthews asked if anyone had an interest in working with international graduate students who were English Language Learners. This is how I initially began working closely with Matthews, five years prior to my current research position.

I remember how during our first meeting as IGTAAP coaches Matthews reassuringly explained her vision for the program, but also articulated how the events of the semester would make that vision clearer. She encouraged coaches to share experiences, asking that they constructively point out what worked or did not seem to work in reaching the goals of the program. Her goals for the program included: 1) supporting international student success at passing their mini lesson, 2) offering language and cultural support to international students who were trying to succeed in an academic community different from their previous educational experience, and 3) educating coaches who work with international students about disparate cultures and ways of respectfully communicating across those differences. From the start she hoped that the money spent on the program would benefit both students and coaches. It was important that the coaches should teach what needed to be learned, but also learn from the students whom

they coached. Although not many students passed their mini lesson during the first semester of IGTAAP, the coaches and Matthews felt that the semester had been instrumental in helping understand better what needed to be done. Students also felt the semester had been a success as they had become more comfortable in thinking about and using American English.

Making Explicit Tacit Theories

During my interview with Matthews five years later, she laughs with humility and experience as she explains how, "It took us a while to understand what the judges were looking for…" The judges she was referring to included a group of administrators, staff, and faculty who evaluated the performance of the IGTA during their mini-lesson. The mini-lesson was used by Michigan Tech to re-evaluate IGTAs who did not pass their SPEAK test. In place of retaking the SPEAK test, the IGTAs were required to teach a particular lesson plan to a classroom of judges.

In stepping back to analyze the first semester of mini-lessons, the writing center coaches and Matthews realized that many of the judges judging weren't trained in evaluating English Language Learners. In fact, many of the judges were used to responding to American graduate students who were working on their dissertations or master's project. This meant the judges unconsciously assumed the entering international graduate teaching assistants would not only

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meet their Western expectations of using "unaccented" language during their "clear, concise, and direct" teaching presentation, but would also demonstrate complex understanding of the material they were suppose to be teaching. In reminiscing about this, Matthews admits the difficulty of being the administrative liaison between coaches, their students, and the judges during that first year. Reflecting back on this first semester now as a researcher, I can understand more clearly the difficulty of Matthews's position. She not only needed to make explicit to the coaches and the students what was expected of them, but she needed to gently persuade the judges to see how they were working from what Trimbur and Horner would call an unquestioned "monocultural and monolingual" approach to language.

In unpacking what went wrong that first semester, Matthews announced that we (the coaches and her self) needed to figure out what the judges were expecting and make those expectations explicit to the ELL students. James Paul Gee, linguistic and literacy scholar, illustrates how some people tacitly and others overtly hold different social beliefs that shape how they evaluate language and language users (2007). In seeking a way to bridge the different language approaches international students brought with them to their American educational experience, Matthews needed to make students, coaches, judges, and

herself critically aware of the underlying social beliefs that shaped the different ways cultures use and value language.

Matthews did just that, by talking to students, staff, faculty, and administrators about rules and expectations they may have about IGTAs. She asked them to consider what were and were not fair expectations. For example, she talked judges about how accents cannot conveniently disappear. She explained how the concept of pronouns in some cultures does not exist, therefore, there needs to be a learning curve in evaluating IGTA pronoun use. And she discussed the cultural differences in *what* constitutes knowledge, *how* knowledge is organized and presented, and *who* owns knowledge or intellectual property.

Parallel to these efforts, ran IGTA mentoring efforts. Writing center coaches worked with IGTAs on pronunciation, showing with mirrors how the tongue is used to form certain words. They explained how everyone has an accent, based on geographic residence. For example, people from England speak with an accent according to people from the United States. Accents, they would assure IGTAs were not something to get rid of or correct because they are part of their social identity. However, accent prejudice, especially toward Pacific Rim speakers, were something coaches and IGTAs were well aware of, often making the issue

of accents front and center. Having been a coach for several years, I remember Sylvia Matthews offering us different ways for working through accent discussions with IGTAs. In addition to talking about accents, coaches overtly explained to IGTAs university rules and expectations about *what* constitutes knowledge, *how* knowledge is organized and presented, and *who* owns knowledge or intellectual property in America.

IGTAAP today can be said to be a success, based on the number of IGTAs who choose and who are required to enroll in the program and the number of IGTAs who now pass their SPEAK tests. While making explicit tacit theories was not the sole factor for making IGTAAP a success, it was, I believe, an instrumental component. My personal experience with IGTAAP not only used theory to help me make sense of my IGTAAP practices, and vice versa, but it also provided me a richer foundation for understanding how theoretical concepts can be used as analytic tools. Several methodologies, examined in the following section, provide examples for how concepts are used as analytical tools.

Similar Research Methodologies

My methodology draws from Keith Gilyard's study of language competence (1991). His research focus in "Voices of the Self" is on identifying and understanding how urban blacks negotiate traditions of values, ideologies,

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`voices', and representations embedded in discourse practices that are used inside and outside the classroom. More specifically, his study uses analytic concepts, such as Standard English as an asymmetrical symbol of power, to illustrate how urban blacks "fail" to learn Standard English out of "resistance" not ignorance or lack of motivation. While IGTAs are less likely to resist learning Standard English, as it remains for them a commodity of economic and social status, they are often positioned in stereotypical roles that diminish who they are, what they know, how they've experienced events, where they've come, and where they are currently working towards going. Much of Gilyard attributes to naïve underestimations of the significance of Standard English as an asymmetrical symbol of power (p. 165). Building from Gilyard's hypothesis, my method identifies incongruent beliefs, represented in my data sites, which are telling of naïve underestimations of the significance of Standard English as an asymmetrical symbol of power.

Similarly, Brian Street's work provides a useful model for understanding how texts stipulate social relationships between human subjects and their perceived identities. In his book *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1985), Street outlines what he terms the "autonomous" model of literacy by showing the claims and assumptions made by individuals using such a model. To explicate this model, he draws attention to Patricia Greenfield's 1972 study with schooled and

unschooled Wolof children in Senegal. Using tests specifically designed to measure "concept formation" she asked the children to categorize and classify things that were most alike. In analyzing how the students classified the objects and seeing how the unschooled children classified only by the most general and obvious method, Greenfield made what Street calls a "frighteningly large conclusion." She assumed from the results that the unschooled Wolof children lacked Western self-consciousness as they were not able to distinguish between their own thought or statement about something and the thing itself (p. 21). Greenfield made further assumptions about intelligence and literacy when she connected their descriptive answers to linguistic ability they were taught (or in this case not taught) in school. For example, the unschooled children would report an object as "red" instead of saying "it is red" or "the ball is red." She argued the one word answer represented the individual's (and tangentially the culture of unschooled Wolof children's) lack of linguistic, cognitive, and tangentially literate ability.

Street is quick to point out how traditional bipolar representations of thinking between disparate cultures were being challenged as early as 1930 by Professors like E.E. Evans-Pritchard, who argued that so called "primitive" cultures like the Azande of Central Africa held views that were not, "irrational, illogical or mystical as European conceptions commonly supposed them to be"

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and that once one accepted the initial premises that founded their "witchcraft" one would discover how the thought processes are similar to those of Western scientific thought. Thirty years later, from his own research into African systems of thought, Robin Horton argued "that it is too simplistic, and indeed ethnocentric, to dismiss such peoples as irrational and unscientific. Too often at fault is the observer's understanding of what other people's statements and actions mean" (qtd in Street p. 25).

Returning to Greenfield's argument, Street explains how she like many others, assume they are testing cognitive flexibility as demonstrated through linguistic use, when in reality they are in fact testing the social conventions of the dominant culture. Street points out how unschooled Wolof student might have considered it redundant to constantly say "the ball is red" when both the researcher and the student could see they were referring to the ball. More pointedly, Street reminds us that "learning to frame written material, particularly in test conditions, is a convention of our educational system" (p. 28). By ignoring the social context and conventions, Greenfield was able to argue that evaluating literacy by linguistic ability did not discriminate between cultures but simply technologies. Ironically, it is Greenfield's denial of context and convention that hides the very ideology that structures her method of research and evaluation of findings. Street warns that however appealing it is to see literacy as technology,

the ideologies and social conventions that underlie the valuing of such skills must

be made explicit. The autonomous model is also dangerous because it naively

perpetuates western conceptions of literacy, ignoring cultural sensitivity necessary

to understand literacy practices as they vary from one cultural context to another.

As an alternate to the autonomous model of literacy, which classifies the

work of Greenfield, and is best known for emphasizing problem-solving,

imparting technical skills, and fixing literacy in an isolated context, Street offers

the ideological model.

> The ideological model attempts to understand
>
> literacy in terms of concrete social practices and to
>
> theorize it in terms of the ideologies in which
>
> different literacies are embedded. Literacy – of
>
> whatever type – only has consequences as it acts
>
> together with a large number of other social factors,
>
> including political and economic conditions, social
>
> structure, and local ideologies. (qtd in Gee, p. 58)

Street's ideological model requires a method of analysis that interprets not

just one part of the research problem, but looks at the social, cultural and political

issues shaping the research situation. Instead of offering an either/or solution that

focuses on one of the research subjects, an ideological approach focuses more on

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providing a thoughtful understanding of the complete issue, instead of approach the issue from a single belief, thought, or principle.

In order to implement an ideological methodology, research needs to pay specific attention to those not represented or excluded by more popular views. Failure to consider exclusions and underrepresented viewpoints, or worse yet, to only interpret data that fits with one's own beliefs leads to a perception of ideology that is much less flattering. As Gee explains,

> To many people, ideology is what other people have when
>
> they perversely insist on taking the 'wrong' viewpoint on
>
> an issue. Our own viewpoint, on the other hand, always
>
> seems to us simply to be 'right'. 'Ideology' and 'dogmatic'
>
> are, thus, terms which, for many go hand-in-hand. (p. 1)

In studying the role ideology plays in my data, it becomes critical to ask what ideology is reflected in the discourse, and what interests does that ideology serve. The following method helps facilitate a critical discourse analysis that is theoretically framed by what both Brian Street and James Paul Gee refer to as an ideological model of literacy.

James Paul Gee's Concepts as Analytic Tools

CDA, according to Norman Fairclough, is a research method based upon the theoretical claim that

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discourse is an element of social life which is dialectically

interconnected with other elements, and may have

constructive and transformative effects on other elements.

It also makes the claim that discourse has in many ways

become a more salient and potent element of social life in

the contemporary world, and that more general. Processes

of current social change often seem to be initiated and

driven by changes in discourse. (Fairclough)

In order to understand what exactly CDA is, it is necessary to define

discourse. Discourse is most often referred to as the way one expresses oneself

using words. But discourse is much more than talking, writing, instant messaging

or texting. Discourse is both ambiguous and ubiquitous. Discourse

unconsciously, yet pervasively, influences the way a culture of individuals know,

value, and experience the world. Discourses are used for building power

relationships, for regulation and normalization of social values and beliefs, for

developing standards for what constitutes knowledge.

Given the tacit yet pervasive power of the written and spoken word, CDA

is necessary for describing, interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing social life

reflected in text (Luke A. , 1997). My following use of CDA is concerned with

studying my text data to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance,

inequality, and bias used to denigrate non-native speakers. It is a critical

discourse analysis because it uses Gee's concepts as analytical tools to illuminate

ways in which discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias are

initiated, maintained, and reproduced within the social, political, and historical

context of monolingualism.

Master Myths and Frozen Theories

The first data site, as outlined earlier in this chapter, is John Gravois's

"Teach Impediment" article. Because discourse influences the way we see the

world, it is important to identify the grand narrative, or the parts of the data text

that provide people with a way to act, understand, and know a particular context.

James Paul Gee's concept of a master myth provides a tool for identifying those

grand narratives. Gee defines a "master myth" as the part of social language that

evokes a common way of thinking (p. 71). The problem with a master myth is it

disguises contradictory ways of thinking that play out in social language.

The taken-for-granted characteristic of a master myth often results from a

particular history is mistaken as being representative of all people, spaces, and

times. Eventually, master myths become hidden in a particular social language.

Instead of recognizing that there are different ways of thinking about and acting in

the world, especially in response to social change, master myths become accepted,

and eventually taken for granted. The first layer of analysis, therefore, is to parse

out the master myths embedded in the language used by Gravois himself, and those he quotes in his article.

Horner and Trimbur's research, outlined in chapter 1, provides a critical lens for analyzing and interpreting the hidden theories. Though my research can hardly reflect on all the master myths represented in the data, it will reflect on myths that can be correlated with a significant point in the history of monolingualism, as chronicled by Horner and Trimbur. In particular, I identify master myths in this layer of data that work under the false assumption that any language, especially English, is monolithic or autonomous in nature.

Cultural Models and Principles of Meaning

As explained above, master myths are grand narratives that can be explicated from public discourse such as Gravois's article. Social languages, such as the discourse used in *Parentnet* data, evoke what James Paul Gee refers to as "cultural models." Cultural models, defined by Gee, are versions of reality that are "inescapably rooted in our social and cultural experiences" (p. 6). In other words, cultural models are assumptions and beliefs about the world that masquerade as a fact. Because cultural models are residual effects of master myths, they are often used and taken for granted. Because of this, cultural models can be both tacitly hidden or explicitly stated in an individual's discourse. CDA is a way to identify tacit theories, as well as explicit theories, constituting cultural

models. CDA is used in chapter 4 to parse out cultural models, put the beliefs and assumptions into the ideological context from which they were communicated, and illuminate the particular interests served by such assumptions and beliefs.

According to James Paul Gee, "for any social theory that grounds someone's social beliefs, however tacit or overt that theory may be, we can always ask where the generalizations that make up the theory come from" (p. 17). In order to infer from the words what theory the *Parentnet* participant is tacitly using, this part of the analysis relies on making explicit connections between claims made by the individual and principles of meaning that may have been used by *Parentnet* participants.

More specifically, *Parentnet* data is analyzed to 1) identify and interpret what reality about the research situation people assume, and 2) infer what meaning-making principles inform particular theories of reality. Each cultural model identified and chosen for analysis is a foundation or base upon which *Parentnet* participants make meaning. Gee's three principles of meaning are used to illuminate how cultural models make sense to particular individuals (p. 73). The first principle of meaning is the exclusion principle. This principle acts as an analytical tool to help identify words that, whether explicitly or tacitly, include or exclude certain interests. The second tool used to analyze cultural models is the guessing principle. This principle identifies judgments that are made from

speculation over what someone else has said. In other words, this principle helps

identify meaning that has not been logically deduced, but is instead made through

presuming what others mean. The final and third principle is the context

principle. This principle helps extract suppositions made from or in the context of

the listserve. In other words, what makes sense within the context of *Parentnet*,

but may not be rational or logical in a different context.

Using these three principles, Gee believes a researcher can fit together

enough pieces of meaning, to understand the construction of principles or

assumptions that give rise to and reinforce cultural models. By using cultural

models to identify data points, and by using principles of meaning as the analytic

tool to expound understanding, my CDA can systematically examine the

discourse choices used in the everyday talk of *Parentnet*. By illuminating socially

constructed terms, this layer of analysis provides an understanding of how words

inform assumptions about the research situation.

Meta-knowledge

Chapter 3 analyzed a public debate, John Gravois's "Teach Impediment"

article, to identify master myths. Master myths reflect the grand narrative of what

people believe and how they act in accordance with that belief. Analysis at this

layer provides a reflective richness to my CDA because it identifies what is

unconsciously or prototypically accepted by large portions of people. In the case

of this research, this involved parsing out the guiding myths or narratives that inform the different opinions held by people about IGTAs in the undergraduate classroom. Chapter 4 analyzed everyday talk, *Parentnet* email strands, for the purpose of explicating cultural models. This second layer of analysis also brings richness to my CDA because it illuminates what is being taken for granted in the everyday talk of *Parentnet.* Gee explains how when individuals master something, such as everyday talk, they have no conscious awareness about it. Discourses, by their very sociolinguistic nature, would not work if people we consciously aware of what they were doing while they were doing it (p. 140). According to Gee, my discourse data, for the first and second layers, is, for the most part,

> unconscious, unreflective, and uncritical. Each Discourse
>
> protects itself by demanding from its adherents
>
> performances which act as though its ways of being,
>
> thinking, acting, talking, writing, reading, and valuing are
>
> right, natural, obvious, the way good and intelligent and
>
> normal people behave. In this regard, all Discourses are
>
> false – none of them is, in fact, the first or last word on
>
> truth. (p. 190)

This brings us to the third layer of analysis which focuses on scholarly discourse data. As mentioned briefly in chapter 1, scholarship, by its very nature, is reflective, thoughtful, and philosophical. In chapter 5 Gee's concept of "meta-knowledge" (p. 190) is used as an analytic tool to dissect the Chronicle of Higher Education colloquy forum. In the context of teaching, Gee defines meta-knowledge as the process of breaking down the issue into logical bits to investigate it in such a way that participants can critically talk about, describe it, and explain it (p. 140). This process, when used in the classroom to engage students in thoughtful discussion about a subject, is referred to by Gee as "overt teaching." According to Gee, certain life experiences trigger thoughtful reflection. These experiences can come in the form of personal stories, discourse confrontations, pedagogical experiences that require one to rely on meta-knowledge in order to teach, and likewise, research that requires a logical and reflective approach to investigating an issue. Meta-knowledge is used as a tool to parse out discourse that uses or refers to life experiences that illuminate thoughtful reflection used in the scholarly discourse. As stated above, this third layer adds the final analysis, providing the final tier for triangulation of data.

Qualitative researchers use the term triangulation to describe the use of multiple strategies, or in my case analytic tools, to study the research issue. My research makes use of triangulation by using compatible analytic tools, borrowed

from Gee, to study three different layers of discourse: the public discourse of "Teach Impediment", the everyday discourse of *Parentnet*, and the scholarly discourse of *The Chronicle's* colloquy forum. The final chapter of my research, chapter 6, explains and concludes how my research contributes to not only the field of humanities in specific and higher education in general, but also adds to the lucid and unsettled discussion over university use of IGTAs.

Chapter Three

In this chapter, I identify, analyze, and theorize the different perspectives that perpetuate the historical, cultural, and ideological nature of the master myth of monolingualism. My first data site, "Teach Impediment," is itself a journalistic analysis of opinions about international teachers in the American collegiate classroom, and also a data site for my own analysis. Research questions framing my analysis include:

1. How is the master myth of monolingualism mobilized

2. What are the insidious assumptions or frozen theories embedded in the myth of monolingualism

3. What frozen theories are questioned and disputed, and likewise what frozen theories remain tacitly uncontested

4. How is discourse manipulated to emphasize "our good things" and "their bad things"

Master Myth of Monolingualism

My research uses Gee's theoretical concepts for master myth and frozen theories as analytical tools useful for parsing out insidious assumptions that are both consciously and unconsciously mobilized through perpetuation of

monolingual suppositions. I chose to appropriate Gee's theoretical concept of a

master myth as an analytical tool because a myth is a story, which in the tradition

of orality (Ong, 1988), was often accepted as a historical and scientific account

that defined the ideological view of a particular social culture. Myths tend to

amalgamate dominate views about people, language, and culture or as Gee

explains, storytelling unifies particular groups of people through analogy.

> One of the key ways humans think about the world is
>
> through seeking out similiarities. We try to understand
>
> something new in terms of how it resembles something old.
>
> We attempt to see the new thing as a type, thus, like other
>
> things of the same or similar type. And very often a great
>
> deal hangs on these judgments. Judgments are still 'open'
>
> and widely discussed in the culture thanks to on-going
>
> social changes. However, any language is full of such
>
> similarity judgments that have been made long ago in the
>
> history of the language – in another time and another place
>
> – and which are now taken for granted and rarely reflected
>
> upon by current speakers of the language. (p. 71)

Gee theoretically names out-of-date judgments as "frozen theories."

"Teach Impediment" is a data site embedded with various stories or opinions

shared by diverse people about university use of international teachers. A close

study of how the myth of monolingualism and related judgments play out in the

data helps theorize 1) who or what social group is best served by a particular

telling of a story, and likewise who is excluded or judged by this particular view

of the situation; and 2) what historical parts of the story are still relevant in

today's current social context, and likewise what parts of the story have become

"frozen theories" or theories about the world that no longer make sense.

Teach Impediment

As mentioned previously, my first data site is the article, "Teach

Impediment," which was published in the Chronicle of Higher Education. In this

article John Gravois reports on and critiques different views that represent

perspectives of public officials (state senators and university administrators),

students, and IGTAs. Because Gravois, a well established and respected

Chronicle writer, summarizes and analyzes what the general public is thinking

about the research situation, his article provides useful data for identifying what

master myth frames public debate over IGTAs. The variety of people he

interviews helps reveal different judgments that are either informed by or in

response to monolingual beliefs. By bringing to the forefront these judgments

and beliefs, my analysis identifies how long held myths and frozen theories

complicate the current situation regarding international teachers in the American

classroom. Critical study of the juxtaposing pieces of the master myth itself, and

the assumptions and theories in particular, allow us a more complex

understanding that complicates the question of whether or not monolingualism is

worth maintaining in today's global world. In order to understand the current data

and present situation from a historical perspective, my analysis uses Bruce Horner

and John Trimbur's article "English Only and U.S. College Composition" (2002).

Because social constructions are historically written, but always in the present

rewritten, Horner and Trimbur's theoretical framework provides a way for us to

approach the current situation differently, in light of the past. Their article is

especially useful for doing this because in a historical chronicling of

monolingualism, the authors examine how university practices and policies no

longer adequately address current day issues. More specially, the authors

challenge monolingual thinking and practices by arguing for a repositioning of

monolingualilsm in relationship with multilingualism. They identify

monolingualims as a "problem and a limitation of U.S. culture and that argues for

the benefits of an actively multilingual language policy" (p. 597). Horner and

Trimbur suggest that complicating debate over monolingualism are viable

solutions for addressing the problem, which focus on the speakers rather than on

understanding the historical, ideological, and social intricacies of monolingualism

itself. In my analysis that follows the social context for monolingualism, as

Horner and Trimbur suggest, is positioned center stage.

Analysis of a Public Debate

The social problem resulting from the master myth of

monolingualism is best summed up in North Dakota state senator Betty

Grande's words, "If you can't speak the language clearly, get out of the

classroom." The language Grande is referring to is Standard American

English and it is international graduate teaching assistants she wants out of

the classroom.

Over the last few decades, universities have increasingly relied on

graduate teaching assistants to teach fundamental undergraduate classes, such as

100-level courses, like, Engineering 101 or First Year Composition. Financially,

paying graduate students a stipend and tuition scholarship is much more cost

effective for universities than hiring full or even part-time instructors. Yet this

trend is not only fiscally motivated. Graduate teaching assistantships provide an

opportunity for graduate students to enact social capital as their scholarly

contributions, in and outside the classroom, become recognized by students,

peers, and professional colleagues, enhancing also overall university scholarship.

Thus, such positions are mutually beneficial in fiscally and scholarly ways for

both the university and for undergraduate and graduate students, a win-win

situation. However, with the increase in international graduate students at American universities (as detailed in the review of literature), criticism has switched from complaints over the use of GTAs, as opposed to tenured or tenure-track faculty, to complaints about using IGTAs who do not speak English as their native language. While the latter complaints seem to be simply a matter of language skills, I posit that the problem is not simply one of language, but is a socially constructed myth of American monolingualism.

Storyline: A Public Failing

When it comes to the topic of teaching, most of us will readily agree that understanding what the teacher is saying is critical to learning. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of who is to blame when the student cannot understand what the instructor is saying because the IGTA speaks with an unfamiliar accent. Some, like Ms. Grande, argue that IGTAs are to blame and accents are something that IGTAs must eliminate if they wish to teach in an American classroom.

Legislature and mother of a college-age son, Ms. Grande asked her son's friend how classes were going, Gravois reports how she was dismayed to discover,

> how many said they were having trouble wading through a
>
> professor's accent. What was worse, the students suggested

that the university did not seem interested in doing anything about it.

Ms. Grande sensed a public failing. She approached administrators about the issue, but received responses she found to be tepid at best. "I found it as frustrating as any student had described," she says. "'This is something that the students should work through; it's a diversity issue,' they told me."

"There were more excuses," Ms. Grande sizes up, "than there were avenues to remedy the situation."

At that point she began paving an avenue of her own with the language of a deliberately unforgiving bill.

Grande's bill would require universities to:
1. reimburse tuition if students complain in writing that

2. they had to withdraw from a class because their instructor did not 'speak English clearly and with good pronunciation,'

3. reassign those instructors to non-teaching positions

   if 10% of the students in the class filed a complaint.

   (Okura)

Others, like North Dakota State University Provost Craig Schnell,

maintain that accents are part of both individual identity and cultural heritage, and

therefore domestic students need to learn how to listen to accented English as

spoken differently by various populations around the world. According to

Gravois, Schnell defends his

> university's policy on foreign teaching assistants, which is
>
> built on a series of written and spoken language-proficiency
>
> tests and, for those who fail them, remedial classes in
>
> English as a second language. 'We think we've had pretty
>
> good luck with it,' he says. He also stresses the importance
>
> of exposing students to international influences, especially
>
> students from a place like Fargo.
>
> 'I think North Dakota's fairly provincial, he says, 'and if
>
> you sound in any way different, that's a point of
>
> contention.' Those hang-ups are something students must
>
> grow past, he insists. He then cites one of the basic
>
> premises -- for Ms. Grande, a basic excuse -- of

contemporary higher education: 'We're going to live in a

global society,' Mr. Schnell says, 'and we have to be

prepared.' (Gravois, 2005)

Gravois offers additional information to support Mr. Schnell's perspective

on our global world, and the role higher education must play in preparing students

for this world. More specifically, he reports on how there are now many times

more nonnative speakers of English in the world than there are native speakers of

English.

In 2003 just under 41,000 people earned new Ph.D.'s from

American universities, according to the federal "Survey of

Earned Doctorates." Of those, about 12,200 -- roughly 30

percent -- were citizens of other countries. In engineering,

foreigners have outnumbered U.S. citizens among new

Ph.D.'s for the past 20 years. In the physical sciences,

meanwhile, 45 percent of the students are foreign. Among

all those who earned doctorates from American universities

between 1999 and 2003, the most common source of

undergraduates was the University of California at

Berkeley. But the second most common was Seoul

National University, in Korea.

Higher education, according to Gravois, is seeing the increase in linguistic

diversity much faster than are most Midwestern towns. In light of this, Gravois

also reports on the consequences of linguistic diversity for undergraduate students

like Nicholas P. Hacker, a 23-year-old resident of Grand Forks. Hacker is both a

freshman member of the North Dakota Senate and a senior at the University of

North Dakota. According to Gravois,

> Mr. Hacker says he has taken several classes where the
>
> instructor's accented English was difficult to comprehend.
>
> "There were days when I would go home and have to study
>
> the material that they had taught, for the simple reason that
>
> I couldn't understand the things that came out of their
>
> mouth," he says. "It's one thing to go home and study a
>
> concept, another not to understand what the professor was
>
> saying."

Feedback from students like Mr. Hacker encourage people, like Ms.

Grande, to seek solutions for the social problem that requires domestic

undergraduates wade through their teacher's (or IGTAs) accent. Fixing the

problem, however, is not as simple as requiring IGTAs to speak better English

with less of an accent. As Horner and Trimbur point out,

there is, after all, no clear point at which an individual can

be said to be or not to be a speaker of a given language, just

as there is no clear point at which someone can be said to

have achieved literacy. (612)

Earnest Work and Good Intentions

While many people confuse the terms "accent" and "pronunciation" there

is a meaningful distinction. Pronunciation refers to specific inflections and

audible idiosyncrasies that are specific to a language. Language idiosyncrasies

are vocalized during the speaking of any language – whether one's native or

nonnative language. Pronunciation can be evaluated as good or bad, right or

wrong. For example, as a child, and a native speaker of English, speech lessons

helped me strengthen my "lazy tongue." It took four years of speech therapy

before I was able to correctly pronounce "r" sounds, which I pronounced more

like a "w" than an "r."

In contrast, accents occur when the specific inflections and audible

idiosyncrasies specific to a language are present during the speaking of *another*

language. In our global world where over 7,000 languages are spoken, English is

often used as the default language. Many Americans assume "English" means

Standard, mid-Western English. In reality, British English is heard much more

often in other parts of the world than is Standard, American English. Mary Louise

Pratt (2003) contends that American reliance on a Standard, unaccented English has led to ambivalence toward other languages. I would like to take her contention one step further. Since all Englishes are accented in relations to each other, there is not only an ambivalence about other languages, but intolerance toward other-accented English. This ambivalence and intolerance has encouraged people like Ms. Grande to believe that no matter where you travel in the world, people want to communicate with Americans in English. In referring to her trips to Israel, Egypt, Honduras, Ms. Grande claims that people from these countries mainly wanted to "to communicate with the American. They knew that, throughout their lives, if they wanted advancement they would have to do everything they could to communicate with us."

Mr. Rubin, however, suggests that even if this is the case, universities need to teach -- worldly listening skills. According to Gravois, Rubin believes "the ability to listen to and comprehend world Englishes a prerequisite to success in a wide variety of enterprises."

Questioning Pedagogical Expectations

Most people will agree that the word *accent* is not synonymous with words used to describe teaching skills or ability. However, most will also agree that accents do complicate the learning situation. So, while an accent is not indicative of teaching ability, it does have an effect on the learning situation.

Failure to make this distinction results in policy proposals like Ms. Grande's that call for action if 10 percent of the students in a class came forward with complaints about IGTA's English ability effecting their learning ability. In response to such a compliant, the university would instigate the practice of moving the instructor into a "nonteaching position."

According to a 2005 report funded by the American Political Science Association (APSA), undergraduate students often identify language as the primary impediment to their comprehending an IGTA's instruction (Okura, p. 311). The report points out, however, that IGTAs are required to pass not only a high TOEFL level but a particularly difficult SPEAK test prior to being awarded an IGTA position.[9] As a result of proficiency screening, the problems, according to the APSA report, are due to cultural confusion and differences such as the

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[9] The **Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit** (SPEAK) is an oral test developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), publishers of the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), an industry standard for assessing English proficiency for non-native speakers. The SPEAK is administered to non-native English speakers. Its aim is to evaluate the examinee's proficiency in spoken English. It is usually taken as a professional certification, especially for graduate teaching assistants in the American college and university system, who are often required to hold office hours and converse in English with students. It is also used in the medical profession, where communication with patients is required.

The SPEAK test is very similar to the Test of Spoken English (TSE), and is in fact a form of the TSE developed for institutions that consists of retired forms of the TSE. Thus, both exams use the same scoring system (Wikipedia).

IGTAs lacking American pedagogical skills or undergraduate students lacking coping strategies to respond to non-native speakers of English.

Definitions provide a first layer for understanding what is commonly implied in word choices. *Merriam Webster*'s dictionary, a well-established source for this type of inquiry, defines *teach* as:

> A *transitive verb that means "to impart the knowledge of."*
> *Impediment is defined as a noun referring to either*
> *"something that impedes" or a "lack of sufficiency."*
> *(*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary*)* (Meriam-Webster, 2008)

Based on these definitions, the title "Teach Impediment" suggests that IGTAs are expected to arrive at their American host university and (1) pass on knowledge to American students. Failure to fill the heads of American students with knowledge is, therefore, by definition, a result of (2) insufficient English on the part of the IGTA.

As stated previously, lexical understandings tend to encapsulate popular, common, or standard views on the meanings of words. Words entail more than just what is said at the surface or lexical level. Words are embedded with meanings rooted in political and historical agendas that serve to maintain certain ideological beliefs held by certain groups of people. Unlike scholars from the

interdisciplinary fields of the humanities, who study the historical and ideological meanings embedded in words, most people take words for what they mean in the immediate social context without understanding how the meanings are implicated in a socially constructed history of politics, power, and privilege. The expectations for the word teaching identified in Gravois' article are informed by lexical meanings, and not necessarily by social constructions that constantly reshape what it means to teach today's global world students.

In the field of literacy and language theory, Freire's (1993) landmark critique of the "banking concept" of education challenged traditional pedagogical models based largely on "imparting knowledge." Unlike the lexical meaning for "teach," which conjectures a didactic method of teaching, Freire's pedagogical model is less about imparting facts and figures and more about providing opportunities for dialogue. Using Freire's model as a contrast to popular notions of what it means to teach, I emphasize three aspects of teaching that are currently missing in Ms. Grande's notion of what it means to "teach." These three aspects of teaching are: dialogue, respect, and cooperation. The basis for dialogue, Freire insists, is respect. Under this model, responsibility for *teaching would not solely involve IGTAs, but would be a cooperative effort between IGTA and student.*

A criticism of Freire's work, like the debate involving university use of IGTAs, focuses on either/or binaries. For example, because Freire's model treats

education as emancipator, there is an assumption implied that individuals are either with the oppressed or against them. In general, either/or approaches often lead to a rather simplistic analysis of a situation. It is helpful, however, to use such criticism as a tool for translating how Freire's model reconstructs Ms. Grande's argument by examining the more complex subtleties of the situation.

Ms. Grande argues that if IGTAs cannot speak English they need to "get out of the classroom." On one level, this argument fits with Freire's notion that teaching requires dialogue. Under this notion, teaching and speaking are complementary skills both of which are necessary for IGTA and student success. But the type of dialogue Freire advocates requires respect on the part of both participants – student for teacher and teacher for student. Ms. Grande's proposed bill, which calls for 1) tuition refunds if IGTAs cannot be understood and for 2) dismissal of the IGTA from their teaching assistantship, creates an impediment toward building respect, as it places students in a position to assess their instructor, with severe penalties and consequences for the IGTA. While student evaluations at the end of a semester are extremely useful for assessing teaching, appraisal of teaching ability based on student's comprehension of accented English denigrates IGTAs – at the risk of undermining initial credibility and respect. Furthermore, the responsibility for students' understanding of accented English is solely on the IGTA.

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Analogous to the role of responsibility is the role of blame. Gravois poses

the question, "When the student can't understand the instructor who is to blame?"

It is easy to blame students' lack of understanding on the accented speech of

IGTAs. After all, it seems commonsensical that one needs to speak English in

order to teach at an American college. It is also fair to assume IGTAs speak

English with a certain level of pronunciation proficiency. According to one of the

students interviewed by Gravois, it is not only fair but necessary:

> "There were days when I would go home and have to study
>
> the material that they had taught, for the simple reason that
>
> I couldn't understand the things that came out of their
>
> mouth," he says. "It's one thing to go home and study a
>
> concept, another not to understand what the professor was
>
> saying."

It is easy to see how the conclusion can be drawn that, to a certain extent,

the ability to speak English is critical to teaching performance in an American

classroom. In the context of our global world, however, where multilingual

speakers are the majority, and in the landscape of higher education, which is

increasingly becoming international in population, accented speech is more of a

standard than it was even a decade ago. According to Gravois's research,

international students constitute on average somewhere between 20 to 40 percent

of the graduate school population. In benchmarking other universities for my research, this figure seems to fit and has in fact increased to averages that now range between 30-60 percent, with the latest trends in graduate demographics.

Identifying Insidious Stereotyping

Cultural expectations and assumptions for the role of an IGTA are inevitable and even necessary. Without expectations and assumptions, requirements and standards for teaching across various disciplines and institutions would be impossible. But the assumption that a teacher is a proficient speaker of Standard English, lowers the ethos of an IGTA who, as part of their own graduate education, is being apprenticed into the role of a teacher. The root of the problem is figuring out how universities, as institutions, can challenge inaccurate images of a teacher, given trends of globalization, and likewise reevaluate roles and responsibilities currently given to IGTAs and domestic undergraduate students. While poor communication skills on the part of a teacher will, undoubtedly, interfere with student learning, so too will social and cultural stereotypes that no longer fit with an accurate image for a competent teacher.

The excerpt below from "Teach Impediment" particularly provides quantitative evidence supporting the need to challenge stereotypes that get in the way of learning opportunities between IGTAs and undergraduate students.

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In 1988 Donald L. Rubin, a professor of education and speech communication at the University of Georgia, began toying with an experimental model that would occupy him for the next several years: He gathered American undergraduates inside a classroom and then played a taped lecture for them over high-fidelity speakers. The lecture -- an introduction to the Mahabharata, say, or a discourse on the growing scarcity of helium -- was delivered in the voice of a man from central Ohio.

While the undergraduates sat and listened, they faced an image projected onto the classroom wall in front of them: Half the time, it was a photograph of an American man ("John Smith from Portland"), standing at a chalkboard and staring back at them. For the other half of the testing groups, the slide projected before them was that of an Asian man ("Li Wenshu from Beijing"), standing at the same chalkboard. The two figures were dressed, posed, and groomed as similarly as possible.

Now for the interesting part: When the students were asked to fill in missing words from a printed transcript of the

central Ohioan's taped speech, they made 20 percent more

errors when staring at the Asian man's image than they did

when staring at the picture of "John Smith."

For some, the results of this study may not seem all that surprising. For

example, a faculty member from one of Michigan Tech's engineering programs

who is in charge of GTAs, expressed interest in my dissertation topic. He emailed

and inquired if I would be willing to share the results of my study when

completed. He typed, "I'm particularly interested in your topic because I just

don't get why my undergraduate students can't understand my international TAs,

they are some of the brightest students I have. I can understand them, why can't

their students?" What the faculty member is not considering is his position of

privilege. Not only is he an expert on the subject matter, but he has had the

luxury of traveling to more than twenty different countries, living in the Middle

East for several years, and fluently learning three languages including Arabic.

Most American students are not privileged in this way. Maya Angelou

writes in *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*:

It is necessary, especially for Americans, to see other lands

and experience other cultures. The American, living in this

vast country and able to traverse three thousand miles east

to west using the same language, needs to hear languages

as they collide in Europe, Africa, Asia. (1994, p. 111)

The geography of the United States is part of the reason that undergraduate students struggle to understand IGTAs. But even more is the assumption of Ms. Grande, that in all other countries (and she refers specifically to the ones she has traveled to, which include Israel, Egypt, and Honduras) people want to communicate with Americans in English. Ms. Grande takes this notion as logical, explaining that these people "knew that, throughout their lives, if they wanted advancement they would have to do everything they could to communicate with us." While there are many issues at play in this statement, it is pronunciation, language learning, and listening—communication—that become the sole responsibility of multilingual international speakers. Such a notion, once again, reifies language.

In contrast, Dr. Rubin concludes his interview with the following statement,

we must accompany support for international instructors'
teaching skills with support for U.S. undergraduates'
listening skills, in particular their ability to listen
effectively—and that means nonprejudicially—to world
Englishes.

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Scholarship supports Dr. Rubin's claim. In particular, the New London Group maintains that "negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students." It is, therefore, important for universities to create learning opportunities that give students access to the evolving language of what Min-Zhan Lu (2006) describes as "Living English" and Suresh Canagarajah (2006) refers to as "World Englishes" (see chapter 1). IGTAs provide an opportunity for critical engagement necessary for domestic students to understand how English is spoken and used around the world. From this perspective IGTA speaking ability is less an obstacle to student learning and more an attribute.

Theorizing Assumptions of Fairness

In talking about the need for universities to support and increase U.S. undergraduates' listening skills, Rubin also states that universities need to do a better job of developing international instructors' teaching skills. While universities have good intentions in supporting international students, this support is almost always in the form of increasing their English proficiency and pronunciation. These skills often come at the expense of learning the teaching skills necessary for successfully instructing an American classroom.

For international students to be granted admission to an American graduate program, they are required by immigration, the university, and the

department to have a certain level of English proficiency. While these levels

vary, these skills are often measured by TOEFL scores and SPEAK tests, as

explained in chapter 1. Occasionally, but not often, faculty will interview the

international student to gain a better sense of their English ability. While these

practices and policies are used to determine if individuals have the level of

English necessary to advance their understanding of a research subject in a second

language, they do not give any indication of an applicant's ability to teach. This

is troubling because a practice common at most universities is enrollment of

international graduate students, whose graduate education is funded through a

teaching assistantship.

After being accepted, international students usually arrive on campus a

week prior to the start of classes. In this week, they are required to find and

negotiate a place to rent, figure out transportation to and from campus, enroll in a

health care plan, register their immigration status, attend orientation for all

graduate students, attend a department orientation, and in a few cases, attend a

teaching orientation. There is little room for cultural adjustment, and hardly any

learning opportunity for understanding the culture of the American classroom.

Gravois takes this into consideration in his own analysis through the experience of

one IGTA in particular, who was hosted as a TA at the university from which the

above student experience was gained, and where Ms. Grande herself is an adjunct.

Ms. Liu says she felt woefully unprepared when she first

stepped into that classroom. Though she did attend a

weeklong departmental orientation for all new teaching

assistants, she says there was no effort to socialize her as a

foreigner into the mores of American higher education—

much less North Dakotan higher education. 'Had I known

the problems I was to get myself into,' she says, 'I

wouldn't have come.'

The sentiments expressed by Ms. Liu are shared by a large percentage of

international students. At the annual conferences of NAFSA: Association of

International Educators, there is typically more than a half-dozen sessions that

focus on helping foreign students adjust to the American culture in general and

higher education expectations and assumptions in particular. The solution often

suggested by experts is better orientation programming that aims to help students

adjust to US expectations and to familiarize them with a range of campus services

and academic- and social-support programs. While these are valuable programs,

they fail to address the social assumptions and expectations embedded in the

master myth of monolingualism. Below are the insidious assumptions and

expectations identified in this chapter's data analysis using the concept of frozen

theories as an analytical tool:

- Denigrating social and cultural stereotypes

- Unilateral teaching expectations

- Teaching ability measured only by speaking ability

- Undervaluing of listening skills in classroom communication

- Ethnocentrism and denial of the role World English plays in today's global society

- Default explanations for international enrollment

- Confusion over linguistic terms and realities

Identifying and analyzing how these assumptions and expectations play out in a printed publication of one journalist's reporting of the situation offers a general understanding of how the myth of monolingualism plays out in the grand narrative or over arching discussion of higher education. In this chapter's analysis it became evident how opponents against the use of international teachers in American classrooms emphasized the "good things" of American students and the "bad things" of IGTAs.

While people, like Ms. Grande, often speak candidly to reporters, the data is different from what is said in conversation that is not intended for publication. Because of this, the second data site was chosen for a comparative look at how monolingualism is mobilized in the less formalized discussion of a listserve conversation. As explained in my methodology, while this discussion

was not intended for public consumption, it was a discussion archived on the public university web site, making data analysis ethically possible without intruding on or changing the course of what is said and how it is said among participants.

Chapter Four

Chapter 3's analysis of public discourse was the first of three layers of analysis. This initial layer revealed that while monolingualism once served the purpose of evaluating and integrating diverse speakers, current conventions of monolingualism appear to be more divisive and even detrimental in their use. For example, data analysis revealed how public statements, made by opponents to university use of IGTAs, tend not to consider the unique discourse (language, social and cultural) problems IGTAs face in classrooms as graduate teaching assistants. The silent blanketing of these matters leaves the impression that these issues do not exist (Okura). However, data results from the first layer of analysis provide evidence that not only do these issues, such as lack of teaching support for IGTAs, exist but they thwart current efforts by universities to balance learning opportunities of domestic undergraduate students with international graduate students.

Chapter 4 provides the second layer of analysis, which examines how issues regarding IGTAs are discussed between parents of university students. The group of people my research gives particular attention to is parents who have

voluntarily subscribed to Parentlist – a listserve for parents of Michigan Technological University students.

My first layer of analysis used Gee's concepts of "*master myth*" and "*frozen theories*" to analyze reported and published statements. My second layer of analysis uses Gee's concepts of "*cultural models*" and "*principles of meaning*" to analyze the more informal text talk of Parentlist posts. In the following, I outline how Gee discusses these concepts and how my research uniquely appropriates each of them as analytic tools.

A cultural model is a generalized description, explanation, storyline or rationale for why and/or how elements of daily life -- things, people, events -- work sensically. Cultural models are relative to a particular cultural group and time. People use cultural models to understand what is going on around them and to make choices about what to do as competent cultural members and to evaluate what is desirable or not. Cultural models are a theorizing process of explaining a perception of reality through the words we use to describe it. According to Gee cultural models can be more or less tacit or overt; they can be more or less "self-advantaging, unrealistic, or delusional" (p. 17).

In order to interpret how these models might support the master myth of monolingualism, my research analyzes the meaning making principles at work in the parent posts. To do this systematically, I use Gee's "principles of meaning" to

parse out the commonsense logic underwriting cultural models embedded in the listserve statements. Gee provides an example, as well as an explanation for each of the principles of meaning. He frames discussion of these principles with the question, 'What does the word *sofa* mean?' This question is followed with the scenario below,

> Imagine that my friend Susan and I go into my living room, where I have a small white, rather broken down seat big enough for more than one person, and a larger and nicer one. I point to the larger, nicer one and say, 'That sofa has a stain on it.' Susan sees nothing exceptional about what I have said, assumes we both mean the same thing by the word sofa', and points to the smaller object, saying, Well, that sofa has a lot more stains on it.' I say, 'That's not a sofa, it's a settee. Now Susan realizes that she and I do not, in fact, mean the same thing by the word 'sofa' (pp. 72-3).

Gee explains how his meaning for the word 'sofa' excludes or distinguishes the word 'settee' from the word 'sofa'. He hypothesizes that Susan does not share the same meaning for the word sofa because it "means different

things to each of us because each of us has a different set of related words" (p.

73). While words are drawn from our social experiences, I understand Gee as

saying the meanings for these words come in the overlapping of past social

experiences with the immediate context of the discourse situation. In this sense,

words and meanings are always drawing from different social experiences,

languages, and groups – meaning in this sense is always in flux. Or as Gee

explains it, "the borders between social languages are not rigid and entirely

discrete" (p. 74). That is why Susan could distinguish, in the example above, that

Gee meant it was not a sofa, but a 'settee.' However, she could not know, nor

Gee himself may not be aware of, the sense making behind his use of the term

'settee'. The **principle of exclusion**, therefore, accounts for what is included in

use of a particular word, and likewise what is excluded (p. 73). As an analytical

tool the principle of exclusion makes possible a level of critical reflection that in

normal, everyday conversation is difficult to attain without bringing

communication to a halt. As an analytical tool the principle of exclusion helps

identify how the subject of a sentence gets set up differently to change the overall

meaning of what is being said.

The second concept I draw from Gee is the **guessing principle**:

What the guessing principle says, in part, is that we

discover what others and ourselves mean by operations that

are, though they are sometimes carried out consciously and

sometimes unconsciously, not in principle different from

the operations scientists use to investigate and make

intelligent guesses about the world. They (and we) simply

build theories and test them by how well they make sense

of past and future experience, revising them as the need

arises. (p. 75)

As an analytical tool, the guessing principle identifies the cultural model

participants are drawing from based on common sense explanations. For

example, the cultural model of extended adolescence suggests parents work from

the belief they are entitled to speak and act in the best interest of their son or

daughter.

The third principle of meaning making is the **context principle**.

According to Gee "we can only make good guesses about what other words a

given word is meant to exclude or not exclude as applicable on a given occasion

by consideration of the context of the communication" (p. 75). In order to infer

the context of the situation, Gee recommends consideration of

other words used or liable to be used, in the situation, the

physical setting, and the assumed knowledge and beliefs of

the speaker. However, we should be clear on the fact that

whenever we speak, context is not really something that

can be seen and heard, it is actually something people make

assumptions about. (p. 75)

Because all meaning only makes sense in context, contexts are important

in determining how common sense logic is framed to serve a particular interest or

purpose. In my following analysis, the context principle is used to suggest what

interest is being favored, and the relationship of that interest to opposing interests.

Use of the three principles allows my research to break down the common

sense logic used in listserve discussion, and parse out cultural models. The

purpose of doing this is to identify how cultural models are used to simplify

abstract reasoning by imposing on words more or less self-advantaging,

unrealistic, and even delusional meanings that help maintain how one particular

social group thinks things ought to be. The questions framing the second layer of

analysis include:

> *1.* How do cultural models inform a discussion like
>
> Parentlist?
>
> *2.* How do discussion participants use principles of meaning
>
> as they try to make sense of the issues involved in IGTA
>
> teaching?

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3. How do cultural models and principles of meaning-making reinforce the master myth of monolingualism?

Because data was collected and archived from two different years, chronological organization is not used.[10] Instead the following sections of analysis follow lines of argument that raise discussion among participants over

        1) *Who is to blame?*

        2) *What classifies an American University?*

        3) *Is better pronunciation the solution?*

        4) *Is English universal?*

        5) *Is higher education a business?*

Parentnet: Who is to Blame?

The issue of blame seems to be the impetus for many of the arguments articulated on Parentlist. This line of argument, which focuses on culpability, raises discussion among participants over why and how universities enroll international students. It also raises doubt amongst parents about whether they did or did not select the best university for their son or daughter. This, in turn leads to discussion over whether or not this problem is unique to Michigan Technological University. Many of the posts hold IGTAs accountable, which

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[10] Appendix A is a chronology of listserve posts

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leads to discussion over whether or not IGTAs, in general, have the English

proficiency necessary to teach in the U.S. Reproach is also given to American

undergraduates who are criticized for being lazy. This line of criticism leads to

talk about whether or not a course, or at least part of the core curriculum, should

teach listening skills.

Analysis of Listserve Discussion

The first post theorizes the cultural model, or commonly held belief, that

"foreign instructors are hard to understand."

```
From: MTU student
As a current student at MTU, I know what it is
like to have foreign instructors. They are all
usually very nice people and I am sure that
they know the subject very well (this is
supposed to be a requirement) and could easily
teach it to someone who knows their language.
To someone who speaks English, however, foreign
teachers are immensly hard to understand, even
when you ask them many times to repeat what
they have said. It becomes very frustrating to
succeed in a class when you cannot understand
the instructor. This is NOT an issue of whether
or not the person is foreign, but whether the
person can clearly communicate the correct
information. With many (not all) foreign
teachers, the information is not communicated
clearly enough to learn.
```

In the above post we see how the subject of foreigners gets set up

differently so what is said substantiates the cultural model that foreign instructors

are hard to understand; but avoids appearing ethnocentric or gringo-istic. This is

particularly evident in how the MTU student classifies foreign *people* distinctly

from foreign ***teachers.*** For example, the student claims that *"usually"* foreign *people* are nice. This implies that it would be the exception to find a foreign person who is not nice.

The context principle suggests that the student is not the type of person to automatically categorize foreign people as "not nice." With this established, we see how the student classifies foreign teachers (not people) as "immensely hard to understand." This rhetorical move is an overt attempt to identify what he is saying about *foreign teachers* as a reality of the situation, and not an ethnocentric or gringo-istic statement of personal bias toward *foreign people*.

Curiously, the MTU student overtly states that "this is NOT an issue of foreignness." Yet the word foreign appears four times in the post. Use of the guessing principle, as an analytical tool, suggests that the student is aware of how his statements might be construed as ethnocentric or gringo-istic. This guesswork leads to an overt effort to frame his opinions on the issue of foreign teachers from a "communication" context where the issue is foreign teachers who are hard to understand, and not the foreign teacher as a foreign person. What the student's word choice suggests is that in talking about people it is not politically correct to discriminate against foreigners as people. In discussing foreign teachers, however, student learning trumps gringo-ism. This trumping supports two cultural models: universities need to be set up with student's best interest in mind;

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and teachers should be easy to understand. Two cultural models are implicit in

the student's sense making process. First, **universities need to be set up with**

the student's best interest in mind. And second, **teachers should be easy to**

understand. The data, therefore, implies foreign teachers, because they are hard

to understand (not because they are bad people) should not be teaching because

they make learning a frustrating process for American students.

Picking up on the logic that "foreign instructors are hard to understand"

the following post sets up a context of victimization in which the student becomes

the injured party. This is a rhetorical move to set up rationale for a consumer bill

of rights.

```
From: R. & S. G.
The difficulties with partial language barriers
in a technical teaching environment is sad and
the student pays the final price for
compromised teaching. My son had FIVE FOREIGN -
BORN INSTRUCTORS AT THE SAME TIME AT MICHIGAN
TECH. An English-impaired instructor in an
engineering school is an unnecessary learning
load to a student. Possibly a school should
offer discounted tuition credit-hour charges
when an instructor has notable difficulty
communicating in spoken English.
```

Also drawing from the cultural model that universities need to be set up

with the students' best interest in mind, R uses the context principle to argue that

foreign teachers are not in the best interest of students because they are hard to

understand. It is important to note that R qualifies the previously supported

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cultural model that teachers should be easy to understand, with an additional

specification that teachers should be easy to understand, **especially** when teaching

subjects that are difficult (i.e. technical courses).

Michigan Tech, known as a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and

math) based university, has its fair share of difficult technical courses. Because

he feels students' best interests are not being served, R argues that the student

pays the final price for having foreign teachers in technical classrooms. In making

his argument, R uses dramatic language to suggest that the student is being

sacrificed or is being forced to "pay the final price." The language he uses creates

a life or death drama. Rhetorical use of pathos helps advance his theory that the

university is compromising student learning by hiring foreign instructors. Under

the cultural model that teachers should be easy to understand, R employs

disability language to identify foreign-born instructors as English-impaired.

Students, he argues, are not served well when they incur an "unnecessary learning

load" due to teachers who are not quality teachers.

R assumes he is entitled to speak for his son. The context principle

suggests that R believes he has license to make sure the university is acting in the

best interest of their son or daughter. As evidence that the university is treating

the students unfairly, he shares that his *"son has had* FIVE FOREIGN - BORN

INSTRUCTORS AT THE SAME TIME AT MICHIGAN TECH." Use of all

capital letters suggests a calling out or yelling of information so important it speaks for itself. In this particular case, R emphatically declares that his son has been a victim of **not one but five** English-impaired-foreign instructors. Under a normal 15 credit term, this would mean that his son had ALL instructors who were foreign during one semester. This victimization of students, R implies, is not in the best interest of students. As R puts it himself, "the difficulties with partial language barriers in a technical teaching environment is sad and the student pays the final price for compromised teaching." While the accusation may or may not be true, it works on a cultural model of extended adolescence. This model justifies parental "hovering", which has earned many parents the nick name of "helicopter parent." From this context we see how R attaches a bill of rights to his argument, suggesting schools "should offer a discounted tuition credit-hour charges when an instructor has notable difficulty communicating in spoken English."

Below L.B. picks up on the dramatic language used to describe students as injured victims of a school system that uses foreign instructors. He makes an analogy with his own trouble in understanding foreign doctors at a local children's hospital. The context principle helps L.B. compare injury caused by use of foreign instructors with a medical injury misdiagnosed or mistreated due to

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language barriers. The implication of the analogy, both have severe, "life

threatening" consequences.

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From: L. B.
… I have had trouble understanding the foreign
Dr.'s at children hosp. in Ann Arbor.
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D.A. continues the dramatic tone in her post.

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From: D. A
*** if they can save my life ...i don't care if
they speak martian !!
```

D.A. seems to be saying that she doesn't mind the level of English one has

if that person (may speak a language as foreign as martian for all she cares) can

"save my life." This refocuses the issue back on doing what is best for the patient

or student.

The following day, D.A. is the first to post. This post is framed by a new

cultural model. Instead of *universities* need to do what is in the best interest of

students, her sense making draws from the belief that Americans need to do what

is best for America. She makes an analogy to the learning context R mentioned

twice: 1) in his reference to "an engineering school" and, 2) in his reference to "a

technical teaching environment." In a similar line of thought, D.A. makes a point

by referring to a high school physics class, which is also a technical teaching

environment. However, unlike R who used a context of sacrifice or victimization,

D.A. uses a context of nationalism or patriotism to make her argument.

```
From: D.A.
Even in High School, this is becoming a growing
problem. My daughter is having major problems
with Physics because of a foreign-born teacher.
Much as we would like to be sensitive to that
person's feelings, it is something that MUST be
addressed if the next generation of Americans
are going to "keep up," as it were, with other
nations in the scientific fields. Should
America lag behind, we could very well become a
akin to third world power. (Not to mention the
money we put into that education... are we to
toss those funds out the window???)
Perhaps a solution would be to require teachers
from foreign lands to take specialized courses
in English (pronunciation) to alleviate this
problem. We cannot allow our fear of "hurting
someone's feelings" to get in the way when it
is our children's education, our money going
into that education and, possibly, the future
of this country at stake!
my 2 cents... am I "going-on-a-nut or what?"
*G*
```

D.A. theorizes that foreign instructors are "a growing problem that MUST

be addressed if the next generation of Americans are going to keep up." The

language of risk is used by D.A. to set up an argument based on a context of

nationalism.

A problem/solution logic plays out in D.A.'s sense making. First she

identifies the problem as foreign teachers in technical classrooms, such as,

Physics. The technical learning environment is a context previous listserve

members used to support their own arguments. D.A. also refers back to the MTU

students' comment that "foreign people are usually very nice" by responding that

as much as "we would like to be sensitive to that person's feelings" the issue of

foreign teachers MUST be addressed if America is going to keep up. Once again

being nice is trumped by making sure we educate our children, because they are

the future of America. D.A. relies on the emotive pull of patriotism to imply that

America's success or failure is directly related to university use of foreign

instructors. In particular, D.A. implies that if we (as Americans) continue to hire

foreign instructors the consequences may be that America becomes "akin to third

world power." Informing her sense making is a cultural model of American fate;

our children are our future. This logic implies that when we risk our students, we

risk our nation as a future leader. This risk is a grave threat, which seems to lead

to her also adopting a dramatic tone.

D.A. makes a slippery slope argument for "we must do what is best for

students and best for our country. We cannot allow our fear of 'hurting

someone's feelings' to get in the way when it is our children's education, our

money going into that education and, possibly, the future of this country at stake!"

In other words, D.A. argues that the consequences of not doing anything about

foreign instructors is too great to worry about not being nice. The need to not

appear ethnocentric is once again trumped by a serious risk to our children and the

future of our nation. D.A. acknowledges her slippery slope logic in her last

statement, *"...am I 'going-on-a-nut or what?' *G*."*

D.A.'s problem/solution logic identifies the problem as America falling

behind because of foreign teachers who are hard to understand. Her solution,

"require teachers from foreign lands to take specialized courses in English

(pronunciation) to alleviate this problem." The following post, in contrast,

suggests that Americans need to learn how to listen to a variety of languages and

dialects in high school. The reference to high school responds to D.A.'s comment

about her daughter struggling in high school to understand her Physics teacher.

```
From: D. R.
*** perhaps we should have a curriculum on
listening to a variety of languages and
dialects' in your local high school ??
```

It is hard to tell from the limited context if D.R. is being sarcastic in his

response. The exclusion principle suggests D.R. feels students in his son's high

school know how to listen. He therefore locates the problem as specific to D.A.'s

school system.

```
From: D. A.
Not really cost-effective, D---. But we have to
admit that all our thoughts
on solutions are just pipe-dreams anyway... Oh
well!
```

D.A. takes D.R.'s post seriously but suggests his solution is not cost-effective. It is interesting to note that in previous posts consumerism was used to empower listserve members. However, in D.A.'s post she suggests that as parents they do not have any power to help put into place a solution, "our solutions are just pipe-dreams anyway…Oh well!"

Once again, D.A. uses a problem/solution logic to dismiss D.R.'s solution. The problem/solution logic is a context framing many of D.A.'s posts. While D.A. seems focused on evaluating proposed solutions, below, K.M.D. suggests that the conversation is jumping ahead of itself because the problem has not been properly identified.

```
From: K. M. D.
No one is addressing the basis for why our
schools and universities are using foreign born
instructors. Are our educational system and
values so out of wack that our nation cannot
produce people who have the knowledge and
ability and the motivation to teach? The ones
who have the expertise go into better paying
positions, forcing our schools to go outside
the US to fill positions.
```

Above, K.M.D. focuses on why our universities are using foreign instructors. She suggests that universities use foreign teachers to fill a void left by Americans who choose better paying positions. The problem, she argues, is a value system "out of wack." In this context the problem exists because American

students go into better paying positions. This implies that a solution to the

problem might be as simple as paying teachers more.

The belief that schools are forced to go outside the US to fill positions due

to underpaid teacher salaries is challenged in J.C.'s following post, which refers

back to what D.A. posted previously.

> *From J.C. Referencing D.A.*
> 'Much as we would like to be sensitive to that
> person's feelings, it is something that MUST be
> addressed if the next generation of Americans
> are going to "keep up," as it were, with other
> nations in the scientific fields.'
> With all due respect, is it not the case that
> scientists who immigrate do so to fill a void
> that "we" have indeed already fallen behind? It
> has been my impression that, at least in math
> and science, our educational system has been
> significantly "dumbed down" with these
> predictable results. I don't think it's some
> Utopian ideal of "diversity" that results in
> the employment of so many teachers whose first
> language is not English, but a pragmatic result
> of seeking the most accomplished and talented
> people available to fill the positions. Maybe
> the answer lies in meeting halfway -- the
> students making a more strenuous effort to
> understand, and the professors working with
> linguists to translate what they know to
> colloquial written English as syllabi or
> textbooks, and making more strenuous efforts to
> improve their spoken English.

J.C. counters D.A.'s theory that America needs to keep up, and argues

instead that America has "already fallen behind." He also argues that it is not a

context of "some Utopian ideal of 'diversity,'"but rather, he argues foreign

instructors are hired for the "pragmatic" reason that they are "the most

accomplished and talented people." From the reality that Americans are no longer the most accomplished and talented people, J.C. is able to propose the notion that "our educational system has been significantly 'dumbed down.'"

Because J.C. identifies the problem as a pragmatic result of hiring the most accomplished teachers, his solution involves both students and professors making a more "strenuous" effort to understand one another. In particular, he suggests that "maybe the answer lies in meeting halfway—." However, he fails to recognize how his explanation of this is not necessarily equitable.

While he recommends that both students and instructors "make a more strenuous effort", he excludes what this might entail for students. In contrast to what American students need to do, J.C. uses the exclusion principle to identify how teachers need to do a multitude of specific tasks if the problem is going to be solved. More specifically, foreign instructors, J.C. suggests, need to "work with linguists to translate what they know to colloquial written English as syllabi or textbooks, and making more strenuous efforts to improve their spoken English." So while students try harder to understand, with no specific directions for what this might include, foreign instructors are supposed to work with linguists, do translation, author syllabi and textbooks in colloquial English, and on top of it all, work strenuously to improve their overall spoken English.

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J.C. counters D.A.'s notion that America is falling behind, with the context that America *has already* fallen behind. Because of this, the problem is not solved by understanding why universities are using foreign instructors, but how better communication and understanding can be facilitated between students and foreign instructors.

J.C.'s solution draws from a model of communication that is reciprocal, albeit assymetrical, rather than the transmission model of communication. D.A. responds to J.C. using the problem/solution logic.

```
From: D. A. Unfortunately, J---, those who are
most accomplished and talented usually go to
other better-paying jobs! That is one of the
problems this country has in
keeping it's teachers... lousy pay.
In fact, my daughter wanted to be a teacher
until she saw the pay scale ... she said, "the
heck with that! I'm going to write novels!" *G*
```

D.A. is quick to reiterate the context that best supports her solution to the problem. In reiterating that American students, who are accomplished and talented, choose not to teach but go into better-paying jobs, D.A. brings back into discussion the problem of lousy pay. As evidence, she provides the example of how her daughter wanted to be a teacher until she saw the pay scale…and said, "the heck with that! I'm going to write novels!" Again, this is a slippery slope

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argument based on the assumption that her daughter will write the next great novel and be paid more than a teacher.

D.A.'s hypothesis challenges other parents' assumption of extended adolescence, although she denies her role in perpetuating this cultural model herself. As an alternative to the extended adolescence model, D.A. indentifies her daughter as a rationale choice making agent who acts in her best interest by choosing a job with the better salary potential. This shift in context allows D.A. to offer a solution –pay teachers more. Note, however, that this solution would not address J.C.'s problem that Americans are no longer the most qualified for the position.

The following post responds to J.C.'s previous comments. From the data we can infer C.R. is a student.

```
 Referring back to J.C.
Maybe the answer lies in meeting halfway -- the
students making a more strenuous effort to
understand, and the professors working with
linguists to translate what they know to
colloquial written English as syllabi or
textbooks, and making more strenuous efforts to
improve their spoken English.
C.R.
As a Tech student right now, I can say that a
lot of students don't bother to *try* to
understand, they just complain. However, there
are some of us who ARE trying, and are still
having trouble. So far I think I've had 3
foreign instructors. Two of them I had no
trouble understanding, although I did have to
learn to listen to the accent. The third
however, would often ask my class for the word
```

```
he was missing, and most of the time it would
take quite a while to guess it, because we
didn't know what concept he was trying to
teach. It's hard enough to deal with very
different accents, but those can be figured out
by the students with a little effort. It's MUCH
harder to try to guess what your calculus
teacher is trying to say when he's covering an
entirely new concept.
```

C.R. makes a claim for authority based on her firsthand experience "as a
Tech student right now." She positions herself as a listserve member who is not
guessing about the context, however, she excludes in her claim for authority the
notion that experience can be narrow, idiosyncratic, and as much a part of
guesswork as that of parents.

C.R. corroborates the belief that foreign instructors are hard to understand,
especially in a technical class. On the one hand, she argues, "It's hard enough to
deal with very different accents, but those can be figured out by the students with
a little effort." On the other hand, she argues, "It's MUCH harder to try to guess
what your *calculus* teacher is trying to say when he's covering an entirely new
concept." C.R. argues that trying harder (making a more strenuous effort,
learning to listen) is not the solitary answer in and of itself. As evidence, she
states that even those students she knows are making an effort **still fail** to
understand some foreign instructors

Below D.R. responds to C.R.'s post in a way that appears polite but also condescending. He thanks C.R. for her contribution ("nice note"), but follows the compliment up with an assumption, drawn from the guessing principle, that C.R. and the students she is referring to *are not* trying hard enough if the problem still exists. He offers specific solutions (based on his own experiences utilizing these solutions) for how they can try harder.

```
From: D.R.
nice note C---. when i encounter problems in
business communications i respectfully ask the
speaker something like.. 'could you please
repeat that last sentence....and perhaps go a
little slower so I can be sure i'm clear on
what you mean" aka 'personal responsibility'.
and what about the notes and written materials
?? and what about requests for teacher
conferences. surely if a difficult to
understand prof gets bombarded with appt
requests he/she will get the drift and work on
getting it better the first time.
```

D.R. makes an analogy to how problems of communication are solved in the real world of business. His adage, here and in subsequent posts, seems to be "personal responsibility." He gives examples of how students can act more responsibly to correct the situation. He suggests students be agents of change. More specifically, he suggests if enough students complain to the instructor, the instructor will "gift the drift and work on getting it better the first time." His

solution assumes that C.R. and students like her are not already acting as agents of change.

The following post refers back to K.M.D.'s post.

```
From: L. W.
K--- has some interesting points
. . .No one is addressing the basis for why our
schools and universities are using foreign born
instructors. Are our educational system and
values so out of wack that our nation cannot
produce people who have the knowledge and
ability and the motivation to teach?
There is no doubt that a large percentage of
American students see sports and activities as
more important than school and studies. Watch
when your local school district has a sports
team doing well -- and compare to what
happens when students do well in academics. And
the parents support the schools in this.
In addition, the old "work ethic" has fallen
out of favor in our society -- but many who
come here to study still believe in work, so
they advance.
The ones who have the expertise go into better
paying positions, forcing our schools to go
outside the US to fill positions.
Perhaps . . . but having instructors who do not
have a command of the English language
compounds the problem. Students otherwise able
become frustrated and change majors.
I know this was a problem in the early 70's,
but had not heard many complaints about it in
recent years -- until now.
There are many other reasons for having
instructors who cannot communicate with their
students, and perhaps D--- could fill us in on
some of the other reasons, or discuss the
matter here with us.
```

Like K.M.D. who argued America's value system is "out of wack", L.W.

also frames his post from the context of standards, ideals, and prinicples. Using

this framework, he faults people who buy into principles that value sports over academics. He argues this type of value system subordinates the old "work ethic", which he suggests other countries still adhere to.

L.W.'s last few comments invite a person from the MTU administration to "discuss the matter here with us." This invitation is based on the assumption that parents are entitled to an explanation for why the university does what it does. In subsequent posts the request for administration to respond shifts from a invitation to join the discussion to a threat demanding a formal reply.

D.R. responds by drawing from the communication model of reciprocity J.C. previously introduced.

```
From: D.R.
as noted communications is a dual
responsibility [sic] and frustrations are part
of
the real world...the two together if solved
would be the best education
any of us ever got !!
```

It is unclear from the context what D.R. is posing as the problem to be solved. However, more context is offered in D.R.'s second post below. In his second post, he responds by identifying previous posts as ethnocentric ("get over it. The earth revolves around the sun… not the united states"). This framework allows D.R. to counter with an argument for globalization ("we live, work and pleasure in a global village…with diverse cultures and languages and dialects").

```
From D. R.
get over it. the earth revolves around the sun
....not the united states.  we live, work and
pleasure in a global village...with diverse
cultures and languages and dialects etc....and
WE have to learn to cope with all
...paleontolgoical thinking won't
exactly create a cutting edge educational
experience. Grades and absence of frustration
are not the goal.... education is.
school admin reflects the community....in ours
the academics and even the band get as much
note ( even more if measured per dollar of
revenue...) as sports.
suggest you use your energies to help the kids
find some useful websites for learning to
communicate ( also = listening ) with others
less like their suburban cranbrook like yuppie
clone kids !!
```

D.R. also criticizes "paleontological thinking" or out of date thinking as an

obstacle to a "cutting edge education." He refutes "grades and absence of

frustration" as the goal of education. According to him, getting the best education

is what counts. This requires, he implies, learning how to "cope with" the most

accomplished and talented type of instructor, regardless of nationality.

 The problem, he argues, is caused by students' insulated experiences prior

to college. Students, who struggle with foreign instructors, he assumes, only have

communication experience with people who speak and act like they do. His tone

expresses frustration with the "parochial" logic from previous posts. His

frustration leads to his claim that **his** school administration does reflect his

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community. In his superior community people do value academics more than

sports.

His classification of different communities insinuates that **your**

community**,** not mine**,** is 'out of wack." He frames the problem in communities

that do not have the right values. He suggests **parents from those communities**

"use **your** energies to help the kids find some useful websites for learning to

communicate (also=listening) with others less like their suburban cranbrook like

yuppie clone kids!!" His post puts the blame with parents who have spoiled and

protected their kids by insulating them within homogenous communities. As a

result, these students are unable to communicate with people who are unlike them.

D.A. calls D.R. out on his flaming through her metaphorical use of

"blaze'blaze'."

```
From: D.A.
> get over it. the earth revolves around the
sun ....not the united states.
Oh, come on, D---... blaze' blaze' This is the
answer the gov't gives to avoid issues!
school admin reflects the community....in ours
the academics and even the band get as much
note ( even more if measured per dollar of
revenue...) as sports.
Now that's a shame!
>suggest you use your energies to help the kids
find some useful websites for learning to
communicate ( also = listening ) with others
less like their
suburban cranbrook like yuppie clone kids !!
Again, not cost effective (especially for THIS
POOR, CITY-BRED and ALONE Mother who is trying
to do the best she can for her child so that he
```

```
doesn't wind up in the same rut as she...
what's a yuppie like, D---? What are suburbs
like? Is it nice? You sound like you know...
*G*
```

D.A.'s rebuttal is a somewhat illogical response to D---'s flame. She

suggests he is offering a solution like the type governments use to avoid issues.

She argues D.R.'s solution (parents helping their kids surf the web) is not cost-

effective, a criteria she has relied on in past posts to prove false D.R.'s logic. Yet

she fails to consider how her own logic seems irrational. The exclusion principle

suggests she is participating online in the listserve discussion, which requires time

and access to a computer. Yet she argues from the context that she cannot afford

(access) or does not have the time to help kids surf the web.

D.A.'s response draws from the American promise that our kids are our

future. She claims a privileged perspective through her self-identification as a

"POOR, CITY-BRED and ALONE Mother who is trying to do the best she can

for her child so that he doesn't wind up in the same rut as she…." Her rebuttal is

a clear move to reclaim high ground from D.R.

Next a participant who hasn't until this point in the discussion contributed

to the discussion pipes in with the following post.

```
From B. M.
Are you the D--- R--- that is a professor at
MTU?
```

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D.R.'s name happens to match that of a professor at Michigan Tech. The

guessing principle suggests B.M. is attempting to discredit D.R.'s post by

clarifying that D.R. is not speaking from his own interests, but those of the

university. D.R. confirms that he is not the professor, pointing out how that

would be "intellectually dishonest" to disguise university perspectives as

representative of his own.

```
From: D. R.
no. that would be intellectually dishonest. nor
am i a 'foreigner'...just think we all need to
open our minds before opening our mouths and
teach personal
responsbility (sic) rather than whining.
```

D.R. also points out that he is not a "foreigner" representing the interests

of foreigners. His personal opinion is "we all need to open our minds before

opening our mouths and teach personal responsibility rather than whining." In

stating his opinion, he distinguishes whining from responsible actions.

As is his pattern, D.R. follows his first post with a second post.

```
From: D. R.
in case you haven't been out of nw lower in a
while .....there is a thing in the world called
'cultural diversity' going on !!! why is
because they are advanced. ( we ) americans
don't know it all even though they like to
think so.
```

D.R. points to the isolated and parochial context framing others' posts. He suggests close-minded and insular thinking results in an assumption that Americans know it all, even though they don't. His tone is one of increasing frustration.

```
From: D. A.
Now see! We're right back to where I started
from...
So what's the solution?
```

D.A. ignores D.R.'s solution of personal responsibility by responding, "We're right back to where **I** started from…" Her comment insinuates that D.R. has either just gotten to where she has been since the beginning or that he is moving the conversation backwards instead of forwards.

In the post below, M uses a question strategy to walk others through her sense making process. Her first question classifies listserve members as consumers who may have made the wrong choice in selecting MTU. She follows this with the question, "Are there enough high quality, English speaking professors for my son to get a good engineering education at MTU?"

Her statements draw from several cultural models. First, she draws from the notion of extended adolescence, which justifies her helicopter hovering. Second, she draws from the cultural model that universities need to do what is

best for students. She assumes high quality engineering education (a reference to

technical courses) requires English speaking professors.

```
From: M.
Have we made the wrong choice in selecting MTU?
Are there enough high quality, English speaking
professors for my son to get a good engineering
education at MTU? If this situation is so bad,
should we be contacting out MI State reps and
looking into an investigation of the quality of
education MI taxpayers are funding? It seems to
be time for the MTU administration to make a
formal reply on the Parent's Net and clear this
up. On a follow-up note: Has the curriculum
changed such that in-coming Freshmen (2000)
have a foreign language requirement?
```

It is important to note that the context has shifted from inviting the MTU

administration to join the discussion to threatening the University to make a

formal reply or else face the consequences of an investigation from Michigan

state representatives.

Before administration responds to M's demand L.W. responds to D.R.'s

earlier post. "This is the point. Education. Education does involve both

instructors and students." The context principle suggests L.W. is acknowledging

D.R.'s framing of the problem from a communication model of reciprocity.

```
From: L. W.
This is the point. Education. Education does
involve both instructors and students. But you
are seeming to ask hundreds of students to
delay their education for months or years while
they learn to communicate with a number
of different professors, from a number of
different cultures, speaking a number of
```

```
different languages. The most common language
of the students is American English. The school
is an American school. The funding is supplied
by students, parents, and taxpayers -- all
similarly schooled in English.
Thus, before someone is placed in a position to
teach a class, he or she should have enough of
a command of the English language to be
understood by the majority of class. Not
perfect, not unaccented, not even close – but
enough to communicate the subject and
understand the questions raised by the
students.
"suggest you use your energies to help the kids
find some useful websites for learning to
communicate ( also = listening ) with others
less like their
suburban cranbrook like yuppie clone kids !!"
I am afraid find this above comment offensive.
You don't know me (us) well enough to assume
such stereotypical bias!
```

While L.W. affirms D.R.'s argument that education is a reciprocal process, not just one of transmission, he draws from the "majority rule" cultural model to argue the fairness of classroom communication that requires "hundreds of students to delay their education" in order to learn how to understand their instructors. He argues that the university needs to hire instructors who speak English well enough to teach. He defines well enough by what it is not: not perfect or unaccented English, but understandable by the majority. This seems a reasonable notion, he argues, given this is an American school, the most common language is American English, and the majority of funds come from American taxpayers.

After making his own hypothesis known, L.W. responds to D.R.

personally by letting him know his above comments about "suburban cranbrook

like yuppies" are offensive and biased. L.W. also makes clear D.R. does not

know him well enough, nor do other listserve members, to judge him personally.

The context of familiarity becomes threaded into upcoming responses.

```
From: D. R.
hmmmmmmmmmmmmmm ....stereotypical
bias....wonder where i got that from ??? some
good points.
```

D.R. responds with a "hmmmmmmmmmmmm…" that implies he is trying

to do what he is advocating for and listen before responding. He justifies his bias

as a response to a previous stereotype. Lastly, he admits that L.W. made some

good points. The context principle suggests the purpose of the above post is one

of posturing for positions, allegiances, and credibility.

```
From: L.W.
May I assume that you have not had instructors
who did not even understand that question? I
have. Twice. Add in another professor who
understood perfectly, but refused to explain.
Many of the texts are written by people who
know what they are talking about, and hence do
not feel the need to explain what is (to them)
obvious. Many modern computer books have the
same fault, and even in my own profession we
see the same problem. When you don't
understand, you go the to prof -- but if the
prof cannot communicate, you are left in
confusion.
They may indeed improve with time, but how many
students will be their victims during the
learning process?
```

```
I would suggest that there should be some
minimum standards for professors to teach, just
as there are minimums for a student to get into
college or into a class in the first place.
```

L.W.'s next rhetorical move is to establish credibility through first-hand experience. As a college student, he had three foreign instructors. Two instructors he couldn't understand. The other instructor spoke perfect English but refused to explain. By distinguishing between speaking ability and teaching ability, L.W. introduces a secondary problem: foreign teachers who are not good teachers. He identifies both of these problems as being common to technical courses, like computer science. At one level, L.W.'s comments corroborates cultural model that having instructors who can't speak understandable English is not in the best interests of students. However, he also introduces the notion that some foreign instructors can speak well, however, they do not explain material even when asked. As a solution for both of these problems, L.W. recommends minimum standards for foreign instructors, implying through the exclusion principle that there are no standards in place.

As she repeatedly does, D.A. pipes in to evaluate the proposed solution.

```
From: D. A.
Unfortunately, L--- (you don't mind my calling
you L---, do you?), we can't even get teachers
screened for past criminal records, etc.! FOX 2
News did a story on just how many working
teachers in Michigan actually have criminal
records for child abuse and the like... it's
```

```
unbelievable and quite pitiful! The education
system just does not want to be bothered with
any of it...
```

D.A. begins her post by asking L.W. if she knows him well enough to call

him by his first name, L---. This is a reference back to L.W.'s objection that D.R.

does not know him well enough to make personal judgments about him.

D.A. uses this post to build another slippery slope argument, based on

evidence from a FOX 2 News. According to Fox news, there are no standards;

schools even hire criminals who threaten the children. Use of FOX 2 implies a

conservative context for arguing that there are no standards.

Below, D.R. makes an apple to oranges contrast between major

universities and an entire geographic location: rural northern Michigan.

```
From: D. R.
it would be interesting to survey mit, cal
berkeley and a few other places to see what the
related situations are. my limited personal
experience is that northern
michigan generally is a bit provincial about
these sorts of things.....the u.p. is not
exactly the center for cultural diversity.
perhaps mtu and all could be more forthright in
'full disclosure' or 'we' could be more
diligent in screening our school selections.
also wonder how many a students are complaining
compared to the others ? are there any 'a's to
english speaking americans in the subject
classrooms ? how are they doing it ?
```

D.R. questions whether or not the problem exists outside of the Upper

Peninsula, which he classifies as "a bit provincial." Although he qualifies his

experience as "limited" implicit in this statement is D.R.'s opinion of himself as

someone who is sophisticated and broad-minded enough to identify other

communities as insulated and unsophisticated. From his informed perspective, he

classifies part of the problem in the U.P., which according to him is "…not

exactly the center for cultural diversity."

Like previous posts by D.R., "responsibility" and "shared blame" are

adages he strongly advocates. This adage is used to challenge the cultural model

of extended adolescence and the caretaking role of the university. He states that

universities are at fault for not being more "forthright" in disclosing the number

of foreign teachers. Similarly, "we" need to be "more diligent in screening our

school selections."

D.R. also questions the number and type of students who are complaining.

The guessing principle suggests there are students who are able to understand

foreign instructors. This leads to the question of, "how are they doing it?"

Below L.W. responds to D.A. affirming her friendly tone is not a problem.

```
From: L.W.
D.A.  > Unfortunately, L--- (you don't mind my
calling you  L---, do you?)
Not a problem! <grin>
 we can't even get teachers screened for past
criminal records, etc.! FOX 2 News did a story
```

```
on just how many working teachers in Michigan
actually have criminal records for child abuse
and the like... it's unbelievable and quit
pitiful! The education system just does not
want to be bothered with any of it...
Other than the few I referred to in other
postings, I have not had a problem with
foreign-born instructors and their command of
the language. I don't know all at MTU, but the
few I know have more than sufficient command of
English to make themselves understood and to
understand the students.
I had not heard the Fox2 report -- scary! I try
to get to know my children's teachers.
Part of the problem in education (and the
reason a lot of people pursue alternative
education) is that the school communities tend
not to listen to parents. Our schools have
"block" scheduling, which is hurting my #2 and
#3 -- some schools do a better job if
implementing this, but ours is unresponsive --
they have their agenda, and it does not include
the needs of all the students.
With the growing shortage of teachers, the
problems you mention will only escalate.
Hopefully pay will increase, since I have a
couple who want to teach. <grin>
```

L.W.'s post shifts responsibility for the problem from the individual to the

education system, ("our schools"). He argues schools tend not to listen to parents,

"they (schools) have their agenda, and it does not include the needs of all the

students." In contrast to his earlier post that supported the "majority rule"

approach, he contends that block scheduling fails to address the needs of his

children.

L.W. also refers back to D.A.'s hypothesis that American students choose

jobs other than teaching because of the lousy pay. He hopes universities solve

part of the problem through better pay because he has a couple of kids who want to teach. He ends his posts with a "<grin>" which in the immediate context seems to be a response to the idea of better pay for his kids, but also seems to differentiate derogatory and offensive posts from posts that are familiar in tone (it's ok to call me by first name).

The following post was submitted by the university's listserve owner. The use of first names suggests a familiarity between listserve members and the owner. D.W. does speak for the university, and because of this may be less frank in what he says and how he says it. D.W. however, is careful to classify himself as a subject acting separately from the university by categorizing his comments from a first person perspective. In using the "I" perspective, D.W. is able to maintain a familiar, informal relationship with listserve parents, while still working as part of the administration team. D.W. offers a suggestion, which the parents are asking for, but couches this with the apology "Sorry I can't help you more."

```
From: D.W.
I just realized that L--- wanted me to respond.
As a grad student here in the early 90s, I
didn't have any experience with faculty who
were difficult to understand. As a writer who
interviews faculty and staff for stories, I
have had very few instances where I had trouble
understanding someone. My solution was to keep
asking for clarification until I got the
information I needed.
Sorry I can't help you more.
```

D.W. isolates his personal experience with foreign instructors to two contexts: as a student and a university writer. These two types of interactions provide cumulative evidence that minimizes the problem. From his student perspective he "didn't have any experience with faculty who were difficult to understand." From his professional experiences he has had "very few instances where I had trouble understanding someone." He advances personal responsibility as a solution, explaining how he solved the misunderstanding by asking for clarification. Using the guessing principle myself, I would suggest that this post was submitted as a place holder response from the administration (to join in discussion), until a more formal response (that responds to the threat) was drafted.

The context principle suggests the following post was submitted in response to: the increasing tone of frustration, number of personal attacks, and slippery slope arguments being posted.

```
From: L. B.
Hi, We agree there is a language difference. So
here (sic) an add (sic) I just got. This should
help! I am sending this a joke,or a new tool
:). Let's lighten thing up. Have a nice day
everyone?
*************************************************
*****************************
****************
THREE DIFFERENT POCKET-SIZED LANGUAGE
TRANSLATORS GIVE YOU INSTANT ACCESS TO THE
WORLD--ONLY $59.95, $89.95, Or $99.95
Today's business and travel world knows no
boundaries; hop on a plane, and a few hours
```

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```
later you're in another country. But how are
you going to communicate? Does your level of
foreign languages pretty much end after the
words "hola" or "bonjour"? There's no need to
feel despondent. To learn another language
fluently requires YEARS of practice. So, while
traveling to other lands, you need to lug
around heavy dictionaries, put on a brave face,
and hope for the best, right? Not with the
pocket-sized Lingo translators! Each one offers
instant access to thousands of foreign words
and phrases, and only weighs a few ounces.
Plus, the Lingo 6 clearly PRONOUNCES
the words for you--even with the correct
accent! Your choices cover the globe. We have
the Lingo 6 Talk, only
$99.95, which translates and pronounces German,
French,
Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and English
(Compare our price to $169.95 elsewhere.) Lingo
6 Talk: <A
HREF="http://www.etracks.com/r/r0.4?lni3TzcKter
cDb7dfQN2j0YtHZTuquFusF946">
http://www.etracks.com/r/r0.4?lni3TzcKtercDb7df
QN2j0YtHZTuquFusF946</A> The Lingo Pacifica 10,
only $89.95, which translates English, French,
Portuguese, German, Spanish, Vietnamese,
Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai (It's
$119.95 elsewhere!)
```

While the post was submitted for the stated purpose of "lightening things up" it reinforces an autonomous model of language, where meaning is isolated and fixed. No follow up posts in reply suggests this post does not contribute or constitute another thread of discussion.

 In contrast, the following is a formal response from the administration that reveals why neither the problem, nor the solution, are as simple as cultural models tend to make them appear.

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The then Vice President for Instruction submitted this post shortly after M

requested that MTU administration to make a formal reply on the Parent's Net. A

post by an administrative member is a rare occurrence on this listserve, as its

purpose is to facilitate uncensored discussion among parents – people who share

the experience of a son or daughter at Michigan Technological University. While

it seems to me that the parents' blame entails a context of consumer rights,

extended adolescence and the University's caretaking responsibilities, the VP

provides a convincing response by framing issues and actions in the context that

MTU:

- Acts in the students best interest

- Knows what it needs to do to build a world-class faculty

- Responds to a consumer model of supply and demand

- Works to find viable solutions to problems

- Balances student frustration with learning benefits

In order to organize and analyze what is said, I've broken the post into

segments.

```
From: D.W.
Parents and Guardians:
S--- B---, our VP for Instruction, sent the
following letter for ParentNET-L:
The difficulties students have working with
instructors who are not native English speakers
as discussed on mtuparent-l are of significant
concern to the faculty and administration at
```

```
Michigan Tech. It is clear that most of
you involved in the discussion already
understand both the realities of the
international talent pool in sciences and
engineering, and the challenges we confront as
we build a world-class faculty like ours here
at Michigan Tech. I'm writing to let you know
what we currently do to make students'
interactions with international faculty and
GTA's not only less trying, but more
beneficial.
```

In his first sentence, the VP forms an allegiance with listserve participants by crediting them as individuals who are capable of understanding the significant concern non-native English speakers are to faculty and administrators working to maintain a "world-class" faculty. This compliments their insights, but also breaks down the us (parents) versus them (school system) logic prevalent in parent strands.

The guessing principle suggests the VP understands the social capital he builds by complimenting listserve members as those who "already understand both the realities of the international talent pool in sciences and engineering, and the challenges we confront as we build a world-class faculty."

From the context of building a "world-class faculty" he dispels the assumption that "foreign teachers fill a void" by articulating his (administrative) belief that foreign instructors are "the most accomplished and talented" individuals to fill the position. Interpreted from the context of consumerism, "a

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world-class faculty" is part of providing a quality product, and is the expectation

of consumers (parents and students). The VP confirms that increasing the quality

of faculty to "world class" does encumber difficulties like the ones discussed by

listserve participants. With this in mind, he forecasts: "I'm writing to let you

know what we currently do to make students' interactions with international

faculty and GTA's not only less trying, but more beneficial."

Below his comments explicitly state what policies, standards, practices,

and processes the university currently uses to address the problem.

```
We never hire faculty without an extensive
interview process that includes many meetings
with individual faculty and administrators and
the search committee, and a lecture presented
to the faculty. If there is any question of the
applicant's ability to communicate in the
classroom, the faculty are extremely unlikely
to offer an appointment. It would quickly come
back to haunt them when frustrated students
start coming to them for supplemental help
(which they are encouraged to do, but there are
only so many hours in the day).
```

The VP corroborates a notion made previously by listserve members -

hiring teachers with poor communication skills adds additional work for the

university. Therefore, instructors with poor communication ability are "extremely

unlikely" to be offered an appointment because it is not only in the students' best

interest not to hire them, but it is also not in the best interest of the university or

the faculty. His logic draws from a general rule of thumb, people and places

don't fix things in a way that create more problems.

At this point in the post, the VP makes an interesting rhetorical move, he

frames the problem from a consumer model of supply and demand, which

explains the pragmatic reason behind the use of "international Graduate Teaching

Assistants."

```
In fact, our faculty from overseas are often in
the group rated most highly by students on
their evaluation of instruction forms at the
end of each term. The point at which we do have
occasional problems is with international
Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA's). We depend
on GTA's for supplemental instruction less than
many universities, but we do involve them as
the primary instructors in some entry level
classes. Across the United States, more than
half the graduate students pursuing degrees in
engineering and many sciences are from
overseas. They are attracted to our superior
educational system and the economic benefits of
technological degrees. Typically, they stay in
the US after graduation and help fuel our
economy. Some people question the ethics of
this practice inasmuch as we are skimming the
cream of bright young scholars from many
underdeveloped countries, but that is a
different question.
```

The VP changes the context in a few sentences. He points out how, "our

faculty from overseas are often in the group rated most highly by students" on end

of the term evaluation forms. The exclusion principle suggests that the university

has accomplished its goals of attaining a "world-class faculty."

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The VP also responds to the assumption that the problem with foreign teachers is unique to MTU. He explains, "We depend on GTA's for supplemental instruction **less than many** universities, but we do involve them as primary instructors in some entry level classes, (emphasis added)." The context principle implies that the problem seems bigger to parents of first year students (who dominate the listserve) because those are the students enrolled in entry level classes. This explains why a first year student might have FIVE foreign instructors in one semester.

The VP's logic uses the context principle to distract parents with an ethical issue. By stating the quality of IGTAs and scholars at universities across the US, the VP draws attention to the ethical dilemma of American universities recruiting the best scholars from underdeveloped countries and enrolling them to advantage our own US economy.

He speaks directly to the implication of practices and standards for hiring and supervising teachers below.

```
To be admitted as a graduate student at
Michigan Tech, applicants who are not native
English speakers must submit scores from the
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
Currently, we do not accept students with
scores below 550. The TOEFL is a written test
and does not provide reliable information about
speaking ability. Thus, any international
student who would be a GTA must take the SPEAK
test administered by our
Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty
```

```
Development. If the results do not establish a
good command of spoken English, the student is
referred to our Writing Center for coaching.
Department Chairs are notified and generally do
not put this student in the classroom until
he/she has passed a re-test. In addition, we
try to help international GTA's acculturate to
the American system of higher education,
especially classroom etiquette and student -
teacher professional relationships. These are
very different in some countries from which our
students come. To be candid, some groups on
campus are more patient with this training
process than others, and we are working to make
it more universal.
```

The post explains how IGTAs have to speak passable American English
and understand American education culture. The VP makes a bid for trust by
being forthright. He frankly states how some groups on campus are more patient
than other groups. But at the same time, the VP cautions that the problem will not
be solved by simply asking students to try harder because the problem isn't just
one of speaking and listening.

In the following section of this long post, the VP makes clear how only in
extreme emergencies, brought on by consumer demand, the university will use
instructors with less than perfect English.

```
The exigencies of scheduling classes can result
in an instructor with less than perfect command
of English being assigned to teach. Department
Chairs sometimes find student demand for a
class is greater than predicted, and
there is an urgent need for additional
instructors at the last minute. Often the
native English speaking faculty will double up,
```

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```
and sometimes the Chair takes an extra class.
When those resources are exhausted, we may turn
to GTA's.
```

IGTAs, he makes clear are a last resort. Again, he is forthright in vying

for trust, by admitting the university can make the mistake of "underestimating

student difficulties." Because the university is culpable to making a mistake,

below the VP discusses the procedure in place for addressing such mistakes.

```
Of course we would not put an instructor in the
classroom if we didn't think they could
communicate clearly. But the faculty are more
experienced at listening to accents than are
students, and sometimes we underestimate
student difficulties. If students find
themselves in a class with at GTA that they
just cannot understand, they need to let the
Department Chair know right away. The Chairs
are very responsive to student difficulties and
can take effective action.
```

Above he explains how the university has institutional procedures in place

to minimize culpability. If a student takes the necessary action to, "let the

Department Chair know right away" the university does listen, respond, and take

action. This is a counterstatement to parent assumptions that the university

doesn't care.

The final part of the VP post shifts the context to what is gained (the

benefits) from having foreign instructors.

```
On the whole, our University is substantially
enriched by the 8.4% of students and the
```

```
faculty who are from overseas. They are
typically very bright and dedicated, and bring
different assumptions and perspectives to the
learning process that help to challenge
students and faculty alike. With the exception
of an occasional mistake as cited above, I
believe that straining to understand a
different accent is a small price to pay for
the benefits our international students and
faculty bring to the Michigan Tech community.
S--- B---
Vice Provost for Instruction
Michigan Technological University
```

The exclusion principle suggests the VP is trying to fill in the gaps of missing and inaccurate information from previous parent posts. He emphasizes the low percentage (8.4%) of international students and faculty represented at the university. He reiterates how foreign instructors are typically very bright and dedicated and bring different perspectives to the learning process. He makes clear how their presence and participation benefit American students. These inclusions create a different perspective of the situation, which allows the VP to argue "the strain of having to understand a different accent" are out weighed by "the benefits gained from new perspectives and assumptions brought to the learning process by foreign instructors."

The guessing principle suggests that D.R. felt several of his hypotheses were corroborated in the post above. The VP's bid for trust is accepted by D.R.

who now frames his thoughts on the issue from the context of "we have to have trust in our institutions"

```
From: D.R.
Thank you for taking the time and interest to
address this concern. Perhaps these and other
issues of note could be part of an faq page on
the mtu.edu site and when they first arise
someone could redirect folks....however the
discussion has been useful i think
in helping parents understand the variety of
views and approaches to what are seemingly the
same 'problem'.
At some level we need to have 'trust' in our
institutions and accept the inherent weaknesses
of standardization in the interest of balancing
educational opportunity and
economy ( of scale). If we would all start with
the basic premise that the university knows
what it's doing and has a rationale for the way
things are done, frustration would be
minimized. ps; your opening paragraph is a
credit to your 'organizational behavior' prof
!!!
```

D.R. suggests a web page of frequently asked questions (faq) might prevent future discussions like the current one; further he allays blame on the university by sponsoring a promise of confidence.

Below we see L.W. aligning himself, for the first time, with D.R.

```
From: L.W.
I found Mr. B--- summary quite good and
encouraging. I would hope that this information
is made known to the students . . . if so,
then, as Mr. R--- has pointed out, it is up to
them.
Thanks!
```

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Both parents high lite the procedures for student action. Unlike L.W. who asks for the information to be made known to the students, J.C. takes the initiative as a parent to discuss the listserve conversation with his son.

```
From: J.C.
I found Mr. B---'s summary quite good and
encouraging.  I wholeheartedly concur with
this.
I discussed this briefly with my son who's a ME
major at Tech. He pointed out that there will
be non-English-speaking associates in any
professional group, and it is better sooner
rather than later to learn to communicate
with them, (emphasis added).
I wondered at his insight until I remembered
that the small engineering concern at which he
spent last summer working/interning comprised
two US-born and two foreign-born professional
engineers. So, he's seen real-world examples of
what Tech seems to be preparing him for,
(emphasis added).
Also, as a chem tutor at the chem learning
centers, he has been given special instruction
in how to refer students whose learning problem
stems in part from a language barrier. Thus the
learning centers may be a good
resource for students who've encountered this
problem.
Parenthetically, I hope it's only coincidence
that we've seen so many requests to unsubscribe
from the list since the non-English-speaking
instructor issue came up. I've found the
discussion, though bristly at
times, to be most productive.
```

J.C. uses his son's personal experience as a student to reiterate the "real world" advantages of student agency in learning how to understand foreign instructors.

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As a side bar ("Parenthetically"), J.C. points out the number of requests to
unsubscribe to the listserve during the "bristly but productive" discussion of non-
English-speaking instructor. It is unclear from the context if he guesses this is
due to discomfort with the subject itself or with the derogatory theories and name
calling used to debate the issue. The latter undermines one purpose of the list: a
social space where as a collective identity, parents can feel like they are
participating in the Tech experience.

Below, D.R. provides the final post for this subject strand. He also
responds to the "unsubscribing" by observing that it is better to be involved and a
little frustrated than to avoid discussion due to discomfort.

```
From: D.R.
Agreed with J.C., et al....the point of
'discussion' is to evolve from initial
bias/opinion and perceptions...often based on
lack of knowledge, empathy or focus....to a
better understanding and if necessary
implementation or corrective, preventive
measures ( including self audit )
and in this case that is what has happened.
The addition/use of archives and the
contribution of mtu 'officials' completed the
loop on this particular issue and all
contributors should be recognized for their
involvement....it is better to be involved and
a little frustrated ....than to avoid the
discussion and occasional discomfort that
accompanies it. ( And as we are all learning
the email medium lacks intonation, body
language, lag time and other important aspects
of interpersonal communication that can often
exacerebate
strongly worded submittals.
```

```
Now.... will we have a similar policy statement
regarding the hiring, administration and
management of the resident assistants
? After all the kids spend more time in the
dorm room than the classroom, so presumably it
is pretty important.
Thanks
```

As a self-claimed organizational expert, D.R. offers a response that is

typical of group dynamics: he rationalizes the process and affirms the result.

Discussion of Results

In the beginning of this chapter the following questions were raised.

1) How do cultural models inform a discussion like Parentlist?

2) How do discussion participants use principles of meaning
   as they try to make sense of the issues involved in IGTA
   teaching?

3) How do cultural models and principles of meaning-making
   reinforce the master myth of monolingualism?

My discussion will demonstrate how I have responded to these questions,

and what, in conclusion, can we learn from this second layer of analysis.

A significant contribution of this chapter was introduction to the

methodological usefulness of Gee's concepts of meaning making as analytical

tools. More specifically, the context, guessing, and exclusion principles helped to

identify claims, assumptions, and expectations drawn from underlying cultural models, which are tacitly informed by the master myth of monolingualism.

A framing cultural model for this overall discussion is "universities need to act in the best interest of students." This assumption works to support statements like "teachers should be easy to understand" or "students whose best interest is not being served are 'victims' of an education system 'out of wack'." Because assumptions are commonsensical and not far from the surface level of meaning making, it is easy to deduce how these cultural models are informed by different aspects of monolingualism. As an example, a syllogistic deduction from the cultural model "universities need to act in the best interest of students" follows:

- Universities do what is best for students

- Good instructors are best for students

- Universities should employ good instructors

- Good instructors are easy to understand

- Foreign instructors are hard to understand

- Foreign instructors should not be employed.

Informing the deductive logic at work in the mobilization of the above cultural logic is the master myth of monolingualism. This myth underwrites the belief above by assuming English is easiest to understand, and therefore superior.

While at the surface level this makes sense, when we reveal the ideological

history of this myth, it becomes problematic because it privileges one particular

group's perception of reality. Judith Rodby explains how this myth became

written.

> Popular opinion has it that once upon a time America
>
> was monolingual and homogeneous. It was a unity
>
> which is now fractured by immigrants and their
>
> foreign languages. This confabulation implies that
>
> monolingualism would restore and preserve
>
> American unity, and that governmental legislation
>
> impugning all instances of multlingualism would
>
> enable a return to this America of lore. (1992)

In chapter 3 we saw how the lore of America, described by Rodby above,

still plays out in everything from journal reporting to the writing and opposition to

legislative bills. In this chapter's layer of analysis we see how the master myth of

monlingualism plays out in cultural models that are mobilized by individuals

through every day sense making.

Monolingualism in Meaning Making

As explained in chapter 2's method, Michigan Tech's purpose for initiating Parentlist was to draw together parents who had a first year student at Michigan Tech. The goal was to provide a listserve where parents could connect with other parents, talk informally about their son's or daughter's first year experience, and feel "involved." It is important to recognize that the listserve does not serve the purpose of bring together an ad hoc committee to fix university problems, but rather serves the simple purpose of providing a social space for parents. However, listserve data demonstrates parent intent on not only trying to solve the immediate problem of their son or daughter not being able to understand their foreign instructor, but also solving a much larger "crisis" facing American culture and society. Because of the graveness of the problems that all seem to stem for university use of foreign instructors, parents' tone and language, at times, is very dramatic, judgmental, and even threatening. In using Gee's concepts as analytical tools, this layer of analysis sheds light on how delusion claims appear rational, and likewise, how the most rationale reasoning can really be delusional. For example, the majority rule can be broken down by the context, exclusion, or guessing principle to show the idiosyncractic assumptions and self-advantaging judgments made in mobilization of this particular cultural model.

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Cultural Model = "The Majority Rule"

The context principle = This is an American school.

The exclusion principle = American students speak English.

The guessing principle = Assumption that instruction will

be in English.

The assumption that instruction will be in English appears commonsensical. But it is an assumption that literature, reviewed in chapter 1, challenges as a fallacy of monolingual perpetuations. This fallacy has expansive gaps in historical chapters, diversity of characters, and foreshadowed storylines. These gaps make it easy to dismiss predictions that by 2050 there will be 30 million more multilingual users of English over "native" monolingual users. It ignores the intent of multilingual speakers at American university, and it pigeonholes all foreigners as one character. This missing information provides a more complex but substantially richer understanding of who our universities are, and who we are as a nation, of multilingual people, highly interdependent, in a far from idyllic global world.

Myth Contradictions

Chapter 4's analysis also revealed how the master myth of monolingualism is embedded in cultural models in contradictory ways. In some cases, the role or implications from the master myth of monolingualism are taken

too lightly. As a result, solutions are oversimplified, and deeply engrained social problems are mistaken as easy fixes. For example, D.R. argues that the problem of not being able to understand foreign instructors is partially a result of American students not being able to listen to people who do not sound like, think like, and act like them (suburban, cranbrook like, yuppie clone kids). Therefore, D.R.'s suggestion is American students need to make a more strenuous effort to listen, and instructors need to make a more strenuous effort to learn colloquial English, which is familiar to Americans. This is a probable solution for those individuals *who are not already trying.* However, it is not a solution for students like C.R. who *are* trying hard to listen but still find it "immensely difficult" to understand foreign instructors. In addition, D.R.'s solution fails to consider how meaning is always constructed in context, and therefore is always changing. Because D.R. frames the problem from a very American individualistic context, it seems commonsensical that his answer to the problem is: individuals need to try harder. However, this framework too neatly conceals how entrenched monolingualism is in history, ideology, and social practices.[11]

In contrast, D.A. exaggerates the master myth of monolingualism faulting people who are not American, English speakers for all that is wrong with our

---

[11] See discussion of Horner and Trimbur's work in chapter 1

nation. Her sense making relies on a delusional fear that equates hiring a criminal with hiring a foreign instructor. In order to support her exaggeration of the myth, she relies on evidence from Fox news. From the dramatic thread of exchanges between D.A. and D.R., we see how, on the one hand, D.R. minimalizes the problem of how monolingual perpetuations, as not that big of a deal. We also see how, on the other hand, D.A. exploits the master myth of monolingualism to explain all that is wrong with our nation. Both arguments are delusional understandings of the role monolingualism plays in shaping ideas, beliefs, practices, policies, and individual identities.

The juxtaposition of different sense making logic provides a more complete picture of the landscape shaping the research problem. For example, the claim that America is falling behind and the claim that teachers are not paid enough depend on speculation that foreign instructors fill a void. This guesswork is based on a daughter's choice not to go into teaching because the professional does not pay enough. Therefore, the mother assumes that foreign teachers are used to fill a need left by more qualified individuals like her daughter who chose not to teach. The logic for this claim, however, falls apart when understood from the social context given by vice president who doesn't guess, but knows from his idiosyncratic experience that foreign instructors are the most accomplished and talented, and therefore the most qualified for the job.

Problem Identification

As stated earlier, all meaning making depends on context. In this chapter, the usefulness of a solution largely depended on how parents identified the problem. For example, when the problem was identified as foreign teachers who are hard to understand, viable solutions included students making a more strenuous effort to listen, and foreign instructors making a more strenuous effort to improve their English communication skills. However, when the problem was identified as a nation at risk, the proposed answer was to re-evaluate our value systems, work ethics, and current university practices and policies.

Predominantly, problems identified by parents are set up by cultural models that explicitly and inexplicitly draw from the American myth of monolingualism. Identified cultural models include the following:

- Extended adolescence of students

- Universities act in the best interest of students

- Objectification of foreign people

- American promise

- Universities as care-takers, and

- Consumer model of education

These cultural models set up a bewildering array of assumptions, expectations, and claims based on the role of English and English users in higher

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education, and the role of monolingualism in America. Common assumptions of these cultural models include:

- o English monolingualism is in the best interest of students

- o Students are monolingual

- o English is an autonomous skill and not a social process

- o Language learning is unproblematic.

- o Education is a consumer bought product

- o Pigeonholing foreign instructors is ok

- o English proficiency trumps teaching ability or subject knowledge

It makes sense that the next move needs to take us from understanding the common assumptions at work in mobilizing the master myth of monolingualism, to understanding how to effectively respond to cultural models that no longer make sense.

In summarizing my findings from this second layer of analysis, I want to refer back to the value James Paul Gee places on discourse members becoming conscious and critical of their own discourse actions. He explains how easy it is for individuals in like-minded groups to become complicit with their values and thus, "unwittingly, become party to very real damage done to others" based on theories about the world and people in it that are self-advantaging, unrealistic, and

even delusional (p. 190). This chapter gave us a richer understanding of how cultural models inform sense making principles. In particular, it revealed how cultural models that inform everyday discussion often advance the tacit perpetuation of the master myth of monolingualism.

Lastly, I want to point out how the cultural model of "faith in procedures" was mobilized in two different ways – both of which are informed by the master myth of monolingualism. Many parents argued that putting into place appropriate practices, policies and procedures would fix the problem. In response, the VP explained how the university did already have viable practices, policies, and procedures in place. His careful explanation resulted in immediate buy in from listserve participants. As the listserve discussion unfolded, the cultural model of "faith in procedures" was mobilized differently to vocalize, defend, and resolve "lack of trust in the university." The "faith in procedures" cultural model most prevalently objectifies and victimizes IGTAs. The "faith in procedures" cultural model, I believe, objectifies all foreign teachers by assuming their inadequate abilities and language skills fit into neat little categories that a policy or procedure can fix. I also believe it is not the intent of most listserve participants, who unreflectively draw on cultural models and principles of meaning to make common sense presumptions, to harm or victimize foreign instructors. After all, participants made it clear they think foreign *people* are very nice. However, this

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is an example of how a group of well intended-trying-to-be-politically-correct people with a shared interest cause damage to others…unwittingly.

Moving to a Third Level of Analysis

I conclude this second layer of analysis with more questions, rather than answers.

1) Do educators and scholars perpetuate, challenge, or critique the master myth of monolingualism?

2) How do they discuss the problem of undergraduate students not understanding foreign instructors?

3) What logic do they use to support or challenge claims on the issue?

The following chapter, attempts to answer these questions through a third layer of analysis that examines what scholarly experts are saying about the problem of US students not understanding their foreign instructor(s).

Chapter Five

Using the concept of master myth as an analytical tool, my first layer of analysis revealed how the public struggle over monolingualism plays out in policy decisions. Using cultural models as an analytical tool, my second layer of analysis showed how monolingualism is mobilized, at the personal level, through common sense assumptions and belief. In this chapter, I use Gee's concept of "meta-knowledge" to analyze how monolingualism is organized, operates, and is countered in the reflective and critical knowledge making process of scholars.

My data site for this chapter is a colloquy forum sponsored by The Chronicle of Higher Education. By definition, a colloquy is a formal conversation between scholars. True to this nature, colloquy participants are all Chronicle members who, by profession, spend a great deal of time teaching, learning, and exploring knowledge processes. It would be easy and convenient to set scholars up as academic experts who have the right answer to the research problem. However, as I've stated in previous chapters, that is not my research intention. As a researcher, I am less concerned about finding a right answer and more concerned about identifying and overtly understanding the issues and contexts that implicitly constitute and complicate the research problem. Therefore, in this chapter I am interested in finding out how scholars organize and critically reflect

on meta-knowledge, in general, and on particular issues that repeatedly surfaced in the preceding two layers of analysis: accents, student laziness, teaching competency, discrimination, and stereotypes.

Meta-knowledge as an Analytical Tool

In order to comprehend how I use "meta-knowledge" operationally, we need to look at Gee's definition of literacy and more specifically his discussion of the distinction between 1) primary and secondary discourses and 2) acquisition and learning. Gee's basic definition for literacy is as follows: "Literacy is control of secondary discourses" (p. 261).   His definition relies on a distinction between primary and secondary discourse, which he theoretically develops. As Gee explains, primary discourse is "our socio-culturally determined way of using our native language in face-to-face communication with intimates" (p. 260). Primary discourse uses language that is both familiar and comfortable. In contrast, secondary discourse uses language that is more formal and less familial. Some secondary discourses are more recognizable to certain, "privileged" groups of speakers. For example, the language used by white, middle class American English speakers closely resembles the type of English expected in the classroom (Heath, 1983) (Barton, Mary, & Ivanic, 2000) (Delpit, 1995). For American students their primary discourse is most likely a colloquial form of English that is different from the more formal and standardized English (secondary discourse)

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used in school. While this implies that these types of students may find it easier to shift from primary to secondary discourse use, this is not always the case. While American students may know the language of university discourse, communication with other speakers may not be customary to them. As Gee explains, secondary discourses require one to communicate with people we are not accustomed to speaking with on an everyday basis. This defining factor of Gee's definition of secondary discourse is significant because it reveals how engagement in a secondary discourse can be difficult, frustrating, and even unsuccessful for speakers whose primary language closely resembles the secondary language of the university. On the other hand, for IGTAs, their primary discourse may be an entirely different language. Therefore, the gap between IGTA's native primary discourse and the secondary discourse of the university is a much wider gap than that of American speakers. This gap, I argue makes it easy to blame IGTAs for poor English proficiency based on imposed assumptions about the process and lack of shared experience.

In order to understand the struggles one may face in secondary discourse situations, Gee makes a clear distinction between acquisition and learning. This distinction is not unique to Gee, but it is critical to seeing how his concept of "meta-knowledge" can be used as an analytical tool. He explains that while acquired knowledge is picked up through interaction in social contexts inhabited

by family, friends, and peers, learned knowledge is picked up as a "series of analytic bits" in a social context less familiar, inhabited by people who are also unfamiliar. He also makes a distinction between acquisition and learning by explaining that while acquired knowledge is characterized as informal, implicit, and unconsciously understood, learned knowledge is formal, explicit and consciously understood. The explicitness of learned knowledge leads to what Gee refers to as "meta-level knowledge." Gee argues,

> One cannot critique one discourse with another one
>
> (which is the only way to seriously criticize and
>
> thus change a discourse) unless one has meta-level
>
> knowledge in both discourses. And this meta-
>
> knowledge is best developed through learning,
>
> though often learning applied to a discourse one has
>
> to a certain extent already acquired. Thus, powerful
>
> literacy, as defined above, almost always involves
>
> learning and not acquisition. (145)

I understand Gee as saying language *acquisition* is a 'way of being' that allows one to *implicitly make sense of tacit expectations*. In contrast, *learning* requires an overt and reflective process (meta-knowledge) that *makes tacit assumptions and expectations explicit*. Problems occur when practices and

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policies are based on social contexts and social constructions, rather than a conscious and thoughtful understanding. In order to address problems currently related with undergraduate students' failure to understand IGTAs, a more complete and complex meta-knowledge level is required. Otherwise, as the first two layers of analysis showed, speakers unconsciously mobilize master myths by adopting perspectives based on cultural models that are very familiar and understood but often go unrecognized in conversation.

In the following, I use "meta-knowledge" as an analytical tool to identify how colloquy participants weave together experiences, information, facts, and understandings to produce a discourse of collective learning that is focused around knowledge about knowledge. The questions framing analysis include:

1) Do educators and scholars perpetuate or challenge the master myth of monolingualism?

2) How do the words they use counter common sense assumptions in cultural models?

3) What other discourses do colloquy participants tap into to offer alternative frameworks for thinking about the problem?

What We Have Here Is a Failure to Communicate

The forum, led by Donald L. Rubin, a professor of Speech Communication at the University of Georgia, specifically discusses "what should

be done when students fail to understand their non-native teaching instructor"
(http://chronicle.com/colloquy/2005/04/english/). The topic is introduced in the

preface with the following question, "Is the internationalization of the American

university eroding or enriching the quality of undergraduate education?" The title

is less inquisitive and more assertive in laying out the hypothesis that "what we

have here is a failure to communicate."   The context and impetus leading up to

the forum is presented in the following introductory statements:

> Classroom language barriers have become both a public
>
> hobbyhorse and a subject for scholarly study in their own
>
> right. Just this January, a state lawmaker in North Dakota
>
> proposed a bill that would have given students at state
>
> universities the power to remove instructors from the
>
> classroom if they did not "speak English clearly and with
>
> good pronunciation." Meanwhile, some linguists suggest
>
> that student stereotypes are what handicap classroom
>
> communication in many cases.

Questions framing the forum discussion include the following:

- What are the best strategies to deal with classroom language

  barriers?

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- Is accent the biggest impediment, or are factors like intonation, body language, and attitude more decisive?

- What is the best recourse for students who do have complaints about not being able to understand their instructors?

- Is there any place in the undergraduate curriculum for training in cross-cultural listening skills?

By the very nature of the <u>Chronicle</u> colloquy conscious reflective action occurs, which is less concerned about getting the answer "right" and more centered on the process of collective learning. Even the appointed "expert" of the colloquy, Dr. Rubin, responds to "complex" and "difficult" questions asked of him with "I hope I get this right." While semantically this seems to suggest he hopes to answer the question correctly, it implies that he by no means thinks he has the one and only right answer. I see this rhetorical move by Rubin as an expression of his membership as part of the collective learning community of the colloquy. In this role, he is willing to share and learn from others as they all share their knowledge they have about issues. As such, the colloquy data is a collection of posts that set up a third layer of analysis, which: focuses on what is typically talked about (based on common cultural models); critically discusses what is explicitly stated; and also considers what is tacitly implied (how things are linked to the master myth of monolingualism).

Many of the colloquy posts comment on what has already been discussed in the preceding two layers of data analysis. Because of this I limit my analysis to posts that offer new perspectives on how the communication issues between American students and IGTAs are linked to monolingualism. In order to draw connections across all three data sites, my analysis is organized around three topics that were prominent in the previous two layers of analysis: 1) racism/ethnocentrism, 2) IGTA teaching competence, 3) issues of accents, and 4) laziness and use of convenient excuses by undergraduate students. In looking at the colloquy posts, my analysis focuses on the meta-knowledge implied in posts that provide an opportunity to bring into discussion a more explicit understanding of what up to this point has been an implicit or unconscious part of the common sense meaning making.

Analysis of Colloquy Forum

Below, the first question, by Professor Madjd-Sadjadi, refers to John Gravois's "Teach Impediment" article that references a study conducted by Dr. Rubin (Rubin, 1997). Professor Madjd-Sadjadi supports the findings of the study with an illustration of how he has personally been identified as "foreign" because of his name, even though he was born and educated in the US.

Question from **Zagros Madjd-Sadjadi, The University of the West Indies, Mona, research university**:

> I was struck by the fact that students shown a picture of an Asian professor and a description that he was born in China was sufficient to plunge comprehension scores. Yet, despite being a native-born American who was educated in the United States, invariably I found students who would believe that I was "foreign" because of my name. Has there been any research to see if the problem of comprenhension (sic) is one of blatent (sic) racial discrimination on the part of students? Has there been any research done to see if foreign students react similarly to American students in regard to their professors' accents?

In the above post we see how Professor Madjd-Sadjadi uses his personal experience to make sense of, and corroborate, the findings of Rubin's study. Like other comments from the previous two layers of data (see pgs), Professor Madjd-Sadjadi questions if the problem isn't really an issue of student comprehension, but rather is a problem of "blatant racial discrimination." Rubin responds in a way that creates a question/response pattern for the colloquy.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
> You raise key issues, Professor Madjd-Sadjadi, about attributed versus avowed social identity. Many speakers of South Asian Indian English, for example, AVOW identities as native speakers of English. After all, they may come from English-dominant households and they were educated completely in English. Yet US undergraduates often ATTRIBUTE to them identities as non-native speakers of English. And indeed, most US institutions of higher education require TOEFL

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scores for native speakers of Indian English.

You raise the issue of race as a factor in the attribution of "foreign-ness" to instructors. I, too, suspected that teachers who were identified as both foreign and also as persons of color would suffer the most severe linguistic discrimination at the hands of mainstream US undergraduates. We have conducted exactly such a study: comparing, for example, reactions to a Nigerian black instructor to a US African American instructor, versus a Danish (White) instructor as compared with a US mainstream (White) instructor. In our findings--yet to be published--race did NOT matter. Only status as an international mattered, and it exerted the same deleterious effects on ratings of teaching competence and on listening comprehension as we had been describing now for years.

So it was bad in this study for an instructor to be identified as a Nigerian, but equally bad to be identified as a Dane. And it was good for the instructor to be identified as a mainstream (White) US resident, but equally good to be identified as an African American US resident.

Next, you ask whether international students have the same reactions to non-native speakers of English as to US native-English speaking students. I cannot answer that question, as we have never had a large enough sample of international students in our experiments. In fact, we always simply exclude data from non-native English speaking research participants.

In commenting on the question of "blatant racial discrimination" Rubin

taps into the research of Howard Giles, an established intercultural

communication expert. In particular, he cites a study by Giles that concluded "race did NOT matter" in these types of situations. This opens a discursive space for him to offer an alternative way to think about the comprehension struggle between students and IGTAs. Instead of seeing the problem as one of racial discrimination, he suggests that it is an issue of "linguistic discrimination."

It seems significant that Rubin admits he too "suspected that teachers who were identified as both foreign and also as persons of color would suffer the most severe linguistic discrimination at the hands of mainstream US undergraduates." This comment suggests that Rubin views himself as a participant in the collective learning process and not necessarily the expert with the right answer or solution. Instead his role is to help participants understand the complexity of what seems like a simple question: who is to blame when students cannot understand their IGTA?

In response to the notion of "linguistic discrimination," Jon's post below hypothesizes, from his own personal experience, that some accents are more privileged than others based on geography.

> Question from Jon, Midwestern U.:
> I have noticed that while speakers with Asian accents are often perceived as unintelligible and uninteresting, speakers with European accents are often perceived as worldly and scholarly. Have you studied that phenomenon?

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Rubin responds that although he too suspected this, his findings from one

of his studies found US students unable to attribute accents to geographic

locations.

> US students are often wildly erratic in placing
> accents. In one study-when we played a typical
> South Asian Indian voice (in the role of a physician)
> but made no geographic attribution, students
> guessed that the speakers was Greek, Turkish,
> French, Japanese…the variety was endless.

In his response, Rubin points out how attributed stereotypes do get set up

differently, with some stereotypes being more negative, and other stereotypes

being more positive. His critical assertion complicates the "linguistic

discrimination" thesis because at the meta-knowledge level the complexities are

more recognizable.

The comment below questions how linguistic discrimination is related to

comprehension ability.

> Question from **Zoe Colley, University of Dundee,
> Scotland**:
>   I would be interested in know if US students are
> as likely to complain about being unable to
> understand someone from, for example, Scotland as
> they are from China? A broad Scottish accent (as
> well as many types of British accent) can be very
> difficult to understand.

In response to the question above, Rubin agrees that certain accents are very difficult to understand.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
>   Very true. I don't have an answer for that one, but I suspect that Scottish English may in fact be difficult for speakers of US English to understand in part because the typical intonation patterns (rising and falling inflections) of Scottish English differ so much from standard American English intonation.
>
> Twenty-five years ago Howard Giles and his colleagues conducted a number of studies demonstrating that among UK listeners, the various dialects elicited very distinct social stereotypes. But US listeners are by and large naive to the nuances of accent which have been so important in the British Isles. After all, half of North America thought that 4 lads with speech thick with the coal dust of Liverpool were the classiest act we'd ever seen.

Drawing from the research of Howard Giles and a pop culture observation about the Beatles, Rubin contrasts UK and US responses to British dialects to show that while UK listeners can associate small differences in dialect with distinct stereotypes of groups in the British Isles, US listeners just hear an undifferentiated "British" accent - enters the appeal of the Beatles' thick Liverpool accent. Although US listeners may distinguish small nuances among US dialects, they are not able to make such distinctions in World English.

Rubin's example illustrates how US speakers condense unfamiliar linguistic

differences against a monolingual standard.

Below a participant questions if monolingual standards play out in

decisions about tenure. At stake is his own tenure as a non-native instructor.

> Question from **Anonymous at Catholic University in Washington DC**:
>   Are you aware of tenure cases not being granted because of a Professor's accent? Although I have an accent, my students never complained about it neither in person on course evaluations. Yet this was brought up (the fact that I have an accent) in my recent deliberations for tenure.

Rubin uses the above question about tenure as an opportunity to discuss

how monolingualism also gets set up by multilingual speakers to deny seeing the

problem for what it is: lack of strong pedagogical skills.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
>   I do know that some individuals have claimed that student end-of-term evaluations have been colored by negative linguistic stereotypes, and therefore those evaluations ought to be discounted in their cases for promotion and tenure.
>
> I must say that the time or two when I have been asked to evaluate a tape of a professor making such a claim, I happened to find myself agreeing with the students that I was hearing an example of poor teaching--not because of accent or intelligibility, necessarily, but because of poor coherence, too few examples, and failure to project the voice (in terms of volume and animation).

> That's not to say it couldn't happen; it's conceivable to me that in many cases students are systematically underestimating the teaching competence of a non-native instructors, failing to attend to or fully appreciate the instructors' coherence, examples, and vocal projection... simply because those students have refused to get past accent.

Rubin's comments illustrate how stereotypes based on monolingualism can also be used by foreign instructors who are unwilling to recognize they are "poor teachers." Thus, he implies, monolingual stereotypes are used by both the foreign instructor and American student for very different purposes. Rubin implies in his last comment that English monolingualism does "conceivably" play into student and faculty evaluation of tenure. However, the contention seems to be that monolingual concerns trump arguments about good teaching, suggesting tenure decisions should include student and peer evaluations.

Below we see again how monolingual expectations make it easy to judge, rather than understand.

> Question from **Harvey Blumberg, Montclair State University**:
>   Most Foreign professors speak too fast. Why can't they be taught/told to speak s l o w l y.

Rubin's comment below also ties the above comment to monolingualism.

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Donald L. Rubin:

   I don't know if I would say "most," but you are quite correct that many non-native speakers of English can increase their comprehensibility by slowing down. And indeed, those of us who teach classes for international teaching assistants often do try to help our students slow down by asking them to make a point of pronouncing word junctures, or just by thinking about which single word (or words) in each sentence to stress. One way to achieve word stress can be to "linger" over a word, reduce speech rate, introduce a pause. Repeating a key word or phrase also helps, but that technique can quickly become overdone.

Unfortunately, when people are under stress--as in trying to improvise on the fly an answer to a difficult question all the while functioning in a second language--they can revert to poor speech patterns.

But recent research suggests that even more important than speech rate (after all, most listeners can comprehend close to 300 words per minute, and even an auctioneer or carnival barker barely breaks 180) is using intonation (rising and falling tones) to signal the junctures between idea units. In standard American and most Anglophone Englishes, we raise our intonation as we are reaching "the point," and then we drop our tone of voice to signal "this is it; this is what I've been leading up to." But not every World English uses intonation in that same way. So in our classes for international TAs, we spend a good deal of time helping our clientele think about what point they are really trying to get across and how to use vocal pitch to "pitch" their thought-units.

We see how Rubin borrows from linguistic discourse to reveal how monolingualism plays out even in personal knowledge that asserts foreign teachers speak too fast. Using recent research data, Rubin challenges information that suggests speech rate is the problem. As an alternative explanation, he introduces the notion of "World Englishes" which he argues is a diversity of Anglophone English*es* (emphasis added). The problem, he suggests, is students are trained in the secondary discourse of Standard American English. Students, therefore, become accustomed to and familiar with the intonations specific to this one form of English. World Englishes, in contrast, embodies intonation differences. He therefore implies that the meta-issue is not one of speech rate, but rather one of monolingual practices that expose students to a single set of English intonation patterns.

From this point in the colloquy discussion, the comments seem to shift from identifying the problem as linguistic stereotypes, to addressing solutions for breaking down linguistic stereotypes perpetuated through American monolingualism. This shift is made apparent by repeated phrases, such as, "World English" or "English as an International Language."

Soonhyang Kim brings critical insights to the question of "What can we do to raise U.S. students' awareness about English as an International Language."

> Question from **Soonhyang Kim, The Ohio State University**:
> What can we do to raise U.S. students' awareness about English as an International Language? It is not an easy task and takes time to help them to be aware of their communication responsibility because they are traditionally and historically not educated to be patient and open-minded to differences.

Through her question, Kim directs the discussion to reflections on embedded limitations in students as communicators and on implicit indictment of US education system for historically privileging monolingualism so that US listeners have become easily frustrated and largely intolerant of diverse English patterns. Monolingualism is thus the meta-level frame for the discussion.

Below, Rubin states that the question of how to raise US students' world-mindedness is also another "tough question."

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
> It's another tough question you pose. In my own research, I have NOT been able to document that participating in a short term conversation partner/mentor relationship with an ITA has long-term impact on undergraduates' world-mindedness. I would be happy to hear that others have found different results.
>
> There is a huge literature on "the contact hypothesis." Is it sufficient to just expose US undergrads to internationals? Apparently not. One problem is that even in very successful undergrad-ITA relationships, the undergrad might not

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generalize his or her new appreciation for an INDIVIDUAL ITA to the entire GROUP of ITAs.

In my experience running undergrad international conversation partner programs, US undergrads are generous and open to their individual partners. And in a few weeks, they forget how poorly they originally thought their conversation partner spoke. But undergrads (as well as ITAs) are busy, sometimes age and family responsibilities pose greater barriers to ongoing relations than do cultural differences, and they often drift apart. In those one-in-20 cases (my estimate) when the cross-cultural relationship really bloom--magic ensues.

While several colloquy comments recognize the need to increase American student awareness of World Englishes, Rubin's opinion is students need to move beyond monolingualism. He suggests however that monolingualism is only one attribute of "world-mindedness." He offers a meta-level critique of education as well as the popular idea that immediate experience is a panacea. He criticizes approaches that focus on one-on-one interactions, arguing that we need systematic not individualized approaches.

A comment on what Vanderbilt University does for IGTAs re-introduces the question of how universities can help native English speakers be more open to "linguistic diversity."

Question from **Linda Roth, Vanderbilt University**:
International TAs here receive up to a year of

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training in Pronunciation, Listening and Speaking, Communication Skills and Teaching Skills. Do you know of any institutions that give intensive orientation to native students to help them develop skills in listening to international as well as to help them be more open to linguistic diversity and more accepting of differences?

Rubin responds with a comment that emphasizes how he knows of no "systematic training in listening to World Englishes," or an openness to linguistic diversity.

Donald L. Rubin:
No. I know of no institutions that provide systematic training in listening to World Englishes. Some institutions (e.g., Iowa State) have developed some nice materials for first year orientation for undergrads. The materials explain how to get the most out of interaction with international instructors--including the issue of listening for meaning and with an open mind.

But do students at your institution pay much attention to the materials they receive at orientation?

If I am wrong, and there are folks out there who do more extensive work with US undergrads in understanding World Englishes, I'd be delighted to hear about it.

While he recognizes that there are "nice materials for first year orientation for undergrads" he directs reflection to the larger implications

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not being addressed by such practices. His post suggests that the problem

is not lack of viable learning opportunities, but rather lack of opportunities

for students to acquire the skills necessary to make sense, in a systematic-

real-life way, of learned practices. Learned theories, he implies, are soon

forgotten if they are not put into real-life practice. Rubin clearly

distinguishes between learned and acquired World English skills. He

argues that students need to overtly learn about language theories but they

also need to explicitly put into practice these theories in a way that

eventually becomes implicit, comfortable, and natural. Rubin's comments

invite other educators to reflect on the theories and assumptions

underlying their practices.

Below John introduces a question about the relationship between speaking

and thinking.

> Question from **John Mathew, Baselius College,Kottayam, India**:
>   How can the non-American students speak fluently in English as long as they think in their vernacular and speak in English?

Rephrasing John's original question to focus more on thinking rather than

speaking, Rubin makes explicit the cognitive complexities of the communication

struggle between IGTAs and American students.

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> **Donald L. Rubin**:
>   It's a very interesting question, in what language do bilingual people think? A number of authorities believe that you think in the language in which you've learned a particular subject. Thus, if you've learned calculus in Spanish but you've learned art history in English, you'll tend to solve calculus problems in Spanish, but think about Michelangelo in English.
>
> Certainly recall of specific vocabulary words in the non-native language can be a problem. That's why many ITA educators try to give special vocabulary practice in the discipline-specific vocabularies of each field.

Rubin comments on the meta-issue of cognitive complexities, identifying how cognitive processes complicate the communication situation. He explains how IGTA education, which consciously recognizes the thinking process as part and parcel of the speaking process, can address cognitive complexities. Again he makes the link between overt understanding of the importance of theories and putting those theories into explicit practice.

Towards the end of the colloquy forum, comments became more frank on how linguistic discrimination serves to advantage monolingual speakers and elicit, rather than challenge, xenophobia.

> Question from **Chris, large state university**:
>   As an American graduate teaching assistant in communication studies at a large state university, my department has many international teaching

assistants. I have really mixed feelings about the issue. Many of our undergraduates do use language as an excuse for laziness and unfounded cultural xenophobia. I believe that the notion of "colleges as businesses" sets a dangerous precedent for academic freedom. Most of the international TAs in my department speak English reasonably well, and in some cases, could even pass for being native speakers.

But I must admit that I do sometimes sympathize with undergraduate students. Unfortunately, there are a handful of international TAs in my department who make basic grammatical errors when speaking English, and are difficult to understand even in simple interpersonal conversations.

Perhaps we ought to make a distinction between instructors with strong accents and instructors who truly lack basic English skills. What are your thoughts on this?

Chris brings into discussion several meta-issues: linguistic labels that propagate stereotypes of lazy undergraduates, xenophobia, and models of education that put at risk academic freedom. In response, Rubin comments how Chris's question raises "another really complex" meta-issue. Drawing on ESL theory, Rubin makes explicit how cultural knowledge, expectations, and social practices complicate the communication struggle between students and IGTAs.

Donald L. Rubin:
Another really complex question. There is controversy in the field of English as a Second Language about the role of non-native English

speaking instructors in teaching English language and communication skills. After all, there are certain elements of cultural knowledge (when to tell a joke, what kinds of allusions to make to Sex in the City, when to use a sentence fragment for dramatic effect) that require a lot of socialization. Some of this concern would apply to the teaching of public speaking, or even to the teaching of interpersonal communication.

On the other hand, as you say, simply categorizing ALL non-native speakers of English as incapbable of providing such instruction does a great disservice to those instructors. Even worse, it does a disservice to the US undergrads who are deprived of the cultural insights of an informed outsider.

One successful model of teaching communication skills by non-native speakers occurs when the non-native instructor adopts the mode of CO-LEARNER along with her or his students. The students get to assist the instructor, and in the process they learn a lot, because they must articulate the language and communication principles upon which their advice to the instructor is based. Of course, the instructor must be willing to give up any pretense to FONT-OF-ALL-KNOWLEDGE, in such a model.

Rubin raises several implicit questions in his comments above that need to be asked at the meta-level analysis of the problem: Can we teach tacit knowledge? What is the value of an outsider perspective? Can an alternative model of teaching cultivate reciprocal learning between instructor and student? These are meta-level issues that invite future reflection at the meta-knowledge level.

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In returning to colloquy comments, the post below uses personal experience and opinion to frame the question of whether or not there is a point at which accented English is too difficult to understand.

> Question from **Pei-Jen Shaner, U of Virginia**:
> I am an (sic) non-native English speaker and an international graduate student who did teach several classes in my university. My experience so far has been OK. But I am curious, is there a way (in terms of speech and community research) to identify at what point our accented English is too difficult to understand? It will really help if there is certain standardized procedure that can help universities decide what is the problem in any given case (is this particular TA too accented to be understood and needs more training? or are those particular students too lazy or too narrow-minded to tackle the challenge of "world" English?).

Rubin alludes to the meta-level assumption that speech is socially constructed; thus ever changing social contexts complicate, if not make impossible, efforts to standardize English.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
> I suppose the world would be a lot simpler, but also a lot less interesting were it possible to state uniform criteria for comprehensibility. But language features interact with subject matter, even with particular teaching tasks within the subject (e.g., explaining Bohr's constant vs. demonstrating how to use the centrifuge in the lab.)
>
> Recently educators have been trying to validate the new speaking section of the revised TOEFL exam

> (called i-TOEFL, I believe) as a screening tool for international teaching assistants. So far, we have learned that each institution, perhaps even each department, must go through the process of standard setting depending on its needs and expectations. There's a fair amount of variability in what the pilot institutions have determined might be an appropriate "cut score" on this new ETS speaking test.

He light-heartily suggests that if there was a standard method to measure speaking ability, the solution would be much simpler. He comments on what he knows is being done, by Educational Testing Services (ETS) to design a method of evaluating spoken English. However he minimizes focus on these efforts by emphasizing how language features will always interact with subject matter. Informing his comments is a meta-level understanding of language that challenges efforts to fix language in one particular social space or time.

The following post asks for clarification about linguistic confusion related to use of the terms "accent" and "pronunciation."

> Question from **Soonhyang Kim, The Ohio State University**:
> There seems to be some level of confusion between having an accent and speaking with a poor pronunciation. Could you define these two? I also believe that pronunciation is more workable than accent as an adult learner. What do you think?

Focusing on the mechanics of speech, Rubin offers a meta-level explanation of how speech is produced.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
> I hope I don't flunk this question!
>
> Pronunciation is usually considered superordinate to accent,and includes paralinguistic elements like rate, tone (in English it's paralinguistic), word stress patterns and the like.
>
> Accent, on the other hand, usually refers to the production of vowels and consonants.
>
> I believe you are quite correct. It's easier to modify one's intonation and word stress patterns than it is to modify consonant formation. (Though the latter is by no means impossible.)
>
> And the good news is that intonation and word stress are very critical to comprehensibility. We can get by with fairly pronounced accent so long as we conform to host language norms for intonation. Just listen to Henry Kissenger (or don't, at your discretion.)

In talking about patterns of language and stereotype recognition, Rubin uses meta-knowledge to argue that it is not enough for non-native speakers to produce good mechanical sounds. Cultural and social knowledge and language rhythms/patterns complicate a listener's comprehension of accented speech. He uses this explanation to advance the implicit argument that listening is also a social practice often framed by monolingual ideology.

Below, Armstrong questions whether the locus of discrimination is

cultural norms and expectations rather than speaking ability.

> Question from **Patricia Armstrong, Vanderbilt University**:
> I've heard it said quite often--and have repeated it myself--that undergraduates confuse comprehensibility of a non-native English speaking instructor with pedagogical competence or familiarity with cultural norms in the American classroom. In other words, it seems to me--and others--that when the accent of an instructor is noticeable, it can become a convenient locus for complaint when the issue may be that the instructor has cultural expectations for the classroom that are very different from those of his or her students. What are your thoughts on this? Is there any research proving or disproving such an idea?

This shifts discussion from speech production and comprehension to

social discrimination.

Rubin offers research findings as a means for explaining how cultural

penchant for assigning blame and local classroom protocols also complicate the

communication struggle.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
> Our earlier studies found that students majoring in the Humanities had especial difficulty comprehending accented speech on natural sciences topics. International instructors often bear the burden of gatekeeper courses. When I do poorly on any task, I tend to look for external reasons, don't you?

> I recently heard a colleague give a presentation in which she said that one international teaching assistant received very positive end-of-year evaluations. She was judged high in rapport, warmth, clarity--all those good things. And another ITA had 10% of her students complain that she was unintelligible.
>
> It was the same ITA in both cases. The difference? In the class in which 10% complained about her language, students had to cope with complicated software assignments. The other class was more of an overview of the field.
>
> So there is at least anecdotal evidence that some undergrads do blame their difficulties in managing course demands on the most vulnerable target around: their ITA
>
> Cultural expectations certainly do play a role. If I come from a culture in which students wouldn't consider posing a question to their professor during class time (questions come only after class), then of course it wouldn't occur to me to pause and ask for comprehension checks from my undergrads. These differing cultural expectations are a major topic that are covered in the many fine ITA preparation programs available at many universities.

Using anecdotal evidence, Rubin supports Armstrong's hypothesis that conflating accents, stereotypes, and issues of comprehension make it easy to assign blame. More specifically, his meta-level comments suggest that it is not only a matter of subject meeting language, but an ideological issue involving

power, gate-keeping, blame, and scape-goating. Using meta-knowledge Rubin

explicates how the conflation of accent leads to student action (complaints),

which perpetuates a cultural theory of blame and expectations that falsely

exonerates students of responsibility for listening.

Below a post questions another cultural belief that has led to social action

and cultural theories that only paint part of the communication picture.

> Question from **Jay Jordan, Penn State**:
>   In the last paragraph of the article, the ND
> legislator in question remarks that people she's met
> while traveling internationally just want to
> "communicate with the Americans." But does that
> mean "speak just like them"--especially if most
> nonnative speakers can never really acquire native-
> like proficiency?

He uses his observation to set up a hypothetical question: can non-native

speakers really acquire native-like proficiency? This question brings to

discussion two underlying assumptions: 1) in another country, Americans expect

others to speak like a native American, and 2) American English is the only

"native" discourse. Rubin responds to the flagrant ridiculousness by comparing it

to the misnomer of "accent reduction", but uses his response to advance an

appreciation for World English and World English users.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
>   My own experience confirms that people around
> the globe are very pleased to interact with open-

minded folks from the US. And there is some subset of internationals who are interested in "accent reduction" (a misnomer if ever there was one--since EVERYONE has an accent). But by and large, speakers of World Englishes are very proud of their accomplishments in a second (or 3rd or 4th) language, and very pleased to maintain the specific character of their West African or Bengali or Arabic inflected English.

Me too, I also appreciate the variety among World Englishes. It makes me shudder to think of homogenizing them all into a North American strait jacket

Rubin critically reflects on what is at stake for non-native speakers. Underlying his comments is an understanding of the larger ideological stakes of assimilating differences in order to privilege one particular language and social perspective of the world. He challenges the tacit perpetuation of monolingualism by advancing World Englishes as an alternative lens from which to see, recognize, and applaud diverse language users who choose to maintain their cultural "characteristics" through linguistic identifiers.

In the post that follows, Kim is quick to point out how Americans are far less willing to communicate, even though it requires less sacrifice.

Comment from **Soonhyang Kim, The Ohio State University**:
This reminds me of a recent article from the Graduate Teaching Associate Development (?). The article, through survey with UGs, identified

> undergraduates' unwillingess to communicate with ITAs as one of the factors affecting ITA communication problems with students.

Kim's reference to the survey results links back to my discussion of Gee's primary and secondary discourse distinctions, at the beginning of this chapter, which helped explain at a meta-level why some US students find it difficult and frustrating to communicate with speakers who speak English as an International Language instead of American English.

Rubin concludes the colloquy discussion by reframing the problem between IGTAs and American students from a transactional model of communication.

> **Donald L. Rubin**:
>   After reading the Chronicle article which is the impetus for this colloquy, I felt that the positions presented were rather polarized. If I have a take-home point I'd like to make it's this: International instructors constitute a campus-wide resource. Any problems in teaching and learning that arise from international instructors require a campus-wide effort. Support for ITAs (and also continuing support for non-native English speaking faculty members) is key, and much progress has been made in many fine programs on that score. But also key is attention to undergraduates' listening abilities. Very few--if any--programs exist to support undergraduates as listeners of World Englishes. Improvements in intercultural teaching and learning--crucial for participation in the global community of knowledge and commerce--cannot be

> achieved by addressing only one half of the
> problem.

Rubin implies popular discussions, like that reported in the Teach Impediment article, perpetuate monolingualism. Such perpetuations fail to culturally, historically, and systematically consider the interrelated and socially constructed roles of World English speakers and listeners. Failure to consider all of the stakeholder roles and investments, he suggests, results in "addressing only one half of the problem." As a more complete approach, he offers three solutions that need to be implemented simultaneously across campus in order to address the whole problem instead of just half of the problem. These include: 1) support for IGTAs; 2) teach listening to World Englishes; and 3) improvements in intercultural teaching and learning. All of Rubin's proposed solutions are informed by meta-level issues that I expand in the following section.

Discussion of Results

At the beginning of this chapter I said my analysis would focus on answering the following questions:

- Do educators and scholars perpetuate or challenge the master myth of monolingualism?

- How do the words they use counter common sense assumptions in cultural models?

- What other discourses do colloquy participants tap into to offer

  alternative frameworks for thinking about the problem?

As promised, I will elaborate my analysis of colloquy data to address these

questions. The colloquy data, like the other two data sets, corroborates the

existence of a communication struggle, or failure to communicate altogether,

between American monolingual students and their multilingual IGTAs.

Discursive struggles are often indicators of more complex problem than what may

be apparent in the immediate context. On a larger scale, discourse struggles are

ideological conflicts involving multiple stake holders hanging tight to real life

investments (i.e. grades, tenure, social capital, access to an advanced degree). It

seemed appropriate, therefore, to use Gee's theory of meta-knowledge as an

analytical tool to reveal how, in his own words:

> mind mixes with history and society; language mixes with
>
> bodies, things, and tools; and the borders that disciplinary
>
> experts have created, and which they police, dissolve as we
>
> humans go about making and being made by meaning.
>
> (Gee, p. 190)

History, society, language, people, culture are larger dynamics that might

inform reflections or critique at the level of meta-knowledge. These dynamics

were all brought into discussion in the collective learning process of the colloquy

forum. They lead participants to reflect on the conditions for knowing what we know or for what counts as knowledge at the level of practice.

As explained in my introduction to Chapter 5, the colloquy forum, by its very nature, is a space intended for scholars to come together to learn and explore knowledge processes, and in turn to reflect on how those processes may impact pedagogical practices. Using meta-knowledge as an analytical tool, my analysis identified how participants overtly and critically make sense of communication practices that perpetuate the master myth of monolingualism. For example, while racial discrimination is often assumed as part of the reason students are unwilling to understand IGTAs, reflections at the meta-knowledge level suggest linguistic discrimination conflated in racial discrimination. This meta-level finding led to critical discussion about how Americans discriminate linguistically based on American Standard English, although, ironically, lack the ability and experience needed to discuss linguistic subgroups from elsewhere.

Understanding the basis for, and validity of, these discriminations is necessary, I believe, in becoming both a responsible and responsive user of World English in an international economy increasingly interconnected through globalization. According to Min Zhan Lu, our world today is one where all forms of intra- and international exchanges, in all areas of life, are increasingly under pressure to involve English (2006). It makes sense from the perspective of this

chapter's data findings that English be approached from a model of

multilingualism. From this model, English is an international discourse that is not

only used in students' university world, but in the wider more global world.

Colloquy participants frequently used "world English" and "English as an

International Lanugage" model to challenge monolingual assumptions. These

alternatives were not offered as a solution to the current problem of

monolingualism, but as a way to understand more fully the historical,

sociocultural, cognitive, and individual complexities folded into monolingual

ideology. The meta-knowledge used for this purpose paralleled the literature

reviewed in Chapter 1. Although colloquy participants did not draw from the

work of the New London Group, much of what they said resonates with

characteristics of multiliteracies. The goal of multiliteracies, according to the

NLG, is to overcome,

> limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how
>
> negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences
>
> in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working,
>
> civic, and private lives of students. (Group, 2000, p. 60)

These same goals seem implicit in colloquy comments that by and large

argued that internationalization of the American university enriches the quality of

both undergraduate education and graduate education, and more generally, learning and teaching practices.

At the level of meta-knowledge, participants recognized social constructions that make it impossible to find a one-size-fits-all solution for the problem between IGTAs and students. This meta-awareness led participants to advocate for systematic and multi-level change at 1) the public policy level in response to the Teach Impediment case thinking to signify an outdated master myth, 2) at the campus-wide level where cultural models mobilize historical standardizations of monolingualism, and 3) the individual level where unfair issues of blame and discrimination are frequently perpetuated.

While this third layer of data is my last layer of analysis, I reach this point in my dissertation feeling my work is not an end but a critical beginning. Chapter 6 concludes with this beginning in mind by identifying the implications of my dissertation work for future research. More specifically, in this final chapter I weave together the findings from my three data sets, discuss how data results tie back to Chapter 1's review of literature, and reflect on the methodological contributions of my tripartite analytic schema.

Chapter Six

Chapter 1 began by identifying a common social problem: undergraduate students who have experienced some level of frustration over not being able to understand their international graduate teaching assistant (IGTA). Literature reviewed explains how the problem is historically and ideologically tied to monolingualism.

In this chapter, I'd like to conclude by summarizing how language used to discuss, describe, analyze, and evaluate the communication problem between students and their IGTAs is not transparent or neutral, but is embedded with history and ideology that further perpetuates or responds to the master myth of monolingualism.

Monolingualism at one time was seen as a "good" thing that unified a nation of diverse people, but in the last few years monolingualism has become mobilized in different ways. As literature reviewed (chapter 1) from the 1990's illustrated, monolingualism was perceived as a dogmatic, negative trait in today's globally diverse society. From the data analyzed we see how monolingualism has crept into diverse conversations both public and private. More specifically, we saw how some people consciously use monolingualism to denigrate others making a concerted effort to separate "us" from "them." For others,

monolingualism surfaces in cultural models that mobilize monolingual

assumptions and expectations and is unintentional or unreflective. And others

critically challenge monolingualism at a meta-level. My research data

demonstrates that monolingualism has not been abandoned, but it also explains

how monolingualism is permeable. Language ability is not a fixed state, but is a

dynamic and porous process. My research showed that lodged between our myth

of a monolingual past of Standardized English and the promise of a multilingual

future of World Englishes is the present moment. Without a doubt, universities

play a significant role in negotiating necessary learning opportunities for both

IGTAs and American students in this highly complex and political middle-space.

At the same time that we recognize monolingualism as a living part of our cultural

history, it is significant, I believe, that our monolingual heritage not be mistaken

as a destiny.

At the start of my dissertation I presented the research question: can

universities balance learning opportunities for 1) IGTAs whose first language is

not English or whose English deviates from standard usage with 2) undergraduate

students, whose first and often only language is English. These questions were

cast in terms of critical composition scholarship addressing the prevailing and

continually reproduced assumptions and expectations that denigrate international

students and teachers and perpetuate American monolingualism. This query

focused my research on exploring how debates and potentially productive interventions have been stalemated due to the failure to confront deeply embedded myths and cultural models that devalue otherness and privilege dominant people, processes, and knowledge.

Using a method of inquiry (chapter 2) that borrows Gee's concepts of master myths, cultural models, and meta-knowledge as analytical tools, a unique research approach was designed in chapter 2. My use of Gee's concepts as analytical tools is a methodological contribution that will prove valuable to future researchers who seek a method for: triangulating disparate discourse data, understanding the complexity behind a seemingly simple problem, and/or validating identification and analysis of tacit knowledge. My own dissertation work sought to accomplish all three of these research purposes; more specifically I set out to:

1. ascertain how "frozen theories" play out in public forms of discourse to perpetuate the master myth of monolingualism (chapter3).

2. examine how cultural models, used in everyday discourse, mobilize the master myth of monolingualism (chapter 4)

3. analyze how scholars collaboratively critique current practices and policies regarding IGTAs, and identify from their reflective discussion the larger issues at stake (chapter 5).

I have been committed to advancing the education of American and international students at both the graduate and undergraduate level for over a decade. As I explained in chapter 2, I am both personally and professionally invested in understanding the motivating issues of blame when undergraduate students fail to understand their IGTA. My stake in my research undoubtedly influences my data interpretation. But this subjectivity provides me both practical and meta-knowledge lenses from which to understand the larger social context framing my three data sets. Given that I am invested, have a personal history of working with both undergraduate students and IGTAs, and have been at Michigan Tech for close to ten years, my research perspective is not unbiased. However, my personal and professional experiences add to my data interpretation a valuable practical, first-hand perspective that informs my theoretical understanding of the research issue.

The opportunity to work with Sylvia Matthews (see chapter 2) in setting up the IGTAAP program provided my first glimpse of how "the master myth of monolingualism" is socially constructed in and perpetuated through both primary Discourses (institutional policies and practices) and secondary discourses

(conversations among students, faculty, IGTAs, and coaches). As a graduate student/researcher attending and presenting at conferences, I quickly realized that problems resulting from perpetuation of the American myth of monolingualism are not unique to Michigan Tech. Denigrations based on monolingualism are widespread, and so too is frustration with teachers who are hard to understand.

Both in the classroom and on the senate floor, monoligualism is an ideological and historical battle. At the policy level bills such as "Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act" argue that making English the official language of the Government of the United States would unify and simplify communication between Americans () (). In 2009 U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe introduced two bills to make English the national language of the United States and require all official functions, including steps toward citizenship, to be conducted in English: "Our nation was settled by a group of people with a common vision, and as our population has grown, so has our cultural diversity," the Oklahoma Republican said, "This diversity is part of what makes our nation great. However, we must be able to communicate with one another so that we can appreciate our differences" (Myers, 2009). Both bills work on the myth that ability to communicate and understand one another is an autonomous process unscathed by disparate literacy histories, political histories, class distinctions, cultural traditions, and individual experiences. Research (Reddy, 1979)

(Wittgenstein, 2001; Wertsch, 1993) (Wittgenstein, 2001 Commemorative Ed) (Wertsch, 1993) has dispelled this myth at the meta-level. Yet such a myth is evident in all three data sets of this dissertation work. Protests against the myth of monolingualism are continually voiced by groups like The American Civil Liberties Union, who year after year argue against state and local government language restrictions that prevent communication in languages other than English, except in special circumstances (ACLU, 2008).

On the other end of the spectrum is discourse that advocates monolingualism as "a curable disease." In one particular blog (An American Between Worlds: One Mother's Attempt to Have It All, 2007) participants debated whether or not the word "disease" was "a little too strong." After all, "disease sounds so deadly! Like an epidemic." But the discussion concluded that the way monolingualism has developed in the United States is much like the life-cycle of a disease. In consideration of my CDA results, I would concur that monolingualism was discussed as a pathological condition suffered by people outside the dominant culture. At one level of analysis we saw how cultural models mobilized the master myth of monolingualism through language that is also used to discuss a disease: "impairment, victimization, a nation at risk." At the meta-level, discussion among academics deliberated whether or not accents are curable.

The ubiquitous nature of monolingual debates has not resolved the frustrations and problems; there are no simple solutions to the complex consequences resulting from this master myth. Hence, the frustrations persist. At Michigan Tech, 2009 midterm grades once again resulted in the semi-annual Parentlist discussion over frustration with foreign instructors. The same assumptions and expectations made during the 2000 listserve strand of discussion were articulated again in 2009: demand that instructors should be at the very least understandable, advocacy for a bill of consumer rights, assertion of the assumption that foreign instructors are cheap labor, repetition of the expectation that foreign instructors disadvantage students in technical courses like engineering, debate over whether or not the issue is one of speaking or teaching competency, and advancement of the theory that overcoming language barriers is a necessary lesson in diversity and the inevitable rebuttal that such theories are nothing more than excuses disguised as politically correct rationalizations, or as one parent writes below "diversity b.s.."

A small sampling from the 2009 Parentlist conversation shows how monolingualism continues to creep back into discussion. Below we see how complaints voiced by parents in 2000 are re-introduced. While the parents, students, and IGTAs have changed, cultural models remain the same. Below the

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beliefs that teachers should be easy to understand and American students are

paying customers are once again articulated.

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My problem with instructors is that we are
paying them to teach. Don't ever lose sight of
that- those instructors are working for the
parents/students that paid to take that class.
 MTU (and other universities/colleges) would do
well to always remember that.  In all other
"real world" scenarios if that employee were
not able (or willing) to adequately perform the
duties they are being paid to do they would be
shown the door.
I agree totally with most of these posts.  My
son had (I think) the same instructor last
semester and this "language barrier" (yes
that's what it is) frustrated him a great deal.
 The instructors should at least be
understandable and able to articulate clearly
in ENGLISH!  If our students
wanted to learn in other languages they would
study abroad.
A college education has become very costly and
there really is no excuse to do anything but
the best for our kids.
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My son has echoed the same regarding the
language barrier in this class. What does the
school hope to accomplish with this practice? I
have been subject to it as well, although many
years ago. I personally believe it's their idea
of cutting costs - acquiring cheap labor. I
have real bad opinion about this. Is there
something that I'm overlooking. Please don't
give me that diversity bs.
My daughter is a Freshman and in Calc 3.  She
has the same teacher, same language barrier.  I
think the language barrier is something they
definitely have to learn to deal with, just as
all of us do with work etc.  However, the thing
I am least impressed with is that this
particular professor
seems to be just "reading" power point slides.
 I don't see where there is a lot of actual
instruction, and she is struggling at times as
well.  I think they can read and understand the
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power points more easily themselves, as opposed
to hearing them with an accent.
Just my thoughts. Shouldn't there be more
"instruction"?
My son is in the exact same situation. He is
talking about retaking it online this summer.
He is frustrated because the professor's accent
is very difficult to understand as well. He
says this is an extremely important class
because it is a prereq for just about
everything else.

Welcome to ENGINEERING SCHOOL. It was like
that when I went to Tech 25 years ago. My
coworkers, who are engineers from other schools
also have the same experiences, so it's not an
MTU thing. Your student needs to figure out
how to work with their instuctors no matter
what nationality. A good life lesson in my
experience.

The 2009 strand of discussion, however, brought forth a new perspective – that of

an international parent. Below is his response.

Language barriers is a subject that
particularly matters to me. You see, my family
and I come to this country as immigrants 13
years ago. Our son, now near to graduation as
Chemical Engineer, was 11 at that time. In my
country of origin I had learnt English for many
years before coming here, at school and by
mostly working for American companies doing
business there. Spanish is my first language.

I still remember my first time of a language
barrier after emigrating (sic) to the USA. We
were shopping at Sears in Grand Rapids, MI, and
an employee made me repeat a few times
"Customer Pick Up" until he understood what I
meant. Then, his very ironic smile in his face
told me loud and clear how much he didn't like
foreigners He repeated after me the same thing
I have said, but with his perfect English
pronunciation. He was telling me in my face:

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"this is the way you should pronounce it." He was not teaching me, he was making fun of me.

My family and I have experienced this same treatment since the very beginning, and it had never stop. Even after 13 years in the US, and with a continuous learning English every day, I would never be able to pronounce perfect English. I remember my parents, also immigrants to my country of birth from Europe when they were very young, never lost their strong Hungarian pronunciation until they passed away, over 80 my mom, and over 90 my dad. You see, it is almost impossible to loose(sic) your first language accent never ever.

Understanding an English as Second Language foreigner is a two way communication process. First, we (the foreigners) should do every possible effort to pronounce the best we can. We don't like to be reprimanded because we do not pronounce like the English as first language American born citizens. But the opposite is also true. Americans should also do their best possible effort to understand the foreigner. I guess that what I am asking is that as soon as somebody realize that the other individual has issues when speaking English, he/she should make every possible effort to "open their ears." Communication is easy if we both try each other to communicate and to be communicated better.

Also, foreigners don't need the English speaker to speak louder, as we have experienced many times. We are not deaf. What we need is the other to speak slower, not louder. That doesn't happen very often.

I don't know if I can speak for ALL foreigners. I am describing personal experiences. I have been traveling overseas because my work for many years. Funny to say, we all communicated in English, as it is THE universal business language. It is very important for foreigners to learn English, as it is a skill that will be necessary in every step of your professional

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life.  For all those foreigners overseas, it
was easier to understand my second hand English
than the one spoken by Americans.  Same with
me.

I think it is important that all students in
MTU learn how to better communicate and
understand foreigners.  It will be very useful
for them, as soon as their professional life
and careers would take them oversees, or will
place them in contact with foreigners here in
the US. Where I work, we have them all:
Indians, Latin Americans, Europeans,
Australians (Yes, they speak kind of a funny
English, much more difficult than the American
English), etc.  Foreign languages come in all
colors and styles.

I am done.  Thank you all for your
comprehension.
```

Up until this point, participation of international parents was completely missing from past Parentlist discussions about IGTAs, and for the most part in Parentlist discussions overall. This void left unchallenged the notion that American students are the only paying customers. It also made it easy to maintain assumptions that accents are easy to fix, which tangentially advanced the expectation that accents are something that can or should be "lost.." But most problematically, the missing international perspective made it easy to reify, pigeonhole, and denigrate all foreign instructors. For example, the post above poignantly illustrates how linguistic discrimination plays out in real life. On the one hand it challenges derogatory behavior influenced largely by the master myth of monolingualism, and on the other hand recognizes the communication

responsibility of both native and non-native speakers of English. I was

particularly drawn to his use of the phrase "funny English" in juxtaposition with

his example of the American who wrongfully made "fun" of him. Fun and funny

are not necessarily good or bad, but depend on the context. The balance between

what is fun and what isn't fun is a hard line to draw. For some the intention of

humor is not to be funny but sarcastically derogative.

In talking with students today, many have a different take on language

barriers than those voiced by college parents or even students from a generation

ago. While today's students are quick to voice their frustration with instructors

who are hard to understand, they also seem more ready to accept their role in the

social deconstruction of communication barriers. Based on informally talking

with students in my own and others' classes, from formal interviews conducted at

the outset of my dissertation work, and from 2006 Michigan Tech's National

Survey of Student Engagement results (NSSE, 2006) students today seem to

understand that discussion over IGTAs, or foreign instructors in general, is part of

a broader more complex conversation about globalization. Much of this change

in perception has to do with a changing world where diverse languages and

cultures are both physically and literally a touch on the i-phone away.

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A little insight:

1. The University would certainly cost a lot
more if every calculus student took all three
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calculus classes from career professors who are being paid to teach instead of trained. So in order to keep the tuition down, GTI's are a great initiative. Plus, it furthers their education as well.

2. As a Tech Student, I have come to realize that having instructors that are somewhat difficult to understand means that I have to pay more attention to what they are saying, and in the end it's easier to take notes because its easy to paraphrase someone who doesn't know all of the intense jargon that a full blooded American would throw at you. In essence, they are already paraphrasing the basic principles behind the theories instead of obscuring them with unnecessary commentary in perfect English.

3. In addition, the calculus book required for the courses is very well written and is absolutely critical in learning the material. The homework is essential to learning how to use the tools presented in class and the book will continue to serve as an excellent resource throughout your child's college carreer. Even without a professor or GTI, I feel I could have learned the entire course simply by the explanations given in the book.

4. Also, the calculus that I learned in AP courses in high school only prepared me to do simple derivatives, however was not used to find the rate at which the lateral strain is changing in a wooden beam with grains at a 45 degree angle to the cut, as we did in Michigan Tech Calculus to prepare us to be engineers. Calculus for engineers is much different than the basic principles taught in our Nation's high schools (and I might add that more advanced calculus IS taught in high schools in many of the countries where the GTI's which you crtique were born).

In the end, how are we to compete with engineers coming out of countries like Japan and India where kids go to school 300+ days of the year 6 days a week for their entire educational career if we need to keep dumbing

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down our programs here in the States. We need
to be challenged, and learning in a diverse
atmosphere increases our awareness of a global
economy. All of us WILL need to do buisness
with different
countries in order to survive in this type of
economy and personally I look forward to
learning from someone who is much more
knowledgeable than I am, even if they can't
speak perfect English.

Have a good weekend and go Wings,
Vicodin

P.S.
I am not by any means a perfect student, nor a
perfect person. I party hard at school and play
rugby where I take out my own frusterations. I
am simply a Sophomore who's mom informed him
that alot of parents were concerned about
foreign instructors and felt that he had some
insight to share. Thanks for your time.

Our daughter just finished her 4th year at a
Tech. She finds a little humor in all this
conversation on Calc and the profs. She took
calc 1,2,and 3 at tech and though she had to
work hard she said the language was not a real
problem if you get the right mind set and go
for help when you need it. She got two 4
points and a 3 in those classes. When she
needed help SHE went and got it. It is up to
the student to go get the help not the parents.
I find that letting her know that it is her
responsibility to get help when needed and not
have me do it for her has helped her grow as an
individual and be more self sufficient.

My son came into his freshman year with his Cal
1 completed at our local university during his
senior high school year. He went into Cal 2 -
struggled but with the help of the math center
was able to complete with a B - Calc 3 was even
harder, he buckled down and spent time at the
math center. Mid term (thank you Bandweb) we
saw that he was in danger so we had a family

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discussion. He decided (not us) that he needed
to drop a course even though he would not get a
refund so that he could concentrate on the cal
3 class.  He was in the D range but pulled it
up to a B.A big Thank you to the tutors in the
math center.

He has decided that he needs to slow down and
be a 5 year student in order to fully learn the
material and be a more productive adult.  Yes
the dollar cost is higher -It will mean more in
student loans but he has decided that it is
worth it. We believe he is right - this is only
four(now five) years of his life, such a small
part overall, and if another year means that he
will be more productive in the long term it
will pay off.
Consider this - MTU is a fine institution with
a fantastic reputation.  Your student is
getting an education equivalent to other top
technical schools for 1/2 the cost. Even with
the 5th year his total tuition bill will be
less then some of the other high caliber
technical schools. Sometimes we get lost in
today and forget the big picture.
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Lastly, I'd like to refer to the following post by a Michigan Tech faculty

member.

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Dear Michigan Tech parents,

As promised, I have some numbers in response to
questions or comments raised on the email list.

First of all, here is some data from teaching
evaluations of GTIs (GTIs are Graduate Teaching
Instructors, the graduate students who teach
independently).  These numbers are on the
summary
question that students answer (anonymously):
"Taking everything into account, I consider
this instructor to be an excellent teacher."
The evaluations are for Calculus I and II.
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              average evaluation (max. score is 5.0)
              All GTIs:                 4.26
              Foreign GTIs:             3.88   [4.05]
```

Some notes:
1. I included all the evaluations of GTIs from the last 2 semesters.
2. Among the foreign GTIs, one received an especially low score (2.64);if I exclude that score, the average score for foreign GTIs rises to 4.05.
3. Scores for regular, fulltime faculty members teaching Calculus I and II are actually slightly lower than those of foreign GTIs.
4. The average score for all sections of engineering and technology courses, which are mostly taught by regular, fulltime faculty, is 4.08. (I use the engineering and technology courses as comparison because those courses are similar in demands, and GTIs are rarely used for those courses.)

I think these numbers show that Michigan Tech students are not registering widespread dissatisfaction with GTIs, even with the foreign GTIs.

The one GTI who scored particularly low will receive some additional scrutiny and will not be allowed to continue to teach unless improvement is seen.
This has happened in the past with other GTIs, and I have seen both outcomes: the GTI improves or the GTI loses the position. The course in question was Calculus II, and the students in that section did not suffer unduly, at least in terms of final grades (the GPA in the given section was 2.19, while for the entire course---all sections---it was 2.32). But it is quite possible
that those students had to work harder to succeed.

Second, there was a question about how many students are failing in calculus. I looked at the last three years (Calculus I and II), and grouped the students in three sets: those with a good result (grades of A, AB, B), those who

did okay (grades of BC, C, CD), and those who
did poorly (grades of D, F, W---W means the
student withdrew from the course).

```
              Good     Okay     Poor
Calculus I    44.3%    30.2%    25.5%
Calculus II   39.1%    31.5%    29.3%
```

Here are my comments about these numbers:
1. In a quick internet search, I could not find
any national data to compare with these
numbers. My sense (based on conversations with
and presentations by colleagues at other
institutions) is that Michigan Tech is a good
or better than most universities, but I cannot
back this up with hard data.
2. I think we would all like to see a higher
success rate, but I don't know of any quick
fixes. The combined results for the last three
times I personally taught Calculus I were 47.4%
good, 24.7% okay, 27.8% poor. I certainly do
not have any difficulty with spoken English, I
have always had a liberal office-hour policy,
and some people even think I am a good teacher
(you can read comments about my teaching at
ratemyprofessor.com).
    Yet my results are in line those of the
entire department.
3. I know it is not what some want to hear, but
so much comes down to the motivation and work
ethic of the individual students. At Michigan
Tech, we offer help to students who are
struggling in their courses.
    Students who come to class regularly, do
their assignments consistently, and take
advantage of office hours and the Math Learning
Center usually succeed. If your student does
these things and still is not succeeding, most
likely that means that he or she entered
Michigan Tech with a serious deficit in algebra
and trigonometry. In this case, he or she will
likely have to work much harder than the
average student in order to do well in
calculus.

I would like to reiterate what I stated in my
earlier message: In spite of my comments above,
I know that some complaints about teaching in

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my department are valid, and I hope you will
encourage your students to see me if you or
they feel there is a valid complaint.  There is
not much I can do unless I have specifics about
a given situation.  However, when I am made
aware of a problem, I and other faculty who
oversee the GTIs always
follow up, to investigate and to help the GTI
improve.
```

Like the email from the Provost in chapter 4, the faculty member offers

some quantitative data to challenge assumptions that have led to perpetuation of

unfair cultural models.

It is interesting to note that while all three data sets expect the world to

speak English, many people are less willing to accept and some are down right

hostile to the English that non-Americans speak. While rudimentary English may

be the default language most conveniently used between speakers from different

cultures, online communication has led to the proliferation of diverse World

Englishes. As Henry Hitchings**,** author of *The Secret Life of Words: How English*

Became English (2008) observes, "one of the intriguing consequences of

globalization is that English's center of gravity is moving.." Based on this

premise he argues that native speakers of English will

> be at a professional disadvantage, because they're seen as
>
> obstructions to the easy flow of business talk and they're
>
> competent in just this one "basic" language. Nobody owns

languages any more. And this is likely to be especially

troubling for anyone whose language is widely used by

people who aren't native speakers (p. 10).

Practical Suggestions, Benchmarks, and Future Research

My research intention was to address the issue of undergraduate students'

frustrations in understanding IGTAs, and offer some practical suggestions. From

the results of my findings, however, it is not solutions we need, for those are

abundant in nature, but rather a repositioning of the problem. We need to depose

common sense assumptions about monolingualism that no longer make sense.

This calls for making monolingual assumptions more explicit and available for

public discussion. We need to make transparent the different reasons people use

and work from monolingual assumptions, in an effort to make more permeable

language barriers. We need to challenge monolingual practices and policies that

serve only to elevate Standard English users, at the expense of denigrating

speakers of World Englishes. We need to look at monolingualism as a starting

point that leads us into a future where sounds can be atypical and meaning

permeable. Deposing monolingualism includes: better teaching instruction based

on paradigms of the present rather than the past, transparency of language

expectations and assumptions, and reciprocity, however asymmetrical, in

communicative roles. As educators, our role is to bring the value of World

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Englishes from peripheral positions of scholarly discussion into academic practices and policies. Practically, this requires a model of reciprocal responsibility in classroom communication. The role of listening needs to depose unrealistic accent reduction models.

At Michigan Tech I see intentional work towards this in programs like D80. The goal of D80 is to involve undergraduates in service learning projects in third world nations where 80% of our planet's inhabitants live but are not considered in the design of infrastructures, goods and services. D80 programs, such as Peace Corps Masters International, Engineers Without Borders, and International Sustainable Development Engineering Research Experiences provide education, service and research opportunities for students, staff, and faculty interested in gaining valuable professional experience while making a difference in the lives of others outside of national borders (Tech, 2008). At a theoretical level, these programs provide opportunities for participants to enact social capital because an ability to speak World English is arguably critical to networking outside of national boundaries. A longitudinal case study or ethnography of these initiatives would provide valuable data in determining just how critical multilingualism in enacting social capital and advancing both personally and professionally in today's global economy.

Similar programs are emerging at universities across the world. Unlike European universities, American universities – including Michigan Tech—are less aggressive in integrating multilingualism into the mission of such programs. Little attention is given to the role language use, expectations, and assumptions play in constructing the learning experience. Yet despite the lack of any institutional language requirement, I see more and more students independently learning Spanish before going to Bolivia or Chinese prior to their post-doc at Peking University. I take this as an indication that students recognize language competence as a form of social capital. Yet as explained in chapter 1, language instruction alone is not sufficient; nonetheless, it is a start. These are the students that faculty, administrators, and I are eager to identify, mentor, and often have the pleasure of seeing awarded National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows.

My research has only skimmed the surface of the social problems transpiring from the historical perpetuation of monolingualism. While time greatly limited the scope of my dissertation work, it offers a starting place for future research aimed at looking at how English's center of gravity is shifting and what that means for American monolingual speakers.

While Gee's concepts provided analytical tools for triangulating vastly different types of data, Teun Van Dijk's recent work (2006) with manipulation could similarly be used to triangulate data at the 1) social, 2) cognitive, and 3) discursive levels. Unraveling discourse data from these three levels would provide a more complex understanding of how the myth of monolingualism is mobilized in cultural models." This type of future work is critical for understanding monolingualism as an integral part of American culture and legacy, but not a destiny. Monolingualism is part of our shared heritage. However, monolingualism can and should be deposed.

In conclusion, I have no simple answer for undergraduate students who fail to understand international teachers. If anything, my research indicates that the problem has deep historical and ideological roots. Our nation's heritage has created cultural models that work on the rigidity of maintaining standard expectations and assumptions. While the resiliency of these models is increasingly challenged with trends of globalization, the core values for these models remain – they are embedded in the spirit of America's identity. With that said, identities change and so too do expectations and assumptions associated with an era, an individual, a political view, a culture, and, yes, even a classroom.

Needless to say, problems associated with monolingualism will not be solved by simply requiring international teachers to be more proficient or

requiring American students to learn another language and travel abroad. Stereotypes and assumptions that intentionally and unintentionally denigrate non-native speakers make it too easy to blame accented speakers, lazy students, or an institution. Even with my own passion as an international educator for disparate languages, peoples and cultures, I unthinkingly assume fault on the part of a non-native speaker when I am tired and unwilling to put in the effort necessary to listen to words spoken in a way unfamiliar. I too am guilty of being frustrated and intolerant. As key players at universities, staff, faculty, administrators, IGTAs, GTAs, and students both domestic and international need to make a concerted commitment to challenge not only blatant forms of monolingual bullying but tacit and often unconscious forms of linguistic denigrations. It is these often implicit patterns, according to my research findings, that get in the way of viable solutions by maintaining, rather than revising, expectations and assumptions. Unchallenged expectations and assumptions make it too easy to blame individuals and institutions, rather than identify and address the underlying problem. If we are to take one lesson from this research it is acknowledgment that the issue is not a simple problem to solve but is a highly complex ideological issue of identity, power, and ethnocentrism that needs to be better understood.

It is my hope that frank discussion of how a persistent ideological bias plays out in these data sites, despite explicit claims by invested speakers to the

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contrary, demonstrates why monolingualism remains so tenaciously a part of educational practice. Because irrational expectations and derogatory assumptions have, up until now, gone unchallenged little progress has been made despite decades of earnest work and good intentions. In focusing on what we say, not what we intend, my research responds to the exigency of our globalized existence and offers practical suggestions for deposing monolingualism by making explicit deeply entrenched ideological bias.

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