Composing Alternatives to a National Security Language Policy

Scott Wible

> *[T]he Secretary of Defense [. . .] wants his young soldiers who are on the front lines of finding these killers to be able to speak their language and be able to listen to the people in the communities in which they live. That makes sense, doesn't it, to have a language-proficient military—to have people that go into the far reaches of this world and be able to communicate in the villages and towns and rural areas and urban centers, to protect the American people. We need intelligence officers who, when somebody says something in Arabic or Farsi or Urdu, knows what they're talking about. That's what we need. We need diplomats—when we send them out to help us convince governments that we've got to join together and fight these terrorists who want to destroy life and promote an ideology that is so backwards it's hard to believe. These diplomats need to speak that language.*
>
> —President George W. Bush, January 5, 2006

Speaking before the 2006 U.S. University Presidents' Summit on International Education, President George W. Bush unveiled the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), which put $114 million toward efforts to improve language education as a means to secure the nation. This initiative aims to expand the number of Americans mastering what military and intelligence officials have labeled "critical-need" languages, particularly Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Farsi. Throughout his speech, President Bush talked about foreign language education as a means to protect the United States in the short-term by "defeating [terrorists] in foreign battlefields so they don't strike us here at home."

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He also talked about how foreign language education could protect us in the long-term by helping "defeat this notion about [. . .] our bullying concept of freedom," because learning the languages of other countries and cultures can be a way "to reach out to somebody" and let that person "know that I'm interested in not only how you talk but how you live."

President Bush's National Security Language Initiative is one piece of an emerging, post-September 11, national language policy that proposes to develop multilingualism in more U.S. citizens. In one way, the policy challenges Official English legislation, because it proposes that students learn to communicate in multiple languages rather than in Standard English alone. In other respects, however, the policy is based on troubling notions about language, identity, and the pedagogical aims of language arts teaching. Given that the policy stands to influence language arts education, students' literacy practices, and their conceptions of civic action, scholars in the English language arts need to situate it on their disciplinary map and, working in concert with their colleagues in foreign languages, respond to it in ways that reflect the field's pedagogical and political commitments.

The field has already developed theoretical and pedagogical frameworks for promoting multilingualism in the United States, but these frameworks were constructed as challenges to government policies and teaching practices that would make English *the* language of communication in the U.S. public sphere and in its classrooms. For example, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) published the National Language Policy in 1988 as a counterstatement to the English Only movement. This policy called for English language arts scholars to work toward all U.S. citizens learning multiple languages as a means to "unify diverse American communities" and "enlarge our view of what is human" (Conference). More recently, scholars such as Bruce Horner, John Trimbur, A. Suresh Canagarajah, Min-Zhan Lu, Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe, Paul Kei Matsuda, and Anis Bawarshi have challenged the implicit policy informing U.S. composition instruction that students should work toward writing proficiency in the English language only. In *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*, the July 2006 *College English* special issue to which these scholars contributed, Horner argues that "students need to learn to work within and among and across a variety of Englishes and languages" (570). Although composition scholars have already done this important work of responding to the various manifestations of English Only policy in the United States, they and other English scholars should view the present debate about a national security language policy as an exigent moment to articulate specific ends for a multilingual language arts education. The election of Barack Obama makes this language policy debate no less pressing either, because national security, international diplomacy, and education are still high-priority items on the federal government's agenda. Composition, literature, and linguistics faculty in English departments, working alongside foreign language scholars at their schools and in organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA), should advocate a policy that promotes humanistic values.

In creating the current form of the national security language policy, President Bush, high-ranking U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) officials, scholars at the Defense Language Institute, and several congressional leaders have been motivated in part by retired Israeli General Arie Amit's 2002 warning that the United States would not win its global war against terrorists unless it understands "their language, their literature, and their poetry" (qtd. in Porter 4).[1] This policy would provide financial resources in order to motivate schools to refocus their programs on these languages and these literatures. The purpose of the present essay is not to deny the significance of national security needs as part of what a multilingual society should be able to address. Rather, the essay calls on English scholars to analyze all of the effects that follow from linking "language instruction" to "national security" and to work toward seeing that the emerging national language policy attends to the political, social, and cultural needs of the many language communities within U.S. borders. With this purpose in mind, I first analyze the policy debate concerning a national security "language crisis," highlighting in particular how President Bush's NSLI, several DoD documents, and congressional legislative proposals present designs for a national educational infrastructure that is grounded in definitions of foreign languages as military tools. I then move from critique to action by proposing three strategies that English scholars can pursue—in their classrooms, in collaboration with their colleagues in foreign language departments, and in shaping institutional policy writing at their colleges and universities—to promote multilingualism as a means of dialoguing to understand and resolve differences, rather than only to infiltrate and defeat enemies.

Defining the Nation's "Critical Language Needs"

As in all public policy debates, the present "language crisis" debate centers on attempts to define a problem in specific and strategic ways. Political scientist Frank Fischer explains that participants in policy debates use rhetorical strategies "to portray a social situation in a way that favours [sic] one's own argument and course of action as being in the public interest" (170). While a national security language policy is still being shaped, with the change in presidential administrations taking place and several legislative proposals awaiting action by congressional subcommittees, federal officials to this point have defined the nation's language and its language problems in a way that directs attention and resources toward military and intelligence operations. English scholars need to understand how this social situation has been portrayed in order to redirect public attention and funding toward other language needs in U.S. society.

The DoD and related federal agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), came to see foreign language education as a significant national security concern after September 11, 2001. Inquiries into the terrorist activities of September 11 led to suggestions that the federal government's insufficient language resources had contributed to its inability to anticipate and prevent the attacks. Several government reports, including those resulting from inquiries by the 9/11 Commission, warned that the military and intelligence communities did not have enough linguists and translators on staff to sustain a full-scale counterterrorism effort (Natl. Commission 78, 92). The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) similarly found that, at the FBI, "shortages of language-proficient staff have resulted in the accumulation of thousands of hours of audiotapes and pages of writing material that have not been reviewed or translated" (14). In this same January 2002 report, the GAO concluded that the Army did not have "the linguistic capacity to support two concurrent major theaters of war, as planners require" (15). From the perspective of these independent reviewers, the federal government had allowed this "language crisis" to emerge by failing to assess both its language capabilities and its language needs in the midst of an unstable international security environment.

The DoD leadership identified three primary reasons leading to this national security "language crisis." First, several DoD self-studies revealed that a narrow understanding of "language skills" and "language needs" has long been ingrained in U.S. military culture. In the 2004 *National Security Strategy* report, DoD officials noted that in many instances, U.S. Combatant Commanders think about the military's language needs solely in terms of the linguists who translate intelligence-related texts. These commanders, the report concluded, "lack understanding of the multiple dimensions of language capability" that they could deploy while planning and executing military operations (qtd. in U.S. Dept. of Defense, 2004, 14).[2] Moreover, U.S. command structures have been based on a deep-rooted bias in the military culture that does not regard language competencies as "warfighting skills" (U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Defense* 2005, 3). This lack of understanding and this bias have led to language skills and cultural knowledge not being listed as important qualifications for officers assigned to Combatant Commanders' staffs; in turn, the military has not prioritized language education in its officer training programs. Equally as significant, Combatant Commanders have ignored opportunities to add to their planning staffs those personnel who already hold relevant language abilities, especially Foreign Area Officers, who possess a unique combination of combat skills; deep knowledge of a region's culture, politics, and economics; and advanced proficiency in speaking, listening, and reading at least one language in a wide range of military, diplomatic, and civic contexts.

The U.S. military's difficulties in Afghanistan and Iraq have brought to light how this lack of language and cultural knowledge in planning circles can manifest itself in military operations. A 2004 DoD report, for example, notes that senior leaders and planners in Afghanistan and Iraq "cite the lack of qualified language professionals and regional experts as a major shortcoming [. . .] in initial planning for combat and contingency operations, for the execution of the combat phase, and for post-combat reconstruction and stabilization efforts" (U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Defense* 2004, 29–30). The implications of these shortcomings are clear. When DoD officials and U.S. Combatant Commanders lack understanding about language competencies and hold deep-rooted bias against language skills, their evaluations of the military's combat readiness do not fully account for its (in)ability to work with coalition forces and to foster understanding and resolve differences with local diplomats, military and business leaders, and civilians.

A second, albeit related, source of the national security "language crisis" is change in the post-Cold War international security environment itself, particularly since the U.S. military began to wage its Global War on Terrorism. Historian Clifford Porter of the Defense Language Institute,[3] the U.S. military's primary language school, explains that terrorists fight "asymmetrical warfare" (1), which involves surprise and deception rather than conventional, direct applications of military force. Terrorist forces conducting such warfare are not "strictly organized military units," such as the United States faced and could more easily track during the Cold War, but rather "less-predictable enemies that may or may not fight on conventional battlefields and hide in the hinterlands of the world where the languages spoken are rarely studied in the Western world" (1–2). The asymmetrical nature of the Global War on Terrorism, argues Porter, demands that the military invest in developing its human resources rather than sophisticated satellites and weapons:

> [W]hen the enemy is unconventional, hiding with civilian populations and motivated by an ideology that targets civilians, the foreign language capability of intelligence and special operations assets is one of the critical tools to unlocking the secrets of the enemy in his hiding places. (3)

Satellite technologies and global positioning systems can help the U.S. military know where enemy forces might be located, Porter explains, but these and other technologies cannot tell U.S. commanders "how the enemy thinks from the strategic to the tactical levels of war" (1). Such insight, DoD officials believe, can come only through learning the language and understanding the culture of key leaders and principal actors in terrorist networks.

A third contributor to the nation's security "language crisis," federal officials contend, has been geopolitical and cultural interests that have influenced the infrastructure of foreign language education. This infrastructure has guided a majority of students to learn Western European languages such as French, German, and Spanish rather than the languages spoken and written by peoples where the U.S. military has initiated conflict in recent years. In his remarks at the 2004 States Institute on International Education in the Schools, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S. C. Chu expressed his disappointment that, according to a 2002 MLA study, “Less Commonly Taught Languages” comprise only 12 percent of all U.S. college-level language enrollments (“Meeting” 5).[4] Chu criticized colleges and universities because these numbers signal their “lack of instructional capacity” in DoD “investment languages”: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Turkish, and other central Asian languages (6). Although statistical increases in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, and Tagalog instruction were “heartening,” Chu noted that these enrollment figures were mostly for introductory courses (6). Instead, he argued, the DoD needs both high schools and colleges to create sustained courses of study in these languages. Chu warned that if language scholars do not shift their attention to the DoD’s critical-need languages, “a large proportion of our American youth will not be prepared for the very different environment in which we find ourselves” (7).

Having identified these three sources of the national security “language crisis,” the DoD pursued two courses of action to address the problem, the first of which is internal. Under Secretary Chu assembled a team to create a *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, which upon its January 2005 publication sought “to transform the way [the DoD] value[s], develop[s], and employ[s] language and regional expertise” (U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Defense* 2004, 6). Among its many recommendations, the *Roadmap* calls for DoD leaders to generate a complete list of the military’s language needs for particular missions and personnel roles and to devise an index that measures the military’s level of readiness, in terms of its language capabilities, for specific operations (U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Defense* 2005, 5). The *Roadmap* also calls for the DoD to create one-time tests for identifying the kinds and levels of language competence that all U.S. military personnel possess, and it charges U.S. military leaders with deploying these personnel in positions that allow them to use, and thereby maintain, these skills in their day-to-day military activities (11–12). Finally, the *Roadmap* tasks the Defense Language Institute with redesigning its curricula (12) and calls for the DoD to develop strategies for recruiting heritage language speakers and other students who possess “critical need” language skills (6). The DoD leaders see the *Roadmap* as a means of “ensur[ing] the right skills are developed” to enable U.S. military personnel “to shape events, to respond rapidly, and to operate globally” in the twenty-first century (U.S. Defense Language Institute 29).

Although the DoD’s *Roadmap* proposes internal solutions to the language crisis, military officials contend that only a broader, more nationwide effort can develop the language resources that they need to secure the United States. The DoD initiated such collaboration by convening the "National Language Conference: A Call to Action" in June 2004. This conference, co-hosted by the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Study of Language,[5] brought together various stakeholders in this language policy issue, including leaders from federal agencies such as the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Labor, and Health and Human Services; the corporate sector; foreign language scholars from both the secondary and collegiate levels, including MLA Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal; and private companies that provide language services. Through presentations and roundtable discussions, conference participants attempted to define the nation's critical language needs, identify its existing language resources, and create a strategy for developing new language resources.

How presenters defined "the nation" and its "critical language needs" proved to be an important aspect of the National Language Conference presentations. Several federal representatives argued that a national language policy should conceive of the nation's needs more broadly, especially in acknowledging the existence of linguistic minority communities in the United States. These presentations attempted to expand definitions of the nation's language needs to recognize non-English-speaking citizens' claims to equal access and civil rights, as well as to address the general lack of cultural understanding and empathy for linguistic minorities. Presentations on this topic included the Justice Department's need for greater numbers of translators for federal trials (van der Heide), the Labor Department's need for more bilingual employees to service Limited-English Proficiency small-business owners and workers (Mok), and the Department of Health and Human Services' need to recruit more heritage language speakers into the medical field in order to remove cultural and linguistic barriers that limit many citizens' access to the health care system (Jang).

Meanwhile, Under Secretary Chu and U.S. Representative Rush Holt, among others, used their conference presentations to define the nation as a citizenry insecure at home because of the military's language shortfall in overseas theaters of war. In his opening address, Representative Holt argued that the September 11 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil occurred because vital intelligence gathered in foreign countries had been "lost in translation" (1). Chu, meanwhile, explained that, even though "national security and national interest could once be discussed in terms of physical borders and cultural boundaries, it is indisputably no longer so. National security concerns take us from the streets of Manhattan to the mountains of Afghanistan and to the resort cities of Bali" ("The Influence" 3). Holt and Chu tried to narrow the scope of this language policy debate as they defined the nation's language problems in terms of the military's overseas operations. Moreover, Holt and Chu repeatedly echoed the conference's theme of "a call to action" as a way of tabling debate about the ideal aims of language education. Chu, for example, maintained that America's monolingualism and cultural illiteracy are "a fact of life" that conference participants must accept for now (7). As a nation, Chu argued, we don't need more talk about ideals—"we need action" that shapes our nation's "raw materials" into the language competence that is "necessary for our survival in today's world" (7–8). Ultimately, both Holt and Chu tried to compel conference participants to commit to protecting the nation rather than debating what should or should not be defined as the nation's language needs.

The DoD published a white paper entitled *A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities* in order to synthesize conference deliberations and to provide a framework for legislators who would join the effort to form this national security language policy. The document, published in February 2005, proposes a seven-part strategy for coordinating the nation's efforts to identify, manage, and expand its language resources. Foremost among the components of this strategy is the creation of a National Foreign Language Coordination Council, chaired by a National Language Authority, which would be responsible for "developing and overseeing the implementation of a national foreign language strategy across all sectors," from commercial, educational, and nonprofit organizations to local, state, and federal governments (3). Not surprisingly, the military's definition of its language needs as the nation's language needs dominates the white paper's analysis and recommendations. Although the white paper does mention that the United States has a responsibility to ensure educational, economic, and civic opportunities for the nation's heritage communities (2), the DoD asserts that it is in the nation's best interest for the military and intelligence communities to lay immediate claim to "the limited language resources that exist right now" (12).

Since its publication, the DoD's *Call to Action* has sparked federal activity aimed at implementing this national security language policy; both the White House and the Congress have proposed measures to meet the critical language needs of the United States, needs that President Bush and congressional leaders have also consistently defined in terms of national security concerns. As mentioned in the epigraph to this article, President Bush's NSLI, unveiled on January 5, 2006, put $114 million behind improving language education in order to secure the nation. The NSLI builds on several existing federal programs, but the newly available funds are meant to encourage schools to refocus their educational efforts on military-defined "critical-need" languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, and Hindi and to develop continuous programs, kindergarten through university, for students of these languages. The NSLI also proposes several new programs, including a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, which would recruit and train volunteers to serve the nation as linguists in matters concerning national security and economic and political stability (Office). Meanwhile, H.R. 678, the National Security Language Act, would work "to strengthen the national security" through expanding educational programs that combine science and technology instruction with foreign language study, and S. 451 and

H.R. 747 would formally establish the National Foreign Language Coordination Council called for in the DoD's *Call to Action* white paper.[6]

The legislators, federal officials, and language educators shaping this national language policy are well aware that their vision for securing the United States through language education is not new. Many presenters at the 2004 National Language Conference, for example, referred to the September 11 terrorist attacks as a "Sputnik moment," thereby invoking the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, through which Congress tried to restore the nation's technological and economic superiority over the Soviet Union by directing more than $1 billion in federal aid to improve research and teaching in science, math, and foreign languages at all educational levels.[7] Key MLA leaders such as William Riley Parker joined the U.S. Commission on Education to oversee the NDEA's implementation, and the legislation led to a significantly larger number of students learning the languages and cultures of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Significantly, however, the NDEA overlooked the opportunity to develop educational programs for heritage language speakers within the United States. As Bruce Gardner remarked in 1965, the NDEA promoted an "anomalous national language policy," according to which it is "at best to ignore, at worst to stamp out, the native competence [in heritage language speakers] while at the same time undertaking the miracle of creating something like it in our monolinguals" (19).

Contemporary political leaders have similarly directed the citizenry's attention, in Holt's words, to the "national deficiency in the languages and cultures of critical areas around the world" (1). By defining the military's language problems as the pressing language problems facing the entire nation, these governmental and military leaders declare their support for a policy that would make schools important spaces for securing the nation against terrorist threats. But defining the nation's language problems in terms of the military's overseas concerns, whether in 1958 or 2008, directs attention away from pressing language problems affecting the day-to-day experiences of people living within U.S. borders.

Reframing the National Security Language Policy

This national language policy, because it encourages more U.S. citizens to learn multiple languages, provides an important counterbalance to the Official English legislation that Senator James Inhofe introduced during the 2006 congressional debates on immigration reform and that his fellow senators approved by a 63–34 vote (Inhofe Natl.). Senator Ihofe's English Language Amendment targets immigrants in particular, demanding that they learn English as a means to prevent them from "importing dangerous, deadly philosophies that go against our American ideals" ("Inhofe Statement"). Although President Bush and other federal officials might share the same belief that all people living in the United States need to learn English, they have also sought to encourage—and to fund programs that enable—all U.S. citizens to learn multiple languages. Even as the national security language policy promotes multilingualism, however, English scholars need to examine this policy closely to understand the ideas about language, identity, and public participation that guide its vision for language arts education.

The policy's almost exclusive focus on the military and intelligence communities' "critical" language needs reinforces a belief that English is the language for U.S. civic life whereas non-English languages are "foreign" and are needed only for speaking and writing in international contexts. As John Trimbur argues, such a perspective results from "a ritualized forgetting that the United States was then, as it is now, a multilingual society" ("Linguistic" 578).[8] In this way, the policy effectively reinscribes a belief in an English-Only U.S. public sphere. Trimbur instead proposes a vision of U.S. society in which multiple languages "circulat[e] as means of participating in public life" (587). This vision of people using multiple languages in both professional and civic life should guide English scholars as they attempt to redirect the aim of this emerging national language policy.

By defining the nation's language crisis in terms of "foreign" languages and overseas concerns, President Bush, DoD officials, and congressional leaders have potentially dissuaded schools and colleges from developing programs to serve the communities where they are located. Mary Louise Pratt provides an example that illustrates this point in her 2004 essay "Building a New Public Idea about Language":

> Within its own borders the United States needs professionals and service people of all kinds who can operate in locally spoken languages. A few months ago, for example, two southern California primary school teachers told me of their frustration when a flagship Japanese program was set up in their school district, while an acute need for Tagalog-speaking nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, even tax preparers went unmet. There was no pipeline to track local Tagalog speakers into these professions and enable them to develop their Tagalog. (114)

Pratt's words illustrate the fact that a national language policy conceived solely on international concerns may keep the citizenry safe from enemies, but it will also ignore inequalities that face linguistic minority communities within U.S. borders. The national language policy debate needs to include a broader range of voices to redirect the policy's aim toward improving domestic well-being in a variety of ways, particularly for those people who, because they speak seemingly "foreign" languages, are situated outside the national imagination in most debates about effective public policy.

Because of this concern for the nation's seemingly invisible language needs, foreign language scholars and organizations have stressed that a national language policy should advocate and materially support all languages, not just those deemed "critical" by the U.S. military and intelligence communities. Pratt, for one, warns that foreign language scholars must "make themselves heard as advocates not for particular languages but for the importance of knowing languages and of knowing the world through languages" as an important dimension of citizenship (112). Similarly, the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies acknowledges that a national language policy should address the nation's security needs, but it also calls for this policy to position foreign language education as a "core academic subject" because "[s]tudy of and through another language [. . .] enhances learning through improved cognitive development, transferable reading skills, [and] reinforcement of other subject areas" (1). In making these arguments, foreign language scholars attempt to broaden the national language policy's working definition of "language" so that it guides educational programs according to a vision of each particular language as a unique lens that refracts a person's perceptions.

The utilitarian view of foreign languages that Pratt and others contest can been seen most clearly in President Bush and DoD leaders' talk about languages being military tools. U.S. Colonel Michael R. Simone of the Defense Language Institute stated this view most bluntly when he declared, "Language is our weapon." Simone's assertion suggests that U.S. political and military leaders see foreign languages as tools used to ascertain and translate information and to kill terrorists. In making this argument, Simone reinscribes what Min-Zhan Lu calls a "commodity approach" toward language learning and use (25). This perspective on language, Lu argues, has "locked our attention" on identifying what language "tools" one needs while ignoring how individuals' languages choices have "real consequences for [their] well-being" (25). As Lu contends, this utilitarian perspective on language learning and language use works to reassure people "that we can simply 'ease in and out' of disparate social domains, languages, englishes, discourses, prototypical selfhoods, relations with others and the world in the same way one picks up and puts down a tool (or slips into and out of a dress) without any 'real' effects on one's Authentic Selfhood" (430). By reinforcing this "commodity approach" toward language acquisition, the national security language policy defines "effective" language use in a way that all but ignores the need for critical engagement with the cultural and linguistic contexts that influence how one can and wants to use the language within his or her personal, professional, and civic lives. Moreover, it denies how acquiring and using another language, although it does not determine one's sense of political, cultural, and social identity, does create possibilities for one to negotiate these identities in new ways and to reshape one's relations to other cultures. Scholars must advocate for more complex understandings of language acquisition and use in order to ensure that a national language policy provides sufficient material support for a range of foreign language education programs, kindergarten through graduate education, that give students time to develop this critical dimension to language use.

Significantly, several major higher education associations have enthusiastically expressed their support for the NSLI, viewing the legislation as an opportunity—with the federal funding attached to it—for schools to redesign undergraduate and graduate education to prepare students to respond to the political, economic, scientific, and social challenges facing the world. For example, the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the American Council on Education's Coalition for International Education (CIE) both applaud the government's efforts to expand foreign language and study abroad programs, even as they explain that, for the desired ends to be reached, the federal government must increase its basic funding of science, mathematics, and foreign language research by 8 to 10 percent annually for the next seven years (AAU 17; CIE 1). The CIE in particular recommends that, rather than appropriate NSLI funds to create new programs, Congress should redirect this money to bolster programs that have already been established through both Title VI of the Higher Education Act, which specifically targets international education programs, and the Fulbright-Hays legislation, which provides material support for study abroad programs (2). The National Research Council, meanwhile, notes the necessity of the NSLI and declares that "[u]niversities must be ready partners willing to refine and direct their programs toward mutual goals" (Committee 9). At the same time, however, the Council calls on the federal government to initiate more dialogue with higher education institutions to identify these mutual goals and to determine the conditions that are needed to meet them (9). As these examples suggest, major higher education associations support the federal investment in university research and educational programs, seeing the mission of universities and colleges in part to be using their research and teaching skills in the public interest. At the same time, these associations demand that the government provide the material resources needed to address the nation's challenges in a substantive, sustained way.

Along with this federal money and universities' commitment to serving the public interest come obligations for many students to use their language skills in service of the nation's military and intelligence needs. For example, David L. Boren Scholarships and Fellowships, which are part of the National Security Education Program, fund undergraduate and graduate students to travel to countries that are critical to U.S. national security interests and to study the languages written and spoken there through practical, academic, and research experiences. In exchange, award recipients must commit to at least one year of U.S. government service after completing their program of study. Certainly, one thing that a national language policy should do is address the government's language needs, and not all programs under the national language policy would be tied to government service. Nevertheless, a national language policy should create material conditions that enable motivated students to learn any language that helps them achieve their own personal, professional, and civic goals, not just those goals stipulated by government agencies.

English scholars committed to promoting multilingualism have a stake in this national language policy debate because of the potential for government funding to alter the infrastructure and influence the responsibilities of U.S. language arts education. Engaging this debate entails proposing alternative definitions of the nation's "foreign" languages and its critical language needs that account for the linguistic diversity of the U.S. populace, the social needs and resources located within the nation's linguistic minority communities, and the ways in which non-English languages reinvigorate democratic participation in the United States. Advancing these types of definitional arguments can be an important step in English scholars' efforts to promote multilingual language arts education as a means for students to acquire the linguistic and rhetorical skills that enable them to participate in public and professional life in any way that they find meaningful, whether that involves serving local communities' medical needs, working in national security, exploring one's familial or communal histories, or contributing to public policy debates about the critical language needs of the United States.

Redirecting the National Security Language Policy

MLA leaders Rosemary G. Feal, Mary Louise Pratt, and Domna C. Stanton, as well as Heidi Byrnes and Leo van Lier, among others, have been working to ensure that foreign language educators are included in the process of developing this national language policy.[9] Their engagement with this policy debate is motivated in part by their desire to ensure not only that the federal government's support for foreign language education is a long-term, sustained commitment that encompasses all levels of schooling, but also that the national language policy supports the learning of languages generally, not just the DoD "investment languages." Although foreign language scholars have identified this national security language policy as a central disciplinary concern, many scholars in English studies have yet to explore this issue. Because the shaping and implementation of this policy is still in progress, their participation in the debate is vital. The policy could determine the languages that many schools decide to teach, and it could influence the attitudes and worldviews that are cultivated through language arts education. English scholars need to join this effort in order to prompt conversations about what the nation's language needs are and how a national language policy can create a language-competent society to meet them.

Geneva Smitherman, who helped draft the CCCC's National Language Policy, explains that the CCCC's language policies provide compositionists with the "intellectual basis and rhetorical frameworks" for participating in such debates about language policy and for crafting public arguments about the political, cultural, and social value of linguistic diversity (373). With its National Language Policy, for example, the CCCC calls for multilingual language learning to be directed to the ends not only of enabling the United States to "participate more effectively in worldwide activities" but also "unify[ing] diverse American communities" and "enlarg[ing] our view of what is human." In addition to drawing on these rhetorical frameworks for shaping macro-level interventions in op-ed pages and congressional panels, however, English scholars also can read the CCCC National Language Policy as a heuristic to inform their work in teaching, curriculum development, and institutional policy writing. Operationalizing the discipline's National Language Policy statement at the local level can be a means of influencing how the national security language policy shapes literacy education and writing instruction. Ultimately, the CCCC National Language Policy prompts scholars to work within the present policy debate to broaden the definition of the nation's language needs so that it represents a wider range of cultural, economic, political, and social interests in U.S. public life.

Fostering Dialogue about the Nation's Linguistic Diversity and Language Needs

Rhetoric and composition scholars can make a significant contribution to the present debate by promoting students' active learning about how the national security language policy debate might play out in the lived experiences of people in their communities. Primary research projects can promote writing as a means for students to explore the language diversity of their community and to identify ways in which local or national language policies do or do not build on it. Such projects can advance the university's mission to prepare students for civic life while also enabling them to understand the significance of the national security language policy and to gain the facility and adeptness to engage public debates about linguistic diversity.

For example, students in an Advanced Composition course can conduct primary research in which they explore the region's linguistic diversity and examine language policy issues that affect local heritage language communities. The MLA Language Map can help students gain a tangible sense of the linguistic composition of their communities. The online map (http://www.mla.org/map_main) draws on 2000 U.S. Census data gathered in response to the question, "Does this person speak a language other than English at home?" ("The MLA Language Map"). By consulting the Map, students could determine the number of speakers of specific languages who live in the particular state, county, city, town, or zip code where they go to school.

These data could, in turn, support community-based research projects in which students explore the spaces where speakers of a specific language can and cannot use that language in public. Students could conduct interviews to learn about how the local government uses census data in deciding what resources, if any, to make available for linguistic minority populations. They could also build on these interviews by researching the cost to taxpayers of making these resources available and, equally significant, the cost to communities when such resources are not made available. This research could serve as the basis for a feasibility report or proposal for new technologies, new hiring practices, or new educational programs that better serve the needs of these communities and that promote opportunities for the voices of non-English speakers to be heard in local public spheres.

These types of research projects can provide a way into discussing the national security language policy debate because they prompt questions concerning how we, as a community or as a nation, define our "critical" language needs. Through these class explorations, teachers can pose questions about the terms on which various groups in society can participate in public debates about our language problems, and they can encourage students to reflect on how they conceive of the linguistic and cultural diversity of "the community" when they write about public issues. These projects can also help students strategize and debate how the university should or should not connect to these language communities. Through such discussions, students not only critically engage the current language policy debate, but they also begin to reflect on the university's mission and consider how educational institutions might build a greater public commitment to language learning. Bringing the community's or the nation's linguistic diversity into the writing classroom serves as one means by which language arts scholars can work to foster what linguist and Australian policymaker Joseph Lo Bianco, calls "a way of talking about linguistic diversity in positive terms" ("Brief" 3).

Collaborating to Design a Multilingual Rhetorical Education

As the federal government began declaring a national "language crisis," the MLA Executive Committee appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages to create an agenda for MLA members' research, pedagogy, curriculum and institutional design, and political advocacy that would present "persuasive alternatives to security-driven approaches" to foreign language education (MLA Ad Hoc Committee, "Transforming" 288). The MLA created this committee, in part, to critique the security-centered vision of foreign language education, but also because the association's leadership realized that colleges could do a better job of graduating a greater number of students possessing advanced skills in multiple languages. Many scholars acknowledge that, in the words of Gilles Bousquet, "if traditional foreign language curriculum and governance do not evolve" to begin fulfilling the nation's language needs, "[government] leaders will look elsewhere for language education" (305). Foreign language studies' new disciplinary agenda presents English teachers with a tremendous opportunity for collaboration, as the Ad Hoc Committee calls for interdisciplinary research and pedagogical collaboration as one strategy for developing students' advanced competencies in target languages. English scholars can read the Ad Hoc Committee's 2007 report, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*, as a means to invent rhetorical strategies for collaborating with their colleagues in foreign languages to create a multilingual writing pedagogy and rhetorical education. This interdisciplinary collaboration would begin the important work that Horner and Trimbur call for in redefining college writing practices as being *not* in English only (621). Equally as important, this collaboration could lead to local, institutional-level efforts to revitalize language learning for the sake of a broad range of humanistic values.

The MLA Ad Hoc Committee calls for making foreign language study more relevant in this present moment of "language crisis" by creating a curriculum that develops students' advanced competencies in foreign languages, whereas emphasis on language pedagogy has long been given to the lower-level language courses taken by a greater number of college students. Too many upper-division courses, the Committee argues, focus solely on the practices of reading and interpreting literary texts as a form of cultural and aesthetic appreciation ("Foreign" 236). In so doing, these courses do not "explicitly advance [students'] language competency" (MLA Ad Hoc Committee, "Transforming" 290). Given the present need to revitalize foreign language education, the Ad Hoc Committee calls for redesigning the major in ways that give students opportunities to read, analyze, and compose a variety of public texts and to gain meta-level knowledge about the particular language that they are studying.[10] The Committee speculates that more college students would pursue foreign language learning if "multiple paths to the major" were available; paths that enabled students to connect foreign language study to their learning and professional aspirations in the natural and applied sciences, engineering, health and social sciences, or other humanistic disciplines ("Foreign" 238). More important, as German scholar Heidi Byrnes explains, the upper-division courses of this redesigned foreign language major would include a "formal, linguistic emphasis" ("Perspectives" 285), examining the linguistic and rhetorical resources of the language and learning to use these resources strategically, in literacy theorist James Gee's words, to perform "specific [. . .] social activities" (qtd. in Byrnes, "Locating" 4). This agenda for curricular redesign would strengthen foreign language educators' claims that their departments should be important sites of federal investment, because they could show their commitment to developing the advanced linguistic competence required for graduates to address the social, political, and economic demands of an increasingly interconnected world.

Even as it reemphasizes advanced literacies as a pedagogical goal, however, the Ad Hoc Committee shifts the aim of foreign language education from teaching students to operate as "native speakers" in the target language to developing "translingual and transcultural competence." This ability to negotiate communication across lines of linguistic difference, the Committee argues, demands that students "learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others" ("Foreign" 237). This emphasis on "translingual and transcultural competence" follows from a shift in scholars' research on second-language learners, a shift away from identifying errors that occur because of "interference" between first and second languages and toward developing "complex portraits of the advanced language user," one who possesses "multiple literacies" and enjoys "an exponential increase in choices in multiple cultural and linguistic frameworks" (Byrnes, "Locating" 6). The Ad Hoc Committee's vision for "translingual and transcultural competence" would lead to redesigned foreign language courses and curricula that teach students to see foreign language use not as a simple matter of adhering to grammatical rules, but rather as a rhetorical literacy that involves making "culturally and situationally conscious" choices among the linguistic resources available to them in any particular context (Byrnes, "Locating" 5). Translingually and transculturally competent students make such choices, in Byrnes's words, through "broaden[ed] and deepen[ed] frames of reference" (6) that enable them to reflect on differences in meaning and worldview among the participants in a communicative exchange.

A key part of the MLA Ad Hoc Committee's agenda for developing students' translingual and transcultural competence calls for creating interdisciplinary, team-taught courses, and English scholars are well positioned to contribute to this effort. These courses, the Committee explains, would link English-language courses and credit-bearing discussion modules that together explore topics such as language acquisition theory, various popular and professional texts from the linguistic community, and the dominant cultural narratives shaped by these texts (*Foreign* 239). Byrnes has criticized the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on this point, arguing that "[i]nterdisciplinary work will downplay the role of language and language acquisition, precisely because this is not the major interest of colleagues in history or art or philosophy or political science, or gender or film studies, who might contribute to this kind of interdisciplinary enterprise" (qtd. in Wasley). Byrnes's concern is significant, but this investment in developing multiple literacies is one that Byrnes and the Ad Hoc Committee share with English scholars, particularly those in rhetoric and composition studies. Many compositionists have begun to design vertical curricula that give students opportunities to practice writing in a variety of academic and public settings, with the aim of acquiring both advanced linguistic competencies in English and “a deep understanding of rhetorical situatedness” (Miles et al. 508). Given their commitment to teaching students both to produce texts and to gain meta-level knowledge of a language, English scholars can forge important pedagogical collaborations with foreign language scholars toward developing students’ advanced literacies across linguistic and cultural contexts.

Rhetoric and composition scholars could make a valuable contribution to team-teaching efforts, for example, by designing courses in which students learn about the rhetorical traditions of the language community that they are studying and also practice composing texts for multiple writing situations. These courses linking foreign languages and rhetorical education could help students learn, in David Fleming’s words, what “speakers, writers, readers, and listeners need to *know* in order to ‘become rhetorical’” within a particular linguistic and cultural community (105). Working with colleagues in foreign language departments, composition scholars could develop an upper-division sequence of rhetoric and writing courses through which students learn how the cultural, political, and social resources of a linguistic community give shape to what Fleming calls the “argumentative form” of that group’s public texts (112). By performing various writing exercises in the target language, students also would sharpen their abilities to adapt the “typical moves” in the culture’s “civil repertoire” to their own rhetorical purposes (111), all while reflecting on how their appropriation of these moves comes from within their own cultural and linguistic positioning as an “outsider.” Such an interdisciplinary sequence of courses, a sequence pairing foreign language reading and writing with the study of cultural rhetorics and rhetorical theories, could deepen students’ transcultural and translingual competence, as they gain advanced language literacies while also understanding how a particular language group’s members reproduce their worldviews through rhetorical practice.

Expanding our vision of rhetorical education in this way to include engagement with foreign language education can be a productive move to make as English scholars attempt to broaden the notion of “civic engagement” that a national language policy would foster. A team-taught, multilingual approach to rhetorical education would help students develop the linguistic and rhetorical skills necessary to communicate across multiple language and cultural groups. Equally as important, a rhetorically based language pedagogy can heighten students’ appreciation of language as a lens that shapes how people see the world and interpret experiences. The ends of such rhetorical education do not become those of acquiring language for cultural and linguistic mastery over “enemies” and “others”—mastery that exacerbates global conflict. Instead, a multilingual approach to rhetorical education can foster students’ commitment to cross-language practices that foster deeper understanding and respect for cultural knowledge and worldviews.

RESHAPING INSTITUTIONAL VALUES AND PRACTICES THROUGH POLICY WRITING

Although English scholars can pursue collaboration with colleagues in foreign languages to begin creating a multilingual rhetoric and writing pedagogy that encourages students to use languages to promote understanding across lines of difference, they also need to write these values concerning languages and language study into the documents that shape everyday activities in their colleges and universities. Institutional critique as an analytical, action-oriented method can usefully inform such work. Scholars can draw on this method to engage the current national language policy debate from within the local spaces of their home institutions. Micro-level policy writing, informed by institutional critique, should be seen as an activity through which literacy educators can create substantive, sustained change that challenges the implementation of a national language policy that is based solely on national security concerns and instead builds on the nation's linguistic diversity as a means to strengthen U.S. public life.

Working with the methodology of institutional critique, scholars identify micro-level policy texts that give their local institution its rhetorical and material shape and that govern the daily activities of its members. Of course, the extent to which shared governance among faculty, administrators, and trustees marks the policymaking process varies significantly across the range of academic institutions in which scholars work, and scholars must clearly understand their school's established policymaking structures as they work to pinpoint "places where writing can be deployed to promote change" (Porter et al. 631). In short, language scholars must identify points of leverage through which they can compose broad-based appeals to the institution's key policymakers that make commitment to language diversity a core element driving the school's research, teaching, and service activities.

A few examples here can illustrate how compositionists might use institutional critique to create a deeper disciplinary and communal commitment to linguistic diversity, in the name not only of a more efficient military but also of a more robust democracy. As Pratt has noted, public schools and universities might use federal funding from the NSLI to develop programs in Mandarin Chinese or Arabic when the surrounding community faces a more pressing need to develop professionals who can serve the local population through bilingualism in English and Vietnamese (114). Institutional critique prompts scholars to identify policy texts within their own universities and colleges that, through either top-down or bottom-up writing and revision, could redirect institutional practices toward valuing local language resources and addressing local language needs.

A university's strategic plan and their trustees' public agenda could be two such texts that shape institutional activities in a top-down fashion. Among their many rhetorical functions, these two texts, particularly at land-grant and metropolitan institutions, articulate how the school fulfills its responsibility to serve the public interest. English scholars can work with their colleagues in the foreign languages to argue for the school's strategic plan and the trustees' public agenda to be written in ways that define "the public" not as an assumed linguistically homogeneous population, but rather as a heterogeneous community reflecting the linguistic diversity present within it. To appeal to the range of values held by faculty, administrators, and trustees involved in the policymaking process, scholars could define local linguistically marginalized communities in terms not only of their unmet social and political needs, but also of the resources that exist within them for economic, cultural, and intellectual development.

Changes in institutional culture can also happen from the bottom up, of course, and English scholars employing institutional critique can identify rhetorical strategies for prioritizing departmental programs and faculty activities that build on the community's linguistic resources to develop the school's intellectual strengths. For example, scholars might compose arguments within their faculty development grant applications or their annual faculty evaluation narratives to legitimize multilingualism as an important skill for academics to possess. Depending on one's department and institutional contexts, these arguments might range from the intellectual benefits of expanding one's cultural and linguistic frameworks for research to the opportunities to create teaching and service activities that connect faculty to the local communities within which they live and work. The goal would be to use these texts to circulate, through formal institutional channels, arguments about the interests and concerns of local linguistic minority communities, whose existence is often not acknowledged when universities talk about the "public" that they serve.

Advocacy for linguistically diverse communities should entail incrementally changing the values that guide daily practices within our schools. English scholars can strategically leverage the rhetorical resources that are available within their school's policymaking networks in order to shape public ideas about the need for linguistic diversity and the civic values of serving, unifying, and building on the strengths and resources of local communities.

Conclusion

Deborah Brandt warns in "Drafting U.S. Literacy" that "when literacy links up with competition, with the need to win the war," "this competition [. . .] justifies [. . .] the production of just-in-time literacy" (499)—that is, literacy aimed at meeting the military's and corporations' inexhaustible demand for skills needed to support security and economic activities. The national security language policy applies pressure to language arts education in this way, because it creates incentives for schools to direct resources toward foreign languages needed for U.S. military efforts. In so doing, this policy potentially directs schools' efforts away from teaching languages that could help teachers and students forge connections with linguistic minority communities. This language policy debate can and should compel English scholars to work with heritage language community leaders to articulate the critical language needs that arise from the monolingual majority's inability to communicate and work with linguistic minorities. Moreover, compositionists, linguists, and literacy theorists can collaborate with foreign language scholars to design language arts education that produces citizens who can dialogue across cultural and linguistic differences within their local communities and throughout the world.

English scholars who respond to the post-September 11 national language policy debate can help challenge the widely held assumption that the discipline deals with English language concerns only. During his chair's address at the 2005 CCCC Convention, Doug Hesse called on scholars and teachers of English to engage public conversations concerning literacy education and writing assessment, contributing their "knowledge of what writing is and what it can be, the whole of it, in every sphere" as well as "the never-done knowledge of how writing develops, within a person or a populace" (355). This knowledge about writing could help rhetoric, composition, literacy, and literature scholars position themselves more centrally within this national security language policy debate, but, as Jaime Mejía, Renee Moreno, and Paul Velazquez noted in their 2006 CCCC panel, multilingual concerns too often remain invisible inside the field's efforts at knowledge creation. English scholars need to problematize—and, in so doing, strengthen—the discipline's theories about writing by considering the linguistic realities of people who move between languages or who use only one non-English language in their daily lives. Compositionists and literacy theorists need to discover how these people use writing, why they use writing, and what they want to be able to do with writing.

English scholars need to come to terms with the monolingual perspectives that shape much of the work done in the name of "progressive" research on and teaching of writing in the United States. Hesse claims that "those who teach writing must affirm that we, in fact, own it" (338). To provide significant leadership in this public debate over a national language policy that promotes multilingualism, English scholars must come to terms with the great linguistic diversity in writing in the United States and in the world that they do *not* own because of the material and symbolic constraints within the discipline that have focused our attention on writing in English only. By researching multilingual and multidialectical writing in the public realm, English scholars could bring to the field a greater sense of what language diversity looks like in local communities. They could begin to discover ways in which a national language policy could better account for the language needs of Americans who would learn a second or third language in order to "write themselves into the world" (351) or to dialogue across national and cultural differences rather than simply to meet the military's ever-intensifying demands on teachers, students, and schools.

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NOTES

1. I assert here that General Amit's warning has motivated U.S. language policymakers on the basis of the widespread use of this quotation in several texts that circulated within the planning process, including Clifford Porter's *Asymmetrical Warfare, Transformation, and Foreign Language Capability* (4) and Major Deborah Ellis's *Integrating Language and Culture* (3). Both Porter's and Ellis's documents supported DoD planning that eventually led to its 2006 *Language Transformation Roadmap*, which outlines a strategy for the U.S. military to build a foundation of language and cultural expertise. Meanwhile, Rick Lazio, Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Forum, concluded his talk at the DoD-sponsored National Language Conference with Amit's warning, adding that, until the United States learns terrorists' languages, it cannot defeat them and "can't sell them soda either" (5). Presentations at the June 2004 conference collectively shaped the DoD's February 2005 white paper, *A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities*, which circulated to members of Congress and which informed several pieces of language-related legislation, particularly the National Language Coordination Act of 2005 (S. 1089) introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-Hawai‘i).

2. Throughout this section, I quote from both the final version of the DoD's *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, published in January 2005, and from an earlier June 2004 draft. I draw on the earlier draft at certain points because it contains more extensive description and analysis of the DoD's language capabilities, whereas the final version only makes recommendations for future action.

3. The Defense Language Institute (DLI), located at the Presidio of Monterrey, California, serves as the DoD's primary means of teaching languages of strategic importance to the U.S. military. The DLI's Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) is the DoD's foreign language school, and the DLI's English Language Center (DLIELC), located at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, manages the U.S. military's English as a Second Language Program as well as English-language instruction for international military and civilian personnel, particularly for NATO member countries. Since October 2001, the DLIFLC has had the authority to grant Associate of Arts in Foreign Language degrees to qualified graduates of its basic language programs.

4. The MLA survey that Chu cites here is reported in Welles. Chu likely heard MLA Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal's presentation at the June 2004 National Language Conference, during which she discussed these survey results at great length ("Higher").

5. The University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Study of Language was founded in Spring 2003 to pursue interdisciplinary research projects that address the U.S. intelligence community's post-September 11 need "to mobilize language capability in areas of the world that were unfamiliar and not well studied" (University, "About CASL").

6. For an insightful critique of S. 451 (formerly S. 1089), the National Foreign Language Coordination Act, see Erard.

7. English teachers became enlisted in the job of "national defense education" through the 1964 reauthorization of the NDEA. For a historical analysis of how English studies' incorporation into this legislation shaped the discipline's research and teaching agenda, see Strain.

8. Trimbur has recently argued that English scholars historically have reinforced this ritualized

forgetting, because they have implicitly grounded reading and writing research in a belief that U.S. education had a linguistically homogenous past ("Dartmouth Conference").

9. Feal, Executive Director of the MLA, was invited to the DoD-sponsored National Language Conference. In her presentation at the conference, Feal surveyed the existing infrastructure for and presented strategies for improving and expanding language education in colleges and universities ("Higher"). Feal has also used the "Editor's Column" in the *MLA Newsletter* to share her analysis of the national security "language crisis" ("Scaring"; "Language"), and she appeared as a guest on National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation* program to discuss the factors that shape Americans' decisions to learn or not learn a second language (Brecht, Feal, and Long). During their respective tenures as MLA president, Pratt (in 2003) and Stanton (in 2005) published an article in *Profession* seeking to raise awareness of and propose strategies for the MLA's response to the national security "language crisis." More recently, Pratt chaired the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, which published its report in *Profession 2007*. As Stanton notes, since Pratt's tenure as MLA president in 2003, the MLA "[has] been engaged in dialogue with government officials concerned with the role of language in national security" (77). More recently, van Lier, editor of the *Modern Language Journal* (*MLJ*), and Byrnes, Associate Editor of *MLJ*'s "Perspectives," organized a series of four panels in 2007 and 2008 that focused on imagining what a permanent federal-level structure for foreign language education policymaking might look like, one that would "assure the development of encompassing, coherent, and long-term policies and practices" ("MLJ"). These panel discussions informed a December 2008 special issue of "Perspectives" (92.4) on the topic "Representing Foreign Language Education at the National/Federal Level in the United States."

10. For a discussion of one foreign language department's efforts to redesign the curriculum in ways that focus on a variety of cultural texts rather than solely on literature, see Bollag.

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