

Tutors' and Multilingual Writers' Narrative Framing of Writing Center Visits: Attention to Grammar

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how first-year multilingual writers in a classroom community make sense of their first university writing center visits. Employing narrative analysis of student journals, this study illustrates differences in themes writers discuss in their narratives of first writing center visits and themes in self-reflections on their writing. Comparing narratives in student journals and tutor report forms, this study also presents the congruities and discrepancies between writer and tutor views of a session. Writer emphasis on grammar when narrating writing center visits contrasts with writer emphasis on development in self-reflections on their writing. When tutor and writer session descriptions differ, tutors emphasize discussion of development and organization while writers emphasize sentence-level accuracy. Without scaffolding of strategies for writing center use, first-year multilingual writers may privilege sentence-level feedback in their early understanding of the writing center, resulting in a more limited experience of writing center support.

Keywords: multilingual, writing, writing center, first-year, narrative, perceptions

Introduction

One-on-one writing center pedagogy at its best leverages opportunities to attend to individual writers' needs, as they vary and change across or even within sessions. In considering multilingual writers' diverse needs and contexts for writing, writing center directors and tutors benefit from an increasing body of scholarship, including the recent collection *Tutoring Second*

Language Writers, edited by Bruce and Rafoth. In response to this collection, Hadingham (2017, p. 21) calls for additional research “probing deeply into the individual tutees’ thoughts and experiences.” Kormos (2012, p. 390) similarly suggests, “[T]he impact of individual differences on the process of second language writing and the written product has been a neglected area of research.” The present study begins to address this gap by drawing on writer narratives and self-reflections from class journals, tutors’ post-session report forms, and appointment data to explore how a community of first-year multilingual writers negotiate the interface between the writing center and the writing classroom. This research addresses the following questions:

- (1) How do the themes multilingual writers highlight in writing center narratives compare to the themes they discuss in self-reflections on their writing, and what hypothesis can be made to interpret any discrepancies?
- (2) To what extent do these writers and writing center tutors agree on the focus of their sessions in their post-session descriptions of the visits, and what hypothesis can be made to interpret any discrepancies?

This paper argues that some multilingual writers focus on “grammar” and “mistakes” in their narratives of writing center visits even while they focus more on development and ideas in their self-reflections on their writing. Comparatively, when writing center tutors’ and multilingual writers’ accounts of sessions differ, tutors may highlight organization and development while writers highlight linguistic accuracy. These contrasts highlight these multilingual writers’ more restricted view of the writing center, a view likely informed by a combination of previous learning experiences, writing center interactions, and classroom instruction.

Previous Research

Qualitative Research on Multilingual Writers' Perceptions of the Writing Center

Though qualitative research on multilingual writers' perceptions of writing center use is limited, this study builds upon a few informative case studies. For instance, in a US context, Bruce (2009) presents the perspectives of several multilingual writers from diverse backgrounds with varying use of the writing center. One especially relevant case study Bruce presents is of Sami, a male student from Saudi Arabia who spoke to his frustration with writing center tutors who were "just looking for grammar stuff and the grammar mistakes and things on the surface. While I didn't want that, what I wanted was somebody who tells me about the ideas, how to explore my ideas, how to put my ideas, how to write the theme of the topic or the piece of writing that I wanted to write and how should I support my theme or my main topic" (p. 219). Bruce also notes the difficulty of securing this interview: Sami was "the only Middle Eastern male student on campus to agree to meet with me" (p. 218), a fact that Bruce connects with Sami's assertion that "I don't want others to know about my weakness [as a writer]" (p. 220).

In an international context, Chen (2010) presents a study of ten graduate student perspectives on a writing center in Taiwan. These students reported mostly positive experiences with peer and writing consultant feedback, though they were cautious in accepting peer feedback on language. Interestingly, Chen reveals a pattern of writing center feedback focused on sentence-level errors and peer feedback addressing content and organization as well as sentence-level errors, a pattern she attributes to lack of tutor disciplinary knowledge and writing center time constraints. In contrast, Okuda (2019, p. 20) presents four case studies of graduate writers at a Japanese writing center, three of whom agreed with the center's philosophy and practice of focusing on higher-order concerns and reported satisfactory feedback. Okuda does

not compare peer and writing center feedback, but notes that writers felt English language feedback should come from native speakers of English (p. 20). Studies highlighting differences across contexts and between writers enrich our understanding of multilingual writers' work in writing centers, and this study seeks to contribute to this vein of research.

Discussing “Grammar” with Multilingual Writers in the Writing Center

Addressing sentence-level issues is still controversial in some writing centers (Cirillo-McCarthy, et al., 2016; Eckstein, 2016, p. 361). However, increasingly writing center scholars advocate for strategies of addressing multilingual writers' sentence-level questions (e.g., Praphan and Seong, 2016), providing a growing body of scholarship on best practices for this work (e.g., Severino, 2009; Minnett, 2009). Considering sessions with multilingual writers, Cirillo-McCarthy, et al. (2016) even go so far as to argue that a writing center's exclusive focus on language-related issues or insistence on avoiding sentence-level feedback helps to promote deficit discourses in which multilingual writers' needs are framed as outside of the general writing center mission. Instead, Olson (2103, p. 4) calls for tutors' careful attention to linguistic feedback for multilingual writers: Olson suggests that in contrast with editing, “A tutor's job rather becomes an effort to engage more consciously with multilingual writers in ways that attend to the realities of the intersections between language, power, and identity, while at the same time conversing with multilingual writers about the fluidity of language.”

However, tutors may articulate one tutoring philosophy, while observing another. For instance, in a US writing center context, Yu (2020) reports a case where a tutor with TESOL training articulated a philosophy of reserving most feedback on language until later in the writing process, while actually providing linguistic feedback throughout the writing process. Ewert (2009, p. 256), in a US university context, and Han and Hyland (2016, p. 450), in a

Chinese university context, report similar issues, but with L2 writing teachers reporting one philosophy for providing feedback while enacting another during writing conferences. For example, Ewert notes that both instructors in his study “indicated that they thought the best focus for the conference was content and organization rather than language issues” while they did not maintain this philosophy in their actual conferences (p. 255). Thus, the mismatch between “content and organization” as the intended focus of L2 writing conferences and “language” as the actual focus is not unique to writing center contexts.

Further, as Nakamaru (2010, p. 98) argues, there can be difficulty separating language from writing. Nakamaru shows that distinguishing grammar from lexicon in tutorials challenges some writers and tutors, resulting in writers who use the term “grammar” for a variety of language-related concerns and tutors who frame their discussion in binary terms of “grammar” and “content.” Recent writing center research varies in its treatment of “grammar,” with Eckstein (2016) contrasting treatment of “grammar” with treatment of “organization and content” (p. 368) while Severino, et al. (2009) make finer distinctions, with categories such as “expression and vocabulary”, “style and syntax”, and “grammar and punctuation” all being distinguished (p. 116).

As seen in these studies, whether tutors and writers believe that sentence-level feedback should be a significant part of writing center conversations, feedback on linguistic accuracy figures in many conversations about the writing center. Eckstein (2016) shows that international multilingual student writers may prefer that a writing center tutor “[p]oint out all of [their] grammar errors or edit [their] paper,” and they agreed that grammar feedback was provided during their sessions (p. 368). Eckstein argues that “A stronger emphasis on grammar is due largely to pressure from university teachers who often recommend that L2 writers seek

language help from tutors in the writing centre to correct their linguistic errors” (p. 362). Qian and Krugly-Smolka (2008, p. 77) also suggest that a previous educational background emphasizing sentence-level accuracy may drive students’ strong conceptual connection between grammatical accuracy and good writing. However, comparing L1, L2, and Generation 1.5 writers, Eckstein also notes “all writers seemed to agree that tutors should focus on larger issues such as organization and content” (p. 369), suggesting the importance of tutor willingness to address a wide range of writing questions for all writers, regardless of native speaker status.

Severino, et al. (2009) reach a similar conclusion. Comparing 85 L1 and 85 L2 writers’ requests for writing center feedback, Severino, et al. (2009) show that as a group L2 writers in their study were more likely to request “grammar and punctuation” feedback than native speakers of English. However, they also show that there were no statistical differences between L1 and L2 writers’ requests for feedback on thesis, development, organization, or cohesion; and L2 writers were slightly more likely to request feedback on audience awareness and fulfillment of task or prompt requirements (p. 120-21). These findings support Eckstein’s argument and Thonus’ (2014, p. 208) assertion that it is a myth that “Multilingual writers are concerned only with ‘editing.’” Indeed, in Yu’s (2020) case study, the writer, a first-year Thai female undergraduate majoring in material sciences and engineering, indicated that she found her tutor’s feedback on “content and ideas” more “effective” than the language-related feedback, though she found all feedback “helpful” (p. 11).

Quantitative studies, such as Eckstein (2016) and Severino, et al. (2009), may serve as important groundwork for more qualitative studies exploring individual students’ perspectives on how sentence-level issues and higher-level issues, such as development and organization, are addressed in their writing center sessions. As Thonus (2014, p. 201) notes, multilingual writers

represent a diverse population of learners, and even basic distinctions, such as “international student” and “Generation 1.5 learner” are “insufficient to describe the broad spectrum of multilingual students.” Thus, additional qualitative research exploring perceptions of sentence-level feedback at the writing center is needed to explore this individual variation, as introduced by Bruce (2009).

Methods and Materials

Narrative Analysis in Language Teaching and Learning

Narrative analysis has recently been leveraged in TESOL research to gain insight into individual learner experiences and perceptions. The present study adopts Bell’s sense of narrative inquiry as “an analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions” illustrated in narratives, where “[h]allmarks of the analysis are the recognition that people make sense of their lives according to the narratives available to them, that stories are constantly being restructured in the light of new events, and that stories do not exist in a vacuum but are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives” (2002, p. 208). Bell (2002, p. 209) points to the advantages of narrative inquiry as it “allows researchers to understand experience” and “get at information that people do not consciously know themselves.” More recently highlighting the usefulness of narrative analysis in TESOL, Barkhuizen (2011) introduces a special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on narrative theory. In this issue, researchers explore the varying contributions of research on ‘big stories’ or the grand narratives often elicited in interviews and ‘small stories’ or the narratives emerging in everyday contexts. Vásquez (2011) highlights the value of small stories in accomplishing identity work.

Regarding learner perceptions of writing and writer identity, Pomerantz and Kearney (2012) apply narrative analysis in the investigation of a multilingual writer’s developing

conceptions of effective writing. Thus, they provide a detailed portrait of a multilingual writer as she is “continuously grappling with her understanding(s) of writing and identity which are informed by her interactions with others,” including writing tutors. To do so, they gather small stories of the focal student’s writing processes and reflections. These narratives help to shed light on individual multilingual writers’ experiences.

To explore individual variation in first-year multilingual writers’ perceptions of peer and writing center feedback, the present study draws on narrative analysis, in particular, building on Pomerantz and Kearney’s (2012) focus on small stories as “sites where individuals negotiate meanings” (p. 225). While Pomerantz and Kearney focus on a single multilingual writer’s narratives, with attention to narratives from several data sources (including class journals, interviews, and emails), the present study analyzes ten multilingual writers’ small stories of their first writing center visits, composed in class journal responses to a required visit for their first-year L2 writing course. Contextualizing the students’ narratives, this study also provides analysis of the students’ journaled self-reflections on their writing, revision, and peer feedback. Students’ narratives were additionally compared with tutors’ session descriptions drawn from post-session client-report forms.

The Classroom, Writing Center, and University Community

The community of writers featured in this IRB-approved study is a class of international, first-year multilingual writers enrolled in a Fall 2014 section of English 101 (Introductory Reading and Writing for Non-Native English Speakers) at a comprehensive university with a population around 4000 students in the Midwest region of the United States. All aspects of this research conform to our institution’s human research guidelines.

The four-credit English 101 class focuses on strengthening multilingual students' skills in reading and writing academic English prior to mainstream composition courses. Students enroll in this course based on their performance on the University's writing placement exam, and typically just one section is offered with small enrollments. In this class, ten students were enrolled, including one female native speaker of Chinese and nine male native speakers of Arabic, as seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Student Data

Pseudonym	Major	Native Language	Sex
Ahmed	Mechanical engineering	Arabic	Male
Abdullah	Electrical engineering	Arabic	Male
Faisal	Pre-engineering	Arabic	Male
Omar	Civil engineering	Arabic	Male
Asad	Civil engineering	Arabic	Male
Sayyid	Actuarial science	Arabic	Male
Marwan	Finance	Arabic	Male
Abdulmalik	Mechanical engineering	Arabic	Male
Ibrahim	Pre-engineering	Arabic	Male
Xia	Music	Mandarin	Female

The instructor for this class was a tenure-line English professor who had taught the course several times previously. In 2016, she became Writing Center Director while continuing to teach.

The campus Writing Center in this semester employed sixteen total consultants, including the director, whose training was in rhetoric and composition; one graduate student from the MA TESOL program; and fourteen undergraduate students, all of whom completed a writing center methods course with some attention to TESOL methods. All appointments were 35 minutes, and the center supported 608 appointments that semester. Of the total appointments,

206 appointments were with individuals who identified as speaking a language other than English as their home language. Across these appointments, Arabic and Chinese were the most common languages identified by these students as their home languages. Thus, consultants had some limited TESOL training within the context of writing center methods coursework as well as regular experience working with multilingual writers, especially writers whose linguistic backgrounds were similar to those of students enrolled in this section of English 101.

Collection and Analysis of Journal Data

To introduce students to the Writing Center early in their University experience and early in their writing process, this English 101 section required an introductory writing center session for all students before submission of the second of three drafts of their first paper. Having limited exposure to the Writing Center at the time, the instructor framed the Center more generally as a place to talk about your writing and gain feedback, but did not provide specific guidelines on what one may address. As the instructor was unaware of the opportunity for a Writing Center tutor to visit the class, and provided only a very basic introduction, any student preconceptions regarding Writing Center conversations depend on previous experiences, such as campus orientation or discussion with peers.

The day after the submission of the second drafts of paper one, students submitted an online reflective journal on the draft, including discussion of their writing center visits. Students responded to the journal prompts found in the Appendix.

Each clause in each journal entry was categorized according to whether it addresses writing center use or not, being grouped with either the students' self-reflections on their writing or the writing center-specific discussion or split if students addressed both. Responses to prompts 1-3 and prompt 9 were hand-coded as more general self-reflection on the draft and writing;

responses to prompts 4-7 were hand-coded as writing center-specific reflections and narrative; and responses to prompt 8 were coded according to whether they addressed writing center feedback or class feedback, i.e. from class peers or the instructor.

Following Okuda's (2019) analysis of writing center perceptions, journal data (including narratives) were analyzed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. Though the themes identified in this analysis overlap with feedback areas identified by Eckstein (2018, p. 19), e.g., grammar and organization; the codes used in the present study are grounded in the student journal data and to whatever extent possible use the actual language represented in the journals. Any theme that appeared in at least two student journal entries received a code derived from the students' actual journal language. For instance, in coding, writers' use of the term "grammar" to indicate a variety of sentence-level questions was maintained, and that category was kept separate from "mistakes" since it was not always clear that students treated "mistakes" as sentence-level issues, though this was generally the case. Synonyms or other related words that point to a similar theme were also included in the same category. For example, for "mistakes", language about "fixing" things and "errors" was also included. Table 2 below includes the codes as well as example student language used as keywords for these codes:

Table 2
Journal Codes and Keywords

Code	Example Student Language
Grammar	"grammar"
Mistakes	"mistakes", "correct[ed]", "errors", "fix[ing]"
Reader comprehension	"make sense", "understandable" (with reference to text)
Organization and coherence	"organize", "go from one point to another", "transition"
Development	"details", "examples", "wrote my third point" (with two previous points), "exp[a]nd my introduction"
Prompt/Focus	"related to my topic", "prompt"

Since writers, instructors, and tutors may use ‘grammar’ to indicate word form, word order, mechanics, punctuation, lexical questions, usage, and more (Eckstein, 2018; Nakamaru, 2010), maintaining the term “grammar” presents certain interpretive challenges if one wishes to differentiate which of these specific areas the writer indicates. However, as student perceptions and narrative framing of their experiences are central to this study, writer efforts to categorize or explain their experiences are maintained in the focus themes.

This discussion is situated not only within a particular class but also for a specific draft of a particular assignment, following Chen’s (2010) method of focused data-collection on Taiwanese graduate student perceptions of the writing center. In Chen (2010, p. 156), ten graduate student writers were asked to seek and respond to feedback from two class peers and a writing center tutor on the first draft of their final paper. In the present study, students were required to respond to feedback from two class peers and a writing center tutor before the submission of their second draft and their journal entry. This situatedness helps reveal students’ real ideas about the writing center in the context of their actual center use.

Client Report Forms from Sessions with English 101 Students

Since writers and tutors collaborate in framing the focus of sessions, this study compares tutors’ characterizations of the sessions with the students’ narratives. Following Malencyk’s (2013) analysis of client-report forms as a site for meaning making in the writing center, the present study provides an analysis of tutors’ client-report forms, online documentation forms completed after each session. A few reports took the form of narratives, as described by Malencyk (2013), though others provided shorter phrases and lists. Reports were analyzed in terms of tutor characterizations of sessions, compared with writer descriptions of sessions.

Results

First-year Multilingual Writers' Attention to "Grammar"

Appearing most frequently of all themes in these students' writing center narratives, the language of "grammar" and "mistakes" dominates, even at the expense of discussion of other aspects of writing and the writing process. Six of the nine students who responded to the prompt mention "grammar", while seven of the nine students reference "mistakes", "errors", or "fix[ing]" something. Sometimes this discussion of grammar and mistakes is connected, for example:

I decided to visit the writing center to get some information that will help me, and I did go to them. I got some ideas from them and they correct few mistakes that I had in my grammar sentences. (Ahmed)

Students also indicate the importance of writing center tutors as an audience who can assess the comprehensibility of their writing, for example:

I was talking with the consultant about the fact that some spelling or grammar mistakes might change the whole essay. (Abdullah)

Here Abdullah points out how mistakes in grammar or spelling, possibly resulting in a different word choice, "might change the whole essay," an issue identified by Nakamaru (2010, p. 98), who argues the difficulty of separating language from writing, and thus "lower order concerns" from "higher order concerns."

Pre-writing and Development in Students' Writing Center Narratives

As students focused much of their discussion on linguistic accuracy in their writing center narratives, discussion of pre-writing and development are much less frequent. Only two

students discussed pre-writing in their writing center narratives; for example, Faisal provides a narrative on his writing center visit focusing on idea generation and argument:

I went to the writing center and they helped me by given some ideas to start my paper and how to make an outline. When I visited the writing center I talked about how to pick an ideas that will match about my topic. The most helpful when I visited the writing center was about how I can make all the ideas that I wrote about match each other. Also, the write center helped me by giving some ideas that is related to my topic. I will visit the writing center again when I got feedback from my professor so I can work with the writing center about the errors that I have on my paper.

With a non-directive approach, a tutor aims to draw out the writer's ideas and voice, though there may be tension between the pedagogical goal of using non-directive methods and learner needs, with tutors being cautioned to avoid appropriation (e.g., Severino, 2009). Yet Faisal found that a possibly more directive element of the session “helped [him]”, also referencing “all the ideas that I wrote about”, thus claiming ownership of his writing. Faisal's work to ensure his ideas “match each other” and “[his] topic” also shows his attention to focus within his argument.

Just three of the nine students addressed development explicitly in their writing center narratives, only one of whom did not also address “mistakes” or “grammar”. In sum, discussion of “grammar” and “mistakes” dominates in the students' writing center narratives, representing an important theme for these multilingual writers even when they discuss, however infrequently, other areas of writing feedback, as well.

Writers' Self-reflections on Paper Drafts: Grammar and Development

The multilingual writers in this class, however, are not so heavily preoccupied with linguistic accuracy as an analysis of their writing center narratives alone might suggest. Students'

self-reflections on their writing focus largely on writing development, with somewhat less frequent discussion of mistakes and grammar. Writing development, including writing more, providing more examples and details, and using sources, is the single most frequently discussed theme in the self-reflective journal responses and those on peer feedback. Seven of the nine students who responded to this journal prompt wrote about development in their self-reflections, and several writers made multiple references to different aspects of development, with 24 unique references to this theme in this sample of journal entries, for example:

I feel completely positive about my second draft because I used my peer comment, and I have more details and examples about my ideas. (Faisal)

There are some questions that I am wondering them such as does my essay need more examples or not or do I need to use better vocabulary in the essay. (Ahmed)

This attention to development contrasts with similar discussion of the students' writing center visits, in which only three students referenced development in discussing their sessions with only four total references. Compared to the seven students who discussed "mistakes" and the six students who discussed "grammar" in their writing center narratives, five students discussed "mistakes", and four students discussed "grammar" in their self-reflections on their draft. Thus, students discussed a wider range of topics in their writing self-reflections than in their writing center narratives, with development being the largest focus.

Tutor Notes on Writing Center Visits Compared with Multilingual Writer Narratives

Highlighting narrative as a meaning-making endeavor, a comparison of a writer's and tutor's account of the same session reveals the tutor's conscious focus on organization in contrast with the writer's focus on linguistic accuracy. To explore these divergences, we consider the following session involving writer Omar and tutor Mateo, introduced in Table 3:

Table 3
Tutor Documentation of Multilingual Writers' First Writing Center Sessions

Student	Tutor	Date	Tutor Notes in Client-Report Forms	
			Student-Requested Focus Areas	Focus Areas Addressed in Session
Omar	Mateo	September 30	He wanted to work on the organization of his paper. The student was an ESL student but had pretty good writing skills compared to other new international students. I was pleased with this session because as we worked through the paper, he started catching his own errors based on previous corrections.	Organization

Here tutor Mateo notes Omar's native speaker status and his identity as a new international student. While his assessment seems favorable, i.e. in Mateo's view, Omar "had pretty good writing skills compared to other new international students", his discussion still shifts to an "errors" and "corrections" framework. For instance, Mateo notes, "he [Omar] started catching his own errors based on previous corrections," possibly describing a non-directive strategy for sentence-level error correction.

Indeed, Omar's writing center narrative supports this view of the session, with grammar being highlighted:

[T]he writing center helps me to know about my small grammar mistakes which I already know, but sometimes it is hard to figure out your own mistakes. We talked about

my first draft and we talked about some grammar things such as past tense and what is the best way to organize the ideas and the paragraph.

As seen in Omar's narrative and suggested in Mateo's report, even when organizational work was apparently the student's goal and the tutor's identified focus of the session, sentence-level editing was still a significant focus in their discussion. This mismatch between stated tutoring goals or philosophy and actual practice parallels the mismatch in some teacher-student writing conferences with multilingual writers, seen in Ewert (2009) and Han and Hyland (2016).

Though incongruity between multilingual writers' stated goals and a session's focus may not be uncommon, it may still be problematic, especially if the mismatch deprives the writer of agency. Eckstein (2018, p. 17), advocating tutor willingness to address sentence-level questions with multilingual writers, surveys writing center scholarship on the importance of respecting writers' goals. The same seems to apply to multilingual writers who indicate goals related to something other than grammar in a session. Mateo connects the work on error correction in their session with Omar's identity as a new international "ESL student", inadvertently promoting a deficit discourse, as discussed by Cirillo-McCarthy, et al. (2016), even as he compliments Omar's "writing skills."

Comparing Writing Center Narratives, Self-reflections, and Consultant Notes

Discrepancies and congruities between multilingual writers' writing center narratives, tutor accounts of the same sessions, and students' self-reflections on their writing shed light on writer and tutor beliefs about writing and the writing center. Overlapping themes across an individual's writing center narrative and their self-reflections can reveal information about the student's understanding of writing or the writing process. For example, Asad's narratives and self-reflections demonstrate an overlap in theme, with a focus on mistakes. He discusses

“fix[ing]” mistakes and “corrections” in his writing center narrative, but also when he reflects more generally on his writing:

I always proud of my writing. However, that does not mean I have no mistakes. My second draft was not bad to me because I think it is better than the first one. (Asad)

Thus, we can hypothesize that making and correcting “mistakes” are important parts of how Asad conceptualize *writing* at this point, not just his writing center visits.

In contrast, some students who focus on mistakes and grammar in their writing center narratives may not address these topics at all in self-reflections on writing. For example, Abdullah reports discussing “sp[e]lling and grammar mistakes” and second language acquisition in his writing center visit:

My visit to the writing center was awesome the guy who I met were good guy and he helped and explain my mistakes. I was talking with the tutor about the fact that some spelling or grammar mistakes might change the whole essay. Every advices was helpful plus I asked him about his knowledge of other language and how was his experience. He answered me that he took France class and it was not very easy for him. I am planning to visit the writing center next week.

However, he focuses on draft development in his self-reflection:

I am proud of the way that I described small detail such us the event that we have and how the speed radar worked in my country. I think I put some quotation from in the wrong place. I should take quotations from home and travel essay instead of taking another quotation from outside the book.

It is unlikely that Abdullah focuses on grammar and language in his writing center narrative simply because of a preoccupation with linguistic accuracy. In contrast with Abdullah’s writing

center narrative, Abdullah's self-reflection and discussion of peer feedback do not include direct references to language learning and accuracy. Even when he describes sentence-level changes in this draft, he avoids use of the words "grammar" and "mistake" – instead referring to comprehensibility for his peers: "I change all thing that my peer suggested me to change for example I change some sentence that was not understandable." Discussion of "grammar" and "mistakes" is withheld in this discussion of peer feedback, even in a sentence-level context where the concept of "grammar" could have easily been invoked. The absence of references to grammar, in the presence of sentence-level discussion, underscores the differences in Abdullah's discursive framing of his writing center visit and of his reflections on peer feedback, with the former focusing on "grammar" and "mistakes" and the latter focusing on writing development and comprehensibility for his audience.

Comparison of this narrative with the tutor's description of the same session highlights the writer's and tutor's distinct efforts in making sense of their writing center session for themselves or in representing it for an audience, i.e. the professor or the writing center director. In his narrative and self-reflection, Abdullah frames attention to source work and development in terms of his own independent writing and reflection (distinct from his work at the writing center), noting simply, "I think I put some quotation from in the wrong place." He later turns to discussion of his writing center visit, making no explicit reference to discussion of source work in his narrative, instead focusing on "mistakes" and language.

Comparatively, for this session, in his client report form, Joe, Abdullah's tutor, notes discussing sources and quotations with him:

Abdullah had several quotes he found on the internet, and I encouraged him to find quotes that were from the source mentioned in the prompt instead.

Though Joe and Abdullah apparently discussed use of sources, and though Abdullah internalized Joe's suggestions to the point of addressing them in his journal and paper draft, Abdullah does not attribute these assessments regarding his source use to the writing tutor or his session. Instead, he introduces his journal with his own self-reflection on his draft, including his assessment of his source work, and then begins his narrative on his writing center visit, which focuses on "grammar", "mistakes", and native-speaker status. Abdullah's decision about what to include as an explicit part of his writing center narrative may reveal something about his understanding of the writing center, either his conceptions of the types of concerns addressed there or his impressions of his instructor's expectations in that regard.

In comparing individual writers' self-reflections and their writing center narratives, we observe distinctions between what the writers discuss in one versus the other. We also observe distinctions between what a writer chooses to discuss from their writing center visit and what the tutor identifies as the session's focus. Based on these distinctions, we may conclude that the tutor experienced the discussion of sources as the key focus of the session, while Abdullah may have found discussion of language acquisition to be central. When one considers the audiences for the journal and the client report form (the instructor and the writing center director respectively), however, another interpretation is possible. The tutor might have felt that his director would find the notes on source work more relevant than comments on personal experiences with language learning, or Abdullah may have viewed both the discussion of quotations and of language learning as meaningful, while framing discussion of his paper's development, including source work, as his own, independent of tutor feedback. In asking about the writing tutor's experience with learning another language and discussing the relationship between language (mistakes) and meaning, Abdullah moves his own identity as a language

learner to a salient position in the session. Both discussion of language learning and of source work appear in his journal. However, the focus on language and mistakes in Abdullah's writing center narrative follows the larger pattern of these students' writing center narratives, i.e. focusing on mistakes and linguistic accuracy, while Abdullah reserves his discussion of his source work for his own self-reflection.

In the absence of an instructor who framed the writing center as an editing service, a few (not mutually exclusive) hypotheses may account for this focus on editing in writing center narratives. One possibility is that orientation hosts or other campus peers introduced the writing center as a site of remediation, leading writers to consider mistakes first when conceptualizing their writing center work. Olson (2013, p. 2) also suggests that tutors may play a role in the focus on error correction as they may "automatically" attend to "'correcting' all of the 'mistakes,'" thus erasing linguistic and cultural differences in response to pressure that the writing center and writer face to create "standard English."ⁱ As observed by Qian and Krugly-Smolka (2008), earlier instruction, such as for standardized language assessments, may also predispose some students to focus on language when considering writing.

Thus, a variety of background factors may contribute to these first-year multilingual students' focus on linguistic accuracy in their writing center narratives, including some tutors' own subconscious focus on editing considerations even in sessions where multilingual writers articulate a different purpose. What is clear is that in the absence of explicit encouragement of more multifaceted writing center sessions, this class of first-year multilingual writers focused on linguistic accuracy in their conceptualization of writing center work, even as they explored a much wider range of writing questions in their second language writing class and self-reflections. Timing may even emerge as a relevant classroom factor in considering initial

writing center visits, as a required brainstorming visit may help to highlight for multilingual writers (and their tutors) the diverse ways that the writing center can provide support.

Discussion and Conclusions

Triangulating data from first-year multilingual writers' writing center narratives, their self-reflections on their writing, and their tutors' session report forms, this study illustrates the differing ways that multilingual writers and their tutors make sense of writing center sessions. Situated in a classroom community of practice, this research provides a unique look into the interface between the L2 writing classroom and the writing center, from the perspective of multilingual writers. Narrative inquiry, because of its ability to help us "understand experience" (Bell 2002, p. 209), provides a window into multilingual writers' experiences and perceptions of their writing center visits and their efforts to situate these experiences in their larger writing narratives. These students' stories begin to shed light on the variation in individual multilingual writers' experiences and understandings of writing center conversations, as called for by Hadingham (2017).

The juxtaposed classroom and writing center data in this study reveal first-year multilingual writers who are interested in a variety of higher order and lower order concerns when they reflect on their own writing, providing further support for the conclusions of Eckstein (2016), Thonus (2014), and Severino, et al. (2009). The division of addressing mostly "grammar" and "mistakes" at the writing center and addressing a combination of development and linguistic accuracy during self-reflections on writing and peer feedback may seem nothing less than natural for an L2 writing class. However, as Nakamaru (2010) shows, this division in discussing writing may reflect tutoring or writing ideologies. Further, in contrast with the graduate tutors in Chen's (2019) and Okuda's (2019) studies, undergraduate tutors may be

especially equipped to address a wide range of questions in response to first-year writing for a general audience, as it typically assumes no particular disciplinary knowledge. Thus, the disproportionate focus on grammar in the first-year students' writing center narratives, at the expense of a more diversified discussion of writing, is not a function solely of students' and tutors' native speaker statuses. It may instead suggest for first-year multilingual writers a compartmentalized sense of the types of writing feedback one may pursue in different contexts.

Discrepancies between writer and tutor accounts of the same session may be understood in terms of writer and tutor beliefs about writing or the writing center. For instance, a conscious focus on global writing concerns might not preclude significant tutor attention to sentence-level feedback even when it is not requested, as observed in Yu (2020), but that philosophy might make feedback on development or organization seem more memorable or reportable. The distinctions between the students' self-reflections and their writing center narratives highlight gaps between the questions these first-year multilingual writers were considering and their experience of the writing center as a place to address this full range of writing questions.

Most students discuss sentence-level issues related to comprehensibility both in their writing center narratives and in their self-reflection. The key difference is that most students in the class put much more focus on the discussion of development in their self-reflections and treatments of peer feedback. Thus, one potential problem for this writing center may be students' failing to see (or the center and faculty failing to convey) the variety of ways that the writing center can support the other types of thinking about writing in which the students are already engaged. The instructor and writing center's responsibility is to scaffold this complex and varied discussion during writing center sessions with multilingual students. If all first-year multilingual writers are able to experience the center as a place that supports their full

conversation about writing, we may observe more engaged students, returning time and again to the center, and reporting growth along the way.

Limitations of this study include the small sample size as well as the relatively limited diversity of learners' backgrounds represented in this class, with most learners in the study being male native speakers of Arabic, many of whom were pursuing engineering degrees. While this research provides a case study of how this community of learners, with similar backgrounds and educational goals, conceptualized their early writing center work, future research looking at more diverse groups of learners' writing center experiences or looking at learners' writing center experiences over a longer period of time could help to expand our sense of multilingual writers' perceptions of the writing center.

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Appendix

Journal Prompts

- (1) How are you feeling about your second draft of paper 1?
- (2) What in this draft are you most proud of?
- (3) What in this draft do you think needs the most work still?
- (4) You were required to visit the Writing Center at least once before the submission of your second draft of paper 1. Describe your visit(s).
- (5) What did you talk about with the writing consultant?
- (6) What was the most helpful thing that the writing consultant said or did during your session(s)? Was there anything that wasn't helpful about your visit?
- (7) When are you planning your next trip to the Writing Center?
- (8) What changes have you made to your paper in response to your peer feedback, meetings with the Writing Center, and/or meetings with the professor?
- (9) What questions do you have now about this draft?

ⁱ As Greenfield (2011) argues, “standard English” is a vexed concept and may be viewed as a product of institutional racism (p. 39).