

From official educational policy to the composition classroom: Reproduction through metaphor and metonymy

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Abstract: This paper uses critical discourse analysis to examine the language used in the teaching and learning of writing in a composition program in a public university in the United States. The objective was to identify metaphors and metonymies employed to construct an official standpoint of writing and the teaching of writing within the program, to identify the ideological position of the views conveyed in the documents and to analyze how this perspective is passed down hierarchically from the official documents to those actually developed and used by the instructors in the classrooms. The metaphors and metonymies used in the documents construct writing as an important commodity and college writing as more valuable than writing in other places. Metaphors and metonymies stood out as important semiotic devices for instructors to stay within a given pedagogical and educational perspective in ways that may normally be largely unnoticed by them.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, metaphor, metonymy, education, composition



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1. Introduction

It has been argued that the language of education is replete with metaphors (Elliott, 1984; Aspen, 1984; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Metaphors have an important role in the production and reproduction of ideologies and are present in discourses which articulate claims and beliefs and their relation to questions of identity and values (Wee, 2002). Metonymies, though not so frequently addressed as a means for ideological construction as metaphors, have long been recognized as systematic and actively functioning in our culture (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). While some metaphors and metonymies in education seem to lend it objectivity, they may be reflecting deep ideological stances of which users may not be aware. Through repetition these ideas build upon each other, creating apparent cohesion and the perception that they are factual, or normal, and thus seldom resisted (Woodside-Jiron, 2004).

This investigation summarizes the results of a study that analyzes how ideology is represented in the metaphorical and metonymical language about the teaching and learning of writing in the context of a U.S. university. We examine educational metaphors and metonymies that represent students, teachers, and their relationship, as well as the role of language as subject area, and the broader representation of the educational goals in society. This study looks at official documents and instructional materials that legitimize imagined educational practices around the teaching and learning of writing.

The data for this study were collected from sample syllabi created by an English department to guide new graduate teaching associates, actual syllabi developed by graduate teachers, and assignment sheets created by them. Other texts analyzed include the language program philosophies as stated in the departmental mission statements as well as the departmental homepages on the internet which describe the program. The purposes of this study were to 1) identify the metaphors and metonyms that are circulating in the official educational documents and in the instructional materials used in the classroom, 2) analyze how these identified metaphors and metonymies are distributed and reproduced from official educational policies to classroom practice, and 3) analyze the social implications these metaphors and metonymies have on the naturalized concepts of education.

Through the lens of critical discourse analysis we will analyze how metaphors and metonymies are distributed by policy documents and reproduced through instructional material to find the relation between official educational policy and teacher, teacher and student, and official educational policy and student. We begin with a description of our theoretical frameworks and the artifacts to which they are applied. We then examine the metaphors and metonymies found in the documents and the ways in which they are appropriated by composition instructors. Relations of power within educational hierarchies will reveal how education is imagined and conceptualized

within educational discourse. The consequences of such discourse practices are also discussed.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

The analysis described here comes under the big umbrella of 'critical' and in many senses corresponds to what is known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA includes diverse theoretical and methodological concepts that acknowledge that language can convey ideologies, relations of power, and institutional constraint. The purpose of CDA is to analyze hidden and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control manifested through language. More specifically, it "...studies real and often extended instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form" (Wodak, 1997, p.173 as cited by Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Some of the tenets of CDA that are considered relevant for this study are

- All representation is mediated by value systems embedded in the language, or, language is ideological.
- Ideologies in language are socially determined; that is, they can be related to social structures and processes.
- Anything may have an alternative way of representation; thus every language choice is meaningful.

Discourse is conceived in CDA as socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned; in other words, there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and society. Because discourse and its effects are not evident, the objective of CDA is to make this relation visible. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) explain that discourse is a form of social practice, "implying a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it" (p.259).

Critical discourse analysis takes as a premise the importance of the ideological effects that emanate from discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Through the ways that people are positioned and represented in discourse, these can help to produce and reproduce unequal power relations between social classes, gender, race, and ethnicity, among other social identities. According to Fairclough and Wodak, "[b]oth the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them are often unclear to people. CDA aims to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). This includes "a rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels, and programs represent reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interest), and individualism" (Rogers, 2004, p. 3).

Van Dijk, who is best known for his work on racism, has opted for a socio-cognitive perspective of CDA. Under this perspective van Dijk contends that no direct relationship can be constructed between discourse and social structures; instead they

are mediated by the interface of personal and social cognition. For van Dijk, cognition is the missing link which may show how societal structures are enacted or challenged by text and talk (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). In finding the relation between discourse and social structure, van Dijk (2001) asks the following question: “How does such discourse control mind and action of less powerful groups and what are the social consequences of such control such as social inequality?” (p. 355). This process of “mind control,” as van Dijk refers to it, entails a) the tendency to accept beliefs, knowledge and opinions, b) the obligation to be recipients of a discourse, c) the lack of alternative media or public discourse, and d) the lack of knowledge of the recipients of the discourse. van Dijk’s unique take on CDA focuses on how discourse structures influence mental representations, an issue we find crucial in making connections between metaphors, metonymies, and CDA.

3. Metaphors, Metonymies, and CDA

For Lakoff and Johnson (1980), mental representations are at the core of the study of metaphor. Until Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors were defined as instances in which certain words in poetry or literature were used outside of their conventional meaning to refer to a similar concept. Yet, Lakoff and Johnson advocate that metaphors are more than the manipulation of language to suit literary purposes; they are conceptual mappings that reveal much about our processes of thinking and reasoning:

Far from being merely a matter of words, metaphor is a matter of thought – all kinds of thought: thought about emotion, about society, about human character, about language, and about the nature of life and death. It is indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. xi)

According to Lakoff (1992), metaphors reveal “the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another” and are so pervasive in our everyday language that they are “absolutely central to ordinary natural language semantics” (p.1). Metaphors shape the way we conceive of lived experiences because abstract conceptions are reconceived in tangible terms. A metaphor then, “is a process in which the source domain transfers its ontological meaning into the target domain, resulting in a stream of entailments that guide our understanding of the overall concept” (Johnson, 2005).

Charteris-Black (2004) has applied critical discourse analysis to the study of metaphor because he sees metaphors as influencing the type of value judgments we make. For Charteris-Black, metaphors are used constantly to convey evaluations and hence, constitute part of the ideology of texts. Santa Ana (2002) has discussed how metaphors in the media affect our understanding of issues such as immigrants and immigration, finding that the press related immigrants to dangerous bodies of water as Proposition 187 was being pushed in California: *the relentless flow of immigrants, the foreigners who have flooded the country, a sea of brown faces marching through*. Later, Johnson (2005) examined how in the light of a proposition against Bilingual Education

in Arizona, known as Prop. 203, issues of bilingual education were related to failure, pathology, bad investment, among other negative metaphors. Both scholars showed how politics and the persuasion of decisions were highly affected by the use of metaphors that revealed underlying ideologies.

While there is no literature related to a critical view of metonymies, we consider that these, too, play an important role in the underlying meanings of texts. Metonymy can be defined as a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity is connected to another entity of the same domain (Kövecses, 2002). Metonymies are often discussed in the literature of cognitive linguistics together with metaphors (Dirven & Pörings, 2002; Barcelona, 2000), yet there is not a uniform view regarding how to distinguish between them. As with metaphor, a cognitive approach to metonymy has been gaining support in the past years because it facilitates an understanding of how metonymy works in discourse. Bredin (1984 cited in Al Sharafi, 2004) stresses the importance of metonymy in discourse and even hypothesizes that it may be more common than metaphor. Further, he argues that “metaphor *creates* the relation between its objects, while metonymy *presupposes* that relation” (p. 57). Indeed, there is increasing evidence from cognitive linguistics that suppression and presupposition are largely involved in the use of metonymy. Gibbs (1994) provides evidence from cognitive psychology of our metonymic thinking, arguing that our ability to think metonymically allows us to make a number of inferences.

Metonymy is used to refer to people, objects, events, and situations, and many of these metonymies have become conventionalized. As a result, cognitive models for series of events have been idealized so that part of the model evokes the entire model. A result of this phenomenon is that when the speaker metonymically mentions subparts of a situation the listener retrieves the whole situation using background knowledge. Often, the effect is a reliance on prototypes and stereotypes.

Our intention is to find metaphors and metonymies that are reproduced, resisted and appropriated in discourses that are circulating in the field of education, namely, in texts, such as syllabi, teaching philosophies, and assignment sheets— keeping in mind that texts are never neutral and always embody ideologies.

4. Technologization and Commodification of Discourse

Two tendencies in the change of orders of discourse that CDA has drawn attention to, and that we have identified in the analyzed texts, are the *technologization* and *commodification* of discourse, which can be applied to describe some of the discourses that are circulating in the field of education.

Technologization of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 1996) is the tendency to control discourse and, with that purpose, modes of speaking, writing, and communicating are made into technologies. Discourse, as the object of such research, is carefully designed and passed down (and sometimes imposed) through training. Teaching, for example, is one discourse technology. The features of this change in the orders of discourse

relevant to this study include the imposition of externally generated criteria for discourse practice and norms, the recruitment and projection of certain types of discourse and discourse skills as usable across contexts, the use of forms and meanings of 'friendliness' in a number of other contexts to imply closer relations, and standardization and normalization of discourse practices.

Cameron (2002) has drawn our attention to a related phenomenon: the striving for the unification of discourses for the sake of global communication. This refers to the development of "effective communication skills" and a "uniform way of talking" (p.68). For that sake, Cameron argues, certain interactional norms, styles of talk and specific rules of correctness are increasingly being spread and taught as *the* way to "effective communication". These norms coincide with those of educated and mostly white middle-class Anglophone societies and are disseminated through instruction and training in discursive practices, and in educational institutions. Indeed, under this schema, the composition courses in university settings are a way to reinforce standards and norms for communicating that have been sold to us as 'effective'.

In many ways, this phenomenon is connected to the perception of language as an economic commodity (Fairclough, 1992; Heller, 1999 cited in Cameron, 2002), which is consequential in determining why and what people choose to learn. According to Fairclough (1992) language and language skills have come to be perceived as commodities that are sold to the clients or consumers. Part of this trend of transferring the language of commodities and market to educational discourse is the widespread use of a vocabulary of 'skills' and 'competences'. This wording helps to commodify the content of language education, in the sense that it facilitates "the division into discrete units, which are in principle separately teachable and assessable, and can be bought and sold as distinct goods in the range of commodities available on the educational market" (p. 209).

Another way of understanding this trend is placing it into the culture of *self-improvement*, that is, the tendency for individuals to undertake not only the task of improving communication skills but also of solving their problems. However, most of the forms of self-improvement emphasize communication skills, in which certain pre-packed models are preached as those for successful communication. This harmonizes with one of the features of technologization of discourse described above, according to which certain communication techniques are transposed and used across contexts. One of these discourses is the discourse of friendliness, to develop rapport and intimate relations with others through skills of self-expression and mutual self-expression (Giddens, 1991).

Cameron calls for an examination of the notion of "effective communication" and to question "effective for who and for what" (p. 79). When employees use standard norms, styles, and routines, it is interesting to see what language forms are not encouraged, what communication abilities are not desirable, and whose norms and for the interests of whom they are disseminated. What should also raise concerns is the idea that "communication is emerging as the supreme value of language teaching" (p.

81) and, therefore, teachers who are subdued to this idea unquestioningly teach this way. Bourdieu (1991) argues that “there is a whole dimension of authorized language, its rhetoric, syntax, vocabulary, and even pronunciation which exists purely to underline the authority” of those who perpetuate symbolic violence (p.76 in Kumaravadivelu, 1999, p. 462).

5. The Syllabus, the Assignment Sheet and the Teaching Philosophy as the Crystallization of Discourse

The artifacts whose discourse we analyzed in this study are taken from the first course of the English Composition program in a public university in the Southwest region of the United States. The course is called English 101 and is part of the basic education courses that all students in their first year are required to take. In the particular university where the project took place, a large number of different sections are offered every semester, and consequently a large number of instructors are involved, all coordinated by the Writing Program. In order to ensure a standard implementation of this course, instructors, and graduate students working as teaching assistants are acquainted with the goals, objectives and philosophy of the program; they are provided with the basic materials to be used, a model syllabus and samples of assignments students fulfill, all of which they can adapt to the particular needs of their students and their own teaching styles. They are also asked to keep a portfolio in which they include their teaching philosophy, their syllabus and the assignment sheets among other course-related documents. We chose to analyze these documents because we consider them replete with samples of the discourses that circulate in the teaching of writing.

5.1 The Syllabus

A syllabus is usually the first communication instance in the development of a course and it serves administrative, course development, interpersonal and learning functions (Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001; Parkes & Harris, 2002). As an initial point of interaction between students and instructor, a syllabus provides grounds for expectations of a course, since “it clarifies mutual responsibilities, helps set the tone of the course, and describes the instructor’s beliefs about the educational purpose of the course” (Eberly et al., 2001, p. 59). Ideally, then, a syllabus should provide useful information about the instructor’s philosophical beliefs, the means of obtaining valuable information, tips on how to do well on assignments, strategies for studying or writing, among others. However, since the instructors do not act in isolation, syllabi, as pieces of discourse, realize and constitute certain institutional values and norms, as well as broader societal trends.

A syllabus can in many ways be considered an iconic sign of what it represents – the course to be taught. It is a diagrammatic icon (Peirce, 1893-1910; Jakobson, 1966; Hiraga, 1994), as it makes the course understandable by showing some of its structural

features. And yet, the iconicity of the syllabus is not limited to its diagrammaticity. It can also be achieved through metaphoric and metonymic language.

The model syllabus provided by the teaching coordinators of the Writing Program serves as guide for the Graduate Associates in Teaching (GATs) to use in the development of their syllabi for their particular classes. GATs usually use the model syllabus as an example of what an “appropriate” syllabus should look like and adapt it to their needs. GATs may take the syllabus as is or make modifications, depending on their expertise, teaching background, and values. The goal of our research was to see how the model syllabus fed into the GATs’ syllabi we collected—that is, to what degree these were adapted, but also to what degree these were modified and resisted.

5.2 The Assignment Sheet

The assignment sheet is perhaps the most interactional document not only in that the register is a rather oral and conversational one, but also because it is created by instructors, given to students, and then used by students.

Currently, English 101 is divided into three major units: Textual Analysis, Contextual Analysis, and Cultural Analysis, each of which culminates with an essay. The textual analysis essay requires the close reading of a text while the contextual analysis asks students to consider the outside influences upon the creation of a text (such as gender, time period, location, race) in their analysis. The cultural analysis essay is typically taught either as an analysis of a particular culture or an analysis of the student’s own culture.

For each of these essay assignments, as well as for smaller assignments distributed throughout the unit, instructors create assignment sheets that outline the expectations of the assignment to students. Often the assignment sheets are very context specific. For example, instructors will reference class discussions or texts in them. There is a certain amount of shared knowledge that may not necessarily be present in documents such as the syllabus, because the syllabus is created before the class begins and therefore, before the relationship between instructor and students has been established. For this study, we collected English 101 assignment sheets from instructors but did not specify that they be from a particular unit.

5.3 The Teaching Philosophy

Composition instructors draft their philosophies during teacher training orientation and are required to submit revised philosophies to their teaching advisors every semester throughout their graduate studies. Thus, it is the statement of an individual’s philosophy of teaching writing and is constantly changing as he or she is exposed to new theory and classroom experiences. No sample philosophy is available for instructors to model theirs after, so the document is much more personal in both content and language than the other of the two documents we analyzed. The teaching philosophy, as used in this way, is therefore primarily for the instructor and department records. It is not as much a document to be used in the classroom or to be seen by students, although some are.

The Writing Program philosophy consisted of an overall philosophy of writing skills. It tended to use a discourse of critical literacy practices, much in tune with Freire's and Giroux's ideas of critical pedagogy. Writing is seen as a representation of self and of our ideas in language. Though there was an emphasis on writing as representation of self in pursuit of social justice, it was also represented as having a purpose outside of ourselves, whether personal, civic or academic.

It is fair to say that although our intention was to compare the general philosophy with the teachers' individual philosophies, the topics discussed in each of the philosophies differed greatly. The individual GATs' teaching philosophies focused on their teaching practices and values, whereas the departmental philosophy focused mainly on the writing practice *per se*.

6. Methodology

The purpose of our study was to analyze the metaphorical and metonymical language circulating in a university writing program, identify ideological stances in their use, and analyze how metaphors and metonymies were passed down hierarchically from the Writing Program's Philosophy Statement, sample syllabus and sample teaching materials (provided by the course director for new graduate teaching associates to model) to those actually used by the Graduate Associates in Teaching (GATs) in their teaching portfolio and in the composition classroom. This would allow us to see which metaphors and metonymies were reproduced and distributed as well as which were resisted or modified.

At the time of the study, the participating instructors, two females and one male, were second-year graduate students in the English department and represented three of the four specializations in the department: Creative Writing, Literature, ELL/SLAT (English Language and Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching), and RCTE (Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English). The three instructors who participated in this study were enrolled in the Creative Writing, Literature, and RCTE programs. We would like to point out that we are not purporting to make claims about the Writing Program as a whole based on these three instructors, but rather, we kept our sample size small in order to analyze the documents qualitatively and in great depth.

We began by analyzing the Writing Program's Philosophy Statement, which was publicly available on the Writing Program website, and the model syllabus for English 101, available on a password-protected portion of the same site.

After reviewing the departmental materials, we collected the teaching philosophy, course syllabus, and assignment sheet from three composition instructors. We then undertook the reading of the documents with the purpose of identifying instances of metaphors and metonymies. We grouped them according to what these devices represented and developed extensive charts, agreed upon by the three authors. It must be said that the process of identifying and categorizing the metaphors and metonyms

was challenging since it meant questioning the language that we as instructors use in our everyday teaching practice and which until this point we had perceived as straightforward and anything but metaphorical. In order to identify metaphors we started from the examples of cognitive metaphors and metonymies provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), Lakoff (1987) and other analysts (Taylor, 1995; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Kovecses & Raddens, 1998, Dirven and Pörings, 2002, Ungerer & Schmid, 2006, Ruiz de Mendoza, 2003). An attentive reading of the documents was necessary to identify instances in which the language was shaping our understanding of a phenomenon through categories from a different domain (in the case of metaphors), or when our understanding of a phenomenon relied on the presupposed relation between that phenomenon and a subcategory (in the case of metonymy). The labeling of the metaphors found followed the convention used in the relevant literature: It includes the target (the concept which is explained or through the comparison) and the source (the concepts from which the expression is drawn). The labeling of metonymies also attempts to follow the tradition by showing what stands for what and hyphenating the words. A final step was to analyze which of the metaphors and metonymies found in the departmental materials were reproduced or resisted in the discourses produced by the instructors in their documents.

7. Metaphor Analysis

The analysis of the language in the syllabi of the instructors, their assignment sheets and their teaching philosophies showed that they indeed used a metaphorical and metonymical mode to communicate their messages and that in most cases these metaphors and metonymies were also present in the official documents. These metaphors reproduced the view about writing and the teaching of writing to which the program adheres.

7.1 Writing as height/upward movement

'Standards [for writing] in English 101 are higher than in high school', 'we will foster a higher level of analysis' are metaphors that imply that a higher place will be achieved with writing, and that better writing implies moving upwards. Or, retaking Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) orientational metaphor: GOOD IS UP. In *'read and write at the college level'* moving higher is linked to reaching certain degree of competence, which as we know, also spreads mostly along the vertical axis. This metaphorical language conveys the idea that by (taking the course in) writing, students will reach certain heights that have already been marked as valuable (high school, college) and significant.

Graduate associates repeatedly emphasized the differences between students' previous levels of writing expertise and the expertise expected in the college courses they were teaching. An explanation could be the fact that GATs usually have firsthand experience with the students' work and as graduate students, they are quite aware of

the differences in expectations in one institution and in the other. As novice teachers and students themselves, they are constantly reminding their students about the standardized requirements set for university students, possibly because they too are constrained in the use of college work genre.

The expression 'at the college level' contains a metonymy- that college stands for a way and a standard of writing, for a number of features or types of writing done by students that go to a certain place – college. We'll refer to this metonymy and how to interpret it below in the next subsection.

7.2 Writing as building

The vehicle (or source) 'building' provides mental access to the target entity 'writing,' which is in a different domain. Verbs such as "design" and "build" are used in the sample syllabus model and we find that nouns such as "construction" and "support" are used frequently in the GATs' syllabi in expressions like '*you will analyze a text, taking into consideration the text's construction*', '*you will justify using relevant textual support*', '*support of that point with illustration*', '*paragraphs that support your thesis*' in which writing is about building foundations that can bear the weight or 'strengthen' ideas, points, sentences, etc. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have pointed out, the language of constructing has become widely accepted by language teachers and it has been associated with a number of trends developed within the general constructivist approach to learning. Constructivism is a metaphor per se, and as Reagan & Osborn (2002) put it, "one of the most powerful contemporary metaphors for teaching and learning" (p. 58). It is associated with other metaphors like 'scaffolding,' 'support,' and 'build up'. What is not clear is to what extent the educators that use these metaphors are aware of the theories associated with this language.

7.3 Writing as strength/power

Closely associated with the discourse tendency described above is a set of metaphors related to strength, weight, force and power. Writers (presumably those who study and make adequate progress) become stronger (*'the course is designed to build on your strengths as writers*', *'your interpretation is stronger than any other'*), and have force and power (*'the author... make(s) readers scream*', *'wield the power of the writer'*).

The connection between knowing how to write and power is conveyed rather directly in the discourse here described. What is implied here is the promise of the writing course to provide the linguistic and rhetorical basis to master writing and achieve power through that knowledge.

7.4 Writing as techniques and skills

The discourse used to describe what students have to learn is presented in terms of techniques and skills (*'these rhetorical exercises give students the practical skills necessary*', *'introduces you to writing techniques and strategies*', *'you will apply*

methods of analysis, *'English 101 will introduce you to the skills and strategies'*). Part of the idea of discourse technologies is that there is a group of specialists and researchers who have studied the discourses and have the knowledge about how language works and how it should be taught. One way of teaching it is by compartmentalizing it into skills, like speaking, listening, reading and writing, and each of them into smaller teachable skills and techniques. Another example of how writing is authoritatively divided by the 'experts' into discrete, almost obligatory skills, for the sake of teaching it, is the following: *'writing must be treated using brainstorming, free-writing, drafting, and revising techniques'*. Such wording suggests that there is but one process of writing and that it necessarily involves these skills in this particular order. Moreover, writing is represented as the using of tools to manipulate objects (*'composition courses are workshop classes', 'use the texts'*) even for bellicose purposes (*'How does the text explode notions of the archetype or stereotype? How do they reinforce it? Both?'*) As Fairclough (1996) argues, "this wording helps to commodify the content of language education, in the sense that it facilitates its division into discrete units, which are in principle separately teachable and assessable, and can be bought and sold as distinct goods in the range of commodities available on the educational market" (p.209).

7.5 Writing as focus

This recurrent metaphor suggests that writing would provide the writer a "way to focus ideas" or as a way of placing the blurry (ideas as an abstract notion) into focus (written form), thus contributing to the objectification of the writing process: *'focus on textual elements', 'students approach writing ... focusing their efforts on analyzing and discussing', 'narrow your focus', 'focus your thoughts'*. The association triggered by the use of this metaphor is that one can see more clearly while looking at separate issues rather than the combination of the different parts or even the totality.

7.6 Writing as development and process

One very common metaphor in educational discourse is related to the belief in western societies about the supremacy of process-oriented approaches (as opposed to past rather demodé product-oriented methodologies). Metaphors that convey the idea of process were found in the model syllabus as well as in all the GATs' syllabi: *'writing is a process', 'I use a process-oriented critical –expressivist approach, 'I consider writing a process that...'*. Metaphors of development (*'fully developed ideas', 'this essay will further develop your close reading and analytical skills'*) convey a similar idea. What this latter metaphor implies is a linear process, just like the biological processes, where the possibility of regressions, digressions, and pauses finds no representation.

It was stated as given truth that writing is a process, rather than a product, since drafts, peer editing and writing workshops are all common practices in all the courses, according to the syllabi. It is interesting to note how this idea ignores writing as product-oriented activity, which still prevails in many non-Western institutions. Canagarajah (2001) points out how minority scholars have indicated an active

resistance to process-oriented approaches in some of their communities. In their views, process methods are based on the linguistic needs of the dominant communities where certain students (usually those in the majority) have the required codes and need to develop accepted standards of usage through active interaction and practice. But this approach may not be the best for students of other needs.

7.7 Writing as communicator

These metaphors were also found in the sample syllabus and transferred to the GAT syllabi. Here writing was seen as *'a response to course material'* or as *'responding to drafts'* as well as *'to introduce you to writing strategies.'* This metaphor was hard to separate from its metonymic qualities. The writing course implies a dialog between the course (a metonymy) and the student, responding to the commodification of discourses where friendly utterances and behaviors seem more appealing and conducive to what is perceived as more "effective learning." The fact that a student *'is introduced to writing strategies'* strikes up a mental image of an almost friendly encounter between two strangers who may one day become friends, and be able to respond and communicate on a comfortable basis. While we still have not come to a conclusion about what discourse this metaphor may pertain to, we do find that "writing as a response" is a common practice in writing courses, where student writers are asked to voice their opinion and/or analysis via writing. We find that speaker in the source domain is presented as similar to writing, as if the interaction between texts was an interaction between speakers, or as if the texts could speak for the writer.

7.8 Writing as mirror

A very common metaphor found across the documents analyzed was writing as mirror: *'texts reflect the culture that produced them'*, *'texts reflect the times and cultures in which they were produced'*. These metaphors convey the idea that a text gives back an image of the context where it was produced reducing the role of language as one of reproduction and representation, ignoring the construction and transformational power of language.

The task of writing journals is also encouraged and is a process where the writers put in words what they went through during the course. In *'the journals consist of thoughts and reflections on writing process'* and *'your journal will consist of reflections and personal experience'* the thoughts and the experience of the writers are said to travel like light from mind to paper, and they then become recoverable in the journal.

7.9 Writing as discovery/exploration

Other metaphors go further to suggest the possibility of writing and the products of writing as able to discover what is not that obvious, clear or transparent. For example in *'your job as writers is to explore these texts'*, *'writing to discover ... meaning'* implies even a detective- or explorer-like activity, in which even clues as evidence need to be

searched and found as in *'use specific evidence from the text', 'claims must be substantiated with evidence from the text'*.

Interestingly, writing as represented in one of the analyzed syllabi has the characteristic of making inner properties of the writers visible: *'writing is a method of self-discovery', 'students discover their voices', 'techniques are used in search of voice and identity'*. The importance of the use of metaphors for conveying the idea of writing as a way to 'discover' the self (which are apparently hidden) cannot be overemphasized. The discourse of critical inquiry states that literacy is a practice of self-inquiry in order to find one's voice and identity (see Nieto 2002). Several utterances in the examples lead us to believe that there may be a balancing act between the finding of one's voice and identity and the standards of "appropriate" writing.

Table 1: Metaphors the instructors reproduced in their documents

Metaphor reproduction	Examples
WRITING AS HEIGHT/ UPWARD MOVEMENT	'We will foster a higher level of analysis' 'read and write at the college level'
WRITING AS BUILDING	'The course is designed to build on your strengths as writers' 'paragraphs that support your thesis' 'taking into consideration the text's construction'
WRITING AS TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS	'These rhetorical exercises give students the practical skills necessary' 'Writing must be treated using brainstorming, free-writing, and revising techniques'
WRITING AS DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESS	'writing is a process' 'this essay will further develop your close reading and analytical skills'.
WRITING AS COMMUNICATOR	'to introduce you to writing strategies' 'a response to course material'
WRITING AS FOCUS	'focus your thoughts' 'students approach writing ... focusing their efforts on analyzing and discussing'
WRITING AS MIRROR	'texts reflect the culture that produced them' 'a representation of self and ideas in language'
WRITING AS DISCOVERY/EXPLORATION	'your job as writers is to explore these texts' 'writing to discover meaning'

8. Metonymy Analysis

In the materials produced both by the Writing Program and the instructors, we found metonymies that served to shift agency from people to institutions, to talk of places instead of the events that happen in these places or the standards, norms or writing practices accepted in those places, to refer to an entity presuming his/her standard practices.

8.1 Institution-for-People-Responsible (Lakoff and Johnson 1980)

The Writing Program Philosophy begins by stating: “The [name of institution] Writing Program offers first-year and advanced courses in writing to help students become more capable of writing for personal, civic, academic, and professional purposes and audiences.” In this example, the metonym “*[name of institution] Writing Program*” stands for the people who work in any division within the Writing Program: the eight members of the Course Directors Committee, the eleven professional development interns, and the Writing Program Advisory Committee with its subcommittees. The effect of grouping these individuals and these individuals’ distinct tasks within the umbrella term “writing program” is a loss of personal identity for the gain of institutional power. Furthermore, it is an indication of the institution’s power and superior authority as more valid than that of the individual. This brings us back to the question “Who and what is education for?” The institution’s Writing Program defines what composition *should be*- “help[ing] students become more *capable* of writing for personal, civic, academic, and professional purposes and audiences”- and in turn defines capability in terms of their own notions of success.

The other institution-for-people-responsible metonymies replace the instructor with the course: “This course will require you to analyze...through critical thinking,” “English 101 emphasizes writing as inquiry,” and “Attention to the craft of writing is essential to English 101.” In these examples, the English 101 course is personified to take the place of the instructor. What the phrases seem to really be saying are “I will require you to analyze...through critical thinking,” “I emphasize writing as inquiry,” and “Attention to the craft of writing is essential to me.” Because the course is represented as having mental and verbal attributes, the instructor is relieved of responsibility by attaching more power to the institution.

8.2 Place-for-Event (Lakoff and Johnson 1980)

We found four examples of the place-for-event metonymy, all of which were in the instructors’ personal teaching philosophies. In two of the four examples, the “classroom” is substituted for the entire writing course experience: “*create critical minds in the classroom...*” and “*by identifying their role in the classroom...*”. Replacing the event (presumably all types of writing activities or activities conducive to writing) with the physical space in which it occurs takes identity away from the student; it assumes that their experiences are restricted to those that take place within the four

walls of the room itself. Additionally, if the physical space of the classroom is almost always inhabited by both students and instructor, the phrase “*create critical minds in the classroom*” assumes that critical minds (again a metonymy, see discussion of *contained-as-part* metonymy) or critical thinking or writing cannot be created without the instructor/creator present. The second example, “*identifying their role in the classroom*,” does not explicate what the students’ role is in relation to and assumes that when they are within the walls of the classroom they have only one role (an assumption we found fiercely contradicted by both the other metonymies and the metaphors we observed).

The other two place-for-event metonymies describe students’ experiences outside the classroom and university setting: “encourages students to pursue critical thinking and writing as a method of communication outside the classroom” and “their lives outside of the university setting.” Interesting to note, however, is that while these examples use the phrase “outside” rather than “in” as the others did, they are still restricting. The actions of “critical thinking,” “writing,” and “communication” are not assigned a place in which to occur. Rather, they are spoken about in terms of where they do not take place (they are “othered”). They take place “outside of the university setting” and “outside of the classroom” rather than in the home, place of work, or interactions with authorities.

8.3 Contained-as-a-Part (Lakoff 1987)

Previously mentioned as a place-for-event metonymy, the phrase “*to create critical minds in the classroom...*” also includes a contained-as-part metonymy, as it refers to students as “minds.” Again, this metonymy depersonalizes the student, defining the complete person by her intellect, thoughts, intelligence.

8.4 Place-for-Standard

In the sentence “[English 101 will] improve your ability to read and write at the college level,” “college level” stands in for the set of skills arbitrarily assigned to those in higher education. Found in both the model and instructor syllabi, its purpose is to let first-year composition students (who typically have not yet experienced “college level” work) know that the work for the course will be more academically challenging than that at the “high school level.” It is a way of quantifying the knowledge they will be expected to gain in a rather homogeneous setting, since what “college level” implies is assumed to be shared by all readers.

In the metonymy ‘read and write at the college level’ the place, ‘college,’ stands for the rules and norms accepted as valid for writing within this location. However, since the particular regulations, standards, types, or qualities of the writings are not described but only vaguely associated via mentioning their metonymic relation with the place where they are made to work, the reader is compelled to resort to her/his ideas about what it means to write at the ‘college level’, which may lead to a reification of the

prestige of college writing, assuming, as was explained with the 'GOOD IS UP' metaphor (see 'writing as upward movement' section above), that it is of good quality.

This combination of metaphor and metonymy tends to reinforce a homogenized representation of how one is expected to write when one goes to college. This type of discourse seems to reinforce the tendency towards standardization of discourses, a feature of the technologization of language described by Fairclough (1992, 1996). The use of a metaphor and a metonymy may lead to an easier acceptance of the idea that the writing that is done at college is better than at another place, that it is a rather homogeneous practice across colleges, within colleges, and across students, and that it is a desirable aim.

8.5 Entity-for-Standard-Practices

Entity-for-standard-practices is a term we coined to describe the specific type of metonymy we found in which the qualities, skills, or practices associated with a particular entity are replaced by the entity itself. One example was taken from the first line of the model syllabus and was modified and used by all instructors in their syllabi: "English 101 is a writing course that is designed to build on your strengths as...writers". This metonym indicates that a student has many roles, one of which is "writer". It is also a substitute for all the expected practices, skills and knowledge a writer may have. It assumes that once readers see "writer" they are knowledgeable about what a writer does and what standards will be expected. While the sentence could be reworded to emphasize the practice of writing—"build on your strengths in writing," for example—the set of standard practices associated with writing is instead personified.

Table 2: Metonymies instructors reproduced in their documents

Metonymy reproduction	Example
Institution-for-People-Responsible	'this course will require you to analyze... through critical thinking' 'attention to the craft of writing is essential to English 101'
Place-for-Event	'create critical minds in the classroom' 'by identifying their role in the classroom'
Place-for-Standards	'read and write at the college level'
Contained-as-Part	'create critical minds in the classroom' (where minds stand for the whole person)
Entity-for-Standard-Practices	'a writing course that is designed to build on your strengths as... writers'.

9. Conclusion

Parting from a biased view, that discourses can never be neutral and are always tainted with ideologies, we made use of critical discourse analysis to identify metaphors and metonymies in educational texts including syllabi, teaching philosophies and assignment sheets within a composition program in the US. We were able to demonstrate how the discourses that circulate in the field of education are also present in texts that are used at our own local institution, proving once more that texts are never a product of our own making, but are a response to more general trends in our fields and in the marketplace.

In spite of the fact that instructors are apparently given the 'freedom' to modify the model syllabus and construct their own assignment sheets, key concepts and assumptions remain mostly unquestioned. That is the case of the view that language is a mere reflection of the reality and writing reflects it ('Writing as mirror'); that meaning is blurred ('Writing as focus') or hidden in the texts ('Writing as discovery/exploration'), rather than actively constructed or reconstructed through semiosis, a more complex phenomenon which includes cognitive and social activity; that the writing that is done inside the college classrooms is superior to other types of writing ('Writing as height/upward movement' and 'Good is up, place-for-standard' metonymy); that learning writing is a linear process that follows a given order and steps ('Writing as development and process'), and is best done by discriminating discrete skills and techniques ('Writing as skills and techniques'). Writing and the teaching of writing in these terms correspond to and reinforce prevailing discourse practices in education such as the *technologization* and the *commodification* of discourse. All of these discourses support the ideas of standardization which prevail in the current trends of American education at all levels.

As Fairclough (1992) argues, there is an army of people that have done research into language practices, are redesigning them and training personnel in these practices. Institutions of higher education are naturally involved in this process due to their research tradition and the constant flow of clients. Writing courses are undoubtedly a space for teaching how to be effective and successful in using the language, which forms are more acceptable than others, what is worthwhile learning and what not. It is then necessary to problematize the instructional discourses and become aware of the way metaphors and metonymies shape our understanding of language practices.

Metaphors and metonymies in the analyzed documents seem then to correspond to the prevailing orders of discourse in our days, the notions, ideas, and beliefs that are held as truth by the institution.

We do not know, however, to what extent these are also part and parcel of the instructor's trajectory, identity and ideologies. The methodology used entailed only textual analysis. The instructors were not interviewed to corroborate to what extent they were aware of the adhesions they were making by resorting to the discourses they chose to use in their documents. Neither do we know to what extent teachers would individually be able to engage in emancipatory discourses about writing, were they

able to perceive that language use is in fact a form of submission. After all, language use in the academy is strictly regimented, and creative, non-prestigious, non-efficient forms are often discarded, as are their users. In the college setting, not learning to use the written language as a way to exercise power would seem by many to be a contradiction. We can only testify to our own surprise to discover that our academic and apparently objective language is full of metaphors and metonymies and that in many ways we may also be inadvertently imposing a view of writing which may not be appropriate to a number of our students, contributing to the exaltation of writing practices in universities, to the turning of writing into a technology that has to respond to standards dictated by effectiveness, ease or market demands. Janks and Ivanic (1992) propose Critical Language Awareness, that is, raised consciousness and contestation, as a way to counter the prevailing 'common sense'. Understanding the consequences of adhering to received language practices as well as realizing that there are other options would be an initial step in this direction and a step beyond the analysis we present here.

In sum, we found reproduction and homogenization of discourses from the official educational policies to the documents used in the composition classroom. And as scholars who are responsible in part for the education of undergraduate students, we feel satisfaction at the humbling experience of recognizing our own language as biased and ideological, and being able to take distance as a premise to start new discourses.

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