The growth of voice: Expanding possibilities for representing self in research writing

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ABSTRACT: *Novice researchers are expected to participate through writing in the particular discourse community in which their research is located, yet if they come from other languages and other academic cultures and traditions than those of the education provider, they may experience the process of writing as the process of silencing their voices. Many supervisors of such researchers face the dilemma of encouraging compliance with the dominant conventions – opting thus for the safety of homogeneity – or of fostering greater diversity in voice and discourse organisation, opting thus for the risk of negative reader response. Through retrospective and introspective reflections by the authors, using sociocultural and postcolonial perspectives on academic writing, we explore the processes we used in negotiating Ha's representation of self in her novice research writing. We look in particular at the roles a supervisor and student can play in helping a writer to make informed choices about ways of making meaning that satisfy her intentions, so that the writer's own voice can grow. We also trace how this initiative contributed to a gradual process of recognition of greater diversity in writing by the academic community in the institution where we work, and discuss how this represents an ethical approach to academic writing.*

KEYWORDS: *Affect, ethics, negotiating identity representations, research writing, thirdspace.*

Word Quilt
No artifice is this
It is a true design
from here and there, within without,
woven
(never joined by stitches)
till the patches
and their borders
till the voices
and their histories
dance joyously
together

INTRODUCTION

Writing within, between and across boundaries is like the making of a quilt. The whole is so often greater than the sum of the parts. It is an entity to be appreciated though its impact depends upon the expectations of the reader and the echoes of other texts in the mind of this reader as much as it does on the craft of the writer. It is an

investment in time, effort and of the self. Academic writing is no different. We wish to explore how such a quilt can be made to the satisfaction of its sewer (if this can ever be so) as well as its viewers, and how the making of each quilt can change expectations of what a quilt can be.

To be more explicit, we trace in some detail the ways in which such changes were wrought for a young scholar, Ha, originally educated in Vietnam and then in Australia for postgraduate studies. Her career in academic research writing is now well established and she lives and works as an academic in Australia. We explore the processes we (Rosemary as supervisor and Ha as student) used in negotiating Ha's representation of self in her novice research writing. We look in particular at the roles a supervisor and student can play in helping a writer to make informed choices about ways of making meaning that satisfy her intentions, so that the writer's voice can grow. We also trace how this initiative contributed to an already developing, albeit gradually, process of recognition of greater diversity in writing by the academic community in the institution where we work, and discuss how this represents an ethical approach to academic writing.

To make sense of Ha's writing and its relation to her sense of herself as a novice researcher, and to identify aspects of theory and pedagogy that would support our understandings of the development of academic literacy (both for the student writer and the wider discourse community), we draw on socio-cultural and postcolonial theorisations of discursive practice.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Our work is based on the sequence of ideas outlined (in broad brushstokes) below then discussed in greater detail. Discourse communities tend to position us as insiders (knowers) or outsiders (not knowers), and thus conserve members' identity by demanding conformity. Through their literate practices they socialise us and shape our knowledge in political and ideological ways. These practices are full of contradictions. Ironically, literacy practices in the academy (of many Western universities) are ideologically underpinned by values of democracy and individualism, yet often deny the individual's right to write based on other norms. They ostensibly promote a critical approach to knowledge, yet frown on heterogeneity. In effect they thus eschew the understandings of the production of language and text as a dialogic, dynamic process where diversity is the norm.

Given this understanding of the interdiscursivity in writing, the insight into the affective and intellectual investment research writers have in their ownership of the meanings they communicate, and the fact that people engaged in the literacy practices of research writing come from an endless variety of linguistic, philosophical, political, sociocultural and disciplinary contexts, we need to emphasise this dialogic characteristic and make a space within which it can flourish. This has been called a "third space" by Homi Bhabha (1990, p. 211), referring to a space where the process of hybridisation "enables other positions to emerge". As "Thirdspace" it is described as a "space in between self and the Other" (Kostogriz, 2005, p. 193). We wish to explore the pedagogical practices (albeit "small" ones) that allow diversity to grow in this thirdspace, which we can all inhabit.

Discourse communities and the shaping of literacy practices

James Gee (1996, 1999) shows how discourse communities (such as educational psychologists or biker gangs) enact beliefs and attitudes towards others and towards knowledge in their language use and behaviour. He reveals how literacies and their associated pedagogies can position novices as deficient rather than knowing. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) similarly emphasise that the "artifacts we use to construct our worlds and mediate our relationships to these worlds" are created by others (p. 171) Thus, when we cross geo-political, cultural and community borders, we may face conflict, and find ourselves trying out new ways to mean. They suggest that developing "new ways to mean" involves restructuring the self "in line with the new set of conventions and social relationships sanctioned by the new community" (p. 172). However, this view fails to see the generative possibilities of a more dynamic understanding of the nature of discursive participation.

Lillis (1997) argues that "the dominant conventions underlying the production of texts in academia work towards constraining" novice researchers' attempts to "take a more active control over their meaning making, and, hence, the voices they wish to make heard" (p. 185). Lin, Wang, Akamatsu and Riazi (2002) reveal what they call the "familiar" story of how their identities as expressive, confident communicators in English (which they had learnt as a foreign language) were reshaped to place them as inferior, "other", when they studied in Canada. Their experience of subtractive alterity coloured their confidence in themselves as knowers.

Like Lin and her co-authors, novice researchers are expected to participate through writing in the particular discourse community in which their research is located, yet, as numerous researchers show, if they come from other languages and other academic cultures and traditions than those of the education provider, they may experience the process of writing as the process of silencing their ways of knowing and expressing knowledge, their voices (Cadman, 2002; Ingleton & Cadman, 2002; Lillis, 1997; Lin et al., 2002; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Schmitt, 2005).

From accounts like these it is clear that reading and writing are social acts that are often in essence political in that they incorporate relations of power. Academic research discourses are no exception. They play out the politics of knowing (who knows what; who can say what; how we can say it) and the politics of presenting knowledge (who knows how to argue, reference, be relevant, in specific ways). They also participate in the politics of English as a global language, where power (or superiority) is conferred through knowing how to use English in particular ways (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phan, 2005; Phillipson, 1992).

Affect and the investment of self

Doing research is an act of faith in our ability to add to knowledge, or to transform knowledge, as a contribution to the ways in which others might know. This is a heavy burden for anyone to assume, yet, as Johnson, Lee and Green (2000) argue, novice researchers in Australia are subjected to "pedagogical technologies of 'supervision' and of 'study'" which promote a personalised and protracted supervisory relationship and which are characterised by the "experience of isolation and abjection" (p. 136) aimed at promoting independence and autonomy. Cadman (1997) discusses the

prevalence of metaphors of struggle and loss – and being lost – that appear constantly in published and unpublished accounts of international (and local) research students' experiences of writing about their research in a variety of English they feel they do not own. She argues in this and other research (Ingleton & Cadman, 2002) that this sense of loss for student researchers, of not being the skilled person they once felt themselves to be, indicates that there is a direct relationship between language performance and sense of self.

Similar experiences and feelings amongst mature, novice academic writers have been reported by Ivanič (1997; 2005) in her landmark work on writing and identity. For Ivanič (2005, p. 392), people's identities are "*discoursally constructed* by the communicative resources on which they draw" and this process is affected by social factors, which mediate "who he or she *can be* in his or her social context". Moreover, one's identity "is always constructed in relation to the identities of others" (p. 392). Her works take account of the investment writers have in making meaning their own. Kanno and Norton (2003, p. 241) likewise point out the importance of the emotional investment learners have in their engagement in their learning spaces, desirous as they are of belonging to their "imagined community".

Ivanič's discussion, along with her accounts of her research participants' negotiation of these discourses, are helpful in thinking about international students' writing. Her dimensions of writer identity, namely authorial self, autobiographical self, discoursal self and the relational dimension (Ivanič, 2005), are useful to understand a writer's representation of self in her writing, although we propose that there is a need to pay even more attention to the affective and socio-political investments that students have in writing when English is an additional language.

Voice and self-representation

Ivanič's notion of writer identity and self-representation in writing is related to the concept of "voice" used by many writers (Ivanič, 2005, p. 400). She refers to voice as related to the "strength with which the writer comes over as the author of the text" (p. 400). This view is not unproblematic, as shown by Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999, p. 48), who argue that "voice" as a concept is imbued with an ideology aligned with particular cultures that value "linguistic behaviour which is *clear, overt, expressive, and even assertive* and *demonstrative*", as compared with the values espoused by a much larger community for "*subtle, interpretive, interdependent, non-assertive*" characteristics. They see "voice" as a term suffused with the values of individualism. Nevertheless, we argue here that the notion of self-representation does not assume a strident voice, nor does it assume a clearly defined persona. This is only one of the possibilities. What we do wish to emphasise is the ways in which writing is always interdiscursive, and reverberates for both writer and readers with multiple voices.

Dialogic processes, intertextuality and changing products in the thirdspace

Mikhael Bakhtin (1981, 1986) argues that the production and processing of language and the way we view the world via language are primarily and endlessly responsive to and replete with the voices of others; making meaning is a dynamic and *dialogic* process, and variety of voice is the norm. Texts (both written and read) are always "populated" with one's own intentions (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293) as well as with the

voices of other texts, and are thus intertextual (see also Chandrasoma, Thompson & Pennycook, 2004 for the ways intertextuality can work). Bakhtin sees language as ideologically saturated (1981, p. 271), and language use as occurring within the creative tensions between normalising influences and almost anarchical "heteroglossia" or multi-voicedness. As such, writing (and reading) can be regarded as inevitably acts of intertextuality, in a generative rather than a simply reproductive way. Bazerman and Prior (2005) emphasise the value of writing as richly intertextual and hybrid, while researchers such as Currie (2001) and Pennycook (2001) remind us to take account of the power relations in the production of text. These understandings of written communication are fundamental to pedagogies that can see writing across cultures and disciplines as generative rather than as deficient, yet avoid being naïve and apolitical.

Many researchers (for exammple, Cadman, 2002; Currie, 2001; Ivanič, 2005; Kramsch, 1993; Kostogriz, 2005; Lea & Stierer, 2000; Lillis, 1997) discuss these notions of writing in relation to academic environments, and call for pedagogies of literacy that do more than make expectations explicit, that take account of social and institutional relationships and look critically at how language use and social meanings are related. They see the process as one of negotiating different (sometimes conflicting) practices.

In exploring the roles of context and culture in learning additional language(s), Kramsch (1993) argues that the many stories of "border-crossing", of being "betwixt and between" (p. 234) in cultural encounters, help users of more than one language "find for themselves this third place they can call their own" (p. 257). Drawing on Michel de Certeau's (1984, p. 18, cited in Kramsch, 1993, p. 237) observations that we use social and cultural systems by "constructing *our* space within and against *their* place, of speaking *our* meanings with *their* language", Kramsch sees this intercultural third space between the one owned by a new culture and the one we feel we belong to (but see with new eyes) as one in which we construct our voice. We learn, live and become literate in languages to make both social and personal meanings, which may question the meanings we had before and those of the new community. Thus, inhabiting this third place or space, Kramsch notes, though generative, is full of conflicts, and can be "at once an elating and deeply troubling experience" (p. 234). Kramsch offers guidelines for teachers for a "critical foreign language pedagogy" (p. 244); among other practices, she exhorts awareness of and responsiveness to global and local contexts of communication and educational practice, the ability to listen, and the need to negotiate the students' appropriation of language "for their own purposes" (p. 247) while still ensuring they understand the expectations of language use in the sociocultural context.

Kostogriz (2005, pp. 202-203) also advocates a pedagogy that actively promotes "productive-transformative activities" rather than ones working merely towards reproduction. This he calls a "Thirdspace pedagogy", which he defines as a *critical pedagogy of space"* (p. 203, italics in the original), and which he sees as being "able to take into account both the multiple and contested nature of literacy learning in multicultural classrooms and intercultural innovations in meaning- and identity-making" (p. 203).

The notion of respect, we argue, is implicit in the ethics of a thirdspace approach to literacy education. Respect requires that there be an understanding that the terms of communication and knowledge are heterogeneous, not one-sided (Sennett, 2004). This requires an acknowledgement of difference, but also, as we see it, a mutuality of attentiveness. Sennett argues that being respectful of others on their own (cultural) terms does not mean distancing or remaining distanced for "fear of offending" (p. 21). Rather, it means forging connections (p. 37). This connectedness, as Cadman and Hai (2001) show is central to positive researcher identity.

OUR DESIGN

We felt that we needed to tell our own narratives, not of our lives, but of our experiences as they contributed to the processes of supervision and writing. Narratives, as stories we tell, are usually constructed and communicated to serve a purpose. In the words of Lawler, we hope our brief stories will help us and the reader make sense of our world and help us to "connect together past and present, self and other" (2002, p. 242). We present these narratives first (although we wrote them after doing the "memory work" described below), to frame our exploration of our processes of negotiation in writing.

These processes are then explored through what Haug et al. (1999) call "memory work". Memory work is the telling of stories, lived experience as it is reconstructed in memory. It liberates us from being represented by the words of others bearing the "criteria of an alien culture" and permits us to tell stories that "give an account of the things we have actually done" (p. 43). Although Haug et al. (1999) advocate the use of memory work as a means for a group of people to collectively make clear to themselves, through the interweaving of each others' ideas, the ways in which the social affects experience, we used it in our study to check and differentiate our shared and distinctive senses of the experience of negotiating discourse, establishing authorial self, and the meaning we gave to our actions.

In 2001, we used the product of writing, Ha's Masters thesis, written in 1999, as a stimulus for this memory work, selecting sections we each felt were sites of negotiation of writing at the time of supervision, and sites of particular significance in the shaping of Ha's authorial voice. We then discussed our perceptions of what happened, of what we had thought and felt at the time. This lengthy discussion was audiotaped and transcribed. Subsequently – also in 2001 – Ha and Rosemary each wrote a reflective piece exploring what they felt had been happening in Ha's writing.

To add another layer to this, we have represented these accounts now, five years later, and described the repercussions of what we learned then for our current practices as writers and literacy educators. Although we acknowledge that memory is shaped by the present, as much as or perhaps more than by any authentic sense of the past, we argue that situations re-narratised are important in our present, for it is the ways we give meaning to our perceived actions that provide the basis for our future actions. What we feel we did when we wrote, will inform our future writing.

THE NARRATIVES

In the following, Ha reflects on how her research writing was and still is related to her sense of self, and Rosemary discusses how she sees her teaching as respecting Ha's right to assert her authorial self.

Ha: the importance of writing with my own voice (written in 2001)

I am a Vietnamese, who is doing her PhD in an Australian university and communicating with the intellectual community in English. Vietnamese is my mother tongue, the language I have been brought up with and educated in, whereas English is a foreign language I have been using most for my recent education. I "took risks" in writing in two voices, one my Vietnamese self and the other my English self (I acknowledge that this is an oversimplification), in order to create my own voice in academic writing while I was writing my Master thesis on "Different voices: writers' comparisons of English and Vietnamese academic writing". By doing so, I still succeeded in sending my message to the examiners without silencing my own voice, which has been developed through my experiences in writing in both languages. Such integration might be a worthwhile example of how students of English as Foreign Language may be encouraged to develop their own styles of global communication in English.

For me, writing is an act of deep and conscious thinking. But more than that, it is an expression of self within and beyond the boundaries of discourse and culture. Writing across cultures gives writers even more space to move in between, yet it limits the development of personal voices due to uncertainties and risks writers may have if crossing the borders unpersuasively. Writers often face confusion as they find themselves between discourses of writing, feeling unsafe if they do not follow strictly the target language's writing norms. How culture and discourse influence one's writing have been pursued and explored by many researchers (Farrell, 1997; Lillis, 1997; Phan Le Ha, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Although different researchers approach the issue in different ways, they seem to agree with each other that writing is heavily influenced and determined by the discourses and cultures one is surrounded with and educated in. Nonetheless, how one is exposed to the world and cross-cultural experiences also has an impact on the way one writes. Even when people share "cultural codes" (Hall, 1997, p. 4), it is not guaranteed that members of the same culture would interpret the world in exactly the same ways. This leaves room for individuals' identities to get into their big cultural "loop' and assert their positions. Thus, meanings, which individuals construct, are not only shaped by their cultural practices, but also reflect their own identities, for example, meanings constructed from gender, religion or age perspectives. So writing is a two-way process, practised within the intimate relationship between language(s) and culture(s) discussed by Hall (1997) and many others.

But the story is not that simple. Writing in two tongues is like a two-edged knife. If one can handle it skilfully, one can achieve many purposes; otherwise one will cut oneself. Put differently, one will become one's own victim, and will hear the accusation: "you are illiterate in academic writing" or "you are not like us". Yes, thesis examiners assume certain ways of writing, ways of being "people like us" (Gee, 1996, p. viii). But this argument does not suggest one should silence one's voice and mechanically follow the academic English writing norms.

For me, being invisible in my own writing is impossible, because writing gives me a sense of identity. I often tell myself that everyone has his/her own way of writing and so do I. When people write, they think. It is a process of continual thinking,

rethinking, structuring and restructuring. I think it is particularly important to understand that writing is not only the work of the mind but it is also the work of the heart and the work of the soul. This suggests that writing is one way of proclaiming one's identity. When I read my writing, I can really see how my understandings are interwoven with both the outside world and my own world. These two worlds are in fact not separate. They complement each other and when two become one, I find that I write with passion.

In my writing I affirm my legitimate right not to be colonised by norms that alienate my writing from myself, the self that constantly develops side by side with the process of making meanings. My recent involvement with studies about the discourses of colonialism, its current active forms, and postcolonial English (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998, 2001; Phillipson, 1992) has reinforced my will and given reasons to my desire to boost my own voices in writing. Now I understand more clearly why some stereotypes die hard, and therefore, I want to use my writing as a weapon to disrupt misleading and harmful ones. I am myself and therefore my writing must be mine.

Rosemary: seeking a pedagogy for negotiating representation of self in research writing (written in 2001)

I teach academic writing in an Education faculty. I have done so for more than a decade now. I also supervise students researching various aspects of English language teaching. By telling you this, I wish to claim a degree of authority based on my experience. Many of the students I work with are international students, most of whom have experienced learning and writing in more than one language. I, too, speak and write in more than one language. As an academic working in this field, I have been influenced by what Pennycook (extrapolating his argument in his 2001 book) might call the falsely emancipatory discourses of English for Academic Purposes, pervaded by the essentialising attitudes of colonialism and linguistic imperialism: English academic writing is relevant, reasoned, concise; "Asian" writing is repetitive, circular, florid; educators need to teach their international students OUR new (to them, not to us) ways of writing….and so on.

Equally, I have been influenced by the emancipatory discourses of critical literacy (CL), critical language awareness (CLA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA), which build on Paolo Freire's call to effect social change by imposing the voices of the "oppressed", or which conversely aim to provide students with access to powerful discourses (Pennycook, 2001, p. 103). I felt a little uneasy with these discourses, because, like Lin et al. 2002, I have loved reading and writing in my own spaces amongst the discourses of three languages. To me, writing and speaking more than one language has always given me a sense of richness and specialness. I did not want to merely imitate others, but rather to weave their words in with mine – why shouldn't this be the same for the writers I had to teach? Why indeed should I, as an educator, tell expert writers (my students) that their ways of writing are inappropriate? How would I know what I might value in their writing if I silence the voices they value? How could I help students feel good about their thinking, their researching and their writing, to negotiate the discourses surrounding them in ways that are generative of their own spaces, but spaces that would be recognised by the discourse community?

In light of these feelings, I welcomed approaches to teaching academic literacy that were more critically aware of the ways language can position us, of the assumptions and values that lie behind language use, of the multiplicity of readings of written

discourse (for example, Benesch, 2001; Clark, 1992; Gee, 1999; Fairclough, 1992; Lea & Stierer, 2000; Lea & Street, 2000; Lillis, 1997; Pennycook, 2001), but also of the ways we can bring variety into the genre/discourse. I have tried to encourage students to see their academic writing as consciously crafted, political, public, but above all as their own. I am conscious that my view of the value of hybrid discourses is not shared by many academics – power is still invested in the management of seemingly immutable, disciplinary genres. I am equally conscious that many students might not want to create new voices but rather confirm their "belonging" to a specific community on its terms. I am wary of romanticising the value of hybridity. I try to ensure that student writers learn to hypothesise the responses of some at least of their readers, and that they are clear about the expectations of their examiner-readers that I feel are not likely to be negotiable. I prefer to work towards the writer's own positive feelings about the text being crafted.

When I began to work with Ha, I was aware of the need for an appropriate pedagogy, yet I think I worked mainly by instinct. Ha had a strong desire to control her own identity as a researcher and writer. I responded to this by letting her have a freer hand in expressing her personal experience and her passionate beliefs in her initial drafts, and as it turned out in her final thesis. To tell you the truth, she probably would have done this anyway, though I think she would have understood less well the challenges this presented to the then current discourses of the field. I also constrained her writing, imposing the knowledge values of the local education discourse by consistently demanding she use advance organisers, state arguments explicitly in topic sentences, and justify her use of her own experience as evidence. I acted as the responsive voices of hypothetical readers. We discussed the reasons for including parts of the writing, and the ways to make them fit with the constraining conventions and values and the new space's intentions and values. But these pedagogical moves of mine were not seen by Ha to be as clearly defined as I thought they were. She sees herself in retrospect as imposing her own writer's intentions, and as being mostly aware of doing so. She also sees herself as negotiating her own representation of herself in her writing. She negotiated this with me, but more importantly also with the voices/demands of the discipline, which she refused to accept as reified, and the imagined voices of her readers. I see this as healthy. I feel that there has been a successful process of negotiation of language use to reflect the identity Ha wanted.

We now discuss some of the results of this process.

HA'S WRITING IN THE THIRDSPACE

We look at two excerpts from Ha's thesis text as an example of how she, as a novice researcher, negotiated for herself (and with Rosemary) a "third space", or rather a new space, and how this opened up new possibilities for selfhood in the discourses in which she worked. We also wanted to know what it meant to her to be writing in new spaces. In looking at these excerpts we discuss our responses to the following questions:

- In what way is this writing in a new space?
- Why was it important to Ha? How did she feel about this?
- How does Ha feel as a writer now?
- What are the pedagogical issues?
- How can supervisors and students help writers' voices grow?

Ha reflects through spoken discussion and written reflection on two aspects of voice and its growth in her writing choices. One is her resistance to being "colonised" by the discourse within which she writes, and the other is her inclusion of a voice of "soft negotiation", which she values as a way of showing what she sees as her Vietnamese self. We try to show the ways in which Rosemary and Ha negotiated the ways these aspects were presented.

Refusing to "hide": emotional investment in asserting the validity of personal experience

Ha selected the second paragraph of her introduction to her thesis as writing in which she actively represented herself. At the time, Rosemary had identified the following passage (not to Ha) as somewhat "risky", given the focus in the conventions in this field on more impersonal arguments, preferably drawn from the research literature or from institutional needs or requirements.

> From my own experience as a Vietnamese postgraduate in the Faculty of Education in an Australian university I found that academic writing caused me some unexpected problems when I first commenced the course in 1998. This can be explained by the mismatch between my perception of academic writing influenced by the Vietnamese cultural norms, the application of these into an English essay, and the classical norms in English academic writing required in my writing performance in Australia. Looking back at some of my first assignments I wrote for the subjects I took in the first semester, I can see differences between the Vietnamese and the English writing styles. For me, these differences resided in organisation of discourse; language and content related to the particular discourse forms; politeness and relevance; style (eg, use of metaphor, rhetorical questions); the nature of evidence; referencing, and the expectations regarding the degree of a writer's own input. Comments on these assignments from my lecturers made me think about my writing seriously. Such comments included statements like "Your discussion…is most interesting. However, it would be useful to think more about what and how you could use theories introduced within the course. You need to think a bit more about what theories are being introduced in your reading…and then deciding what your main arguments will be in relation to these theories" … or "Your ideas are confused and you have not understood the assignment altogether", or "your discussion does not make sense". Intellectually, there was nothing wrong with my understanding or perceptions of the particular knowledge, or theory in question. Nor was my English inadequate. Rather, what I lacked at the time was the assumed "natural" way of writing (the English way influencing English native-speakers). "My way" of writing was not highly appreciated within the Australian cultural framework.

Rosemary was concerned, because even though Ha had preceded this segment with a more impersonal argument based on the "evidence" provided by published research, she was using the first person (unusual at the time) and also a highly personalised argument based on her own experience, with strong claims about the value of her own written account of her thinking. We discussed these aspects of the text and, on Rosemary's request, Ha eliminated information that could identify the subject she had studied and explicitly pointed out the ways in which differences in writing were manifested: "For me, these differences resided in organisation of discourse … writer's own input."

Originally, these differences were first pointed out much later in her thesis. While the lecturer's responses she refers to might have been used for any argument which appeared to have shown inadequate use of theory, Ha wanted to make the point that her lecturer may not have recognised her use of and links to theory because of the sequence of ideas in her organisation of text. The links were there, but not where expected. Since she was making this point, Rosemary decided that this strong personal claim early in the writing with an additional hint as to why this was legitimate would in fact reinforce the very points Ha was making about the need for readers to actively seek links between textual elements. In this way, we negotiated a thirdspace for Ha's writing, a space she felt comfortable with at the time.

In initial retrospect in our oral discussion, Ha commented:

> *I wanted to let them see that I myself could have problems in academic writing in English and also to let the reader know that the way I write is not necessarily wrong or not proper….I was really not only upset, but irritated by the way writers commented on our writing, not all of it but I mean Asian students' writing. I thought it was not fair, and I really wanted to show them that we have our own way of writing and our reasons. We have our own values. That's why, even though I write in English and my readers or my examiners are English-speaking people, I don't want to hide my values, I don't want to hide, no matter how they will judge it.*

These words reveal the emotional investment in asserting the legitimate presence in academic writing of the autobiographical self and personal experience which are Ivanič's (1995, 1997, 2005) characteristics of writer identity. We should not ignore the passion in such words. They do, of course – and at all times in Ha's writing this is so – have the conventional "virtue" (in terms of local academic norms in the discipline) of being relevant, directly related to her focus of interest. It is equally interesting to see how she invokes solidarity with a "community" of "Asian writers" as a way of characterising her "resistance" to cultural hegemony. Ha argues that she sees the irony in this homogenisation of diverse cultures under one name, 'Asian', but uses it in an act of resistance and appropriation, marking the discourse of others as her own, with her own meanings and positive valuations. Language, culture and values in the thirdspace may indeed be as diverse, conflictual and generative as Kramsch (1993, 2004) argues.

Ha looks beyond the affective aspect of the personal, though, as she elaborates on the investment in this paragraph in her thesis. She shows how her personal educational and cultural histories contribute to both form and content in her writing.

> *This thesis has a lot to do with, not only with academic knowledge, but it has a lot to do with socio-political knowledge. As you know I'm from the international relations background and I'm very interested in this particular transfer of values. I wanted to appeal directly to readers to respect what I know and to attract the readers to the things I know. And also I really wanted them to know more about the Vietnamese culture, the Vietnamese way.*

She also comments on her use of the personal as an act of resistance:

> *I tell you why I wrote my way – just to show my anger. No, true, I'm not happy with a lot of stereotypes!*

Ha is clearly locating herself in the writing, and her identity includes her Vietnameseness on her own terms, not as represented by others. In further, written retrospect, Ha explores what this aspect of her writing meant to her. She saw it as a double refusal of being colonised.

> *Writing to me is not a new concept or a recent practice. It is my childhood friend, my own world of interesting secrets and surprises, my hobby, my love, and above all, **my identity**. My writing is consistently elaborated and crafted from my grandmother's lullabies, idiomatic expressions and fairy tales, from my preference in expressing myself with words woven in papers, from what I have been taught at school and from what I have experienced in life. My writing in English has also become part of myself, a part that can not be separated. English and its underlying values have mingled with my other values to make my writing mine. I now communicate in two languages, but am not limited to only two cultures. Rather, given the advantages of the international English, I am communicating with the whole world, in the voice of a Vietnamese who also sees herself as an international citizen. But I always find English too narrow and not delicate enough for my knowledge, my passion and my identity to blossom and develop. This is my Vietnamese part that has filled in this gap. My English writing, thus, sometimes constitutes a Vietnamese input under an English appearance and vice versa. It may also be presented with both English and Vietnamese in its look and content. But most importantly, it has my own creativity that makes a distinctive flavour, and my experiences that assert my authority as a writer.*

> *Completing two Bachelor degrees in Vietnam, one International Relations and the other one Language, I enthusiastically started my postgraduate course in Australia with strong confidence in writing. However, the literature in cross-cultural adjustments of Asian students knocked me down. Fortunately, it did not keep me down; it woke me up and couldn't make me heavily dependent on the English academic writing norms. Again, my confidence and my self-esteem helped me stand up and motivated me to take some action. I knew it was the first step and I would be in trouble if I proposed any provocative arguments that went against the norms. So I had to find a way that was wise enough to protect me and at the same time shed light for the intellectual community about how Vietnamese postgraduate students wrote academic English. I wanted to listen to a number of Vietnamese writers' voices and make them widely heard. I was actually in the same position as my participants then. Thus, apart from the data, I also wrote my thesis from my experiences as a writer in both languages and as a writer who felt insulted and angry because her valuable and beautiful conventions in writing had been disregarded and misinterpreted by many Australian academics. So, my anger, motivation and confidence together with my desire to promote the Vietnamese way of writing were all interlinked with the required norms and expected performances in English academic writing. In doing so, I expressed myself to a degree that might be risky, as Rosemary – my supervisor – was worried. But I was very confident that I would send the message through, and I did. Of course, I also did things that would help my writing to speak in a harmonious voice to the academic readers. Rosemary and I worked out what would help to achieve this.*

> *I have now realised more consciously how useful and valuable writing in two tongues is to my creation and choice making. If the English norms give me the privilege to assert myself with the use of constant "I", and spell out my intentions in "maps" then the Vietnamese norms legitimise my employment of poetic language and create a subtle flow in writing. As the English norms require me to explain everything explicitly, why do I have to hide my emotional feelings as well as show my*

engagement with the topic? Conversely, I think I did conform to the norms but I did it in my own way. It looks conventional but it reads personal too.

In my writing I assert my legitimate right not to be colonised by norms that alienate my writing from myself, the self that constantly develops side by side with the process of making meanings.

The voice of "soft negotiation"

In this section, Ha discusses the conclusion of her thesis. She identifies the letter (see below) at the end of her concluding chapter as another part of her thesis where she is writing in her own space, but where she is influenced by what she regards as academic writing and by the value (a personal one she feels) of a "soft" kind of social negotiation. She observed that the writing of diplomatic letters to a more powerful entity to smooth the course of conflict resolution has long been a tradition in her society. She reminded Rosemary that her studies in international relations inhabit her mind as Vietnam does her heart and writing her fascination.

Dear Lecturer,

I am an overseas postgraduate student from Vietnam. I would like to share with you the way I wrote academic Vietnamese essays in my first degree, so that you would have a general understanding of how I write in my language, and would give me explicit instructions about how you expect me to write in your subject.

In Vietnamese universities, we are generally not taught how to write an academic essay. We follow the general structure of an essay, with the introduction, the body, and the conclusion but we have to find our own ways to develop it.

As far as the structure of an essay is concerned, Vietnamese writing prefers "beating around the bush" in an "indirect" and "circular" manner. This can be explained by the characteristic of the Vietnamese people, who value "tactfulness", and implicit reference to things. Thus, long and rather circular introductions are popular in Vietnamese writing, and open-ended conclusions with new arguments added are also preferred. As there are no specific rules for academic essays, Vietnamese writing is seen as "free" with the focus on readers' responsibility to encode a piece of writing. "Flow" in writing in forms of linking or bridging sentences is valued. Although it is indirect and rather "digressive", Vietnamese writing still holds together through the strategies of creating "flow" and always comes to the point at the end.

In terms of styles, Vietnamese writing generally prefers a "flowery" style with beautiful, sophisticated and poetic words influenced by the tendency to symbolism and generalisation of the language.

Vietnamese students do not often show criticism in their writing because of cultural and socio-cultural reasons, which expect students not to reformulate existing knowledge as a sign of respect and politeness in the society. Also, collectivism is important in social relations with the emphasis on "us" and "ours", but not "me" and "my" as reflected in Western individualism.

Referencing is not strictly required in Vietnamese writing, so Vietnamese students do not provide detailed and 'sufficient' references in their writing. This is not considered as "plagiarism" since the society does not set its own rules for people to write.

Above is how I normally write in Vietnamese. I may employ some of these characteristics when I write in English. You may even enjoy some of them, especially those which give my writing an individual 'flavour'. However, you may need to tell me which characteristics conflict with features of academic writing you most value. I would be very grateful if you could give me detailed guidance of how you expect me to write in your subject.

Yours sincerely
Vietnamese postgraduate student

Ha comments on the voice of "soft negotiation":

Vietnam, my country, has had a rich tradition of diplomacy, which has left successive generations with precious diplomatic lessons. Completing a five-year course in International Relations in Vietnam, I have been convinced to admire our ancestors' diplomacy art, the art that has defeated powerful enemies and prevented their further evasions. This very art, on the one hand, strongly affirms our independent united sovereignty, our people's tolerance and desire to live in peace, and our determination to fight for our land. But on the other hand, it makes our enemies realise their wrongness and illegality without making them lose their face. In other words, our diplomatic art enjoys "soft negotiation", and it is our weapon to deal with powerful bullies.

My experience and other Vietnamese students' writing experience in Australia are of the same kind. We are the minority and always under strict judgements of the English academic writing norms. Yet, we have our voices, our identity. My Masters thesis and the way I wrote it would be a really good means of negotiation, in which the negotiation of the legitimacy of my voices was in focus. Thus, I decided to pursue "soft negotiation" from the beginning. Very clearly and proudly I convinced my readers of the values and beauty of Vietnamese writing and its related stories. I wrote in English with a Vietnamese heart, from a sojourner's experience and a non-English speaking background student's wisdom and awareness of how to follow basic and fancy English writing norms. I somehow wanted to play a game, using one's weapon to make one learn and appreciate others. If our ancestors successfully used diplomatic letters to defeat enemies, why should I not write a letter to negotiate with the wider academic audience. The idea came up and I fascinatedly pursued it. The letter was then not only something personal but something academic, something that broke the rules set by strict academic norms.

If I wrote this letter again now, I would be more assertive and ask for my right to be sufficiently considered.

Rosemary felt that the letter itself was a creative way to end a thesis. She had asked Ha to write something that would leave the reader with a strong sense of the research and its significance. Ha's letter certainly achieved this, and we agreed that, while it may homogenise Vietnamese writing and place it in opposition to a homogenised English academic writing, this was a result of the language of resistance. It seemed important to convey a strong and positive sense of the assured yet different ways that Vietnamese writers might realise their arguments. For Ha, this letter was written to serve the political purpose of raising awareness of different, valid ways of writing. In presentations of Ha's research, she invariably received applause for this letter. She had achieved her purpose of "quiet diplomacy" and Rosemary's purpose of a strong ending.

Ha's voices, agency, strategic resistance and appropriation

We both want to emphasise the affective importance as well as the intellectual importance of having a presence in the text. Ha speaks of passion, of anger, of important negotiation. She sees herself as taking risks in just the areas identified by Ivanič (1995) and Hird (1997) as the most common site of "subjectivity" in the writing, those parts in which personal ideas and content are being constructed. It is where her presence is at its most personal that Ha speaks of risk, where she builds her arguments on the basis of personal and vicarious experience. Even so, she sees these risks as set off by the intellectual component of her presence in these sections. Her arguments are germane to the topic and deserve to be heard. Her condition as an "insider" to the matter at hand is, she feels and asserts in her wording, a reason for the legitimacy of the inclusion of personal experience. She also has a personal and political agenda, about which she feels passionate. Making this explicit for herself as well as for her readers was important.

Ha also feels proud of her intellectual engagement with the topic, and her ability to meet the requirements of the local norms. She sees herself as seriously adopting the conventions (for example, the structure of a thesis), but also as using what she calls the "tricks" (eg, advance organisers), and combining these with other aspects of her writing (for example, the passionate bits, the personal arguments, and her prior knowledge). She experiences agency in her writing. Her writing is a clear example of the postcolonial strategies of strategic resistance and appropriation discussed by Pennycook (2001). Ha is rightly proud of her creation, of her writing in the thirdspace.

Self representations

Ivanič's (1995, 1997, 2005) framework of four interrelated aspects of writer identity seems to apply to Ha's writing. Her authorial and discoursal selves have certainly been influenced by her life history, her education, her ethnicity, her status as sojourner; her autobiographical self is evident in both text and reflections. The conventions of the thesis have also confined (only to a degree) who she is allowed to be in the text, though she changes the borders of these confines. Her authorial presence is signalled predominantly by the use of "I", though this also signals an authoritative presence when she is drawing on insider experience. She positions herself authoritatively towards other writers through the use of strategic citations from her own experience, modifiers such as "strongly", "not highly", "warmly", gently speculative language such as, "Nevertheless, I wonder whether …", and the use of the first person. She also uses the impersonal language common in literature reviews, together with the customary use of discourse markers such as conjunctions to indicate agreement and disagreement. Still following the local conventions, she makes explicit statements of agreement/disagreement, and explicit statements about her purposes and arguments. Ha's voice(s), appropriated and made her own, resound in her content as well as in the form of her writing.

Rosemary sees Ha as an extraordinarily aware writer. She is also confident, proud of her creations; her teachers have always approved of her ways with words. Perhaps because of this awareness, Rosemary has used her writing in workshops on writing as an example (only one of several, though, so as not to make it a perceived norm) of

how one can write in new spaces in ways that do not ignore the power issues in discourse production. Ha wrote for her examiners, took informed risks, but also "conformed". More importantly, she enjoyed doing so, and felt that she had been true to herself. Ha continues inhabiting third spaces, experimenting with diverse ways of writing in academic publications.

Changing expectations of discursive practices

Writing from the present (the year 2006), both of us feel that there have been substantial changes in the ways the academics in our local academy accept diversity in writing, in particular with respect to discoursal organisation, the explicitness of assertion of self in the writing, the authority of feeling in experience, and the use of metaphor. Certainly, students have begun to feel freer to choose erstwhile unvalued ways of presenting ideas. They do so with some temerity, but gain confidence as they see the products of others and note the diversity in these. The "narrative turn" (Denzin, 2004) in education writing, which encourages "storied" experience, has contributed greatly to this, but in our experience, the personal narratives of how writers have made the decisions about their own writing have been just as influential in helping student writers to feel they can make choices about their representation of themselves in their texts.

As we are writing this paper, we are respectfully "negotiating" with each other to create a mutually complementary voice that signifies our positions in the academic world and simultaneously allows our identities to blossom to the full. With our awareness of the dynamic change in the English reader's mind, we can enjoy this creativity even further. Writing is a never-endingly creative process, and writing a thesis or a journal article would encourage a creative mind. This resembles Brophy's (2006) ideas, and opens more windows made of different "materials" and designed by different "artists" to make sense of this globalising yet "glocalised" world.

NEGOTIATING REPRESENTATION OF SELF IN RESEARCH WRITING: CRITICAL, RESPECTFUL PEDAGOGY WITH ATTENTION TO FEELINGS

In the discussions on critical language awareness and critical literacy pedagogies throughout the 1990s and into the new century, educators have promoted various approaches to teaching writing to both first and second language learners (Benesch, 2001; Clark, 1992; Fairclough, 1992; Hird, 1997; Ivanič, 1995, 1997, 2005; Kamler, 2001; Kostogriz, 2005; Kramsch, 1993; Lillis, 1997; Luke et al., 1994; Pennycook, 2001). Most of these approaches recommend an explicit and critical pedagogy, which: attempts to develop in students an awareness of social and power relationships in text; explores the values and representations of writers in locally and internationally produced texts; provides many opportunities for reader responses to writers' products; draws on an eclectic range of approaches (for example, genre, process, linguistic), and explores the issue of identity in writing. Such a pedagogy must work from the principles that change in discourse is generative and that in all supervisor-student interactions, students' sense of self needs to be taken account of. They must be respectful encounters.

To be respectful, critical pedagogies of writing need to pay more attention to the affective as well as the intellectual dimensions of voice and writer identity as they relate to ownership of the writing and to form and content. The question, "Who are you allowed to be in the writing?" (Clark, 1992; Luke et al., 1994) is often asked. Despite the emphasis on writer identity, the questions, "Who do you want to be in the writing and how and why?" appear less frequently, yet they are important for achieving a sense of agency. This is the tension created by the knowledge that it is the writer who has everything to lose if the reader does not recognise the value of the writing. Thus, it appears to us that the most critical job ahead of us is still to educate the educators, and not just the writers. We must find ways of educating each other (as teachers, supervisors and examiners) to savour the richness of hybrid texts so that our students' voices can grow, and with them knowledge and discourse possibilities in academic settings.

We argue that our account of negotiating writing is a small example of respectful and thus ethical critical academic literacy practices in academic literacy teaching, which not only encourage writers to shape their own ever-evolving writer identities, but also help generate new texts that extend the possibilities of legitimised voices in academic writing, and allow us to share our knowledge more globally.

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