Negotiating Diversity in English Language Teaching: A Tragedy in Four Acts

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Prologue

Accommodating student diversity, providing spaces to represent their voices, and facilitating the development of more expansive repertoires of communication and knowledge are becoming important in language teaching. Though diversity is touted as a desirable pedagogical goal, there are serious ethical and ideological challenges for teachers in accomplishing it. To begin with, we cannot stereotype the voices and interests of students based on their nationality or ethnicity. The understanding that identities are hybrid and multiple would suggest that the backgrounds and desired identities of our students cannot be easily predicted. Furthermore, identities and values are always in flux. As we design a pedagogy based on certain expectations, we might be surprised to see students' interests changing. More importantly, teachers cannot also be expected to have familiarity with the linguistic and cultural heritage of all their students in contemporary classrooms that feature students from diverse backgrounds. One can assume, therefore, that there are many unknowns in teaching for diversity. For these reasons, based on her own failed experience of helping an international student, Ruth Spack (1997) warns: "Teachers should be careful not to create curricula on unexamined assumptions about what students will need to succeed. … We cannot safely predict what texts and activities will be most beneficial for our students' development" (p. 8).

Increasingly, scholars are arguing that diversity has to be negotiated on an ongoing basis, whether in social or classroom relationships. Rhetorician Krista Ratcliffe (1999) argues that we need a "new code of cross-cultural conduct" for social relationships. She cautions against appropriating the words of others to suit our own cultural frames of reference. In order to adopt a more ethical approach, she advises situating others' words in the total social and cultural context, adopting a reflexive attitude to consider our own predispositions that lead us to understand others in biased ways, adopting a willingness to negotiate meanings with others with patience and tolerance and, most of all, striving for greater understanding in an "ongoing" manner (p. 207) without premature closure or easy resolutions.

Similarly, in teacher development, scholars argue for the need to shape one's pedagogical knowledge, values, and identities in an ongoing manner, based on our classroom practices and relationships (Johnson, 2009). Negotiations of values and discourses in classrooms can constructively contribute to shaping teachers' own identities. They can also enable us to rethink our pedagogies as we strive to construct more ethical and effective practices in our teaching. The social turn in teacher development conveys to us that pedagogical practice is not a mechanical process of deploying predesigned curricula and pedagogies in all contexts (Johnson, 2009). Teachers will be creative and agentive in shaping relevant curricula based on their changing knowledge and beliefs from their ongoing teaching practice. For this reason, many teachers realize the need to become researchers themselves. It is possible to combine teaching and research without letting one's biases distort the findings. Methods such as classroom ethnographies, action research, and narrative research enable practitioners to produce useful knowledge on teaching (see Lankshear & Knobel, 2004 for an introduction to these methods). By combining teaching with research, practitioners are able to reflect on the unpredictability inherent in negotiating diversity and develop relevant knowledge for instruction.

A particularly insightful method for teachers studying diversity in classrooms is narrative research. Narrative research presents certain strengths over other research methods. Though this research can take many different forms, I am interested in methods of eliciting experiences in narrative form, facilitating critical reflection during narration, and analyzing the process and product of narratives for diverse social and personal meanings. Barkhuizen (2011) labels this method "narrative analysis" as distinct from "analysis of narratives" which is a product-oriented study of narrative artifacts. Narrative research facilitates embodied knowledge. That is, it provides perspectives on experiences and activities as enmeshed in social and affective life. Such embodied knowledge provides an intimate, invested, and involved orientation to experiences that disembodied or detached analysis cannot provide. Secondly, narratives present fully contextualized experiences with all variables and contingencies held together. Such situated knowledge will also present complex and rich perspectives that differ from experimental or controlled studies that isolate the variables or filter out the contextual influences.

Narrative analysis has been also found to make a special contribution to teacher identity development. Scholars in teacher development have adopted narratives from practitioners to enable critical reflection and reconstruction of their beliefs, identities, and practices. This process can be summed up as involving three stages--namely externalization, verbalization, and examination (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 488). In narrating one's teaching experiences, practitioners are able to bring out feelings and experiences that are forgotten, ignored, or suppressed. As they verbalize, teachers give these experiences order and coherence. The conventions of the narrative genre motivate teachers to provide a trajectory, development, phases, and closure to their experiences. Analysis does not have to occur at a later or separate stage, but mediates the other two stages. As they externalize experiences and verbalize to provide shape, narrators are already being analytical in relation to their evolving themes and trajectories. The processes involved in narrating one's experiences can play an important role in mediating teachers' identity and professional development. The narrative not only generates new insights into one's experiences, but may facilitate one's ongoing identity construction and pedagogical design.

In this article, I narrate my relationship with a student in a teacher development course. Though the data was gathered in a disciplined manner in a course I taught and researched adopting classroom ethnographies (Canagarajah, 2013 for background), I am adopting principles from narrative analysis to reconstruct my experience. While I have analyzed the data for objective research articles on students' writing and professional development elsewhere (i.e., Canagarajah, 2015), I am examining my own development in this article. I find that narrative analysis helps bring out my own embodied reflections and situated perspectives on this teaching experience. It provides me an opportunity to critically examine my pedagogical practices and ideological orientations, and develop more ethical and effective practices for negotiating diversity in English language teaching. I take creative license to narrate this experience as a drama between the student and myself, treating us as the main characters in a classroom story that involves others. In telling this story in the third person, I find that I benefit from the slight detachment to reflect analytically on my experience. The narrative thus functions in an even more pronounced way to mediate my own teacher identity development.

The setting and dramatis personae

Kyoko (pseudonym) is a Master's degree student in TESL at Penn State University. She is in the fourth and final semester in the US, taking one of her remaining required courses before graduation. The course is titled "Teaching Second Language Writing." She has completed a Bachelor's degree, with a major in Linguistics, in Japan. She has considerable experience in writing and learning English. She learned English as a foreign language at high school under Japanese

teachers. She had done an undergraduate-level English composition course under an instructor from the US. She had gone on to write a BA thesis in applied linguistics in English under the guidance of a Japanese instructor who received graduate training in the US. She is interested in returning to Japan to teach English as a Foreign Language.

The instructor of her course is Prof. C, a senior scholar in Applied Linguistics from Sri Lanka. He has taught English in Sri Lanka and USA for over thirty years. He considers himself a member of the progressive school of critical pedagogy that theorizes power and diversity in language teaching. He was himself an ESL student and claimed a personal understanding of the struggles of multilingual students. He often boasted that native English speaker teachers could not relate well to multilingual students as he could. Besides, as a critical practitioner, he was proud that he had read widely on theorists and practitioners who were successful in addressing diversity in education. These considerations provided Prof. C the confidence that he can successfully empower multilingual students in his teaching. In retrospect, we might consider these claims as demonstrating his hubris, which is the tragic flaw that will lead to his failures and misunderstandings in this course.

Prof. C felt that his thirty-year teaching experience had helped him develop a successful pedagogy for addressing diversity in writing development. His pedagogy was motivated by what he considered three sound principles—i.e., dialogical, practice-based, and ecological. By dialogical, he assumed that knowledge and expertise developed from an interaction between students, teachers, texts, and other artefacts. In other words, learning was not a one-sided imposition of normative knowledge from the teacher or the text book. Knowledge and skills were co-constructed through active participation and negotiation. By practice-based, he assumed that people learn best by engaging in meaningful communicative activity. For these reasons, an important course requirement was the writing of a literacy narrative (LN hereafter[i]). In this semester-long writing project, the students reflected on their own language and literacy development, as they revised and reconfigured it in response to the feedback from their peers and the instructor. In writing this narrative, Prof. C assumed, students would also learn about effective writing in order to teach writing. To ensure that the writing was truly dialogical, he adopted an ecological orientation to learning. This involves providing sufficient resources for students to draw from textual and semiotic resources for their writing and professional development. In addition to three textbooks on the teaching of writing, he treated as learning materials the LNs written by the students, and the articles and books they read on their own initiative in relation to their themes. To reflect on their evolving narratives and professional knowledge, he set up a weekly journal writing activity on the course website. The website also enabled students to post multiple versions of their drafts for feedback from the instructor and peers. The classroom as an ecological system is not totally neutral or egalitarian. Part of classroom ecology are institutional policies and social ideologies that shape educational agendas. Though Prof. C was open to diversity in writing and teaching, he was interested that students should negotiate these power structures as they developed their narratives and voices. Therefore, while he prescribed one of his own books that explicitly adopted a critical approach to writing pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2002), he also adopted two other books that were more open to dominant norms and expectations (Casanave, 2004; Ferris and Hedgecock, 2015). He also knew that sometimes he himself might voice the dominant norms of writing and teaching unwittingly during his teacher feedback in his role as a faculty member who represented the university. The ecological approach is open to the possibility that the mix of favorable and constraining learning resources can be transformed into "affordances" for productive learning based on students' motivations and negotiation strategies (van Lier, 2004, p. 91).

Act 1: Conflicts on voice and agency

Prof. C's dilemmas in trying to understand Kyoko's preferred voices and discourses began in the very first activity in the class—an online posting from students to introduce themselves to each other. After mentioning her name, degree program, and country, Kyoko added:

> I'm in the middle of taking in North American academic discourse, and I have been struggling with how I express myself in L2 writing. I feel like being in the middle of nowhere when I write in. English. (A[ii], 09/08)

Prof. C was struck by the pain and confusion in Kyoko's voice. Other students, especially Anglo Americans, usually put their best foot forward in the beginning of a course. They boast about their past achievements, present motivation, and desire for future success to impress their instructors.

Prof. C encountered what sounded like diffidence and apathy again in the early drafts of Kyoko's LN. This is how Kyoko opened her narrative:

> For me, writing always associates with pain and embarrassment. When I imagine my journal to be accidentally or intentionally read by someone, I cannot stop worrying. I would prefer reading others' voice to writing my voice. After all, I'm too self-conscious to keep on journaling.   So, have I had excessive self-consciousness since I was born? [. . .]

> I became lazier as I went on to a high school. I had still hated myself, which made me apathetic to learning at school. All I did in a class was napping, daydreaming, observing other classmates or teachers and giggling with my friends. Despite of my apathy toward learning, I had kept a relatively good grade at almost all subjects, which was due to my deep and long attention span. Without clear vision in my future, I just lived in a moment. . . . I knew I had no creativity in writing, and I was not brave to venture to disclose my shame. (Draft 2)

As he was committed to criticality and agency, Prof. C was concerned that Kyoko was adopting too deferential a tone. Her mention of worry, shame, self-consciousness, and lack of a vision made her condition sound almost pathological. Though there was an endearing honesty and humility in her statements, he had never encountered such expression of anxiety and shame in the classroom before. At this point, Prof. C decided that he had to diagnose Kyoko's condition in order to help her. He immediately thought of publications in the field of composition and applied linguistics which theorized the rhetoric of Japanese writers. He remembered his friends who had suggested that critical thinking and individuality were so alien to East Asian students that it was unfair for American writing teachers to foist these expectations on them (see Atkinson, 1997; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996). They argued that the traditional collectivist cultures of these students motivated them to suppress their voices. Prof. C was so erudite that he knew that even Japanese scholars publishing in Japanese had confirmed that academic discourse in their language was deficient. Nakajima (1987) and Nozaki (1988) had suggested that Japanese language was not congenial for rational and critical discourses.

Prof. C was now filled with pity for Kyoko. He was motivated by his critical ideology to think that it was not impossible for Kyoko to adopt a more confident and individualistic voice. To empower Kyoko, he wanted to motivate her to consider more agentive and resistant positions. An opportunity soon arose. Once a week, the draft of a student was chosen for a large group discussion. When Kyoko's turn came, Prof. C wrote the following guiding questions for general discussion:

How is Kyoko presenting herself through these statements? Would you consider this passive and deferential? Does this attitude characterize her whole essay?

Is there indirect criticism here [i.e., against limited school pedagogies]? Can she develop this further? Would a more critical attitude make this essay better? (A, 10/27)

The second question was in relation to some paragraphs where Kyoko discussed how English language/writing pedagogies were unengaging to her. Prof. C tried to direct her criticism outside at teachers and institutions rather than blame herself for lack of motivation.

What transpired in the discussion was that many students did not share Prof. C's view that the essay lacked in criticality or voice. Her peers read Kyoko's essay differently, seeing other voices and identities that gave greater complexity to her writing. Chrissie, an Anglo-American student, said:

I see multiple selves in Kyoko's writing or multiple identities-- Japanese, middle child, good student. Although these are obvious to me she doesn't talk about them explicitly in the context of identity. (PC, 10/27)

Prof. C recollected that Kyoko had discussed unfair treatment by her family. Her siblings were given preferential treatment as they were both boys and deserved attention for being the eldest and the youngest. As a female "middle child," she was ignored. Those paragraphs had a subdued resistant tone. Similarly, another Anglo-American student Tim observed:

There is the issue of desirability (what does the teacher [want] and what can I do to get a positive response) bound up in the identities we take on in these situations (student v teacher, employee v employer) . . . . I feel that these exist (for myself and perhaps Kyoko) no matter how "cool" or "open" a teacher/boss is. (PC, 10/27)

What Tim clarified was that criticality and voice should be considered contextually. In some power relationships, it might be difficult to resist too directly or openly. Therefore, to protest against unengaging pedagogies is not always possible where students perceive a clear inequality with their teacher. Furthermore, while Prof. C was focused on the narrator's writing voice, Tim pointed to identities in educational contexts that shaped one's voice. Both Tim and Chrissie were focusing on Kyoko's other identities embedded in the narrative, thus pointing to a diversity of voices in her LN.

Perhaps benefitting from peer comments on the contextual variability of agency and voice, Kyoko shared her own misgivings about an unqualified treatment of critical thinking in writing instruction. In a journal entry, she wrote:

In my opinion, the notion of critical itself is very western culture originated. Japanese doesn't have the exact counterpart word of English "critical." Of course we approach to one thing from diverse perspective in our own way, but, I don't know why and how, there must be something different between two language cultures. As western democracy does not fit all the country, the concepts of intelligence, critical, negotiation, rights, and education might be slightly different in each culture. (J, 10/16)

Kyoko was suggesting that critical thinking is not an abstract or universal human disposition, but mediated by culture. She finds a difference between how Americans and Japanese represent or express criticality. Drawing an analogy from how other constructs such as "democracy" and "intelligence" are also culturally relative, she goes on to suggest that criticality and agency may be expressed differently. She suggests that adopting a triangulated thinking to arrive at balanced positions is an example of critical thinking in Japan. Though this message was posted as a self-reflection, its implications for the questions Prof. C posed in the class discussion were not lost on

him. It appeared as if Kyoko was answering his prompts resistantly, exposing his biased expectations on criticality. Prof. C bristled: "Is she critiquing my feedback? Is she laughing at me?!"

That Kyoko could draw from the views of her peers and instructor to triangulate the different interpretations on her drafts and adopt her own position is one of the benefits of dialogical pedagogy. Another positive feature was that the curriculum encouraged students to do research outside the prescribed materials to develop their chosen themes. Kyoko chose to read the LN's of other multilingual authors to consider how she should frame her narrative. She read the LN of Finnish scholar Ulla Connor (1999) who narrates how she gradually shifted her deferential discourse to more agentive in her English academic writing, as she also became more acculturated into American life, eventually settling down in the US to raise a family. Kyoko responded to her narrative as follows:

> She rejected her L1 background and has acquired a new identity as an American through her life in the US. However, I am not her, obviously. Neither do I want to deny my history nor become a mini American. I cannot smoothly shift my L1 to L2 as Connor does. Am I wrong? Shouldn't I mention too much about L1? What should I do in writing autobiography? It's not about language anymore. I thought reading other ESL writers' writing would help me make my ideas more clear, but in reality, I got confused more after reading Connor's. (J, 10/27)

Kyoko is clear on her perspective that she does not want to follow Connor's trajectory of voice or acculturation. Her sarcasm on not wanting to become "a mini American" is telling. Kyoko is firmly grounded in her language, community, and culture. This makes it difficult to "smoothly shift" from Japanese discourses to English discourses in her writing. The sarcasm and irony also introduce a different voice—one that is expressive, firm, and resistant—that Prof. C found surprising. Though Kyoko identifies the trajectory she does not desire, she is still exploring how she should reconcile the competing discourses.

As she proceeds with her reading, writing, and self-reflection, she develops some clarity. After reading Prof. C's own textbook (abbreviated as CAW for *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*), she journaled:

> Right after reading Connor's autobiography, I read CAW Chapter 4 to prepare for the last class. It gave an answer to my confusion. CAW refers to Connor as one example of development of self in writing, and offers us with other four approaches. I understood that my approach must be different from Connor as my first impression, and such divergence in expressing self might be all right. (J, 10/27)

She is relieved to learn that there are many ways multilinguals resolve their discoursal and identity conflicts. Connor's approach is only one of them. Two days later, she identified an in-between position as a worthy alternative that might satisfy her concern for voice:

> As long as I can refer to CAW chap 4, the concept of "third position" by Kramsch and Lam (1999) and the responses from ESOL students by Canagarajah (1999) exactly represents my current situation. Therefore, I'm planning to take the transposition approach at this stage. (A, 10/29)

The textbook defines "transposition" as an appropriation of competing discourses in the writer's own terms to achieve a new discoursal space (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 116). Kyoko is opting for a voice that merges resources from Japanese and English to develop a hybrid realization.

Initially, Prof. C felt flattered that Kyoko had found his textbook useful. She had adopted a critical option for voice as satisfying her own needs without anyone's imposition. He congratulated himself: "Did I really say that in my book? I knew I was brilliant!" On the other hand, he realized

that what he had written in his textbook was more flexible than the somewhat one-sided view on criticality and agency he had been adopting in this class, especially in his relationship with Kyoko. In the heat of responding to multiple student drafts, he had forgotten what he had himself preached in his writing. A sober voice within him prompted: "Well, if you really take transposition seriously, you have to let her develop her voice and criticality in alignment with her own culture and dispositions. Transposition may take unpredictable forms!"

Act 2: Feelings about feelings

While it appeared as if Kyoko was finding a way to resolve the conflicting discourses of Japanese and English to develop a more critical voice, Prof. C detected another dilemma that required his teacherly intervention. Kyoko demonstrated a penchant for feelingful and emotional writing in what he considered a serious academic context. Prof. C was struck by the following paragraph in an early draft where Kyoko discussed how she handled one of her writing assignments in high school:

> I knew I had no creativity in writing, and I was not brave to venture to disclose my shame. Besides, I was not interested in a book report either because all the assigned books by teachers never inspired my interest.…On the final day of the summer break, the day before the submission deadline, I finally settled down to work on writing. Facing blank writing paper, I had been bewildered for a long hours by fingering with a pencil. Then, suddenly, one unforgettable moment of the summer crossed my mind.… I decided to write about my bitter-sweet feeling of saying good-bye to the old car and welcoming a new one. Once I got started to write, my deep and longer attention span assisted me to drive a pencil. Noise around me got muted, light around me got dark, and time flow stopped. I wrote, wrote and wrote as my heart tells. When I finished writing the last sentence, it was already at the break of dawn. While writing, my eyes were full of tears. It may be because I was so touched by recalling our dear old car, because I couldn't see the goal of the writing, or because I was too exhausted by long hour writing. (Draft 3)

There is a rhythm and rhyme in the prose, accentuated by the parallelisms that Prof. C liked: "Noise around me got muted, light around me got dark, and time flow stopped. I wrote, wrote and wrote as my heart tells." He also liked the personification in metaphorical prose such as the following: "my deep and longer attention span assisted me to drive a pencil;" "I wrote, wrote and wrote as my heart tells." The paragraph demonstrated the genuinely inspired writing she was narrating. However, Prof. C felt uncomfortable with the emotionality in her ending. It seemed as if she was wallowing too much in her "bitter-sweet feeling." He wasn't too moved because he couldn't understand how the loss of a car could elicit such poignant feelings. Perhaps it was his gender difference that prevented him from understanding the force of such passion. Though he was theoretically aware that feelings mediate all writing, he preferred understatement and restraint in academic prose to represent carefully modulated feelings. Therefore, he responded as follows in his feedback on this draft:

> What is striking about your literacy is the high place you have given to feelings. Not only was your Japanese early writing emotional, this very narrative is emotional at places. You must theorize the high place you give for emotions in writing. Is this from your culture or is this your personal preference? …. There are many directions in which you can take this narrative.… And I cried a lot when I read some sections of your narrative! (TF, 9/29)

In the final lines, he engaged in some parody to convey his reservations. Since Kyoko had narrated in the previous paragraphs that her Japanese instructors would write feelingful teacher

commentary to express their response, Prof. C mentioned that he too was crying. He did not consider that such parody might be interpreted as sarcasm by Kyoko or hurt her feelings. Kyoko's revision showed the effects of this feedback on her writing. The following lines were missing in her next draft: "While writing, my eyes were full of tears. It may be because I was so touched by recalling our dear old car, because I couldn't see the goal of the writing, or because I was too exhausted by long hour writing."

However, Kyoko did not abandon her feelings completely. Though she deleted the emotional ending of the paragraph, she kept intact her rhythmic and metaphorical lines. She continued in her future drafts to seek a way to merge divergent discourses, such as the scholarly and the personal, or the objective and the emotional. In this endeavor, she was strengthened by the feedback of her peers. Cissy, an Anglo American student, said: "In your literacy autobiography I see a very poetic writing, especially when there is an emotional memory, and that is something I wish my writing could be more like" (PC, 10/1). Cissy found Kyoko's evocation of feelings effective. Mark found that this poetic prose contradicted the opening statement on her poor writing ability: "The identity you write about in the start of the paper seems very different from the person who wrote such an interesting and personal story" (PC, 9/30). He found this opening a disarming move, which gave her personal and expressive prose greater effect. Prof. C initially found such peer responses difficult to understand. He realized that they were divergent from his own assessment. He muttered to himself: "Did you morons see that I chastised her for too much emotion? Are you saying that you would permit such expression of feelings in academic writing?"

While Kyoko retained her expressive style in her future drafts, she also included more scholarship into her writing in deference to teacher feedback. Adopting a more objective and analytical tone, she elaborated on her early schooling and literacy in Japan. Consider the prose in her following draft:

> Since an elementary school classroom teacher addresses students' whole personality, it builds an intimate teacher-student relationship. Several researches (Lewis, 1988; Easley & Easley, 1981; Lee et al, 1996; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992) state that Japanese elementary school teachers apply various approaches to encourage students cognitive and literacy skills in various subject areas. (Draft 4)

Prof. C was initially happy that Kyoko was merging her research with her experiences to construct a more hybrid discourse. Rather than basing her description of her early Japanese education on her subjective impressions alone, she was offering scholarship that explained the rationale for that educational tradition. Happy with this revision, Prof. C mentioned in his teacher feedback: "You have developed your ideas better here. I like also your citations. They are important academic texts" (TF, 12/ 4). However, as he read the paragraph again, he became uneasy. It seemed as if Kyoko was communicating tongue in cheek. Her citations refer to developing a "whole personality" and "intimate teacher-student relationship." Prof. C thought to himself: "Is she subtly providing support for the features I criticized in my feedback? Is she indirectly making a case for feelings and empathy in writing?" However, he concluded that Kyoko was not capable of that kind of irony and resistance as she seemed so innocent and lacking in reflexivity.

Act 3: Struggles with reflexivity

Among the reasons why Prof. C underestimated Kyoko's ability to be self-reflective, detached, and ironic is that she had herself mentioned in an earlier journal entry: "It's difficult to be critical to analyze my own writing" (J, 10/29). Drawing from his long teaching experience, Prof. C knew that developing a balanced, detached, and reflexive orientation to one's own writing was one of the difficult competencies to develop. He thought that the innocence, directness, and spontaneity of Kyoko can gain from reflexivity and facilitate greater criticality. It was time to attack that problem

now, he thought to himself. To prod her in this direction of development, he wrote in one of his teacher responses:

> You can do more to highlight your theme/thesis better. It is not clear what overriding theme you are bringing out of this narrative and how it might contribute to writing scholarship. In your intro or conclusion, you can do something to highlight your theme to the reader. (TF, 12/9)

Prof. C thought that encouraging Kyoko to analyze her writing with detachment, and focus more explicitly on her themes and objectives, would encourage reflexivity.

However, Prof. C also developed some doubts about his assessment of Kyoko's voice and expertise. It appeared to him at times that Kyoko was already quite self-aware and reflexive. He was confused as to how he should interpret passages such as the following in her later drafts:

> Once I learned the writing rules of a particular school of thought in Applied Linguistics, it was quite smooth to write a research paper since all I had to do was imitate their writing styles. Research design and implement processes made me realize how to make up the findings "sound objective." I gained some peculiar word usage in the field from reading articles, and I made repeated use of these words as children do when they learned a new vocabulary. My thesis advisor checked my draft a couple of times, and every time she said nothing but "You were doing well." The final draft was edited by the "Mac enthusiast" native English speaking teacher. It was predictable that he corrected my all grammatical mistakes in detail. Of course, my findings were not one of the major finding in the 21st century. And of course, nobody knows my BA thesis is well done. (Draft 6)

Prof. C's immediate reaction was to say to himself: "That apathetic and self-denigrating tone once again! She's boasting about textual borrowings and mechanical writing. No doubt, they say Asian students love to plagiarize!" Her statements made him think that she did not see any problems with imitative and listless writing. She had mentioned in her earlier drafts and journals that she was unengaged with school work and writing. However, another side of him felt that these statements should not be taken at face value. It appeared as if she was satirizing the type of writing she was reduced to doing because of the attitudes of her English teachers and the practices behind their pedagogies. So he thought: "She's laughing at her form-focused teachers, who are more interested in error correction without any interest in her ideas. She's also satirizing the bland and mechanical academic discourse that was expected." Kyoko had sufficient self-awareness to acknowledge that the mechanical writing she was doing was not communicative or informative. She was not taking herself seriously, and advised her readers also not to do so. Though Prof. C struggled with this interpretation, he eventually told himself that he was making too much of too little. Kyoko had such weak control over grammar (see phrases like "my all grammatical mistakes" and "quite smooth to write a research paper") that she probably did not have the language to communicate such layered attitudes and subtle tones.

He was similarly conflicted about her final draft submitted for grading. Here are the introductory and concluding paragraphs, together with her title:

<div align="center">Close Encounter of the Alien</div>

> Japanese is a part of my self. Japanese (L1) literacy development has addressed to my emotional, mental, cognitive, social, and intellectual growth as a whole person. On the other hand, my second language, English, especially academic writing is detached from my self. Possibly the current ESL discourse is limited in academic discourse which mainly address to intellectual competence.

[. . .]

> My literacy development process started from a personal level, expression of my feelings, and then extended to more complex and intellectual language production process. Through the socializing process via language, I have acquired various registers in Japanese. Although these development processes mainly occurred within schooling systems, the L1 literacy education addressed my whole personality development so that I was able to internalize Japanese as my language. Entrance to English as a foreign language introduced me the forms of a new language, but its learning process failed to offer me contexts to internalize its language production and processing processes. Current ESL academic context has been limited to classroom and academic texts, and I have never had a feeling provoking occasion yet. That is, English was more detached and still alien to me. In the end, as a graduate student, academic writing is the final goal to master English. Perhaps, I am in the middle of the shifting process of thinking in English from personal to objective, or from emotional to logical. And I don't know how long it will take for me to master it. (FINAL DRAFT)

The revision seemed to be remarkably focused on highlighting a theme, heeding Prof. C's suggestion. Note that Kyoko has considerably sharpened her thesis with a succinct statement on her challenges in the opening statements. She presents her conflict between Japanese and English as paralleling involvement and alienation. Though she had mentioned diverse other trajectories in her introduction in her previous drafts, such as reading development and social orientations, she is focusing clearly on writing development in this version. The discourse is also more objective and formal in this draft. Note the passives and nominalizations, obviously influenced by her readings in applied linguistics (i.e., language production process; socializing process; development processes; internalize Japanese; internalize its language production and processing processes; etc.).

Though Prof. C was happy to observe that Kyoko had provided a neat formulation of her conflicts, a good focus for her essay, and greater objectivity, he was disappointed that she had not resolved her discoursal conflicts. He focused on statements such as the following: "Japanese is a part of my self. . . English, especially academic writing is detached from myself. . . . English was more detached and still alien to me. . . . I don't know how long it will take for me to master it." Such statements suggested that she still maintained an us/them binary between Japanese and English. Though she had earlier identified transposition as her approach for resolving the competing discourses and languages, her final draft stated that she had not achieved that position.

Furthermore, he was disappointed with the grammar and editing problems he saw in the final draft. Students had been asked to get editorial help from the tutoring center in addition to the suggestions in teacher feedback. Most of the other students had submitted carefully edited final drafts. Prof. C focused on structures such as the following: "Japanese (L1) literacy development has addressed to my emotional, mental, cognitive, social, and intellectual growth; ESL discourse is limited in academic discourse which mainly address to intellectual competence; English as a foreign language introduced me the forms; academic writing is the final goal to master English." It appeared to him that Kyoko had chosen to remain apathetic, and not gained from the affordances and feedback to develop her voice in more complex hybrid forms. Prof. C muttered to himself: "Hmm, she's still confused and disengaged. All efforts to empower her have failed. And look at those grammar problems. Why couldn't she get editing help like the other students? Laziness! Lack of effort!"

Prof. C gave her a B+ for the essay and her final course grade. In his final commentary he mentioned that though the essay showed a lot of improvement, there were still some themes and sections which lacked coherence and resolution. He also advised that Kyoko should learn to take her drafts

to the tutoring center and have it edited before final submission. He reminded her that though composing process was important (which she had handled well in responding to peer and teacher feedback, and revising her drafts well), the product needs equal attention, with professionalism and meticulousness expected in final submissions.

Act 4: Tragic misunderstanding

The course and the teacher/student relationship would have ended there in December as everyone left home for Christmas holidays. However, after the gifts had been unwrapped and the feasting was over, Prof. C found some time to look at the data he had collected from this course. He had saved the drafts, journals, interview comments, and portfolios carefully for research purposes. As he took another look at Kyoko's materials and statements in closer detail, with more time to reflect on them during the holidays, he saw a different pattern emerging. He saw the possibility of a different trajectory in her literacy development, a different resolution and closure for her discoursal conflicts, and a different voice.

He found that Kyoko had written earlier in the course: "I've been struggling with how I position myself in L2 context. After coming to an ESL setting, I realized how my literacy background is blessed in my own way. I am not taking over the L2 discourse but I'd rather take advantage of this difference as an ESL speaker, which might be a reason why I mentioned a lot about my L1 literacy development" (A, 10/29). She seemed to have already identified a trajectory for her development. She wanted to merge her resources and strengths from her Japanese into her English literacy development. She demonstrated also a strong grounding in her first language and considered being "blessed" by the resources she was bringing with her. She clearly did not want her home culture and language to be abandoned in the process of mastering English and academic literacy.

Furthermore, she seemed to have adopted an effective and insightful strategy to guide her literacy development. She said in one of her reflections at the end of the course: "I realized that knowing the rule is the first level of the game. If you want to win the game, you have to take an ownership of it. I think I was more submissive about learning (and teaching) academic writing. From this course, I learned a possibility of teaching writing to make learners be aware of negotiation" (I, 12 /10). She demonstrates sound self-awareness about her earlier "submissive" attitude and gradual shift to negotiating diverse discourses towards taking ownership of English by infusing it with her own intentions and values. She was intent on negotiating with dominant academic/English norms to make a space for the values and skills she was blessed with. Negotiation suggests an ongoing process of gradually finding more spaces for appropriating dominant norms in her own terms. From this perspective, expecting a premature closure on her writing trajectory at the end of the semester seemed unfair for Prof. C.

There was more evidence that she had developed a reflexive awareness of her writing challenges. The ecological, dialogical, and practice-based pedagogy seemed to have helped her in the development of a critical awareness of rhetoric and textuality. She wrote in a final reflection as part of her portfolio:

> I acknowledge that writing process provokes my thought and organize my thought. Looking back the trace of my learning of this course, now I can see an evidence of my knowledge construction and intellectual interaction with peers. . . . I think our portfolio will be visible evidences of our thinking process. Also, the portfolio is an evidence of collaboration with peers. [. . .] By reading other students' experiences, I realized that [writing] development is interconnected to the development of their personality. Especially, early literacy development is more tied to the writer's identity development. For example, some students mention about their religion. And some students mention about their language's

> letter system and attitude towards handwriting. We have many things to write about personal experience and opinions. However, the difficulty in teaching academic writing is to transit from personal to critical. I think literacy autobiography is an effective tool to shift from personal writing to critical writing. The writer can start from telling her own personal story, and then she can narrow down to specific and objective perspective through revision process. (A, 12/10)

It was evident that Kyoko had learned many things during the course. She had developed more self-awareness on her writing strategies, motivations for writing, and clarity about her preferred discourses. She had also learned from her engagement with her peers how writing is connected to identity, which motivated her to merge the competing discourses in her background. She also feels that the dialogical pedagogy and the genre of LN had helped her to transition to more critical stances in her writing. In all this, she was demonstrating a complex and mature reflexivity.

From these perspectives, it seemed to Prof. C that Kyoko's trajectory and voice could be understood in a different way. Her final submission could be interpreted as in fact achieving the transposition and hybridity she desired. It is just that they take a form Prof. C did not anticipate. To begin with, Kyoko does provide a resolution—tentative in what she considers an ongoing journey towards transposition. This resolution is still rooted in her Japanese heritage. It is not a rhetorical space that moves beyond her heritage, but one that includes it. We might consider this a form of "rooted cosmopolitanism." This explains the continuing affirmation of her heritage in her final submission. She begins "Japanese is part of my self" and accentuates her evolving orientation of a rooted voice. That is, she displays ownership of Japanese and relates to other semiotic resources from this perspective. She thus indicates the manner in which her heritage (shaped by her first language, nationality, and cultural background) has a bearing on how she relates to English.

A layer of metaphors provides a subtle indication of her desired trajectory in the paragraphs quoted above. There is a romantic metaphor of organic growth and unity between the writer, language, and voice ("growth as a whole person"). Kyoko suggests that she has such organic connection with Japanese but not with English. This is not an expression of stereotypical alienation, but an observation of the way the languages have been taught to her and the functions they have played in her life. English has been taught to her in form-focused and product-oriented ways for academic purposes, unlike Japanese which was taught with empathy for wider purposes. It is clear, however, that she is seeking this harmony with English also. It is precisely because of this desire that Kyoko comments on her current alienation from English. In other words, Kyoko is not affirming stereotypical dichotomies and identities (i.e., Japanese as personal, English as formal; L1 as self, L2 as alien). She is seeking to transcend them through further investment, helped by relevant pedagogies and meaningful writing in English. The romantic metaphors are reiterated in the conclusion (note "whole personality development . . . internalize. . . feeling provoking occasion") to index her desired relationship with English.

The concluding paragraph brings out her optimism effectively, besides succinctly summarizing her trajectory developed in the body paragraphs. She has come a long way from her observations in her earlier drafts and journals when she was "in the middle of nowhere" writing in English. She is more optimistic in presenting her status now as "in the middle of the shifting process." With her growing self-awareness, her attitude to language contact has also changed. Her writing process through the semester is shifting "from personal to objective" and "emotional to logical." As we found in the previous sections, the drafts increasingly become more focused, objective, and analytical, in response to teacher and peer feedback. In saying "shifting process," Kyoko is not referring to a unilateral trajectory from one pole to the other. What she achieves (and probably intends to achieve, in relation to her metaphors of organic growth) is a creative realization—a "transposition"—that merges conflicting discourses to develop a hybridized voice. Though Kyoko has a strong preference for personal and expressive writing, she is able to layer it within the

academic genre, with appropriate objectivity and scholarly citations. The academic moves qualify the expressivity in her essay, reducing the impression of deficiency that an emotional investment might convey.

The title adds another layer of complexity ("Close Encounter of the Alien"). Kyoko is borrowing this metaphor from popular culture. However, in this case, we don't know who is referred to as "alien:" Is English or Kyoko referred to as "alien?" Both are possible in the context of her literacy autobiography. In either case, it is a frank but sarcastic acknowledgement of the uneasy linguistic encounter. In diversity, it is important not to simplify or romanticize the process of linguistic and cultural interaction. In her conclusion also she wonders soberly "how long it will take to master" English and academic literacy. Attaining an awareness of her desired trajectory (i.e., transposition) is different from actually achieving it. The latter depends on various factors, including grammatical control. And yet, Kyoko also displays her capacity to laugh at herself in the title. While the ending is open-ended, Kyoko has figured out the direction for her development. Though she demonstrates her characteristic humility, she is optimistic and clear-eyed about the path forward.

Considering this reinterpretation of what Kyoko had wanted to (and partially did) achieve, Prof. C wondered if the grade he had given Kyoko was unfair. Though there were grammar and editing problems, she deserved more credit for the progress she had made through the course in engaging with the course resources constructively to achieve a more complex writing competence and rhetorical sensitivity. Her final product could also be given more credit for being more effective and coherent than he had initially assumed. He had misunderstood her as always naïve, disengaged, and confused, when she seems to have demonstrated a quiet confidence, self-awareness, and criticality from the beginning. Prof. C realized that perhaps he had been too biased and set in his pedagogical ways to be sensitive to the uniqueness of each student. He simply did not have the eyes to see the subtleties in her aspirations, attitudes, and development. He frantically tried to contact Kyoko to change the grade and offer his revised understanding of her performance in his course. However, the damage had already been done. Kyoko had obtained her transcripts, degree certificates, and left for Japan. Attempts Prof. C made to email her were futile. Either she had stopped using the university email account or did not want to talk about this unhappy experience of being misunderstood and penalized. Subsequent efforts to contact her through other Japanese students also failed. Not only was Kyoko left with a bad grade that might affect her employment or future educational prospects, his feedback and assessment might have affected her self-understanding, confidence, and motivation. These realizations left him with a lot of soul searching. Despite his claims of being a multilingual, a critical scholar, and expert on diversity, he had turned out to be biased and unfair to a second language student.

Denouement

As I reflect on this teaching experience, I am now keenly aware of many unresolvable dilemmas in addressing diversity in pedagogy and social life. Being human, we are shaped by our own backgrounds and biases that we find it difficult to adopt more objective and fair perspectives on others. Furthermore, dominant ideologies and norms are difficult to disassociate from. All this is compounded for teachers by pedagogical beliefs, scholarly discourses, and educational policies that shape our unequal relationship with students. These influences may not show up in rude and violent ways, but couched in attitudes of pity, condescension, or generosity. In the name of improving students' cognitive, educational, and literacy capabilities, we sometimes impose what our profession, ideologies, or cultures dictate to be the norm. Most tragic is assessment, a necessary evil. Though we can never come up with a letter or a number that can sum up a student's performance in a semester or in a lifelong trajectory leading up to our course, we are still expected to provide a grade. These grades do not only judge writing or course artefacts; they also judge the person—with harmful consequences to one's social prospects and psychological wellbeing.

My attempts to turn my classroom experience into a narrative have generated a critical reflection that can facilitate identity development and pedagogical reconfiguration. The process of externalization has helped me overcome feelings of guilt, embarrassment, or defensiveness that would have predisposed me to suppress or forget this experience. In verbalizing and giving the experience shape, I have managed to identify the twists and turns in this teaching/learning relationship. I have also been able to delineate the different challenges Kyoko faced and the stages of her discoursal development. In analyzing the experience, I identify my biases and misunderstandings. I am left with realizations for further pedagogical development.

There are three lessons on addressing diversity that I wish to highlight in conclusion—i.e., those relating to criticality, hybridity, and voice. I now realize that criticality might find variable realization in ways suitable to students' own cultures. The choice facing students is not always a binary case of criticality or passivity, as sometimes presented in the professional literature on critical pedagogy (as cited earlier). What Kyoko tried to convey to me was that she orientated to criticality differently. Her criticality found a more subtle, restrained, and indirect expression in her LN. In fact, Kyoko's own subdued irony in her journal and drafts demonstrates a resistance that can be mistaken for passivity and innocence. Her sense of criticality might have its own functions and values that others may not appreciate. Teachers and critical practitioners have to be open to the different ways in which criticality and agency might find expression in contextually situated ways.

Secondly, textual hybridity might accommodate a higher level of feelings and expressivity than we are prepared to admit in academia. As other scholars have cautioned, hybridity has become a catch all term for alternate discourses in pedagogical circles (see Kubota, 2014). However, hybridity generates more questions than it answers. As it is operationalized in teaching, hybridity sometimes implies the merging of alternate voices and discourses in a manner that is comfortable for dominant institutions and communities (see Canagarajah & Lee, 2014). In such an orientation, the critical edge of communication is lost as the dominant discourses appropriate alternate or resistant voices. I am now prepared to consider more unconventional mixing of discourses as constituting hybridity that could be successful and effective in academic contexts. More importantly, I am prepared to consider how certain types of hybridity unpalatable to me might be appropriate and desirable for others.

Thirdly, I learn that students' weak grammatical control should not be mistaken for lack of awareness, reflexivity, or subtlety. In literacy, we give so much importance to grammatical competence and verbal dexterity that we fail to note the other resources through which students might communicate their thoughts and values. My focus on grammatical control made me reduce Kyoko's complexity as a thinker and communicator. Though students might be writing in a second language, they come with diverse other verbal and semiotic resources (such as their heritage languages and cultures) for voice. Their seeming deficiency in the second language should not make us underestimate their cognitive and rhetorical maturity.

Should I now fashion my pedagogies differently? It appears as if Kyoko herself found the course design useful for her development. In her statements and practices, we see that she benefitted from a dialogical, practice-based, and ecological pedagogy. She draws from multiple forms of feedback from her peers and instructor, artefacts from within and outside the course, and dialogical engagement with her peers and their LNs to facilitate her development. The mistake in this pedagogical experience was that I did not consider that my pedagogical beliefs and ideological values would have to be problematized and made open to revision as I engaged in teaching. Teachers have to consider every act of instruction a renegotiation of beliefs and knowledge with our students, considering both diversity negotiations and teacher identities as "ongoing" (Ratcliffe, 1999, p. 208).

I have reconsidered my assessment practices, based on my negotiations of Kyoko's writing. It emerges that I gave more importance to the product over the process in writing/learning development. I had tilted my grading heavily towards the final product even though I also emphasized the process. That explains my grade of B+ to Kyoko. I would have given a higher grade if I had valued more her remarkable trajectory of growth from "in the middle of nowhere" to "in the middle of the shifting process." The trajectory of changes in her writing, from digressive vignettes to a more focused organization, and the merging of the expressive and the objective, also suggest considerable learning and development. Though other students submitted meticulously edited final drafts, Kyoko demonstrated experimentation, creative revisions, risk taking, and atypical rhetorical moves that they didn't. The dispositions thus developed can help her go a long way in her writing development. While products might give mastery of form and conventions in specific genres, dispositions are transferable across genres and contexts. Affirming the development of such dispositions pertaining to rhetoric, language, and learning with a higher grade would facilitate more constructive learning in the long run.

It is ironic that I am still learning how to be a teacher after thirty years in the profession. I am always surprised by the diversity of students, communicative repertoires, and knowledge traditions represented in classrooms. I am humbled by the lessons students teach me. It is in the nature of diversity to be unpredictable. We have to revise our pedagogical beliefs, identities, and practices based on our classroom experiences. I have demonstrated a way in which we can combine teaching and research that might help look at our experiences critically, and reconfigure our practices and beliefs relentlessly.

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[1] One can also do a narrative analysis of Kyoko's own development as a teacher and writer in this course (as I do in Canagarajah, 2015). However, in the interests of space, I focus on my development as a teacher in this article.

[1] The acronyms for the data are as follows: A: learning activity; J: Journal; PC: Peer critique; TF: Teacher feedback; I: Interview. The dates on which they were submitted are included.

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