

Historical knowledge and reinventing English writing teacher identity in Asia

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Abstract

The identity of 'the English writing teacher' is increasingly important in Asia. Influenced by disciplinary and professional discourses, English teachers in this region tend to develop a monolingual orientation that leads their students towards native speaker norms. However, globalization requires a fluid, less-bounded perspective on nation, culture, and language, that is, a more multilingual orientation to English teaching. This essay argues that an historical perspective on teaching second language (L2) writing in Asia has the potential to reinvent writing teacher identity by challenging teachers' monolingual assumptions. I will first review historical accounts of teaching L2 writing in Asia, showing that this history is multilingual and transnational. Next, drawing on historical examples related to the teaching of English writing in China, I demonstrate that Chinese students and teachers have struggled with a monolingual ideology endorsed by the state ever since English became a school subject. Recent scholarship in applied linguistics and literacy studies has suggested ways to embrace multilingualism in teaching and research. Coupled with such scholarship, historical knowledge may encourage writing teachers to construct a multilingual, transnational identity by designing teaching materials, writing tasks, and pedagogical techniques in a multilingual framework.

KEYWORDS: MONOLINGUALISM; MULTILINGUALISM; TRANSLINGUALISM; GLOBALIZATION

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Introduction

The identity of 'the English writing teacher' is increasingly important in Asia. As globalization deepens and cross-border exchange intensifies within and beyond Asian nations, the urge to learn English as a global language is natural, and Asia-based English teaching journals and conferences feature more discussions on the teaching of writing. Burns and Bell (2011: 958) suggest that teacher identity can be viewed as a series of narrative constructions, where 'one's identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed in interaction with others'. In Asia, English writing teacher identities are partly shaped by the general enthusiasm expressed by students and their parents for learning English. More importantly, they are constructed through the professional and disciplinary discourses in which writing teachers engage, specifically the local language education policies, assessment practices, academic research, professional development programs, their own teaching practices, and their internal reflections (Cheung, *in press*; I. Lee, 2013; Y. Liu, 2010).

English writing teacher identities in Asia have been deeply shaped by an ideology of monolingualism. This ideology typically promotes a view that sees nation, culture, and language as bounded entities and in a one-to-one relationship: within one nation, there is one national language and one national culture. Language practices that diverge from the standard are often perceived as dialects of the 'national language', even if they are so different from the standard as to be mutually unintelligible to speakers of the different varieties. Influenced by the national language education policy, English teachers tend to view English as a 'foreign' language rather than as a global language which they can claim ownership of, and tend to orient towards 'native speaker' standards. Large scale English assessment reinforces this ideology by emphasizing correct form, or 'native speaker' norms. Professional development programs, which provide basic training in language theory and English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy, rarely challenge this monolingual ideology. Local academic journals and conferences often recycle and perpetuate monolingual assumptions. Entangled in professional and disciplinary discourses, English writing teachers tend to adopt this monolingual ideology as part of their identity. However, this identity may not be conducive to the teaching of English in the context of globalization. The increasing flows of people and products across borders have blurred national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, a fact which requires a less-bounded perspective to nation, culture, and language in English teaching.

To encourage English writing teachers to step out of a bounded view of nation, language and culture, historical knowledge on teaching second

language (L2) writing in Asian contexts becomes critical. Historical knowledge may renew these teachers' identities by revealing to them the monolingualism that undergirds the professional and disciplinary discourses that they engage in on a daily basis and inspiring them to break away from this ideology. To demonstrate the affordance of historical knowledge in reinventing English writing teacher identity, I will first visit several themes in the historical accounts of teaching L2 writing in Asia, showing that this is essentially a multilingual and transnational history. Next, I will draw on historical examples related to the teaching of English writing in China to demonstrate that in a multilingual context, Chinese students and teachers have struggled with a monolingual ideology endorsed by the state ever since English became a school subject. Recent scholarship in applied linguistics and literacy studies has suggested ways to embrace multilingualism in teaching and research. Coupled with such scholarship, historical knowledge hopefully will encourage L2 writing teachers to adopt a multilingual, transnational identity as they seek to help their students meet the challenges of communication in a globalized world.

English writing teacher identity in Asia

A person's identity can be defined as a set of characteristics uniquely associated with them. One has multiple identities, or identity facets, within a composite identity. Some identity facets are acquired at birth, such as nationality, ethnicity, and gender. Some are gained through learning and work, such as social class, and institutional affiliation. While some facets are assigned by others, such as professional positions, titles, and honors, some are sought by the self, such as club membership. Identity is never unitary or static, but complex and evolving. Identity is both a self-image and a social construct. As a self-image, identity 'incorporates abstract images of the self as a person together with projections of what the person aspires to be and to have as desirable characteristics, relative to specific criteria of what is valued' (Pennington, 2015: 17). As a social construct, identity arises from a person's interaction with others; thus it incorporates traits and characteristics that others perceive in or ascribe to that person.

Teacher identity is a construct, a mental image of a teacher created through what that person does inside and outside the classroom, by the way that person interacts with other teachers, students, parents, and administrators. The identity of English writing teachers is complex, fluid, contested, and evolving. Focusing on in-service teachers taking an MA writing teacher education (WTE) course in Hong Kong, for instance, I. Lee (2013) shows that writing teacher identity is constructed in multiple dimensions. It is constructed through the modes of professional discourse that these

teachers use in talking about their work, through their pedagogical practice, and through their negotiation with the teacher education program, their internal reflections, and community values and practices. Reflecting upon her writing teacher identity in Singapore, Cheung (2016) emphasizes its multifaceted and multidimensional nature. It is multifaceted because she needs to juggle her identity as both a pedagogical expert and a content expert in second language writing; it is multidimensional because she takes on a situated identity, a professional identity, and a personal identity at the same time. Similarly, Y. Liu (2010) discusses how she struggled to construct her scholarly identity as part of her English writing teacher identity in Taiwan by actively seeking identity resources from her teaching practice, teaching community, and literacy brokers.

Pennington (2015) suggests that teacher identity involves multiple identity facets, and these facets can be understood from a frames perspective. An ESL teacher identity can be viewed through both practice-based and contextual frames. Some of the practice-based frames are instructional (teaching content, methods, materials, and technologies; teacher roles; and teacher-student relationship), disciplinary (academic affiliation; academic qualifications; areas of teacher knowledge; and research and scholarship), and professional (ethics and standards; teacher education and development; working conditions; political influence and power; collegial relations). The contextual frames include global (international orientation; practices related to global flows of people, money, technology, information, ideologies, and language), local (situatedness of practice, institution, community, nation; specific teacher and student groups in a particular locale), and sociocultural (linguistic and ethnic backgrounds of teachers and students; demographics of administrators, teachers, and students) (p. 19). Each of these frames represents different facets of ESL teacher identity, which together make up a composite identity. As ESL teachers, English writing teachers' identity in Asia can also be understood from a frames perspective.

Examined from this perspective, English writing teacher identity in Asia is deeply shaped by monolingualism. In a disciplinary frame, English teachers tend to view English as foreign because traditionally it is not widely spoken in the local or national context. A cursory survey of ESL writing related articles published in academic journals in China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia shows a strong orientation toward monolingual nationalist ideology among English teachers and researchers (Chou and Hayes, 2009; You, 2010). In addition to viewing English as the tongue of the other, they uphold the essentialized and idealized 'native speaker' norms as the target of teaching and assessing writing. This can be partly attributed to the dominance that second language acquisition (SLA) research

holds in the applied linguistics and TESL programs in the region. For several decades, the cognitive approach to SLA research has viewed students learning a foreign language as moving toward the native speaker norms. English teachers view native speakers as the target audience for their students' speech and writing. It is assumed that English is being learned for academic, business, and cultural communication in international contexts rather than for communication within the nation.

The power of this monolingual ideology can be similarly observed in the instructional frame. In I. Lee's (2013) study conducted in Hong Kong, for instance, the in-service teachers came into the MA teacher education course viewing the teaching of writing as primarily a matter of teaching grammar and vocabulary and correcting errors. After the course, their perception of teaching writing remarkably expanded. However, their writing teacher identity continued to be shaped by the monolingual values of their community of practice, crystalized in the comprehensive error feedback approach. As I. Lee writes:

Although Cindy, Alice, and Betty had changed their belief about the primacy of comprehensive error feedback (i.e., marking all student errors) after the WTE course and developed a preference for focused error feedback, they were mandated by a school policy that required them to mark all student errors. As a result, they followed the policy and marked all student errors meticulously. (p. 341)

In this example, the school policy, as supported by the local community of teachers, administrators, and parents, viewed correcting all student errors as a must in moving student written English toward native speaker norms. Despite their active negotiation with the local community values, these teachers ended up submitting to monolingualism in classroom teaching.

In the professional frame, this monolingual ideology has also shaped English writing teacher identity in Asia. Implicitly, the profession of English teaching has supported monolingual assumptions and practice (Kam, 2002; Kubota, 1998). For instance, studying the teaching of English writing at a Chinese university, You (2004a) found that in Chinese universities, English writing is taught under the guidance of a nationally unified syllabus and examination system. Influenced by the high-stakes college English exit exam, teachers are predominantly concerned about the teaching of 'native speaker norms' and test-taking skills rather than assisting their students to express their ideas in writing. Because of their relatively low income status, teachers have to work extra hours and have little time to spend on individual students or on furthering their professional training. In recent years, as a result of competition among universities, English teachers in Asian nations have faced mounting pressure to publish in scholarly journals (J.

Liu, 2014; Min, 2014), often without receiving reduced teaching loads. With new expectations for research, teachers have less time to devote to teaching, and so often fall back on their old teaching practices that focus on language correctness and test-taking skills.

From the perspective of the contextual frame, English writing teacher identity has prominently taken a local orientation, which aligns with monolingualism. Entrenched in classroom teaching, teachers tend to be interested in practical matters in the classroom, such as pedagogy, technology, assessment, feedback on student writing, and features of student texts, and writing strategies (Chou and Hayes, 2009; You, 2004b; Zhang, Yan, and Liu, 2015). Attending local academic conferences and reading local journals have reinforced their interest in the practical matters of the local, without encouraging them to understand teaching writing from a multilingual and transnational perspective. A global orientation to English teacher identity means an understanding of the localized varieties of English as well as 'the other languages which students speak and the need to consider students' multilingual competence in instruction' (Pennington, 2015: 25). Further, a global orientation means a recognition of the artificial boundaries between peoples, cultures, ethnicities, and languages, and a devotion to promoting mutual understanding, respect, and social justice in the content and teaching methods (You, 2016).

It is my contention, as supported by recent scholarship in sociolinguistics and multilingualism, that artificial boundaries between nations, cultures, and languages need to be challenged in the teaching of English writing in Asia. Shaped by national language education policy, English writing teachers tend to view English as foreign, not their own. In contrast, English can be viewed as having taken root in local educational and cultural practice. Transnational flows of people and cultural products have challenged our traditional understanding of national, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. They are becoming less rigid and more fluid, less clear-cut and more blurred. Bridging the division between the mother tongue and English provides a new and necessarily multilingual frame for English writing teacher identity in Asia.

To encourage English writing teachers in Asia to embrace a less-bounded view of nation and language, historical knowledge on teaching L2 writing in the region becomes critical. Historical knowledge may help these teachers reinvent their identities by revealing to them that this history has always been multilingual and transnational and thus making them more aware of the limitations of their monolingual orientation. Further, with sociopolitical forces shaping language teaching in the past being brought into relief, English writing teachers may be inspired to examine the current sociopolitical situation that has shaped their assumptions about language, culture,

and pedagogy. To demonstrate the affordances of historical knowledge in reinventing teacher identity, I will first visit several themes in the historical accounts of teaching L2 writing in Asia to show that this is a multilingual and transnational history.

A multilingual and transnational history of teaching L2 writing in Asia

Asian nations have a long history of teaching L2 writing, a history deeply wedded to migration, colonization, religion, and trade. As early as two millennia ago, Sanskrit and Persian were taught in Indian temples and academies, through both orality and literacy, to speakers of other languages. In east and south-east Asia, classical Chinese was widely studied due to the reach of the Chinese empire and the circulation of Confucian and Buddhist classics. These classical languages dominated L2 teaching in Asia until three centuries ago, when the East Indies Company entered India as part of Britain's colonial rule there. Since then English has become the most widely taught additional language in Asia. In various historical accounts of teaching L2 writing in Asia, several themes repeatedly emerge, themes that have continued into the present day. As these themes are connected to broad sociopolitical forces, they tend to evade the attention of English writing teachers who focus on practical matters in their immediate context. These perennial themes will be reviewed in this section: L2 reading and writing as local language practices, literary creativity in the L2, local people's ambivalence towards the L2 and its so-called native speakers, and the mediation of L2 literacy in local education and sociopolitical life.

After an L2 is introduced into a local context, it gradually enters the local's communicative repertoire. The spread of classical Chinese in Japan, for instance, took place largely through migration and travel. Chinese and Korean immigrants brought classical Chinese into Japan in the fifth century, which became its first major writing system. While for a long time it was only available to the elite class as a foreign language, over time its users transformed it into their own. In the early years, writing in Japan strictly adhered to the syntactic rules of classical Chinese. In the seventh century, Japanese writers started composing kanji (Chinese character) texts using vernacular Japanese syntax and vernacular texts using kanji as phonograms. When the oldest extant chronicle in Japan, 古事記 (Kojiki), was composed in the eighth century, the practice of writing with Japanese syntax while using kanji, partially as phonograms, was firmly established (Seeley, 1991). Once classical Chinese traveled beyond its original cultural boundaries, its phonological, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic conventions were modified by its new users to accommodate local meaning making practice.

As part of this local and translocal meaning making practice, writers have used L2 to describe their lives and their imaginations, drawing linguistic and cultural resources from their communities and beyond. Literary works were created using classical Chinese in Korea and Japan, and religious texts using Sanskrit and Persian in India. Examples of using English for literary creativity are abundant in Asia and probably familiar to English writing teachers. These creative writers come from, using Braj Kachru's (1990) terms, both the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle nations in Asia: Raja Rao from India (Mercanti, 2002); Gregorio Brillantes from the Philippines (Cruz, 2011); Yutang Ling, Ha Jin, Xiaolu Guo from China (Bolton, Botha, and Zhang, 2015; You, 2016; Zhang, 2002); and Kumut Chandruang and Pongpol Adireksarn from Thailand (Watkhaolarm, 2005). The literary genres are diverse: poem, short story, novel, play, and essay. Using English to capture the lived or imagined experiences of their people, these writers infused unique sensibilities into their creative styles (Kachru, 1990). Their English works have challenged the commonly held assumption in language teaching that there is a fixed, one-to-one relationship between language, culture, and place.

In the context of colonialism, learning the colonizer's language tends to create mixed feelings and identities. When comparing English teaching in the Philippines under the American rule and after independence, for instance, Philippine scholars tend to show ambivalence. Alberca (1994) examined the history of English teaching in the Philippines, focusing on the work of American soldier-teachers and Thomasites, i.e., the American civilian teachers. Drawing on student compositions produced around 1904, he demonstrates that within six years of American colonial rule, local students were able to use English at a high proficiency level. He concludes his study by arguing for the importance of balancing nationalism and internationalism in the teaching of English: 'Put simply, why limit the Filipino child's learning experience to bananas, guavas, and carabaos which he or she already knows? Why not introduce him or her to other worlds which will expand his or her knowledge not only as a nationalist but also as an internationalist?' (p. 71). Recalling the colonial days certainly does not mean the Philippines has to go back to the colonial rule to produce competent English users. Instead, striking a balance between nationalist and internationalist orientation in English teaching, hence in teacher identity, is necessary.

In both colonial and postcolonial contexts, the issues of which language should be taught and why, the effects of language on students' identities, and the power and cultural values attached to language education were central concerns to students, teachers, and administrators (Arnold, 2014; Ramanathan, 2003; You, 2010). In Arnold's (2014) study of language

attitudes, policies, and pedagogies at Syrian Protestant College in Beirut in the nineteenth century, for instance, she notes the change of medium of instruction at the college around 1880 from Arabic to English. The faculty initially wrote and translated texts for and taught their courses in Arabic. Then they switched to English because they believed that teaching in Arabic had not proven to be ‘the best means of Christianizing and civilizing the East’ (p. 283, cited in Arnold, 2014). Additionally, as the student population and faculty hires diversified, Arabic was not always a language known to them. It is important to note that before and after the change of medium of instruction, students and faculty were forced to negotiate and switch between English, Arabic, French, and other languages across the college curriculum as writers, readers, and speakers.

When English writing was taught in the colonial period, it was intertwined with the teaching of other subjects in many Asian universities (see Indian universities in Jeyaraj, 2009; see Chinese universities in You, 2010). In universities that were influenced by the American tradition, there were courses called English composition. Universities that were influenced by the British tradition tended to integrate English reading and writing into subject courses. Thus, students’ English literacy development was intertwined with and mediated the learning of subject knowledge in a variety of fields. For example, Jeyaraj (2009) examined several dozen student compositions from British parliamentary records, compositions produced between 1817 and 1857 for government scholarship exams or university exit exams. The student essays reveal that by participating in a modernist curriculum, Indian college students internalized modernist values and practices. Some of the values include the belief in an external reality; one making truth claims based on evidence, scientific method, and rationality; the existence of human universals; and language as a transparent tool of representation. English literacy practice actively participated in transmitting and creating knowledge for students and came to shape their worldviews.

Students’ English composition not only mediated their learning of subject knowledge but also their sociopolitical life. The Indian students’ exam essays were their means to negotiate with the British colonial structure. At St. John’s University in Shanghai, China, similarly Chinese students used English compositions to participate in the national struggle against colonial and imperialist forces. During the Second World War, for instance, the war with Japan was a popular topic in writing classes despite the life-threatening risks such a topic could bring to the students. Lamberton (1955), an English teacher at St. John’s at that time, recalls those dangerous scenarios:

In the fall of 1940 the College was closed for two days because all streets leading to Jessfield were barricaded by Japanese gendarmes. The faculty and staff had to be continually on the watch to keep the students from doing

provocative things. Boats commandeered and officered by the enemy were continuously passing on the creek flowing around the campus and these were loaded with property taken from the Chinese who lived in Soochow and were on their way to Japanese homes in Shanghai or Japan. This sight the students did not find easy to bear quietly. Often they expressed their hatred of the Japanese in their English compositions, so that the instructors in English often tore up the essays rather than risk their being found on the persons of students who might be searched on their way home. If they had been discovered and read by someone who understood English, punishment would have been swift and severe. (p. 184)

English writing provided the students living in those dreadful circumstances a venue to express their sadness, indignation, and hatred. Their writing subverted the disorder and terror imposed by the Japanese imperialists. Through English writing, students and their foreign teachers co-constructed a transnational anti-Fascist discourse. Using this 'foreign' language in their fight against imperialist encroachment in China and other Asian nations, Chinese students turned English into their own.

Out of these historical narratives emerges a multilingual, transnational history of teaching L2 writing in Asia. This history indicates, first, that the teaching and learning of an L2 always takes place in a multilingual context, interacting with the learning and use of other languages. Second, the use of an L2 in the Asian context defies the commonly held view that there is a fixed, one-to-one relationship between language, nation, and place. The use of a second or foreign language has always been part of local people's social practice, mediating their learning of subject knowledge and their sociopolitical actions. Literary writers in Asia have used so-called second or foreign languages to capture their lived experiences and imaginations. By appropriating a second or foreign language for their diverse purposes, the users turned the language into their own, thus collapsing the boundaries between us (non-native speakers) and them (native speakers), our language and their language. Despite this multilingual and transnational history of teaching L2 writing, English teachers in Asia have been strongly influenced by monolingualism in history.

English writing practice and pedagogy under the influences of monolingualism

The influence of the monolingual ideology in teaching English writing in Asia, hence in writing teacher identity, can be traced to the early years of English teaching in the region. This influence can be first noted in the students. When writing in English, despite drawing on resources from their multilingual repertoire for diverse audiences, students tended to

view English as a foreign language and their writing as intended for a cultural other. The complex linguistic and cultural relations wedded in students' English writing can be illustrated by confessional tales from China. Established in 1879, St. John's University was one of 13 American mission colleges in Republican China (1912–1949), and one of the first schools in the country to teach English. Its student newspaper *St. John's Echo*, founded as a bimonthly publication in 1890, claimed to be 'the first paper published in the Orient by Chinese youths in a tongue foreign to them and only acquired after hard years of study' (Greeting, 1890: 1). Most articles published in those early years were written in English classes. While students were fully engaged in the editorship, writing and reasoning in English proved extremely challenging. One of the student editors recalled the amusing difficulty of having to negotiate with both Chinese and English and the imposing colonial forces:

To those who desired to make contributions to *The Echo* and aspired to become editors, they made resort to the Library a great deal in order to read current news from the English papers and also to read a large number of standard novels, especially those by Scott, Lytton, Washington Irving and the like. Once a young editor was assigned the political subject of the 'Open Door Policy and the Spheres of Influence.' He worried for days and mumbled to himself their Chinese translation as 'the way of opening a door and balls of powers.' He thought to himself the best was to turn the knob in order to open the door and that to develop balls of power, all that was necessary was to learn to pitch hard. (St. John's University, 1929: 49)

The essay topic dealt with the fact that after the Second Opium War in 1862 the Chinese market was forced open by foreign powers who claimed exclusive trading rights in certain parts of the country, or 'spheres of influence'. The quite tragicomic acts of turning the knob and pitching the ball ironically capture the complexity of transculturation, the process whereby the subordinated or marginalized select and invent from materials transmitted by a metropolitan culture. Both political terms 'open door policy' and 'spheres of influence' were too foreign and complex for the student to decode. For students struggling with the basics of English, writing for *St. John's Echo* was a recursive process of translating between multiple cultural and linguistic codes. They tried to understand an English topic by translating it into Chinese, and they formulated ideas in Chinese and translated them into English.

When introducing this confessional tale, the narrator and I have evoked a bounded approach to language and nation still commonly found in L2 writing research and teaching these days. This bounded approach aligns with monolingualism. Within the monolingual modernist frame, it is assumed that in a modern nation one communicates with members of a

homogeneous community, sharing the same national language and culture; other languages are considered ethnic or foreign and best kept at home or in classrooms (Dicker, 2003). Whatever languages or dialects have mediated an L2 composing activity, when writing scholars and teachers focus on the writer's first language, they often assume that it is that writer's national code. In multilingual societies, students' languages and dialects do not always coincide with the officially sanctioned written or spoken codes. The St. John's University student, who 'mumbled to himself their Chinese translation as "the way of opening a door and balls of powers"; spoke one of many Chinese dialects. This conjecture can be substantiated by a school essay, which explains the sociolinguistic landscape at Ginling College, another mission college located in the Yangtze River Delta in the same period:

In 1919, I entered Ginling College. There were three striking differences from my own school. Manderine is hard for any Ningpo people to learn. If any announcement was given in Manderine, I had to ask the girl next to me to repeat the same thing in English. Is not this funny to think that a Chinese can not understand Chinese? In high school everything was in Chinese except English reader and grammar, but in college everything is in English except Chinese literature. Last of all, the schoolmates I had came from at least two provinces, while those I had in college came from many provinces. This gave me a variety of characters to study. (Wu, 1923)

The student narrative reveals that before Mandarin was standardized and became unified with written Chinese in the 1950s, Chinese college students from different provinces often spoke mutually unintelligible dialects, technically languages. English thus became a lingua franca in mission colleges at that time. Considering these things, we can assume that the St. John's student probably mumbled the Chinese translations in his home dialect. Mediated in his composing process are Chinese written code (based on Mandarin), local oral code (his home dialect), and English code. In modern China, mutually unintelligible Han dialects are collectively called Chinese unified under the Mandarin-based writing system. And in regions such as Hong Kong and Taiwan only two such dialects, Hokkien and Cantonese, have developed their own writing systems. Triangulating historical data reminds us of the penetrating power of the nation-state ideology in forming a bounded approach to language and nation in our research and teaching. Historical research can reveal to us both the trajectory of the nation-state ideology and its sedimented effects in our present work.

When writing pedagogies travel across national borders, they carry with them traces of the monolingual ideology. What is more important to the argument at hand is that the trajectories of such pedagogies entail multilingual and cross-cultural negotiations, including negotiations with

the monolingual ideology. After English composition was introduced in China as a college course in the late nineteenth century from the United States, current-traditional rhetoric prevailed in Chinese colleges (You, 2010). Writing courses were typically structured according to the modes of discourse (narration, description, exposition, and argumentation) with an emphasis on Standard English. While embracing the approach in principle, Lawrence W. Faucett and Ge Chuangui, two composition specialists influential in Republican China (1912–1949), assigned English writing a far narrower domain than that of Chinese writing. English composition classrooms were to be primarily concerned with the training of practical, business, and professional genres. In *The Teaching of English in the Far East* (1927), a text widely used in English pedagogical courses in Chinese colleges in the 1930s and 1940s, Faucett stated that ‘many students have been taught literary English in the Far East when their own aim was to secure English for business or professional purposes’ (p. 34). Similarly, Ge emphasized in *A Textbook of English Composition* (1941) the utilitarian purpose of teaching English writing: ‘While most students may never wish to write professionally, it does not follow that all that they will ever have to do in the way of English composition is to write short essays on given subjects, or what are called in American schools “themes”’ (p. i). Ge suggested that students acquire skills in other practical genres that they would encounter in their disciplines and future professions. Both Ge and Faucett argued that English composition’s pedagogical goals should be adjusted to reflect Chinese students’ pragmatic needs, and their needs are defined by the politico-economic context that demands proficiency in both English and Chinese.

While both scholars tried to respect the language relations in student lives, their thoughts were constrained by a monolingual ideology. First, both of them viewed English as a foreign tongue, a linguistic ‘other’ in relation to Chinese national language. They believed that English should be taught with an undeviating focus on its practical genres in business and professional communications. In contrast, literary and themed essays were the purview of Chinese language classes. Their thinking aligned with the general attitude among Chinese officials and literati since the mid-nineteenth century. The latter had claimed that Western learning was only good for pragmatic purposes while Chinese learning would bring propriety and righteousness to people’s minds and was therefore vital to the establishment of a nation. Second, attending to both English and Chinese in school settings, the two scholars unequivocally promoted the learning of standard codes. Both had worked in Shanghai for years, and so undoubtedly understood the complex sociolinguistic situation (previously described by the Ginling College student) in the city and neighboring provinces. However, by only focusing

on the standard codes in teaching writing without considering the entanglement of local dialects and languages, they were implicitly promoting a monolingual nationalist ideology.

These two English composition textbooks in China demonstrate the power of monolingualism in shaping pedagogical discourse. The textbook authors were influenced by monolingualism both embodied in American composition textbooks and developed in Chinese political discourse on nation-building in the late nineteenth century. The extensive use of American composition textbooks in China helped current-traditional rhetoric take root in the nation's writing classrooms much earlier than it did in ESL composition in the United States (Silva, 1990). Historical knowledge allows us to perceive in specific socio-historical contexts how multilingual writers might be marginalized when part of their linguistic repertoires are unappreciated or even suppressed by pedagogical practices. Coupled with recent scholarship in applied linguistics and literacy studies, this knowledge also compels us to reassess our pedagogical theories, assumptions, and practices to see whether we have complied with, negotiated, or rebelled against monolingualism in our own contexts.

Second language writing in the multilingual framework

In applied linguistics and literacy studies, there have been calls to shift from a monolingual to a multilingual perspective to language teaching. Proponents argue that instead of viewing languages as discrete entities, we need to understand languages as social practices with blurred boundaries between them (García, 2009; Jørgensen, 2008; Pennycook, 2010). With the historical isolation between communities and later the establishment of nation-states, we tend to associate a language with a place, a community, or a nation. In a nation-state, the language of a certain community tends to be reified as the national language while the languages of other communities are viewed as minority languages or dialects. In teaching L2 writing, we tend to view a second language as owned by the 'native speakers' of that language and separate it from the learners' 'native' language. The main relationship between these two discrete languages is one of potential 'interference'. In contrast, proponents of a more multilingual approach do not view learners' L1 as interfering with or as setting constraints on students' linguistic competence in the L2; instead the learners are seen as drawing on resources from their L1 (or other languages) in their use of the L2.

Recently within applied linguistics, some scholars have suggested that teachers and researchers pay more attention to the way L2 writers make use of multilingual resources (Cenoz and Gorter, 2011; Canagarajah, 2011, 2013). For example, Cenoz and Gorter (2011) argue for a greater focus on

multilingualism in language studies, pointing out that previous research on SLA and bilingualism has rarely gone beyond the ‘two languages’ model and that competence in a second language has been traditionally measured against a monolingual perspective using native speaker norms. While codemixing and codeswitching, long studied in bilingualism, have showcased the ‘soft boundaries’ between a multilingual speaker’s languages, educators have, for the most part, maintained ‘hard boundaries’ by teaching different languages in separate classes. Cenoz and Gorter propose that, in teaching, research and assessment, we focus on multilingual speakers as whole individuals, considering their social and linguistic repertoires, and the relationships between the different languages that they speak (p. 360). The two scholars demonstrate the utility of such a focus in their study of the trilingual writing practices of secondary school students in the Basque Country in Spain in which students were taught Basque, English, and Spanish together. Their study produced results that would likely not have been achievable if the three languages were taught, learned, and researched separately.

In literacy studies, scholars have increasingly embraced a multiliteracies turn, partly fueled by the New London Group (1996). The group argues that traditional literacy pedagogy is inadequate in the post-Fordist era in which communication channels and media have multiplied and cultural and linguistic diversity has increased. A pedagogy of multiliteracies assumes that ‘language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes’ (Cope and Kalantzis, 1999: 5). One implication of multiliteracies is that as writing researchers and teachers we need to attend to the diverse ways in which writers deploy the linguistic and non-linguistic representational resources available to them when constructing meaning. This is a shift towards a broader framework that the New London Group identifies as ‘design,’ an activity that entails the interplay between available *designs* (the grammars of various semiotic systems), *designing* (the act of transforming those systems), and the *redesigned* (the transformed sign, symbol, object). This broader conceptualization locates writing as one resource from a wider rhetorical repertoire and shifts frameworks for teaching and research towards a ‘design grammar’ that locates all signs, symbols, and objects within cultural and historical contexts.

Consequent to the multiliteracies turn, recent research has paid more attention to the multilingual and multimodal resources that L2 writers draw on in their literacy practices (Blommaert, 2008; Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; Fu, 2003; Fránquiz and Salinas, 2011; Gentil, 2005; Kibler, 2010; C. Lee, 2002, 2007a, 2007b; Parks, Huot, Hamers, and H.-Lemonnier, 2005; Shin and Cimasko, 2008; Smith, 2012; Tardy, 2009; Yi, 2010; You, 2008,

2011; You and You, 2013). These studies offer insights into the complex relationship between languages involved in the composing processes and the written products. For example, in out-of-school contexts, C. Lee (2002) studied emails and instant messaging (IM) texts produced by a group of youths in Hong Kong. She identified both Cantonese-based shortenings mixed with English as well as various grammatical 'errors' as the key features of the youths' online discourse. After analyzing chat texts, interviews, and logbooks collected from 19 college students in Hong Kong, C. Lee (2007a, 2007b) further found that IM writing practices are influenced both by the students' perceived affordances of the IM technology and by the available linguistic resources. Focusing on transitions between in-school and out-of-school writing contexts, Yi (2010) reports on a two-year ethnographic study of an adolescent multilingual writer in the United States. Yi's study reveals that the adolescent's writing activities in these contexts influenced each other in the areas of topics, genres, and languages (English and Korean).

These recent studies have complicated our understanding of L2 writing in multiple ways. First, they call our attention to the complex relationships between languages and cultures that L2 writers have to negotiate and to the diverse linguistic resources that they bring to bear in their literacy activities. Second, in school or extracurricular contexts, these writers often develop strategies responsive to context, communicative purpose, and audience. Third, these writers' literacy practices constitute part of the local cultural practice. Their composing activities are profoundly connected to their socioeconomic statuses, which often constrain the linguistic and non-linguistic resources they are able to mobilize. Fourth, these studies have deeply challenged our assumptions about culture, language standards, errors, and audience in L2 writing. L2 students' writing practices cannot adequately be understood within a national culture frame, nor against state-sanctioned language standards. What would be deemed errors in traditional classrooms can many times be better understood as creative ways of constructing identities and voices for particular audiences. In short, by focusing on L2 writers' multilingual resources, these studies have offered us complex, micro views of individual writers composing in diverse contexts under tangible socio-economic forces.

With their primary focus being individual writers, these studies have dealt less with pedagogical practice, though they do offer insights into pedagogy. For instance, they have revealed a major gap in the teaching of L2 writing: by focusing on the standard linguistic code within academic genres, writing teachers have inadequately attended to the linguistic and non-linguistic resources that are available or should be made available to their students. C. Lee (2002, 2007a, 2007b), Yi (2010), and You (2008, 2011)

demonstrate that, at present, young people actively utilize their multilingual resources in out-of-school literacy activities. In school contexts, Cenoz and Gorter (2011), Fu (1995, 2003), Zhang (1995), and Wang and Wen (2002) show that despite being expected to write only in English, EFL students utilize their first language to construct and organize their thoughts, to weigh word choices, and to generate ideas. These findings have encouraged L2 writing teachers and researchers to bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices. C. Lee (2007a), for example, studied text-making practices in IM, calling our attention to the differences between actual uses of language in students' private lives and the form of language required of them in classrooms. Both Johns (2009) and Yi (2010) also urge that we study genres and literacy practices in a variety of contexts, modeling literacy practices from multiple texts and contexts while encouraging writing within these contexts.

To more fully embrace a multilingual framework, the field of L2 writing can benefit from a historical perspective. We can examine how the teaching of L2 writing has been conducted in specific socio-historical contexts, where dominant nation-building narratives have deeply influenced classroom practices. Most nations are multilingual and multicultural but have nevertheless long promoted standardized, official language(s) in nation building. Such a historical perspective helps us to understand how L2 writing pedagogy has been shaped by and has responded to the monolingual mandates of institutions and nations, as well as how students themselves, influenced by monolingualism, have written in a second or third language across various historical contexts. Only by understanding how teachers and students have worked historically with or against monolingual ideologies in local contexts can we start to identify strategies for tackling monolingualism head-on and embrace multilingualism in in-school and out-of-school literacy practices.

Towards a multilingual, transnational writing teacher identity

It is my contention that English writing teacher identities have been deeply shaped by monolingualism and nationalism in Asian nations. As suggested earlier, English teachers in these nations are commonly trained in applied linguistics and foreign language teaching programs, that have heavily drawn on SLA scholarship. In SLA, the dominant cognitive perspective tends to view students learning a second or foreign language as marching toward native speaker norms. Their local languages and cultural practices tend to be viewed negatively as interference rather than as resources. This cognitive perspective aligns with the nationalist language education policy, which posits that students learn an L2 in order to communicate with its

native speakers, who are not ‘us’ but ‘them.’ This perspective is inflected in the materials teachers read in professional development programs, and perpetuated through large-scale language assessment and the pedagogical practice of the local community.

I suggest that historical knowledge in the teaching of L2 writing in Asia may embolden English writing teachers as they contend with monolingualism, in their ongoing teacher identity construction. Based on Pennington’s (2015) frames perspective on ESL teacher identity, writing teacher identity can be understood in practice-based frames. Historical knowledge may encourage teachers to construct a multilingual teacher identity through negotiations in instructional, disciplinary, and professional frames. First, informed by historical knowledge, teachers will see that second languages have been historically used by local writers to capture their lived experiences and imaginations, making these ‘second’ or ‘foreign’ languages their own. As their monolingual assumptions are exposed, teachers may be pushed to reflect upon where and how they have acquired them. They may be encouraged to reassess and challenge the conventional wisdom in teaching writing, i.e., focusing on language forms and correcting errors. Second, coupled with recent scholarship in applied linguistics and literacy studies, historical knowledge may motivate teachers to design teaching materials, writing tasks, and pedagogical techniques from a multilingual framework. While teaching Standard English, they may develop activities that encourage students to explore their thoughts and feelings through diverse genres and diverse Englishes, activities that focus on students’ composing processes and their ability to negotiate with different English styles across contexts in constructing meanings. Third, historical knowledge may enable teachers to perceive that they are not alone in combating monolingualism. They may consciously develop individual and collective strategies to negotiate with various stake holders in their profession. They may demand a multilingual orientation in reforming English education policy and high-stakes assessment (Flores and Schissel, 2014).

In addition to the practice-based frames, writing teachers can reinvent their teacher identity through contextual frames. Historical knowledge may encourage them to transcend their school context (i.e., a local frame) and see the social consequences of their teaching. Historical accounts of L2 writing in Asia reveal that people have used it not only for immediate and material benefits, but more importantly for fighting for their political and cultural ideals (i.e., a sociocultural frame). L2 writing has enabled people of different languages and cultures to forge connections and develop mutual understanding across national and cultural borders (You, 2010, 2016) (i.e., a transnational frame). With historical knowledge, writing teachers may more closely connect class writing with students’ politico-cultural lives

and promote cross-cultural understanding. As teachers gradually take on a multilingual and transnational orientation in their value system, pedagogical practice, and negotiations with stake holders, conceivably their teacher identity will also take on this new makeup. It is for this much needed change that I suggest that historical knowledge of teaching L2 writing in Asia is critical for reinventing English writing teacher identity.

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Learning English at school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice. Cleveland, UK: Multilingual Matters. Drawing on an exemplary ethnography of young English language learners, Toohey investigates the ways in which classroom practices are implicated in the range of identity options available to language learners. She draws on sociocultural and poststructural theory to better understand the classroom community as a site of identity negotiation. *Reinventing identities in second language writing*. Urbana, IL: NCTE Press. Cummins, J. (2001). *English as a Second Language in the mainstream: Teaching, learning and identity*. Longman, UK. Nelson, C. (2009). *Premier's Lend Lease English Literature Scholarship Approaches to Teaching Cross-cultural Identity in English Literature* David Eldridge Hornsby Girls High School Sponsored by Focus of the Study Developments in the 'new' ways of reading, which underpin the rationale of the Stage 6 English Syllabus, require students to have knowledge of how meaning is made, by both the writer and the reader. Thus an understanding of context and culture in literature as well as knowledge of various literary theories that have influenced ways of reading and interpreting texts are an essential part of the contemporary Writing is not just about conveying 'content' but also about the representation of self. (One of the reasons people find writing difficult is that they do not feel comfortable with the 'me' they are portraying in their writing.) The main claim of this book is that writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped subject positions, and thereby play their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and interests which they embody. The first part of the book reviews recent understandings of social identity, of the discursive construction of identity, of literacy and identity, and of issues of identity in research on academic writing. 1. English language-Rhetoric-Study and teaching--Psychological aspects. National identity therefore refers to positive, subjectively important emotional bonds with a nation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A socio-historical context is essential for ideological discourse analysis. In general, there are three critical historical periods that have defined changing national identity for the Chinese nation-state. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, national identity has been a continuous discourse that dominates cultural politics. Roz Ivani. Writing is not just about conveying 'content' but also about the representation of self. (One of the reasons people find writing difficult is that they do not feel comfortable with the 'me' they are portraying in their writing. Academic writing in particular often poses a conflict of identity for students in higher education, because the 'self' which is inscribed in academic discourse feels alien to them.) The main claim of this book is that writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped subject positions, and thereby play their part in