JOALL (JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE)
Vol. 9 No. 2, August 2024
ISSN (print): 2502-7816; ISSN (online): 2503-524X
Available online at https://ejournal.unib.ac.id/index.php/joall/article/view/35964
https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v9i2.35964

Straddling the Personal and the Academic: How Self in Academic Writing is Constructed in Contact Zone

[1*]Setiono Sugiharto

Faculty of Education and Languages, Doctoral Program in Applied English Linguistics,
Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia
Jalan Jenderal Sudirman 51, 12930, Jakarta

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: July 24, 2024
Revised : August 24, 2024
Accepted: August 26, 2024

Keywords:
Contact zone
Self
Rhetorical postures
Discordant
Coherent potential

Conflict of interest:
None

Funding information:
None

Correspondence:
Setiono Sugiharto
Setiono.sugiharto@atmajaya.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Drawing on the notion of the contact zone (Pratt, 1991), this qualitative case study investigates the construction of self in the academic writing of three Indonesian novice writers. Its aims are twofold: (a) to explore how students constructed self in academic writing, including the way they negotiated tensions between their expectations and their teachers, as well as the challenges posed to their writing self in the presence of the dominant discourse, and (b) to identify possible rhetorical postures of their texts. Data were obtained via writing conferences, field notes, and participant observations and analyzed using thematic coding. Results show that the self was constructed by (a) venerating established authorities, (b) depersonalizing knowledge, (c) personalizing knowledge, and (d) through discursivity and linearity. As for the rhetorical postures, different constructions of self in writing yield different rhetorical postures, which can be classified as either discordant or coherent potential. This study concludes that the self as the aspect of identity is invariably unstable, ambivalent, and even conflictual, as it always undergoes changes over time motivated by the dynamics of social contexts of writing. So construed, writing can no longer be treated as a value-free and autonomous activity devoid of one's values, preferential biases, beliefs, and allegiances to realities.

How to cite (APA Style):
Sugiharto, S. (2024). The Straddling the Personal and the Academic: How Self in Academic Writing is Constructed in Contact Zone. JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature), 9(2), 478–504. https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v9i2.35964

INTRODUCTION

A recent surge of interest in studies on the construction of identity by multilingual writers indicates that composition scholarship is becoming increasingly more expansive in its scope and broader in its perspective, resulting in the influx of theoretical exuberance and ideological radicalism

(Canagarajah, 2002). This expansion marked the emergence of the so-called meta-disciplinary discourse – the inquiry into the nature, historical development, as well as the philosophical and methodological orientations of writing (Matsuda et al., 2003). Meta-disciplinary discourse also includes the discussion on writing from the rich perspectives of interdisciplinary relations, ideology and politics, a personal reflection of professional growth, and the discussion of the status of the field**.**

The perspective of meta-disciplinary discourse acknowledges a writer's agency in the text construction. It suggests that an individual writer may participate in a multiplicity of discourses, and that these discourses can be complementary, contradictory, and conflicting (see Lam, 2000; Matsuda, 2015). A plethora of studies on the agency or self as the categorial aspects of the identity of writers do exist, most notably by Burke (2010), Shand & Konza (2016), and Park (2023), which reveal the shifting and conflicting identities of student writers. Nevertheless, as these studies do not consider how the self as the aspect of identity is constructed, negotiated, and evolves if we view it from the contact perspectives, more studies focusing on the writers' self in this vantage point can throw new light into how their written texts come into being and can therefore expand the findings from the previous studies. The choice for novice writers is a compelling one because their writing features are often seen as exhibiting "autobiographical self" (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2003), as well as these writers' "'outlandishness – their appearance to many teachers and to themselves as the students who are most alien in the college community" (Bizzell, 1986, p. 294).

Drawing insights from this notion of contact zone to the study of the construction of self in academic writing can promote a richer and sounder understanding of how the practice of writing pedagogy in a specific and highly localized context contributes to a general theory of writing. Furthermore, situating such an orientation in the local context helps generate insights into how students' attitudes toward writing, values, agency, identities, and discourse convention are conflicted and negotiated in the presence of the dominant discourse conventions. Despite the existence of studies of self-representation in academic writing (see, for instance, Tang, & John (1999), Ivanič & Camps (2001), Park (2023), and Kobayashi & Rinnert (2023), more studies on the self-representation from the contact zone perspective is mandatory to see the unstable, dynamic, and evolving nature of the self. Different from these previous studies, the present study attempts to explore the writings of novice student writers – that is, students whose writings are characterized by inchoative ideas in their writing development. Furthermore, the contact zone viewpoint allows us to capture how students might exhibit an ideological and textual contestation, appropriation and even

resistance to established norms imposed on them. Thus, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the novice student writers represent themselves in writing in the contact zone?
2. How did they shape their own texts in light of ideological and textual tension that occurred during the writing process?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Contact Zone Perspective

Writing pedagogy has always involved power relations and, thus, power imbalance. In teaching writing where students are always compelled to conform to the Standard English variety, Matsuda and Matsuda (2010) recognize this power imbalance, averring that the positionality of writers as students and non-native speakers makes it hardly possible to negotiate and challenge the dominant academic discourse. With the inequality in power, outsiders (i.e., student writers) still deserve the right to negotiate and even resist the dominant discourse conventions. One viable way to do so is to apply a contested "safe-house in contact zone " model.

This site, originally coined by Pratt (1991) to theorize the cultural contact of postcolonial societies, has now been expanded in fields as diverse as composition, literature, and English language teaching. This site refers to "social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogenous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings and temporary protection from legacies of oppression (p. 40). In the field of critical writing and English language teaching, where the cultural values, rhetorical traditions, and identities of non-native English students are, this site has been theorized in terms of spatiotemporal dimension (Canagarajah, 2002):

> ***In the classroom:***
> *Spatial domains*: asides between students, note-passing, small-group interactions, peer activities, marginalia in textbooks and notebooks, chatting through texting.
> *Temporal domains:* transition from one teacher to another, before classes begin, after classes are officially over.
>
> ***Outside class:*** the canteen, the library, dorms, playgrounds, homes.
> *In cyberspace:* email, online discussion/chat.

Figure 1. Sites of the pedagogical safe house (adapted from Canagarajah (2002, p. 183)

Unlike in a highly formal classroom context, these sites offer a relatively relaxed ambience for students to conduct peer exchanges in both oral and written forms. With the absence of authority figures, students can talk and write whatever they desire without being haunted by strict regulations to conform to a unified form of discourse. It is on these sites students surreptitiously exhibit their underlying behaviours.

Apart from historical and anthropological evidence of the effectiveness of these sites used by the marginalized groups to develop subversive discourses to challenge the dominant ones (see, for example, Scott, 1985; Kochman, 1981; Canagarajah, 2002b), evidence also abounds in the field of composition, buttressing the benefits of these sites for writing improvement. Brooke (1987), studying the underlying behaviour of student writers, suggests that underlying makes students conscious of their roles as student writers and of the fact that they are different, and therefore, explore and write out these differences. Also, it helps learners see themselves as "an original thinker,…whose purpose is to please teachers by absorbing and repeating information" (p. 152). Applied to translingual literacy pedagogy, the contact zone can "provide spaces for negotiations between readers/writers and teachers/students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, with suitable ecological resources to facilitate such negotiations, leading to reflexive thinking, creative risk-taking, and critical rhetorical practice" (Canagarajah & Matsumoto, 2016, p. 394).

Self in Academic Writing

In relation to academic writing, identity is conceptualized by Ivanic (1998, p.23) into four intermingled aspects: (a) autobiographical self, an aspect of identity which depicts a writer's life histories and prior social conditions and which he/she brings with in writing. When coming in touch with new social conditions, this self is affected and mutates into a new identity, (b) discoursal self, another aspect of identity imprinted in the discoursal form. The construction of this identity reflects the values, beliefs and power of the writer, which can be "heard" from their voice –what they desire to sound, rather than the stance they want to take, (c) self as author, an identity reflected by the construction of a voice – the stances, opinions, and beliefs they wish to convey. This voice is manifested in a varying degree; some writers take a full control of the contents of the writing, claiming authority over them by establishing an authorial presence, while others attribute them to other sources, treating knowledge as impersonal entities, (d) possibilities for self-hood, the envisioned new identity that a writer may acquire in new rhetorical

situations as a result of the possible clash of autobiographical self and the imposition of other selves which a writer may find at odd with their own self. Due to this clash, a writer is confronted with two options: either to privilege his/her own self or to give prominence to other selves, giving rise to what is called "the patterns of privileging".

Ideological and Textual Tension in Academic Writing

The prevailing conceptions of academic discourse, which are often bandied about in much composition literature and in many writing textbooks, are biased toward the Anglo-American mode of communication, a mode that exalts such constructs as originality, individuality, logic, coherence, linearity, and impersonality. In fact, it is a type of discourse most glorified and privileged in the modern world, owing to its appeal in offering a model of rationality and detached reasoning and in demonstrating absolute truth and empirical evidence of flawless logic (Hyland, 2008). Academic discourse is also associated with the discourse of "Truth" (Lemke, 1995). All these perceptions of academic discourse is prevalent in academic writing, as the dominant English monolingual ideology heavily influences it. This ideology is often in stark contrast as student writers, especially multilingual writers, exhibit contesting ideologies (i.e. their values, histories, rhetorical traditions, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of language).

Nevertheless, the advent of post-structuralist discourse opens up a possibility for deconstructing this commonly-held perception. It provides the impetus for embracing a more inclusive and emancipatory perspective of the notion of academic discourse and for catering to multilingual students' linguistic needs. With this reorientation of perspective, efforts to initiate and socialize students into academic discourse without eliding their typical characteristics as beginning writers, identity, cultural values, and writing traditions have become pedagogically encouraging, thanks to composition scholars who have deconstructed the dominant discourse.

Zamel (1993), predicating her argument on the assumption that academic discourse is not a monolithic and unchanging entity, encourages writing teachers and students to interrogate the nature, value, and use of academic discourse. She contends that the exclusive definition of academic discourse as a "specialized form of reading, writing, and thinking done in the 'academy' or other schooling situations" (p. 28) is more likely to "lead to theoretical frameworks and instructional models that oversimplify our understanding of academic work and reduce it to a fixed idea that does not reflect reality" (p. 30). With this critique, Zamel not only envisions a writing pedagogy compatible with the perspectives of beginning students, but she also urges writing teachers to take a critical stance by resisting the subliminal, oppressive forces that demand conformity to a single mode of academic discourse.

Likewise, taking into account the students' developmental stage, Shaughnessy (1977a, 1977b), an ardent defender of basic writers, problematizes academic discourse for their insistence on exposing such conventions as logical thoughts, "elucidation and validation" skills, and skills in presenting "adequate proof".

Furthermore, Shaughnessy imputes the student's inability to perform elucidation and validation skills as well as to present adequate proof in academic writing to a lack of familiarity with the "rituals" of academic discourse, suggesting that these reflect his/her "honest face" ethos. These all have an important implication for the teaching of writing to beginner writers: the seemingly deviant academic prose the students wrote should not be attributed to their cognitive capacity but should be seen as a mode of learning.

In addition to this pedagogical reorientation, other reorientations emanate from expressivist schools. According to scholars affiliating in this school, individual voice, personal experiences and knowledge should not be excluded from the definition of academic discourse. The tendency to separate one's personal voice from the academic language and dismiss it as irrelevant has been called into question. Elbow (1991), for example, questions the tendency of academic discourse to exclude the author's voice from the text, pointing out that a detached and impersonal stance is a pretense as the "idea and reasons and arguments from the person who holds them" (p, 140) cannot simply be dismissed in the process of textual construction.

METHOD

Participants

The present study employs a case-study method involving three undergraduate student writers – Sandra, Cadfael, and Carlita – (all are pseudonyms). They were deliberately chosen as they can be classified as basic writers due to the typical features of their writing as well as their "'outlandishness – their appearance to many teachers and to themselves as the students who are most alien in the college community" (Bizzell, 1986, p. 294). In addition, their writing samples provide us writing teachers with genuine pictures and insights which mirror our perspectives and belief systems. As such, they help us examine critically our pedagogical assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions of academic writing in a multilingual context. These students were Indonesian undergraduate students who enrolled in my writing classes (Writing III, Academic Writing, and Scientific Writing). They were selected not because they were necessarily representative but because their efforts to make forays into academic discourse reveal divergent vantage points of writing, writing development, and writing strategies in meeting the expectations of the conventions of academic writing imposed by their Department.

Techniques of data collection

Individual conference and after-class group conference

One of the data sources was the conference approach collected from a series of 10 individual scheduled on-campus conferences with the three students in the two writing classes (Writing III and Academic Writing) and one Scientific Writing class. Each individual conference of the two classes, in which I took notes, took place in 30 minutes in my office. In this individual conference, students were not required to verbalize aloud their thoughts (as has been infamously known as "think aloud protocols" in process studies), the reasons being that this technique has been impugned for not "stimulating the real composing situation" (Zamel, 1983, p. 169).

In addition, data were obtained from a series of 5 group conferences, which I conducted after classes were over. These group conferences also lasted for approximately 30 minutes each. The focus of both individual and group conferences in these two writing classes was on the students' previous writing experience, writing attitudes, reflections on the writing process, writing styles, and writing strategies. Group interviews were supplemented by 10 scheduled conferences in the Scientific Writing class, on which I transcribed and took notes. Both individual conference and after class-group conference are particularly helpful in revealing the students' identities as it constitutes a "safe house" (Pratt, 1991), in which "social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogenous, sovereign communities with degrees of trust, shared understandings, and temporary protection from legacies of oppression" (Pratt, 1991, p. 40).

Written documents

Written data were collected from photocopies of the students' essays, which include (a) a reflective essay and (b) drafts of the final term paper (the first and second assignment). This academic writing classroom assignment is a library-research paper with the topics freely determined by the students, and (c) drafts of Scientific Writing (the second assignment) submitted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements of obtaining a Sarjana Degree. This is a field research paper, with the topic decided upon through negotiation between the students and their supervisor.

Data Analysis Procedures

To answer the research questions formulated previously, this study adopts an emic perspective (i.e. insider perspective) to fathom and untangle the students' endeavours in the process of knowledge construction in writing an academic text. As such, constructs are generated from the ground by interpreting the multiple forms of qualitative data. In keeping with the spirit of qualitative research with an emic orientation, my own experience as a long-

time student writer, as a teacher of writing, as a writer and writing researcher – not to mention my wide reading of published literature on composition impinges upon my interpretation of the data. A "thematic coding" (Canagarajah, 2011) was used to analyze the data with the following procedure:

(a) Open data coding is used to allow for possible emerging categories that approximate participants' perspectives. In this stage, all the data were read and read in order to obtain qualitative information related to the students' perceptions and experiences of academic writing, their personal involvement in different writing classroom discussions with different writing instructors and peers, their struggles of representing themselves as "newcomers" of the academic community, and their construction of self as depicted in the texts they produced.

(b) Axial coding, which refines categories by reflecting the comparison of data. In this stage, the data were all scrutinized and reviewed, and different codes that emerged were reflectively compared and contrasted to the pre-existing categories and then dissected into subcategories so as to categorize the "properties of the code" (Burke, 2010, p. 111). The "properties" include, among others, the students' personal reflection on their participation in an academic discourse community, their construction of self, the establishment of readership, and their representation of self-manifested in the texts.

(c) Final coding, which formulates and theorizes the emergent categories. All the emergent categories identified as the "properties" were then formulated and theorized. The formulation and theorization of these "properties" utilized both *theory-driven categorization* and *data-driven categorization*. In so doing, I was able to identify whether the emergent categories belong to autobiographical self, discoursal self, self as author, or the possibilities of self-hood. This helped answer the first research question proposed. Textual realizations, the second research question, were analyzed by combining these two theoretical stances despite their overlap in a certain element.

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: How did the novice student writers represent themselves in writing an academic text?

Drawing insights from the previous studies which have generated useful typology of ideologies of knowledge making (see, for example, Ivanič, 1998),

especially how the writer's self is constructed, the present research found that the construction of selves falls under two broad categories of ideologies: *self-constructed through imparted ideologies* and *self-constructed through organic ideologies*. Imparted ideologies are those that students are inculcated in their new rhetorical situation (i.e., in a formal learning context like classrooms), and as such, they are implicated in social relations, while organic ideologies are those that the students bring with them to a new rhetorical situation, possibly emanating from their interaction with the previous literacy contexts relative to their individual experiences. The former self is constructed (a) by revering established authorities and (b) by depersonalizing knowledge, while the latter self is constructed (a) by personalizing knowledge and (b) through discursivity and linearity. By identifying these different ways of self-construction, this study shall, at the same time, prove that the student writers under study show a rather unfathomably convoluted view of knowledge-making practices.

(a) Self-Constructed by Revering Established Authorities

It is customary in academic writing to attribute other sources as relevant references of knowledge to be infused into the writer's writing. The practice of attribution has become an important defining feature of academic writing (see John, 1997). By attributing other people's ideas, a writer acknowledges their property rights over their contribution to knowledge and shows respect to established authorities. The student writers in this study, due to the background knowledge they had from writing instructions they participated in, indeed acknowledged the importance of giving credits to authors for two reasons: they need to support their arguments from published authors to sound academic, and they fear of being accused of committing plagiarism, which could make them get lower grades and even fail the class. During the individual conference approach, Sandra, for instance, said that she had learned from her Research on English Language Teaching and Seminar classes that attributing experts' arguments is of utmost importance because, without clear attributions, a piece of writing would be considered nonacademic by her instructors and would be accused of plagiarism. As she said:

> "My writing will sound unacademic if I don't involve many ideas of other expert authors. Their ideas should be included if we want to support our opinions. They [the expert authors] know a lot than me. That's why I need their supports ". Also our failure to take others' ideas without writing their names is the same as stealing. (Individual conference with Sandra)

Claiming and supporting arguments from other writers and integrating them into one's writing open up the possibilities for self-hood (Ivanič, 1998). Integrating a writer's own voice with the voices of others and then claiming these voices to be eventually the writers indicate that the writers envision the existence of self-hood.

(b) Self-Constructed by Depersonalizing Knowledge

In the context of a discourse community, the audience (i.e., the members of the discourse community) is deemed omniscient and possesses full authority to impose rules and conventions to be emulated by student writers in producing texts. It is these rules that ultimately "become the standards for teaching and evaluating writing for the class" (Johns, 1990, p. 32). Being recalcitrant to these rules and conventions will risk one's acceptance into the community, with the ostracism ensuing. Analyzing the students' reflective essays and writing assignments, testimonies from an after-class group conference, personal conference as well as the course syllabi, I have the impression that due to their previous attendance to other courses offered by their Department such as Research on English Language Teaching and Seminar, in which their instructors often required them to write academic mid- and final term- papers, the students were exhorted to employ linguistic features that are often associated with research, thinking, and writing, and were therefore inculcated with a view knowledge-making as an empirical process –a view which owes its allegiance to a positivist ideology. The imposition of this view in the teaching of writing, especially in the academic genre, should not come as a surprise because such a view is prevalent in the academic discipline, to which student writers often feel obliged to become members (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Linguistic features often attributed to research include:

> a). no use of first-person references
> b). verbs to do with the processes of research, thinking, and writing, but mainly in the passive
> c). few references to people as the agents of these processes
> d). reference to published works as objects rather than to their writers
>
> (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p 19)

When enrolled in my Academic Writing class for the first time, Cadfael reflectively wrote:

> "The biggest problem I face in academic writing is to use sophisticated vocabulary. As the solution to the problem, I learnt to use thesaurus to get the best and sophisticated word". (Cadfael's reflective journal)

When asked further in an individual conference what she really meant by sophisticated vocabulary, Cadfael responded that her reading made her aware of specific words used frequently in academic writing, especially in research.

(c) Self Constructed by Personalizing Knowledge

In addition to their efforts to cling to the commonly-held view in academic disciplines (as has been demonstrated above), the student writers in this study also made explicit reference to their own agency (as the author) in knowledge-making practices, thereby making a space to align themselves with "a view of knowledge as the product and property of individuals" (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 19) as well as creating their own ethos. In this respect, students construct an "author-saturated" text (Geertz, 1988), as shown by the presence of an individual or personal voice with the first-person pronoun. The student's use of an explicit self-reference (i.e., the first-person pronoun I) in the present study indicates their authority over the topic and their rights to infuse personal opinions and beliefs (emanating from their experiences) and to participate in knowledge-making processes. Intriguing examples can be seen in the extracts taken from Cadfael's and Sandra's written assignments:

> "I believe, using phonics is the right way to enhance adult ESL students' ability to read and write English" (Cadfael)

> "I believe that media and technology today can provide teacher or instructor to have an interactive online classroom" (Sandra)

It is revealing to see here that both Cadfael and Sandra take the role of "I" as the opinion holder" (Tang & John, 1999) by using an explicit self-reference (i.e. the first person pronoun I), demonstrating their authority over the topic and their rights infuse personal opinions and beliefs (emanating from their experiences) and to participate in knowledge-making processes.

(d) Self-constructed through Discursivity and Linearity

These aspects of identity can be attributed to the writing process rather than to the product. Conventional wisdom in the teaching of writing – as has been prescribed by writing textbooks and blindly followed by writing teachers – exhorts students to undergo several stages of the composing process: pre-writing (outlining), writing (drafting), revising, and editing. This subscribes to the idea of linearity as opposed to discursivity, in which writing is seen as a convoluted and unpredictable, chaotic process.

With the predetermined rigid writing stages, the process of writing is viewed as a linear, neat, unitary, planned, and systematic activity. This notion of writing has often been imputed to pedagogy "that requires elaborate preliminary outlining, that provides models to analyze and imitate, and that insists on teaching writing systematically and prescriptively" (Zamel, 1983, pp. 166-167). This pedagogy, which still dominates contemporary writing textbooks and classroom practices, is clearly reminiscent of the current traditional rhetoric orthodoxy, whose central concern was the neat and logical arrangement of discourse (Silva, 1990). Such pedagogy, nevertheless, seems uncongenial and incongruent with the way the student writers in this study represent themselves in the process of writing. It seems to me they were able to sense that determining and planning ideas in the form of a rigid formal outlining, as has been exhorted by their writing teachers, did not necessarily render writing easier. Except for Cadfael, who preferred to write meticulously and warily using a predetermined formal outlining to guide her thoughts or ideas, both Sandra and Carlita represented themselves as student writers who were not constricted by "the rules of the game" commonly exhorted by the anachronistic instructional approach to writing. They can be classified as what Reid (1984) dubs the "radical brainstormers". As Carlita wrote reflectively:

> Honestly, it is hard for me to write by using outline to guide my writing stages or contents. Because I am the one who use to write by following the 'flow'. So when my lecturer asks me to make an outline before I compose a writing, I couldn't do that (usually I write the essay first then write the outline). (Carlita's reflective journal).

When I asked her to submit her proposal for her second assignment in the form of a rough outline, Carlita defied my request. She instead submitted a short essay that described her intention in investigating the topic chosen at the individual conference, convincing me that what she wrote was based on the related literature she had read rather than just a mere expression of personal opinions. That is, she 'planned' her ideas by jotting down directly whatever came from her mind instead of nicely sketching ideas via outlining.

Likewise, Sandra felt uncomfortable deciding in advance what she decided to write. For her, the thoughts would appear by themselves during writing, seemingly not to have bothered much about them when she began to plan what to write. Like Carlita, Sandra submitted her proposal in the form of a short essay rather than an outline, which she asked me to read and comment on before I granted her permission to proceed with the investigation of the topic.

During the individual conference, when I inquired each of them whether they were not worried about the coherence of the content when they

did not plan and sketch the ideas beforehand, both students responded that they were, but quickly reminded me that those who read their drafts had to understand them, because not every student has similar writing strategies. As Sandra said during the individual conference:

> "We cannot force ourselves to follow teachers' instruction all the time if we preparing what to write. We have to use our own ways and strategies; otherwise we cannot start writing. In fact, we know better what we're doing". (Individual conference with Sandra)

All of these seem to suggest that both Carlita and Sandra have developed their own subtle individual invention strategies for pouring their ideas in writing, strategies which "may not necessarily involve pre-writing at all" (Zamel, 1983, p.171).

Contrary to Carlita and Sandra, Cadfael strictly conformed to what she had already planned and formulated in the form of an outline. Cadfael believed that writing with the assistance of formal outlines made her arrange ideas "more orderly" and "clearer". She is the type of "radical outliner", as Reid (1984) dubbed it. Manifesting this belief in her invention strategies in writing, she had been accustomed to writing with a predetermined set of thoughts, and has represented herself as a student writer who always followed what she planned beforehand. Thus, she adopted linearity in the process of textual construction. In other words, she subscribed to a view of "get-it-right writing for the first time" (Elbow, 1998).

Research Question 2: How did the students shape their own texts in light of ideological and textual tension that occurs during the writing process?

Both imparted ideology and organic ideology impinge to a great extent upon the way self is constructed or realized by the student writers. On the one hand, given that they must satisfy the requirements demanded by their Department, the students were obligated to display the new identities they had just acquired in the new rhetorical situation to align themselves with knowledge-making practices unique in academia, thus manifesting their imparted ideology in writing. On the other, as they bring with them their autobiographical self and histories in the new rhetorical context (i.e., their organic ideology), it is plausible to deduce that the students did not undergo a complete identity transformation (Hyland, 2009), and thereby creating an identity clash and tension. To resolve this tension, the students employed textual strategies.

To illustrate these strategies, I shall borrow Bakthin's metaphor "ventriloquation", a term which designates an act of imitating one's voice so

as to resemble it. This term has been synonymously used to denote "multivoicedness", "othervoicenedness", "doublevoiceness", and "hybridization" (see Ivanič, 1998). The term "ventriloquation" is most relevant to illustrate the students' strategies of textual realization, especially when the students are going through a struggle to deal with conflicting forces, tensions, and the clash of identity in their endeavors to attain the ethos of academic discourse or to acquire what Geisler (1994) calls "domain-specific knowledge".

The students in this study certainly cannot escape academic assignments imposed on them by their educational institution. As a requisite of earning grades and a degree, such an assignment needs fulfilling. Despite some commonalities in ideological positioning shared by the students in fulfilling these assignments, the strategies they use to construct texts and to ventriloquize the ethos of academic discourse differ. I shall classify these strategies into two broad divisions: ventriloquating by maintaining "honest face ethos" and ventriloquating by accommodating academic discourse. For the sake of convenience, I will exemplify and illustrate these two acts by examining some extracts from the students' second assignments. The reason for this choice is that it is through their second assignment that they demonstrated their embryonic prowess in doing small-scale research using an IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion) structure –a structure which is not only deemed a generic mode of academic writing, but also enjoys a paradigmatic status in academic research publications (see Canagarajah, 1998). Also, through the presented extracts taken from students' assignments, we can get a glimpse of how the students struggle to ventriloquate the voice of academic discourse and possibly to acquire it.

(a) Ventriloquating by Maintaining "honest face" ethos

Sandra's' piece exemplifies a ventriloquation by maintaining an "honest face" ethos. A loquacious, assertive student who always counted on her "imaginative" ideas in writing fiction, Sandra maintained and held her personal ethos in resolving the clash of identities she faced while writing. Despite her demonstration of exhibiting an "academic-sounding text" by quoting various relevant sources and trying to explain and interpret them, the overall texture of Sandra's texts looks loquaciously disjointed. That is, most of her structural and organizational aspects of writing constitute a conglomeration of fragmented ideas and attributions and show no relevance to each other. Consider, for example, her piece below:

> Writing is one of the important skills in English language. Therefore, teachers develop the teaching style and methodology to elaborate the

> ability of students' writing. The development of teaching writing has been greatly improved by teachers; it can be seen by the variety of ways to teach writing classes. Teachers support their teaching skill in writing with many aspects, such as framework, theory and feedback. In order to support the development of teaching writing, teachers involve interaction as Grabowski (1996) states that writing is a system which needs special instruction and interaction. (Sandra's draft in the second assignment)

This reflects a text with the "texture of feeling or attitude" (Elbow, 1991, p. 145). From the way thoughts are organized and structured in every section of her writing, Sandra seems to adopt "I write-like-I-speak" voice (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 28), characterized mainly by the rhythmic moves of plain sentences, redundancy, relatively sparse or loose structured sentences and organization, and the cacophony of ideas. In fact, in her first assignment, Sandra seems comfortable using hyperbolic expressions to transmit her messages to the reader. These characteristics, while typical in oral conventions (Tannen, 1982), are atypical in a genre where a commitment to a detachment is preserved (Canagarajah, 1999).

Textual realization created by means of the maintenance of honest face ethos with "I write-like-I-speak voice", I suggest, results in a discordant text. This text might be deemed "inappropriate" for academic discourse, in as much as it represents the propinquity of the flow of thoughts distinctive in a spoken interaction, rather than the outcome of a deliberation of "highly constructed processes of composing which are characteristics of writing (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 28). However, I suggest that the above textual realization is not unsystematic. In fact, Sandra's extract is just one of so many examples of writing typical of neophytes who are either not yet acquainted to the conventions of disciplinary discourse or acquire it as part of their organic ideology (see other examples in Sugiharto, 2011) or resistant to it.

(b) Ventriloquating by Accomodating Academic Discourse

Like the texts produced by her counterpart, Cadfaels' and Carlita's rhetorical postures also portray an act of ventriloquation of academic discourse. Yet, the overall texture of the latter's texts are poles apart in some respects in that they display a sort of an "imbued-with-academic-literacy" voice (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 28), which are relatively more detached, densely structured, and restrained –facets typical of literate conventions (Tannen, 1982). Consider, first, the introduction written by Cadfael in her second assignment:

> There is no denying that textbook is an important element in teaching and learning. Since School Based Curriculum (SBC) provides the teacher with a lot of competences for each skill to achieve, and the fact that each textbook provides different competences from others, analyzing textbooks is noteworthy thing to do. Whether or not teacher elects to base her course on a textbook, it is worth thinking about how to recognize a good one while seeing it, and on what ground the teacher might reject or criticize it (Ur, 2003).
>
> It is unavoidable fact that textbooks deal with tasks. These tasks are the element that provides the students with opportunity to practice and finally increase their ability in the four skills, including writing. Despite the fact that writing is a transaction with words whereby we free ourselves from what we presently think, feel, and perceive (Elbow, 1973), there can be no doubt that language is inherently social, a creation and reflection of society and culture (Elbow, 1999). Hence, the students need tasks to guide them achieving the goal of the lesson, in which the students are expected to produce the correct expressions of their ideas, experiences, and feelings toward different kinds of writing situations (Peyton, Staton, Richardson, & Wolfram, 1990). (Cadfaels's draft in the second assignment)

And then Carlita's introduction from her second assignment:

> Often time, students experience academic failure when they are unable to write effective introductions on essay examinations (Scarcella, 1984). It happened because the teachers simply fail to read and understand what the students really mean in expressing their thought in essays, especially in the opening statements. This problem occurs when students tend to be more concerned of what they write without considering their reader's point of view or background knowledge. This situation is unfortunate for both students and teachers, because it leads to the bad score that interferes students to achieve higher academic success. Moreover, the teacher will experience difficulties in evaluating the students' writing. The failure that the students experience in writing is not merely caused by their incapability in orienting their readers, but there are also other factors that cause this phenomenon. (Carlita's draft in the second assignment)

Compared to Sandra's introduction, Cadfael's and Carlita's are less fragmented and disjointed, and depending on the reader's familiarity with the standard pattern of research introduction and on their adeptness in

making intended inferences, they are possibly more relatively intelligible to the readers.

Assuming that the readers are familiar with the commonly-accepted introductory pattern, such introductions ventriloquate a voice of academic discourse, with the research "territory", the creation and occupation of the niche – albeit amorphous and less straightforward and coherent than that in Swalesian's sense – being "heard". In addition, we can "hear" a more detached and impersonal voice when they "decontextualized" the sources they attributed. This voice is in opposition to Sandra's text, in which most of the acknowledged sources are "contextualized" mainly from her writing classroom experiences and her personal knowledge. Decontextualization and contextualization dichotomy are among the many features that distinguish literate and oral discourse (Tannen, 1982).

In addition, different from the Sandra's texts, the plethora of the presence of signposting in Cadfael's and Carlita's textual realizations is symptomatic that they mirror the common textual convention of academic discourse. Elbow (1991) points out that signposting or metadiscourse indicates the convention of explicitness of academic discourse, a convention which might be less obvious in other discourses (see also Hyland, 2008, 2009). Depending on the messages they want to convey, the varied use of signposting in their texts attests to their "imbued-with-academic-literacy" voice. Lastly, whereas Sandra's texts are studded with plain, spoken-based varieties, Carlita's and Cadfael's texts display more impersonal syntactic structures, suggesting an awareness of the import of the detachment in the disciplinary discourse.

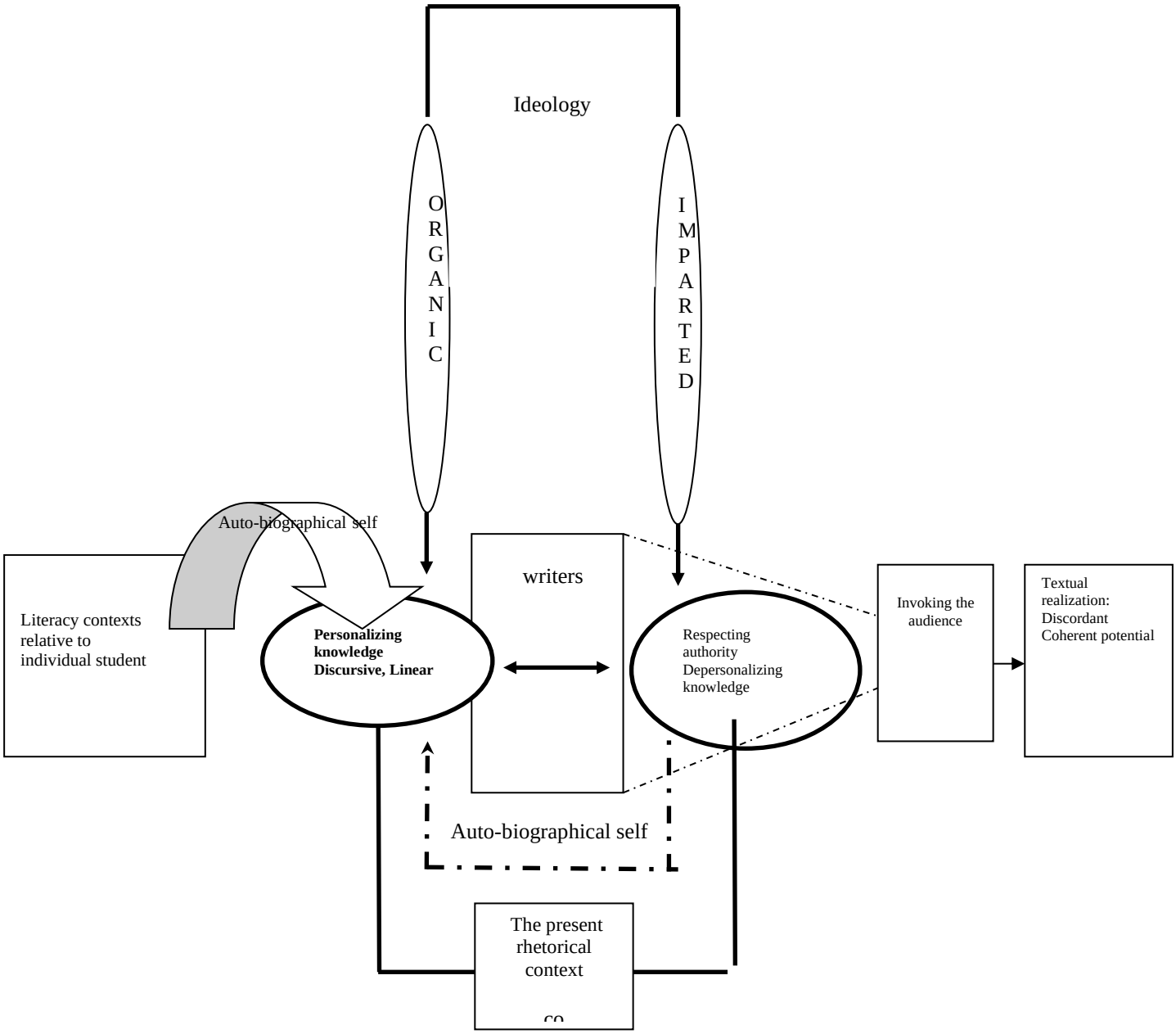
To sum up, while Sandra's honest-face ethos text can be regarded as a discordant text, both Carlita's and Cadfael's "imbued-with-academic-literacy" prose reflects a text which is coherent potential. Despite these different rhetorically constructed texts, the three are the byproduct of the students' intellectual endeavors to ventriloquate academic discourse and to make a foray into it via discursive practices. Of significance here is the rhetorical distinctiveness the students have displayed in their writing, which portrays the fact that they exercise their individual agency as beginning student writers who respond to their academic demands with different motivations, passions, allegiances, and preferences.

DISCUSSION

The motivation for exploring the possibilities for the construction of self in the present study has been premised on the assumption that writing products reflect the students' identity, values, and beliefs. Writing outcomes, in other words, cannot be treated as value- and ideological-free. And as such, we cannot simply resort to the idea that they are devoid of one's identity.

Contrary to the anachronistic assumption that writing is viewed merely as a formal, autonomous activity, critical perspectives of writing research and pedagogy have provided us with insights that writing is also ideological and that it presupposes the construction of the writer's self.

As has been evinced previously, the construction of texts by the three students in this study reflects a struggle to represent themselves as neophytes who attempted to learn the "domain-specific knowledge". This struggle of representation creates the construction of aspects of identity, which includes the autobiographical self, discoursal self, and self as author. Despite an overlap in the conceptual framework between self-constructed by respecting established authorities and evidentiality as in the establishment of readership, the representational perspective also impinges upon the way they establish readership with their intended audience as well as the way texts are realized, which can be schematized in Figure 3 below:



A Schematic representation of self in knowledge construction (taken from Sugiharto, 2012)

The merit of contextualizing students' literacy development from the contact zone viewpoint is that this perspective allows us to trace their critical and reflective thinking in negotiating and appropriating academic discourse as the novice writers attempt to project their self-representation in academic writing. The students' diverse literacy background or autobiographical self –which constitutes their organic ideology – as well as their engagement with a new rhetorical situation, in which they developed an imparted ideology and envisioned the possibilities for selfhood jostling with each other, render them relatively "potent" to visualize or fictionalize their intended audience and to eventually ventriloquate academic discourse with the overall discoursal texture varying from one to another. Sandra, for instance, tends to ventriloquate by maintaining her honest façade, creating a discordant text. In contrast, both Carlita and Cadfael tend to accommodate academic discourse, with their texts appearing to have coherent potential. These relative variations in textual constructions, as has been argued previously, can be imputed to the students' unique agencies, interests, motivations, allegiances, preferences, and different perspectives on reality, suggesting that they do not develop a monolithic view of reality and adopt a unitary identity. In addition, the discoursal self they display can also be interpreted as the result of their being ambivalent toward academic discourse as well as their conveying of a multifaceted self (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Burges & Ivanič , 2010).

The most conspicuous of these is Sandra's text, which earned her a B. This text, having been evaluated by the examination committee, showed a lack of coherence and a linear progression from what is discussed in the "Literature Review" and the "Analysis and Discussion" section. The committee also commented that while her topic of investigation was worth researching as it might throw useful light into classroom practice, the insights Sandra generated from it were not clear. This commentary is understandable as Sandra failed to show her readers what she obtained from her interpretations of the data analysis. In presenting her interpretations, she tended to preserve her "true" identity (i.e., her biographical self) as a fiction writer, bringing it to the new rhetorical context to which she was exposed and from which texts were constructed. Nevertheless, the "new" identity she developed through the imparted ideology pressured her to conform to the academic conventions she had been imposed and to become "someone she is not". Being mutinous would risk her of not "getting [ting] the best results" or even of being failed. In a graded final assignment, displaying a mutiny did Sandra more harm than good. On the other hand, being fully compliant made her dilute her personal ethos too often, which she felt was unfair and might eventually stymie her language development. Beset with these two conflicting ideological forces, Sandra could not opt for an "either/or" pair but had to succumb to ambivalent attitudes: partially deferential and partially

recalcitrant. Her recalcitrance is crystal clear from her adoption of the "honest face ethos" maintenance strategy, whereas her deference, although tangible in some parts of her writing, needs further scrutiny because it is this partial and lackadaisical deference that contributes to a text which is judged as incoherent, irrational, uncritical, illogical, and sloppy.

We can, therefore, put forward an argument (which, like students in Canagarajah's studies (1997, 1999), that Sandra's ventriloquation of academic discourse is an effort to display a symbolic value of academic convention to be conned into acceptance by her teachers and probably by her academic audience. Thus, her imparted ideology, such as showing respect to authority and depersonalizing knowledge, which obliges her to "establish" an academic readership through the means of metadiscourse, reflects the stereotypical convention of academic discourse. The deployment of stereotypical academic conventions, as Canagarajah (1997) argues, is a form of "a concession to academic discourse or attempt to provide a sense of balance and restraint to the writing" (p. 187). Sandra's pretense to appear academically stereotypical suggests at least three things. First, the identity Sandra constructs is multifaceted, protean, unstable, and fluctuating, depending very much upon the tasks she will be assigned and the socio-cultural contexts she will confront. In her first assignment, where she was given considerable latitude in choosing her topic, she enjoyed personalizing the topic she wrote, seemingly without much care for her audience. However, in her second assignment, as has been described above, she needed to appear stereotypically academic.

Second, as an outsider to the academic community who learnt to experiment with academic discourse, Sandra might have found it mandatory to take a premeditated step by deploying and parodying the stereotypical convention in her writing to reconcile her clash of identity with the dominant discourse convention and to eventually meet her academic requirements of educational success. Lastly, the new identity she has just developed and probably (partially) acquired is only ephemeral and transient, driven primarily by extrinsic rather than intrinsic purposes. This new identity may not be part of the identity to which Sandra aspires for the rest of her life (Burges & Ivanič, 2010).

Furthermore, as a student writer like Sandra barely had any bargaining power to negotiate her expectations with her teacher, the stereotypical use of academic conventions is also indicative of what Canagarajah (1997) calls "the art of fronting". Borrowing Kochman's (1981) terminology of fronting as "those anxious mental adjustment that are made in deference to the mode of operation" (p. 125), he sees such a stereotypical use of academic convention as a form of surreptitious resistance students display in reacting against a dominant discourse. This may take the form of feigned ignorance, false compliance, parody, and mimicry. Sandra's discordant text –a conglomeration of mimicry of purportedly academic voice saturated with her own "vernacular" voice – is clearly the product of

her covert resistance against a discourse which requires her to make an "anxious mental adjustment". Situating Sandra's text in light of a social constructivist vantage point, we can, in the end, regard Sandra's discordant text not as a result of her cognitive deficiency in constructing a logical and coherent text but as a strategic heuristic to help her with possible initiation into academic discourse. Positioning herself as a fiction writer and a student writer learning a new discourse, Sandra indeed has the potential to further develop her dual identity –a position which, if taken seriously for her future career, can make her skillfully shuttle between (at least to) two different discourses.

Both Carlita's and Cadfael's texts, which respectively got an A, were immediately praised by the examination committee, not only because their writing products did not pose a relatively serious intelligibility problem for the examiners, but also because these student writers were able to derive insights from their research and to convince the examiners during the exam. Although these two students, like Sandra, initially faced a similar clash of identity in learning academic discourse, they tended to disregard it and instead consider the academic conventions seriously. This identity clash seemed to have ebbed away, once they seriously showed their allegiances to learning academic conventions. Thus, what makes Cadfael and Carlita different from Sandra needs to be explained in terms of motivations, interests and preferences. As students with somber demeanors, both Cadfael and Carlita took things seriously and with high commitment. Their active participation in doing every single class assignment and in conferencing during the completion of their research attests to their allegiances and motivations in learning academic discourse.

With their texts being awarded an A by their examination committee, we can – at least from their narrow-scope academic audience –say that these two students managed to align themselves with the knowledge-making practices typical in academia. Judged from the texts they constructed, we may also argue that the new identity these students exhibited is more on the product of the imparted ideology or of the dominant discourse which is bound to institutional practices.

Yet, like Sandra's, their identity is not fixed and unitary, but fluctuating, unstable, and multifaceted, depending again upon the tasks and socio-cultural contexts. In fact, in the first assignment, Cadfael and Carlita could freely personalize their knowledge of the topics they wrote. Here , an individual writer, as Ivanič and Camp (2001) suggest, can display his/her power to conform to or resist the social forces that are privileging one voice type over another. The changing nature of aspects of identity demonstrates the conceptual flexibility of the theorization of the construction of self in writing. For instance, the possibilities for selfhood of these three student writers are likely to change radically depending on the dynamics of social circumstances the students are facing. This buttresses

Burke's (2010) revelation that a writer's identity is multiple, socially situated, fluid and changing over time. The students in the present study constructed a distinct discoursal self, depending partly, for example, on the clash of their autobiographical self and the institutional demands the students were compelled to conform, and partly on the writing tasks and topics they needed to accomplish. Similarly, an aspect of identity such as self as the author may also undergo alteration, depending on the writer's certainly, confidence and self-assurance with the writing tasks and topics. As has been revealed in the present study, the more knowledgeable about and self-assured with the topics the students are, the more likely they are relatively authoritative.

It is compelling to discover that the student writers underwent a changing and developing sense of self over time, resulting in heterogeneity of discourse. This heterogeneity is indicative of a character of discourse at the turn of the millennium known as postmodern, "characterized by diversity, unpredictability, incongruity, and contradiction" (Ivanič & Camp, 2001, p. 30). The insights generated from this study strengthen Kobayashi and Rinnert's (2023) study that the self as the aspect of identity is never static but always in flux and dynamic and is influenced by the topic and context of writing. In addition, the present study confirms their findings that novice writers have the tendency to project themselves as "a subjective, self-reflective writer identity" (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2023, p. 133)

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND IMPLICATION

The voices of the student writers in this study documented in the present study have compelled us writing teachers to view academic writing as no longer a social activity which is autonomous and devoid of one's values, preferential biases, identities, beliefs, and allegiances to realities. As has been shown, in their attempts to represent themselves, and hence to construct self during the process of knowledge construction, student writers cannot freely opt for their own discoursal choices only but ought to consider the convention of dominant academic discourse community into which they are socialized and initiated to enter. The initiation and socialization process often brings about identity clashes characterized by the fluctuation of identity. This is because of the yawning gap that exists between the students' autobiographical self-constructed in the past from the social contexts they were engaged with and the new social contexts into which they are initiated to enter.

The identity clash can be best described by the typology of ideologies of knowledge-making. On the one hand, the students displayed their willingness to enter academic discourse by learning its conventions, albeit half-heartedly as has been the case of Sandra. One assurance piece of evidence is reflected in the way they establish a relationship with the audience via the employment of metadiscourse – linguistic resources which

are often prevalent in academic writing. Another piece of evidence is the overall rhetorical postures of their writing, which have coherent potential and approximate the textures typical of an academic text. These findings suggest the students have been ideologically imparted through the imposition of academic discourse convention. On the other hand, the students showed resistance to learning academic discourse, albeit covertly, as has been the case for both Cadfael and Carlita. However, the most conspicuous is Sandra's insistence on maintaining an "honest face ethos" in the construction of the text, resulting in a stereotypical academic text at best and discordant text at worst. Both covert and overt resistance to the learning of the academic discourse suggest the existence of their organic ideology.

It is important to highlight that identity clash should be best viewed as students' struggle of self-representation in experimenting with an academic text – a struggle that not only depicts their commitment to achieving educational success, which is, of course, pedagogically laudable, but more importantly attests to the very essence of the notion of writing as a knowledge-making process imputed to social dynamics.

The implication of this study should be clear. The students' autobiographical self, which constitutes their histories and organic ideologies and which they bring to a new rhetorical situation, should in no way be summarily dismissed as irrelevant or extraneous factors that distort their initiation and socialization into learning academic discourse. It should instead be seen as potential factors that can provide access to learning the disciplinary discourse and to "enrich[ing] the culture of the academy" (Spack, 1997, p. 50). In addition, the teaching of writing needs to be reoriented to the current philosophical and intellectual rethinking, such as a critical perspective in writing –a perspective that challenges the imposition of ideas which tend to be deterministic, normative, and disinterested by grounding the act of writing in the situatedness and locality of the writers as the creators of knowledge. As such, this perspective deconstructs many of the basic credos of cognitive schools and other schools of thought in composition pedagogy that have dominated the field for decades.

As this research employs a case study method with only three participants, the generalization of this finding is not warranted. Future research, therefore, needs to address and replicate the same issue by involving more participants. It is especially important to expand the findings of the present research by investigating how student writers position themselves (i.e., how they shuttle between different types of identity discussed above) in light of the imposition of dominant writing norms and conventions.

NOTE

This article is a short, revised version taken from my dissertation project.

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THE AUTHOR

Setiono Sugiharto is a Professor of English at Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, Jakarta. His works have appeared in *Applied Linguistics*, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *TESOL Journal*, *The Journal of ASIA TEFL*, *The Routledge Handbook of Educational Linguistics*, and *Bloomsbury Education and Childhood Studies*. His research focuses on language, politics and ideology, and the sociolinguistics of globalization.