

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫

成果報告
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邁向英語文教師專業發展之學習社群：由 Bakhtinian 觀點
探究個人學習需求如何與團體利益對話

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計畫主持人：招靜琪

共同主持人：

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摘要

修讀博士階段充滿了挑戰，若要能過百關，把自己培養成一個專家，過程中自我的定位與人我關係的處理，不可不謂重要。而在國內修讀英語教學博士是否因社會環境的特殊，而更加艱鉅與複雜，值得了解。本研究為邁向英語文教師專業發展之學習社群系列研究之一，目的在了解三位在國內修讀英語教學的博士生如何在不同階段定位個人並處理人我關係方面的挑戰。方法上以遵循敘事研究派典為方向，文獻上則參考第二語言學術寫作與發表方面的研究，其中特別是所謂的作者自我定位個案研究(writing and identity, Ivanic, 1998)，對我的理論靈敏度提昇有幫助。我搜集了三位女性 TESOL 博士生的求學歷程、走入這一行的原因，及他們對博士班經驗的看法，並嘗試藉由社會文化理論與 Bakhtinian 觀點，解釋他們經驗。2007 年八月本案開始時，三位皆處於論文提案的前後階段，經過一年的努力，三位的論文各有不同的進展，也陸續接近完成階段。這期間，我經由多次的深入個別訪談與正式與非正式的互動，了解了三位進入英語教學學術圈前後的故事，也與三位共同經歷了總總事件。經分析整理他們的遭遇與他們的看法論述，慢慢地了解她們三位如何運用各自的辦法，努力探尋自我定位、培養屬於自己的專業，同時還小心翼翼地處理本地社會文化下的特殊的人我關係型態，並企圖與國際學術界建立對話，果然是比現有的第二語言學術寫作文獻所揭露的現象，其複雜性有過之而無不及。研究成果對第二語言學術寫作的研究及國內英語教學博士的養成教育，應有所啟示與幫助。

關鍵字：第二語言學術寫作、自我定位

Abstract

The road to a Ph.D. degree in TESOL, as in any other disciplines, is likely to be full of road blocks and hurdles. Writing a dissertation is perhaps the most challenging, although it affords a transformation process for the student writer, allowing one to develop into a unique expert in an area of her choice. To get through this complex process safe and sound requires proper positioning of oneself as well as positive interaction with peers, the advisor, and local and international academic communities. This study is interested in how three doctoral students in Taiwan position themselves and manage relationships with others as they pursue their goals in a doctoral TESOL program at the unique social cultural context of Taiwan. It attempts to understand how *self* interacts with *other* during the entire doctoral program and the process of dissertation writing, from the emit perspectives of three TESOL doctoral candidates. Theoretically speaking, this study adopts Bakhtinian perspectives of *dialogism* as a theoretical lens and attempts to follow the narrative inquiry research tradition, which allows me, as the researcher, to document the live-through experience of being a doctoral students and writing a dissertation. The goal is to develop deeper insights into these students' experience in such a context.

Keywords: second language academic writing and publishing, identity forming

Introduction and Purpose

The road to a Ph.D. degree in TESOL, as in any other disciplines, is likely to be full of road blocks and hurdles. The most difficult part is the dissertation process. Dissertation writing often affords a transformation process for the student writer. Confusion and uncertainty at the beginning of the project is often unavoidable. Developing oneself into a unique expert in an area of one's choice also involves a long-process of working through challenges and struggles. To get through this complex process safe and sound requires proper positioning of oneself and close interaction with peers, the advisor, and local and international academic community. This study is interested in how three doctoral students in Taiwan position themselves and manage relationships with others as they pursue their goals in a doctoral TESOL program at the unique social cultural context of Taiwan. It attempts to understand how *self* interacts with *other* in the process of dissertation writing, from the emit perspectives of three TESOL doctoral candidates. Theoretically speaking, this study adopts Bakhtinian perspectives of *dialogism* as a theoretical lens and attempts to follow the narrative inquiry research tradition, which allows me, as the researcher, to document the live-through experience of being a doctoral students and writing a dissertation. The goal is to develop deeper insights into these students' experience in such a context.

Taiwan as a unique sociocultural context makes such an investigation necessary and important. As strongly influenced by Confucianism, our culture considers social harmony extremely important. The most basic requirements for all are proper reverence and respect to one's seniors (including parents, teachers and elders) and knowing one's part in the society. Both of these requirements point to the issues of identity forming and relationship building, which lead to my interest in how the three students position themselves in the program and how they interact with their peers and their professors in their pursue of building academic connections with the larger international academic community with the major study they are conducting. The results shall shed lights on the learning experiences of TESOL doctoral students in this unique culture. The research questions therefore are listed as

What is the nature of self and other during the entire doctoral program and the dissertation writing process? How do members manage conflicts, if there are any?

Literature Review

Review of literature discusses how this study is inspired by Bakhtinian perspectives and research on second language writing and publication.

'Dialogism' in Bakhtinian Perspective

Bakhtin's views on language have provided influential insights complementing the work of Vygotsky, particularly in terms of treating language as the most powerful mediational sign system

in the development of human cognition under the social and historical influence (Johnson, 2004). The basic unit of speech that Bakhtin proposed to analyze language is the utterance, which to him possesses three characteristics: *boundaries* (which are obvious when the speaker changes subjects), *addressivity* (intending to elicit responses from the audience), and *superaddressee* (presuming a fair responsive understanding) (Johnson, 2004, pp. 121-122). The concept of utterance thus presupposes a dialogic relation between the speaker and his/ her addressor and emphasizes intersubjectivity, or the sharedness of human experience. What is more, the relations between self and other are not to be characterized as either-or but as *simultaneity*, “a continuum of degrees in which otherness is manifested in a self through the medium of language” (Iddings, Haught & Devlin, 2005, pp. 35-36). Bakhtin made this relation clear by saying, “I cannot do without the other, I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other, finding the other in me” (Bakhtin, 1981, quoted in Iddings, Haught & Devlin, 2005, pp. 36). From here, the core concept in dialogism, *heteroglossia*, is characterized as everything in our experience being constantly interactive, meaningful, and connected to the greater whole of a discourse community. Our experiences are thus influenced by others, and others also have the potential to influence us, through the dynamic interaction of language and dialogues.

Research on second language writing and publication

This study is also inspired by research on second language writing and publication. This unique line of research is about how second language writers work their ways through social, cultural, and sometimes geographical or political barriers (most noticeably, Canagarajah, 2002), to become a member of the academic community. Lave and Wenger’s situated cognition theory and their notions of community of practice and legitimate peripheral participation are adopted by most researchers to discuss the process of becoming a second language academic writer. The major researchers include Canagarajah (2001, 2002, 2006), Casanave (1998, 2002), Flowerdew (1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2005), Li (2002, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007), and Shi (2002, 2003). For example, Flowerdew has a whole series of publications which investigate the issues from different points of view using questionnaire (1999a) and case study approaches (1999b, 2000) with western-trained Hong Kong scholars and interviews with editors of major journals (2001). Casanave uses narrative inquiry as her method; socio-politically-oriented qualitative case study is her trade mark. Other noteworthy notion is Ivanic’s (1998) work on writing and identity, which is also inspiring and informative to the current study, even though her participants were not second language writers.

Methods

This qualitative case study takes an emic view into the community in advancing new understanding in TESOL and language teacher professional development (Freeman, 1996). Below is information about the context, the participants, the meetings, data collection and

analysis process.

The Context

The data for this study was taken from a TESOL doctoral program. The core research participants are the researcher plus three EFL teachers enrolled in the program. I, the researcher, became familiar with these teachers through a graduate-level course on “Issues and Concerns in Computer- Assisted Language Learning,” about four years ago. Since then, the teachers and I kept in close contact. We often shared insights as each of us developed in our own ways deeper understanding into issues related to TESOL and information and communication technology (ICT). When these teachers reached the dissertation stage, they all decided to do research on TESOL and ICT related issues. They also asked me to serve on their dissertation committee, in various capacities. Working with them as they prepared for their qualifying examinations, I often thought about my own dissertation experience, which unfortunately, perhaps like all the others’, was not a smooth process. It is my expectation that these teachers will also experience many challenges and difficulties. My study on dialogical/social traditions of TESOL and teacher education research convinced me that a study group would be very useful in supporting them. When I suggested the idea, they all welcomed it and were willing to participate in this study.

The Participants

The three teachers and graduate students of a doctoral TESOL program in Taiwan are all in the final stage of their doctoral study, looking to finish their dissertations in one year. All three are female, aged around 35-45. Each of them is also affiliated to a college or university of technology around the Taipei city, working both as full-time instructors and full-time doctoral students.

Each of the participants also has their own research focus. As Table 1 indicates, Pat’s interest is in pronunciation instruction; Jean is interested in pre-service language teachers, while Lily is more into curriculum design and using movies to teach English.

Table 1. The Participants

Pseudonyms	Research Interest
1. Pat	Research focuses on pronunciation instruction.
2. Jean	Research focuses on pre-service language teacher development.
3. Lily	Research focuses on using movie to teach language.

The Meetings

The meetings in this study group were held approximately once every month for the period of ten months. Each meeting lasted for three hours, either in a coffee shop or at a location that is most convenient to all members.

Months	Group Activities	Individual Guidepost
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August	A trip to Yangmingshan	J and P finished their proposal defense.
September	A trip to Yangmingshan with two other professors	School began.
October November	Group meetings and individual interviews (background). Started blogging, titled <i>the Road to Ph.D</i>	L preparing for her proposal
December	A trip to Maokung and a trip to Shin-Lin with HC	L sent in proposal.
January		L passed proposal defense
Feb to March	Individual meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiking and meeting two times with LD ● Meeting two times with JS 	J tried out analysis method L conducted preliminary analysis
April - August	Individual meetings Creativity conference paper	Each working on her project and meeting with me most often individually.

Data Sources

For a study like this that focuses on interpersonal and intrapersonal domains (Vygotsky, 1938), it is important to document not only group activities and meetings but also the participant's inner voices. The record and transcriptions of all meetings constitute one major data source for the interpersonal domain. In addition, all members, including the researcher, kept a log during the study, recording personal responses to meetings, events, and interactions. The participants discuss or show their logs to the researcher only when they feel to do so, even if it is necessary to be at the end of their dissertation. Interviews will also be arranged with each of the members, allowing them to articulate their thoughts in a space that is less public than the face-to-face meetings. Questions asked in the interviews were emerging in nature with clear focus on the research questions as well as related events in the community that need to be discussed, elaborated, or clarified. At least three interviews were conducted with each of the members, at the beginning, middle, and end of the data collection period. One important goal for the first interview will include gaining an understanding of the members' teaching experiences and other related backgrounds, while the final interview will have the goal of understanding their general views of the study group experience. The interviews were face-to-face, and formal interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Results

This brief report provides only some preliminary results. Based on the participants' comments about events surrounding their graduate school lives, it is found that the concept of "community" refers to multiple groups they encountered in the doctoral program: one is their fellow students, while the other is with "the department" as a whole, including those who make the administrative decisions about the program and those who interact with the students as professors and advisors. The boundaries are very clear, but not unchanging with time. Along the timeline that one goes through the doctoral program, we see some shifting patterns in a sense of community and relationships between *self* and *others* revealed by their dialogical interaction within the sociocultural context of the program. Furthermore, although they relate more to their own student community at the beginning of the program, at some points of time they do feel the need to break away from the student community to be on their own and to focus on their own development (for example at the later stages of dissertation). There are also other points of time when they consider themselves in one community with the faculty members, especially when facing outsiders. There seems therefore a pattern of shifting relationships between them and the multiple communities around them based on the tasks in front of them (See Table 2 below). This pattern could explain what is observed and may be helpful in develop appropriate support for students at different stages of the doctoral study in this context. More detailed discussion is provided in the paper, including the exact events and comments that lead to this table.

Table 2. A pattern of relationship between *self* and *other* in the doctoral program

Learning Community -->	With fellow students	With the department as a whole
Earlier stages in the program: Issue: Developing confidence in <i>self</i> and <i>other</i>	Moderate need for the support of fellow students (Through observation of <i>other</i> , students decides how to position <i>self</i> and how to interact with <i>other</i> .)	Moderate need for and low conflict with the department. (Wait and see what <i>Other</i> offers and how <i>self</i> measures up.)
Coursework and qualifying examination: Issue: Dealing with anxiety	High need for community support (<i>Self</i> = <i>Other</i>)	May get into conflicts with the department due to anxiety (<i>Other</i> may be perceived as against <i>Self</i> .)
Earlier stages of the dissertation project (i.e., proposal defense) Issue: Moving from being dependent on	High to moderate need for the fellow student community (<i>Self</i> first; <i>other</i> helps.)	Moving from conflicts to positive relationships with the department (<i>Self</i> first; <i>other</i> has to help.)

peers to developing a unique researcher's identity		
During the dissertation project (from data collection to writing up the thesis): Issue: Getting into flow (<i>self</i> -centered)	Low need for the fellow student community (<i>Self</i> first; <i>other</i> is only helpful in morale.)	Positive relationships continue. (<i>Self</i> first, <i>other</i> has to help. Also, since <i>self</i> is no longer threatened by <i>other</i> , students are becoming more willing to support <i>other</i> when needs come.)

Discussion and Conclusion

When this research project began in August 2007, the three participants were more or less at the stage of proposal. After one year of effort, the three have made different progress and they are approaching the end of dissertation very soon. Adopting Bakhtinian perspectives to the analysis of the critical events that the participants and I went through together, the comments they made, and the stories that they told me, it becomes clear that the three women students are very tactic in handling their relationships with others in the program. They carefully work through sometimes unreasonable rules and regulations while attending to the unique sociocultural expectations of relationships in this culture (particularly in terms of paying due respect to professors and the so-called “department”) while actively seeking ways to develop unique expertise and stand out among friendly, albeit competitive, peers. At the same time, some of them also feel the need to write in dialogue with the world-wide academic community in their own ways. In addition to all these, there are also family pressures surrounding their lives. While it is impressive to watch them handle all these extremely well at the same time, I realized that the complexity in the lives of these woman surrounding their dissertation writing presents perhaps more challenges than those that the second language writer literature discusses. The result of this study should be able to offer new insights and implications to the related literature and to the management of doctoral TESOL programs in this culture.

計畫自評

本案讓我對第二語言學術寫作及社會文化理論又有了進一步的認識，寫作方面因為三位學生仍在努力完成論文，研究資料仍在蒐集中，有待完成。