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Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers

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T he dominant approaches to studying multilingual writing have been hampered by monolingualist assumptions that conceive literacy as a unidirectional acquisition of competence, preventing us from fully understanding the resources multilinguals bring to their texts. In this essay, I attempt to change the questions and frameworks of such inquiry in order to do justice to the creativity of multilingual writers.[1]
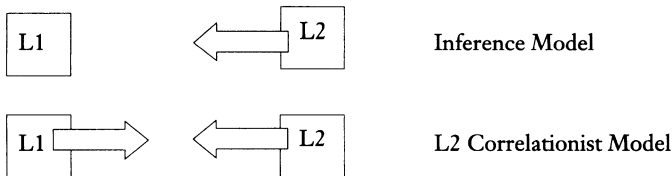
How do teachers and researchers of English writing orient to linguistic and cultural difference in the essays they read? In what I will call the "inference" model, if they see a peculiar tone, style, organization, or discourse, many teachers instinctively turn to the first language (L1) or "native" culture (C1) of the writer for an explanation. This was the practice of some early versions of contrastive rhetoric (see Kaplan). Even now, sympathetic scholars in our field seek explanations from L1 or C1 for what they perceive as difficulties for multilingual writers in composing an essay in English (see Fox). Among other problems, the writer is treated as being conditioned so strongly by L1 and C1 that even when he or she writes in another language, those influences are supposed to manifest themselves in the new text. There is also the misleading assumption that one can unproblematically describe the traditions of L1 literacy by studying the English essay of a multilingual writer (even if the writer is a student in a developmental writing program).

While the inference model fails to acknowledge the different types of mediation that can complicate the realization of texts in different languages, some scholars have now slightly modified their approach in what I call a "correlationist" model. They study the texts in L1 descriptively before they draw on this information to

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explain the writer's peculiarities in L2 (see Indrasuta; Kubota, "An Investigation of Japanese").[2] However, here again, we must be careful not to consider texts written in any genre, by any author, to any audience in L1 as suitable to produce generalizations about a language, and then apply those generalizations to explain problems in texts of any genre, author, audience, or proficiency level in English. How these different variables will create different realizations of the text is often not taken into consideration. This form of essentialization doesn't seem troubling to a monolingualist orientation, which assumes that each language has an invariable discourse that will express itself in texts written by any author in any genre or context. Though there are a few rare cases where multilingual scholars have been able to study the same author writing a college-level essay in a classroom setting, the important variable is still considered to be language rather than the many other mediating factors and negotiation strategies at play. Marjorie Cook, Helene Dunkelblau, Gehan Kamel, and Ryuko Kubota ("An Investigation of L1–L2") have published studies that compare the writing in L1 and L2 of the same set of students. However, the large subject pool and/or quantitative modes of analysis don't permit these researchers to ask the questions related to specific strategies of negotiation that I pose in this essay.

The above two approaches can be presented visually as follows:

$$\boxed{\text{L1}} \qquad \Longleftarrow \boxed{\text{L2}} \qquad\qquad \text{Inference Model}$$

$$\boxed{\text{L1}} \Longrightarrow \qquad \Longleftarrow \boxed{\text{L2}} \qquad\qquad \text{L2 Correlationist Model}$$

The model I am proposing, the negotiation model, considers how multilingual writers move *between* texts:

$$\text{L1} \quad \boxed{\Longleftrightarrow} \quad \text{L2} \qquad \text{Negotiation Model}$$

I don't want to conflate the identity, agency, discourse, and competence of multilingual writers with the characteristics we see within a single text or language. The third model is different from the first two in many respects: rather than studying multilingual writing as static, locating the writer within a language, we would study the movement of the writer between languages; rather than studying the *product* for

descriptions of writing competence, we would study the *process* of composing in multiple languages; rather than studying the writer's stability in specific forms of linguistic or cultural competence, we would analyze his or her versatility (for example, life between multiple languages and cultures); rather than treating language or culture as the main variable, we would focus more on the changing contexts of communication, perhaps treating context as the main variable as writers switch their languages, discourses, and identities in response to this contextual change; rather than treating writers as passive, conditioned by their language and culture, we would treat them as agentive, shuttling creatively between discourses to achieve their communicative objectives. As a precondition for conducting this inquiry, we have to stop treating any textual difference as an unconscious error. We must consider it as a strategic and creative choice by the author to attain his or her rhetorical objectives.

This methodological change is inspired by a broader movement in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition (see Grosjean). Scholars now realize that a bilingual person's competence is not simply the sum of two discrete monolingual competences added together; instead, bilingual competence integrates knowledge of two languages and is thus qualitatively different from monolingual competence. Needless to say, to adopt this orientation to multilingual writers, we have to study the same writer composing in multiple languages, shuttling between one language/context/discourse and another. Ideally, we should study the author writing in relatively the same genre though for different audiences and languages. Of course, to conduct such a study the researchers themselves have to be multilingual. Only scholars who are proficient in both (or all) the languages an author is using will be able to undertake this kind of study meaningfully. Without this bilingual (or multilingual) proficiency, the best that we can do is to compare the descriptions of writing in one language by a researcher with one's own study of someone else's writing in English, leading to the limitations of the first two models.

BACKGROUND TO THIS ANALYSIS

In the following discussion, I compare writing samples from the *same writer* in the *same genre* (research articles or RA) in two different languages (English, or L2, and Tamil, or L1) in three different rhetorical contexts: RA in L1 for local publication (L1LP); RA in L2 for local publication (L2LP); and RA in L2 for foreign publication (L2FP). The writing samples are from a senior scholar in Sri Lanka. Professor K. Sivatamby has considerable exposure to the scholarly communities in the West.[3] He obtained his doctorate in drama at the University of Birmingham and has held fellowships in foreign universities, including UC Berkeley. At the time of writing these papers, Sivatamby was a faculty member in the departments of Tamil and drama at the University of Jaffna.

In order to keep this discussion within a manageable level, I focus mainly on the introduction in the research article. The introduction is the most widely studied and described section in the RA genre (see Swales; Mauranen). This is also the section that receives the most rhetorical effort and composing time, as emerges from ethnographic studies (see Knorr-Cetina). The introduction is the most discursively sophisticated and strategic section in the article, as the methodology and results sections have become more impersonal and stereotypical. I will invoke Swales's typology of opening moves here, in what he calls the Create a Research Space (CARS) model. I use this model only for heuristic purposes, bearing in mind that RA discourse conventions vary across disciplines and communities, if they can be regarded as stable at all.

ACTS OF REPRESENTATION

All three of Sivatamby's articles are on roughly the same topic: his position on the ideological character of Jaffna Tamil society. Sivatamby is perhaps the only local scholar who has written extensively on this subject. The similarity of subject across the articles thus helps us control this analysis for topic as well. How does one present the same topic in research articles in different languages for different audiences and publishing contexts?

For readers in Western scholarly communities, Sivatamby's article in Tamil (L1LP) will be striking for its casual and relaxed opening. The author seems to be under no pressure to create a niche for this paper in the scholarship relating to this subject (move 2 in Swales's CARS typology, after the opening move of "establishing the territory"). This peculiarity can be explained by the fact that one doesn't have to market a scholarly paper aggressively in the local academic community. There is no urgency to fight for publishing space, earn academic credit, or attract reader interest here, the reasons that compel Western scholars to adopt in their openings a "marketing discourse" (in Mauranen's apt terminology). In the local context, academic publications are few, and the oral construction of knowledge—in colloquia and public lectures—earns as much credit (see Canagarajah, *Geopolitics*). What local scholars must adopt, instead, is what I have called a "civic ethos." Scholars must show what important service they are performing for their community by writing this paper and/or constructing this knowledge. One doesn't write papers simply to develop an original viewpoint and earn professional or personal credit. Scholarship has to be socially responsible. Therefore, Sivatamby opens by arguing that it is unwise and unhealthy not to discuss the ideological character of our society—controversial though it may be—as Tamils are living in a time of ethnic conflict and identity politics that demands a reflective understanding of their own social formation. In fact,

the author uses the word "duty" at least twice to emphasize that he is fulfilling an urgent community need:

> One of the features about Jaffna culture that is always visible but never discussed is a realistic depiction of the society. We don't speak or even attempt to speak about culture, which is always in front of our eyes besides regulating and controlling our social practices.
>
> Since this silence hampers the healthy development of this society, I am undertaking this analysis to fill this lack at least academically. At a period when our community is facing a serious crisis in its history, and when it is undergoing radical changes, it is the duty of the social sciences to at least provide some preliminary thoughts and data on our community's fundamentals and assumptions.
>
> Research relating to Jaffna society from anthropology and sociology are poor indeed. There are only a few foreign scholars working in this field (Bryan Pfaffenberger, Kenneth David, Skjonberg). Tamil scholars who have earned international prestige in these disciplines—like S. J. Tambiah—themselves do not give full attention to anthropological and social scientific research relating to the concerns of Tamil Eelam people.
>
> In a situation like this, doing research on the nature of the social changes taking place here is the duty of academics at the University of Jaffna. I have been drawn to this subject from the experience of reviewing the tradition of Tamil literature from the disciplinary perspectives of social history, sociology, and anthropology. This article is being written from that academic background. (Sivatamby, "YaaLpaaNa" 2–3).[4]

The opening is significant also for certain other omissions of RA introductory conventions. The article doesn't announce the findings (or the author's thesis) in advance (an obligatory move 3 step 2 in the CARS model). The author also doesn't indicate the structure of the article or the organization of his argument (another obligatory feature, move 3 step 3). Here, again, the author may be deferring to local expectations. In the local community there is a preference for embedded modes of argumentation that respect the reader's involvement in deciphering the threads of reasoning in the paper. Being too explicit and calculated about the structure or argumentation would project an image for the author as pompous and the reader as ignorant.

The third paragraph appears to fulfill a literature review of sorts (an important step in the move of niche creation). But the names of certain authors are simply mentioned there. There is no citation either here or at the end of the article. Also, the theses or important findings of these scholars are not discussed. This peculiarity probably arises because local scholars often know the names and texts of those who have published on a topic, but don't have the publications handy to do a close reading or to cite references (because of working conditions I discuss later). At any rate, the reason these names are mentioned here is to fulfill the civic ethos. The author is

not interested in discussing their work in detail but only in pointing out why it is important for local scholars to address this subject. He intends to show that only foreign scholars have dared to address this subject, even though they too are few. It is possible also that these names serve to boost the authority and credibility of the author in the eyes of the local reader. The mention of these names shows that Sivatamby has the necessary background knowledge to discuss this topic intelligently. Therefore the citation of names is a rhetorical act for quite different reasons from those valued in the West.

Another section that is not very prominent in this article is the description of methodology. Though this is a separate section that follows the introduction in Swales's typology, the statements in the final paragraph of the opening section seem to serve as a declaration of research approach and disciplinary orientation in Sivatamby's article. As a professor of drama, Sivatamby notes that his observations are primarily based on a study of literary texts (although from the analytical perspective of the social sciences). There are many reasons local readers/scholars don't expect in RAs any statement of narrowly conceived research with sophisticated instruments for extended periods of time. The work conditions in local educational institutions don't permit research of that nature. As long as one has an earned doctorate and possesses the relevant academic credentials, even informal, intuitive, and impressionistic observations are valued as scholarly knowledge.

At the end of the introductory section, most Western readers would usually ask what exactly the author is arguing in the paper. We don't find any statements pertaining to the thesis in Sivatamby's article. Researchers have found that in papers where the thesis is not clearly spelled out in the beginning of the paper, scholars tend to state them at the end. Scandinavian scholars, for example, adopt an end-weighted development, where they state their thesis after letting the reader work out their own conclusions from the proffered data in the body of the text (see Mauranen). However, instead of providing the thesis or a summary, what Sivatamby chooses to do at the conclusion of the paper is to humble himself:

> If I have troubled anyone's mind with the manner in which I have presented this subject or the data, I ask for your pardon. [Quotes a religious verse that acknowledges his limitations and invokes God to use him as an instrument for knowledge and human progress.] (39)

He includes an apology, perhaps because he has made many critical comments on competing ideologies that are sometimes held with religious zeal in the local community. This is also a very conventional speech act in local public speaking. Called *avai aTakkam* ("humbling oneself before the court"), this act may have connections to the rules of speaking in feudalistic times or before royalty. This is still the preferred opening move in public speaking. In local academic writing, I call this the

display of a "humility ethos" (see Canagarajah, *Geopolitics*). As for the argument of the paper, it remains completely implicit. In some genres of local discourse, even to offer to tie all the threads at the end of the article is to insult the reader by not letting him/her do the interpretive work. This is perhaps another reason that the author chooses not to state his position or summarize his argument in the concluding section.

The second writing sample by Sivatamby shows how an essay to the local community is written in English. This article appeared in a collection of essays by local bilingual scholars, featuring diverse disciplinary perspectives on the Jaffna society. Though there are some changes in tone and discourse in recognition of the English-speaking (and bilingual) audience, there are still many similarities with the previous text as both the English-dominant and Tamil-dominant scholars belong to the same community with related RA expectations. This is how the article opens:

> The Tamils of the Jaffna peninsula of Sri Lanka constitute the dominant Tamil group in the island. It is largely their experience at the national level and their perceptions of the Sinhalese and their motivations that have defined the Tamil grievances and decided the pattern of the struggle to redress them.
>
> An attempt is made here to understand the Jaffna man in relation to two of the most important ideological perceptions he has of himself: a) the preserver of the great Saiva-Tamil tradition, and b) the heir to the liberal traditions of the West and the reformist tradition of Gandhi symbolized by the Jaffna Youth Congress Movement.
>
> The Sri Lankan image of the Jaffna Tamil [. . .]. The relevant census figures of the Jaffna district for 1971 were [. . . more background information follows]. (Sivatamby, "Towards" 49)

As in the previous article, there is no effort to create a scholarly niche for this paper; no announcement of thesis or main findings; and no anticipatory mention of the article's structure. What the author does achieve in the opening move resembles his rhetorical priorities in the earlier paper. There is an invocation of a civic ethos as he alludes to the current ethnic conflict in the island between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities. The author argues that it is important to understand the ideological character of Tamils if we are to understand the reasons for their resistance against Sinhala language policies.

However, there are slight differences in the introduction that indicate that the author recognizes the changed audience and is trying to fulfill its expectations. Note the formulation of the "problem" in the second paragraph. The author provides a formal statement of the research question discussed in this paper: "An attempt is made here to understand the Jaffna man in relation to two of the most important ideological perceptions he has of himself." The author lists the two perceptions separately. Though this is the same ideological tension that is analyzed by the author in the earlier paper, it is presented more succinctly here. We therefore see a

more formal and explicit orientation to the research subject. This change of tone is further confirmed in the concluding paragraph:

> The quantitative and qualitative changes that have taken place in the evolution of Tamilian nationalism, should be seen in the perspectivity of the liberal Youth Congress tradition. That would provide the nationalist ideology with a continuity and possibility of development on social democratic lines. (55)

There is no pronounced expression of a humility ethos in this conclusion. There is a distinct academic ethos invoked here, with a suitable researcher-like language ("quantitative," "qualitative," even the neologism "perspectivity"). Furthermore, the contradictory ideological strands introduced in the beginning of this paper are reconciled in a subtle and unobtrusive way. The author suggests that the liberal traditions of the West, introduced by the Youth Congress, will modify in a healthy way the chauvinistic streak in the religion-based Saiva-Tamil ideology. I feel that this shift to greater formality, explicitness, and impersonality is in recognition of the English-educated ethos of the readers of this article.

In the third rendition of the same subject, this time in a paper published in an international journal based in Sweden, we find even greater rhetorical shifts in the discourse in recognition of the foreign audience:

> The current ethnic crisis [. . .] has brought about an overall unity and solidarity among the Tamils of Ilankai [indigenous name for Sri Lanka]. However, in terms of social formation—the social structure and relationships, the modes of production at the peasant level—we could easily see that there are three discernible Tamil formations [. . . brief historical introduction follows].
>
> So, any study of the history of the Tamil demands within the Ilankai context should necessarily focus on the nature and role of the importance of Yalppanam [indigenous name for Jaffna] Tamil society, the type of problems it faced, how it expressed and formulated them as its political grievances, and the type of solutions it put forward [. . .].
>
> Amidst the social and political challenges which it had to confront, the Yalppanam Tamil society developed two ideologies which have been the main source of its social, intellectual, cultural, and political sustenance. Those are:
>
> a) the Saiva Tamil ideology propounded by Armuka Navalar, and
> b) the reformist liberal ideology of the Youth Congress.
>
> They are in fact contradictory to each other, but in the manner they have been coalesced into that society and its political articulations, one finds the specific characteristics of the Yalppanam society emerging. A full scale intellectual history of Yalppanam would be the apt academic way one could see how these two strands have been woven into one whole. [A footnote refers to another article by the author titled "An Ethnography of the Sri Lankan Tamils."]
>
> In this paper an attempt is made to present in a preliminary manner the formation and the subsequent history, in outline, of the continuity of the Saiva Tamil ideology. (Sivatamby, "Ideology" 176)

Though the civic ethos is thinly evoked in the opening line of the introduction, the author quickly moves on to show the academic significance of his analysis. The introduction presents in an even more explicit way the centrality of this subject (move 1, step 1 in the CARS model). The author methodically lists about four issues that are important for analysis. Furthermore, the research "problem" is formulated even more rigorously and tautly (with both strands of ideology blocked separately for consideration). Also, the potential contradiction behind this dialectic and the evolving paradox it suggests is articulated with greater complexity. In fact, this paradox points indirectly to the thesis the author is developing in this paper (as we will find again in the concluding paragraph)—that is, that the religiolinguistic ideology may limit the egalitarian social changes unleashed by the youth movement. Finally, in this introduction, the author fulfills an important step in the CARS model—announcing the present research (move 3, step 1b)—in a very formal and direct way: "In this paper an *attempt* is made to present in a *preliminary* manner the formation and the subsequent history, in *outline*, of the continuity of the Saiva Tamil ideology" (emphasis added). The language is significant for the care with which it is chosen. The author projects a very objective and restrained researcher-like identity here.

What is fascinating about this paper (L2FP) is that it was published about two years *before* the more informally and implicitly developed introduction of the first paper discussed (that is, L1LP). Even the second paper discussed (L2LP) was written eight years before the local publication in Tamil (L1LP). This fact suggests that the more rigorous formulation of the thesis and research problem in the third paper (L2FP) is not an effect of time (that is, attributable to the extended period of gestation one may have enjoyed to sharpen the argument). If the author chose to open L1LP in a less explicit and direct way, this is not an act of omission or failure; it is an act of choice. The indirectness of the thesis here doesn't result from inability; it is a conscious strategy for specific rhetorical reasons. The author is leaving aside the tight formulation of the research problem (that he has already published eight years before this paper) in deference to the preference of local Tamil readers who expect a more implicit and subtle development of research findings. In fact, the author seems even to make a distinction between the English-based and Tamil-based readership in the local academic community. He is relatively more objective and explicit for the English readers in his second paper (L2LP), which too was written before the Tamil paper (L1LP).

It is also interesting that there is an explicit development of ideas in the earlier paper written for the foreign audience (L2FP). The conclusion shows that the author is conscious of a progression in the argument through the paper:

> But to say that the Saiva Tamil ideology has been weakened or is no more effective is to run to hasty conclusions. It should be remembered that the social base of this

> ideology at the place where it really rises—the rich peasantry—has not yet been changed in any effective sense. The possibilities of this ideology slowing down the social radicalization of the militants is not improbable. (182)

The author assumes that the reader would have come to one possible conclusion while reading his analysis: "that the Saiva Tamil ideology has been weakened or is no more effective." However, he wants to nudge the reader toward another conclusion that is also implicit in his analysis—that the character of the peasantry, which sustains this ideology, has not changed. Furthermore, he projects a possible ideological development for the future—that the militant ideology of contemporary youth may be modified as the conflicting ideological strands play themselves out. This is a concession to the alternate argument. It provides a more qualified and balanced stance for the author. Such a complexly formulated conclusion shows that the author can adopt the CARS model or a more front-weighted writing (see Mauranen) typical of Western RAs if he wants to. He has his thesis, his findings, and the different strands of his argument carefully worked out for himself. But he is not choosing to present his argument in the CARS model, as he prefers a different mode of presentation in his writing.

Though the thesis is not explicitly developed in the body of the essay (in fact, the author adopts a narrative approach as he recounts important stages of the community's history), he expects the reader to have followed the progression of his argument. This ending suggests a teleological progression for the paper. The paper displays an end-weighted thesis development. This observation would help us realize that while the author does make a shift to a slightly different discourse in this third paper, he hasn't changed his rhetoric wholesale. There are many features in this paper that are similar to the paper for the local Tamil audience (L1LP). We find that even in this paper (L2FP) there is no explicit niche creation, no literature review, and no advance statement of the findings, the structure of the article, or the evolving argument. These features are thus consistent across all three papers. I submit that the author is not giving in completely to the dominant discourses of Western scholarly readers, although he is aware of their preferences and accommodates them in part. He chooses, however, to retain certain other features of his preferred discourse even as he writes to the Western audience. We must wonder whether this is an act of rhetorical resistance. He is nudging the reader to shift to his discursive preferences, even as he shifts to theirs. If this is indeed the case, what the author is attempting in L2FP is a multivocal discourse that merges the strengths of local scholarly discourse with the dominant conventions of mainstream academic discourse. This is an example of an author gaining voice and agency despite, alongside, and even through the dominant rhetorical conventions by skillfully inserting his preferred strategies into the text.

What gives credence to this subversive reading of the author's strategy is the enigmatic nature of two moves in the introduction of L2FP. First, we have to wonder why the author fails to mention any literature at all here when he did perform a literature review of sorts in the first article. After all, that move is more important in the third paper, as the Western audience considers it almost an obligatory feature of RAs. However, the author probably realizes that this move has to be performed very thoroughly in order to satisfy an audience which has ready access to scholarly literature and expects an agonistic stance toward other texts as one builds one's own argument on a topic. I know from my life in Jaffna that because local libraries are not equipped to enable them to do a thorough literature search or find complete bibliographical information, many local scholars feel that they can't perform this move effectively. To provide an exhaustive literature review on the subject or to even completely cite the few publications referred to is impossible. (As noted earlier, even though the author refers to certain publications in the introduction to the first paper, they are not cited at the end of the paper. Nowhere in the paper are the complete bibliographical references provided.) Because of such problems, local scholars adopt certain coping strategies (see Canagarajah, *Geopolitics*, for more documentation). They adopt what I have called a strategy of "the less said the better." They prefer to start with a straightforward announcement of their research and get into their analysis, rather than perform an incomplete literature review that would attract unnecessary attention to their limitations, generate criticism from referees, and jeopardize their chances of getting published.

The second move that is puzzling in this paper is the mention of a methodology—another obligatory move in Western scholarly publishing. The author claims an academic treatment of this subject by performing "an intellectual history" of Jaffna. To back this claim, he provides a footnote that refers to an article based on ethnography that he has previously published. The implication is that a similar methodology has been used for this paper, or that the discussion here is based on the ethnography he has already conducted. But when I consulted the paper he refers to in the footnote, I found that there was no mention of sustained fieldwork having been conducted. That paper is an article on culture, based on literary sources—and perhaps the author's informal observations as an insider to the Jaffna community. Since local scholars find it difficult to conduct extensive research with sophisticated instruments and resources, they fear that their findings may be construed as informal, intuitive, or impressionistic by Western scholarly circles. Therefore they are under pressure to find other ways of validating their "findings." Ethnography is a low-budget, "low-tech" method that can easily be adopted. The informal observations the author may have conducted are still justifiable as an impressionistic/anecdotal ethnography. At any rate, most readers do not inquire into the details of the

research procedure. The author skillfully adopts an eminently useful academic convention—footnoting—to make a claim without having to go deeper into it. The methodology, like the literature review, is a rhetorical act that makes a gesture toward fulfilling a move important for Western readers. This appears to be another coping strategy.

Local scholars sometimes thus parody Western conventions they don't strongly favor. They seek creative ways of fulfilling the requirements when they don't have the resources to do so satisfactorily. They may in fact exploit the academic conventions to their advantage, using one convention to negotiate another (in this case, using footnoting to deal with methodology). They also know that given the brevity of the research article, not all the information can be given in the body of the paper. Therefore, many moves in the RA are already rhetorical gestures even for Western authors. Local authors thus know that it is possible in a paper to make claims or drop hints to satisfy certain obligatory conventions without going through exhaustive scrutiny by the readers or reviewers of a journal. It is possible that this awareness gives the author the confidence that he will get published in refereed journals in the West. Furthermore, the author probably knows that as papers on the subjects he is writing about are rare in Western journals he has greater chances of getting published even if he doesn't perform an exhaustive literature review or a methodology description. The article is at least newsworthy. Moreover, as he is writing in the broad areas of social sciences and humanities, he would know that there is less importance attached to discussing methodology in those fields compared to the natural sciences.

What I am suggesting is that the author is not only being creative in shuttling between communities, he is also being critical in choosing the terms in which he wants to represent himself. The critical practice in his writing expresses itself in many different forms. There is a subversive side in finding surreptitious ways of fulfilling certain Western conventions. There is a satirical and parodying act of fulfilling certain mainstream conventions without total involvement. There is an appropriative function of finding spaces within the dominant conventions to insert one's own voice and preferred conventions. The author performs these strategies in a rhetorically satisfactory manner that he can still get published in a refereed journal. This success, for me, proves the agency of multilingual writers. These authors are not conditioned by discourses to use them passively. They negotiate with them to use the competing literacy conventions on their own terms. They may very well be using a critical resource that multilingual and postcolonial subjects are specially endowed with. These are the benefits of the "double vision" that is engendered in the interstices of discourses (see Bhabha). As these authors move between languages and discourses, they use the conventions of one to critically orient themselves to the conventions of another. The fact that Sivatamby could get published in a Western

journal, despite choosing not to fulfill all the established moves of the RA, and in fact adopting certain atypical moves, shows that oppositional or alternative forms of writing are not impossible in the academy.

DEVELOPING A MULTILINGUAL ORIENTATION

As we consider the implications of Sivatamby's writing practice to fashioning a pedagogy that would do justice to the resources and strengths of multilingual writers, we must first note an important textual comparison in the examples above. There are greater similarities in discourse between the first and second papers (L1LP and L2LP) than between either of them and L2FP, although they are written in different languages (English and Tamil). On the other hand, though the second and third papers (L2LP and L2FP) are both in English, the discourse is very much different as the author is writing these papers to different communities. This comparison should show us that language doesn't determine the greatest difference in the texts of multilingual authors, but rather context or audience. Sivatamby's first two texts are roughly similar in their implicit thesis development and invocation of civic ethos and humility ethos. This similarity can be explained by the local audience he is addressing in these papers. In other words, it is not language or culture, but rhetorical context/ objective that is the main variable in multilingual writing. Whatever language the authors are using, they can vary their style and discourse depending on the rhetorical context.

The comparison also shows that there are multiple genres of English writing for multilingual writers. Using English doesn't mean using a single way of writing. The same language may be used to construct different texts if the language is used for different contexts and communities. This should show us the limitations of thinking of a specific language as endowed with a specific culture or a specific mode of writing. Equating one language with one discourse (the usual practice of contrastive rhetoric) is terribly limited. For Sivatamby, the same language holds very diverse possibilities—that is, different textual realizations. Furthermore, both English and Tamil have multiple realizations in the same genre of RA writing. They provide possibilities for the author to adopt different discourses for the same genre, motivated by different linguistic and cultural preferences. Moreover, within the same text, Sivatamby finds ways of accomplishing diverse rhetorical acts. The text thus becomes hybrid. If we want to think of constraints in writing, it is more relevant to think about the repertoire of a writer than about the repertoire of a language or culture. The author can choose from the different options available to him or her as a multilingual writer.

This textual comparison illustrates the agency of multilingual writers. They are not linguistically or culturally conditioned to write only in one particular way; rather,

they can be rhetorically creative. In fact, it is their very multilingualism that may account for their creativity. They are endowed with that mysterious "double vision" that enables them to understand the possibilities and constraints of competing traditions of writing, and carve out a space for themselves within conflicting discourses. This realization also should show the limitations of imagining writers as coming to writing with homogeneous identities. Multilingual writers, like everyone else, come with multiple identities. What they choose to display varies according to diverse contexts in order to achieve their interests.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

How will the above orientations motivate a writing pedagogy of shuttling between communities? First, we must keep in mind that not all textual or linguistic difference is an error. Many presumed errors can be choices consciously made by authors from a range of different options in order to achieve their communicative purposes. For this reason, we must encourage students to orient themselves to strategies of communication, and deemphasize a strict adherence to rules and conventions. The rules and conventions can be negotiated for one's purposes with suitable strategies. Though Sivatamby is aware of the dominant conventions in each context, and in fact accommodates them on occasion, he also modifies them slightly for his purposes. We have to teach our students strategies for rhetorical negotiation so that they can modify, resist, or reorient themselves to the rules in a way favorable to them. While there is a school for learner strategy training in ESOL (see Wenden), we also have descriptive studies of favorable strategies multilingual writers may use to negotiate competing discourses effectively (see Leki; Canagarajah, *Critical* 118–21). Second, we must encourage students to stop focusing on writing as a narrowly defined process of text construction. Writing is rhetorical negotiation for achieving social meanings and functions. In other words, writing is not just constitutive, it is also performative. We don't write only to construct a rule-governed text. Although it is important for texts to be constructed sensibly in order to be meaningful, we write in order to perform important social acts. We write to achieve specific interests, represent our preferred values and identities, and fulfill diverse needs. Sivatamby is writing because he wants to help the local community understand its political conflicts, encourage scholars to pay more attention to the political crisis, and develop a rhetoric that represents local values and interests. Third, students should understand that texts are not objective and transparent, written only to reveal certain viewpoints or information. Texts are also representational. We can't avoid displaying our identities, values, and interests in the texts we compose. It is advisable, therefore, for students to engage with the text to accomplish their preferred inter-

ests rather than let the dominant conventions represent their values according to their choosing. The pedagogy should encourage students to reflect on their interests in writing, the values motivating their rhetoric, and the identities constructed by their texts.

In order to fulfill these expectations in writing, we should encourage multilingual students to look at the text/context connection in a different way. Texts are not simply context-bound or context-sensitive. They are context-transforming. It is for this reason that students should not treat rules and conventions as given or predefined for specific texts and contexts. They should think of texts and discourses as changing and changeable. Students can engage critically in the act of changing the rules and conventions to suit their interests, values, and identities. In other words, we are interested in developing not only competent writers, but also critical writers. Therefore, though we should make students sensitive to the dominant conventions in each rhetorical context, we must also teach them to critically engage with them. We should help students demystify the dominant conventions behind a specific genre of writing, relate their writing activity to the social context in which it takes place, and shape writing to achieve a favorable voice and representation for themselves.

In such a multilingual pedagogy of writing, we will treat the first language and culture as a resource, not a problem. We will try to accommodate diverse literacy traditions—not keep them divided and separate. If we invoke differences in communities, this is not to discount their value, but to engage with them in order to find a strategic entry point into English. Similarly, we should reconsider the place of orality in writing. Oral discourse and oral traditions of communication may find a place in writing as they provide useful resources for narrative and voice for students from multilingual backgrounds. They can also help deconstruct the values behind literate traditions and expand the communicative potential of writing. Sivatamby's affinity with the orality-dominant local academic community and Tamil knowledge-making practices helps him to draw from their resources to deconstruct mainstream texts and critique the conventions of literate communication.

Notes

1. I thank Professor K. Sivatamby for encouraging me to study his writing strategies and permitting me to quote from his articles.

2. Ryuko Kubota ("An Investigation") demonstrates the advantages of this approach by comparing Japanese students writing in Japanese and Canadian students writing in English. Similarly, Chantanee Indrasuta compares Thai students writing in Thai and American students writing in English.

3. I am using the real name of the author because I am discussing already published articles.

4. The translation of the title is the author's own. I have translated the rest of the text from the original Tamil.

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