

# “To Whom Do We Have Students Write?”: Exploring Rhetorical Agency and Translanguaging in an Indonesian Graduate Writing Classroom

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## KEYWORDS

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“**T**o whom do we have students write?” This deceptively simple question has served as the bedrock of Writing Studies scholarship over the years, and rightfully so, as audience plays a formative role in the composing processes and reception of texts within academia and beyond (see Lunsford and Ede; Halasek). Reflecting upon and complicating the question of audience, I contend, becomes especially vital as English solidifies itself as the lingua franca of global academic communication. As English and the knowledge spread with it circulates globally with the movement of people and texts across traditional “native-speaking” borders, it becomes increasingly important to understand audience and rhetorical agency from a translanguaging perspective when creating graduate-level English writing pedagogies—whether these pedagogies take place in periphery<sup>1</sup> contexts like the Indonesian one highlighted in this article *or* in national contexts traditionally assumed to be “native” English-using.

Negotiating audience(s) can be an especially fraught process for scholars working in periphery contexts like Indonesia. As Canagarajah argues in his *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, and as Lillis and Curry have more recently shown, to be considered “credible” academics, scholars working from periphery locales are increasingly required to publish in their local languages *and* in English, a testament to English’s long ties to Western power and knowledge production—what Phillipson has dubbed “linguistic imperialism.” Reaching these “relatively distinct communities” (681), Lillis and Curry show, is a complicated process where, on the one hand, scholars must reach local audiences with their knowledge, and on the other, contend with unequal material access to English-based resources and the possibility that native-speaking “literacy brokers” misinterpret their ideas when editing for “Standard English” (87). Understanding audience negotiation from a global perspective necessarily involves acknowledging power and the tensions involved when writers take agency to move between multiple languages and discourses.

Although it is important to acknowledge tensions particular to scholars working in periphery contexts, writers within US universities are also dealing with increasingly complex rhetorical situations. According to the Open Door Institute’s 2015-2016 report, the international student population in the US has increased 7.1% from the 2014-2015 academic year, to 1,043,839 (documented) students, 383,935 of whom are graduate students (a 6% increase from the year prior)

("Open"). These numbers suggest that US universities are actively recruiting international students and that rhetorical situations within US classrooms are becoming increasingly more complex. The linguistic diversity these international students bring with them interacts, in turn, with the linguistic diversity already present in US classrooms. As Min-Zhan Lu asserts in "Metaphors Matter," although the majority of students in US classrooms consider themselves "native born," and thus "monolingual," that does not mean their identities are always in alignment with dominant English norms: "[they] regularly participate in and bring expertise from relations and activities outside of college classrooms involving languages, discourses, versions of English, modalities other than, and thus othered by standardized written English uses" (291). Though differing in degree and scope, *all* global language users, regardless of linguistic affiliation or national origin, negotiate between competing discourses as they write. To learn to engage productively with this increasing rhetorical complexity, US-based writing instructors might begin by looking at the ways students negotiate language, identity, and power in educational contexts outside US borders. To that end, I draw from a year's worth of ethnographic teacher research at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) to reflect critically on how the question of audience mediated both the pedagogy I developed for the program *and* my graduate students' composing processes as they navigated between Western genre conventions and their Indonesian rhetorical purposes.

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Overall, the data I present highlights the importance of re-conceptualizing rhetorical agency as a translingual endeavor: as linked both to the textual moves writers make at the contact zone between competing discourses in a particular rhetorical situation *and* to the ways they move between languages to circulate knowledge from one rhetorical

situation to the next. Though Indonesia seems worlds away from the US, encouraging *all* graduate students to understand advanced academic literacy as a process linked to ideology and power—yet also a space for translingual negotiation—might help challenge the monolingualist assumptions that currently drive global academic conversations.

## Translingual Perspectives on Genre, Audience and Rhetorical Agency

What, then, might such a translingual orientation towards knowledge production look like? In "Language Difference in Writing: Towards a Translingual Approach," Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur argue against the notion that there is one "standard" to which writers must aspire and that writers must check any non-conforming discourses at the door to be rhetorically successful—a unidirectional, subtractive understanding of literacy they refer to as a monolingualist approach. Monolingualist approaches, they argue, have been used "not to improve communication and assist language learners, but to exclude voices and perspectives at odds with those in power" (305). In contrast, a translingual approach positions all languages in a writer's repertoire as "resources,"

capable of co-existing simultaneously within any given rhetorical situation. They argue that we must acknowledge in our research and teaching writers' abilities to draw from all of their "language resources" to strategically appropriate, or challenge, dominant norms (305).

Such translanguaging involves both writerly agency *and* audience negotiation. In *Translingual Practice*, Canagarajah places historical research on South Asian language practices in conversation with teacher ethnography to show that code-meshing—or the deliberate mixing of languages within a single utterance—has long been the norm in a translingual world where communication across difference between writer and audience, rather than linguistic "correctness," is paramount. In Canagarajah's words, "texts are co-constructed in time and space—with parity for readers and writers in shaping the meaning and form" (127). Indeed, Canagarajah suggests elsewhere that an author's readership might also prompt him or her to completely de-link English from Western genre norms ("Toward"). "Language," he argues, "doesn't determine the greatest difference in the texts of multilingual authors, but rather context or audience" (601). He supports this claim by analyzing three introductions written by a Sri Lankan scholar, Sivتامby: one written to a Sri Lankan audience in the Tamil; one to a Sri Lankan audience in English; and one to an international audience in English. Canagarajah finds more similarities between the texts written to the local Tamil audience, even though they were written in English and Tamil, than between the two texts written in the same language, English, to differing audiences. Overall, Canagarajah's research suggests that to understand global writing processes fully, scholars must take into consideration how audience mediates textual production—and that teachers and scholars alike should allow for the possibility that writers might take agency either to code-mesh or to de-link English entirely from the dominant Western genre norms typically associated with it (see also Young, "Other"; Canagarajah, "Code-meshing").

Opening up space in our classrooms for such code-meshing is important if we consider genre as a site of identity negotiation and friction. In Ivanić's *Writing and Identity*, she posits that when confronted with new academic genres, students must negotiate between their "autobiographical selves," or the socially-constructed identities they bring with them, and dominant genre features that often encourage them to convey textually a particular type of "discoursal self" that reflects dominant beliefs circulating in their particular "sociocultural and institutional context" (25). Genres, in other words, reflect dominant ideology that can cause identity friction, particularly when students' "autobiographical selves" don't mesh with the "discoursal selves" they're expected to portray in their writing. Such mismatch in turn affects "self as author," or the authorial stance of the writer as authority in the text. Furthermore, as scholars of intercultural rhetoric have argued, such friction may be particularly acute for non-Western students, especially when expected to write in English-using Western genres and thus to adopt Western textual identities that value more agonistic stances in relation to past literature (see Connor; McCool; Li). Opening up space for students to code-mesh in relation to audience and context may help alleviate the friction involved as writers seek to translate their autobiographical selves into their written texts.

That said, scholars and teachers seeking to understand translanguaging should avoid seeing agency as linked solely to *textual* moves; although code-meshing and genre-bending can be outward signs of translanguaging, texts that appear to assimilate to dominant genre norms can also be

translingual in orientation. In their "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency," Horner and Lu argue that "agency is manifested not only in those acts of writing we are disposed to recognize as different from the norm, but also in those acts of writing that are ordinarily recognized as producing simply 'more of the same': conventional, original, ordinary, conformist" (585). Citing Pennycook's *Language as Local Practice*, they argue that even if writers choose to assimilate to dominant norms, "we can never step into the same river twice." What writers "do is both the same and different, just as the river is and is not the same, and just as we ourselves are and are not the same when we step, seemingly again, into the river" (589). If we think about language choice from a "temporal-spatial framework," even if texts do submit to "convention," they still take on new meanings with each new performance across space and time (590). Therefore, the question writers should ask is "not...whether to be different, given the inevitability of difference, but what kind of difference to attempt, how, and why" (590). In a world where writers are constantly being asked to draw from their translingual repertoire to make linguistic choices, labeling one type of textual choice as more agentive than another is counter-productive.

Anis Bawarshi further expands on this notion of temporal-spatial agency in "Beyond the Genre Fixation: a Translingual Perspective on Genre," where he argues that when considering genre from a translingual perspective, we should both acknowledge "asymmetrical relations of power" (246) and avoid a "hierarchical understanding of agency in which difference, transgression, and creativity are associated with more agency, cognitive ability, and language fluency, while norm and convention are associated with less agency, cognitive ability, and language fluency" (245). We must, in his words, "shift the locus of agency from the genres themselves...to their users, who are constantly having to negotiate genre uptakes across boundaries" (248) to reach different audiences in our translingual world. Translingual agency happens both textually *and* extra-textually, in text *and* in process, as writers negotiate language, identity, and power in relation to their particular historical moments. By shifting the locus of agency from the genre itself to the ways writers negotiate extra-textually with language, identity, and power in relation to genre, both the choice to assimilate *and* the choice to directly challenge dominant genre norms through code-meshing or genre-bending can be considered agentive acts.

The pedagogical negotiations I outline below show the limitations of locating rhetorical agency solely in the *textual* moves students might make; though it is important to acknowledge that genre conventions can be sites of identity friction as writers negotiate new rhetorical traditions and audiences, my students' *extra-textual* negotiations across a period of time indicate that a more expansive understanding of rhetorical agency is necessary in a translingual world. Despite the limitations of the pedagogy I reflect upon below, the orientation my Indonesian students took when approaching genre, audience, and linguistic choice was undoubtedly *already* translingual. As Canagarajah suggests in his *Translingual Practice*, translingualism has long been the global norm; we've only just now begun to acknowledge it in Western academic circles when considering global literacy practices.

## Context Matters: Developing Curriculum for an Indonesian, International PhD Program

The question with which this article begins, “To whom do we have students write?,” is not just a theoretical question: it was asked by an Indonesian professor while discussing the PhD-level English writing pedagogy I was developing for the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), a self-styled “Indonesian, International, Interreligious PhD program” in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. That audience is a complicated matter at this program is clear when one looks at the first line of program’s mission statement: “To provide a setting for PhD research on religions that is rooted in Indonesian culture and religious beliefs, but in dialogue with the international academic community” (“Introducing”). ICRS positions itself as being by, about, and for Indonesia, but also in contact with international audiences.

Because of this desire for global connection, ICRS chose English as the program’s official language, a move that the program’s Language Policy describes as “painful to decide since we are aware of the imperialism of English” (13). The Language Policy alludes to English’s historical ties to the West—a linkage that, as Phillipson and others suggest, has long spread Western power and monolingualist notions of language use to periphery contexts. However, the language policy then asserts that using English is also a way to “participate in international discourse, including discourse with other Asian, African and Latin American scholars (“Language Policy” 13). As the Language Policy implies, echoing research done elsewhere by Xiaoye You and Pennycook, English can no longer be tied solely to Western interests, and just as importantly, to Western *audiences*.

Given the multiple audiences the program wished to reach and the faculty’s critical view of English’s imperialist legacy, the curriculum I developed for ICRS wed a rhetorical genre-based approach with critical contrastive rhetoric. That explicit teaching of genre helps students access dominant discourses has long been established by scholars working in rhetorical genre studies (see Bazerman; Devitt; Bawarshi), and, when it comes to multilingual writing, in the field of English for Specific Purposes (see Cope, Kalantsis; Hyland; Swales).<sup>2</sup> In ESP circles, Swales has been instrumental in forwarding a genre-based pedagogical approach to teaching multilingual writers (in fact, the pedagogy I outline below draws in part from Swales’ work). He positions genres as tools at work within discourse communities, or “sociorhetorical networks that form in order to work towards a set of common goals” (9). His theorization of discourse community, and his notion that to obtain insider status, community members must master the genres at work there (27) has been taken up by many who wish to help both multilingual *and* monolingual students gain access to disciplinary knowledge and thus become “insiders” within academia.

Although explicit genre instruction works to enculturate students into academic discourse communities, others have argued that when taught in a rote, static way, genre knowledge can also limit possibility, and with that, students’ rhetorical agency (see Coe; Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff; Pennycook; Benesch). Prescriptively teaching dominant genres without discussing language, identity, and power can forward assimilation as the end goal, at the expense of non-dominant identities and rhetorical practices—forwarding, in turn, what translingual theorists dub a monolingualist approach.

To negotiate the pragmatic need to introduce students to dominant genres *and* the need to acknowledge the identity friction involved, scholars of global Englishes have called for a critical re-framing of explicit genre instruction (see Pennycook, "Vulgar"; Kubota, "Critical"). Kubota, for example, argues that traditional contrastive rhetoric's focus on the teaching of explicit and clear-cut genre differences between multilingual students' "original" culture and English often creates a falsely monolithic and essentialist perception of rhetorical situations and the actors that work within them. And with this explicitness comes the idea that students must understand these broad rhetorical differences not so they can question power, but so they can *assimilate* to Western audiences (14). She argues instead for a "critical contrastive rhetoric" that makes distinctions between rhetorical traditions explicit so students can critique their ideological underpinnings, and then make the choice to assimilate or not as they compose. Such a pedagogy, she argues, would give students the tools to "both resist assimilation and appropriate the rhetoric of power to enable oppositional voices" (20). A critical contrastive rhetoric, she argues, "call[s] into question traditionally assumed rhetorical norms [to] explore rhetorical possibilities" (20).

The PhD-level writing pedagogy I developed for ICRS was responsive to this research on genre conventions and identity friction. As the sections below explore, I made space for explicit discussions of genre norms in relation to culture, power, and ideology, while also openly addressing the possibility that students might challenge dominant textual norms to reach the audiences of their choice. I assumed this critical pedagogy would encourage students to alleviate identity friction through the genre moves they made; however, the way students actually chose to take agency and negotiate among language, genre, and audience was more complicated than that. Agency manifested itself both textually *and* extra-textually, as the writers with whom I worked sought to circulate the knowledge they produced from one moment in time to the next— across different languages, genres, and audiences.

## Methodology Matters: On the Affordances of Teacher Ethnography

The research approach I chose for my project played a central role in helping me locate this spatial-temporal rhetorical agency. The data in this article was drawn from a larger research project I conducted while serving at ICRS as a US Department of State English Language Fellow during the 2009-2010 academic year.<sup>3</sup> My research approach combined teacher research (Stringer; Nunan) and ethnography, or the moving "back-and-forth among historical, comparative, and current fieldwork sources" (Heath and Street 33)— what I term teacher ethnography (See also Canagarajah).

Given ICRS's complex local-yet-global identity, my larger project sought to answer these research questions:

- How has the English language been positioned as both local and global in a specific Indonesian literacy context?
- How, in turn, do writers, as they use English, negotiate the point of contact between local and global?

Answering these questions involved putting research on Indonesia's sociolinguistic context, past and present, into conversation with semi-structured faculty interviews and program-related documents in order to better understand ICRS as a literacy site; and, after the two-semester course outlined below was finished, conducting semi-structured interviews with students, which I then put in conversation with text-based analyses of their final written portfolios. Given this article's focus on pedagogy and process, the data presented here is drawn primarily from a reflective teacher's journal and informal reflective texts my students wrote prior to creating their final texts.<sup>4</sup>

Central to the data addressed here is the reflective teacher's journal I kept throughout the two-semester course, which helped me capture in-class discussions and thus the way students negotiated extra-textually with my English-medium pedagogy. Though recording each class with a digital device was an option, I chose to take hand-written notes given Indonesia's geopolitical position as a country recovering from two successive dictators, Sukarno and Suharto. During these dictatorships, university folk rightfully feared that the beliefs they shared within university settings might be used against them by the government; because of this beleaguered past, I wanted to establish trust before moving to collecting digital data, which, because of its nature, might be construed as more easily disseminated than hand-written notes.<sup>5</sup> To ensure as much objectivity as possible in these notes, I kept a triple-entry notebook, divided into "Discussion Notes," "Observations," and "Analysis" columns. I took hand-written notes on our class discussions as they happened in real time in the "Discussion Notes" column. Directly after class, I fleshed these out using thick description (Geertz) in the "Observations" column. I then used the "Analysis" column to put these observations into conversation with other fieldwork notes, secondary literature pertaining to Indonesia's geopolitical context, and research in the teaching of English. Following this process, I typed these notes into a master Microsoft Word document, which allowed me to code more easily across multiple entries and data sets when the time came to do so.

Though filtered through my own subjectivity and the limitations of memory, this process helped me gather data on extra-textual identity negotiation over a period of time and to reflect on some of my West-based assumptions concerning audience and genre during the course itself; as a "native speaker" of English who was trained and had worked most of her career in Western academic institutions, such reflection was important as I sought to develop a pedagogy responsive to the needs of my students.

This reflective teacher's journal also worked recursively with the in-class reflective writing activities I highlight below. I drew from my reflections about in-class discussions to create informal writing activities that deepened and complicated students' initial beliefs about language, identity and power, which in turn fed into subsequent in-class discussions. As the data below will attest, by open coding (Strauss and Corbin) my teacher's journal in relation to students' reflective texts, I was able to highlight general trends in students' *in-process* beliefs about audience and textual negotiation—a key way to locate temporal-spatial agency as it occurs prior to final textual production.

Overall, teacher ethnography helped me to make pedagogical revisions as the course progressed *and* to reflect on the course after it was concluded, a process that led to the insights concerning translingual agency this article addresses. In keeping with a translingual approach to knowledge

production, teacher ethnography helped me “move beyond product to process” to better understand the “production, reception, and circulation” of student texts both within and beyond ICRS (Canagarajah, *Translingual* 12).

## Pedagogical Reflections

### *On a critical activity framed monolingually*

Although the majority of the two-semester course I developed focused on genres commonly expected of PhD students in Religious Studies,<sup>6</sup> students began by writing a critical literacy narrative. I wanted, in Kubota’s words, to have them “write about how they perceive[d] the ways in which they [wrote]...in their first languages and critically bring their perceptions to bear on the work of composing texts” in my course (21). To help them draft their texts, and to avoid promoting essentialist understandings of language and culture, I developed activities that helped students critically reflect on the multiple and co-existent “cultures” and identities they might move between as they composed their English texts. However, because these activities weren’t accompanied by overt discussions of audience and rhetorical choice, students maintained a monolingualist orientation—an orientation I wouldn’t have questioned had the faculty member discussed above not asked me, “But to whom do we have students write?,” and had I not taken the time to reflect in my teaching journal on the connections between this discussion and my curriculum.

To begin, I asked students to read Shen’s “The Classroom and the Wider Culture,” in which he contrasts the ideologies influencing Western genres with those of Chinese genres to reflect upon his difficulties acculturating to American composition practices. He explains that the personal experience and voice valued in Western writing—the “I” that “promotes individuality (and private property)” — was, in Communist China, “always subordinated to ‘We’—be it the working class, the Party, the country, or some other collective body” (460). This Chinese ideology, he argues, was reflected in Chinese genres which encouraged him to suppress the “I,” making his transition to US-based “individualist” writing practices difficult. Ultimately, he argues that writing in English meant “creating and defining a new identity and balancing it with the old identity” (466). As dated as Shen’s 1989 text is, it opened up conversations about “culture” and “identity” in class discussion, where many of my students linked practices in their Indonesian genre repertoires to the “we-centered” Chinese practices Shen outlines (5 September 2009).

However, because Shen compares only China’s and the United States’ *national* cultures, he creates a monolithic and essentialist model for students; as Ivancic and others argue, students bring multiple identities and “cultures” to their writing practices. To challenge this one-culture-equals-one-identity binary, we then discussed Swales’ definition of “discourse community,” a concept students grasped easily as the majority of students were fluent in at least three languages,<sup>7</sup> as well as in the languages of their professions and academic disciplines.

Once they were comfortable with the concept, I asked students to brainstorm multiple discourse communities in which they participated and, for each, to answer the following questions:

- How do the language practices in these discourse communities interact with each other?
- And how might they interact with your writing identities in English?

This reflective writing activity spurred a lively discussion on the ways students' already-existent discourses might affect their discursal selves as they wrote in English.

As recorded in my teaching journal, when we reconvened, one student explained that he had connected his Javanese discourse community<sup>8</sup> and his professional discourse community as a licensed therapist; he linked the hierarchical respect of authority in Javanese culture to what he described as a “culture of listening” in his therapist community to argue that both encouraged a more indirect notion of critique than might be expected in an “I”-centered culture. Another student put in conversation his identities as a feminist activist and Muslim imam to discuss how moving between these discourse communities might help him navigate a new, more “I-centered” English identity. Yet another contrasted her experiences studying abroad in Hawaii and her experiences with English at ICRS and the ways West-based assumptions about language mediated the texts she produced in these different countries (7 September 2009).<sup>9</sup>

Given these vibrant discussions, I initially deemed this assignment sequence a successful one in my teacher's journal; it highlighted for students the notion that language *is* culture while simultaneously making Western genre norms explicit, and it also encouraged students to think about discourses as co-existent—a step towards helping students build bridges between their existing discourse practices and the ones I planned to introduce in the class.

It wasn't until the next day, after the meeting where my Indonesian colleague asked me “But to whom do we have students write?” that I realized this sequence might be construed as very West-oriented and monolingualist in nature because we didn't explicitly discuss which English-using audience students might reach with their knowledge, and with that, the possibility that they might negotiate with textual form depending on the rhetorical situations they imagined. Shen's focus is very “East writing to West” and unidirectional, probably because he writes as a US immigrant; though he urges teachers to make the connections between composition practices and ideology explicit, his overall argument is that this might better help students create an English identity that can assimilate to Western practices. Similarly, because we didn't explicitly discuss audience in the discourse community activity, I realized it might have been interpreted as an activity meant to locate and “fix” students' non-Western textual moves when they bled into their English texts—to make it easier to adopt the Western identity Shen embraces.

This activity sequence, upon reflection, took a monolingualist approach to genre and audience. As evidenced by my colleague's question, such a unidirectional, East converting to West approach to English writing is challenged by ICRS's positionality as an Indonesian yet international site. It is problematic to link one language to one discourse—in this case, English to the West—without considering audience and the fact that English is capable of appropriation and re-articulation by non-Western writers. My research approach helped me to reflect on these particular West-based assumptions, which, as the next section will explore, led me to more explicitly incorporate discussions of audience and textual negotiation into the course.

*On Western academic genre conventions and rhetorical agency*

For the remainder of the course, I developed activities that allowed for the possibility that students' Indonesian audiences might dictate the way they negotiated Western genre conventions in English. Given expectations that I would teach students genres necessary to English-using Religious Studies scholars, many of these activities involved pairing short critical reflective writing activities with explicit genre instruction and discussions about textual negotiation. These activities both elicited vibrant class discussions *and* highlighted the limitations of locating rhetorical agency solely in the genre moves students chose to make.

An activity sequence I developed for a research article unit illustrates this claim. Given my initial West-centered framing, openly discussing the question of audience with the graduate students in my class seemed imperative. Therefore, to begin this unit, I asked students to do a reflective writing activity in response to these questions:

- Who do you imagine as your English-using audience for this paper?
- And what country or countries does this audience come from?

Students' answers to these questions point to the important role Indonesian audiences played in their composing processes: four of the five students<sup>10</sup> taking part in the activity reported that they imagined Indonesian audiences, with only one imagining a Western audience because, he explained, "English is a Western language."

One student, for example, imagined a local ICRS audience for his paper, and explained his reasoning as follows:

The academic audience whom I imagine as I write my paper are my teacher and my classmates here at ICRS... I don't have any imagination to talk to American people or Australian people over there...I feel difficult to write when I imagine Western people because I don't know their context. That's why it's better for me to imagine my people, my friends, imagine my intimate audience here...

His desire for an intimate audience was echoed by two other peers, who both imagined Indonesian graduate students as their audiences. In the words of one, "In my paper, I would like to address it to university students at any level...Since I am from Indonesia, my audience is from Indonesia, too."

Besides the student who imagined a Western audience, only one student imagined an audience that was significantly wider than ICRS, though this audience was still Indonesian. He wrote:

This paper is intended to the audience who comes from all parts of Indonesia whose English is very good... They belong to intellectual groups of people who come from... outstanding universities in Indonesia and they are the audiences who are accustomed to do religious dialogues.

He imagines a broader Indonesian academic audience as he composes, but notably one with "good English" rather than the more Western audience suggested by English's origins.

That the majority of students chose to imagine an embodied audience of real Indonesian people they knew—as opposed to imagining advanced academic literacy as an interaction with significant *texts* in the field—could be symptomatic of students' identities as novice academics seeking to enter a conversation where they felt less than authoritative (see Irene Clark). To return to Ivanić's terms, because they were uncomfortable with the "discoursal selves" expected of them when writing in

English—whether because of cross-cultural differences or being new to the field—it could have felt more comfortable imagining an intimate, embodied audience as they sought to construct “self as author,” at least for the time being. However, that they were writing as Indonesians in an Indonesian context also could have influenced these target audiences. As I’ll discuss in more detail below, many of these students were engaging in advanced academic literacy not just to engage *textually* in larger academic conversations, but to use their *knowledge*, regardless of genre or language, to foster concrete social change for real people in their Indonesian communities.

Given that the majority of students imagined Indonesians as their target audiences in this class activity further reinforced the importance of considering audience and textual negotiation when framing this research article assignment. Therefore, the next activity sequence I introduced paired explicit genre instruction with a discussion of critical negotiation.

I first introduced students to John Swales’ CARS (Create a Research Space) Model, which outlines common moves in Western academic introductions (Swales and Feak, “Academic”). We then went over a list of common Western academic genre features compiled by Swales and Feak in their *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, which aligned—albeit with more specificity—with Shen’s article in the prior unit.

In addition, to avoid the monolingualist approach the literacy narrative unit took, we also discussed the following excerpt from Canagarajah’s *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*: “It is possible in critical writing for multilingual students to tap the resources of English and use it judiciously to represent the interests of their communities. An uncritical use of the language, on the other hand, poses the threat of making the individual and community prone to linguistic domination” (17). This excerpt fostered a discussion that drew from the identity work students had done in their literacy narrative unit and highlighted their complicated beliefs about assimilating to Western norms as Indonesian writers.

An excerpt from my teaching journal reads as follows:

One woman talked about power and the English language and how it eradicated other ways of thinking. They must learn English and its ways of being, she explained, because they wanted to do well in school. I asked if assimilation was the only option and students had mixed reactions—one student argued they should just be aware of audience, and that he could keep two identities, like Shen, and switch in between them. Other students said it was complicated because sometimes the languages mixed with each other—English bled into Indonesian writing practices and vice versa, showing they had mixed identities. Another student then brought up linguistic standardization and that Standard English rules were often enforced by instructors unaware of the “cultural aspect” of language. Yet another student thought that they should be able to write in an Indonesian way to Indonesian people (16 November 2009).

This excerpt highlights that when given designated space within the classroom to do so, students were ready to discuss ways they might negotiate audience and textual identity when engaging with English genres. That students were so ready to engage in this discussion indicates their already existent translingual orientations towards knowledge and the importance of making space for such

extra-textual conversations in the classroom.

Given the vibrancy of this discussion, it seemed important to move toward ways students might take agency in the actual texts they wrote. Since students were getting their degrees in Religious Studies, I assigned for homework Mahboob's "English as an Islamic Language: A Case Study of Pakistani English," where he shows how English language textbooks written in Pakistan incorporate Islamic sayings—in their original Arabic—despite being written primarily in English, what translingual scholars would term "code-meshing."

To help frame discussion of the rhetorical moves Mahboob highlights, in class we discussed another excerpt from Canagarajah's *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students* in which he outlines ways multilingual writers might negotiate dominant English language forms:

- *Accommodation*: following the rules and assimilating to dominant language forms, even if at the expense of one's own beliefs or linguistic traditions.
- *Opposition*: ignoring the rules by refusing to adopt any dominant practices because they are against one's own beliefs or linguistic traditions.
- *Appropriation*: bending the rules and negotiating between one's own linguistic traditions and dominant language forms; in Canagarajah's words, "Although [writers using this technique] establish a discourse counter to that of the dominant conventions, they still establish a point of connection with the established genre conventions" (Critical 116).

Taken together, these texts spurred a lively discussion about the risks and rewards linked to accommodation, opposition, or, in the case of code-meshed texts like the ones Mahboob explores, appropriation of dominant norms.

Here is an excerpt from that day's teaching journal:

One student asked [in relation to Canagarajah's heuristic], "Which do you think is the easiest to do?" I threw the question back at the class and another student replied that accommodation is the easiest because you "don't have to think." Another student said that emotionally, though, accommodation was more difficult, even if writing in this way was easier, because of cultural differences. Another student countered and said that opposition might be easiest because you can do whatever you want without taking into consideration genre requirements. The student who asked which was the easiest ended the discussion with, "sometimes it is very hard to do when you are new to writing" (18 November 2009).

From this extra-textual interaction, it is clear that students were working through the relationship between genre and textual identity negotiation—and that they had different views concerning the feasibility of code-meshing and genre-bending.

Furthermore, as the final student suggests, critical appropriation—at least at the textual level—might take time for people "new to writing" in English, an argument for considering agency from a spatial-temporal framework. That seemed to be the case as we moved to our next activity, which was meant to bridge this discussion with choices they might make in their own texts to reach specific audiences.

To link back up to the first reflective assignment in the unit—and to catch up those students who had missed the opening activity—we once again brainstormed as a class multiple English-using

audiences that might benefit from their research projects. Students came up with the following list: Amber as instructor; Indonesian instructors at ICRS; Indonesian English-users; Western Academic Audience; and Southeast Asian Academic Audience.<sup>11</sup>

Though their monolithic conceptions of audience might be considered problematic given the complexity of our global academic conversations, I did want students to take agency and define their own rhetorical situations for this assignment. Therefore, I asked students to choose one of these audiences and to reflect on the following questions in relation to that audience:

- Why might you share your research with this audience?
- What info can you assume they know? What info do they need to know?
- What kind of textual identity will you convey?
- How might you begin your text? What writing moves might you use?

Similar to their work in the first activity, most students (nine out of ten this time) chose to write about and address their texts to Indonesian audiences.

Notably—at least in hindsight—the discussion this activity spurred indicated that students were more interested in the first two content-based questions than the final two genre-based questions. Students were particularly interested in the way that they might transmit Indonesian Religious Studies content from local to global audiences and vice-versa. One student, for example, shared how her research on Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) might be important to share with Western audiences, but it would be “old news” to Indonesian audiences. Another student also drew from our previous discussion of the CARS model to postulate that putting Indonesian voices into conversation with Western ones might be a way to add new information to global conversations (22 November 2009). Knowledge itself, rather than form, took primacy in this discussion.

Though I viewed this discussion as productive, I still wanted to help students link their genre choices to the audiences they were imagining before they began crafting their texts. Therefore, I asked them to do one more reflective writing activity, where I asked:

- Do you think it’s OK to deviate from the CARS model? Why or why not?
- And for what reasons might you do so?

This reflective activity highlighted that although most students believed it was appropriate to deviate from the CARS model, they thought that assimilation to Western norms was their best choice—for the time being.

One student, for example, wrote:

I think it is fine to deviate from the CARS model as long as we have supportive knowledge to do it. However, I will not deviate *at this time* since I think this model is easy to understand as a new English writer and also fluid if I want to later on. We can follow the model but we can still be creative in doing it. The reasons for wanting to deviate, I think, are the different nature of academic culture, audience and purposes (my emphasis).

This student signals her belief that it is acceptable to deviate when considering different cultures and audiences, but because she is so new to academic writing in English, she won’t deviate yet. Another student pointed to the model’s newness as his reason for assimilating: “I think CARS model is really new for me and it can enrich me how to create a research space.” These students see the CARS model

as a “fluid” heuristic, and as a way to “enrich” their existent rhetorical repertoires. In keeping with a translingual orientation, rather than viewing this Western model in an either/or relationship with their existing linguistic traditions, these students view it as another part of their toolkit that they might draw from again—or challenge—in the future. For now, though, these students chose to assimilate, regardless of the audience they imagined.

Other students, however, pointed to power and to English’s ties to the West as their reason for assimilating. One student wrote, “It is hard to deviate from CARS because it is such a ‘universal guide’ in Western research writing. I do not want to deviate. I just want to follow this model. Maybe in a perfectly new territory, it can be deviated.” Though signaling the possibility for new rhetorical situations to expand textual possibilities, he has no desire to deviate because of the CARS model’s “universalized” acceptance in English conversations long linked to the West. Another student echoed this belief that deviation from dominant norms can be difficult: “The risks for deviating from the CARS is our research is likely to be considered as non-academic.” Power matters, particularly to these novice academics.

Thus, although aware of English’s ties to Western ideology, and that they might negotiate with Western norms to reach their imagined Indonesian audiences, students were willing—for now—to assimilate: a testament, it could be argued, to the West’s power to define “good English;” to their own identities as new graduate students wanting to try out a new genre prior to challenging it; and to a translingual orientation towards language use that positions new genres as additive, rather than subtractive. That we began the course with a unit that assumed a de-facto Western audience and that they were being evaluated by a “native speaker” might also have spurred their decisions, despite my efforts to revise the course in a way that encouraged critical negotiation with audience and genre conventions.

Were these critical genre activities, then, a waste of time? No. These conversations about textual form and audience weren’t meant to forward a particular, “correct” way to negotiate English genres; rather, they were meant to encourage students to make conscious rhetorical choices as they wrote their “discoursal selves” into English. And my students *chose* to assimilate in their research articles, regardless of their intended Indonesian audiences, at least for the time being. As Bawarshi suggests, in a translingual world, agency is located not in the final product, but in the writer’s choices as she negotiates “memory, emotion, [her] sense of self, available discursive and linguistic resources, embodied dispositions, [and] histories of engagement” (Bawarshi 247) in her particular historical moment. Assimilation *can* be a critical choice. In addition, as some students indicated, “assimilating for now” does not preclude writers from making different choices in the future as the translingual “river” (Pennycook, *Language* 35) shifts around them.

Furthermore, in hindsight I realize that students’ preference for discussing the ways their

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Indonesian *knowledge* might contribute to global conversations points to the limitations of a pedagogy that links agency solely to negotiations with textual form. From a translingual perspective, populating a conventional English-medium literature review with Indonesian knowledge—or vice versa— could also be considered a form of code-meshing. Though I didn't cue into it at the time, students' vibrant discussion about the role that Indonesian knowledge might play in expanding global conversations about religion points to the importance of moving past a focus on academic product and towards an understanding of the ways that knowledge itself circulates across languages, audiences, and genres."

#### *On academic product versus translingual circulation*

Indeed, students were concerned with more than what their *academic* texts looked like in the translingual spaces at ICRS; they were just as concerned with how the *knowledge* they accessed through English might reach the Indonesian public, whether in English or Indonesian. As Ringer and DePalma argue in their "Theory of Adaptive Transfer," when considering multilingual writing practices it is important to look past textual production to the ways students "reuse and reshape prior writing knowledge to fit new contexts" (135). To understand knowledge production in a translingual world, we must look past textual form to the "circulation" of ideas across languages and rhetorical situations (Canagarajah, *Translingual* 16).

Prior to enrolling at ICRS, most of my students were activists in their local communities, working with various Indonesian NGOs to forward such issues as religious tolerance, women's rights, and community literacy. As my pedagogy developed, I began to reflect in my teacher's journal on the way students' work on the ground fed into their academic scholarship, making me question my initial assumption that the only genres they would need to write would be academic in nature, scope, and audience. This assumption forwarded a one-way, extractive relationship, where students' community activism fed into their scholarly work, but not vice-versa. This realization, and mid-year evaluations requesting more "public" texts, spurred me to incorporate non-academic genres into my pedagogy. One of the most popular of these assignments (according to final evaluations) was the opinion piece, in which I asked students to revise the research article they produced in the unit described above to reach a public audience of their choice.

Given that the course was English-medium and that most students preferred to write to Indonesian audiences, it's not surprising that all nine students taking part in my study chose to write opinion pieces for the English-medium *Jakarta Post*. To help students critically reflect on their rhetorical choices as they moved between academic and public audiences, I asked them submit a cover letter with their final texts that addressed the following questions:

- What public audience do you wish to reach with your research? Point to a specific publishing forum.

- Why do you think it's important that this audience read your work?
- What decisions did you make to target this audience?
- Overall, these cover letters indicated that when writing in English for a *public* Indonesian audience, students were more likely to code-mesh.

For example, one student chose to write about the lack of pre-natal care in Indonesia. She pointed in her cover letter to her choice to include the Islamic phrase “Innalillahi wa Innalillahi rojiun” in its original Arabic: “I include this phrase in my JP opinion piece because usually if we Indonesians have sad tragedies, we always say it. It means that everything is from God and everything goes back to God. I don’t include it in my research article because of some in my academic audience not being aware of Muslim sayings.” This choice to code-mesh in her piece shows a translingual rhetorical awareness and her willingness to code-mesh Arabic into her English pieces, particularly when writing in English to the Indonesian public. She could also have been taking a cue from our previous discussion of code-meshing in Pakistani textbooks (Mahboob).

Moreover, several students also chose to translate their opinion pieces, which were essentially already “translations” of the work they’d done in their research articles, from English to Indonesian—on their own time. Students’ choice to revise their knowledge across genre and language multiple times—for class activities and to serve extra-curricular purposes— indicates that rather than focusing solely on academic form as a site of identity negotiation and critical agency, we should also take into consideration the ways writers negotiate *knowledge* procured through English to serve non-English audiences, and vice-versa.

The student whose code-meshing I just highlighted was one of these writers. She explained her choice to revise and re-signify her knowledge in this way:

My opinion piece is not only academic information, but also personal experience. I also want to share this academic information to reach many Indonesian women who can read my article, and the personal makes it more interesting. That’s why I rewrote it in Bahasa Indonesia and put on Facebook.<sup>12</sup>

As this student indicates, for many of my students, it wasn’t just what their academic texts looked like, but what their knowledge *did* in the community that mattered most. Rhetorical agency happens not just *within* students’ academic texts, but as they appropriate and circulate knowledge to the multiple and diverse audiences in their lives, across multiple genres and languages—and as time unfolds. Broadening the lens to account for such negotiation, as scholars espousing a translingual approach to agency argue, is quite important when considering the ways that knowledge garnered through English is actually being *used* on a global scale.

And the pedagogical choices instructors make should account for such negotiation. Though the pedagogy outlined above initially began in a “monolingualist” way, my revisions in the research article unit and students’ real-time interactions with these revisions indicate that the course *did* encourage students to think critically about genre, audience, and the possibility they might take agency to challenge Western genre conventions. That said, as I step back and reflect on the course as a whole, I do think that the research article unit I developed positioned rhetorical agency as over-tyed to the *textual* moves students might make to challenge Western genre norms; in hindsight, I

should have paid just as much attention to students' interest in negotiating Western and Indonesian *knowledge* as they constructed their literature reviews. We might have discussed at more length, for

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example, whose voices are most often seen in English-medium literature reviews and why—and ways they might put knowledge written in Indonesian in conversation with overly-represented Western voices to reach and teach different audiences with their English texts. Rather than focusing solely on academic form as a site of identity negotiation, scholars should consider the ways writers negotiate *knowledge* procured through English to serve non-English audiences, and vice-versa.

That said, given my experiences teaching in Indonesia, I *do* still think we should invite conversations about code-

meshing and genre bending into our classrooms. The fact that the student above (and others) chose to code-mesh in her opinion piece could be linked to the discussions we had in prior units, or to an already existent translingual orientation—or to both. Regardless, given classroom politics, we as instructors should help students feel invited to make conscious choices to assimilate—or not—to the genre conventions we introduce them to. In addition, though, we must broaden the lens to address other ways students might take agency in our translingual world: critical agency might manifest itself in oral communication but not in students' final texts as the discussion excerpts from my teaching journal indicate, and it might manifest itself in the ways students choose to populate what seem to be “normative” texts with knowledge they draw from their local language communities.

## Possible Implications for US Graduate Writing Pedagogies

Though the data highlighted above is specific to one Indonesian literacy site, I hope this small glimpse into my students' linguistic negotiations might encourage teacher scholars working in the US to develop graduate pedagogies that more openly address the translingual world our students navigate. Though further research needs to be done on the efficacy of such pedagogies in U.S. contexts, to me, challenging West-centered, monolingualist assumptions regarding knowledge production in graduate classrooms seems vitally important in US universities where graduate populations are increasingly comprised of domestic *and* international, monolingual *and* multilingual writers. To that end, I'll conclude with some ways my Indonesian research *might* inform US-based pedagogies.

Taking a translingual approach in US graduate writing pedagogies (where they exist)<sup>13</sup> might involve first asking students to whom they wish to write, and in what languages they wish to reach these audiences, rather than just assuming a monolithic Western academic audience as default, as I

initially did at ICRS. Even if students do end up choosing to write to a Western academic audience in English, starting with these questions might expand students' understanding of the rhetorical situations they might engage with in the future—whether academic or public— while also de-centering English as the only language of academic knowledge circulation (see Horner, NeCamp, and Donahue).

Furthermore, engaging graduate students in activities where they explore the multiple linguistic communities and genres they *already* navigate, whether in English or not, and then asking them to critically reflect on ways these language communities intersect with advanced academic literacy might create a future cadre of global scholars who, rather than assuming a de-facto Western academic audience when writing in English, instead make conscious choices to tailor their texts to fit audience, context, and the identity they wish to portray. Such activities would position these burgeoning academics as agentive co-constructors of knowledge, rather than mere emulators of it.

Encouraging students to view their non-academic language communities as intersecting with, rather than separate from, their academic contexts might also help them connect their academic lives to advancing the “public good.” As Richard Ohmann has argued, teaching graduate students to write effectively should involve more than inculcating them into narrow, discipline-specific communities; enculturating graduate students should involve cultivating the “concern about social problems” (248) that spurred many to apply to graduate school in the first place. One way to do that could be to help students re-imagine knowledge production as a translingual process, where they might strategically move knowledge drawn from their local communities into their academic texts, and vice-versa. Students should feel invited to move between different genres, audiences, and languages as they negotiate and produce knowledge—whether this knowledge is drawn from community work that engages in different “Englishes” or whether it’s drawn from entirely different language communities, as in the case of my Indonesian students. And we must learn to recognize this translanguaging as agentive, regardless of the final form students’ texts take.

To conclude, though the bridge I’ve constructed between my Indonesian research site and U.S. graduate writing classrooms is purely hypothetical at this point, I do believe creating space for conversations about language, culture, and power in our linguistically diverse US graduate classrooms might help students negotiate the tensions involved with (re)writing their identities as burgeoning “academics.” And just as importantly, such a pedagogy might help them take agency to re-write the global academic conversation in a way that assumes global connection across difference as the norm, rather than the exception.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>A note on terms: I use the term “periphery” to indicate global literacy contexts that exist at the periphery of geopolitical power (see Canagarajah’s *Geopolitics*). That said, when referring to what might be termed “center” contexts, I instead use the term “Western” because that was the term most often used by my research participants; for the same reason, I use the term “native-speaking” to indicate dominant Western language practices.

<sup>2</sup>English for Specific Purposes is an umbrella term for genre-based ways of teaching non-native speakers of English. Some examples: English for Academic Purposes (EAP); English for Occupational Purposes (EOP); and English for Medical Purposes (EMP).

<sup>3</sup> Although I conducted this research project simultaneous to the duties outlined in my ELF contract, which stipulated curriculum development and teaching responsibilities, my research was separate from those duties and in no way sponsored by the US Department of State.

<sup>4</sup> All nine students in my English Writing class agreed to participate in my research, in addition to several faculty members, one of whom I’ve discussed already. Given the power differentials inherent in teacher research—for instance, the possibility that students’ grades would be affected by their (non)participation in my research—obtaining informed consent to gather data was a several-step process. Obtaining permission to record research notes in a teacher’s journal involved the office manager at ICRS distributing informed consent forms and keeping them locked away until final grades were submitted to ensure I was unaware of who had agreed to participate. Although still allowed to take notes in my teaching journal, only information from those students who chose to participate could be included in my research. Obtaining consent for student writing activities was similar to that for the teacher journal. Although I could read student texts *as a teacher* throughout the course, *as a researcher* I had to wait until the course was done before analyzing students’ complete portfolios.

<sup>5</sup> It was only after a year of hand-written data collection and after final grades were submitted that I chose to use a digital recording device for the semi-structured interviews I did with students.

<sup>6</sup> Genres I taught included texts they would be asked to write as graduate students, such as the response paper, the literature review, and the research proposal; genres that would allow them to spread their knowledge to a wider academic audience, such as the research article and conference paper; and, given students’ interest in social justice, genres that would help them reach the Indonesian public, such as the opinion piece.

<sup>7</sup> There are 418 distinct languages within the country, and most Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, in addition to at least one local language, making the majority of the population multilingual (Lowenberg, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> As the most-populated and powerful of Indonesia’s 17,000 or so islands, Java was perceived by most students as having a culture distinct from the broader, more diverse national “culture” implied by Indonesia as a nation-state.

<sup>9</sup> Given its focus on extra-textual and in-process negotiation, this article mainly discusses the processes prior to students’ final textual products; for a more thorough text-based analysis of students’ literacy narratives, please see my article, “The Hands of God at Work: Negotiating Between Western and Religious Sponsorship in Indonesia.”

<sup>10</sup> My teacher’s journal notes that it was an Islamic holiday that day, which accounted for the fact that four students were absent.

<sup>11</sup> This student-generated list, as we can see, ignores the fact that audience might be comprised of a mixed group of people, something the initial reflective writing activity in this unit tried to address by asking them "Which country *or countries* [might your audience] come from?" Students' rather monolithic understanding of audience could be indicative of their positionalities as novice academics exploring the concept of audience for the first time; since few had taken courses explicitly devoted to writing and rhetoric—either in English or in their home languages—it was probably easier for them to imagine a monolithic audience for the time being.

<sup>12</sup> Postcolonial leaders adopted Bahasa Indonesia, a version of Malay, as Indonesia's official language in their efforts to unify the nation after the Dutch colonizers were forced out; they viewed it as a neutral and fair choice because it was a non-native language for everyone in the linguistically diverse archipelago. Though Bahasa Indonesia is the only official language, provisions were also made in the Constitution to preserve the islands' rich linguistic diversity. In many regions, children are taught in their home languages for several years before Bahasa Indonesia is introduced, and, during the rest of their education, classes in local languages are offered. Governmental mandates for the preservation of local languages as well as the national language, Lowenberg argues, encouraged the language's success, while also assuring that the majority of Indonesians are multilingual (71).

<sup>13</sup> As Micciche and Carr argue, there certainly are not enough programs that explicitly teach graduate-level writing practices.

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