Negotiating Translingual Literacy: An Enactment

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This article argues that an understanding of writing as translingual requires a shift to a different orientation to literacy—i.e., from autonomous and situated to negotiated. Such an orientation treats the text as co-constructed in time and space—with parity for readers and writers in shaping the meaning and form—and thus performed rather than preconstructed, making the multimodal and multisensory dimensions of the text fully functional. Going beyond the native/nonnative and monolingual/multilingual speaker binaries, this study demonstrates that both student groups can orient themselves to such literate practices in the context of suitable pedagogical affordances. Drawing from teacher research informed by an ethnographic perspective, the study identifies four types of negotiation strategies adopted by writers to code-mesh and readers to interpret texts: envoking, recontextualization, interaction, and entextualization. Envoking strategies set the conditions for negotiation, as it is a consideration of voice that motivates writers to decide the extent and nature of code-meshing; recontextualization strategies prepare the ground for negotiation; interactional strategies are adopted to co-construct meaning; and entextualization strategies reveal the temporal and spatial shaping of the text to facilitate and respond to these negotiations. The analysis points to the value of a dialogical pedagogy that can further develop the negotiation strategies students already bring to the classroom.

Introduction
There has been considerable interest in recent years in understanding writing as a negotiation of cross-language relations, as shaped by processes of globalization, migration, digital communication, and transnational relations. Much of the exploration in composition has hitherto been undertaken under the notion of code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2006; Young, 2004; Young & Martinez, 2011). Code-meshing is a form of writing in which multilinguals merge their diverse language resources with the dominant genre conventions to construct hybrid texts for voice. However, some scholars have recently broadened the exploration to a translingual orientation (Canagarajah, 2013; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011). The translingual orientation moves literacy beyond products to the processes and practices of cross-language relations. This orientation can focus on the construction, reception, and circulation of mobile texts, including those that are
Furthermore, this orientation expands the consideration to diverse other semiotic products beyond the code-meshed texts of multilinguals. Even native speakers are implicated in cross-language relations when they read and write in English. Also, voice, diversity, and hybridity find expression (perhaps more subtly) in texts that appear to be constructed in Standard Written English (SWE). In this sense, translilingual communication involves all of us, both native speakers and multilinguals, and finds representation in textual products with different types and degrees of language mixing. I stress the prefix in my definition of *translingual* to focus on communication a) beyond separate languages and b) beyond language as a medium to accommodate other semiotic resources, such as color, images, and symbols. While the term *multilingual* perceives the relationship between languages in an additive manner (i.e., combination of separate languages), *translingual* addresses the synergy, treating languages as always in contact and mutually influencing each other, with emergent meanings and grammars. Translingual literacy is an understanding of the production, circulation, and reception of texts that are always mobile; that draw from diverse languages, symbol systems, and modalities of communication; and that involve inter-community negotiations.

There is now a general feeling that theorization of translingual literacy has far outpaced pedagogical practices for advancing this proficiency in classrooms (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Tardy, 2011). Teachers have also called for more help, as code-meshing poses unsettling questions for pedagogy, motivating a reconsideration of traditional norms. For example, meshing diverse languages can result in unconventional idioms, word choices, and grammatical structures. Bizzell (2010) has recently asked how teachers should read code-meshed writing when their students use grammars with which they are not familiar. Sohan (2009) asks what she should teach her students: “How can we as teacher-scholars change the way we respond to (read-write-think about) and teach the words of ‘others’ so as to work against the grain of dominant discourses and habituated ‘systems of hearing’ designed to undercut ‘minority’ voices?” (p. 274). The value of expanding an orientation to translingualism is clear, as these questions on code-meshed texts have to be addressed in relation to broader reading, writing, and interpretation strategies. Tardy (2011) disapproves of further theoretical pronouncements and seeks modes of “enactment.” In this article, I offer an example of such an enactment from my teaching to address these questions. The article will demonstrate that teaching is not an application of literacy theory; rather, teaching can advance theorization.

**Theorizing Translingual Literacy**

**Beyond the Text**

The “dominant discourses and habituated ‘systems of hearing’” that Bizzell, Sohan, and Tardy are presumably working against, Brian Street (1984) would label “autonomous literacy.” Such a literacy, which still finds manifestation in product-oriented and normative composition approaches, is motivated by the assumption of an alphabetically constructed text that stands independently with transparent
meaning for all contexts, endowed with the power to determine higher-order thinking and social relationships. Street, along with Heath (1983) and Scribner and Cole (1981), challenged autonomous literacy by situating the text in social contexts. In doing so, they showed how texts are part of localized social relations and draw from both oral and written resources, finding diverse realizations in communities. This breakthrough from ethnographies in less known communities, by those who came to be known as the first-generation scholars of New Literacy Studies (NLS, see Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009), was followed by a second generation of empirical studies in urban contexts that revealed even more diverse literacy practices and new textual genres, developing related notions of literacy as everyday, local, and vernacular (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1990). In opposition to the deterministic view of autonomous literacy, these scholars also emphasized the agency of subjects, even those from less educated backgrounds, who adopted diverse, heretofore untheorized literacy practices.

**Addressing Mobility**

As globalization now intensifies textual mobility, scholars are wondering if the first two waves of NLS took localization too far. Baynham and Prinsloo (2009) have recently asked if a third wave of NLS is necessary to address changes from technology, multimodality, and contact that are generating new objects for analysis. They encourage a reconsideration of the social literacy assumptions of NLS to understand translocal literacy. In a sense, Brandt and Clinton (2002) have already initiated this inquiry. In considering the translocal influences of literate products and the implications for new localities when texts traveled, they reacted against the excessive embedding of texts in local social and cultural systems or communities to give them meaning. They emphasized the materiality of texts, with the power to travel beyond local contexts and influence communicative and social life. For them, “these capacities stem from the legibility and durability of literacy: its material forms, its technological apparatus, its objectivity, that is, its (some) thing-ness” (p. 344). To theorize such possibilities, they adopted Latour’s (1993) activity network theory to show how texts participated with objects and agents in diverse local ecologies to gain functionality. Thus they sought “to rehabilitate certain ‘autonomous’ aspects of literacy without appealing to repudiated ‘autonomous models’ of literacy” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 339).

Since then, literacy scholars have gained new insights into mobile texts from diverse related fields in the language and social sciences. Sociolinguist Blommaert (2008) has adopted the term “literacy regimes” to characterize local understandings of what counts as a text, and the way they shape local communities’ uptake of traveling texts. With other sociolinguists of globalization (Collins, Baynham, & Slembrouck, 2009), he complemented literacy regimes with the metaphor of scales to explain how a text that has meaning and value in a local scale of consideration may be treated as meaningless or ineffective in a translocal literacy regime. This notion drew attention to the role of power in globalization, with certain elite genres and codes jumping scales and the literacies of less powerful communities limited in relevance to local scales.
While Blommaert, Brandt and Clinton, and others provide useful insights into the global circulation of texts, they still operate within the social literacies paradigm in certain respects. They are recontextualizing texts in the new settings in which the texts have arrived, perceiving the texts as part of local literacy practices and events. It is this orientation that makes Blommaert judge texts from underdeveloped communities as deficient in translocal literacy regimes. Though Brandt and Clinton are open to texts changing local contexts, they leave unexplored the complex ways traveling texts may have to be reinterpreted for meaning. To address the dynamics of inter-community engagement with literacy, I situate mobile texts in contact zones (Pratt, 1991). That is, translocal literacy occurs in the liminal spaces between local community norms and practices. Rather than re-embedding these texts into their own literacy practices and events too quickly, local communities have to recognize that these texts are informed by different practices of production and adopt more open strategies of reception, beyond the norms of their own literacy regimes. Some literacy scholars express the need to adopt such a cosmopolitan approach to traveling texts, asking if interpretive practices would be different in cross-cultural engagement (Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009; Hull & Nelson, 2009; Kell, 2009; Ratcliffe, 1999).

Co-constructing Meaning

Applied linguists have given some thought to the ways in which linguae francae are negotiated for meaning in the global contact zones. Scholars of contemporary English as a lingua franca (Firth, 1996; Seidlhofer, 2004) and scholars of precolonial contact languages outside the West (Khubchandani, 1997) point out that interlocutors are open to co-constructing new norms and meanings from the linguistic resources all participants bring to the interaction. They don’t depend on form (i.e., grammar, vocabulary), but focus on communicative practices (i.e., interpersonal, sociolinguistic, and discourse strategies) to help negotiate their diverse grammars. Meaning has to be co-constructed through collaborative strategies, treating grammars and texts as affordances rather than containers of meaning. Interlocutors draw from other affordances, too, such as the setting, objects, gestures, and multisensory resources from the ecology. Thus, meaning does not reside in the grammars they bring to the encounter, but in the negotiated practice of aligning with each other in the context of diverse affordances for communication. In the global contact zone, interlocutors seek to understand the plurality of norms in a communicative situation and expand their repertoires, without assuming that they can rely solely on the knowledge or skills they bring with them to achieve communicative success. Success requires a different attitude to communication: interlocutors are supportive and consensus-oriented as they strive to achieve their shared objectives through their divergent codes.

An important resource for negotiating languages in contact zones is a multisensory orientation to meaning-making. For multilinguals, communication is not solely a rational activity. Though the multimodality of literacy has been well discussed, it is not often appreciated that such literacy requires a multisensory response. After all, one can adopt a rational response to multimodality (as researchers
are prone to do) and consider how diverse modalities relate to each other. A multisensory response involves an opening up of all one’s senses. Multilinguals actively draw from intuition, perception, and imagination to co-construct meaning in lingua franca situations. Khubchandani (1997) argues that there is even an aesthetic dimension to meaning-making. There are other scholars who are reinstating the place of aesthetics in literacy (Blommaert, 2008; Hull & Nelson, 2009). Considering the reasons why writing lost its visual resources and was reduced to ideational content, Blommaert blames the Enlightenment: “Language ideologies emphasising denotational functions rather than others merged with broader rationalist ideologies about the privilege of ‘pure’ knowledge in subjectivity” (2008, p. 114). Autonomous literacy played no small part in connecting literacy to rational processes, devaluing the engagement of other senses.

**Performativity in Literacy**

Moving away from autonomous literacy models that connect literacy to rational processes, scholars in digital communication (Johnson-Eilola, 2004; Wysocki, 2004) have developed the observation that literacy is performative. Performance emphasizes that literacy practices are not about giving meaning to a preconstructed and preexisting text. Such practices are the text. The Internet has introduced new forms of textuality and brought out our capacity to read and write in performative ways. Nicotra (2009) uses multi-user tagging as an example to redefine writing as a co-constructed social activity. As I’ve argued elsewhere, writing is thus not about one person producing a text that contains its meaning, but many people constructing spaces for the co-formation of text and, thereby, collaborative meaning-making. A keener appreciation of the materiality and spatiality of writing emerges (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 129). Textual meaning does not reside solely in language or text, but in all the resources of the text and context. There is thus a strong sense of performativity, as the content is not given but co-constructed. The text is not itself constitutive of meaning but provides the resources for the construction of meaning. More importantly, the status of readers and writers gets redefined, as everyone is both a reader and a writer, sharing mutual responsibility in the construction of meaning. Invention and creativity are not left to a single writer but distributed, as multiple readers and writers invent the text. Nicotra (2009) takes pains to explain that these features of writing are not unique to multi-user tagging. They are present in all forms of writing, though perhaps hidden or suppressed by the ideology of autonomous literacy. She therefore argues for “a new metaphor for writing that encapsulates how writing emerges spatially from dynamic, collective subjectivities in a network” (as cited in Canagarajah, 2013, p. 129). The theorization of texts as spaces for the formation of text through the activity of different agents, objects, and ecological affordances also gives new meaning to Latour’s metaphor of “Ariadne’s thread” (1993, p. 121), which has been invoked by many recent scholars to explain literacy (Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009; Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Kell, 2009; Hull & Nelson, 2009). Texts not only participate in local ecologies; they are themselves ecological, constituted by diverse resources for meaning and structure. In this sense, the materiality of the text also needs qualification. Although a textual object exists,
it is not “autonomous” or independent. It is an affordance for meaning-making, in relation to other ecological resources.

**Redefining Literacy**

The multidisciplinary research on contact zone interactions thus far reviewed suggests a model of negotiated literacy for the third wave of NLS. This orientation perceives the text as co-constructed in time and space—with parity for readers and writers in shaping the meaning and form—and thus performed rather than predefined, making the multimodal and multisensory dimensions of the text fully functional and generative. The research literature further suggests that both native English speakers (NES, hereafter) and multilingual students may display competence for translingual communication, though both student groups can improve their proficiency through appropriate pedagogy and practice.

To consider how such a theoretical orientation toward negotiated literacy might be further refined and developed through enactment, following Tardy (2011), I designed an ethnographically informed teacher research project to investigate what an enactment of such an orientation might accomplish toward the goals of a) further refining a new theoretical orientation toward literacy as negotiation and b) imagining the contours of a pedagogy of negotiation. The next section describes the context of this teacher research project and then elaborates on four macro-level negotiation strategies that characterize literate acts in global contact zones.

**Method**

**Research Design**

Ethnographic perspectives shaped the study’s approach to teacher research. Teacher research enabled me to learn from students’ interaction styles and motivations to progressively refine my teaching practice (Nickoson, 2012; Ray, 1993). More importantly for the field, it enabled me to generate rich and contextualized data to understand post-secondary students’ literacy practices. Teacher research can be conducted through different methods, and I adopted ethnographic perspectives to inform my work. By using the phrase *ethnographic perspectives*, I indicate that I didn’t use ethnography as a full-fledged methodology (as in “doing ethnography”) or simply use its techniques (see Greene & Bloom, 1997, for an explanation of the differences between these three orientations). While some forms of teacher research have been criticized for treating students as deficient (Rhodes, 1997), ethnographic perspectives enabled me to adopt an emic orientation toward students’ own ways of practicing literacy without imposing unfair disciplinary constructs.

**Positionality**

While the roles of participant, teacher, and researcher are difficult to negotiate, they can also generate a useful synergy. As a participant in the literacy events in the classroom, I kept myself open to co-constructing meanings, as expected in negotiated literacy. Applied linguists have observed that certain insights into the negotiations of meaning among interlocutors in contact situations are only
available to insiders, eluding objective research (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Therefore, it was critical that I participated in the literacy events by responding to drafts and classroom discussions, considering myself a member of the classroom community. My negotiation of meaning with the students educated me on their translingual orientation and helped me arbitrate between differences in response. Thus my participant role facilitated my research.

My role as teacher did endow me with power, which I tried to use wisely to facilitate collaborative learning. I cannot call my teacher research participatory, because I did take the lead in framing the course. Given the dominant ideologies on what counts as good writing, I didn’t feel that the students were ready to frame the course in relation to the scholarship I had the advantage of reading. Since practices are often different from professed ideologies on literacy and language, I aimed to construct a congenial pedagogy in which such negotiation practices would emerge. My values and identity shaped the course in other ways as well: Students were directly exposed to my thinking on translingual literacy through my own literacy autobiography, in which I merged hybrid voices (Canagarajah, 2001), through a textbook I had written (Canagarajah, 2002), and through an article in which I analyzed code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2006). My experience as a multilingual speaker enabled me to provide feedback that encouraged code-meshing, and it is possible that students felt comfortable code-meshing because of my translingual performance of self in my own writing.

Though I admit that my pedagogy, identity, and writings may have influenced students to adopt translingual writing, my position is that pedagogy is not neutral. While teachers assuming autonomous literacy may influence students to adopt form-focused writing, dialogical pedagogies may facilitate alternate literacies. However, I strove to create sufficient diversity in readings and activities that students could explore different writing orientations. The texts by other scholars used in the course presented more conservative and normative positions. Furthermore, while there were affordances for translingual orientation, they were mediated by the dominant pedagogical discourses and institutional expectations regarding composition in an American public university. In retrospect, I find that my own teacher feedback sometimes reflected the dominant discourses on writing. For example, I sometimes challenged students when they deviated from native speaker norms or failed to make their meaning transparent. Students had to make their own decisions about how to write, negotiating the mix of affordances and constraints in the course. It is significant that only half of the 14 students in the class opted to code-mesh prominently.

I am not claiming that my research elicited spontaneous or intuitive responses. The very process of inquiry may well have enabled students to develop better-informed and better-articulated positions on what they were doing. Thus the research procedure and pedagogical practice fed into each other. Though this affects the objectivity of research, it is important in research on negotiated literacy for the researcher to simulate the role of an engaged participant in order to understand how such negotiation works. However, the naturalistic orientation deriving
from the ethnographic perspective guarded me from becoming too intrusive in the course. Having set up the assignments and activities for the whole semester, I didn’t intervene experimentally to change or add new tasks for research purposes. In this sense, students focused on the collaborative construction and negotiation of texts without too much distraction by research instruments. Since all the online interactions, interviews, and drafts were stored in the university network, I didn’t feel pressured to analyze the data rigorously during the course, but instead participated fully in the literacy activities and let the course play itself out.

Course Context
My course on teaching second-language writing was open to both advanced undergraduates and master’s degree students. I designed it in such a way that students could learn about teaching writing by writing (and reading, responding, and revising) themselves. The main requirement for the course was a serially drafted and peer-reviewed literacy autobiography (LA; see the syllabus and assignments in the Appendix, which can be found at www.ncte.org/journals/rte/issues/v48-1). The objective motivating this practice-based pedagogy was that students would develop a reflective awareness of writing as they wrote their pieces in relation to what was read and discussed. The course was computer-mediated and facilitated what Halasek (1999) would describe as a Bakhtinian dialogical pedagogy. The readings and writings emerged out of dialogue and dialectical interactions with students’ peers and the instructor. Students posted at least six drafts of their LA at various stages of development in a personal online folder. Their peers and the instructor were expected to read the drafts and post feedback in the author’s folder. The writers had opportunities to respond to the feedback, reflect on their writing challenges, and pose further questions in their weekly journal entries as they revised the draft for another review. The readings in the course were from three textbooks on second-language writing (Canagarajah, 2002; Casanave, 2003; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Learning from these textbooks was also collaborative, with classroom discussions and group activities complementing reflection, journaling, and writing online.

The Focal Genre: Literacy Autobiography
What are the implications of the prescribed writing genre, literacy autobiography, for enabling students to code-mesh? LA is a hybrid genre that straddles the personal and the academic. It can find expression through a personal narrative, reflective essay, creative nonfiction, or autoethnography, all terms I used in my course to clarify the genre. At the point of autoethnography, the genre can accommodate introspective research on one’s memory, archival research on one’s writing development, discourse analysis of one’s literate artifacts, and library research to interpret the ramifications of one’s literacy development (Chang, 2008). While most students started with a straightforward, first-person narrative, many were motivated to develop their drafts into thematically focused essays that accommodated research, theory, and citations. Students had the opportunity to position themselves at different points on this continuum, working within their level of comfort and capability. While the personal nature of LA sometimes made
students uncomfortable, it perhaps motivated them to experiment with ways to make the genre fit the academic context. Since students could not fall back on some of the strategies they had mastered for the established academic genres (such as the five-paragraph essay or research paper), they had to approach the writing process afresh. This motivated them to explore forms that suited their experiences and objectives. In fact, the reflexive nature of the genre may have invited code-meshing. When students narrated how their literacies were shaped by conflicting language backgrounds, it was understandable that they would consider the implications for voice in the LA essay. As I will show below, many students were mindful of the performative nature of this piece of writing. Despite its personal nature, LA does not hinder the transfer of writing skills to other academic genres. By accommodating the personal within the scholarly, LA can make students sensitive to the fact that all academic genres are literate arts of the contact zone, inviting a negotiation of different texts, codes, and voices with personal engagement.

Assessment
The reflective possibilities and performative dimensions of this writing activity were enhanced by my assessment procedure. In articulating the objectives behind this writing activity in the syllabus, I mentioned that “by narrating our own writing development, we can develop greater self-awareness about our literacy background . . . and complicate published research on writing development.” To facilitate such possibilities, the writing assignment was deeply integrated with the course resources and classroom ecology. The weekly journals provided opportunities for reflecting on students’ evolving narrative, writing challenges, and insights into their literacy trajectory. I turned the narratives into an exercise on meta-analysis, asking students to compare and contrast all of them for thematic and/or stylistic findings. I gave exercises that required the readings for the course to be interpreted in the light of students’ LA. Lastly, I asked them to write a final reflection on their writing experience, recording the language awareness, writing practices, and rhetorical strategies developed during the course.

The assessment criteria for the LA emphasized rhetorical considerations. Code-meshing was not a requirement. After all, form is related to one’s rhetorical objectives. Therefore, the assessment was designed to focus on such aspects as “narrowing down your subject, developing a trajectory, with a sound thesis statement; showing the significance of your biography to the field; creativity, engaging tone and style; and engaging with scholarly publications.” Far more than code-meshing in the final product, what was expected was the reflective awareness of writing and language that all students (regardless of whether they code-meshed) developed through the course. This was conveyed by the assessment guidelines for the course. In addition to the LA, the final grade included an observation report of classroom teaching and a portfolio. I asked that the portfolio contain a reflective cover essay that focused on the student’s learning trajectories and realizations. To facilitate this reflection, I also conducted mid-term and course-end online interviews. Thus, students had to look beyond producing a couple of textual artifacts and focus on their learning and writing trajectories. We might consider this a positive case of
washback—i.e., the assessment instruments shaping the learning process—to move students beyond form and product considerations.

**Data Generation and Interpretation**

The design of the course and assignments helped me gather multiple forms of data for a naturalistic study on classroom negotiation of writing. In addition to the serial drafts (identified below as D1, D2, etc.), students’ weekly journals (abbreviated as J), classroom activities (A), peer commentary (PC), and interviews (I) provided further insights into their attitudes to writing. To complement these forms of data, I adopted stimulated recall methods (SR; see Gass & Mackey, 2000) to ask students the reasons why they adopted certain strategies and choices in their writing. In the case of some students, I also had the chance to conduct a member check procedure (MC; see Carlson, 2010), soliciting their response to my interpretation of their strategies. These forms of data enabled me to triangulate my findings. I interpreted all the discursive data (i.e., students’ drafts, interview statements, surveys, journal entries, and teacher/student feedback) through qualitative coding and grounded theorization (Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I initially adopted open coding to identify the attitudes, beliefs, learning strategies, and communicative strategies of the students. Next, I adopted selective coding to focus closely on the negotiation strategies all course participants adopted in our literacy interactions. After highlighting the strategies at the micro-level, I adopted axial coding to compare these strategies and group them into broader categories. The labeling of the micro- and macro-level strategies was influenced by my awareness of other sociolinguistic studies. Researchers of contact languages have identified some of these strategies in their empirical research (Canagarajah, 2007; Firth, 1996; Khubchandani, 1997; Seidlhofer, 2004), though no one has formulated them into the four macro-level strategies presented here. The ethnographic information enabled me to add a temporal dimension to interpretation, considering how writers revised their strategies and displayed awareness in anticipating certain outcomes, and how readers responded to these strategies in successful or failed uptake. Theorization was, no doubt, recursive, as I interpreted the coded data while shuttling between relevant empirical studies, emergent theorization on translocal literacy, and classroom interactions.

**The Enactment: Negotiating Literacies through Four Macro-Level Strategies**

The macro-level strategies identified in students’ writing practice were envoicing, recontextualization, interactional, and entextualization strategies. My formulation reflects the central constructs in any communication—i.e., personal, contextual, social, and textual dimensions, respectively. These strategies’ relationship to each other in writing can be explained as follows: Envoicing strategies set the conditions for negotiation, since a consideration of voice motivates writers to decide the extent and nature of code-meshing; recontextualization strategies prepare the ground for negotiation; interactional strategies are adopted to co-construct meaning; and
entextualization strategies reveal the temporal and spatial shaping of the text to facilitate and respond to these negotiations. These four strategies are not air-tight compartments; they are interconnected and inform one another.

**Envoicing** describes the ways in which writers mesh semiotic resources for their identities and interests. All communication involves populating words with one’s intentions, as Bakhtin (1981) reminds us. This need is more urgent, and perhaps more risky, in the contact zones where people communicate across difference. Envoicing strategies also explain the attitudes and orientations that motivate writers to represent their voices.

**Recontextualization** strategies aim to frame the text according to the desired genre and communicative conventions and establish a suitable footing to negotiate meaning. Framing and footing—both coined by Goffman (1981)—are especially important in the contact zone, where no one can assume shared norms or values. Both activities reconfigure the context for effective and appropriate negotiation of the text. Recontextualization is ongoing, as interlocutors constantly monitor their interaction to adjust or recalibrate their framing and footing.

**Interactional** strategies are adopted by writers to facilitate the co-construction of meaning. Readers and writers align with each other in the fullest ecological context to produce meaning when they can’t assume shared language norms. These strategies are based on the assumption that there is a willingness to collaborate in achieving understanding despite differences. Failure of interactional strategies can lead to a lack of uptake of the writer’s language choices, resulting in misunderstanding or miscommunication.

Finally, **entextualization** refers to the ways in which writers manage text construction to facilitate voice and meaning. This strategy addresses how the temporal process of text construction shapes the spatial encoding of voice within and across drafts. In the context of this study, entextualization strategies are the means by which the serial drafts, feedback, and revisions both prepare and confirm readers’ interpretive activity in a forward-looking and backward-looking manner.

**Envoicing Strategies**

Students adopted diverse strategies for representing their voices in their writing. Though only seven students code-meshed in unconventional ways, the other seven featured more subtle forms of difference. Being sensitive to “difference in similarity” (Pennycook, 2010, p. 34) means acknowledging that the voices of the latter group could find realization in texts approximating SWE. Though I focus in this article on the seven students who did code-mesh extensively (namely, Buthainah and Fawzia [from Saudi Arabia], Rita and Chrsissie [USA], Mark [Canada], Kyoko [Japan], and Eunja [Korea]), the others also practiced negotiated literacy and benefitted from the translingual awareness facilitated by the pedagogical activities (namely, Tim, Christie, and Cissy [USA], Abdul [Saudi Arabia], Chang [Taiwan], Qin [China], and Nurdan [United Arab Emirates]).

The envoicing strategies ranged from bold to somewhat conservative options. Multilingual resources were meshed in different contexts and ways: in cultural
borrowings for religious practices, food, and family relationships (Kyoko, Rita, Mark, Eunja, Fawzia, Buthainah); in quotations from multilingual texts (Buthainah, Chrissie, Fawzia); and in narrative and dramatic interactions (Rita, Mark). Rita and Mark were more cautious than Buthainah in translating most of the French and Korean, respectively, which they used in authorial voice. A few adopted nonverbal codes for voice: Fawzia chose colored fonts, embedded images, and marginal text boxes to add to her semiotic resources. Buthainah used emoticons in her essay, and rationalized her use thus: “Symbols serve as another ‘language’ that words may not be the best tool to express” (SR). In some cases, the semiotic resources students used to cue different voices also served rhetorical purposes. Such were the different fonts or section dividers used to flag the shift of codes or voices (Buthainah, Rita, Fawzia, Mark). Buthainah used the following motif to divide her sections: ~⃣⃣⃣⃣~⃣⃣⃣⃣. She explained: “It is a familiar shape that one may find in Islamic art. Since I am a Muslim, and Islam influenced me, it also influenced my literacy experience. Thus, using this particular motif was a hint to the reader to my heritage” (MC).

What motivated these students to adopt such unconventional envoicing strategies? Many expressed a strong sense of ownership over their language and writing. In the first assignment, when I asked students to briefly describe their implicit “theory of writing,” some expressed a willingness to deviate from dominant norms to represent their identities. Fawzia wrote: “ESL students should never isolate their writing in English from their cultural beliefs. It is true that they should use the English standard of writing in terms of grammar, punctuation, organization, rhetoric, etc. However, that does not mean that they should use English cultural background in order to develop their ideas, they should stick to their identities and be proud to express themselves freely even if their culture is completely the opposite” (A, 9/9). Though Fawzia is committed to representing her identity, she envisions constructing a hybrid text that merges her cultural resources with English.

It was also evident that these students brought a performative orientation to their writing—in the sense that they preferred showing and doing rather than merely telling. Mark mentioned about one of his early drafts: “I have some big problems with it in terms of telling instead of showing” (J, 9/15). He wanted to bring out the messiness of learning Korean through trial and error, and wanted the reader to experience it. This concern was so absorbing that around the midterm, he started signing off his journal entries with “facta non verba.” When he accomplished this performativity in his later drafts by mixing Korean and English, he warned his peers: “My narrative should be a bit confusing because these experiences were confusing and contradictory and the reader should, perhaps, have to struggle through that to pull what they want from the narratives” (J, 12/8). For these students, then, code-meshing enacted their multilingual literacy development.

The students also treated language not just as a medium for rhetorical purposes, but as itself rhetorical. They used language to shape and even explore new dimensions of meaning. Some multilingual students were prepared to go as far as treating their deviations from SWE as metonymic of their difference. Consider
how Buthainah starts with an epigraph that also serves as the title for her essay. It is an Arabic proverb that is only translated in the second paragraph as “Who fears climbing the mountains—Lives forever between the holes”:

ومن يتهيب صعود الجبال — يعيش ابد الدهر بين الحفر

As I type each word in this literacy autobiography, storms of thoughts stampede to be considered and mentioned. Which experiences should I value, which shall I consider, and which should I ignore. My literacy situation is unique as only a few number of students in the department share the same status. As I click the keys on the keyboard, an illustration of my literacy development shunt me to continue my ongoing learning adventure from my academic communities, my home, and my life experiences. (D6)

In addition to the Arabic, the idiomatic and grammatical peculiarities pose challenges for reception (note “storms of thoughts stampede,” “a few number of students,” “my literacy development shunt me,” and the missing question mark). In her interviews with me, peer interactions, and classroom discussions, Buthainah justified these choices based on voice. For example, I pointed to the phrases above and raised the possibility of non-idiomacy from native-speaker perspectives. Buthainah replied: “Actually, I am surprised to hear that because . . . it provides the readers of a visual for what I felt at that time. I do not see why only bulls stampede—this verb can be used figuratively as well. I do not think that this is an issue of native speakers of English, I think that it is a stylistic choice” (SR). Buthainah was experimenting with new meanings for these phrases, enabled by her sense of agency in the language. In fact, she mildly chastised me for adopting a native-speaker perspective.

Though the uptake of these choices varied—i.e., while some students went further than me in appreciating the creative imagination behind these lines, a few remained unconvinced—it didn’t take long for course participants to figure out that Buthainah perceived these uses as contributing to her voice. Chrissie noted, “As a student at an American University, she knows that following the ‘rules’ of academic writing will get her far, but I think she does so with a sense of who she is” (PC, 10/28). The class gradually began to look beyond deviations of form to the rhetorical dimensions of meaning. Considering Fawzia’s deviations from SWE, Cissy said: “I wondered if that was just your writing, as an ESL student yourself or if there were some purposeful errors like the article that we read where the woman purposely wrote in her dialect at times” (PC, 11/05). Cissy referred to an article by Smitherman, which was analyzed for the author’s use of African American Vernacular English.

Reading norm deviations as envoicing wasn’t always easy. At times, it took some nudging, as we see in Buthainah’s refutation above. At other times, the ethos that emerged from essays confirmed to us that we have to respond to language choices differently. For example, Chang recognized that Buthainah always displayed a streak of using language agentively, and responded to her text accordingly:
She realized the power of a new language when she was young and her way of dealing with it was to study hard to have a share of it. Therefore, she had the motivation to learn any new word she came into, to grasp this knowledge of language and to use it independently as her own voice. (PC, 10/28)

Note his recognition of her agency and appreciation of her voice. However, envoicing wasn’t one-sided. I narrate below how writers modified the nature and extent of code-meshing in response to readers’ difficulties and reservations.

Recontextualization Strategies
What contributed most to the positive uptake of students’ envoicing strategies was their recontextualization strategies. Through these strategies, writers indicated that their essays were framed differently from SWE norms and autonomous literacy ideologies. Readers were encouraged to adopt a footing favorable for negotiated literacy. The more experimental writers were always concerned about the proper frame and footing that would enable readers to negotiate their envoicing strategies. This was a matter that demanded considerable attention in writers’ successive drafts.

Some writers, like Rita and Buthainah, initially shocked readers with novel openings and compelled them to reconfigure their footing and framing. By violating the stereotypical frame and habituated footing for academic genres, these writers sought to renegotiate more appropriate ones. For example, Buthainah’s refusal to translate her Arabic texts or correct her novel idiomatic and grammatical uses in her opening demonstrates that the author is not going to provide all the meanings. Readers have to work for them. Buthainah also framed her text as multilingual and multimodal, outside SWE norms. Rita started in medias res with a text from a children’s story that was read to her by her parents. By using different fonts, she indicated that this was not her voice but a text that represented important themes. Such unconventional and difficult openings constituted a “mysteriousness” that performed a defamiliarization. Readers were shaken out of their dependence on preconstructed interpretive frames as they began to engage with the text to build an appropriate footing.

As their essays progressed, Buthainah and Rita provided other clues to help readers reframe the text. After Rita introduces Alice’s dream to “make the world a beautiful place” (Cooney, 1985), she continues to use this leitmotif throughout the essay, rendered through other texts she has read and written, to convey her own quest. The leitmotif serves as a contextualization cue (Gumperz, 1982) to connect the montage of texts and events in Rita’s literacy development. Buthainah presents herself as a “functional bilingual” (which she defines as “language users who may have a few problems with English, but are beyond the realm of ESL” [D6]) in the second paragraph, and seeks a reading that goes beyond grammatical correctness and acknowledges her multilingual status. She thus seeks a different footing from the reader, beyond the native-speaker orientation. Both Rita and Buthainah also skillfully used fonts, stylization, spacing, and section dividers as contextualization cues to shape readers’ uptake of their code-meshing.
Other essays opened more gradually. Fawzia and Kyoko started with a personal introduction that unveiled their backgrounds and identities. When asked the reason for such an opening, Fawzia explained: “I would say that in order to understand my development fully, especially during my college years, one [would] need to understand the context where I came from” (J, 11/9). Christie mused about Kyoko’s opening: “I feel that your introduction helped me to focus on what was to come in your autobiography. . . . What made you decide to write your introduction? Was it to give your readers a sense of who you are as a writer before you began sharing your experiences?” (PC, 9/29). Christie’s comment shows not only uptake, but also the intuitive need for readers to receive an appropriate framing for translingual writing. Some writers preferred a formal opening that established an academic frame. When Mark heard about Arts Based Education Research (ABER), he called it a “breakthrough” and considered it as a possible frame for his essay (J, 10/26). From his fifth draft onward, he adopted this framing in the place of the earlier chronological opening:

I am using ABER “to make vivid certain qualities encountered by the researcher” (Eisner, 2008). Through my work I want to bring the reader with me to Korea in order to generate “new, and more interesting questions than the ones started with” (Eisner, 2008). The generation of new and interesting questions is the product of arts-based educational research. (D5)

This frame enabled him to justify the rhetorical hybridity and code-meshing in his essay for the scholarly community. In his later drafts, he was concerned about misalignments in footing. In his sixth draft, he used embedded comments to consult the readers: “I want to explore how I am positioning myself and others through the TEXT! But how to explain that?” (D6). He later realized that ABER helped him in this matter too, providing a footing that was open to experimentation.

As in Mark’s case, others also continued to revise and strengthen their framing as they worked on subsequent drafts. Recontextualization is not a one-sided process of writers dictating how they want to be read. It involves constantly monitoring their own footing with interlocutors and changing the framing accordingly. Writers have to recalibrate the text in response to ongoing negotiations. For example, Rita and Buthainah relented a bit and provided more direct orientations to readers in their final drafts. Both introduced a formal introduction and thesis statement after their “mysterious” openings. They also introduced a concluding paragraph that pulled all the narrative threads together and pointed to the scholarly implications. Similarly, Kyoko and Fawzia shifted from their personal voice and started their final drafts with a formal introduction that articulated their objectives in the essay. In her new opening, Kyoko highlighted her in-between position in English and Japanese discourses. This helped readers process her Japanese meshing and deviations from SWE as creativity. Though Fawzia maintained her earlier personal opening, she followed it up in the second paragraph with a formal statement of her in-between identity: “Being a Muslim woman who lived in an Islamic country and in a non-Islamic country has affected my life, my view of the world, and my
literacy. It resulted into a different identity from who I knew as a child” (D5). She also concluded her essay with a rounding off of her themes, drawing attention to the trajectory of her literacy development.

Recontextualization was often a focus of discussion in the ongoing classroom negotiations. There were comments embedded in the drafts of most writers, asking if their peers needed more cues for understanding their code-meshing. Buthainah, for example, explicitly asked her peers how much translation they needed for her Arabic texts (D3). After receiving conflicting responses (i.e., some asked her to translate the poems, and others not to), she used her own discretion in the end. She provided more clues for interpreting her Arabic in the early part of her essay and delayed the more challenging code-meshes for later. Similarly, in peer commentary to Fawzia, some advised her to provide a better framing for her multimodal writing. Mark offered ABER as a possibility after he noted:

I really liked the way you constructed your paper with multiple colors, texts, and sidebars. However I do want to know why you constructed it that way and how you are going to justify the construction. . . . I think your paper could be stronger if you pulled in other scholars who say that the way you write, with colors and more, is better in some ways that just a plane white essay. (PC, 11/5)

Students helped each other find better recontextualization strategies through their classroom negotiations. Rita’s use of different fonts to frame different voices in her autobiography provided a good example for others. Mark said in his journal: “The way some other students (maybe Rita or Chrissie?) used different fonts to really show different voices is something I’m going to try” (J, 10/26).

There is ample evidence that the writers succeeded in getting their peers to shift from habitual norms to a translingual framing and footing. Readers figured out that they had to read the essays differently if they were to decode the code-meshing and deviations from SWE. Tim observed of Buthainah’s “mysterious” opening:

By not translating you are excluding a wider audience, your non-Arabic speaking audience from being able to engage fully with the text. Perhaps you are challenging them to bridge that gap as readers. That if they want to gain access to your writing (to a piece of you, perhaps?) they have to meet you halfway somehow. (PC, 10/22)

Tim realizes from Buthainah’s agentive refusal to translate her Arabic that he has to step out of his comfort zone and meet her halfway if he is to interpret her writing. The gaps in the text that prevent him from engaging fully with the text compel him to move out of his own norms and expectations about how to read. This must be especially difficult for a native speaker who has come to expect academic essays to meet his norms and conventions of English. Tim is gradually moving to a footing consistent with negotiated literacy. He indexes his positionality by using they for readers who haven’t changed footing, while himself moving to a we position with the author.
Interactional Strategies

Recontextualization only prepares the ground for the negotiation of meaning. What strategies did writers adopt to encourage readers to co-construct meaning with them? This is where interactional strategies become important. The more experimental writers expected readers to adopt imaginative strategies to interpret the code-meshing without too much dependence on the writer. However, this requires careful negotiation. While writers were concerned that their strategies would gain uptake, they were also mindful of the harm too much help could cause. This would go against the performativity they expected and reduce the rhetorical force of their writing. Mark explained this tension well in a midterm review of his work-in-progress: “I need to see if it brings the reader into Korea vividly without alienating the reader so much that s/he can’t engage with the work” (A, 11/21).

The answer Mark and others discovered was alignment. As applied linguists have demonstrated, when multilinguals cannot rely on a shared language or grammatical norms, they align participants, contexts, objects, and diverse multimodal semiotic cues to generate meaning (Khubchandani, 1997; Canagarajah, 2007). This calls for sensitivity to the multimodal construction of the text and a multisensory response. While writers gave sufficient multimodal cues for interpretation, readers had to align them in the fullest “microecology of the text” (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) to perform rich semiotic readings. Successful alignment was amply evident from peer feedback. Consider how Chang commented on Rita’s use of fonts to code different voices: “Hi, Rita, I noticed that you used different fonts and italics in your autobiography. I was confused at first. Then I had an assumption about why you did this. . . . [He provides his interpretation.] If my speculation is correct, then I have to tell you that I really enjoyed this cross-time/space style of narrative of yours” (PC, 10/15). Similarly, Rita found Fawzia’s multimodal resources helpful to decode her Arabic. She said: “Fawzia, You write so beautifully and with such awareness of your audience! Every time I wasn’t quite sure what was going on, there was a footnote, some colorful text, or [a] quote in a sidebar that offered more information” (PC, 11/5).

Buthainah’s meshings from Arabic without translations or paraphrases invited imaginative alignment. When I queried her on her reasons for not providing help, Buthainah said: “I thought that if I kept it in Arabic, the reader would be eager to continue to reading to get to the meaning of this poem” (SR). It appears that she wanted to pressure the reader to keep reading and looking for alignment. As Ratcliffe (1999) would argue, negotiated literacy involves reading “not for intent, but with intent” (p. 205). Readers were prepared to adopt this orientation in places where translations were denied. Mark (a native English speaker) said,

To me, a non-Arabic speaker, this quote is a beautiful collection of alien writing, fascinating but incomprehensible. It is a statement to me that there is something Buthainah understands that I do not. It is a move that distances me from Buthainah but also leaves me intrigued and interested in reading more. (PC, 10/28)
The paradoxes are telling. For Mark, the alienation is beautiful, the incomprehensibility fascinating, and the intrigue interesting. In other words, the incomprehensibility and alienation pressure Mark to keep reading further.

As readers moved on to new practices of interpretation, they also adopted a multisensory orientation to meaning. It was not literal meaning alone that they were after. In Mark’s statement above, there are clues to one form of meaning he had already started making. His statement that the Arabic text is “beautiful” appears to be a response to the script at the purely visual and aesthetic level. Since communication is multimodal for Buthainah (as evident from her earlier statement on nonverbal semiotic resources), an aesthetic appreciation of the lines was part of her expected response. Even those who could not understand the literal meaning of Arabic could respond to the visual effect of the lines.

Some responded to the orality of the texts. Chang adopted an auditory reading:

> When I was reading your autobiography, it felt like you were talking directly to me in person. Things like “Dear reader,”’ emoticons, textual facial expressions (I don’t remember the terms), “thank god,” italics that emphasize your tones . . . all make your story flow vividly into my ears. Well . . . maybe more like I was talking to you on [an instant messaging service] since it’s all text. (PC, 10/22)

Chang was able to hear Buthainah speaking to him through her direct address, conversational expressions, and even her emoticons. To facilitate this type of reading, he adopted interpretive strategies he had developed on Internet chat forums, as evident in his last line. Fawzia even adopted a gustatory response to Rita’s meshing:

> “The quote that you put in the second page made me hungry—I am glad that I am reading your [LA] after Ramadan :)” (PC, 10/15). Christie responded to the materiality of Fawzia’s text: “The pictures, the way that the ‘paper’ looked. I think it helps give me a better sense of you as a writer, and the fact that you like to incorporate colors in everything that you do. Plain pieces of paper definitely would not fit! :o)” (PC, 11/5). Christie went on to adopt a metonymic interpretation and treated the semiotics of the page as Fawzia’s identity.

Such interactional strategies also accomplished some performative meanings. In further explaining her reasons for not translating the Arabic text, Buthainah said her intention was “giving a sample or a taste of the experience that language learners go through to those who never experienced it, which may help them understand these stories and experiences better” (MC). She wanted reluctant readers, especially native speakers, to go through the experience of being disadvantaged by an alien code and humbled into negotiating for meaning. Through this process, she also forced the adoption of strategies multilinguals use in contact situations. This involved an interesting renegotiation of power. Native speakers found themselves constructing meaning with multilingual writers on equal footing, without the condescending view that multilinguals are deficient. Recall Mark’s observation that “there is something Buthainah understands that I do not” and Tim’s realignment to meet her “halfway.” They recognized that multilinguals had access to a level of meaning they didn’t, and adjusted their footing accordingly.
Not everything in translingual writing can be expected to be clear or uniformly understood. There were times when readers’ alignment didn’t produce shared meanings. Ratcliffe (1999, p. 207) argues, “Although rhetorical listening does not guarantee that everyone will concur about definitions, intersections, and applications of the political and the ethical, it does guarantee that such considerations will be at the forefront of meaning-making. This is an ongoing process.” Similarly, the students were not anxious about making the same meaning all the time in all contexts. They shared the view of translingual writing as situational and open to intersubjective construction. About Buthainah’s fourth draft, Mark observed:

Buthainah starts her essay with a quote in both English and Arabic. There’s several ways to interpret this and very importantly readers who understand Arabic and those who do not will understand the start of this move differently and Buthainah may be making different meta-statements to different groups. . . . To Arabic speakers this quote could be an act of solidarity, an appropriative move perhaps bringing in an common quote and transforming it into something more. (PC, 10/22)

Though Mark was open to the diversity of meanings, he also assumed that to each set of interlocutors, Buthainah’s lines would mean something specific. That is, the co-constructed meaning is not indeterminate. Interlocutors co-construct a meaning that is sufficient for their purposes in spatiotemporal context.

As interpretation is ongoing, readers also looked for larger situational and social cues for alignment, in addition to clues from the ecology of the text. Writers assumed that their contributions in classroom interactions, interviews, and peer critique were part of the negotiation of meaning. For example, after raising some questions about Buthainah’s untranslated verse, Tim wrote, “I think discussing this with you and hearing your thoughts would be more helpful. Hopefully we can do this on Wednesday” (PC, 10/27). Tim was counting on a face-to-face conversation to unpack the meaning of the Arabic. Rita also said, “I trusted my classmates to explain what was important” (I, 5/9), when I asked how she dealt with the untranslated Arabic. In her case, Rita was also counting on others in the class to help her. Though Buthainah was prepared to engage in these conversations, and answered many such queries in the electronic forum and in the classroom, she refused to translate her Arabic verse in the text (as proven by its presence in the final draft). It appears that Buthainah was satisfied with these social interactions for unpacking the meaning of this verse.

A strong temporal dimension to the meaning constructed through these negotiations also emerged. The synchronized trajectory of negotiation and collaboration is important for the meaning constructed. The reader’s erroneous attempts at meaning-making are factored into this interpretive process. There is a performative dimension here as well, as readers are taken through the hermeneutical cycle through inferences, revisions, and reconstructions. When readers engage serially with code-meshed texts at different times, they will come to different understandings. Christie changed her opinion dramatically on the place of
Arabic quotations in Buthainah’s drafts. In her peer review, she wrote: “Although, last week I wrote that she explain her Arabic poems, I now feel that they are a key part to her narrative. She is indirectly showing us, the reader, who she is through these poems. . . . Perhaps it is up to us to figure out the significance of these words?” (PC, 10/27). After repeated readings, and a revised understanding of Buthainah’s strategy, Christie developed a richer interpretation. She gained new insights into Buthainah’s ethos, merged the author’s identity and literacy trajectory, and factored in the feelings associated with reversing the reader/writer roles and power relationships. From this perspective, meaning is progressive and emergent in negotiated literacy. More important than capturing paraphrasable content is the route readers/writers take in negotiating meaning. The where matters as much as the what. At a broader level, this interpretive process also explains the theorization of writing as the construction of spaces for the co-construction of text.

**Entextualization Strategies**

To facilitate such alignment, writers took care to situate their semiotic resources in appropriate contexts in the microecology of the text. There was a spatiotemporal dimension to this strategy, as writers took into account the reading process to provide appropriate clues in relevant places. Entextualization strategies involve a shaping of the text in response to the ongoing negotiations. In some essays, writers introduced their choices gradually in order to ease readers into code-meshing. In others, writers were more demanding, expecting attention to detail.

Consider one of the earliest cases of code-meshing in Mark’s narrative:

The teacher clutched herself and slowly said “nalshiga aju chewuyo.” I stared at her knowing that I had a pained expression on my face and will myself to understand her. “Nalshiga aju chewuyo” she repeated and this time she shivered as well. I stared at her blankly feeling a growing headache come upon me. (D6)

Note how Mark included details on the gesture of the teacher to give clues as to the meaning of the Korean phrase (that the weather is cold). There was also a temporal strategy here. Leaving the first occurrence of the phrase unclear served Mark’s performative objective of simulating the struggle for meaning. In an interaction described later in the text, note how Mark located Korean greetings to help readers interpret their meaning without translation:

“Michael San, Oraeganman eya!” Tatsuya perked up when he saw me walk in to Hard Rock, it looked like he was drinking alone, not all that uncommon for either of us. “Uhhh, Oraeganman Tatsuya. Chal chinae?” I knew he’d say he was fine even through he was worried about his job, worried about staying in Korea, and generally just a bit worried. I met Tatsuya when I was the English teacher and he was the Japanese teacher at Sasee Language Institute and he was almost too nice a guy to be a teacher.

“Chal chinae. Maekju mashilae?” (D6)
“Oraeganman” and “Chal chinae” gain indexicality in context. Through the repetition in the interaction, the reader could guess that both terms are part of greeting routines. It is also clear from Mark’s sentence after the first use of “chal chinae” that it refers to “doing fine.” Here, again, the location generates curiosity and makes the reader peruse the textual ecology for more clues.

Entextualization extended beyond the domain of the single text to encompass negotiations between and across drafts. As a result, students’ code-meshing increased in strength as their revisions and drafting progressed. Writers generally started with a chronological narrative structure with little or no code-meshing. It was around the middle of the semester, in the third or fourth draft, that they focused on a thesis, engaged in code-meshing, and developed their themes through a montage of time, space, and texts. The feedback from readers and the successful uptake motivated many to adopt bolder strategies. In another sense, the revision process prepared the readers for more code-meshing. Through the back and forth accompanying the revisions, the students created a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that shared certain semiotic resources, textual conventions, and interpretive strategies to engage in negotiated literacy. About the collaborative writing process, Rita stated:

They suggested parts of my development that they wanted to hear more about, and that helped me know what to include more of. They were encouraging of my structure and style, even though I was a bit anxious about that since it was different from what others had done before me. They also helped me with language and tone, giving me suggestions about what sounded confusing or said things I didn’t mean. (A, 12/06)

Thus writers recalibrated their texts according to feedback.

Though Buthainah boldly refused or delayed help in the examples we saw earlier, demanding more from her readers, in other instances of code-meshing she controlled the range of codes in her successive drafts, waiting for the capacity of the audience to progressively increase. In the first draft, for example, Buthainah did not code-mesh at all. Her essay was a straightforward narrative in English. The only indications of code-meshing were two smiley faces. She showed the first signs of linguistic experimentation in the second draft, beginning: “‘Oh God! Give me more knowledge’—My education dictum through the years is a verse in the Quran stating: ‘واللّه ﷺ رحمت سُنَّة’ (D2). Buthainah began with the English translation first and gave the Arabic original next. In her later drafts, she began with the Arabic quotation and delayed the translation (as we saw earlier). Even in her fourth draft, she wrote “Thank Allah” and not “ma sha allah,” but used solely the Arabic expression in later drafts. Through this entextualization strategy, Buthainah was preparing readers for more complex code-meshing in subsequent drafts. Such strategies also qualified her agency in writing. She was aware of the dominant norms and conventions in American academic contexts and was deploying her envoking strategies cautiously to suit her audience.

Some writers reduced the mysteriousness of their opening and framed it more gradually. Writers thus adopted a dynamic entextualization strategy of challeng-
ing readers to step out of their comfort zone, offering more help, and/or reducing the difficulty. The classroom negotiations helped them anticipate and respond to uptake, and adopt measures that were more calculated and better calibrated for the context. Their entextualization sought the right balance between voice and norms, agency and constraint, intention and uptake, which turned out to be more or less experimental according to each writer’s preference.

**Literacy as Negotiation**

If, as I assert, the scholarship on contact zone interactions suggests the need for a model of negotiated literacy in which the text is co-constructed in time and space—with parity for readers and writers in shaping the meaning and form—and thus performed rather than predefined, making the multimodal and multisensory dimensions of the text fully functional and generative, then the analysis of my students’ LA data above helps to further delineate what is entailed by such a scholarly shift within NLS.

Negotiated literacy accentuates the possibilities in social literacy scholarship to situate texts in time and space with full appreciation of their mobile, multimodal, and ecological nature. In this sense, it is an elaboration of certain assumptions of NLS. It is also vernacular and everyday in the sense that such production and reception strategies are developed by people through their socialization in contact zone encounters, evidenced, for example, by choices of how much non-English text to use in the literacy autobiography and how to interpret it.

However, the model offers a different orientation to the constructs of literacy practice and event, as discussed by Street (1984) and Heath (1983), respectively. Practice has been hitherto treated as routinized sets of activities relating to specific forms of literacies in specific bounded communities. These data suggest that the practices involved in negotiated literacy are of a different order. Rather than being routinized, they are more exploratory. Rather than being sedimented by the history and culture of local literacies, they are more heuristic in negotiating difference in the contact zone. Witness, for example, how my subjects interpret code-meshing through trial and error by aligning diverse ecological resources.

While the practices of NLS are defined as socially integrated and structured, the practices of negotiated literacy are micro-social. To adopt Schatzki’s (1996) metaphor, we can consider the NLS notion of practice as integrative, and that of negotiated literacy as dispersed. However, Schatzki clarifies that the more exploratory dispersed practices are not disconnected from the sedimented and established integrative practices. The latter come into being through the former. For example, the variation of fonts, used as a contextualization cue by Rita, became a shared resource for others over time.

Negotiated literacy also brings a slightly different orientation to the literacy event. Whereas earlier NLS schools defined literacy events as part of bounded communities with texts well embedded into their regularized social, cultural, and communicative life, the event in negotiated literacy is more exploratory because it constructs smaller and more tentative communities of practice around the texts ne-
The classroom setting of my writing class was such a tentative, temporally transient micro-community. It is easy to imagine similar configurations in other contexts. Micro-level literacy events of this negotiated nature are not disconnected from more regularized literacy events. Rather, it is such exploratory events of the contact zone that lead to more conventional social and communicative events that are then sedimented through repetitive social practice.\(^3\)

I don’t consider negotiated literacy as introducing new practices in the context of recent globalization, but rather as articulating practices that have historically emerged (e.g., Cushman, 2011). Ethnic rhetorical scholarship demonstrates well how people negotiated literacies in precolonial contact zones. The research of Baca (2009) among the Tlaquilolitzli in Mexico and de Souza (2002) among the Kashinawá in Brazil has revealed how diverse semiotic resources, such as hieroglyphs and icons, shaped meaning in relation to local ecologies. In traditional Chinese and Indian rhetoric, it was not the what but the where that was important, as interlocutors co-constructed texts without aiming to paraphrase meaning into a product (Khubchandani, 1997; Mao, 2010). Such literacies are not new to the West either, as Ratcliffe (1999) suggests based on the rhetorical practices before modernity. However, they do require a new orientation to the teaching of writing.

**Pedagogy as Negotiation**

When teachers conceptualize their work as involving literacy negotiations in the global contact zones, some of the perennial questions become irrelevant. For example: How does one read code-meshed texts? Would deviations from dominant language norms and writing conventions affect communicative success and rhetorical effectiveness? These questions only make sense if one refuses to negotiate with writers and their texts. For those who actively engage in negotiating meaning, form and content are what they mutually make of them in their situated interaction. Without adopting a negotiated literacy, it is not possible to interpret meanings appropriately in a code-meshed text, or appreciate its rhetoric, logic, or grammar. When defining communicative success as collaboratively achieved, both interlocutors should be held responsible for any failure. Furthermore, the socially embedded and ecologically situated nature of the text opens it up for nonverbal affordances. Meanings are generated by the interplay of participants, objects, spatiotemporal contexts, and the ecology of semiotic resources, not words in isolation. More importantly, what negotiated literacy guarantees is not mastery or uniformity of meaning but a “willingness” to engage with each other in “ongoing” meaning-making (Ratcliffe, 1999, p. 204).

Just as negotiated literacy requires a different kind of reading, it also requires a different kind of writing. I have identified four strategies writers adopt, which are confirmed by multilingual research as typical of contact zone communication—i.e., envoicing, recontextualization, interactional, and entextualization strategies. I am not proposing that we teach these strategies to our students. I favor awareness-building that does not stifle the development of these strategies in students’ own terms. The realization of these strategies will differ according to writers’
backgrounds, rhetorical situations, and specific interlocutors. What I propose is a conducive pedagogical environment that will allow students to bring these strategies from contact zones outside the classroom. This approach will enable teachers to learn from the strategies students themselves employ in translingual communication. It is more important, therefore, to focus on developing language awareness, rhetorical sensibility, and writing practices that students can build on for translingual literacy.

The narrative above shows evidence of such awareness development. Students learned to interpret words in their fullest semiotic and ecological contexts, treating language as a set of mobile resources that gain indexicality in changing spatiotemporal scales, and becoming adept at translingual practice. They became sensitive to performative and metonymic meanings, treating grammar as rhetoric, and discovered their own rhetorical strengths and preferences as they adopted different strategies for voice. They learned to manipulate the microecology of the text to mesh their codes in appropriate spatiotemporal locations, building greater focus and coherence through the collaborative and serial writing process. More importantly, they showed remarkable reflexivity to identify their own trajectories of metacognitive awareness. Their portfolios conveyed their observations on how pedagogical resources enabled such development.

As I envisioned, the assessment procedure facilitated positive washback and encouraged students to focus on their metacognitive awareness. But how can teachers assess a writing course on awareness development? Since the objectives of the LA and the course highlighted the practice-based dimensions of developing writing strategies and awarenesses, I assessed students on the quality of awareness, extent of reflexivity, and trajectories of learning displayed, and not on products alone. Through the journals, drafts, peer feedback, and end-of-semester surveys and portfolio, I had the opportunity to see how students grew in the awarenesses required for translingual writing. While some students (especially native speakers like Cissy and Tim) produced well-edited final products, they failed to display sufficient reflective awareness or striking learning trajectories. On the other hand, multilingual students like Kyoko failed to achieve advanced control over grammar, but displayed a promising learning trajectory that assured further development. Kyoko began the course feeling “like being in the middle of nowhere when I write in English” (A, 9/8), a phrase she often repeated about her in-between status in languages. However, in the context of teacher and peer feedback, she began to engage more with writing. She went on to identify a hybrid position for herself that merged her Japanese resources with English, which she called a “transposition” approach, borrowing a metaphor from one of the textbooks (J, 10/29). Her LA concluded: “Perhaps, I am in the middle of the shifting process of thinking in English from personal to objective, or from emotional to logical. And I don’t know how long it will take for me to master it” (D6). The shift from “middle of nowhere” to “middle of a shifting process” is telling. She not only developed clarity about her trajectory, but composed a layered text that merged different discourses. Though she herself acknowledged that her mastery was not complete, I gave her credit for
finding her footing in the conflicting discourses, charting her own trajectory for voice, and displaying reflexivity on her evolving awareness.

Assessment of reflective awareness as displayed in the portfolio was subjective. However, my ongoing feedback through the semester in commentary on drafts, responses to journals, and interactions in conferences and online forums served as formative assessment. It fed into the statements of students in their final self-assessment as they reflected on their trajectories and identified what they needed to learn more about. I admit that I, myself, was developing my bearings on translanguaging through the course. Together with the students, and in response to their writing and reflection, I developed a situated awareness of possibilities in literacy. I thus developed course-internal norms for assessing competence, based on the expectations, preferences, and trajectories of each student. Though I initially didn’t have the confidence to critique the students, as I didn’t know if I was appropriating their texts, the dialogical approach helped me provide feedback and assessment without being impositional. It is evident that I sometimes reflected the biases of autonomous literacy and SWE norms (which students like Buthainah were quick to criticize).

This bias is not surprising. As a teacher expected to uphold the established norms of writing and a scholar trained in those conventions, it was not easy for me to free myself from dominant literacies and pedagogical practices. However, as I adopted the role of a facilitator of negotiations, both the students and I were able to develop a critical understanding of writing. Teaching and assessment, like writing, became a case of negotiation—i.e., learning to find the right balance between authorial intentions and community expectations, writers’ voices and readers’ uptake, writerly designs and audience collaboration. In this sense, negotiation is not just good literacy; it is good pedagogy.

NOTES
1. The section headers are used for ease of organization. They are not meant to compartmentalize the strategies, which are inter-connected. Since negotiation is dynamic, I refer to parallel strategies while I focus on each. Note also that the typographical errors in the data are explained by the fact that some interviews were conducted electronically. Students’ statements are presented unedited.
2. All names are pseudonyms, and consent was obtained for presenting the data following IRB approval.
3. See Pennycook, 2010 on how local language practices congeal into genres and grammars through sedimentation.

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