Journal of Multicultural Discourses

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmmd20

Language diversity in academic writing: toward decolonizing scholarly publishing

Suresh Canagarajah

To cite this article: Suresh Canagarajah (2022): Language diversity in academic writing: toward decolonizing scholarly publishing, Journal of Multicultural Discourses, DOI: 10.1080/17447143.2022.2063873

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2022.2063873

Published online: 18 Apr 2022.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rmmd20

JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURAL DISCOURSES
https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2022.2063873

Language diversity in academic writing: toward decolonizing scholarly publishing

Suresh Canagarajah

Departments of Applied Linguistics and English, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, USA

ABSTRACT

This article draws from scalar theory to examine how textual diversification can engage with linguistic and social structures to both pluralize academic writing and facilitate an alternate structuration of publishing policies and practices. It adopts indexical analysis to demonstrate how non-normative linguistic choices can gain uptake for meanings and status in academic communication, leading to the rescaling of vernacular resources in global publishing contexts. The author illustrates from his own academic publishing to demonstrate how he engaged with the different communicative contexts and changing geopolitical and epistemological conditions to introduce his heritage languages and literacy practices towards decolonizing academic writing. The article demonstrates the possibility of paradoxical outcomes such as the following: it is possible to have norms and also variation at the same time; structure and change can be simultaneous; the diverse spaces between the macro and micro might allow for different representational possibilities; and the rhizomatic and layered social, spatial and temporal scales mediate structures and agency for new alternatives.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 26 January 2022
Accepted 5 April 2022

KEYWORDS
Decolonization; academic writing; publishing; indexicality; scalar theory; multilingualism

1. Introduction

While there is a heightened concern about decolonizing epistemologies with the rise of scholarship and activism relating to the Global South, indigeneity, anti-racism, and neo-liberalism, an area that needs more attention is academic publishing. One might argue that academic publishing plays a critical role in epistemic transformation through its role of gate-keeping knowledge. Without transforming the conventions and practices of academic publishing, it is difficult to change knowledge paradigms. Diversifying knowledge paradigms must contend with the dominant epistemological and cultural discourses that inform the conventions of academic writing and publishing. This mission is central to the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, whose aim is to diversify the cultural discourses shaping and representing society and scholarship. Dominant publishing conventions are informed by modernist values of objectivity, detachment, and rationality, and the role of English as an academic lingua franca. Trying to represent alternate epistemologies through existing conventions might end up distorting or compromising one's critical edge. The dominant discourses and practices will mediate and constrain the knowledge

CONTACT Suresh Canagarajah asc16@psu.edu

© 2022 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

represented in diverse ways. The limitations of representing critical research without exploring alternate writing/publishing practices have been widely discussed for some time (see Canagarajah 1996).

However, advances in diversifying academic writing and publishing have been hampered by a stultifying theoretical position on the constraining role of dominant institutional, policy, and discourse structures. Progressive scholars have argued that alternate discourse and writing practices are bound to fail when dominant publishing policies and norms are not changed first. They situate publishing policies in broader geopolitical structures such as colonization and neoliberalism and hold that any attempt at diversification might be resisted or appropriated by such forces for their own profit making and ulterior motivations. For example, Heng Hartse and Kubota (2014) have argued that since editing practices are conservative, the efforts of multilingual scholars engaged in diversifying writing are predisposed to fail. Similarly, Kubota (2016) has critiqued any efforts on textual diversity as illusory as they can be appropriated by the dominant ideological and market conditions, leading simply to the selfish gains of diversity proponents rather than resulting in any structural changes that benefit minoritized scholars. Other progressive scholars also caution against promoting linguistic and discoursal changes without policy and structural changes (see also Flores 2013; Block 2018).

Writing professionals recommend the same caution by focusing on structures at the level of grammatical norms. These scholars of second language writing pedagogies adopt the position that grammatical and discoursal norms cannot be violated in academic writing, as they constitute the established register for this discourse (Gevers 2018; Matsuda 2014). Encouraging multilingual students or scholars toward grammatical diversity is treated as harmful to them. These scholars hold that multilingual students and scholars should be trained on the dominant grammatical and genre norms so that they will succeed in educational institutions. They consider any attempts at encouraging diversification at the grammatical and discoursal level as 'a disservice' to multilingual scholars (Ruecker 2014, 116). They treat even cautious attempts at hybridizing the text through qualified uses of non-English resources for voice, as in African American scholar Young's (2004) approach of codemeshing, as misguided.

In this paper, I argue that while the concern of the above-mentioned scholars about taking established structures seriously is valid, what is problematic is the way we understand 'structures' – whether social, institutional, grammatical, or discoursal. These debates adopt somewhat static, monolithic, and deterministic positions on structures because we haven't developed a robust conceptual method (and language) to talk about the complex ways in which structure and change work together. As the term 'structuration' by Anthony Giddens (1984) suggests, there is a dynamic relationship between structures and agency, institutionalization of norms and diverse everyday practices, and the abstract macro and messy micro, with both mediating and shaping each other. A more complex orientation to structures would suggest that both structuration and change are always ongoing, and that social and discoursal negotiations at the local level have profound implications for structures and norms. Furthermore, though academic debates often get framed in such binary ways as structure and agency, other models provide more complex orientations to demonstrate the workings of power as rhizomatic, nonlinear, and multidirectional, accommodating diverse material and representational resources – as in Foucault's (1980) notion of *dispositif*. More complex perspectives on power might give spaces for multilingual scholars to intervene in strategic ways for changes in academic writing and publishing. I introduce scalar theory to give us conceptual tools to explore these processes. I then outline analytical tools from indexicality studies to trace my own academic writing over my professional career. I illustrate how my texts have navigated publishing norms and policies to progressively diversify my own writing in the service of decolonizing knowledge.

2. Conceptual orientation

Scalar theories from political economy and human geography (Lempert 2012; Canagarajah and De Costa 2016) introduce a conceptual orientation that will help us analyze the dynamic relationship between structure and change in writing and communicative norms. We can understand scalar approaches as related to the scales we might adopt in maps to orientate to space. I can zoom in on my house and even see my driveway and car. But if I zoom out to see my town, I won't see my house. If I zoom out to an even wider scale to the nation-state, I won't also see my town. It is not that my driveway or town don't exist anymore. They become visible only in relation to the scale I adopt for perspective. While the wider scale presents the whole country neatly in terms of its external border, it will leave out the messy diversity within this geographical domain. It is also abstract and impersonal, and may not show the social activity and mobility that a live video might present at the street level in my town.

Scalar analysis thus treats spatial, temporal, or social domains as layered, diverse, changing, and relational. Let me explain:

Layered: every domain is made up of diverse constituting features at both horizontal and vertical levels. That is, a community features overlapping other communities at the horizontal level. It is also made up of gender, class, and race differences, with status differences that constitute that community, at the vertical level.

Diverse: every domain is thus made up of multiple constituents that might not be visible at the global or structural scale.

Changing: every domain is going through changes (including unpredictable mobility) at the moment by moment level, though global scales have to freeze them for perspective.

Relational: the status and value of each constituting feature of a domain depend on what it comes into relationship with. What is 'local' from one scale might be 'global' from another scale. My region of Happy Valley is global in relation to my small university town, but totally unknown and local in relation to the even wider scale of the country. There are thus status differences between the components making up every domain.

Negotiable: these status differences are negotiable because we realize that each domain is layered with overlapping components and feature unpredictable mobility at the local levels. While the change at the local level has implications for changing the character of the macrolevel structures, people can also engage with the layered and diverse components to initiate changes. What we need to realize is that scalar and status differences are not *ontological*. That is, they don't describe a 'natural' or primordial state of affairs in society, space, or time. Scale differences are epistemological and ideological. They are a way of interpreting and perceiving the world. For that reason, scales are always in contestation, as powerful groups might prefer that everyone adopts the status ascribed from their own scale of relations. Scholars call this 'scale jumping' (Blommaert 2010, 12). That is, the powerful enforce the claim that their 'local' values and practices are the universal norm. However, all people are 'scale makers' (Caglar and Glick Schiller 2011, 12) in that they can negotiate the categories of interpretation and understanding to shift things towards more inclusive or resistant perspectives. We will discuss later how the powerless might strategically renegotiate the socially established norms for their own purposes.

Let me now provide some historical examples to clarify the relevance of scalar analysis. Historian Fernand Braudel's construct of multiple time-spans and their effects has been of considerable influence in historical analysis, emphasizing the importance of broad social structures spanning long periods of history and their impact upon everyday life – and vice versa. He identified, in particular, three broad times or 'durations': i.e. firstly, that of the *longue durée* (a history of long-term, slow change with recurring cycles that might represent the systemic structures of long-term human history); secondly, the *histoire sociale* or '*histoire conjuncturelle*', a time of 'slow but perceptible rhythms … one could call it social history, the history of groups and groupings' (Braudel 1984, I, 20); and thirdly, the '*histoire événémentielle*',or episodic history, the short time span or history of events in the daily lives of individuals and places. History is made of all these different dimensions working at the same time. Activities in these three scales mediate each other, and influence the shape of the other. We might say that the *longue durée* is a sedimentation of the activities in episodic history. While common sense might suggest that it is the global structures that shape daily lives of individuals, we cannot rule out how localized momentary happenings change history. Those in complexity theory adopt the term 'butterfly effect' to hold that small changes in initial conditions can lead to large-scale and unpredictable variation in the future state of the system (Cilliers 2010). Note also that these three are not the only time scales available for our understanding of events. The neurological time of nanoseconds of our consciousness also needs to be factored in, in addition to many other intermediate scales.

Let me now illustrate how this perspective will make a difference in our study of language and literacy. Recall that Latin was once the lingua franca of scholarly discourse, perhaps till the sixteenth century. English was a rustic vernacular that was not even used for courtly life during the Norman rule of England in the eleventh century. There are many social, geopolitical, and ideological developments that explain how English gradually became the global and academic lingua franca afterwards. We should consider the changes in relation to developments at the level of *histoire sociale* – such as the rise of nationalism, nation-state formation, and the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire. Though many people cannot imagine a context where English can ever be displaced as the language of academia, as they have seen its power on display for more than 500 years, a *longue durée* perspective will reveal other languages that held that status in the past, such as Sanskrit and Latin. While this *longue durée* perspective is useful to demystify the power of English as permanent, it occludes the agentive acts of individual writers in facilitating the gradual rise of English. Imagine what it would have taken for writers at the cusp of these changes to adopt English (a vernacular) when Latin was the normative intellectual language. It would have taken courage for them to deviate from the norm, as the vernacular's reception would have been uncertain. Alternate writing would have been risky, with some suffering dire consequences for their knowledge, professional status, and perhaps economic survival. However, some scholars did take the bold step of writing in the vernacular and succeeded. If they didn't take the risk, there would have been no changes in the language norm. However, what gradual processes were involved at the micro social level and how long it took till English became the incontrovertible academic lingua franca is difficult for us to analyze. The stages were so localized, multiple, and gradual that we don't have the necessary data to study it. Who has access to the neurological life of writers to externalize the moment by moment decisions they took in writing their texts in Latin or English? However, we do know that scholars experienced these conflicts in the cusp of this transition. Isaac Newton wrote in both Latin and English (in separate monographs) marking an early stage of the shift, before English became the new norm for academic publishing. We know about Newton because of his prominence. We don't know the story of so many other lesser known 'butterflies' who flapped their rhetorical wings to initiate the *longue durée* changes that led to the new status of English.

Consider also the notion of 'standard English', which many hold that they cannot violate if they want to get published. Sociolinguists hold that 'standard English' is an abstraction that never exists in practice (Milroy and Milroy 2012). In actual speech, everyone is different and rarely produces grammatically correct utterances. Our utterances might be made of disconnected fragments, false starts, and mixed sentence structures. Even in writing, there are instances of sentence fragments or rule violations for rhetorical effect. Besides, 'standard English' is only one scale of (abstract) consideration in communication. If we consider tone, style, and discourse, there is immense individual variation in speech and writing. While there are structures and norms in the *longue durée* and the impersonal level, practice in the local context or in immediate time is very diverse, unpredictable, and messy. In a similar way, it is also difficult to define academic written genres in absolute and universal terms. Though John Swales (1990) has defined the IMRD (i.e. Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) structure and the CARS (i.e. Creating a Research Space) model of openings as canonical for research articles, we know that there are differences in different disciplines. Consider the many fields in the humanities, such as literature or philosophy, which will adopt the IMRD structure very differently from physics or economics. Therefore, many discourse analysts (including Swales) define genres in terms of broad 'family resemblances' rather than exclusive features.

All this doesn't mean that the structural definitions of standard English or academic genres are irrelevant. Moment by moment communicative activities lead to the sedimentation of certain structured patterns at longer temporal spans. These patterns serve as broad templates to aid both production and reception of communicative activities. They help explain utterances even when they are unruly, diverse, and changing. Note that deviations from the norms are aided by many other resources to gain meaning. Listeners are aided by diverse semiotic repertoires in the context, including multimodal resources and their knowledge of the shared background assumptions to fill in the missing pieces for meaning. This also explains how we can still understand each other even while language and rhetorical structures might be changing and unstable. That structure and diversity can co-exist can be explained by the example of traffic lights (repurposed here from de Saussure). The red, yellow, and green in each traffic light in street corners might be different in texture or luminosity. However, we recognize the pattern that they make to convey the meanings relating to that activity. Therefore we don't drive away because the texture of lights is different in a particular intersection.

The diversity at the local level in every street corner doesn't affect intelligibility or orderly behavior as expected by the overall triadic structure.

While structures are important, we do have examples in sociolinguistics where new policies and institutional structures being imposed top down failed to gain traction in society because practices at local level diverged. Policies outpaced practice, and failed to gain uptake from the intended minoritized communities. Hornberger (1988) discusses how the governmental policy change of Quechua as a medium of instruction in Peru didn't motivate parents to teach their heritage language to their children, as they realized that their vernacular didn't yet constitute linguistic capital in their society. Similarly, the policy of Tamil as an official language in Singapore by the government hasn't motivated Sri Lankan residents there to privilege their heritage language in their children's education (Schiffman 2003). Therefore, success in policy work is complex, involving gradual, small scale, and ground up changes that are multi directional and layered. Imagine a social scientific research journal that suddenly announces that authors can write in any English dialect they want. Multilingual scholars may still use the standardized variety if the alternate discourses and dialects are not enregistered to index a respectable academic, professional, or scholarly ethos. They are painfully aware of minoritized dialects being valued pejoratively and keep away from them in their publications. Such avant-garde journals might themselves be identified as idiosyncratic or second-tier for violating presumed academic norms. There is thus a synergy between norms and diversity, structure and change, and policy and practice, which needs to be negotiated cautiously by individuals and institutions for satisfactory outcomes. For these reasons, I am not persuaded by scholarly arguments that promote top down and unidirectional policy and structural changes as a condition for undertaking language or literacy diversity at the textual level.

3. Analytical tools

We need tools to study the ways in which moment by moment decisions by individuals in texts engage with larger structures for diversity and change. I introduce indexicality as an orientation that will help us study how the choices people make might negotiate the paradox of norms and diversity, or structure and change, for positive uptake. Consider what it will involve for me to use my nativized Sri Lankan English (SLE) in a refereed research article in a prestigious international journal. I face two problems: one is intelligibility, as the language departs from the privileged varieties of English which international readers assume as normative; second is valuation, as this language would be treated as belonging to a less privileged community or dialect, leading both to the stigmatization of my writing and a denigration of my identity as an incompetent communicator or scholar. Indexicality explains how I might negotiate both challenges.

How words, grammatical features, or semiotic resources 'point to' meanings, values, and identities is indexicality. Although indexicality has a long and rich tradition in philosophy, semiotics, and linguistics, I draw from a focused tradition in linguistic anthropology, emerging from the work of scholars like Michael Silverstein (2019), Jan Blommaert (2010), and Asif Agha (2005). Wortham and Reyes (2015) offer a synthetic analytical orientation that should be accessible to scholars outside this field. Linguistic anthropologists would argue that indexicality is not relevant only for the use of atypical language choices such as mine, but in *all* acts of communication, as they assume language contact, diversity, and change as the norm rather than the exception. Since meanings have to be always negotiated by all parties in relation to the available semiotic resources, indexicality becomes a key consideration in uptake. Indexicality is an 'iterative' process that involves dynamic and ongoing interactions between words and contexts (Wortham and Reyes 2015, 172). While words gain their indexicality from contexts, the contexts can themselves be gradually changed through creative language use. In this way, the 'indexical' (word, symbol, or artifact) and its 'typification' (what it points to) are always only 'stabilized for now'. How meanings get stabilized involves a complex social and historical process. There should be social uptake of the meanings a speaker or writer represents. That uptake depends on the indexical acquiring typification through repeated use in particular contexts for particular meanings over time. This process of typification is called 'entextualization' (i.e. 'the process of coming to textual formedness' – Silverstein 2019, 56). This is similar to the word 'sedimentation' I used earlier for the ways meanings, values, and identities get associated with semiotic resources through repeated use. It is possible to use a SLE phrase repeatedly in meaningful contexts and develop a shared indexicality among my audience.

However, till the indexical sediments and entextualizes meanings, readers will be confused by some of my initial uses of the vernacular. A few strategies can help even in these early stages of structuration. 'Co-text' refers to the surrounding words and semiotic resources that accompany the new indexical. These textual resources can help shape the meaning of the indexical. The contexts surrounding the communicative activity can also help here. Note however that scalar metaphors would suggest that 'context' cannot be monolithic and static as assumed in some linguistic orientations. Context too is layered, diverse, changing, and relational as we earlier discussed in relation to society, space, and time in scalar theory. Therefore, the diverse layers of context can be negotiated in favor of one's atypical language use. Among the features of context that relate to my writing, I can signal to the reader which contexts they should assume as guiding their interpretation of my text. 'Contextualization cues' (Gumperz 2015) refer to such signals. Rather than using the vague and broad term 'context', indexicality studies adopt the term 'frames'. By choosing the most relevant and persuasive frame suitable for the uptake of my atypical writing, I might 'recontextualize' the frames for my writing. That is, if the typical frame for an article in a specific journal is detached reporting of data, I can recontextualize the frame as a reflective theoretical essay to persuade the readers to adopt a different orientation to my writing. A third indexicalization strategy is 'metapragmatic'. We can loosely translate metapragmatic resources as 'talk about talk' – that is, a commentary on my own language use. By commenting reflexively on the importance of vernacular usage in academic discourse, I might persuade readers for a more favorable uptake of my usage. When all these resources and strategies work together over a period of time in a chain of texts that help with the sedimentation of meanings, anthropological linguists use the term 'enregisterment'. That is, a particular corpus of verbal or semiotic resources begins to be distinguished as indexing particular meanings, values, or identities. To sum up, Wortham and Reyes (2015) use the term 'entextualization' for the way that an indexical gains meaning in the body of a single text or interaction, and 'enregisterment' for the ways meanings sediment across texts and interactions over time to develop more predictable patterns.

While the above strategies help with indexing meanings for atypical language use, they also help with the second problem of developing positive valuation. Recontextualization and metapragmatic devices can help persuade readers that a vernacular use should be valued differently in the chosen context for particular reasons of framing, even though it might be commonly treated as stigmatized in other contexts. When such positive valuation sediments over time, it is possible for this linguistic corpus to be enregistered with a different identity and status. History is replete with such examples. Consider how 'queer' or 'colored' have lost their pejorative meanings in many contexts. On the other hand, the identification 'negro' has become stigmatized, though it was widely used about fifty years ago as somewhat 'unmarked'. While the privileged enjoy power to jump scales and impose their norms on others, the minoritized can also use their vernaculars strategically for positive uptake through persuasive recontextualization and enregisterment. Agha (2005) observes:

> A register grows in social domain when more and more people align their self-images with the social personae represented in such images. The stereotypic social range of the register may change during the social process of its demographic expansion when those exposed to it seek to formulate additional, partly independent, or even counter-valued image of what its usage entails. (56)

There is thus space for our qualified agency in enregisterment. However, one must note that the success of these strategies is never guaranteed, whether for the powerful or the powerless. Enregisterment is shaped by diverse social, historical, and ideological considerations and should be negotiated strategically.

4. Analyzing writing practice

I will now illustrate from three stages in my own academic writing how these indexicality strategies work to help me gradually move further in my own mission of democratizing publishing by representing alternate languages and rhetorics from my background. I zoom in on specific instances of linguistic diversification in chosen texts for close analysis, after contextualizing the publications. These atypical cases of language use cannot be separated from other discoursal features in the text, which offer co-texts and metapragmatic resources for the positive uptake of my vernacular use. My objective in this analysis is to bring out the strategies I adopted to diversify my writing. I will also demonstrate how my practices progressed to more risky and bold attempts in parallel with the broader disciplinary and ideological changes over time. My strategies were largely intuitive at that time. The analysis below represents my current reflective understanding of writing practices undertaken in the past without the benefit of the theoretical and analytical tools I have introduced above. My hope is that a close analysis of my attempts at diversification might give other Global South scholars some suggestions on how to engage in resistant writing and publishing in their own scholarship.

4.1. Strategy one: discoursal hybridity

One of my early attempts at representing an alternate academic discourse was in an autoethnography in the edited collection *Reflections of Multiliterate Lives* (Belcher and Connor 2001) which featured the writing experiences of multilingual scholars from diverse disciplines. At this point in my career, as a junior scholar who had recently migrated to the United States, I was cautious in my creative and resistant practices. I was influenced by schools such as World Englishes (Kachru 1986) and variationist sociolinguistics (Labov 1972), which motivated me to see diverse varieties of English as rule-governed and not deficient. Though radical for that time, these schools also assumed the contextual appropriateness of different norms. While vernacular Englishes were treated as legitimate for in-group and informal interactions, they were treated as inappropriate for academic and professional contexts which required the established varieties. Heath (1983) refers to this metaphorically as a 'code switching' model (355), whereby minoritized students would adopt vernaculars for home and standardized varieties for school. While grammatical deviations were not encouraged in formal written discourse, voice was encouraged at the discourse level, relating to tone, style, and organization, influenced by alternate cultures and values. The English in formal writing and publishing was treated as somewhat universal and homogeneous. Many scholars in composition studies adopt the label 'standard written English' or SWE for this register. While I adopted SWE for my article, I also employed a hybrid discourse that was suitable for my purposes by merging vernacular oral and narrative styles with academic discourse. However, as grammar does mediate stylistic and rhetorical diversity, and cannot always be separated as suggested by the code switching model, I will demonstrate that my writing also represented certain localisms at the grammatical level.

Being strategic to persuade the readers on the suitability of my personal and conversational register, I framed my article as layered and hybrid. I adopted a narrative tone and personal voice, interspersed with theoretical and scholarly discourses, as I traced my literacy trajectory. My title was creative and literary: 'The Fortunate Traveler: Shuttling between Communities and Literacies by Economy Class'. It alludes to the lines from the poem 'Fortunate Traveller' by Derek Walcott (1986), from which I quote as my epigraph:

> "You are so fortunate, you get to see the world–"
>
> Indeed, indeed, sirs, I have seen the world.
>
> Spray splashes the portholes and vision blurs.
>
> Derek Walcott, The Fortunate Traveller (1986)

The edited collection also featured a photograph of the authors and their biographical statement on the first page of each article. In retrospect, such multimodal resources would have helped in framing my article for suitable reception. Before they started reading my article then, the readers would know my racial and national background. The title, literary allusions and epigraph, and even my name, background, and physiognomy as an Asian scholar would have prepared readers to understand where my language was coming from. However, the fact that the epigraph was carefully cited with the date of publication would have also cued to the readers that scholarly conventions were being maintained and the article was not informal or non-academic.

To maintain this hybrid framing, I started my narrative with an *in medias res* opening about a childhood event with my parents when I first adopted intuitive and contextual strategies to interpret my parents' English. This anecdote enabled me to highlight the thesis for the article, which I consistently develop, and return to in the conclusion. I write the thesis statement at the end of the first section as follows:

> Perhaps these are the secrets of everyday learning – characterized by reflective understanding, strategic thinking, and contextual reasoning – that are at the heart of any educational experience. They sustain me as I negotiate the communicative traditions in Tamil and English – not to mention the hybrid discourses of diverse institutions and contexts – as I continue to develop a literate voice as a bilingual (24)

That I still respected the expectation of a thesis statement and the coherence of the essay around a unified theme would have further signaled to the readers that I situate this article in academic norms. These moves would have assured to the reader that I was an insider to academic discourses, though I was also representing rhetorical features from my oral and Asian academic community in Sri Lanka (see Canagarajah 2002 for a characterization). One might say that the article has a layered framing. In one sense, it is academic and aspires to communicate to the global community of scholars. In another sense, the personal and narrative framing aspires to introduce local norms in this global scale of communication. My expectation was that this layered and hybrid framing would subtly recontextualize the article for a positive uptake of my local semiotic resources.

Let me now zoom in on a specific paragraph to analyze the language adopted. In this paragraph, I narrate how I changed my Tamil writing after I returned from my doctoral training in the US where I had learned American academic conventions:

> Since the main contribution to the academic life in the local context was in Tamil I had to write in the vernacular in order to show the relevance of my scholarship at home. In an essay on contemporary Tamil poetry, I adopted my newly learnt writing skills from my American graduate school. For example, my introduction followed a move typical of the well-established CARS model (standing for "Creating a Research Space" as formulated by John Swales 1990). I outlined my purpose in that essay, defined how my contribution differed from existing scholarship, indicated the structure of my argument, and spelt out my thesis statement. My colleagues who rarely indulged in meta talk on writing styles, were suddenly quite vocal in expressing their disappointment. Even some of my students came up to me and said that the introductory paragraph had sounded a bit too pompous and over-confident. They explained that in the vernacular tradition (in lectures if not in writing) one opens with an *avai aTakkam* (i.e. humbling oneself in the court). The speaker starts with a brief confession of his/her limitations, praises the knowledge of the audience, and attributes whatever knowledge he might develop in his/her talk to others (i.e. elders, teachers, God). As the term *avai* (court) reveals, this rhetorical practice must have developed in feudal times. But the ethos of the scholar/rhetor is still influenced considerably by such an attitude. My cock-sure way of beginning the essay–announcing my thesis, delineating the steps of my argument, promising to prove my points conclusively–left another bad taste in the local readership. They said that this excessively planned and calculated move gave the impression of a "style-less," mechanical writing. Although I had attempted this mode of writing half-mischievously, I understood that a better strategy was to find ways of encoding the planned/disciplined/organized ways of writing without putting off my readers by sounding self-conscious, self-centered, or self-confident. (Canagarajah 2001, 31–32)

Though I maintain the personal voice and narrative structure, note that I am also using academic terms and concepts together with citations to preserve a scholarly discourse. I refer to the 'CARS model' to refer to my opening, citing Swales for this term. I use terms like *meta talk, ethos of the scholar/rhetor,* and *encoding*, which reflect my comfort with the language of the disciplines literacy, linguistics, and rhetoric. However, there are also some atypical uses from my local context. I refer to a Tamil rhetorical concept, *avai aTakkam*, which I italicize to flag it as belonging to another language and translate it in parenthesis so as to help the reader. I further use the Tamil word *avai* to explain the social context behind that rhetorical concept. The co-text to index those Tamil words are fairly explicitly provided through parenthetical glosses. What I didn't realize at that time was that certain features of my Tamil rhetoric also shaped my prose in English. In Tamil academic discourse, speakers prefer alliterations, parallelisms, and repetitions. Consider the alliteration and parallelism in: 'self-conscious, self-centered, or self-confident'. Certain repetitions are used to reiterate my points:

> introductory paragraph had sounded a bit too pompous and over-confident
>
> attributes whatever knowledge he might develop in his/her talk to others (i.e. elders, teachers, God)
>
> planned/disciplined/organized ways of writing

Tamil rhetoric also adopts hyperboles, which get reflected in my phrasing such as the follows:

> My cocksure way of beginning the essay–announcing my thesis, delineating the steps of my argument, promising to prove my points conclusively–left another bad taste in the local readership. They said that this excessively planned and calculated move gave the impression of a "style-less," mechanical writing.

Here I am exaggerating the confidence and detachment perceived in my English writing by my Tamil readers.

It is possible that some nonlocal academic readers would interpret these excessive parallelisms, alliterations, and hyperboles as ineffective academic writing. Some might think of the parallelisms and alliterations as awkward and inappropriate in restrained scholarly discourse. The repetitions might be interpreted as redundant by readers who prefer an economy of expression. The hyperboles will also be treated as unguarded and exaggerated prose. Despite the idiosyncrasy of the prose, there is adequate co-text for readers not to misunderstand the literal meaning of what I am communicating. However, it is the valuation of this language that requires complex indexical strategies for positive uptake. The framing might have prepared readers to interpret my writing as introducing a discourse that I am bringing from my vernacular Tamil background. The narrative and personal voice would provide a space for such prose. Also, my layered framing would have motivated readers to interpret my 'unidiomatic' phrasing as part of my voice and identity, and a deliberate choice rather than failing. More importantly, there are metapragmatic devices in the essay which would have persuaded readers to rescale these vernacular resources. Note that the essay is explicitly making an argument for bilingual scholars to find spaces for their alternate discourses. This larger argument of the essay functions reflexively to also justify my uses of my own heritage in this essay. In a sense, I am practicing what I preach; and if readers agree with my argument, they would be tolerant towards the idiosyncrasy of my academic language. It is possible that the more charitable readers would have accommodated such atypical language as part of my voice as shaped by my Tamil oral and literate traditions. Though I haven't received any criticism or disparagement for this essay, I have received some positive uptake since it was published. Note that the editors used mine as the lead article for this book. The editors and reviewers didn't suggest changes or corrections in my style or language, though they did ask for elaboration of certain ideas. I have also heard from a couple of writing instructors that they have used my essay as a reading in their composition courses. It appears that my vernacular-influenced English language jumped scales to index my heritage positively in the international academic context.

4.2. Strategy two: codemeshing

I will now analyze an article I published four years later, where I intentionally use Sri Lankan English (SLE). Note that I hadn't earlier deviated from the norms of SWE, which is treated as conventional for academic publications. In the article discussed above, my deviations were largely in idiomatic and stylistic uses. There are many motivations for my readiness to use SLE in the article in *College Composition and Communication* in 2006. At this stage, I had developed a more critical ideological orientation to grammar as political, both reflecting and enforcing social inequalities. In this, I had been influenced by critical theory, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism to perceive language as not simply representational, and variations as not relative. Structuralist linguistics and variationist sociolinguistics had adopted the position that while languages are different they are equal. Inequalities in languages were treated as simply *reflecting* social inequalities and not deficiencies in grammar. The emergent poststructuralist schools treated languages as different and *unequal*. They also theorized languages as not passively reflecting social statuses, but enforcing and sustaining inequalities. Therefore, languages were not treated as merely instrumental for the agentive use of writers (as World Englishes scholars and sociolinguistics like Heath assumed), but ideological in shaping the representational possibilities. Therefore, I didn't think of SLE as only a contextual variation to be treated as appropriate for in-group and informal interactions, following Heath's approach of 'code switching'. Her approach enforced a dichotomy, which indirectly suggested that vernaculars were not suitable for academic contexts. In using SLE in academic writing, I wanted to disrupt the status of SWE from the inside by making spaces within the text for my heritage and identity.

Though this second article was published in the double-blind peer reviewed flagship journal of the profession for writing education in US higher education, the rhetorical context helped frame my use of SLE for favorable uptake (see Canagarajah 2006). As we can imagine, in such high-stakes writing, vernaculars might be considered as belonging to low scales of peripheral or non-academic communication. However, there were other contextual considerations that favored linguistic diversity. Since this is a journal for professionals in the humanities, especially English scholars, the audience can be considered more open to rhetorical and linguistic creativity. The question I addressed in the article was the Students' Right to their Own Language (SRTOL) which the parent organization of this community, National Council of Teachers of English, had passed in 1972. The statement proposes that the dialects minority students bring to the classroom should not be disparaged but accommodated in English language and writing pedagogies. I proposed in my article how we can expand the implications of this statement for international students who bring localized Englishes, when the original proponents had largely discussed national dialects such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). I opened the article with a previous publication in this journal by two other scholars who questioned the monolingual pedagogies that were prioritized in composition (Horner and Trimbur 2002). With such opening, I was strategically framing my article as a continuation of the argument other scholars had already made in the same journal. This framing would suggest to readers that an article on language diversity in academic writing might be expected to also represent the voices of the author himself.

There were other features in my article that served as metapragmatic cues to comment on my choice of SLE. At the heart of my article was a discourse analysis of the writing practice of the African American sociolinguist Geneva Smitherman. She had used qualified uses of AAVE in her published articles which adopted SWE as the dominant register. I adopted a term introduced by another African American scholar Vershawn Young (2004), *codemeshing*, to describe such hybrid communicative practice and further theorized it in my article. I distinguished this term from Heath's approach of *code switching*, which separated the varieties. Young argued for a codemeshing approach of using AAVE for strategic rhetorical purposes in formal and written purposes in order to represent the vernacular identities as part of his heritage. In describing Smitherman's writing practice as codemeshing and theorizing this as a way of implementing SRTOL in writing classrooms, my article would have created a readiness among readers to accommodate my own use of SLE. In fact, I explicitly mentioned in my discussion that I was following Smitherman's example by using SLE in this article. Readers would have understood that it would be a contradiction for me to argue for codemeshing and not adopt it myself in my own writing. Thus these metapragmatic cues would have helped rescale the valuation of my SLE. It would have also represented my use of SLE was a conscious choice of pride in my heritage and resistant use for pluralizing academic writing.

SLE was not used extensively in this article. However, it was enough to nudge the diversification of writing and signal my solidarity with other scholars in this field who were arguing for spaces for multilingualism in writing. The following are a few examples of SLE in that article (they are underlined):

> My fellow villagers in Sri Lanka would say, "Who the hell is worrying about the rules-schools of Queen's English, man?" After all, multilingual speakers have a much larger speech community to use their varieties with. Their reference point is not British or American communities anymore. (589)
>
> To use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to mimic not speak. It means "acting white" for my African-American students, and "putting a show" for Sri Lankan students. (597)
>
> I can hear my South Asian colleagues saying: "But your approach is looking like the very same one as Elbow's, no?" I agree. However, I would reply, "There are small small differences that make big big significance." (599)
>
> Therefore, this article is only a statement of intent, not a celebration of accomplishment. It only aims to make some space for pedagogical rethinking and textual experimentation on the place of WE in composition. As for practice, I am hereby humbly announcing that I'll be joining my esteemed students in the classroom for learning how to accommodate local Englishes in academic writing. (613)

As we can see, these uses themselves are framed by contextualization cues to prepare the readers for deviations from dominant norms. There are also co-texts to give readers resources for interpreting these variations. The early examples are contextualized as utterances by my fellow Sri Lankans. Consider the first example. In SLE, 'man' is a gender neutral tag in utterances. Alliterations such as 'rules-schools' and expressive phrases such as 'who the hell' are commonplaces in our communication. That the statement is in quotation marks and I attribute it to a compatriot would cue to readers that this is a Sri Lankan way of talking. The sentence that follows the example would help understand that 'rules-schools' refers to British or American norms. In the second example, the SLE is an in-group statement for fake behavior. It also deviates from native speaker usage which would correct it as 'putting *on* a show'. Since readers in the West know 'acting white' much better, this co-text will help them understand that 'putting a show' is the Sri Lankan equivalent. In the 3rd and 4th examples, the progressive form 'ing' is used excessively (and inappropriately for SWE norms). This is a familiar grammatical feature of South Asian English varieties. Also, repetition is an intensifier in many oral vernaculars as in pidgins and creoles (i.e. small small; big big). My mention that these occurred in conversational interactions (as cued by the quotation marks) will help readers to attribute them to in-group usage. The co-text would clarify for them that the 3rd example is a subtle difference I am making from the proposal by Peter Elbow. (He proposed that vernaculars can be kept alive in English classes through low-stakes activities till policies change and allow them in high-stakes writing. I proposed that we can already engage in codemeshing in high-stakes writing, without waiting for future policy changes.) Finally, having prepared the readers to engage with SLE gradually in the preceding examples, I move on in the concluding statement to use it in my authorial voice without flagging it with quotation marks or attributing it to others. This final example is reflective of the overly deferential 'Babu English' that South Asians are known to use. This register derives from their address to colonial administrators, which was expected in the past, but continues into present day to index polite address for institutional contexts (such as parents writing letters to teachers to excuse their children from school). Since I had discussed Babu English earlier in the article, that discussion would have served as a metapragmatic cue to comment on my own ironic use of it here.

That the strategies worked for positive uptake was proven by the fact that none of the referees argued that these features should be edited away, although they challenged me forcibly on some of my arguments. I did mention my intentional uses of vernacular in my cover letter to the editor, and also cautioned her (after the acceptance of my paper) that the copy-editors should be alerted not to correct them in the final publication. An evidence that SLE jumped scales is the fact that this article went on to win the annual prize for the best article in that journal. Such awards might signal to readers and the professional community that the mere use of vernaculars in high stakes communication is not a sign of incompetence. I seem to have rescaled the use of the vernacular and enregistered it as a badge of honor in publishing contexts where diversity and multilingualism are supposed to be valued.

4.3 Strategy three: embodiment

Now I want to move to my most recent writing practice where I have started using my heritage language Tamil in my academic English publications. Note that I used Tamil only in transliterated and translated forms in the first stage, which is also typical of how I used Tamil sparingly in my English writing of the past. Recently, I have started using Tamil as needed, without transliteration or translation.

There are many factors that nudged me towards this stage. To begin with the personal reasons that explain this readiness, my own prior uses have given me confidence and much needed apprenticeship to adopt similar rhetorical strategies for new codes. In fact, my prior small beginnings of using SLE idiomatic and grammatical features, and the codemeshing of diverse other minoritized scholars (such as Geneva Smitherman and Gloria Anzaldua), have paved the way for academic readers in our fields to acclimatize themselves to language diversity in high stakes writing. I am also emboldened by the positive uptake of the previous stages and the evidence that readers are developing interpretive skills to negotiate the meanings of unfamiliar languages. One might say that readers are developing proficiency in multilingual resources and indexicality strategies suitable for the further diversification of academic writing. Furthermore, the fact that I was now tenured and had become a full professor gave me the luxury of taking more risks. If a publication was rejected because of my idiosyncratic language, rhetoric, or genre conventions, it didn't harm my professional status.

More importantly, I was also learning creative strategies from multilingual students in my classrooms, which led to ideological changes. As I made spaces for hybridity and codemeshing in the writing of my students, I observed the strategies they were adopting and how both native and nonnative students were effectively negotiating meanings. These observations from my classroom research had led me to analyze them and also theorize them for the different paradigms of literacy and linguistics they called for (see Canagarajah 2013, chapter 6, for a study on student negotiations of textual diversity). I found that students treated meanings in literacy as co-constructed, with both readers and writers working together. They treated literacy as ecological, drawing from all the resources in the texts and settings to make sense of the meaning. So the font, spacing, and visual resources were treated as affordances in meaning making. Similarly, cues such as the author's name, body, dress, and appearance gave them some expectations on how to interpret the texts. In all these ways, literacy was being redefined as *embodied*, where the text was not treated as an impersonal, autonomous, and static artifact. I learned that the material and contextual features played a role in entextualizing the meanings in writing for all of us in the class.

These experiences gradually shifted my own theoretical and ideological position from variationist sociolinguistics and critical theory/postcoloniality to decoloniality. Decoloniality is different from my previous positions in many ways. To begin with, while postcoloniality represented the local in relation to the dominant metropolitan norms, decoloniality shifted the frame of reference to the indigenous and global South. In postcoloniality, local languages were hybridized in terms of the expectations of dominant communities in the metropole. Decoloniality works in the reverse direction: other languages and discourses are appropriated in relation to the knowledge and interests of local communities. There are other epistemological differences as well. Postcolonialism assumed modernity as a fact of life and tried to move beyond it by acknowledging its reality. Decoloniality critiques modernist values and develops an orientation to knowledge from indigenous traditions. This ideological change also transformed my attitude to literacy and writing, as suggested in the previous paragraph. Indigenous theories, including my heritage South Asian traditions, adopt theories of nonduality. That is, they don't treat mind/

body, human/nonhuman, language/multimodality, and text/context as binaries. Indigenous epistemologies consider how they work together in meaning making. This means that texts are treated as ecological and material. They are not treated as self-standing products. This orientation gives significance to processes of entextualization whereby diverse semiotic and material resources construct the text. Furthermore, decolonial theories are relational in orientation. Therefore, importance is given to the ethical responsibilities all parties have towards each other in every activity. Participants have to engage in distributed practice to generate meanings, without blaming the speaker/writer as solely responsible for any miscommunication (see further, Canagarajah 2022).

Orientating to the writing/reading activity from a decolonial embodied orientation, I assumed that the multiple languages I might use in my writing (even in English academic texts) will draw from diverse other semiotic resources in the text and in the setting to gain meaning; that languages are always in contact and shape each other, rather than treating monolingualism in labeled languages as ontological; that readers have to come with the ethical disposition to collaborate with writers in making meaning, rather than assuming that it is the writer's responsibility to make meanings simple for them; that texts are agentive in shaping human expectations and values, and transforming social structures; and that meanings are diverse and pluriversal, accommodating the performative meanings that the text is *doing* rather than just *saying*. These realizations have motivated me to now codemesh Tamil in many of my recent academic publications. I adopt more creative indexical strategies that give me confidence that readers can collaborate in shaping the meanings and valuing the uses of Tamil in high stakes academic communication.

My personal changes are also paralleled by changes in the profession. They have helped in reframing the expectations and values of my disciplinary community. As mentioned earlier, the modernist and Eurocentric ideologies informing academic discourses are being questioned. A range of alternate critical ideologies have received uptake in scholarly circles. Movements such as poststructuralism, identity politics, critical race theory, and New Materialism have led to critiquing dominant scholarly practices. If some of the conventions of academic writing based on English as a lingua franca and discourses of objectivity and rationality were informed by modernity, decolonial movements are introducing alternate genres and rhetorics for academic writing. We are beginning to see more narratives, autoethnographies, multivocal essays, and performative writing in research journals (see Canagarajah 1996 for a survey). Similarly, research practices are also changing, allowing for more introspective, narrative, personal, reflective, multi-sited and collaborative methodologies.

However, I have to still adopt cautious strategies to frame my vernacular uses for each audience of my specific publications. As the emergent practices are not conventionalized or normalized, readers have to be nudged to adopt a suitable reading/interpretive practice. Let me illustrate. I have used Tamil prominently in my book *Transnational Literacy Autobiographies as Translingual Writing* (Canagarajah 2020). There are many features of this publishing context that functioned as metapragmatic cues to rescale my uses of Tamil for positive uptake. The book is about autoethnography as a genre in academic writing and instruction. Therefore, I myself adopted an autoethnography for the content of the book. This genre made spaces for the personal voice, creative writing, and diverse semiotic resources in the text. Furthermore, this book presented an analysis of how my students adopted codemeshing in their own writing. It was fair therefore that readers would also feel comfortable with my own use of Tamil. In a book that already features Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, and Portuguese from my students, readers won't be shocked to see some authorial Tamil.

I will focus on two instances of Tamil use that were uncomfortable for the publisher. These were untranslated or untransliterated Tamil on the titles of two different chapters. Though the editors were happy to accept Tamil inside the chapters, they rules that I shouldn't use Tamil in the titles. Their argument was that chapters are now sold separately from the whole book on publishing websites. They feared that readers won't choose to buy my chapters if they didn't know the meanings immediately by looking at the titles. I had to argue with them that the very purpose of having Tamil in those contexts would be defeated if I used a translation. I had to explain the purposes and the resources for interpretation in order to persuade them to retain the Tamil.

The titles in question are in the introductory chapter and the sixth chapter. They are:

Introduction: கற்பனை: An invitation

Chapter 6: கற்றது கை மண்ணளவு கல்லாதது உலகளவு

In both cases, readers have to read through the respective chapters to interpret the meanings. The Tamil can generate curiosity to motivate them to keep reading the chapter and unpack the meaning. That's one of the performative sides of leaving the meaning undefined and encouraging readers to read closely, resulting in affective responses such as discovery through effort. Furthermore, these practices are important for the themes developed in the chapters. The introductory chapter invites the reader to consider imagination as a resourceful intellectual strategy for learning and communication in an effort to make a space for autoethnographies in writing pedagogy. In that sense, readers have to exercise imagination in this very chapter to arrive at the meaning of Tamil. That கற்பனை means imagination would become evident only at the end of that chapter. The content of the chapter thus serves as a metapragmatic justification for the use of Tamil. I took care to include co-texts to help readers in other ways. Note the other English words in that title – 'introduction' and 'an invitation' – that accompany the Tamil. They would have cued to readers the broader purposes of this chapter and kept them patient. Readers would have at least known that this is the introduction to the book, and I am inviting them to a particular kind of reading experience that might be atypical.

The title for chapter 6 is an ancient Tamil proverb which promotes humility. It can be roughly translated as: 'What we know is a fistful; what we don't know is a world full'. As this is the final chapter of my book, I assumed that readers are now familiar with the gradual interpretive processes they have to adopt and that I can take more risks. I also assumed that readers would now understand the case I am making for more ecological orientations to literacy and more complex performative meanings. I had narrated the creative strategies my students had employed through framing and co-texts to use multilingual resources in their writing. I had explained how the physicality of the font itself indexed voices and identities different from those in typical English writing for my students. Some students appreciated the esthetics of the fonts in other languages, which added to the affective experience of those essays. The students had also encouraged their readers to demonstrate dispositions of humility to collaborate with the writer and text for meaning making. They had appreciated the affective experiences of confusion, painstaking effort, hits and misses of guess work, and the epiphany of discovery in writing that made a space for the affective and embodied dimensions of writing and knowledge. I assumed that the readers of my book would treat these earlier discussions as metapragmatic cues to themselves adopt such strategies and unpack the Tamil proverb in the final chapter.

While the above examples were from my book, I have also started using Tamil in journal articles in peer reviewed journals. Consider the instances in ‘Rethinking mobility and language: From the Global South’ in the *Modern Language Journal* (Canagarajah 2021). Though this is a peer-reviewed journal, I had some freedom to use Tamil as this was a reflective article in the section for a Symposium. Since the topic has to do with decolonization of language and draws from my heritage epistemological traditions, it is rhetorically appropriate that I use Tamil in this essay. The content of the article serves as a metapragmatic resource to prepare readers to rescale my use of Tamil as a mark of bold diversity and affirmation of self in a translocal and high-stakes academic context. Consider an instance of my use:

> Though we were land-based, we didn’t lack a sense of translocal connectedness. We developed this orientation through the people, information, and goods that came to us from elsewhere, besides our own travels. This is what explains our ancient axiom யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் (“All places are our village; all people are our kin”) first appearing in the verse of கணியன் பூங்குன்றனார் (circa 6th-2nd BCE). (572)

As I didn’t have the space to use this proverb in a sustained way throughout the article (as in the uses of Tamil in the previous publication), I translated it immediately for the reader, thus providing a co-text to interpret it. However, I didn’t transliterate the name of the ancient poet next. From the ecology of the text, readers can infer that this is the name of a poet or text. The co-text attributes the Tamil maxim to someone or some text. The Tamil words are followed by the period of that attribution. It is not important for the purposes of my article that the reader know the actual name of the poet. Those who are motivated can easily copy the Tamil name into google and obtain the transliteration of the name as well as some additional information about the poet. That’s the performative side of the meaning which is optional. Since my metapragmatic cues worked towards positive uptake, the reviewers and editors didn’t request me to omit the uses of Tamil in this article. They probably understood that I am adopting rhetorical strategies to develop a more embodied, relational, and affective rhetoric suitable for the decolonizing ideological orientation I was proposing in my article.

5. Discussion

Before I generalize from these examples and suggest writing practices for other minoritized and multilingual scholars, I have to point out the many idiosyncratic and personal contexts relating to the use of my vernacular. Rather than suggesting that others cannot adopt such strategies as this practice is idiosyncratic, my argument is that all writers have to keep in mind that their contexts are unique. We have to each consider the diverse rhetorical, disciplinary, and communicative contexts relating to our publication and adopt relevant indexical strategies to rescale our uses of vernacular and multilingual resources. Authors have to adopt strategies that suit their topic, objectives, genre, journal, and discipline. There are no generic recipes or universal rules suitable for all scholars on textual resistance.

Even in my own trajectory of rhetorical resistance, I didn't adopt the same strategies or same extent of multilingualism in every text. They changed spatially and temporally according to the different contexts. To begin with the temporal contingencies, as I was a junior scholar newly arrived in the US for academic employment in 2000, I adopted only idiomatic and stylistic changes in the first strategy of hybridization. As I became more professionally secure later, I have adopted more risky linguistic moves, such as code-meshing. However, whenever I engage in double-blinded peer-reviewed publications, I still have to be cautious in the indexical strategies I adopt, mindful of the different publishing space. Furthermore, my earlier attempts have given me practice, proficiency, and confidence to adopt more bold strategies in later writing. The readers in my disciplines are also developing proficiencies in engaging with multilingual academic writing through my (and other minoritized scholars') earlier uses, getting ready for more creative reading in subsequent publications. Therefore, one's own resistant trajectory gives a writer further motivation and momentum. I should also point out my ideological development towards more critical and resistant positions over time. My changing ideologies too changed my writing practice. It is safe to predict that my writing practice will continue to evolve, with even more resistant strategies in the future.

Such developments also nudge our profession to loosen its insistence on traditional norms of academic writing and attune to new language and rhetorical norms. These creative texts are agentive in initiating changes at the structural level of policies and norms. The growing attempts of minoritized scholars and students do contribute to making spaces for more risky moves. Small small changes make big big differences indeed! As we see more diverse academic writing, scholars in many disciplines are also developing familiarity with nonnormative texts and strategies for interpreting unfamiliar semiotic resources. Together with the rhetorical changes happening in orientations to academic communication and definitional changes in relation to writing and rhetoric, we have to also keep in mind the ideological and epistemological changes in the global academic enterprise. All of us have to lean in to these changes to frame our articles appropriately and cue to our readers which of the layered contexts and structures we invoke for the reception of our writing. In short, these developments are enregistering a broader corpus of grammars as suitable for academic publishing.

The implications for decolonizing academic writing and publishing can be summed up as follows for scholars who have the motivation to take risks in renegotiating dominant language norms:

- As there is no one-to-one fit between the norms at the macro scale and the textual realizations at the micro level of writing practice, authors should discern how they would adopt discourses and rhetorics that will nudge academic norms towards greater diversification.
- It is possible to acknowledge the established linguistic and genre conventions for academic writing at the macro scale of policies and institutions, while also accommodating considerable diversity at local scales. These are not mutually exclusive.
- Diversity in texts, including the use of diverse registers and varieties of English, or even different languages in English academic texts, don't necessarily hamper intelligibility to

readers who are not proficient in those languages. There are multiple textual and rhetorical resources in every writing to aid in interpretation of even unknown languages.
- The extent to which discoursal or grammatical norms can be diversified is eventually a sociolinguistic challenge. That is, the success depends on how the writer indexes the alternate meanings and values with suitable framing, contextualization cues, co-texts, and metapragmatic strategies to engage with dominant structures and persuade readers for uptake.
- However, all acts of writing are risky – whether those that cleave to the dominant norms or those that resist them. Adopting dominant grammatical norms doesn't necessarily mean that the article will get published or there will be universal agreement on its effectiveness. In fact, 'orthodox' writing might be treated as mechanical and pedantic, lacking voice and individuality. In the same way, adopting creative new linguistic and rhetorical conventions may be treated as brilliant – or rejected!
- We should be ready to see readers or referees refuse positive uptake of one's alternate writing, as academic work involves power struggles and structural constraints. If some readers choose to reject a piece of writing in favor of their own norms and practices, minoritized scholars shouldn't give up but develop the resilience to refine their strategies, reframe the article, and identify alternates spaces of publishing. Grammatical and social structures are not monolithic, static, and permanent. And power relations are not a zero sum game where only one side wins all the time. What I hope for is the gradual chipping away at power to decolonize writing and scholarship at diverse communicative spaces, which will complement the parallel activism for large scale institutional and policy changes.

6. Conclusion

To conclude then, the debate on structure and change or norms and diversity involves a false binary or forced dichotomy that needlessly limits the possibilities for voice for minoritized scholars. Scalar theories suggest that social, linguistic and discoursal structures involve layered domains and dynamic interactions between the macro and the micro. Therefore, we have to conceive of paradoxical realities such as the following: it is possible to have norms and also variation at the same time; structure and change can be simultaneous; the diverse spaces between the macro and micro might allow for different representational possibilities; and the rhizomatic and layered social, spatial and temporal scales mediate structure and agency for new possibilities.

However, the notion of power as multidirectional should also leave us with cautions. Dominant institutions can appropriate diversity, compromise its critical edge, and even marketize it for profit making purposes (see Canagarajah 2022 on these challenges). Therefore, linguistic resistance will also take new forms in response to the changing strategies of dominant institutions. More importantly, we should not limit ourselves only to one form of struggle, but mobilize scholars for multifaceted action. Martín Rojo (2021) outlines the diverse academic policy domains which scholars can engage for sustainable changes. It is still worth repeating that resistant writing and publishing don't have to wait for policy changes – but in fact writing can facilitate structural transformation through the efforts of creative and critical scholars from the Global South.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Suresh Canagarajah is the Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English, Applied Linguistics, and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. He teaches World Englishes, Multilingual Writing, Decolonial Studies, and Disability Rhetoric in the departments of English and Applied Linguistics. Suresh comes from the Tamil-speaking northern region of Sri Lanka. He has taught before in the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, and the City University of New York. Suresh was formerly the editor of the *TESOL Quarterly* and President of the American Association of Applied Linguistics. He currently serves in the Pennsylvania State Law Enforcement Citizen Advisory Commission, established by the governor of Pennsylvania to improve policing practices in the state. He also coordinates the "Consortium for Democratizing Academic Publishing and Knowledge" to mentor minoritized scholars worldwide into publishing.

ORCID

Suresh Canagarajah http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1292-2366

References

Agha, A. 2005. "Voice, Footing, Enregisterment." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15 (1): 38–59.

Belcher, D., and U. Connor. 2001. *Reflections on Multiliterate Lives*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Block, D. 2018. "The Political Economy of Language Education Research (or the Lack Thereof): Nancy Fraser and the Case of Translanguaging." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, Advance Publication*, 1–21. doi:10.1080/15427587.2018.1466300.

Blommaert, J. 2010. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Braudel, F. 1984. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: Vol. 3: The Perspective of the World*. Los Angeles: UCLA Press.

Caglar, A., and A. Glick Schiller. 2011. "Introduction: Migrants and Cities." In *Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants*, edited by N. Glick Schiler and A. Caglar, 1–22. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Canagarajah, S. 1996. "From Critical Research Practice to Critical Research Reporting." *TESOL Quarterly* 29/2: 320–330.

Canagarajah, S. 2001. "The Fortunate Traveler: Shuttling Between Communities and Literacies by Economy Class." In *Reflections on Multiliterate Lives*, edited by D. Belcher and U. Connor, 23–37. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Canagarajah, S. 2002. *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Canagarajah, S. 2006. "The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued." *College Composition and Communication* 57/4: 586–619.

Canagarajah, S. 2013. *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. New York: Routledge.

Canagarajah, S. 2020. *Transnational Literacy Autobiographies as Translingual Writing*. London: Routledge.

Canagarajah, S. 2021. "Rethinking Mobility and Language: From the Global South." *Modern Language Journal* 105 (2): 570–582.

Canagarajah, S. 2022. "Challenges in Decolonizing Linguistics: The Politics of Enregisterment and the Divergent Uptakes of Translingualism." *Educational Linguistics* 1 (1): 2022. doi:10.1515/eduling-2021-0005.

Canagarajah, S., and P. De Costa. 2016. "Scales Analysis, and its Uses and Prospects in Educational Linguistics." *Linguistics and Education* 34: 1–10.

Cilliers, P. 2010. “Difference, Identity, and Complexity.” *Philosophy Today* 54 (1): 55–65.

Flores, N. 2013. “The Unexamined Relationship Between Neoliberalism and Plurilingualism: A Cautionary Tale.” *TESOL Quarterly* 47 (3): 500–520.

Foucault, M. 1980. “The Confession of the Flesh.” In *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, M. Foucault, ed., 194–228. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gevers, J. 2018. “Translingualism Revisited.” *Journal of Second Language Writing* 40: 73–83.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gumperz, J. 2015. “Interactional Sociolinguistics: A Personal Perspective.” In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by D. Tannen, H. Hamilton, and D. Schiffrin. pp. 309–323. 2nd ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Heath, S. 1983. *Ways with Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heng Hartse, J., and R. Kubota. 2014. “Pluralizing English? Variation in High-Stakes Academic Writing.” *Journal of Second Language Writing* 24: 71–82.

Hornberger, N. 1988. “Language Planning Orientations and Bilingual Education in Peru.” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 12 (1): 14–29.

Horner, B., and J. Trimbur. 2002. “English Only and U.S. College Composition.” *College Composition and Communication* 53: 594–630.

Kachru, B. 1986. *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes*. Pergamon: Oxford.

Kubota, R. 2016. “The Multi/Plural Turn, Postcolonial Theory, and Neoliberal Multiculturalism.” *Applied Linguistics* 37: 474–494.

Labov, W. 1972. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylavania Press.

Lempert, M. 2012. “Interaction Rescaled: How Monastic Debate Became a Diasporic Pedagogy.” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 43: 138–156.

Martín Rojo, L. 2021. “Hegemonies and Inequalities in Academia.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 267–268: 169–192.

Matsuda, P. K. 2014. The Lure of Translingual Writing.” *PMLA* 129 (3): 478–483.

Milroy, J., and L. Milroy. 2012. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. 4th ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ruecker, T. 2014. “Here They Do This, There They Do That.” *College Composition and Communication* 66: 91–119.

Schiffman, H. 2003. “Tongue-tied in Singapore: A Language Policy for Tamil?” *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 2 (2): 105–126.

Silverstein, M. 2019. “Texts, Entextualized and Artifactualized.” *College English* 82: 55–76.

Swales, J. 1990. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walcott, D. 1986. “The Fortunate Traveller.” In *Collected Poems 1948-1984*. D. Walcott, ed., 456–463. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Wortham, S., and A. Reyes. 2015. *Discourse Analysis Beyond the Speech Event*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Young, V. 2004. “Your Average Nigga.” *College Composition and Communication* 55: 693–715.