“You must learn this or your paper will be killed”:
Three International Students’ Perception of Academic Literacies

Scholarly paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the M.A. degree in Second Language Studies

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Abstract

Learning to write academic papers in English is very challenging, especially for international students who have little familiarity with the English academic writing conventions and practices. This study explores the experiences of three international students, who are in the process of discovering academic genre expectations and appropriating academic writing conventions. The present paper reports on data gathered from interviews and writing tutorials with the three English as Second Language (ESL) students, who are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The study draws on theoretical insights from New Literacy Studies, Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, and the perspectives of critical researchers on the hegemony of English. Data analysis reveals that although English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing classes are designed with the aim of helping students to learn to write academic papers, oftentimes these courses may not succeed in providing the kind of metatextual awareness of genre expectations that the students need to produce papers expected of them in their specific fields of study. The process of appropriating English academic literacy practices is further complicated by issues of linguistic and cultural capital and power. The concluding discussion offers suggestions for EAP classes on how these courses could better support ESL learners in gaining the metalinguistic awareness they need. It also proposes that EAP classes open up space for students to explore possibilities for hybrid forms of academic literacy practices.
Introduction

The number of international students studying at universities in the United States of America has been increasing steadily during the past three decades. They come from various countries all over the world (International Institute of English). Without doubt, each of these students contributes to making North American universities linguistically and culturally diverse. In the same vein, the universities are making a lasting impact on the lives of these students since studying at a U.S. university entails a process of socialization into that particular academic discourse community. During this socialization, students face various challenges which range from finding a place to live to finding one’s place in the new system; from learning about new theories and practices to learning about oneself in and through those academic endeavors.

The variety created by international students has led researchers to explore how these students from such diverse backgrounds cope and succeed in their new academic environments. As Morita (2004) states, “understanding how these students participate in their new academic communities and acquire academic discourses in their second language (L2) has become critical” (p. 573). As the title suggests, international students are expected, under the threat of their “papers being killed”, to follow the established academic writing conventions. Academic disciplines, as well as individual professors within one field may differ considerably in terms of the expectations they espouse and set to their students. Therefore, learners new to disciplines and conventions may understandably find juggling the expectations of various academic practices quite challenging.

Studying the academic socialization of international students requires looking at multiple forces at work in the learning context and within the individuals themselves. In other words, it involves important issues like identity, gender, power, negotiation, social context, and participant roles (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Norton and Toohey, 2002; Watson-
Gegeo, 2004; Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003). The present study explores the experiences of three international students at the University of Hawai‘i (UH). It provides glimpses into these students’ academic socialization process by focusing on their perceptions of their academic communities and academic literacy practices, how these perceptions shape and are shaped by the nature of their present and future academic and professional endeavors, and on the nature of their struggles and successes with academic literacies. Research on the issue of developing academic literacy in English has suggested that it is a complex process for L2 learners since they have to “acquire not only certain linguistic skills, but also the preferred values, discourse conventions, and knowledge content of the academy” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 147). This learning process entails conflicts for the students since they might face a pressure to adopt the conventions of the dominant discourse.

Critical researchers (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999, 2002b; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Pennycook, 2001), however, argue that we as teachers need to do more than apprentice students into academic discourses. We need to help students develop metalinguistic awareness of the discourses they encounter, and enable them to see the arbitrary nature of academic discourses, their relation to the discourses they bring with them from their home academic cultures, as well as the social and global power issues involved. My own positionality in this project has been that of “subject-in-discourse” (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005) who, as an international student as well as future English language teacher, is in the process of learning that academic discourses and relations are not monolithic; instead, they are multidimensional and locally context dependent. As a result, I have come to strongly believe that teachers need to raise students’ metalinguistic awareness, as well as teach the Discourses of power (Davis, Bazzi, & Cho, 2005; Gee, 1996). Therefore, as an M.A. student with linguistic capital that could help fellow students achieve some of their academic goals, my tutorials with the three participants focused on providing guidance and feedback on their papers in progress. At the
same time, our interviews provided space for them and me to reflect on our academic writing experiences and draw on each other’s insights to become more aware of the issues that shape our lived reality.

The study aims to contribute to our understanding of the complexities involved in students’ experiences with new sets of academic literacy practices by exemplifying the theories as well as extending discussion on the notions the study draws on. The first part of the paper analyzes the three international students’ perceptions of various academic literacy practices they engaged in during the course of one academic semester. It draws on the theories of New Literacy Studies (NLS). Although it is an expanding field of research, we need further exemplifications of the practices this research espouses in academic contexts where much is at stake for various stakeholders.

The second part examines power relations that affect students’ lived experiences in the academia. It draws on Bourdieu’s sociological theory, which is generally well-received concept, but not widely used in the ‘mainstream’ applied linguistics. It is widely used, however, in critical applied linguistics as well as poststructuralist applied linguistics (Delpit, 1988; Heller, 1999; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce 1995; Pavlenko, 2004; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). The study aims to further exemplify the applicability of Bourdieu’s theory to the analysis of the issues revolving around why and how languages are learned in diverse contexts. By exploring the issues of power, critical researchers suggest that cultural encounters create third spaces (Bhabha, 1994). However, the experiences of the three students reveal that students might not always take up these spaces. Students may, under the pressure of sociopolitical forces that are at play both in the academia and at home countries, buy into the dominant Discourses without developing a critical metalinguistic awareness of such Discourses. Therefore, the study suggests that there is a need to extend the discussion on how
language and literacy courses could provide support for international students in order for them to negotiate the dominant academic literacies and practices.

**Conceptual Framework**

*Multiple Literacies in a World of ‘Multiples’*

This study explores the complex experiences of three international students in a North-American academic discourse community - experiences that are born in the web of interactions between students, teachers, texts, and classroom cultures. Drawing on the growing field of New Literacy Studies research, this study takes a (critical) sociocultural approach to academic literacy practices within the context of academic communities of practice.

NLS researchers argue for a ‘new’ definition of literacy, one that would recognize that literacy is not a neutral set of reading and writing skills but a social practice situated within a particular context (Street, 2003). In other words, just as learning has increasingly become to be seen as a social practice rather than a mere cognitive process (Norton & Toohey, 2002; Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003), literacy is becoming to be recognized as a complex construct that reflects the power struggles of the surrounding sociopolitical environment.

The NLS literature argues that people have multiple identities and they engage in multiple communities throughout their life trajectory. Furthermore, Street (2003) reasons that people can have multiple and hybrid literacies, which they employ according to the situation at hand. In a likewise manner, Lankshear and Knobel (2003), drawing on the work of Gee, point out that “since there are multiple secondary Discourses, and since literacy and being literate are defined in terms of controlling secondary uses, there are multiple – indeed many –
literacies and ways of being literate” (p. 13). In addition to multiple ways, there are also multiple modes of being literate in the world that requires its citizens to read (understand and interpret) and write (create) not only words, but also images, gestures and actions (Kress, 2003). In other words, people engage not only in multiple but also multimodal literacies.

Zamel and Spack (1998) point out that ‘academic literacy’, similarly to the term ‘literacy’, no longer simply refers to reading and writing alone, but “must embrace multiple approaches to knowledge” (p. ix). According to their explanation, academic literacies involve the ability to make meaning in increasingly multicultural classrooms and juggle diverse discourses. These processes are not smooth as there will be conflicts and struggles arising from the negotiation of meanings, practices, and identities. Thus, in a similar manner to the term ‘literacies’ within NLS, Burke and Hermerschmidt (2005) argue that academic writing “should be reconceptualized as competing sets of writing methodologies and social practices rather than as homogenous sets of skills” (p. 351). McComiskey (2000) defines three levels of composing: textual, rhetorical, and discursive. He explains,

[a]t the textual level, we focus our attention on the linguistic characteristics of writing. At the rhetorical level, we focus on the generative and restrictive exigencies (audience, purpose, etc.) of communicative situations. And at the discursive level of composing, we focus our attention on the institutional (economic, political, social, and cultural) forces that condition our very identities as writers. (pp. 6-7)

McComiskey (2000) argues for writing pedagogy that integrates and makes explicit all three levels of composing.

Given the need to develop academic English literacies, students experience multiple and often competing language ideologies. These potentially conflictual interactions establish the necessity for discussing the issues of capital and power. Students’ lived experiences are formed in ideological environments characterized by a diversity of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses (Bazerman, 2004). These voices are in an ongoing dialogic process “against broader, globalised political economies of literacy” (Luke, 2004). To word it differently, different institutions, disciplines, and departments generally have their own
preferred literacy practices. Students who may be taking classes, for example, in business and language departments, can find themselves in the midst of conflicting expectations and conventions (e.g., impersonal business reports vs. very personal and expressive writing). Students are basically required to follow the conventions or they risk losing the symbolic capital these practices hold in the socioeconomic or educational institutions students belong to or desire to access (Carrington and Luke, 1997; Luke, 2004). This suggests the importance of exploring the ways in which writing is shaped by and shapes the discursive context of academic practices and students’ perspectives and experiences.

In order to study and obtain a better understanding of international students’ complex experiences with academic literacies in their L2, the study was guided by the following interrelated research questions: What is the nature and process of international students’ apprenticeship to their academic discourse communities? How do the students perceive their experiences with respect to academic literacies? What is the nature of their difficulties and successes? What do the students need to know in order to gain success? What strategies do they use and what sources do they draw upon to acquire this knowledge? How does the sociocultural context affect their experiences? How do the students negotiate their identities, positions, and competence?

Method

NLS have provided a new perspective on the relationship between literacy and the social context, as well as on power struggles, and identity. Various NLS authors (Carrington & Luke, 1997; Collins & Blot, 2003; De Pourbaix, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Street, 2003) argue that literacy practices are socially situated and should be studied within their contexts to grasp their significance and role within those contexts, and effects on the individuals and the societal relations at large. In other words, studying the ‘local’ contexts
should enable us to arrive at a deeper understanding of the subtle ways in which 'the outside or the global' is manifested in the 'local' (Street, 2004, p. 328).

Street (2003) acknowledges that the word ‘literacy’ has ideologically loaded connotations that defy its use as the object of NLS, and as an alternative, he employs the following terms: ‘literacy events’ and ‘literacy practices’. The first refers to “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative process” (Heath, 1983, p. 93, quoted in Street 2003, p. 2). ‘Literacy practices’ encompasses the notion of literacy events and refers to “the broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts” (Street 2003, p. 2). In other words, literacy practices comprise and are manifested in literacy events. It seems, then, that by studying literacy events we can arrive at a better understanding of literacy practices. Thus, the study reported here analyzes the nature of academic literacy practices through academic writing events of three international students at an U.S. academic institution. It also discusses how these students gain the knowledge they need to become adept at the dominant academic literacies in their current context. In addition, the study analyzes interviews with the students to gain an understanding of their ideological perspectives on language and power. This is done by considering the value they place on the linguistic and cultural capital they gain in the course of their academic pursuits in the United States.

Participants

Participants for this study were obtained through a call for volunteers at two English language units on the UH campus: English for Academic Purposes Program (EAPP) and English Language Program (ELP). EAPP offers courses designed for international students who have been admitted to the UH but who, depending on their TOEFL score and placement
exam results, are required by the university to take EAPP courses to improve their academic English skills in all or any of the four areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The second program, ELP, offers various content-based English language courses for international students whose English skills are not deemed high enough for academic study. ELP has been designed to help students improve their general English language skills in order for them to improve their TOEFL scores to meet the established criteria for gaining admission to U.S. colleges.

Since one of the aims of the study was to focus on students' experiences in learning to write academic papers, the call for volunteers focused on students who were planning on taking academic writing classes during the semester of data collection. In cooperation with the administrators and writing teachers at EAPP, I identified the groups of students who were most likely to be enrolled in academic writing classes at EAPP in that particular semester, and called for volunteers from among those students. Two participants (Hanahana and Inalou1) answered that call. The third participant (Jun) came from an academic writing class at ELP where I did practice teaching during the semester preceding data collection.

Two of the three students, Inalou and Jun, are undergraduates, and Hanahana is a graduate student in a one-year professional certificate program. They come from different countries and major in different disciplines. Inalou is from East-Timor and majors in Communication Studies; Jun is from Korea and majors in Biology; Hanahana is from China and studies Travel Industry Management (TIM). Inalou has a B.A. degree in Information Technology form Indonesia, Hanahana has a B.A. in Physics from China, and Jun completed two years of undergraduate studies in Engineering in Korea before deciding to study in the States. Inalou and Hanahana began their studies at the UH in the Spring 2005, whereas Jun's studies at the UH started in the Fall 2005. With regard to academic writing, Inalou and

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1 All student names are changed to protect their privacy.
Hanahana took an Intermediate Academic Writing class at EAPP in the Spring 2005, while Jun took two Academic Writing classes at ELP during the Spring 2005 quarters.

Table 1
Overview of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hanahana</th>
<th>Inalou</th>
<th>Jun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Language</td>
<td>Chinese (Mandarin)</td>
<td>Tetum</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous degrees</td>
<td>B.A. in Physics from China</td>
<td>B.A. in Information Technology from Indonesia</td>
<td>No degree; completed two years of undergraduate studies in Engineering in Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current academic program</td>
<td>Travel Industry Management (one-year professional certificate program)</td>
<td>B.A. in Communications</td>
<td>B.A. in Biology</td>
</tr>
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Methodological approach

The study has been designed with constructivist paradigm in mind (Hatch, 2002; Silverman, 2001). According to the ontology of constructivist paradigm, there are no universal or absolute realities. Instead, it suggests that we live in a world of multiple realities, which are “inherently unique because they are constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own vantage points” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). Therefore, the objects of inquiry are individual constructions of reality. The epistemology of the constructivist paradigm sees the researcher and the participants co-constructing the subjective reality of the participants. In her discussion of social constructionism, Holmes (2003) points out that perception exerts a significant influence on the interpretation of people and their behavior, and that people are constantly constructing their multiple identities and different aspects of those identities in the myriad of interactions they engage in.

With regard to the above discussion, I acknowledge that the experiences my participants have recounted have partly been brought about by my interest in certain aspects of their
academic experiences. At the same time, some of my questions have been evoked and informed by their reflections, which, in turn, have been affected by their interpretation of my interests. Therefore, based on the principles of the paradigm I have adopted and my personal experiences as an international student, my view is that the following pages can be seen to reflect only a few pieces of the colorful mosaic of being an international student. And the reflection from those pieces is presented through lenses that have been co-constructed by the researcher, the participants, and the sociocultural and educational contexts we inhabit.

Methods of data collection

Data collection took place from September to December 2005. The primary methods of data collection were private tutoring sessions and interviews. The aim was to collect data through active participation rather than just interviews. For this reason, I decided to take on the role of a private academic writing tutor to be able to personally engage in and observe the participants' process of writing academic papers in order to get insights resulting from this level of relationship rather than researcher-researched. Another reason for adopting the role of a tutor was to enable power dynamics that differ from the ones that generally exist between teachers and students. Rather than operate as an evaluator who controls grades and can potentially greatly threaten one's academic identity, I served in a more supportive role. As a fellow international student, I was able to commiserate with participants on academic challenges in the U.S. My training in ESL writing also enabled me to assist the three students with their coursework. Yet power relations certainly did exist in that I was as an M.A. student in language studies and a more experienced member of the academic community in which we participated. In this sense, I represented access to the symbolic capital that they wished to attain for success in their academic pursuits. Furthermore, I assessed their writing and took the more powerful position of interviewer and interpreter of their academic experiences.
The purpose of tutorials was to help each student with academic papers they were working on for their classes. With Jun and Inalou, we primarily worked on their papers for their academic writing course in the EAPP; Hanahana was working on papers for his two courses in TIM as well as his graduation paper. The initial plan was to meet with each student on a weekly basis from the beginning to the end of the Fall Semester in which the study was conducted. Due to various reasons like students’ workload, health problems and personal issues, we were able to meet approximately every other week.

The main body of data consists of twenty-one tutorials (nine with Hanahana, ten with Inalou, and six with Jun), most of which were voice recorded. Field notes were kept on all tutorials and relevant parts were transcribed. In addition to this, six approximately hour-long interviews were conducted, two with each participant. The first round of interviews took place in the middle of the semester; the second towards the end of the semester. The interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed. Besides this, I observed Inalou and Jun in one of the classes in their major field of study so as to be able to better understand the academic literacy experiences they were describing concerning these classes. In Jun’s case, I also informally interviewed her Introductory Biology teaching assistants (TAs) about Jun’s progress in that class. In the case of Inalou, I held an interview with her instructor of academic writing asking for her perceptions of Inalou’s writings and development.

I collected copies of the draft papers with which I had assisted them, and feedback from their instructors and/or peers on those papers. In addition to this, I collected samples of their written work that we did not work on together but which represent the types of assignments they were required to do in their various classes (for example, Jun’s lab reports and Hanahana’s referee tasks). The collected documents also include students’ course syllabi and guidelines for their writing assignments.
The initial motivation for the study was to see what issues international students face in the process of learning academic writing at an U.S. institution of higher education. For this reason, I decided to offer free academic tutoring for those interested in participating in the project. Therefore, it was not surprising to see that the three students who responded to the call for volunteers acknowledged that they need and want help with academic writing. Although the tutorials were focused on providing guidance on and discussing specific papers that the students were working on, many other issues pertaining to academic literacies
surfaced during the tutoring sessions. Some of the more salient questions were further explored during interviews with the students as well as their instructors.

In the following sections I explore two major themes identified in the course of data analysis. First, I explore how the three students' engagement with academic literacy expectations has contributed towards their acquisition of metalinguistic abilities. Second, I examine their perceptions of their academic endeavors in the light of sociolinguistic notions of linguistic and symbolic capital.

**Apprenticeship to Communities of Practice**

How people construct themselves and their learning experiences can be interpreted through the concept of Discourses. The notion was established by Gee (1996), who distinguishes between two types of discourses: 'discourse', which refers to “stretches of language that make sense” like conversations, stories, reports; and ‘Discourse’, which refers to “ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities” (p. 127). Gee (1996) further differentiates between primary Discourse and secondary Discourses. The first refers to the primary social group into which people are socialized in their early life as members of particular families. Secondary Discourses are secondary social groups and institutions into which people are apprenticed as members of schools, workplaces, churches, clubs, etc.

In the present study, the academic institution and the disciplines to which the students belong are seen as secondary Discourse communities and are referred to as ‘academic discourse communities’. Gee (1996) explains that, “Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction, but by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices ... through interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse” (p. 139). The significance of the notion of apprenticeship suggests that Discourses can be seen as a type of Communities of
Practice (CofP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). At the same time, Discourses are not confined to a given CofP; instead, they can pervade across various communities. Furthermore, there are multiple Discourses operating in one community. The subsequent sections explore students’ experiences with academic literacy practices across academic discourses.

Hanahana, Inalou, and Jun are participating in the large academic discourse community of their university. In the following description, students reveal how, within the umbrella academic community, they participated in many overlapping communities of practice (e.g., different disciplines, EAPP courses, individual seminars, Korean, Chinese, and East-Timorese student groups, etc.). The analysis establishes that with respect to academic writing practices, the three students’ perspectives and investment in their various classes differ based on their awareness of disciplinary differences and their perceptions of what types of literacy practices have capital in their major discursive community. Students learn these complex relations as they engage in textual analysis in collaboration with their instructors and classmates. The analysis also suggests that international students’ success in the academia is not dependent only on linguistics skills. As it appears, academic discourse communities assume familiarity with mainstream cultural values and background knowledge.

*Inalou’s multifarious and intertextual literacies experiences*

Inalou perceives herself as a novice in the U.S. academic discourse community, especially with respect to academic writing. Her perspective is not very surprising, given that the institution she attends positioned her that way by placing her into two consecutive EAPP writing classes. Some students may reject such positioning and hence be not very motivated in EAPP classes. Inalou does not appear to reject that positioning and is a strongly motivated EAPP student. Her perceived need for socialization into the process of writing research papers
in the academia has led her to seek assistance from various sources: her EAPP writing instructor, senior students, and a private tutor.

Inalou perceives her EAPP writing class as a valuable form of apprenticeship to the academic discourse community, and believes that the class enables her to obtain and sharpen tools and skills indispensable for composing texts in the academia. The interview transcript provided below expresses her appreciation for what she has learned in the EAPP class. It reveals her understanding that writing papers is a process as she emphasizes the importance of planning, preparing and organizing a paper. In addition to this, the excerpt suggests her awareness of the rhetorical dimension of texts as she acknowledges the need to think critically and analyze the sources as well as her own writing:

Inalou: I feel that EAPP class is very helpful especially the writing one, I mean first time I was really I had no idea, like I said before, I was like I have no idea at all but

Ave: no idea about what?

Inalou: writing, how to write in English, yeah how to be a good writer especially in English, and by the end of class I think I got and idea and try to more to think critically and learn how to analyze and prepare everything by like scheduling everything. So for me it’s really helpful because, I mean, it’s helped me in order to practice my English, practice my writing and also learn how to organize, I think, my speaking, my writing experience, it’s really helpful for me. I learned a lot from EAPP class

(...) AVE: so you feel it prepares you to attend other classes in your major or?

Inalou: I think all the classes in college, I mean this is my first here, so EAPP class is something to get your attention, not attention but to wake you up, okay you have to do this, it gives you idea about what’re you going to do in the next. I mean, by attending the EAPP class it’s something like grab your attention maybe to think what is going to be the next, so at least you have idea that if you’re going to the other class, oh you have to do this, at least it guides you

Ave: what do you mean exactly?

Inalou: for instance in writing class I learn how to write research paper so that in my other class I have idea, I mean, it’s not new for me to start writing something that I already get from my EAPP class

As the excerpt suggests, Inalou regards EAPP as a crucial preparation for her other college classes since it helps her to practice academic writing in English. She seems to have realized that in order to be successful in the academia, she needs some form of apprenticeship into its literacy practices. Furthermore, she believes that the EAPP writing class provides her with indispensable guidance and practice. She was very invested in her academic writing class
by devoting much effort to the final research paper. Tutoring sessions with Inalou provided ample evidence to this fact, and even when we had scheduled to have an interview, she brought along the draft of the research paper, which we discussed after the interview.

The issues we discussed were usually more of a rhetorical rather than textual nature, for example, what the purpose of her paper is, how to analyze her findings, and what information she could include in the introduction and conclusion. Her reflections on what she learned in the EAPP writing class also reveal her awareness of the rhetorical component of composition (e.g., purpose and audience), as well as of the fact that texts are not produced in isolation but are based on works that have come before. At the same time, she reveals that she still struggles with expressing her thoughts in “good English”, yet overall, her concern is not with grammatical correctness but getting her meaning across:

I think I did improve a lot in like I try to express my idea and also combine with the sources that I found, like I know how to find a good source, not really know, but I learn how to find a good source and connect to my idea and my topic so that it like make sense. And also I think I learned a lot how to organize my paper well so that readers can easily understand, and also using for instance like the transition, then how to write my paper using APA format ... but ... I still feel struggle to express my thought in a good English and I feel it’s still like unconfident but of course I’m still writing what I think about ... Even now I get some mistakes there but of course I just leave it and then I come back later to fix it so ... I feel that on the learning process, to improve my writing especially how to put the words, writing words so it’s more easy to understand so that the reader not going to confused.

As can be seen, Inalou seems to be mainly concerned with the rhetorical characteristics of her writing as well as an aspect of intertextuality: dialoguing with and acknowledging other authors while expressing one’s own views. As Bazerman (2004) points out, there are a number of dimensions of intertextuality. One of them concerns the extent to which a text refers to and incorporates ideas from other texts. However, the notion of intertextuality reaches far beyond that dimension, “intertextuality can stay within one specialty, disciplinary or professional domain, or may reach into different fields, different times, and different places” (Bazerman, 2004, p. 62).
Another kind of intertextual knowledge Inalou encountered concerned the discursive level of her academic community – sociocultural knowledge. Besides taking several EAPP classes, Inalou was also enrolled in an Introduction to Communication course in the Communications Program. The primary goal of the course was to provide introduction to the mass media. Inalou has a wealth of experience working with the media in East Timor. She worked for the public television as well for the United Nations Development Program Media Unit in East Timor. Despite this, the introductory course to mass media posed some challenges to Inalou due to the fact that the lecturer’s points were regularly infused with examples from American pop culture and U.S. domestic politics. Duff (2003) argues that references to local pop culture characters and other media narratives at schools is a major issue because

[s]tudents from different linguistic and cultural groups often do not have equal access to or familiarity with the local pop culture scripts, texts, scripts and references that are admitted into the classroom; and even if they do, they ... may not have the ability to comprehend or produce quick intertextual references in the classroom. (p. 237)

In order to succeed in the Introduction to Communication course, Inalou needed knowledge of the American culture and society. In the lecture that I observed, which was on the topic of advertising, the lecturer illustrated his points by references to, for example, the Superbowl, Janet Jackson, McDonald’s, Hyatt hotels, Billy Dee Williams and Colt 45. Inalou was able to follow most of the lecture but, for instance, did not understand the implication of the advertisement for Colt 45 since she did not know what it was (neither did I, being a relative newcomer to the U.S.). Inalou noted ‘Colt 45’ down in her notebook and explained to me that she would later find further information about it on the Internet. Although she was able to get the lecturer’s point based on the other examples that accompanied Colt 45, she said that she still needed to look it up since quizzes in that class contained test items on examples the lecturer provided, and the example of Colt 45 might be included on the next test.
Since Inalou lacked background knowledge of the American culture and society, she commented that it was sometimes hard for her to follow the lecturer’s examples, and that this insufficiency of background information made her feel somewhat excluded from the discussions:

Inalou: I mean the problem is ... sometimes the background I don’t really understand, especially when he talks about American background ... especially the example that come from the internal or domestical issue - I don’t really understand actually. I can understand something international but not the domestical things. So for instance, he mention about one of the FBI leaders that was I think, how to say, fired or something, and I don’t really understand, so I have to go back and google when I come back home (...)

Inalou: actually when we have discussion, sometimes it’s interesting discussion but because I don’t understand the background of the topic so I don’t really, I cannot comment on

Ave: but you said one time that you keep speaking up in that class

Inalou: ycah ... as far as I can, but sometimes I cannot speak because like I don’t really understand when he start to say like, oh this guy from this TV, and he said something but I never seen that program, so I don’t know, I cannot say something cause I have no idea

Inalou’s experience appears to suggest that the U.S. academic discourse community tends to presuppose familiarity with concepts, notions, and examples that are part of the ‘mainstream’ American culture and social practices (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Duff, 2001, 2002, 2004). Inalou turned to the lecturer for help. He advised her to read newspapers, magazines and watch TV programs, which she has done in order to become better acquainted with the larger discursive context of her academic pursuits. Her diligence rewarded her with high scores on the quizzes and tests.

Inalou’s experiences illustrate that international students deal with the appropriation of multiple literacies in their academic discourse socialization process. Reporting on ESL students’ experiences in a high school social studies class, Duff (2001) points out that “besides needing literacy skills to read the front pages of newspapers or academic texts ... students needed a more general pop-culture literacy, contained in ... media” (p. 117). Similarly to those ESL students, Inalou has realized that besides learning to organize, draft
and write academic papers, her academic success is impacted by her ability to understand the
discursive level of knowledge construction: the values and the collections of concepts that are
part of the knowledge construction process in the field of Communications. Writing a
research paper for the EAPP class raised Inalou’s awareness of intertextual relationships
between sources; her challenges with finding access to participation in her Communication
class have showed her that there are intertextual connections between different modes (e.g.,
research articles, magazines, TV, radio, the Internet) of knowledge communication. As NLS
studies maintain, literacy is not a set of skills to be acquired, but a complex practice, which
involves intertextuality (Bazerman, 2004), and multimodality (Kress, 2003).

*Jun’s co-constructed awareness of differences in literacy practices between academic
discourse communities*

Jun’s writing experiences for classes at the EAPP and in her major have enabled her to
realize that academic literacy practices differ from one discourse community to another. Jun
was taking three EAPP classes, plus an introductory course to her major – Biology, and an
introductory class in Chemistry. Jun’s experiences with different academic literacy practices
appeared to suggest that there was an incongruity between the EAPP writing course and the
rhetorical expectations in her content courses. The EAPP writing assignments focused on
building students’ fluency through personal writing, and academic writing skills through
papers in which students had to write about a personal experience, take a position on an issue,
and form and respond to arguments. In her biology and chemistry courses, however, she had
to engage in another genre of academic writing – lab reports, which she described as “very
different” from the type of writing produced for the EAPP writing class:

Ave: I’m like curious ... about your classes in your future when you go to take other
classes in biology and chemistry, what kind of academic writing you are expected
to do there, is it the same structure that they teach at EAPP?
Jun: no
Ave: it’s different?
Jun: very different, usually expect like this kind of paper [pointing to a lab report], very different, so yeah, did you feel difference between this one?

Using Jun’s terms, “regular papers” differ from “science” writing, and the latter pertains mainly to research in the field of science, including her major:

Jun: I spend more time on EAPP cause I’m not good at writing so much so I have to think for a while, then write down, so I spend much time on this one [pointing to a paper for the EAPP writing class], this one reason I don’t really like to write regular paper, I spend much time
Ave: do you think these lab reports have helped to improve your writing?
Jun: mhmh (affirmative), academic writing?
Ave: mhmh (affirmative)
Jun: mhmh (affirmative)
Ave: in what ways?
Jun: in science, especially in lab, but it’s not really related with other, only with specific field like lab or research or something like that research in science field

In other words, Jun appears to understand that there is something essentially different between the types of writing she produces in the EAPP writing class and her biology labs. Her reflections seem to suggest that she perceives lab reports to be fairly specific to the field of science. This suggests that she is in the process of developing metalinguistic awareness of differences between genre expectations in the academic programs in which she participates. However, my interactions with Jun suggested that the nature of academic writing instruction Jun received in the EAPP course played rather minor role in enabling her to gain the rhetorical knowledge that she needed in order to be successful in her content courses. The EAPP class was focused on building students fluency by asking them to write about their personal experiences and express their opinion on social issues. In the lab, however, Jun was expected to produce rather impersonal and scientific reports on the experiments they conducted. Bazerman (2004) also argues that often the theories behind EAPP types of programs might not provide students with “a precise enough picture of the literacy demands of disciplinary coursework” (p. 60). Although the EAPP class enabled Jun to become better acquainted with academic conventions like citing and referencing, and with the differences between formal and informal language, it did not seem to provide Jun with tools for figuring
out the conventions that govern writing in the field of biology. Her understanding of those
genre expectations emerged primarily through her engagement in the literacy practices of her
major.

Jun has developed her awareness of the academic writing conventions in the field of
biology through a combination of explicit guidance from her biology teaching assistant (TA),
and textual analysis of research articles and lab manuals. Jun explained that initially her
biology class was not explicitly taught how to write reports on lab experiments. At first, they
had to report only on results without writing an introduction or background to their
experiments. After a couple of weeks, the TAs had realized that it would be more beneficial
for students to learn to write reports which contain other structural elements besides the
discussion of results in order for them to succeed in future classes:

Ave: what about the reports? After you do the experiment, you have to write reports,
right?
Jun: yeah
Ave: did the TA give you any instructions on how to write it?
Jun: yeah, but exceptionally, my case kind of different from other TA. At first she said,
*oh we just write about result, only result*, but she realized it’s not good to us cos
after this lab we have to take other lab and we have to do all thing about lab. I
mean, its introduction and background and result and conclusion, we have to write
all of this not only result. She said at first we just write only result but after that she
realized we need to write whole thing, whole paper so she changed

The TAs and the students co-constructed their knowledge of how to structure and write
lab reports using model research papers from the field of medicine. Jun shared with me that in
addition to the outline provided by the TA, she relied on the lab manual to write her reports
since the manual chapters provided background to the experiments they conducted as well a
model outline for structuring her reports. Jun’s careful analysis of textual and rhetorical
writing practices in her major rewarded her with success: the biology TAs described her
reports as “almost senior level” and said that these make her seem like an “over-achiever”
compared to other students in the class.
It appears that Jun is developing metalinguistic awareness of genre and rhetorical expectations inadvertently. She has figured out what she needs in order to write successful lab reports. However, she does not seem to have much awareness of what the genre/rhetorical expectations are for courses outside her major. For example, some disciplines like literature or applied linguistics are increasingly favoring first person singular, whereas other disciplines favor a more impersonal approach. Jun, unfortunately, might not have fully understood this yet:

Jun: I mean, previous paper I just write result, only result, so I just wrote it without understanding... after I write that, TA gave us some order then including background, so I have to study before I wrote background, otherwise I cannot understand and I cannot write background, so it’s helpful and it make me understand more yeah

Ave: and what have you also learned in terms of language, the kind of language that you are expected to use?

Jun: it’s kind of formal writing as I learned in EAPP class, I don’t use, I try to not use we or / yeah

Although Jun understands that there are differences between genre expectations in EAPP and Biology, my interactions with her suggest that she still seems to perceive academic writing as a universal set of skills: that academic writing is about formal language, citing, referencing, and avoiding plagiarism. NLS, however, argue that academic writing is far from being a set of skills; instead, it is competing sets of literacy practices (Burke & Hermerschmidt, 2005). At the same time, it seems likely that the majority of undergraduate students (at UH) do not perceive academic writing as a literacy practice. In Jun’s case, it appears that it is her engagement with texts produced in the field of biology that has contributed to developing her metalinguistic awareness in terms of distinguishing among the genres of EAPP and biology. Yet this understanding has emerged almost inadvertently as she participated in the practices of these two very different discourse communities. Would she have developed this awareness of biology genre expectations if she had been enrolled only in the EAPP class? The data suggests that probably not. However, this does not suggest that
EAPP classes are of no use for students from, for example, disciplinary backgrounds in hard sciences. On the contrary, EAPP classes have much potential for enabling students to gain the tools they need to be successful learners. As Burke and Hermerschmidt (2005) argue, these academic writing classes may provide "an opportunity to engage them [students] in deconstructing the assumptions and taken-for-granted truths embedded in the reading and writing they encounter in the contexts in which they work and study" (p. 352). The concluding discussion will offer some suggestions for developing this potential.

\textit{Hanahana's apprenticeship to the unwritten academic genre expectations of his discipline}

Hanahana was eager to find instruction on academic writing conventions as he realized that he needed support in the process of apprenticeship to disciplinary perceptions of acceptable academic writing. He observed well that this process is best facilitated by fellow (senior) members of the academic discourse community (i.e., professors, classmates, tutors). Similarly to Inalou and Jun, one of the first legs of Hanahana's journey of appropriating academic conventions was the EAPP writing class. His reflections suggest that, initially, he enjoyed his EAPP class since it enabled him to practice writing in English. But this attitude changed as he realized that in order to be successful in his studies, he needs instruction on the specific genre expectations of his major – Travel Industry Management. EAPP, however, did not appear to provide that support.

In general, Hanahana acknowledged that the EAPP writing class had some positive influence on his writing skills. It enabled him to build fluency and equipped him with some handy strategies for writing, such as brainstorming and freewriting, and an overall understanding of the process of writing a paper:

\begin{quote}
I think, yes, the EAPP class although I, huhuh, its waste some of my time, but I think it's good to learn procedure, I do think this kind of theory and the nature the procedure of learning should learn more earlier.
\end{quote}
Over time, however, his overall perception of the EAPP class changed and he depicted the class as a waste of time. He explains,

It’s [referee tasks in a TIM class] much helpful than I do EAPP class. There I, you just write, write your own paper, but you don’t discuss and you don’t find the problem, but from this kind of ... case study, you can find problem.

Similarly to Jun, the reason for Hanahana’s lack of enthusiasm over the EAPP writing class was the limited opportunities to develop his awareness of the specific academic expectations in his field of study. He explained that although they had had to write an academic paper for the EAPP writing class, they did not really analyze the weaknesses of those papers. He reasoned that the EAPP class excluded that type of analysis due to constraints such as diversity of students’ disciplinary backgrounds. In other words, the EAPP writing course did not provide help in developing metalinguistic skills needed for efficiently learning concrete genre expectations.

Hanahana developed his awareness of the academic writing conventions in the field of TIM through metalinguistic analysis of research produced in that discipline. In contrast to the EAPP class, he often made highly positive references to his class on Research Methods in Travel Industry. Hanahana emphasized at several occasions that this class was of greatest benefit to him for learning about academic writing and doing research. The reason for this was that the course enabled him to develop a greater awareness of Travel Industry writing expectations through analyzing and critiquing refereed research papers published in his field:

In fact in China I haven’t studied any about the writing when I was in the university. I learned the basic skills in middle school and primary school but I haven’t taken any language class in the university so I know very little about writing, but I know very general introduction and method, and you can look at others’ papers to get the structure so it’s not difficult but ... most helpful for my writing is this term I take Travel Methodology class. That’s very important because we do some referee of other published papers, we study the problems, that’s very helpful for me to understand the paper. I think this is the best way to help you to understand.

Hanahana’s Research Methods class became a valuable community of practice that enabled him to appropriate the dominant TIM discourse. He attributes much of his developing
understanding of genre expectations in TIM to the analysis of research articles together with his classmates. At the same time, he also remarked that some of his classmates were “very careful about the paper” in terms of critiquing them. He said that in the beginning, he had not been critical of the papers they read, but later, being exposed to methodologies for doing research, he began to see the weaknesses, especially in terms of methodologies. In other words, he was appropriating the valued forms of disciplinary thought. He explains,

They [classmates] are very careful about the paper, even the words - you should use abbreviation if it appear many times a lot. They're very serious, so from that group discussion - I think it is very good - you can know how others analyze their paper and you can see the problem. Maybe that problem you yourself haven't noticed ... I think this kind of communication group discussion is much more helpful.

Through discussions with his classmates, whom he perceived as more experienced members of the North-American academic CoP, Hanahana was apprenticed into the academic discourse in terms of the larger sociocultural academic expectations for critical thinking. Yet Hanahana revealed that this critical attitude created anxiety in him concerning the quality of his own papers. This suggests that he was not uncritical about the expectations of academic forms of thought; on the contrary, he was aware that eventually his own work may be submitted to the same type of criticism and that his writing might fall very short of the model articles he was exposed to:

I think yes I learned a lot from this class and since I know the weakness of this paper, I should be careful when I write my paper, yeah, huhuh, I dare not to write, I always laugh to them, oh we are so critical with the author but when we - I’m afraid of writing my own paper heheh

Hanahana openly admitted that he was a novice in Western social science expectations, including writing research papers. Yet in another TIM class, this humbling awareness encouraged him to analyze and become more knowledgeable about what was expected of him in terms of academic writing conventions. The topic of the course was Service Marketing and Hanahana highly enjoyed the content, but was somewhat disappointed with the professor. In his view, the instructor was unorganized, very busy with his own research and, consequently,
hard to approach. Furthermore, he perceived that professor to be “very strict”, especially in terms of following academic writing conventions like avoiding plagiarism, referencing, and formatting the paper according to the APA style. His comment on the professor’s strictness with these conventions was, as mentioned in the introduction, “you must learn this or your paper will be killed.”

The fear of his papers being “killed” led Hanahana to search for methods of survival in the class. Similarly to Jun, his strategy for success was to examine papers produced in Service the Marketing discourse community. He appears to have understood that he needs to study genre expectations at the metatextual level in order to produce acceptable papers in that class. Therefore, Hanahana sought help from the professor by asking him for and studying case studies written by the professor himself. In addition to this, he carefully read case studies written by friends who had taken the same class in previous semesters and by classmates who had received high scores on the case analyses. Furthermore, he asked for my advice on using the APA style, paraphrasing and referencing. His efforts were not in vain since his scores improved on each subsequent case study. The professor’s feedback also suggested that his writings were improving both in terms of the quality of analysis as well as the use of writing conventions.

While Research Methodologies class fostered Hanahana’s metalinguistic awareness through communication with classmates, in his Service Marketing class, it was the combination of Hanahana’s text analysis and professor’s feedback that helped him to develop his awareness of the TIM genre expectations, and consequently, improve his writing.

On the whole, Hanahana seems to perceive his EAPP academic writing class as only somewhat relevant for developing the academic literacies necessary for him in his major. Moreover, similarly to Jun, he seems to have arrived at the realization that the best way to learn academic literacy practices valued in one’s discipline is through analyzing works
produced in and for that discipline, and to practice writing using local resources available in that discursive context.

Inalou, Jun, and Hanahana seem to be rather well aware of the fact that disciplines differ in terms of valued writing genres. In other words, they acknowledge that the texts that constitute disciplinary knowledge have their specific genre expectations. The three students are eager to learn what is considered acceptable research and what is not. Their cases suggest that instructors, as well as fellow students, play a vital role in students’ apprenticeship to preferred ways of academic writing that different discourse communities foster. At the same time, there are differences between the three students’ perceptions of the best contexts for apprenticeship. Inalou, for example, regards highly her EAPP writing class and perceives it as a wake-up call to the demands of the academia. Jun and Hanahana, however, are more appreciative of their content courses since these provide them with knowledge about the specific expectations of their major fields of study. The EAPP class does not appear to develop that type of awareness. One of the reasons for Inalou’s highly positive perception of the EAPP class could be that her content course in Communications did not require her to produce any writing. As Bazerman (2004) has pointed out, EAP programs oftentimes do not help students to develop awareness of the literacy demands of disciplinary coursework. Therefore, it might happen that when Inalou enrolls in content courses where papers are required, she may discover that the skills she learned in the EAPP class are not sufficient for achieving academic success in her major. In other words, as Jun’s and Hanahana’s cases suggest, it is necessary for students to receive instruction on specific genre conventions in order for them to develop an awareness of and meet the academic literacies expectations of their disciplines. Andrews (1998) discusses that it is important for students to develop their “reflective or metalinguistic awareness”, which will enable them to “be more sensitive to and competent in using language confidently, deliberately, and intentionally” (p. 8). Jun’s and
Hanahana’s reflections reveal that they developed their metalinguistic awareness through active engagement with academic texts produced in their fields.

Gee suggests that people need to use a powerful literacy, defined as a “‘metalanguage’ for understanding, analyzing and critiquing other Discourses and the way they constitute us as persons and situate us within society” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p. 13). In other words, metalinguistic awareness enables persons to understand the ways in which Discourses operate in and on their lived experiences. One way in which the students are revealing their awareness of the subjectivity of these Discourses is through their varying investments in the EAPP. While Inalou regards her EAPP writing class highly and believes it to prepare her for her future classes, Jun and Hanahana perceive the EAPP class to be a waste of time and mental energy. In other words, the students do not embrace EAPP practices in equal ways in the light of their disciplinary practices: for Hanahana and Jun, the academic literacies practices of the secondary Discourses of their discipline seem to be more powerful. In the light of critical approaches to literacies (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001), the question that this observation raises is whether and in what ways the students are aware of the power issues involved. This issue will be explored in the following section.

Power Relations and Academia

The relationship between languages, discourses, ideologies, and social institutions is complex and involves exercise of power. Norton (2000) defines the notion of power as “socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated” (p. 7). In terms of Bourdieu’s theorization of different types of capital, literacy practices constitute a form of cultural capital – embodied capital, which comprises knowledge, skills, dispositions, linguistic practices, and representational resources (Carrington & Luke, 1997).
As has been discussed above in the framework of NLS, there are multiple literacy practices within and across communities of practice. Learning academic literacy practices at a U.S. university entails gaining linguistic resources, which may or may not grant students cultural capital. The value of these literacy practices depends on what significance these resources have in the eyes of the institutions that the students will join. As Carrington and Luke (1997) argue, "linguistic capital valued within one social field may be of limited value within another ... or may be contingent upon other field-specific (and therefore culture and sub-culture specific) combinations of different forms of capital" (p. 101). Therefore, within one academic institution, one may encounter diverse disciplines with their own locally valued literacy practices – practices which, at the very same time, may not be deemed significant in other disciplines (e.g., freewriting in language studies vs. formally structured, impersonal lab reports in science classes). Therefore, the appropriation of academic literacies entails the need to consider the complex relations within and between social spaces students inhabit or will enter.

At a more global level, students' participation and investment is fashioned by the sociopolitical values fostered in their home countries (e.g., prestige of Western education), which in turn have been informed by the globalization forces of the world at large (Morgan and Ramanathan, 2005). Cultural reproduction theories (e.g., Gramsci, 1971; Phillipson, 1992) suggest that the hegemony of the English language will be perpetuated by the Periphery. This approach takes a deterministic view, which suggests that international students who acquire linguistic and cultural capital in the U.S. will return to their home countries to perpetuate the interests and values of the dominant global powers since those generally hold symbolic capital sanctioned by global forces. This paper, however, draws on the ideas of critical theorists (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001), who allow for a more complex understanding of the issues involved. Pennycook (2001) argues for
"conceptualization of global culture ... more in terms of the diversity, variety, and richness of popular local discourses, codes, and practices which resist and play-back systematicity and order" (Featherstone, 1990, p. 2, cited in Pennycook, 2001, p. 70). The approach of critical theorists implies acknowledging the power of globalization forces, yet avoiding deterministic views by seeking to understand "what is produced in cultural encounters, not just homogeneity or heterogeneity or imperialism or resistance, but rather what third cultures or third spaces are constantly being created" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 71). Although this suggests that responses are complex given the locally contingent nature of the symbolic capital a culture may hold, it appears that at the moment, Hanahana, Jun, and Inalou are more invested in appropriating the dominant academic practices, rather than exploring hybrid forms, since they perceive Western academic Discourses having great symbolic capital. In other words, the students’ responses align more with what cultural reproduction theorists would predict, rather than critical theorists.

Hanahana: Western academic conventions are the best

Hanahana’s engagement with the U.S. academic literacy practices has turned him into a strong advocate for Western academic conventions. Coming from an educational and professional background in China, where, according to Hanahana, people do not have a strong awareness of intellectual property since knowledge is believed to be communal, referencing has been a new practice for him. His analysis of research articles as well as feedback from his professors has led him to believe in the significance of referencing in the intertextual academic world. He has become firmly convinced that professional magazines and journals in China should begin to provide references for the articles they publish so that people could check the reliability of the information provided and relate it to other sources. He sees the
lack of references as “a big problem” which can be solved by appropriating Western academic practices:

Hanahana: I read some Chinese authors, if they graduated from United States or some Western country they are very good at writing the reference but some authors if they graduate from a Chinese university, they are not very good at it .... I know we should quote, we should use the reference but there is not such a strict rules for us to follow and we don’t have such APA manual books, I haven’t read it in China, but I think it’s because of the education. If the author is graduated from the Chinese university, they haven’t get training in this so you know the problem
Ave: mmmh (to encourage him keep on talking)
Hanahana: that’s a big problem. I talked with lot of my friends, Chinese friends, they found this is a really big problem because if you don’t, it’s difficult so our knowledge is lack of the systematically and it can’t be related to each other, it’s a major problem for Chinese academic research

He has also understood what types of sources hold symbolic value in the U.S. academia. For example, in his final paper for the certificate program, he initially planned to mainly draw upon online journal articles. Feedback that he received from his advisor pointed out that these types of sources should not be relied upon since they are generally not academic. Another issue the advisor pointed out was that works published ten years ago are “very outdated.” Hanahana’s response to this has been an acceptance of the academic research expectations of the dominant Discourse. This was reflected in his increased determination to work on finding current academic sources from the library and academic databases:

That’s the big challenge for me, at first I don’t know which kind of reference I should refer to ... and my professor told me you should reference the academic paper. I just read some newspaper and also get a lot of news online. I got email subscription membership but that is not reliable, you should reference to the books or the academic paper. So I think most useful skill I have learned is how to use the database and how to search and how to use library. And that’s very useful. I’m very good at using this modern technology and I like to play computer whole day so that’s probably very helpful. If you know how to gather this information, that’s the most important part you know how to organize this

Hanahana perceives that he has gained valuable symbolic capital through learning internationally recognized conventions. He believes that academic standards and the quality of education in the U.S. are much higher than in China. He has emphasized several times that the quality of research in America is significantly better than in China, and he sees the American academic papers having a very high standard towards which “you should improve
yourself to meet that standard.” He does not seem to question or problematize the standard; instead, he seems to look up to the American model and considers himself a “lucky guy” to be able to study here. This indebted sense of luck seems to be rather prevalent among international students, including Jun, whose perception of the quality of education in the US is, similarly to Hanabana, that it is better than in her home country. In other words, their perceptions appear to lend support to the cultural hegemony theories.

*Jun: Western degrees are the best*

Jun’s reflections suggest that degrees from U.S. universities are associated with great symbolic capital in Korea. She explained that, “everybody getting graduation in America, they thought much better than graduating in Korea,” because it is more prestigious to graduate from a U.S. university. The association of prestige with U.S. degrees is characteristic not only of Korea but numerous countries around the globe, from Europe to Asia to Africa (International Institute of English). Theorists of linguistic imperialism maintain that globalization means Americanization, which in turn means, among other things, the English language and English-medium education expanding at the expense of other languages (Phillipson, 2001). Interestingly, at the same time, Jun suggested that in terms of content, some of her high school classes in Korea were actually more demanding than her college classes in the U.S. The reason for this contradiction with respect to quality and prestige, as her comment appears to suggest, is that an American degree holds more institutional capital than a degree obtained from a Korean university. Despite the Korean quality of education being comparable or even superior to the American system, U.S. degrees are generally considered more valuable.
Besides gaining prestigious symbolic capital, one of Jun’s goals for coming to study in the U.S. was to become more fluent in English. She believes that her lack of the English language skills could limit her access to the U.S. academic community:

Jun: English, yeah I have to improve for surviving here huhuh yeah that’s most important
Ave: what do you mean by surviving here?
Jun: cos if I can’t use English, I can’t speak or use English very well, then it’s kind of contact with each other, I mean, American people I cannot join in their society

The excerpt reveals that Jun perceives her linguistic abilities as an obstacle for joining her imagined community of ‘an American university’, which, contrary to her initial expectations, contains people who speak her own first language. She made good friends with several Korean students as well as Korean-American classmates, who have taken science in English, and whom Jun seems to view as valuable resource. They formed a study group and study together daily for their biology and chemistry classes. Talking about her friends, Jun says:

Jun: actually that’s good for me you know, if I don’t know them, then it’s hard, really hard for me
Ave: why do you think it would be harder for you if you didn’t know them?
Jun: because I have to do it myself kind of but I can get help from them and they can explain to me what this [pointing to the word ‘photosynthesis’ in the lab report title] is, so I think the good thing is there are many Koreans so I can do with them, but the bad thing is I don’t speak English much time

My interactions with Jun have suggested that she relies heavily on her cooperation with her Korean-American friends since they have the linguistic capital she seems to lack. Her comment above, however, appears somewhat ironic. Although Jun seems to suppose that her studies in the U.S. grant her English speaking capital, this might not necessarily happen to the degree she might expect because she does not practice English “much time”. Despite this, Jun’s reflections reveal the importance of the English language capital: it is necessary for accessing the U.S. academic communities in order to be able to gain prestigious symbolic capital in the form of academic degrees.
Inalou: Western practices are the best

Similarly to Jun, Inalou perceives Western education as cultural capital, and one of her main goals is to improve her academic English language skills as a means to gaining more economic as well as social capital in her home country:

I feel it's really, really important to improve my English because I mean, especially in my country, if you can speak very, very well English, you’re educated well in English language country, it’s also benefit for yourself, like you get more salary and you can have a good position. Because I really want to develop myself and want to be doing something that’s really useful and helpful for my country, my family, myself as well, so I wanna really, I don’t know how to say in good English, by learning English and study improve my English so I can do something that’s important maybe to myself or others

She perceives English and Western education to be essential for access to international institutions that hold considerable power. One of the reasons for her coming to study in the U.S. was her aim to study about the media and communications in order to have the linguistic as well as academic knowledge and skills that would enable her to work with international agencies. She believes that equipped with this knowledge, she can be of great benefit for her home country:

Ave: what is your own view about English, you said that it’s important to have it if you want to get better job, what is your personal view on this that English plays such a great role
Inalou: yeah I think because my country is a new country and we get a lot of attention from the international people especially UN and US, there are a lot of countries that they have their interest on my country like we got World Bank so it’s really I mean challenge and important as a Timorese. If I got good English then I can work with them and I think they need people that have a good background in English and maybe study abroad to help them to, how to say, help that agency or organization to work with East-Timorese to be a link or something like that

Again, Inalou’s points suggest the dangerous impact of the English educational imperialism. The support that international aid agencies provide to countries which are considered underdeveloped from the dominant Western perspective is dangerous in that it promotes continued dependence on the so-called Center powers. The underlying reason for this danger appears to be the fact that the flow of funds and ideas tends to be unidirectional,
thus constraining and undermining the prestige of local perspectives and intellectual potential
(Phillipson, 1992).

Similarly to Hanahana, Inalou seems to perceive America as a kind of model for her
home country, which gained independence fairly recently (in 2002). According to her
personal experience, the media channels in East Timor are under governmental control.
Therefore, her desire is to improve that situation by learning from the experience of another
democratic country. Inalou perceives America as a model of the freedom of the media: “we
believe Americans have freedom of media. I hope to learn something from here”. It is
significant that she does not seem to recognize that there is a considerable lack of freedom in
the U.S. media as well (Reporters Without Borders). Also, she does not appear to openly
question America as the model for her country, which is surprising given the worldwide
bemoan of Americanization of cultures via the mass media. As Phillipson (1992) maintains,
“the Centre cultural products serve as models for the Periphery, and many aspects of local
cultural creativity and social inventiveness, evolved over centuries, are thrown into confusion
or destroyed” (p. 61). Perceiving America as the model for professional media is a complex
issue since it may become a tool for media imperialism: it may result in the transfer of the
Centre ideology through the export of professional principles and practices (Phillipson, 1992).

The reflections of Hanahana, Jun, and Inalou reveal that they seem to accept the
ideology that “West is best” when it concerns U.S. education and academic standards. This is
a complex issue. English and its associate academic Discourse expectations have become
dominant worldwide through conscious language spread (Pennycook, 2001). Furthermore, the
so-called Periphery scholars have often adopted a reproductionist position vis-à-vis these
English Discourse standards (Canagarajah, 1999; 2002a). There can be costs and benefits for
both individuals and nations to the global spread of English (e.g., loss of ethnic cultures or
gain of social and economic capital). At academic and personal levels, students are in the difficult position of needing to learn and use the language of power (Davis et al., 2005; Delpit, 1998) while not buying into the inferiority of their own languages and literacies. Also, students do gain power in the U.S. and in their home countries through learning English academic Discourses and this may be of central importance to them. The elite position in their home countries that English may give them may override their concerns for linguistic imperialism. The question still is whether or not linguistic and cultural hegemony is being perpetuated. It seems that it may be perpetuated at the level of inculcating the ideology since Hanahana, Inalou, and Jun appear to buy into the dominant Discourses as true. In other words, when these students become the elite in their own countries, they may end up perpetuating inequitable practices that value Western knowledge and marginalize indigenous epistemology.

Concluding discussion

The paper investigates how three international students from different disciplinary and sociocultural backgrounds perceive their academic literacy practices within a U.S. university. The analysis suggests that there is an incongruity between the content of EAPP courses and the rhetorical expectations in their major fields of study. In the EAPP, the students appeared to develop mainly their general writing skills and fluency, become familiar with the writing process, as well as some forms of academic writing conventions (e.g., the preference of formal words over phrasal verbs, and referencing conventions). Also, as Inalou's reflections suggest, EAPP writing courses develop students' awareness of some rhetorical aspects such as purpose and audience. However, the analysis reveals that what students learn in the EAPP does not provide them with the knowledge they actually need to write successful papers in their major. What they need are tools for and practice in analyzing research produced in their
fields at metatextual level. As Jun’s and Hanahana’s cases suggest, they gained that type of rhetorical awareness in the Discourse communities of their majors, more specifically, in courses where they were provided explicit instruction on genre expectations, and where their tasks included critical analysis of texts produced in their field. In other words, their awareness of genres developed significantly through engaging with the academic writing practices of their majors. However, as NLS researchers suggest (e.g., Davis et al., 2005; McComiskey, 2000) it is important for students to be aware of not only the textual and rhetorical level of texts, but also the discursive level. Unfortunately, as Davis et al. (2005) point out on the basis of McComiskey’s observations, the discursive level “is the one most undertaught” (p. 205).

The understanding of discursive level of texts is highly important for students to gain. Equipped with knowledge about the ways in which institutional, sociocultural and sociopolitical values are involved in the creation of texts, students may be able to see that academic discourses are not monolithic, that the conventions they espouse are socially constructed and may vary greatly from context to context. As Lankshear and Knobel (2003) argue,

[to participate effectively and productively in any literate practice, people must be socialized into it. But if individuals are socialized into a social practice without realizing that it is socially constructed and selective, and that it can be acted on and transformed, they cannot play an active role in changing it. (p. 11)]

Of course, it seems rather challenging to balance both goals – to socialize students into academic language while maintaining a critical distance from that socialization. It appears nearly impossible especially with respect to socialization involving the English language and U.S. degrees, both of which have hegemonic power.

Indeed, the acquisition of academic literacy practices is very complex, especially for international students. One the one hand, they face the challenges of having to read and write academic texts in their L2 (some texts are quite demanding for even L1 English speakers). Through their studies in the U.S., they gain linguistic capital. This is an important goal for
many international students coming from countries where English is not the dominant language. However, greater control over one’s linguistic repertoire in the English language is not a guarantee for academic success. Coupled with linguistic challenges, international students are faced with social and academic practices that may differ from their previous experiences. Furthermore, as Inalou’s case suggests, successful participation in academic disciplines may sometimes be hindered by the fact that the dominant Discourse community assumes sociocultural background knowledge which international students have not been exposed to in their home cultures.

Critical theorists argue that cultural encounters create third spaces where students can exercise their agency, negotiate their identities, and form hybrid forms of practices (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001). Looking at the reflections of the three participants, it seems that at the moment, their perceptions of their studies are tainted by the cultural and sociopolitical imperialism of the Center practices. For example, Hanahana seems to have bought into the idea that Western academic practices are the standard for China; Inalou appears to believe that the American media practices are a model for East Timor; and Jun clearly perceives that American degrees hold greater prestige than degrees earned from equally qualified programs in Korea. In other words, they know that the education and the linguistic capital they can gain in the U.S. are valued in their home countries. They seem to be more interested in gaining that capital than creating their own hybrid forms. But this does not mean that they have forever bought into the “West is best” ideology. It may be that this is the point where they currently are on the journey of their ideological becoming (Freedman & Ball, 2004). Their values may change depending on the social and institutional contexts into which they move. As Carrington and Luke (1997) maintain, the value of practices depends on the symbolic value institutions grant them. However, it seems probable that students will
benefit socially and materially from their degrees, and therefore, they will not recognize any reason to question the "West is best" ideology.

With respect to third spaces, the students may not be aware that there is space for agency to create hybrid forms of academic practices. At the same time, it could also be that through their awareness of differences between disciplinary genre expectations (e.g., that some departments value highly impersonal genres of academic writings, while others encourage more personal writing) they have gained some sense of possibilities for hybrid forms. But they might be apprehensive of creating hybrid practices since these might not have symbolic capital in their fields of study. In addition, as Hanahana's case suggests, it could also be that the academic conventions seem so rigid that they do not venture into creating more hybrid forms.

**Implications**

A clear pedagogical implication that I believe this study establishes is that students need to engage more with the possibilities for third spaces, rather than absorbing dominant Discourses as the best or the only way with words. Perhaps EAPP courses can open up spaces for this exploration, for example, through inviting students to critically reflect on their (academic) literacy experiences and thus engage their knowledge and identities in the learning process. One practical way of opening up the space is to have students compose their literacy autobiographies. A literacy biography is “an account of significant factors and events that have contributed to your development as a reader or writer (Connor, 1999, p. 41, cited in Cho, 2005). Writing a literacy autobiography requires students to explore the origins of their attitudes, beliefs and theories about reading and writing practices, thus possibly opening a space for beginning to understand the socially constructed nature of literacy practices.
It seems that all the students, especially Jun and Hanahana, look for models of writing as their means for apprenticeship into their disciplinary discourse community. Along with the need to explore hybrid forms of academic literacy practices, the study establishes the need for EAPP classes to encourage students to bring in assignments from their content area, rather than focus only on writing assignments designed specifically for the writing class. In other words, EAPP classes should teach the students ways to analyze the characteristics of their academic genres in order for them to gain metatextual awareness of the academic literacy practices that govern their disciplines.

Another critical pedagogical implication that emerges from this study is the importance of the discursive level analyses of academic texts and the development of Gee’s notion of powerful literacy. Lankshear and Knobel (2003) maintain that “[p]racticing a powerful literacy ... can provide the basis for reconstituting our selves/identities and resituating ourselves within society” (p. 13).

Along with the need for discursive analyses, this study suggests including the development of textual and rhetorical meta-awareness. Hanahana and Jun did not really value their EAPP classes since these did not seem to provide them with the kind of metalinguistic knowledge they needed to produce papers that were expected of them in their majors. Discursive and metalinguistic analyses imply that it might be worthwhile to consider introducing ‘students-as-ethnographers’ approach (e.g., Davis et al., 2005; Skarin, 2005) to EAP classes. Skarin (2005) explains,

As text analysis tools are being explicitly taught, course members can go out into their school communities as ethnographers of communication. They can interrogate the implicit ideologies that are continually reproduced within academic communities while at once reflecting on their own transnational identities, cultural ideologies, and the relationships among them. Students can also begin to see their classrooms as a microcosm of the larger social and political world which they reflect, reproduce, and also change (whether consciously or unconsciously). (p. 25)
For example, the college students in Skarin's (2005) study learned interviewing and observation techniques, and artifact collecting skills, which they later used to explore the ideal students, the social values and practices, the pedagogical practices, the positioning of students, as well as the structures of texts common in the microculture of a particular classroom. The teacher supported the students in analyzing and interpreting the data to write ethnographic essays which explored questions such as: What are/is the social norms/Discourse of this microculture and why is this so? How do/es the social norms/Discourse reflect/reinforce power structures? In what ways would you change the texts used within the microculture? The teaching practices? Skarin (2005) reports that the students-as-ethnographers approach enabled the students to develop, among other skills and knowledge, their awareness of academic genres and practices, of how the school acts as a socializing force and how socializing forces within school exert power over them and other members, and broaden their field of possible identities. In other words, the approach enabled the students to develop their awareness of the three levels of composition suggested by McComiskey (2000).

It appears that the students-as-ethnographers approach could provide EAP students with valuable tools for exploring and learning what is expected of them in their major fields of study. It may help them get an understanding of the fact that academic conventions are not as rigid as they seem, which, in turn, may provide space for their agency to experiment with more hybrid forms of academic literacy practices.

International students' apprenticeship into the English academic literacy practices is a complex process. In this study, the investigation of this complexity through the theoretical lens of NLS and critical approaches to applied linguistics has shed insightful light on some pieces of this mosaic. However, these theories contain much more potential for researching the issues involved in (international) students' academic socialization. I would especially like
to call for further research that would explore students' appropriation of both written and oral academic literacy practices in order to discover how and what hybrid forms are created through this process, and how EAP courses can open up space for students to explore the possibilities for hybrid forms in academic contexts.
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