

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

Department of Applied Linguistics

**NEGOTIATION OF PEDAGOGIES IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE WRITING INSTRUCTION**

A Dissertation in

Applied Linguistics

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
December 2016

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ABSTRACT

The growing field of second language writing has been primarily focused on the study of English as a second language (ESL) pedagogy, particularly in the United States, leaving writing pedagogy in other countries, where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), largely ignored. This has happened both because writing pedagogy in EFL settings is often seen as no more than a imported ESL teaching methods which have been adapted to local practical limitations, such as a lack of textbooks and other resources, and ideological constraints, such as exam-driven cultures and a perception that writing is secondary to the teaching of other language skills (Leki, 2001). Yet research in international writing instruction can bring scholarly attention to important factors in writing pedagogy which might otherwise be overlooked, in particular the influence of institutional practices and regulations (Cimasko & Reichelt, 2011), and in so doing, can help scholars question their assumptions about writing instruction (Donahue & Anson, 2015).

This study examines in depth two contexts of EFL writing instruction, the English departments of two universities in Serbia, with a focus on how teachers negotiate between multiple rhetorical and education traditions based on their own conceptions of writing, the needs and expectations of the students, and the positioning of English language writing within the educational institution and the community. Employing ethnographic data collection methods and using cultural historical activity theory (Engeström, 1987) as an analytical framework, this one-semester case study draws on classroom observations, interviews, and textual artifacts. This study first examines three factors which shape EFL writing instruction in these contexts: the overall curricular objectives, a contrastive rhetoric ideology, and the role of foreign lecturers, tracing how each factor is a reflection of multiple scale-levels (Blommaert, 2010) from local to global. This study then examines several pedagogical innovations as resolutions of tensions between elements of the activity system, concluding that locally appropriate pedagogy (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996) emerges from these negotiations, as teachers exercise agency in implementing their goals. Ultimately this project suggests that EFL writing instruction must be understood through examination of local and global levels of context.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank first my advisor, Dr. Suresh Canagarajah, for his tremendous support and mentorship throughout this project, and for profoundly inspiring my thinking about language, teaching, and the role of the scholar in the world. I thank also the members of my doctoral committee for their patient guidance and invaluable advice throughout this project: Dr. Karen Johnson, Dr. Deryn Verity, and Dr. Xiaoye You. I thank also the fellow doctoral students who have worked with me in writing groups and individually, providing not only insightful feedback but also much-needed encouragement to continue: Eunjeong Lee, Dorothy Worden, Madhav Kafle, and Kwanghoon Yoon. I thank my family for their loving support and unending belief in me, particularly my husband Constantin Schreiber, who created space in our lives for me to write. And finally, I extend my deepest gratitude to the faculty and students at Southern Serbian University and Central Serbia, who so generously welcomed me into their schools, homes, and lives.

The semiperiphery, then, should perhaps be seen as a place of tension, a contact zone where different attitudes, discourses, and practices meet and merge. As such **it is effervescent with possibilities, allowing dominant attitudes to be challenged and new paradigms to arise in a way that would be unthinkable in centre countries**, where the monopoly over what is considered valid knowledge holds more sway.”

~Bennett, *The Semiperiphery of Academic Writing*, 2014, p.7

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the fall of 2010, I arrived in Serbia as an English Language Fellow, assigned to teach second and third year essay writing courses in the English department of a large university. The goals of this State Department program are very clear – as a Fellow, I was specifically charged with improving English language pedagogy:

The EL Fellow Program fosters mutual understanding, promotes English language learning and enhances English teaching capacity abroad...EL Fellows model and demonstrate up-to-date TEFL classroom practices that help foster thoughtful and responsible behavior in students and teachers of English (US Dept of State)

With a master's degree, two years of teaching first year composition courses for international students, and a variety of other ESL and EFL teaching experience, I felt reasonably confident that I could accomplish the State Department's mission. And so I embarked on my year of teaching prepared to draw on those experiences, learning about my students and learning from the teachers, of course, but also sharing the wisdom I believed I brought with me.

It took an unfortunately long time for me to notice that the methods, goals, and understanding of the roles of teachers and students I held were completely out of place in this new setting. The most vivid examples were the peer review and multiple drafts I had so enthusiastically implemented in my writing classes, the same classes in which students were required to be assessed by a timed essay exam, and then there was the – I felt – deeply innovative and engaging task of asking students to research and write their own Wikipedia articles, a task so divorced from that same timed exam that students simply stopped showing up to my classes. Far from needing to keep my Serbian colleagues “up-to-date”, it was my own conceptions and ultimately pedagogy which had to be negotiated within their fully developed, smoothly functioning educational system.

For all of the many wonderful outcomes of my time in Serbia, this particular experience, one which is certainly not unique in the literature on English language teaching (ELT) (e.g., Clachar, 2000; Cummings, 2004; Hargan, 1995, Reichelt, 2011), demonstrates a few significantly problematic constructs. First, it reflects the global hierarchy which still rules the field of English language teaching (ELT), in which the English-dominant countries in the geopolitical global center are assumed to produce the best, most scientifically advanced methods (and by extension, instructors) and then to export those methods and instructors to countries in the global periphery (Canagarajah, 2002a; Holliday, 1994; Sampson, 1984) who then adapt the methods as best they can to the “local peculiarities” of the educational system (Tarnopolsy, 2011). This hierarchy, motivated by ideologies which privilege the native speaker as the model of authentic speech (Widdowson, 1992), is deeply ingrained in the field of ELT.

This same ideology is echoed in the field of composition's United States-centric bias, which rests on the assumption that writing is rarely taught outside of the U.S., and if it does exist, it is difficult to learn about or not worth knowing about:

claims about the absence of writing instruction—and in particular, first-year or introductory writing courses—in countries outside of the United States are common currency. These claims have had the effect of ...“othering” countries that have different, complex, but well-established traditions in both writing research and writing instruction, presenting these countries as somehow lacking or behind the times (Donahue, 2009, p.213-214).

As in the field of ELT, the field of composition is in thrall to what Donahue (2009) calls the “import/export” model: composition scholars in the U.S. consider themselves to be the originators of composition pedagogy, and as such “import” international students who need to be taught how to write, and “export” expertise in teaching writing, in the form of materials, methods, and teachers. The outcome, in both fields, is the same – a view of English language teaching and writing pedagogy abroad as adapted, “not quite right” forms of pedagogy created in and for the global center (Leki, 2001b).

Lack of research on EFL writing pedagogy

As the field of second language (L2) writing has expanded and developed over the past decades, creating profound insights into the processes of teaching and writing in a second language, the field's main focus has remained firmly on writing in English as a second language (ESL), with research on EFL writing making up a small proportion of the L2 writing literature (Ortega, 2009). This focus has created what Reichelt and Cimasko call an “imbalance in the literature” (2011, p.vii), privileging the writing and teaching that is done in English, in powerful center countries, over the vast array of foreign language writing instruction that happens across the world. As the field of L2 writing has fought to distinguish and define itself, it has placed so much emphasis on the differences between L1 writing and L2 writing, that the context of L2 writing has sometimes been hidden or overshadowed, eliding the differences between ESL and EFL (Perpignan, 2011).

This tendency towards an emphasis on ESL is built in: as Kubota (2013) points out, the very name of the field, second language writing, already contains assumptions about who should be studied: “people writing in their second language in second language contexts”, and these assumptions overlook “writers’ possible multilingual backgrounds, “foreign” rather than “second” language learning situations, and global lingua franca contexts” (p.430). Because ESL is assumed to be the standard, and foreign language writing the exception, EFL writing has been largely ignored as an object of research.

Where EFL writing is discussed in center-based, international publications, the primary focus has been on how pedagogical methods developed in the global center (typically process writing pedagogy and its component techniques, such as peer review) are taken up in EFL contexts. More specifically, the trend has been towards enumerating the ways in which process writing techniques are adapted in response to the local instructional context. As a result, EFL writing instruction is figured as a version of ESL writing pedagogy constrained by both practical and ideological factors (Leki, 2001b).

This analysis of the literature is based on an unfortunately limited sample of the work on EFL writing pedagogy, as scholarship on writing pedagogy is regularly published for local audiences in non-English publications (Donahue, 2009; Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011) including journals in the local language and local ELT conference proceedings (Chou & Hayes, 2009), which may well not take this deficit perspective on EFL writing pedagogy. However, the field of L2 writing in the global center continues to function, like composition studies more broadly, “on the tacit assumption that scholarship...is located - produced, found, and circulated - in English-medium, U.S.-centric publications only” (Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011, p.271-272). This assumption both supports and is supported by the negative portrayal of EFL writing pedagogy in the literature, and is one important reason to push for more attention to writing pedagogy internationally.

Benefits of conducting research across borders

Expanding our research focus to L2 writing instruction beyond ESL requires looking beyond the borders of the United States and other English-dominant countries and considering what traditions and techniques of writing instruction exist in international settings. This expansion has multiple benefits. First, it helps to shift scholarly attention away from center methods, highlighting instead the international scope of pedagogical practices. Research in foreign language writing, including EFL, can bring attention to themes which may otherwise be overlooked, including the role of English as an international lingua franca, the impact of national context on writing pedagogy, and the influence of institutional regulations and educational goals (Cimasko & Reichelt, 2011). Second, if we think of pedagogy beyond the level of individual classrooms, an expanded understanding of writing programs internationally can help us to uncover and challenge our assumptions about what makes writing pedagogy effective:

By offering writing teachers and administrators opportunities to see the localness of their work, transnational writing programs counter assumptions about the universality of writing instruction (Martins, 2015, p.5)

Anson and Donahue (2015) further argue that because “writing programs beyond the United States are shaped by and into unique institutional, disciplinary, and pedagogical contexts” understanding them demands that we acknowledge “the teaching of writing as

situated within complex histories and cultures” (p.23). Research on writing across borders therefore “encourages us to revisit our entrenched beliefs about the ‘automatic’ value of our courses, our field, and our research” (Anson & Donahue, 2015, p.24) – which can only help us as scholars, administrators, and teachers to develop more nuanced and sensitive perspectives. Part of the value of crossing borders as teachers and scholars, Canagarajah (2016) writes, is that the interpretations of pedagogical concepts in diverse locations “provide scope for new insights and applications, nudging the field in new directions” (p.439).

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to uncover the workings of another system of writing instruction, precisely because in a globally connected world, deep cross-cultural understanding is vital:

We need the ability to negotiate [which] comes from deep intercultural awareness; the ability to shift in understanding of our global position; ...the deep familiarity with other systems and contexts...without these, our “internationalizing” efforts will remain stuck in a-historical, a-contextual, and highly partial modes of intellectual tourism” (Donahue, 2009, p.236).

Overview of the study

My goal in this study is to correct what I see as a harmful misconception in the literature on EFL writing instruction. This misconception – one furthered/spread by the most well-meaning of researchers, including myself in the pilot stages of this project – is that EFL writing instruction is at best a clever adaptation of ESL writing instruction to limited and frustrating material and ideological constraints, and at worst a shallow and incomplete imitation of ESL writing pedagogy (Leki, 2001b). The scholarly consequence of this misconception is that the study of EFL writing instruction has nothing to offer the pedagogy of those who teach in the center beyond a sort of marveling at the creativity of teachers laboring under strange and difficult conditions, what Donahue (2009) might call “the occasional encounter, fulfilling but exotic” (p.236).

It is certainly true that for many EFL writing teachers working in the global periphery and semi-periphery (Bennett, 2014), in contrast to teachers in the global center, conditions *are* difficult: class sizes can be large; teachers may have limited access to training, technology, and materials; and writing exams may be predetermined and difficult to change. However, it would be a mistake to see their pedagogy only in terms of these issues. These teachers, like all teachers, work within the reality of their specific contexts and manage to create a pedagogy that is appropriately local - and in the era of English as the international language, appropriately global. The rich and complex ways in which these teachers formulate a pedagogy – not a hybrid or even adapted pedagogy, but one which emerges from negotiations between teachers’ beliefs, international practices, and local circumstances – can show us all how to navigate a path between institutional

demands, students' concerns, and our own understandings of best practices – to balance between local and foreign languages, educational traditions, and rhetorics.

To that end, I explore the how EFL writing instructors in the English departments of two universities in Serbia negotiate between local traditions of writing instruction and internationally circulating writing pedagogies, taking into account the positioning of writing within the educational institution and the status of English as an international language. Employing ethnographic data collection methods and using cultural historical activity theory as an analytic lens, this one-semester case study aims to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of English language writing instruction in this context?
- What social and institutional factors impact the nature of English language writing instruction in this context?
- How do teachers in this context negotiate between local and international pedagogies in their practice?

By providing rich, contextualized descriptions of EFL writing instruction through the lens of Vygotskian cultural historical activity theory, this study aims to challenge the limited (and limiting) conception of EFL writing as dependent on center practices, and provide insight into how teachers negotiate with factors of their teaching contexts to promote their own objectives and meet the needs of their students. By providing a way to account for teachers as individuals functioning in a broader social system, cultural historical activity theory offers a way to trace those negotiations and bring them to the forefront of our understanding of EFL writing pedagogy, empowering local teachers and bringing knowledge of their practices back to the global center.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework and literature review

In the first part of this chapter, I discuss scholarly critiques of the circulation of English language teaching (ELT) methods in the world, specifically how such global flows have been critiqued for helping to create and maintain economic and linguistic hierarchies between the English-dominant countries in the global center and non-English-dominant countries in the global periphery. My goal here is to provide a brief background of the main theoretical issues around globalization and ELT which inform my study.

In the second part of this chapter, I give a comprehensive overview of research on writing instruction in places where English is generally considered to be spoken as a foreign language (EFL). Specifically, I discuss how that pedagogy is portrayed in the literature, and trace the growing tension between the idealization of center methods and a call for such pedagogies to be localized. I examine within the research two approaches to understanding EFL writing pedagogy: adaptation and appropriation.

In the third part of this chapter, I will propose an alternative framework for understanding EFL writing pedagogy, combining concepts from composition studies, applied linguistics, and research on teacher cognition. I then move to an explanation of Vygotskian cultural historical activity theory, its development, its conceptualization of teacher innovation, and how I will employ it as a theoretical lens in data analysis. Ultimately, my goal is to draw on these frameworks to place teachers' innovations within their specific social context at the heart of understanding EFL writing pedagogy, and thus to view such pedagogy not as an adapted or deficient version of center methods but as an independent and complex enterprise of its own.

In this discussion, I adopt terminology which requires some justification; the first is the term English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Traditionally, the literature on English Language Teaching (ELT) has adhered to the three-tier World Englishes model based on the work of Kachru (1986), in which countries are grouped according to the official status of English in the country: In Inner Circle countries such as the United States and Great Britain, English is the national language, in Outer Circle countries such as India and Nigeria, English is one official language, and in Expanding Circle countries such as China and Russia, English has no official status. English teaching has been classified as English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Inner and Outer Circles, and as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Expanding Circle. These traditional distinctions have been heavily criticized: first, the distinctions between ESL and EFL tend to blur in many richly multilingual settings like Hong Kong, where, as Lee (2011) points out, English has been called both a foreign language and a second language in research, and amongst the general public there is an "ambivalence regarding the role of English" (p.119). Second, these sorts of rigid boundaries around and categorizations of language have been problematized by scholars working in the translingual paradigm, who have demonstrated that language use is deeply hybrid, context-dependent, and creative, and that the monolithic association of one physical nation with one language breaks down quickly under scrutiny (e.g., Higgins, 2009; Pennycook, 2010; Canagarajah, 2015; You, 2011).

While acknowledging how these classifications have been rightly contested, I will adopt the term EFL to describe the teaching of English in Serbia, for two main reasons. First, although the linguistic landscape of Serbia continues to evolve, with English becoming ever more deeply embedded in the lives of Serbs as a lingua franca for travel, business, and media, its official status in the country is still that of a foreign language, with none of the controversy that exists in more multilingual and post-colonial places such as Hong Kong (Lee, 2011). More importantly, while students and teachers may well adopt a translingual approach in their personal communication (e.g., Schreiber, 2015), in the realm of education they view English as unquestionably a foreign language, and themselves as in pursuit of the “pure”, native speaker varieties. Their orientation to the language as a school subject thus continues to be, in Kachru’s classification, “norm-dependent”. This separation between a standard language ideology in school settings, and more flexible, playful language practices for personal use, especially in digital spaces, is hardly unusual for EFL students (Saxena, 2011). Though it certainly does not preclude code-mixing and other hybrid language practices in the classroom, it does mean that from an emic perspective, the term EFL is both salient and appropriate for my participants.

In addition to the linguistic classification of EFL, in this study I also adopt, following Canagarajah (1999), the geopolitical terms “center” and “periphery” to describe the relationship between the economically and politically powerful nations in which English is a first language (i.e. the Inner Circle, primarily North America and Britain) and the less powerful nations traditionally considered parts of the Outer and Expanding circles. These terms have also been deeply contested; for example, Appadurai (1996) has posited that the center-periphery model is too simple for “the new global cultural economy”, which is instead “a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order” (p.6). And certainly, political changes such as the rise of the European Union have altered the traditional global power hierarchies to some extent – though not to the extent of fully including the states of eastern Europe into the global labor market (Prendergast, 2008). As Canagarajah (2002a) points out, globalization does not automatically equate to greater freedom; even a global society with rich linguistic and cultural hybridity is still deeply stratified. In the field of ELT, particularly in the marginalized region of the Balkans, the center-periphery distinction remains alive and well, deeply affecting the lived experiences of teachers and students.

One useful nuance in these depictions of global relations is the addition of a third position, that of the “semi-periphery”, a term originally proposed by Wallerstein (1984) within world systems theory (Bennett, 2014). Semi-peripheral countries, are located between the center and the periphery, with characteristics of both; universities in the semi-periphery

tend to act as conduits for knowledge flows emanating from the centre (received via transnational partnerships, visiting lecturers, participation in international conferences or scholarships to centre institutions), which is then conveyed to the outer rim of the system through their own events and publications (Bennett, 2014, p.3)

Thus, the semiperiphery play an extremely important part in the global academic system, “simultaneously sanctioning the values emanating from the centre while refreshing it with new perspectives brought from outside” (Bennett, 2014, p.3). While Serbia may not be considered semi-periphery in all spheres, the term neatly describes the positioning of those working within the Serbian academy, especially in the field of ELT, in which the center-periphery flow is so deeply entrenched.

2.1 Global flow of ELT methods

Since the 1980’s, scholars in applied linguistics have been actively critiquing the ways in which the spread of English teaching methods and materials is complicit in global power hierarchies. More specifically, the global spread of English language teaching methodologies has been criticized for its imperialist overtones and its degradation of local pedagogical knowledge (Phillipson, 1992). As Pennycook (1989) points out, within the field of ELT there has been “a one-way flow of prescriptivist knowledge” from the center to the periphery, as

the knowledge produced in the center academic institutions is legitimated through a series of political relationships that privilege it over other possible forms of knowledge (p.596)

The political dominance of the center means that pedagogical ideas and practices from the center are assumed to be founded on (neutral, complete) scientific knowledge, and therefore the best – no matter where they are used. Sampson (1984) called this problematic assumption “the fallacy of the unidimensionality of development” – the idea that everything that comes from an advanced or developed country must also be highly advanced. Under this fallacy, she argues, “educators in technologically developed countries assume that the teaching methodologies they develop are exportable in the same way that the technologies of these countries are exportable”, and further assume that if there are problems with the method, it is “not the technology that is at fault, but the unreadiness of the country to receive that technology” (Sampson, 1984, p.21-22).

However, as these scholars have pointed out again and again, the methods developed in the center are created in one specific set of social conditions, typically within privileged institutions of higher education – circumstances which are far from universal. The idealization of these methods means that TESOL pedagogy in the periphery “automatically becomes second class in that it is forced to make difficult adaptations of methodologies that do not really suit” (Holliday, 1994, p.13). And, as Canagarajah (2002a) describes, this has had profound consequences for teachers in the periphery:

Greeting each new method that is shipped out of the centre with awe and bewilderment, periphery teachers and institutions spend their limited resources on

purchasing the new teaching material. To learn to use these, periphery institutions have to spend more resources for getting the assistance of centre experts for re-training their teaching cadre. This becomes a vortex of professional dependence into which periphery communities get drawn ever deeper (p.135)

With the advent of the internet and easier access to free teaching materials, the “vortex of professional dependence” has arguably become more subtle, taking on a less financial and more psychological quality. Ideologies around the superiority of the “native speaker” mean that native speakers are granted to privilege of determining authentic language use, and by extension, authentic language pedagogy (Widdowson, 1994). These ideologies continue to shape local EFL teachers’ relationship to both the subject they teach and the methods they use – and keep a steady stream of native speakers arriving as often uncontested experts. Where these ideologies are strong enough, local teachers may discount the value of their own hybrid local practices, which remain unacknowledged, untheorized, and even hidden from the view of visiting center scholars (Canagarajah, 2016).

English language teaching methods have overwhelmingly flowed only in one direction, from the center to the periphery. While acknowledging that this process has had positive effects, enabling professional growth and development for practitioners in the periphery, it has also been of tremendous profit to those in the center, a fact that has been critiqued by scholars for 30 years. Despite this history of scholarly critique, these practices are ongoing, and perhaps nowhere more visible than in the teaching of writing in EFL contexts.

2.2 Approaches to EFL writing

The center-periphery flow of methods detailed above, and the assumptions about the relative quality of methods that underlies this flow, is reflected in, first, the lack of scholarly attention to EFL writing in both L2 writing and in composition, even as it experiences a “global turn” (Hesford, 2006). Second, it is reflected in the fact that where EFL writing is studied, the emphasis has been on documenting how center writing pedagogies are taken up in EFL contexts (Leki, 2001b). In L2 writing literature, as in the general ELT literature, EFL writing instruction has been positioned as a limited version of center pedagogies - the dependent, second-class citizen.

L2 writing: ESL as the standard

The focus on ESL writers in the American university setting derives from the origins of L2 writing as a field of study. In the United States, ESL writing pedagogy can

be traced back to the 1940's, at the very outset of the field of applied linguistics, generally considered to be the founding of the University of Michigan Language Institute in response to the post-war flood of international students (Matsuda, 1999, 2006b). The influx of international students together with the rise of open admissions introduced larger numbers of ESL writers to American universities and by the 1970's ESL writing textbooks began to appear, and by the 1980's L2 writers and writing processes became a subject of significant academic attention (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015). The study of L2 writing at that time (and arguably, today) existed largely as a subfield of applied linguistics which drew inspiration and methods from its L1 counterpart, mainstream composition, which was itself largely concerned with the teaching of first year composition in the American university (Santos, 1992; Silva & Leki, 2004). Thus, from the beginning of L2 writing as a sub-field, its primary goal has been to understand how best to meet the needs of ESL students at the tertiary level.

This perspective on L2 writing is heavily American-centric, in part because the American academy has been teaching writing as a stand-alone skill at the college level – and documenting its efforts to do so effectively – longer and more prolifically than European and British universities (Bräuer, 2012; Bazerman et al., 2010). Yet it is important to recognize, in attempts to understand EFL writing pedagogy, that ELT as a global enterprise is subject to a rich mixture of influences entirely separate from the American academy. The British Council has had a long and influential presence in EFL instruction around the world, not only in post-colonial contexts but also in the semi-periphery nations of eastern Europe (e.g., Prendergast, 2008, on the impact of the British Council's programs in Slovakia), bringing British approaches to the teaching of writing to these contexts. That these influences have been under-represented in the L2 writing literature is part of the American-centric bias within the field and within composition studies more broadly (Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011).

Thus, as the L2 writing literature has developed, it has remained primarily focused on ESL classrooms, with ESL writing generally treated as the standard, and EFL writing (and even more so, foreign language writing in languages other than English) as the exception (You, 2010). Thus, for example, when Ortega (2009) conducted a review of issues of both the *Journal of Second Language Writing* and articles focusing on writing in *TESOL Quarterly* since 1992, she determined that EFL writing made up less than a third of the articles, with the majority of studies conducted in East Asia and a few in Europe. It is this sort of emphasis which led Reichelt and Cimasko, in the introduction to their 2011 edited collection on foreign language writing pedagogy, to note that L2 writing research has focused largely on “writing in English in English-dominant contexts”, and that part of the impetus for their book is to address what they call “this imbalance in the literature” (p.vii).

Composition's "global turn": L1 writing as standard

Parallel to this expansion in L2 writing research towards foreign language writing contexts is the "global turn" within composition studies. In the past two decades, the field of composition studies has seen repeated calls for internationalization and an examination of its own American-centric biases. One of the earliest such calls, Muchiri et al (1995), drew attention to the ways in which the field functioned under the assumption that the sole source of knowledge about the teaching of academic writing was in the United States, and that outside of the United States, there was "no interest or research in academic writing" (p.176). Since that time, scholars such as Donahue (2009), Horner (2011), and You (2011), have argued that the field of composition needs to adopt a global perspective on its work, moving past its emphasis on "the U.S. sociopolitical scene" and acknowledging the reality of composition as a worldwide enterprise (Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011, p.271).

This global turn, as in L2 writing, has had valuable broadening effects - for example, two recent edited collections of papers from the "Writing Research Across Borders" conferences: *Traditions of Writing Research* (Bazerman et al., 2010) and *International Advances in Writing Research* (Bazerman et al., 2012), each feature more than thirty chapters on writing research from a broad array of contexts, including K-12, university, and workplace writing; writing in a variety of disciplines, including social and hard sciences; and writing in languages from Spanish to Polish to Chinese. The goal of these collections is specifically to "introduce the great variety of work globally" in "different national and historical contexts" (Bazerman et al, 2012, p.4). This sort of work opens up U.S. composition to the rich diversity of traditions and practices in global writing scholarship and pedagogy.

However, the "global turn" overall has, as Donahue (2009) points out, primarily been concerned with how U.S. scholars might benefit from an understanding and appreciation of L1 writing, rhetoric, and research traditions around the globe. For example, the two collections described above focus on L1 writing in these diverse settings, with a marginal number of L2 writing studies, including one EFL pedagogy chapter in each volume. I argue, following You (2010), that an understanding of how English language writing pedagogy is done in EFL settings, mingling with, absorbing, and impacting the local L1 pedagogy, has much to teach scholars in both L2 writing specifically and composition studies more broadly, challenging our monolingual and imperialist assumptions about our students, the English language, and the United States' place in the world, as we seek to make our work "more ethically global" (p.6).

Deficit orientation: the adaptation approach

The main goal of research on EFL writing pedagogy has been primarily the investigation of how process writing and other Western methods are taken up in EFL contexts. More specifically, the trend has been towards enumerating the ways in which

process writing techniques are adapted in response to the instructional context – what I call the “adaptation” approach to studying EFL writing pedagogy. In her foundational 2001 article, Ilona Leki articulates this research trend as follows:

As interest in process approaches spread to other parts of the world, research articles inevitably began to appear in which researchers examined a site to determine whether process approaches were truly being implemented and then reported that what looked like a modern, sanctioned, embrace of process approaches was not really taking place: it was not quite right... (p.204)

As an example, she cites a study of Turkish writing instructors’ stances towards Western pedagogy, in which teachers were described as “admitting” that they still focused on mechanics such as spelling and grammar in their supposedly process-oriented writing classes (Clachar, 2000, quoted in Leki, 2001b). Leki roundly critiques how this framing positions local teachers who adapt the methods to their contexts as deficient, having falling from grace, “as though local adaptations made to the paradigm were something to be ashamed of” (Leki, 2001b, p.205). The positioning Leki describes can even appear in this empirical work as either a slightly apologetic or defensive tone, as scholars work to enumerate and convey to others the reasons why Western pedagogical methods have not been successful in their contexts:

These findings of non-conformity are rarely oriented in the direction of describing it in terms of local adaptation to a methodology but rather in terms of failure to fully understand and/or implement the methodology correctly (p.205)

The wave of critical scholarship at this time, of which Leki’s article is a part, marks a moment of transition in the field of L2 writing, as it begins to respond to the developing sense in ELT more broadly that methods not only can but must be adapted to fit the needs of the local context.

The appropriation phase

As in the general ELT literature, there has been an increasing resistance to the adaptation approach, with calls for modified center writing pedagogies to be viewed as intentionally resistant and principled (Canagarajah, 2002a). For example, Casanave (2009) points out that considering the constraints under which EFL writing is taught, process-writing techniques such as peer review and multiple drafts “might be difficult, or even unreasonable, to practice in some settings” and that both international and local traditions need to be critically examined with an eye towards “the contexts and dynamics of [teachers’] local teaching-learning situations” (p.260). I argue that this resistance can be understood as a new phase in the understanding of EFL writing pedagogies, what I call the “appropriation phase”.

The traditional paradigm, the adaptation approach, treats the ELT and writing instruction methods emanating from the global center as objectively best, and focused on disseminating pedagogical knowledge from ESL settings outward. Though local practitioners attempting to implement these imported methods have all along found that the methods simply weren't appropriate or effective – that in order to work at all, they had to be adapted – they were also subject to the adaptation approach. Thus, as Leki (2001b) describes, the initial reaction of researchers (including the local teachers themselves) encountering or reporting these adapted methods is to portray them as poor instantiations of the correct methods. As an industry, ELT generally (and L2 writing specifically) is deeply invested in the scientific superiority of center-produced methods, and local teachers may also be invested in the prestige associated with using imported (native-speaker) methods. These groups, for personal, professional, and economic reasons, cling to the traditional approach. Leki (2001b), supported by the ideological shift towards localization of methods which was already underway in ELT (e.g., Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999), and operating from a position of privilege in the global center, was able to adopt a critical stance towards the adaptation approach. It then takes some time to filter through the literature, for all the same ideological reasons that put this center-periphery flow into place originally: the native speaker mythology (Widdowson, 1994), and accompanying assumptions about the superiority and neutrality of methods (e.g., Sampson, 1984; Pennycook, 1989).

What appears after her work—what I call the appropriation phase—reflects a growing tension between the desire to idealize imported pedagogies and the desire to appropriate them for local purposes, based on the knowledge and skill of local teachers (for example, Canagarajah, 2002a). In the time since Leki's article, scholars in L2 writing have increasingly drawn attention to the teaching of writing beyond the United States, and the ways in which imported writing pedagogies are localized (Canagarajah, 2002a; Manchon, 2009; Reichelt & Cimasko, 2011; You, 2010; Martins, 2015). Particularly in the past five years or so, the increasingly positive take on localization of pedagogy suggests that this shift has begun, at least for some scholars. It is perhaps unsurprising that it is occurring now, as this ideological shift is deeply connected to changes not only in composition (the “global turn” described above) but also in the field of applied linguistics: namely, the shift from a traditional World Englishes understanding of language variation to a more fluid translingual understanding, in which language norms are contextual and always negotiated, and a concurrent shift from an idealization of a monolingual native speaker to a recognition of a multilingual norm (Canagarajah, 2013; Kubaniyova & Feryok, 2015).

These sort of changes are “disorderly and often controversial”, and thus “the period in which they occur is apt to be marked by insecurity and conflict within the disciplines” (p.77) – deeply true for both the shifts in applied linguistics and in L2 writing. As the “vanguard” of scholars looks forward, the majority of the field clings to the traditional approach, and despite the presence of a few key critical voices, the literature on EFL writing pedagogy is still under the influence of a deficit orientation.

2.3 Findings from EFL writing literature

In this section I review the findings of work on EFL writing pedagogy, considering the positioning of Western methods and teachers, of EFL writing instruction in relationship to both L1 composition in those settings and to other language skills, and of EFL students themselves. I then consider the broader category of practical constraints which are frequently blamed for the incomplete or imperfect implementation of center writing pedagogies. I conclude with a discussion of the most recent additions to this body of work. The goals of this review are to take from this literature what is valuable – an enumeration of the factors that shape EFL writing pedagogy, and glimpses into the very real conditions under which EFL writing teachers do their work – and also to trace the deficit orientation which lingers, especially in the work of transnational scholars, despite a heightened awareness of the value of localization.

It is important to note that in critiquing these studies of EFL writing pedagogy, I do not wish to present them as misinformed or unfair characterizations of these contexts. In fact, a great number of the articles and chapters I surveyed were written by local writing instructors, that is, scholars who teach at the institution studied and are arguably in the best position to observe, report, and assess local practices (i.e. Lee, 2011; Tarnopolsky, 2000, 2011; You, 2004; Xiao, 2001). Others, written by Western or center-based scholars, cite interviews or surveys of their local teacher informants as sources in addition to their own participant-observations (Casanave, 2009; Reichelt, 2005), and both my own experience teaching writing in an EFL setting and my own investigations of EFL writing teacher beliefs and practices resonate with the depictions presented here. It is therefore not my intention to question the validity of the findings reported, only to suggest that underlying much of this work is an orientation to the EFL writing instruction practices described as deficient when held up against an (unattainable and inappropriate) ESL standard.

Conceptions of Western pedagogy

Briefly, in the L2 writing literature, “Western” writing pedagogy is pedagogy from the English-dominant countries in the global center, primarily the United States and England. Briefly, in this literature, it is assumed to consist of techniques associated with two major trends in composition pedagogy: current-traditional rhetoric and the process writing approach (Reichelt, 2005). These current-traditional essay types and process writing teaching techniques have been widely disseminated globally through textbooks and other materials produced primarily in the United States and Great Britain. At the same time, they are circulating the conceptions of learning and underlying ideologies of the societies that created them (Canagarajah, 2002a); like all teaching methodologies, they contain “an inherent set of values” about what it means to be an educated citizen (Sampson, 1984, p.28).

What is adopted from current-traditional rhetoric are primarily essay structures/forms: namely, the typical five-paragraph essay consisting of an introduction stating the thesis, a body with topic sentences and supporting details, and a conclusion. Typical current-traditional essay forms disseminated in EFL textbooks include argument or opinion, cause and effect, and problem and solution. This sort of writing is so profoundly identified with American culture, both abroad and within the United States that composition scholar Janet Emig once described the five-paragraph essay as “so indigenously American that it might be called the Fifty-Star Theme. In fact, the reader might imagine ‘God Bless America’ or the piccolo obligato from ‘The Stars and Stripes Forever’” (Emig, 1971, quoted in Crowley, 1998). (See more on contrastive rhetoric below).

The process writing approach emerged from the work of composition scholars such as Peter Elbow and Janet Emig, who studied the ways expert writers write and then formalized their behaviors into a series of steps or “stages” which novice writers are encouraged to follow, from prewriting through drafting, revision, and editing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015). In EFL writing, techniques adopted from the process writing approach include some pre-writing (brainstorming) techniques, peer review, and revision of drafts based on peer and teacher feedback as well as analysis of model essays. It is somewhat ironic that in EFL contexts these two methods are lumped together as “Western” or “center” methods when in the U.S they have often been considered to be in fundamental opposition to each other, particularly at the time process writing was first introduced. Yet, as Crowley (1998) points out, in reality, the two pedagogies not only peacefully co-exist but actively complement each other; for example, pre-writing strategies can be used to generate ideas for the most traditional of essay form, and exercises on grammatical correctness from current-traditional pedagogy fit tidily into the editing stage of process pedagogy. Accepting the interweaving of the two pedagogies, rather than vilifying one in order to promote the other, Crowley argues, can produce something greater than either independently.

Consistently in this literature, these two methods are held up as the most progressive, innovative, and beneficial methods for students, albeit in need of local adaptation. Perhaps the most striking example is Harootunian (2010) in a chapter in Bazerman et.al.’s *Traditions of Writing Research*, who presents the results of a State Department-sponsored teaching exchange and curriculum development project at an Armenian university aimed at “introducing Western-style methods into a post-totalitarian culture” (p.97). Though he focuses on the writing students produce and does not describe the actual assignments or pedagogical practices which make up this “Western style”, he is quite clear about what the benefits of the Western approach are: “our methods...are essentially democratic and therefore laden with counter-cultural power” (p.107). He sets up center pedagogy as fundamentally liberating, as providing students with the tools to develop and express identities as enlightened Armenian citizens. He also, however, concludes his chapter with the idea that importation of Western methods – what he calls “our offerings” – should be “mediated” with the goal of “foreign participants tak[ing] up and master[ing] these methods for their own purposes” (p.107). For Harootunian, though Western writing pedagogy must be flexibly implemented in different contexts, it is

inherently liberating; the culture being circulated here is democracy itself, with a hearty dose of individualism.

Even where Western process writing pedagogy is not figured as the path to individual empowerment, it is held up as a goal worth aspiring to. Occasionally, as in the study critiqued by Leki (2001b), Western methods are described as more rigorous, in particular because of their association with critical thinking and research writing (e.g., Clachar, 2000). More commonly, Western pedagogical models are held up as more progressive, better able to equip students for writing effectively in a variety of genres (e.g., Lee, 2011; Tarnopolsky, 2011). Hence, Xiao (2001) patterns her writing center at a Hong Kong university on Western models, explicitly aiming to counteract the “product-oriented view of writing” the students bring with them from their previous L1 and L2 writing experiences (p.9), figured as a problem to be overcome through a focus on higher-order concerns and other tutoring techniques drawn from Western writing center practice.

Conceptions of L1 writing styles

In the EFL writing literature, the students’ L1 writing styles are frequently portrayed as a factor in adapting pedagogy – most commonly as in framing the tendency of students to compose L2 essays in an L1 style as something to be avoided through careful practice. For example, Reichelt (2005) reports that the Polish EFL instructors she interviewed believed that in Polish-language writing, “length is more important than content, and content is more important than organization”, and that their students, as a result, had to learn “to write in a completely different way, emphasizing thesis and organization rather than just ‘filling the page’” (p.224).

This contrast is often reminiscent of the early version of contrastive rhetoric, in which cultures are perceived to have distinct styles of argumentation that are shown in the organization of their writing. In traditional contrastive rhetoric studies, cultures are arranged into broad groups including “Oriental”, “Romance”, and “Slavic”, with the “Slavic” rhetorical style depicted as loosely structured, with digressions from the main topic both permitted and expected, in contrast to English writing, which is depicted as simple and direct, a straight line from introduction to conclusion (Kaplan, 1966). This contrast is echoed by some current scholars working in Slavic language contexts; for example, Tarnopolsky (2011), writing in the Ukraine, makes a contrast between the “practically obligatory” five paragraph essay structure of thesis statement and topic sentences in English writing and the “more amorphous” Ukrainian academic essay (p.186). Blagojevic (2012) compares the use of signal phrases in English and Serbian journal articles in the sciences and concludes that because English writers use signaling devices nearly twice as often, “the obtained results unequivocally speak in ‘favour’ of English academic authors” and their reader-friendly practices, warning Serbian writers that “the transfer from the mother tongue writing style...may hinder successful communication on a global scale” (p.85).

It is important to note, when conceptualizing L1 rhetorical styles, the danger of simplistic dichotomies which can veer into stereotypes – particularly for researchers who are not themselves educated in the L1 styles (Sullivan, 1996). You (2010) suggests that the way to avoid what he calls “reductionist, deterministic, and essentialist missteps” (p. 9) is to attempt to understand and represent the L1 tradition as much as possible on its own terms. For my purposes, rather than attempting to address the Serbian L1 writing tradition itself, I will deal only with the belief regarding contrast between writing styles as an ideology about writing in this context – one deeply imbedded in the thinking of teachers and students.

Relationship to L1 writing instruction

In many EFL contexts, L1 composition teaching at the university level is considered by scholars to be scant to non-existent – as Donahue (2009) noted, the phrase “there is no freshmen French” is frequently used to reference a general impression of the lack of writing instruction in other countries (p.216, 237). This impression is reinforced by findings such as those of Reichelt (2005), who reports that in Poland there is “not a strong tradition of L1 (Polish) writing pedagogy on which to draw” (p.219), and the same is true in Spain (Reichelt, 2009). She observes that it is only in primary schools that L1 writing is taught explicitly, and that at the university level there is a strong focus on literary interpretations and content over structure, with minimal feedback from teacher and no revision. For Reichelt, this particular pattern is considered a “weak” tradition of L1 writing instruction, in contrast to traditions she observes not just in the United States but also in countries such as Germany and China (Reichelt, 2009).

In this literature, the depiction/observation of L1 writing instruction tends to be limited to explicit teaching in language and literature classrooms, which may well overlook important literacy experiences students are having outside the classroom or by looking at academic literacy more broadly, in a way that more closely resembles writing across the curriculum or writing in the disciplines in the U.S. (Anson & Donahue, 2015). Kobayashi and Rinnart (2002), for example, found that in Japanese high schools, where emphasis on reading classic works in language classes left little time for writing instruction, many students received intensive writing instruction in individual tutoring sessions designed to prepare them for college entrance exams, which included discussions of how to adapt a traditional Japanese rhetorical pattern to the requirements of the test. This suggests that local traditions of writing instruction (and writing itself) are interwoven into students’ educational lives in complex ways which may not be immediately visible to foreign researchers.

In this literature, where L1 writing instruction is not seen to exist at all, EFL writing instruction is typically set up as in sharp contrast to it. L1 rhetorical and pedagogical traditions are sometimes seen as interfering with or hindering the successful mastery of the Western/English rhetorical style (Harootunian, 2010; Reichelt, 2005; Reichelt, 2009). For example, Clachar (2000) finds that the Turkish rhetorical style

values description, appreciation, and reproduction and leads to a pedagogy in which students' writing is heavily controlled by teachers, whereas the Western rhetorical style promotes analysis and evaluation, together with a pedagogy in which students are able to "assume independence and responsibility for [their] own writing" (p.95). As in Harootunian (2010), individual empowerment is assumed to be inherent in such Western pedagogy.

However, the more common approach is for scholars to advocate sensitivity to L1 writing instruction practices when creating pedagogy. Ortega (2009) suggests that "an understanding of the nature of writing instruction" in students' mother tongue should drive choices such as explicit writing instruction over implicit, or the use of peer feedback (p.239-240), and Reichelt (2009) proposes that EFL writing specialists should consider whether writing pedagogy should "draw on the practices of local L1 writing pedagogies, L2 writing pedagogies, or both – and in what proportion" (p.203).

For Chinese EFL instruction, multiple scholars have presented an extremely complex relationship between L1 and L2 writing styles and pedagogies. First, You (2010) examines how Chinese L1 writing practices affect which aspects of Western rhetoric get taken up in EFL composition, and presents EFL writing as both shaped by and shaping Chinese writing traditions. One good examples is the refiguring of the current-traditional five-paragraph essay as the "five legged essay," something of a hybrid form with the traditional Chinese "eight-legged essay," with a focus on elegant expression rather than critical thinking or invention (You, 2010, p.154). A second is the way that Chinese students use the traditional method of memorization of essay forms to prepare for modern language exams like the TOEFL. Both of these practices create what You calls a "homegrown English pedagogy" (2010, p.154). In a less positive interpretation of the relationship, Fu and Matoush (2012) find that "English writing instruction pales in comparison to Chinese writing instruction," as China has a long and extremely sophisticated tradition of literacy education, rich in classical rhetorical styles, whereas English language instruction is mechanical, exam-driven, and characterized by a focus on surface level accuracy, neatly flipping the critiques about local writing instruction made by some center-based researchers.

Conceptions of foreign EFL teachers

The potential for inculcation of Western values through the importation of pedagogy is never stronger than when a Western writing instructor imports them with her into the EFL setting. This is far from a rare occurrence; native-speaking foreign lecturers at the university are typically the ones assigned to teach writing courses, and with little familiarity with L1 pedagogy they rely primarily on their own training (Reichelt, 2005, 2009). In Poland, for example, "instructors from English dominant countries are often employed to teach writing, and they typically bring with them teaching materials and practices from home, including the use of process writing and peer feedback" (Reichelt, 2011, p.10). Reliance on familiar methods can "blind expatriate teachers", giving them a

dangerous false confidence that their expertise will simply transfer to the new location (Canagarajah, 2002a, p.149; see also Verity, 2000). A powerful example is Cummings (2004), who in her article about the development of a computer-mediated EFL writing class in Japan, describes the ideal writing classroom as “a safe community... where interaction and collaboration blossom and thrive... where risks are taken, and time is invested in and outside the class” (p.23). She displays an expressivist and humanistic view of writing instruction – not to mention of a university classroom as student-centered and communicative, rather than lecture-based. She immediately goes on to describe the collision of her western pedagogical practices and expectations with the Japanese EFL writing classroom as “a blow to the solar plexus” (p.23), given her students’ attitudes and expectations. Likewise, in Italy, Hargan (1995) describes how EFL writing teachers import not only practices but also expectations for students’ writing that “are in in conflict with local practices and thus their students’ educational experiences” (Reichelt, 2011, p.15); for example, she finds that though students are accustomed to summarizing other works and providing limited commentary, the EFL teachers expect original arguments supported by evidence, creating deep misunderstandings.

Conceptions of EFL writing students

In this literature, EFL students are often presented, at least initially, as passive or unmotivated when it comes to writing instruction, though this impression is usually attributed to the local instructors (Fu & Matoush, 2012; Reichelt, 2005; You 2004). Cummings (2004), who was both researcher and instructor, depicts her students as silent and unresponsive, unwilling to communicate with her or with each other, so much so that she decides to move all interaction online. She then discovers, to her surprise, that “they were in fact motivated, lively, curious... These were not passive, unmotivated survivors of grueling entrance examinations” but students with “a lot to say and great difficulty in saying it” (Cummings, 2004, p.40). That it took a research project to reimagine her students this way speaks to the strength of the conception of EFL students, particularly Japanese ones, as silent.

Reichelt (2009) notes that such impressions (and other difficulties) can emerge from cultural differences between Western instructors and their Japanese students, yet it is not only foreign instructors who propagate this view of unmotivated students. In You (2004), one of the Chinese EFL writing instructors interviewed considered the students unwilling to make any corrections because they are “lazy” (p.102), and in Fu and Matoush (2012) another teacher remarks that as writing is a very small part of the exam, students have no incentive to work hard at it (p.34). Hirose (2001) likewise points out that Japanese students have a low level of motivation simply because they do not see the need for writing, especially in comparison to their need for speaking. She further connects Japanese students’ resistance to methods such as peer feedback with a lack of experience, as this is a part neither of their prior EFL nor of their L1 writing instruction, a contrast which will be discussed below.

There is also a strong sense in the literature that EFL writing students are in many ways homogenous, all with similar problems and concerns. This conception is perhaps particularly noticeable in contrast to ESL writing courses, which still form the touchstone for this work, where students are expected to have linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from both each other and the instructor. Aside from Cummings' initial portrayal of her students as an undifferentiated mass of sullen resistance and colorful hair (2004, p.24-25), both Hirose (2001) and Xiao (2009) present the students they work with as unvarying from year to year, having the same primary and secondary school experiences, the same expectations and anxieties about writing, and the same structural and grammatical issues due to L1 interference. Thus, for example, Hirose (2001) reports that "Japanese students have not written English beyond the sentence level before they enter university" (p.37) without qualification – not many or most Japanese students, but simply Japanese students. Even beyond the level of nationality, Ortega (2009) finds that there is "a pitfall" of treating all EFL settings as "an undifferentiated, homogeneous contextual class" (p.250), which hides a wealth of diversity. She urges scholars to engage deeply with the history, culture, and social values of local contexts – such as the L1 tradition of writing.

Writing in relationship to other skills

In the EFL writing literature, writing is rarely portrayed as being taught separately from other language skills, in dedicated classes, but rather as a part of the overall English language curriculum, and a small part at that (Reichelt, 2009). Casanave observes that in Japan, "rarely are entire classes devoted to writing" (2009, p.260), and Reichelt finds the same situation in Poland, China, and Spain, where "writing has traditionally received little emphasis compared to other skills in EFL classes" (2009, p.200). In the Ukraine, Tarnopolsky (2000) reports, both during the Soviet period and afterwards, EFL writing has been "treated as a skill of lesser importance", something that the majority of students see as unnecessary (p. 210). Because of these sorts of depictions, in this literature EFL writing emerges as something last on the priority list of the instructors, pushed to the margins of both curricula and classes. This conception is not exclusively of EFL but of all foreign language writing instruction: for example, Schultz (2011) notes that in foreign language pedagogy in the United States, writing is often subordinated to other skills (p.71).

In the EFL writing literature, academic writing in English is depicted as valued not for its own sake, but for its role in supporting the students' overall acquisition of language; as Leki (2001a) notes, writing is rarely taught in isolation because "learning to write in an L2 is not considered to be an end in itself but... a tool with a special capacity to link and integrate other language skill" (p.1-2). Similarly, in Hirose (2001), EFL writing instruction in Japan is described as a little-used "service activity" for grammar and vocabulary (p.35). In her article, the title of which tellingly describes her class as a "giant first step towards improved English writing," she states that the first year writing

course she teaches is the first exposure to either a dedicated writing class or to writing of more than individual sentences. Students, she argues, need freewriting and other fluency exercises to get accustomed to writing in English, as Japanese students have a “paucity of writing practice” in and out of classrooms (Hirose, 2001, p.46). Ortega (2009) notes that writing has been conceived of as “an ideal site for pushed output” of linguistic structures in FL pedagogy generally (p.244), a classic support function for language development.

In addition, this positioning as in service of acquisition of other skills means that EFL writing instruction is often seen as highly focused on surface accuracy (grammatical correctness, mechanics such as spelling and punctuation) and therefore tightly controlled and lacking in creativity or self-expression (Reichelt, 2009). Hirose (2001) sees Japanese EFL writing instruction as relying heavily on “language structures and translation” (p.40), and Fu and Matoush (2012) describe English writing in China as being taught primarily through pattern drills, error elimination drills, and filling in blanks, rather than individual production; they also note that copying (and memorizing) models is a key strategy in writing instruction, so that students are positioned as “mere linguistic manipulators” rather than individuals expressing their opinions or identity (Fu & Matoush, 2012, p.23). Concern with surface accuracy, Ortega (2009) points out, is often incompatible with “writing for engagement and pleasure,” creating a problem for instructors who want to assign challenging creative or communicative exercises but “may feel that their pedagogical goals for accuracy-oriented practice are compromised” (p.245). Even where structure or organization in writing is emphasized, the current-traditional paradigm means that students are subject to prescribed essay forms and length requirements, which, divorced from communicative purposes or students’ content coursework, can be “generic and artificial” (Reichelt, 2005, p.223).

This portrayal of EFL writing as ideologically undervalued - pushed to the margins, serving mostly to support students’ acquisition of oral language, and overly concerned with grammatical correctness - helps to build the perception of EFL writing as limited, but it is the practical constraints on EFL writing, so emphasized in the literature, which complete the impression.

Practical constraints

One of the most consistent threads through the EFL writing literature is scholars outlining practical aspects of the EFL university settings which they consider to hinder the successful uptake of process writing, figured as restrictions or constraints. The most comprehensive heuristic for these was created by Leki (2001b), who laid out a set of what she termed “material and ideological constraints” on the teaching of EFL writing; nearly fifteen years later, these factors continue to be the chief way the contexts of EFL writing instruction are defined (Reichelt, 2011). While the ideological constraints mostly fall under the headings covered above, including L1 rhetorical style and a conception of writing as solely support for acquiring other language skills, the material constraints are comprised of factors such as large class sizes, heavy teacher workloads, lack of writing-

specific teacher training, and lack of locally developed teaching materials, and most significantly, exam-based assessment (Leki, 2001b; Reichelt, 2011).

All of these factors are considered to limit the amount of individual feedback a teacher can give on students' writing. Class sizes are reported to range from 50 to upwards of 100 students, teachers are responsible for multiple sections as well as other courses, and given the low pay for this work, they often seek extra teaching, translating, or other work to supplement their income (Ortega, 2009; Reichelt, 2005; You, 2004; Xiao, 2001). All of these factors mean that teachers may choose pedagogical techniques to make responding to student writing more manageable, include responding to a small number of issues common to many students orally in class, and short in-class writings which are critiqued by the class as a whole or through one-to-one peer feedback (Reichelt, 2005, 2009). The desire to minimize writing instruction discussed above is often attributed to the extremely time-consuming nature of grading papers combined with teacher' heavy workloads (Reichelt, 2005; You, 2004; Xiao, 2001). Tarnopolsky (2000) observes that in Ukraine, traditional disinterest in writing in English created a generation of teachers unable to write much in English themselves, and "often totally unprepared to teach writing to their students" (p.210). Even where the situation is not so extreme, scholars claim that writing tends to be neglected in teacher-training in favor of the other skills (Hirose, 2001; Reichelt, 2009; Casanave, 2009), and this is exacerbated by the fact that center-produced English language teaching materials are made for ESL, not EFL contexts, and there is a lack of any locally developed alternatives (Canagarajah, 2002a; Tarnopolsky, 2000, 2011). Altogether, the picture of EFL writing created by the emphasis on these factors is one in which even the most well-meaning and dedicated teachers would struggle to provide individualized or effective instruction.

The impact of writing exams

Among all of these ideological and practical factors, perhaps the most commonly emphasized is the presence of large, standardized writing exams, which exert tremendous influence on teachers and students. These exams are present across a wide variety of contexts, not only in Japan and China where their effects have been extremely well-documented (Casanave, 2009; Fu & Matoush, 2012; You, 2004, 2010) but in Europe (Reichelt, 2009). These exams mediate writing instruction to such a degree that it can overwhelm the communicative function of language learning: Cummings (2004) reports that her university students in Japan initially viewed English solely as "a dead language to be memorized for the purpose of passing examinations" (p.37). You (2004) describes the condition of English writing instruction for non-majors at a Chinese university as so fundamentally test-driven, that in one faculty meeting he attends, the teachers are instructed to actually give up teaching out of the textbook entirely in favor of "administering and discussing two sets of simulated tests in every class" (p.107). The image created is that of an exam structure which goes beyond simply affecting pedagogical choices to actually replacing them entirely. Likewise, Lee (2011) describes

the exam-driven culture in Hong Kong as creating such pressure on local teachers that a complete revolution will be needed before teachers can adopt innovative methods.

These practical and ideological features of EFL contexts are consistently figured in the literature as limitations or constraints on the uptake of process writing pedagogy, creating an image of EFL writing instruction as an activity mounted against obstacles at every turn:

like the different parts of a gigantic machine, the curricular elements work...in such a coherent unity that most writing teachers have to maneuver in a limited pedagogical space, making their pedagogical choices virtually from no choice (You, 2004, p.108)

The work these scholars have done to draw attention to these powerful forces shaping teachers' practices in EFL settings is extremely valuable, exposing, as Reichelt and Cimasko (2011) suggest, important factors like the impact of standardized writing exams which so often go unnoticed in ESL scholarship. Yet at the same time, the adaptation approach has in some ways constrained how EFL pedagogy can be presented in the literature, hampering the ability of center scholars to learn from their periphery colleagues.

2.4 Current status

My reading suggests that the shift from adaptation to appropriation is underway – in work on EFL writing in the past five years, scholars and teachers no longer question the need to adapt pedagogy rather than to import it wholesale, and their work contributes to an ever expanding body of evidence of how EFL writing pedagogy in different contexts actively responds to a wide range of economic, political, cultural, historic, and linguistic factors. However, my reading also suggests that center methods are still, for the most part, valorized, and aspects of the local contexts which are different from the contexts in which the methods originated are still often presented as deficiencies. In other words, though scholars have recognized that methods, tasks, activities, standards can't simply be imported, the scholarly and pedagogical exchange is still largely and unfortunately one-way, with teachers' hybrids of local and international practices still seen as second-class.

Perhaps the most striking examples are the works of mobile, transnational scholars like Tarnopolsky and Lee casting critical eyes on their own local teaching contexts. Within Cimasko and Reichelt's (2011) edited collection, despite the potent claims in their introduction about how FL writing pedagogy studies can fill in important gaps in the L2 writing literature, the approaches demonstrated by the authors to the teaching of EFL writing are varied. While all the authors advocate the adaptation of imported (sometimes called "mainstream" or "modern" or "Western") methods, they do so with varying degrees of the lingering deficit model. On one extreme, Tarnopolsky

(2011) describes the situation of writing instruction in the Ukraine as one of fundamental inferiority. He first announces that his chapter will report on the “specifically Ukrainian approach to teaching EFL writing” that he has developed:

an attempt to logically and organically combine the most progressive western approaches to teaching writing skills with strict account of the conditions of learning and teaching, the students, the teachers, and other local peculiarities (p.184)

In detailing these “local peculiarities”, Tarnopolsky then goes on to cover many of the greatest hits on the litany of EFL challenges, familiar from Leki’s (2001b) heuristic: teachers are still using “grammar-translation and other obsolete methods” (p.192) and lack appropriate training to teach writing, students have not learned to write coherently in their high school education (p.194), and anyway have “a negative attitude” towards writing in English (p.196), there is an insufficient use of computer technology, and so on. Ultimately, he describes the principles he has distilled from “the most progressive western approaches” (p.184), and how he has successfully implemented them: he has created a localized textbook with his colleagues, specifically for Ukrainian students. He reports that when he tested the textbook experimentally against a British textbook, students progressed more in their writing with the localized book, and he concludes by supporting the need for homegrown EFL writing pedagogy. However, his overall framing remains in the deficit model – an adaptation rather than appropriation approach.

Similarly, though Elqobai (2011) begins her chapter on EFL writing instruction in Morocco by citing You (2004) to say that imported methods must be not only “adopted” but also “adapted” (p.83), she almost immediately reverts to the deficit model, saying “the educational context makes *correct* and efficient implementation of the approaches, such as process writing, difficult and in some areas almost impossible” (p.84, emphasis added). Again echoing the components of Leki’s heuristic, she describes EFL classrooms as overcrowded and pressed for time, using imported teaching materials and standards that are “most of the time inappropriate for the teaching context” and nearly impossible to uphold, though they are required by national educational administration (p.87). In her article there is a deep conflict between on one hand the powerful understanding that the methods, standards, and materials which are forced upon teachers are inappropriate because they are foreign, because “the teaching-learning setting...is widely different from the setting where the Standards originated”, and on the other a lingering unwillingness to criticize the approaches and the ministry that requires them: “there is no question...of the effectiveness of the approaches” (p.88). Elqobai (2011) is still accepting – or performing an acceptance of – the superiority of the methods, even as she breaks down their neutrality, and like Tarnopolsky she ultimately comes down firmly on the side of adaptation: the necessary next step is “adjusting the imported approaches to the specific multilingual Moroccan context” (p.94)

Finally, Lee (2011) paints an exceedingly negative picture of EFL writing pedagogy in Hong Kong, describing persistent problems in student writing as well as teachers who have poor results on the writing portion of their teaching exams (p.123) and difficulty correcting errors accurately (p.126). She describes the perception of writing as

a chore, as a source of pressure for students who see the goal of writing as producing grammatically accurate texts, thanks to a “utilitarian approach” to teaching writing focusing on vocabulary and grammar, and an extremely assessment-driven educational culture, which is “seen as the major culprit for impeding the implementation of process pedagogy” (p.125), exacerbated by teachers’ heavy workloads and by unsupportive school administration. These factors, Lee argues, combine to create a culture which “poses obstacles to innovative pedagogy” (p.127), and in order to overcome them, Hong Kong needs nothing short of a “revolution of some kind to overhaul the current assessment-oriented system in writing” (p.130) While she hints at the possibility of negotiations within the current system, encouraging teachers to create connections between assessment and teaching and to deemphasize error correction in favor of content, she focuses primarily on how writing pedagogy “should” be done according to best principles, rather than trying to find the negotiations that are already in place – negotiations which, if reported, could offer models not only for other EFL settings in the grip of standardized exams, but also the possibility of contributing to pedagogy in the center.

Increasing attention

Since the publication of Reichelt and Cimasko’s (2011) collection described above, foreign language writing scholarship seems to have gained ground. The most recent bibliographic review published in the *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Silva & Velazquez, 2016) suggests that there is more balance between ESL and EFL –based publications, as the review includes research from several EFL settings (China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Spain, and Latin America). This work, however, tends to fall into one of two camps. The first is studies in which the context of the learners is treated as secondary if not entirely irrelevant. For example, Min (2016), in an article on how teacher feedback impacts students’ peer review training in Taiwan, refers repeatedly to ESL/EFL teachers and students, equating the two contexts and eliding the differences between them. This is a move that certainly makes sense for the purposes of publication, as it promotes the findings of the study as relevant for all English language learners, but it contributes to the same sense of scientific neutrality that set up the center-periphery flow in the first place (Pennycook, 1989; Sampson, 1984).

The second camp is a continuation of the deficit model, in which EFL contexts are held up against center contexts and found lacking. Two of the most recent examples are from East Asia: first, Schenck and Choi (2015), in a corpus study comparing Korean EFL learners’ use of formulaic language in writing to that of American undergraduates, describe the Korean writing classroom as constrained by large class sizes, which “severely limit” how much feedback students get on their writing, and “extensive instruction via the Grammar-Translation method” (p.142), as well as a lack of language

input from the environment and poor textbooks. Citing Lee (2014), Schenck and Choi continue:

While educators in Asian countries such as South Korea and China *are now aware of innovative pedagogical practices to improve student writing, they tend to rely on conventional methods of instruction and feedback that focus on language form*” (p.142, emphasis added)

Schenk and Choi (2014) do mention later that the use of grammar-translation is often motivated by the pressure of college entrance exams (p.144), but as a sort of excuse, that is, without considering how the pedagogy might be appropriate for the context.

In this formulation, I see the same deficit orientation which shaped my own understanding of EFL writing, prior to starting the PhD program: if EFL writing teachers know about these “innovative” (read: superior) methods, *why don't they use them?* What is it in their environment that prevents them from adopting these methods? These are precisely the questions Leki's article attempted first to answer and then to challenge. What's perhaps most problematic is that this lamentation about the backwardness of these teachers, who are clinging to conventional methods rather than moving forward towards “innovative” ones, is acceptable as a rhetorical move at the beginning of an article. Simply put, as a justification for an article, it still works – EFL teachers, as well as the publication gatekeepers, accept that this local pedagogy is inferior and should be remedied.

The semi-periphery

Research on EFL writing instruction remains primarily focused on East Asia, with some expansion into western Europe and central America (Reichert, 2011). More recently, starting to move out to the Caribbean, and particularly the Middle East, where there are a rapidly increasing number of English-medium institutions. Thus, the recent edited collection *Transnational Writing Program Administration* (Martins, 2015) features works about, for example, Lebanon, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, in addition to East Asia and western Europe. In this particular collection, given the emphasis on transnationality, these expansions into new geographic areas are still focused on connections to the U.S. – many of these chapters, though not all, are about how American composition programs are either impacted by online transnational collaborations between writing classrooms, or adapted when they are put on by universities in other countries, particularly in the Middle East. What is still lacking from this global picture, to a large extent, is a vision of pedagogy in the semiperiphery – in particular, the region of eastern Europe¹.

¹ The scholarship around English in Serbia tends to be linguistic or literary, rather than pedagogical; the only EFL pedagogical research in Serbia which has been published in English in journals I can access (my monolingual/center limitation) is on oral communication, and published primarily in local conference

Serbia, like the other former Yugoslav nations, is an iconic member of the global academic semiperiphery. As Bennett (2014) describes, the politically and geographically diverse nations of eastern Europe, including Serbia, Croatia, Romania, the Czech Republic, and others, are united by their subordinate position in relation to the wealthier western European countries (the much-debated “two-tier Europe”), which has shaped their academic cultures in several important ways. First, universities in semi-peripheral countries don’t have the sorts of material resources that those of us in the global center take for granted – in particular, university libraries may be out of date and there is a lack of computer technology – but neither are they entirely bereft, particularly with the rise of internet access. In Serbia specifically, Petric (2014) describes the academic research infrastructure as in recovery from the civil wars and economic decline of the 1990’s, with current support for research being poor, and suffering from a continual “brain drain” (p.192).

Universities in the semi-periphery are also caught in a cultural tension/shift between a traditional, hierarchical system of academic rank based on service and patronage and the importation (sometimes legislated by governing bodies like ministries of education) of a meritocratic system of rank based on publication. The semiperipheral institutions are in the process of tremendous upheaval, in part because of reforms like the Bologna Process, which are pushing these countries to abandon traditional practices in order to “modernize”, that is, take on practices espoused by the center (Bennett, 2014, p.5-6). As a result, Bennett suggests, the semiperiphery can be seen as a “contact zone” (Pratt, 1991) for global academic practices, a place which allows “dominant attitudes to be challenged and new possibilities to arise in a way that would be unthinkable in centre countries” (p.7).

It is for this very reason that research on Serbian pedagogy can provide an antidote to the troubling and pervasive center-to-periphery flow of ELT; such work can find those new possibilities arising through documenting and reporting how local teachers employ navigate through the richly layered contact zone of pedagogical practices, and in the process, re-position EFL writing as a source of valuable academic knowledge.

2.5 Alternative approaches

In this section I outline how L2 writing as a field might move past the adaptation approach or even the appropriation phase, to negotiation – a recognition of innovation. The goal with this negotiation approach is:

proceedings. In a few cases Serbian scholars have partnered with scholars in other countries (e.g., Bruner, Sinwongsuwat, & Radic-Bojanic, 2015) to publish in international journals.

to challenge the stereotypical role relationship between mainstream knowledge-transmitting theorizers and local knowledge-receiving practitioners (Min, 2011, p.162)

I begin with two possible models on which to draw, that of appropriate pedagogy and a principled eclectic approach, and then consider how those approaches mesh with pedagogical innovation and teacher cognition.

First, scholars such as Widdowson (1994) and Sullivan (1996) have proposed fighting against the deficit positioning of EFL scholarship by shifting focus away from “authenticity” in language teaching towards an “appropriate pedagogy” based on the appropriation of internationally circulating methods: a pedagogy which is formulated specifically by local instructors for the context in which it is used. Outlining an appropriate pedagogy in the context of Vietnam, Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) propose to consider the classroom as a culture of its own: a complex mix of the culture of the broader society, institution, international educational practices, and students’ own cultures. They urge the valorization of practices which broker international methods and materials for that specific blend – for example, the appropriation of group activities as full class call and responses which employ a specifically Vietnamese familial relationship between teacher and students.

Second, a “postmethod” perspective (Kumaramadivelu, 2006) moves beyond the necessity of method at all, instead prioritizing “the local knowledge of teachers, deriving from their years of accumulated experience, wisdom, and intuitions” (Canagarajah, 2002a, p.140). The three basic principles of post-method pedagogy are: practicality, possibility, and particularity, which emphasizes “an active understanding of local exigencies” (Min, 2011, p.162). Drawing on this post-method pedagogy framework, Min (2011) advocates what she calls a “principled eclectic approach”. She notes that while many EFL writing teachers are adopting a combination of process and genre pedagogies, this approach “fails to foreground local writing pedagogies by only incorporating ideas from the English center countries into local contexts” (p.159), creating a one-way exchange, in which local teachers are the forever recipients. To counteract this dependent model, Min (2011) proposes an approach that “both adapts imported mainstream instructional approaches to local needs and highlights creation of local practice” (p.159). This approach is particularly valuable because, unlike simple combinations of imported process and genre methods, it reflects critically on mainstream pedagogies as well as on Anglophone writing practices – for example, asking students to debate the pros and cons of a thesis statement for particular audiences. Ultimately, these models of constructing pedagogy emphasize the context of the classroom, the local culture, and the instructors’ deep familiarity with both which guides their practice, as well as a critical “talking back” to mainstream pedagogy, and it is these elements I aim to promote in a negotiation approach to EFL writing pedagogy.

Teacher cognition

To understand how this “talking back” comes about, and what fuels teachers’ innovation in the classroom, I consider not only the participants’ observable activity but also what these teachers believe about language, teaching, their students and their contexts, and consider how those beliefs and their expert knowledge impact their practices. Research on teacher cognition has provided insights into how teachers plan, make decisions, and solve problems in and out of the classroom, as well as how teacher knowledge is acquired and transformed (Borg, 2006). Research on L2 writing teacher cognition demonstrates (unsurprisingly) that teachers’ cognition, particularly around the assessment of student writing, develops with classroom experience; that teachers have distinctly individual sets of beliefs about the teaching of L2 writing pedagogy, and that teachers’ implementation of new methods varies according to their “existing beliefs and practices” (Borg, 2006, p.157). This research suggests that EFL writing teachers should demonstrate a spectrum of negotiation practices with internationally circulating materials, as their individual beliefs will impact how much negotiation they are willing and able to do.

I also adopt an approach to teacher cognition, following Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015), as “situated, dynamic, and embodied knowing in action”, or as “emergent sense making in action” (p.438), an approach in line with a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical understanding of teaching/learning. One of the key outcomes of conceptualizing language teacher cognition this way is that, rather than expecting teachers’ beliefs and their practices to align (and aiming to reduce any inconsistencies between the two), researchers understand both teachers’ beliefs and practices as “complex and context-sensitive relative to teaching situations” (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p.438), which means that they may very well not align. Furthermore, this new orientation permits researchers to consider more reflexively how teachers’ statements of beliefs and knowledge may be performative:

when teachers describe their emotional struggles, passions, motivations, values, beliefs, they do not simply put words to pre-existing mental mechanisms...when they tell, they tell with a particular purpose, to a particular audience (p.438-439)

This way of conceptualizing teacher cognition, therefore, also aligns with my understanding (described in the following chapter) that positioning for both researchers and participants is dynamic and negotiated. Finally, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) emphasize the critical importance of considering context in the study of language teacher cognition, noting that

the micro-perspective of language teachers’ inner worlds and individual practices is embedded in the larger ecologies of workplaces, educational systems, national language policies, and global issues (p.445)

The common thread throughout the approaches to and conceptualizations of pedagogy and teacher cognition I describe in this section, then, is an emphasis on context as the key factor in shaping practice, and multi-layered nature of that context – exactly what a cultural historical activity theory analysis enables me to account for.

Pedagogical innovation

All these approaches pave the way for an emphasis in scholarship on innovation at the level of both curricula and of individual classroom practice. Hyland and Wong (2013), quoting Rogers (2003), define innovation in language teaching as “an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption,” such as a school or school district (p.2). They elaborate that innovations can be mandated by administrators, or created by teachers attempting to improve their classroom practice, and can appear in the form of materials, exams, curriculum, or concepts (p.2). They also note that the implementation of innovations is a messy process, impacted by “individual preferences, institutional ideologies and fiscal necessities”, and ultimately it is teachers themselves who will determine which innovations are put into effect and how deeply (p.2). This understanding of innovation is hardly new in the field of education; Cuban (1984) notes that changes in teaching practice are seldom “an all-or-nothing embrace of an entire approach”; instead, in his historical study, “teachers incorporate into their repertoires particular practices they found useful” (p.4) – presaging a negotiation model. While these smaller changes may, in retrospect, appear trivial, they are evidence of teachers adopting progressive or innovative practices.

Although Hyland and Wong (2013) seem to focus most on innovation as top-down reform mandated by administrators or governing bodies, their emphasis on context – what they call “the complexity and importance of local situations” (p.3), and on the interconnectedness of educational systems, fits neatly with both the group of negotiation approaches to pedagogy outlined above, and with an activity theory approach to innovation, in which innovation is a result of teachers’ attempts to resolve the contradictions inherent in the activity system of their classroom (Thorne, 2004; Feryok, 2012). When the activity theory lens is applied, and the emphasis is shifted the work of classroom practitioners, we see can see the local development of pedagogy in action.

2.6 Cultural historical activity theory

Activity theory is an outgrowth of socio-cultural theory, a theory of human development which emphasizes that human development occurs in the interaction between the individual and the social (Vygotsky, 1978). Briefly, activity theory views human activity as goal-oriented and shaped by multiple social and institutional factors which compete and produce tensions and contradictions within the system (Engeström,

1987). There have been three major iterations of activity theory, which I will review briefly here.

The origins of activity theory lie in Vygotsky's concept that humans do not act directly upon their environment, but rather through mediational means. Vygotsky (1978) depicted this mediational relationship by conceiving of an activity as a triangle, with the subject (the actor), the mediational means (the artifact), and the object (the goal of the activity) at the three points:

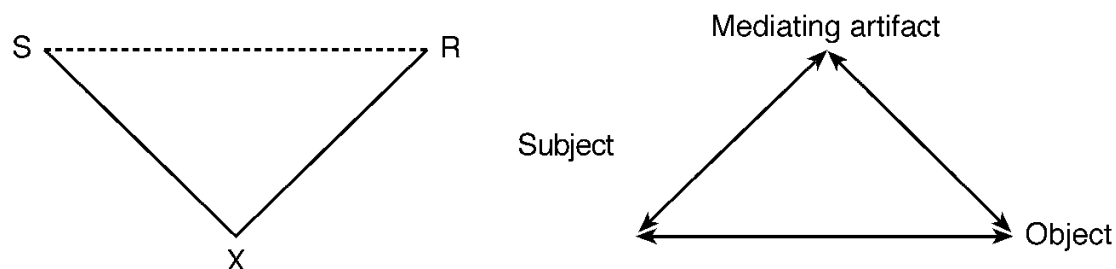


Figure 1. First generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001)

This model, the first generation of activity theory, considers only individual goal-directed action. However, Leont'ev (1981) argued that human activity is also mediated by social relations and by other people. He pointed out that whereas an activity (and its object) is typically collective, an individual's action within the activity may be directed at a different goal, in accordance with the individual's position in the activity; labor is therefore organized by "a historically evolving division" (Engeström, 1999, p.5). More specifically, Leont'ev posited a three-level model of activity: the first level is collective *activity*, which is driven by a collective motive, the second is individual *actions*, which are directed towards goals, and the third is *operations*, which are often automatic (performed routinely) and are driven by available tools and the local conditions (Engeström, 1999). In classroom research, this three-layer model helps to identify how an individual *action* (grading a test) happens within the *activity* (the teaching of English), which is itself part of an *activity system* (the writing classroom). As Engeström puts it,

In activity theory, the distinction between short-lived goal-directed action and durable, object-oriented activity is of central importance. A historically evolving collective activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems, is taken as the prime unit of analysis (2001, p. 964)

This second generation, based in the work of Leont'ev, is the one commonly associated with the name *activity theory* or AT, and analyses following this model focus most on distinguishing activity, which "concerns social motives at a broad level (such as formal education)", from individual action, which is directed towards an immediate goal and "achieved by different operations" (Feryok, 2009, p. 281).

In the third generation of activity theory, Engeström (1987) built on Leont'ev's observations by creating a graphic representation of an activity system which includes social factors, and it is this third generation which is associated with the term cultural-historical activity theory, or CHAT (Ellis, Edwards, & Smagorinsky, 2010). The third

generation model emphasizes that human activity is directed toward *objects*, and that actions towards those *objects* are mediated by the elements of the activity system in which the individual works: the *community*, its cultural norms and values (*rules*), physical and symbolic *mediating artifacts*, and the expected *division of labor* within the system (see Figure 2).

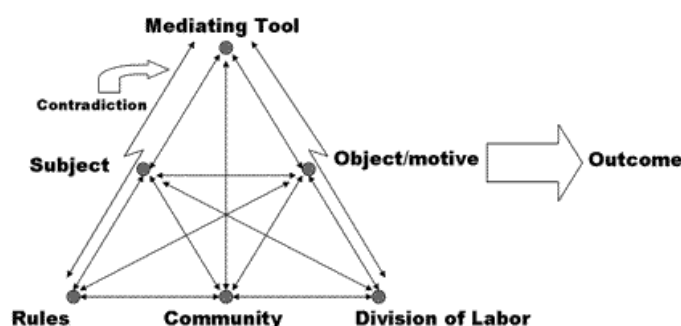


Figure 2. Third generation activity theory (Engeström,1987)

Aside from the specification of the elements of the activity system, this model included two other key features: dialogic arrows, showing that each element in the system interacts with each other element, and the concept of contradictions within the system as “the driving force of change and development” (Engeström, 2001, p.135). Engeström’s work has continued to develop, theorizing connections between activity systems and adding in concepts such as “knotworking” and activity networks (Engeström, 2001). However, for the purposes of this study, I will draw on the third generation from Engeström’s work in the 80’s and 90’s.

CHAT is deeply informed, via Vygotsky’s work, by Marxist concepts, and so emphasizes the social, economic, and historical relations which shape each activity system (Smagorinsky, 2010). As a result, a major focus in CHAT is on the *rules*, *community*, and *division of labor*, which permits the researcher to highlight how an individual, as the subject of an activity system, enacts agency within a larger social structure (Smagorinsky, 2010), as well as on how the “internal contradictions within activity systems might act as generators of change” (Ellis, Edwards, & Smagorinsky, 2010, p.3)

Elements of an activity system

Artifacts can be either concrete material objects, like textbooks, or psychological tools, such as the typical structure of an exam. According to Cole (1996):

...an artifact is an aspect of the material world that has been modified over the history of its incorporation into goal-directed human action...artifacts are simultaneously *ideal* (conceptual) and *material*. They are ideal in that their

material form has been shaped by their participation in the interactions of which they were previously a part and which they mediate in the present (p.117)

For example, an exam structure functions as an artifact because it has been shaped by previous human action (previous decisions about what the exam would look like, and actual exams being written and graded), and its structure also mediates current interactions (future exams look the way they do because of historical precedent and expectations).²

Another crucial element of Engeström's second wave CHAT is the presence of contradictions, which are "historically accumulating structural tensions" (Engeström, 1999, p. 4), that is, points of conflict within elements of the activity or between activity systems. Engeström (1987) identified four types of contradictions: primary contradictions, which are within a component of an activity system (for example, an internal struggle within the subject); secondary contradictions, which are between elements (for example, between the subject and the division of labor); tertiary contradictions, which occur when an outside activity system imposes a new and conflicting object (as in administrative educational reforms); and quaternary contradictions, which are between the dominant activity and other activity systems. I will deal primarily with secondary contradictions, as they often occur when "a strong novel factor" (like a foreign textbook, teaching practice, or even subject) is introduced into an activity system (Engeström, 1993, quoted in Johnson & Golombek, 2011). I will also attend to the resolution of contradictions over time (iterations of activity – in a school setting, often, semesters), as contradictions "are historical and must be traced in their real historical development" (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, p.371).

Resolution of contradictions and innovation

Activity theory views development as motivated by the resolution of contradictions within an activity system; when contradictions within the activity system are identified and resolved, both the outcome of the activity and the activity system itself can be transformed. What triggers actors to identify and then resolve a contradiction? According to Engeström (2001), it is "the conflictual *questioning* of the existing standard practice" by the subject (p. 968). Questioning leads to closer analysis, to identification and articulation of the conflict, and then to a solution. So, for example, teachers who see students graduate from their classes unprepared for tasks in the real world may be motivated to question the standard practice, which is the first step towards pedagogical innovation.

This link between resolving contradictions and innovation is a foundational part of a socio-cultural approach to understanding development. Vygotsky himself emphasized that "individuals dynamically use symbolic and material resources in new

² I will use the more general term artifact, rather than the term tool, which is "a subcategory of the more general conception of an artifact" (Cole, 1996, p.117).

and innovative ways” and in doing so, transform both themselves and their environments (Thorne, 2004, p.54) – a description which neatly fits with an appropriation approach to understanding pedagogy. Solutions to contradictions may involve “a radical expansion of the object of activity for all parties” (Engeström, 2001, p. 967) – redefining the goal or object of activities can bring the elements into alignment. This type of change is not only an individual transformation, but a collective endeavour in which the whole activity is subject to transformation and being transformed. As Smagorinsky et al. observe, contradictions that lead to change “require a socially contextualized intellectual resolution” (2004, p. 22); not all contradictions produce innovations, and not all innovations will be successfully implemented, only those which are fundamentally locally appropriate.

Use of CHAT in this study

Educational institutions are both shaped by and help to reproduce the broader cultural and economic settings in which they are located; as Heath and Street (2008) point out, the structure, space, activities, and goals of individual classrooms do not exist in isolation, but are influenced by “historical and political forces” which determine “language, modalities, and norms of use for institutions of formal education” (p.17), and ethnographers of education must therefore attend to those forces, which, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, are very much at work in the teaching of EFL writing.

As Feryok (2012) points out, because an activity theory approach “considers the roles of both the individual and the social in action,” it is especially relevant for understanding language teaching, which takes place within “an activity system regulated by the state, where the goals of language teachers may be reinforced or constrained by the motives of the state school system” (p.96). For this reason, activity theory has been used to understand teachers’ professional development and how it occurs within “cultural, institutional, and historical situations” (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p.8); for EFL teaching in particular, activity theory has been used to show how teachers exercise agency to negotiate with top-down educational reforms and other broader social factors (e.g., Ahn, 2011; Kim, 2011; Feryok, 2012). The activity theory model allows me as the researcher to situate individual teacher’s cognition and practice within the community of teachers and students as a group, the institutions of the department and the university, national level educational policies, and international forces such as the Bologna reforms.

The goal of a CHAT analysis is to identify contradictions within an activity system in order to resolve those contradictions and help the activity system function more smoothly, so that the CHAT analysis itself serves as a tool or catalyst for change (e.g., Engeström, 2001, in which his work with hospital staff resulted in a new system of “care agreements” between parents and health practitioners). For pedagogical research, CHAT can be used as a “heuristic supporting innovation” (Thorne, 2004, p. 52), for researchers who work with teachers to identify points of contradiction in their practice and then propose resolutions.

However, my goal as a researcher was not to change the pedagogy I observed, but rather to highlight the ways in which the participants are already finding or have found for themselves “socially contextualized intellectual resolution[s]” (Smagorinsky et. al, 2004. p. 22) to the contradictions they face, and how the accumulation of such resolutions over time creates a locally appropriate pedagogy. I am specifically aiming to resist or counteract the sort of imperialism in ELT research which can be perpetrated by center researchers insisting on the use more “authentic” center methods (as critiqued by Canagarajah, 2002a; Holliday, 1994). Thus, I am using CHAT as a conceptual framework to guide data analysis, without aiming to change teachers’ practice.

This approach does not mean that my study cannot have pedagogical consequences. Although this type of analysis does not create or impose solutions from outside, it does both allow and support teachers’ efforts to enact locally determined pedagogy. By holding up a mirror to their practices, identifying what it is teachers are already doing to negotiate, this analysis can provide teachers information about not only what is possible in their contexts, but also what is not possible, what negotiations are successful and which are not, how teachers are able to develop and exercise agency to affect immediate or local activity while still acting within the constraints imposed by community, national, and international forces (Feryok, 2012). In addition, because CHAT views development as motivated by the resolution of contradictions within an activity system, it allows the researcher to see a locally appropriate pedagogy as forward motion – the natural outcome of teachers working to resolve the contradictions in their practice created by the entrance of international pedagogies into an already highly efficient system, rather than an imperfect or limited adaptation. By offering a theoretically principled way to put teachers’ action into context, a CHAT analysis can both change how EFL writing pedagogy is viewed in the literature, and empower teachers to know precisely what they are dealing with in their context, and how they can effect change.

Chapter 3

Methodology

To grasp concepts which, for another people, are experience-near, and to do so well enough to place them in illuminating connection with those experience-distant concepts that theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life is clearly a task at least as delicate, if a bit less magical, as putting oneself into someone else's skin.

~Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding", 1974, p.29

The goal of this study is to examine the nature of EFL writing instruction in this Serbian university setting, focusing on how instructors negotiate between local institutional requirements and traditions of writing instruction and international pedagogical practices. Specifically, this study will address the following questions:

- What is the nature of English language writing instruction in this context?
- What social and institutional factors impact the nature of English language writing instruction in this context?
- How do teachers in this context negotiate between local and international pedagogies in their practice?

This chapter will first provide an overview of the research context, moving from the macro (geopolitical) level, to the national, city, and university levels, and finally to the micro (department and classrooms). I will then describe the methodological orientation, describe the data collection methods, and finally the analytical framework of activity theory.

3.1 The research context

The data for this project were collected primarily in the English departments of two universities in southern and central Serbia, which is located in southeastern Europe on the Balkan Peninsula. The largest state of the former Yugoslavia, it is bordered by Hungary (and thus, the European Union) directly to the north, Bulgaria to the east, Macedonia and Kosovo to the south, and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia (also an EU member state) to the west.

Yugoslavia was officially considered to have only one language, Serbo-Croatian, written in both the Cyrillic and Latin scripts, though it varied quietly widely in dialect

(Greenberg, 2004). In the aftermath of the civil wars of the 1990's and the breakup of Yugoslavia, the governments of the Balkan nations made concerted efforts to differentiate each nation linguistically, insisting that each country speaks not just a different dialect but a completely different language (Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, and so on); thus, the official language of Serbia today is Serbian, written in the Cyrillic script (in contrast to Croatian, which is written in the Latin script). These politically motivated changes, as well as the actual boundaries between these languages, have been controversial and contested (Greenberg, 2004), which has contributed to the emphasis on English as a comparatively neutral lingua franca throughout the former Yugoslavian region. All official documents, including university documents such as dissertations, are required to be written in Cyrillic, yet in practice, Serbs use the two scripts regularly, and both orthographies (as well as English) are highly visible in public spaces of Grad on street signs, billboards, and shop names.

English plays a large role in Serbian society – it is widely spoken as a lingua franca for business and tourism throughout the region. In Serbia, English is a required subject for all students from the first grade on, and private schools teaching English are common. English language media is endemic in Serbia, with English language websites in frequent use and, notably, English-language music, movies, and television shows, which tend to be subtitled in Serbian rather than dubbed. Thus, although English does not have an official status in the region, Serbs are, as one of my former students put it, “bombed with English every day” (Schreiber, 2015).

In Yugoslavian times, Yugoslav citizens could and did travel freely, and had considerable cultural exchange with the west (unlike the extremely closed-off Soviet Union), though often using Russian as well as English. Post-war, as in other eastern European countries, English has become ubiquitous due in no small part to its association with participation in the global marketplace (Prendergast, 2008). For countries on the global periphery (and semi-periphery), English has powerful associations with “being modern, educated, and western” (Saxena, 2011, p. 288). In post-socialist or -communist states such as Serbia, knowledge of English is additionally seen as the ticket to membership in the global free market economy: traveling, getting a good job, and becoming an expert in technical fields (see, for example, Slobodanka, 2005).

European educational influences

Politically, Serbia is currently caught between ties to Russia and to the European Union (“Serbia’s EU Accession”, 2016). The country is moving slowly towards membership in the European Union, having become a candidate country for EU membership in 2012, and beginning formal accession talks in 2014 (European Commission, 2015). The process has been somewhat delayed by political factors including an unstable and contentious relationship with Kosovo (European Commission, 2015). Since the conclusion of my data collection, Serbia’s non-EU status has been thrown into high relief in international media by the refugee crisis in Europe, as Serbia is

the last country crossed by migrants moving towards the European Union at the Hungarian or Croatian borders, further emphasizing Serbia's position in the global semi-periphery (Bennett, 2014).

Despite the uncertain broader political status, the Serbian university system is deeply impacted by changes and trends in European education – though not without some resistance and tension (Dull, 2012). Like other universities in Serbia, the two universities at which I conducted fieldwork follow a European model, in that students apply for specific departments and are admitted based on scores from entrance exams written and administered by each department, and the curriculum is mostly set, with limited elective options in the later years of study (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). The Serbian university system has also been impacted by two recent pan-European reforms: the Bologna Process and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

The Bologna Process, a set of reforms aimed at standardizing higher education throughout Europe in order to facilitate the mobility of students (and professionals) includes standardization of the amount of work required to complete bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees: the number of credit hours required in each year of study, the amount and type of coursework required for a credit hour, and policies regarding grading and attendance. As a country, Serbia has been participating in the process officially since 2003 (Despotovic, 2011), and the Department of English at Southern Serbia University adopted a new curriculum in line with the mandates for the Bologna Process in 2006 (Departman za anglistiku). This new curriculum, among other changes, officially set the undergraduate curriculum at four years, the master's program at one year, and the PhD program at three years; instituted a semester system, splitting classes previously considered to be one year long into semesters; and formally adopted the European Credit Transfer System (Departman za anglistiku), a way of assigning credits to classes based not on the number of hours of teaching, as was traditionally the case, but on the amount of work done by the students (Lawley, 2009). However, as is typical with sweeping top-down educational reforms, implementation of the Bologna reforms across has been severely mixed, and classroom practice has been arguably largely unchanged (Despotovic, 2011).

At the level of individual writing teachers, reactions to the Bologna Process in Serbia are mixed: while some teachers report feeling constrained by changes such as the move from year-long to semester classes, and by the more explicit requirements for student assignments, including shorter exam essays and more emphasis on points for smaller assignments, and report frustration with the lack of training or other support for implementing the reforms, others report that the introduction of elective classes creates interesting opportunities for teachers and students (Schreiber, 2016). Teachers also report, however, that their day to day instruction practices have changed very little, echoing the findings of other investigations of Bologna Process implementation in the region (Rauhvargers, 2011; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010); one teacher good-humoredly observed that most teachers “will probably still teach in the same way... whatever you call the system” (Schreiber, 2016, p.164). As has been well-documented with top-down educational reforms, individual teachers tend to defend their own expert knowledge and resist the imposition of external authorities dictating their work.

Serbian universities have also officially adopted the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a set of descriptions of language proficiency written in terms of the communicative acts that learners should be able to perform at each level. The goal of the CEFR is to provide “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses” across Europe, and to describe “in a comprehensive way what learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.1). The CEFR specifies goals for language learning, defines ways of assessing learning, and promotes a learner-centered approach to education, especially self-assessment (Little, 2006). The CEFR also explicitly promotes goals of pan-European identification and unity, stressing the value of Europe’s rich linguistic diversity (Byram and Parmenter, 2012).

The CEFR itself, being lengthy and somewhat obtuse, is not widely read, and the CEFR approach has been disseminated largely by commercially published pedagogical materials (Komorowksa, 2001). Instead, it is the level descriptions which are well-known to policy makers and teachers (Alderson, 2007), and in eastern Europe, the actual adoption of the CEFR has been based primarily on the use of the levels, whereas the concepts of learner autonomy and the value of linguistic diversity have not yet been widely adopted (Stoicheva & Stefanova, 2012). In Serbia specifically, the CEFR has been adopted to inform language proficiency standards both in the entrance exams and throughout the curriculum. In the English department of Southern Serbia University, for example, students theoretically should be at a B2 (upper intermediate) level when they enter, and a C2 (advanced proficient) level by the time they graduate, although in practice this is not strictly upheld (see Chapter 4 for further discussion).

City and university contexts

Grad³, the site of my principal data collection, is the third largest city in Serbia, with approximately 350,000 residents in the metropolitan area. Grad has traditionally been an industrial city, with several factories, including a large tobacco factory, on the outskirts of the city as the main force in the economy, supplemented by tourism to local sites of historical importance. Grad’s population is almost exclusively ethnic Serbs, with a small population of Roma and other Yugoslavian ethnicities, as well as a small Chinese immigrant community.

Southern Serbia University⁴ (SSU), located in Grad, is one of the three major state universities in Serbia, with approximately 30,000 students across 13 faculties (what in the American university would be called colleges) including schools of medicine, law, economics, and engineering. The English department of SSU is housed in the Filozofski Fakultet, the Faculty of Philosophy, along with other foreign languages and humanities departments such as sociology, psychology, history, and communications – what in the

³ Pseudonym

⁴ Pseudonym

United States might be called a College of Liberal Arts.

Veliki Grad⁵, the secondary research site, is a large and cosmopolitan Serbian city of approximately 1.4 million people. Central Serbia University⁶ (CSU), located in Veliki Grad, is the oldest and largest of Serbia's three major state universities, with nearly 90,000 students in 31 faculties. The English department is housed in the Faculty of Philology, together with a wide array of other language departments, including Arabic as well as Slavic and European languages.

Veliki Grad has a large population of expatriates and foreigners, a fact which is reflected in the makeup of the teaching staff of the English department - two of four writing teachers, and several other teachers, are permanent expats from English-dominant countries. However, besides this difference, the two English departments are highly similar, especially in terms of curriculum.

English department

The Department of English at SSU was founded in the early 1970s (Department za anglistiku) and grants undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees in English literature and linguistics. As of 2013, the official count at the faculty was five full professors, three associate professors, three assistant professors, four graduate student TAs, and seven senior lecturers, for a total of 22 full time instructors (Department za anglistiku).

From the beginning, the department has been deeply internationally connected, hosting visiting lecturers from Fulbright programs and the British Council, and with local faculty members spending academic semesters or years abroad, and some earning doctorates from universities in English-dominant countries. Though these exchanges were disrupted by the civil wars of the 90's, in the past fifteen years, both lecturers and professors from the department have participated in State Department exchange programs such as the Fulbright and the Junior Faculty Development program, and programs such as the English Language Fellow and English Teaching Assistant Programs have sent nearly a dozen Americans to Grad over the past ten years.

In contrast to these prevalent and visible temporary exchanges for teachers, the professional mobility of faculty at SSU and CSU is very low, in that students tend to remain at one university from the undergraduate years through doctoral study, and new professors are almost exclusively drawn from the ranks of the university's own graduate students, resulting in a teaching population which is fundamentally local and deeply interconnected. In the time of my work and my observations at the university, the only new instructors appointed (with the exception of visiting State Department-sponsored American teachers) were the university's own graduate students, who taught increasingly more classes until they completed their doctoral work and were then appointed as professors. There was some movement between universities to finish degrees (at least one student completed his master's at another major state university), but no "outside

⁵ Pseudonym

⁶ Pseudonym

candidates” per se, an approach to university hiring which is characteristic of the region, and generally more common outside of the American university context.

Likewise, although temporary mobility through exchange programs for students (though both State Department programs and the EU-funded Tempus program) are available, the student population overall at each university is strongly local, primarily ethnic Serbs from the city in which the university is situated and the surrounding villages and towns – this is particularly true for SSU. There are occasionally foreign students, usually Serbs whose families have emigrated and who return to Serbia for their education – in my observations there were a handful of such students, from New Zealand, the United States, and France. After graduation, most students remain in the city or return to their hometowns, becoming English teachers either in the public school system or in private language schools.

The core of each English department’s curriculum is a set of classes which students take every semester known as *Savremeni Engleski Jezik*, which is translated as either Contemporary English Language (CEL) or more commonly Modern English Language (MEL)⁷. The set of classes includes three “practicals” (skills-based classes) and a lecture, each of which lasts for an hour and a half twice a week. The MEL courses are numbered by semester, so that, for example, MEL 4 is the fourth semester. MEL courses are designed primarily to develop students’ linguistic competence: grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, fluency, and awareness of pragmatics and register (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). MEL courses begin in the first year with basic development of students’ vocabulary and grammar, then progress to more specific translation and writing skills. The “practicals” focused on writing are the only required writing courses for students in the department.

However, students also write in English in their coursework outside of the MEL classes. Students write essays for exam purposes in their literature, culture, and linguistics classes throughout their four years of study, and professors do provide instruction and feedback around these exams. In the third years of study, students have the option of taking two elective courses which require extensive writing: one is a course on intercultural communication which requires weekly response papers and a final research paper, and the other is a course entitled “Form and Content”, which explicitly aims to teach students about the conventions of academic research writing and culminates in a 5,000 word research paper. In addition, at the master’s level, students are required to take a course in the technical aspects of academic writing, primarily how to use Word tools to format documents, and a course in research methods, which discusses the writing of academic genres such as a research proposal and a journal article.

The following table shows a brief overview of the students’ writing courses during the five years of coursework offered in the English department:

⁷ The fact that the course title not only exists but is commonly used in both languages speaks to the status of each language within the department. All official documentation (all departmental records, including records of students’ courses and grades) are in Serbian, as this is a state university and records are considered government documents. However, within the department, English is used as much as possible, with lectures, syllabi, and exams in English.

	Courses	Goals
YEAR 1:	MEL 1 and 2: preparation	Review and improve grammar and vocabulary; main writing task is retelling stories
YEAR 2:	MEL 3: paragraph writing MEL 4: basic essay writing	Learn basic paragraph structure: topic sentences, primary and secondary support, concluding sentences; focus on one topic Practice three-paragraph essay structure with argumentative thesis; provide support for your claims
YEAR 3:	MEL 5 and 6: essay writing	Practice essay types such as for and against and solution to problems, descriptive writing, some business writing genres; emphasis on transitions and essay structure
	Semester 5: Intercultural Communication Semester 6: Form and Content	Learn and apply models of intercultural communication; main writing tasks are response papers and final research paper Learn basics of research and source use, citation and quoting; main writing task is final research paper
YEAR 4:	MEL 7 and 8: advanced essay writing	Review and develop essay structure, adding counterarguments and refutations, expand vocabulary
Master's level:	Technical writing	Learn publication conventions, techniques for formatting documents in Word, and citation
	Research methods	Learn qualitative and quantitative research methods and how to propose and present research in writing

Table 1. English department curriculum.

All English language courses at SSU are assessed by a midterm (also called a “colloquium”) and a final exam. Assessment for MEL classes is done first individually for each practical, then the scores are combined (with scores from oral exams in some semesters) to determine if the student will pass the MEL course overall. All exams are timed, and in writing courses typically consist of the students producing some sort of essay in response to a prompt, though the structure varies across the courses. In the elective and master’s courses, the exams may consist of a submitted paper and/or an oral presentation.

Timed essay exams are graded both on how well the students follow the structure which has been taught, and on their use of language. An important element of assessment across the writing courses (and throughout the department) is a list of basic grammar

(BG) structures which students should master during their time at the university. If students make errors with the structures on the list (known in the department as “making a BG”), their total score on that task should be reduced, with first year students given somewhat more leniency than older students. The BG list includes verb formation and tense, and the use of articles, pronouns, and prepositions (see Appendix A for a sample list of BGs and Chapter 4 for further analysis of the role of this list in the writing curriculum).

The materials for each writing class are primarily American and British ESL textbooks. Students do not buy the books themselves, due to the cost and difficulty of importing them; instead, the instructors leave copies of whatever materials they want students to have in the “copy shop” on the first floor of the Faculty of Philosophy building. Students then pay for copies of the materials at the beginning of each semester, often with bindings and plastic covers, so that the copy shop serves as a de facto school bookstore. In some courses instructors customize materials by selecting sections from several textbooks and creating a course reader, and in others instructors have produced local textbooks from materials collected over time, as will be described in Chapter 5.

3.2 Research methodology

To investigate the teaching of EFL writing in this context, I adopted an ethnographic case study approach, using cultural historical activity theory as an analytic lens. In this section I will first describe the ethnographic approach and its use in the study of education, then the critical ethnographic orientation and how it shapes an understanding of researcher positioning, then the case study approach, and finally consider how each approach informs my data collection and interpretation.

Ethnographic approach

At its heart, ethnography aims to document and analyze the culture of a group, organization, or institution. More specifically, ethnography is based on a phenomenological perspective, which emphasizes that how people assign meaning to their experiences is “essential and constitutive, not accidental or secondary to what the experience is” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.36). Thus, ethnographers seek to understand how research participants themselves interpret their own experiences and behaviors – a fundamentally emic approach. The goal of ethnographic work, then, is to “share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for the reader” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.39).

Green & Bloom (1997), in their discussion of the troublesome task of defining what counts as ethnography, note that because ethnography has been taken up in so many disciplines, with such a variety of perspectives and techniques, that there is “no single

place to go to define what counts as ethnography, only local sites inhabited by particular groups” (p.183). However, at a minimum, the practice of ethnography must involve “the framing, conceptualizing, conducting, interpreting, writing, and reporting associated with a broad, in-depth, and long-term study of a social or cultural group” (Green & Bloom, 1997, p.183). Heath (1982) points out that in the field of education, researchers often use the term ethnographic imprecisely to refer to any qualitative studies employing participant observation and naturalistic inquiry. It is thus important to make a distinction here between the practice of full-scale ethnography, which has its roots in cultural anthropology and requires extensive time and investment in the culture studied, and research which merely uses the tools or techniques of ethnographic study (Heath, 1982). This study, occurring over the course of a few months, could not be considered a full-scale ethnography; instead, I have adopted the methods and guiding principles of ethnography in a more limited study – what Green and Bloom (1997) would call taking an ethnographic perspective.

Ethnography as a research method has a long history in studies of schooling and educational institutions. Since the 1970’s, ethnography has been in increasing use in the field of education, with most studies focusing on language and communication in the classroom, particularly how language use denotes and creates power, and how learning is socially constructed in the classroom (Green & Bloom, 1997). In the field of composition, ethnography has been used to investigate the practice of writing (how individuals compose texts), the teaching of writing in classroom settings, and literacy practices both in and out of schools (Bishop, 1999).

Though an ethnographic approach has not been used to study the teaching of EFL writing specifically, it has several advantages in this context. First, ethnographic research in school settings works to distinguish between school’s definitions of expertise or knowledge and how individuals within the school develop ways of learning and teaching, precisely because “often individual and group expertise passes unnoticed” (Heath & Street, 2008, p.19). This distinction, part and parcel of ethnography’s emphasis on digging into contrasts between official or ideal definitions and participants’ actual behavior (Heath, 1982) allows me to focus on the daily practices which emerge from teachers’ cognition in action, and how students attend to those practices.

At the same time, ethnographic research within classrooms must attend to the larger political and historical forces that shape instruction by determining the structures, time, and space in which classrooms exist, as well as the goals of instruction, pace of the classroom, assessment practices, and even methods (Heath & Street, 2008). Thus, this approach meshes well with the tenets of cultural historical activity theory, which emphasizes the positioning of the activity system within a broader social context and the relationship between the individual (teacher or classroom) and the social.

Critical ethnography

Over the past thirty years or so, the goals, assumptions, and practices of traditional ethnography have been subject to what Brown and Dobrin (2004) call a “postmodern assault” (2004, p.2), a series of critiques of the imperialist and positivist nature of traditional ethnography. Geertz (1974) described the breakdown of “the myth of the chameleon field-worker, perfectly self-tuned to his exotic surroundings” (p.27), emphasizing that the act of ethnography is ultimately an act of interpretation which draws on researchers’ innate capacities to understand others, calling it more like “reading a poem – than it is like achieving communion” (p.45). Rosaldo’s pointed description of the “Lone Ethnographer,” riding off to a foreign land to do fieldwork and then returning home to write one true account of the culture he observed (1989, p.30), satirizes the traditional conception of ethnography, in which the research participants are both passive and exoticized, and the research is conducted for the professional benefit of the ethnographer and his academic community.

In the wake of these important criticisms, a new strand of critical ethnography emerged in the field of education. Work in critical ethnography aims to identify systematic social inequalities and to “free individuals from sources of domination and repression” (Anderson, 1989, p.254). Specifically, the goal of critical ethnography in education is “to problematize what goes on in schools in terms of the reproduction of social inequality and the potential for social transformation”, so that such work is “openly value based”(Lather, 1986, p.64) with an explicit goal of social change.

Critical ethnography has emerged more recently in composition studies, drawing on theoretical traditions of postcolonialism, feminist inquiry and Freirian critical pedagogy, moving ethnography towards being more personal, more social, and more political (Brown & Dobrin, 2004). Critical ethnography in composition studies thus emphasizes both the potential of ethnographic work to create meaningful change for participants and “the ethics and politics of representation” (Brooke & Hogg, 2004, p.117) considering the highly asymmetrical relations of power between stakeholders in ethnographic work. In traditional ethnography, as Stevens (2004) points out, researchers created authority by describing their entry into the research site and then disappearing behind supposedly impartial observations, a move which “erroneously suggests that texts can transparently represent cultures and that observers do not impact what they observe” (p.157). In response, critical ethnography in composition studies calls for self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and collaboration with research participants at the level not only of data collection but of writing, through multivocality in ethnographic texts, calls which have also been critiqued for their potential to idealize the conditions under which research is conducted, and to focus too heavily on the written product and the researcher’s own experience (Horner, 2004).

In this study, my aim is not to break down structural inequalities in society, but to focus on how scholarship represents the work of some teachers as less valuable than others, and how this devaluing constrains what teachers and scholars can learn from each other. I am therefore not conducting a true critical ethnography. Instead, what I borrow from critical ethnography is an acknowledgement of the openly ideological nature of my

work. My goal has been to maintain throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and writing, a cognizance of my own stance and perspective as a researcher, and how those factors, beyond simply my presence in this context, impacted the collection of data. My goal has also been to maintain an awareness of my own privilege as a Western researcher (and a native speaker of English), the power hierarchies in which my work is necessarily embedded, and the “specific social material conditions” (Horner, 2004, p.25) which shape the interest and ability of my participants to collaborate with me. While I will offer a reflection on my own positioning as a researcher later in this chapter, my intention is to go beyond the “facile statement” of identity which often occurs in qualitative research (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1995, p.9) to engage in reflective research practice throughout this study.

Researcher positioning

Following on the rise of critical ethnography, there have been increasing calls for self-reflexivity by qualitative researchers across disciplines, including composition, education, and applied linguistics (e.g., Kirsh & Ritchie, 1995; Nero, 2015; Pavlenko, 2007). Associated with this demand for self-reflexivity has been a challenge to the traditional understanding of the qualitative research interview as a neutral tool for gathering data, and a push to consider the research interview as a site of investigation in and of itself. More specifically, this strand of scholarship draws attention to what Talmy (2010) calls “the fundamental sociality of the interview” (p.132), and the ways in which both researchers and participants are enacting and negotiating identities and positionings.

As Block (2000) points out, in applied linguistics research, we traditionally have had a tendency “to take research participants at their word”, to present data from interviews as unproblematic representations of participants’ thoughts and feelings (p.757). He advocates that researchers in applied linguistics should examine in their interview data “issues related to the presentation of self, such as how the interviewee constructs the interviewer, their relationship, and the purpose of the interview” (p.758). Similarly, Pavlenko (2007) includes in her enumeration of issues in thematic analysis of interview data a tendency among researchers to ignore how language is used to position/create identity in interviews.

Building on this line of argumentation, Talmy (2010) draws a distinction between a more traditional and common ideology of interviews as neutral research instruments, and a more nuanced understanding of research interviews as social practice – an approach “in which the research interview is explicitly conceptualized and analyzed as social action” (p.129). Thus, for example, instead of the researcher striving for objectivity so as not to “contaminate” interview data, the research interviews as social practice approach recognizes that “data are collaboratively produced...data cannot therefore be contaminated”: interviews are not treated as objective reports of participants’ internal states, but rather accounts that are co-constructed in the interaction between interviewer and participant (Talmy, 2010, p.132). As a result, the research participant is no longer

constructed as a “passive vessel of answers”, but is acknowledged as an agentive interactant, one who “not only holds facts and details of experience, but, in the very process of offering them up for response, constructively adds to, takes away from, and transforms the facts and details” (Holstein & Gubrium, quoted in Talmy, 2010).

This sort of reframing, drawing on the work of scholars such as James Gee, considers interviews as distinctly social practices in which people strive for alignment and the accomplishment of (shared or unshared) goals, and in the process enact membership in particular discourse communities and particular social roles (Pavlenko, 2007). I argue that it thus productively extends the principles of critical ethnography by providing a well-developed set of theoretical principles for engaging in self-reflexivity.

The complexities of role and identity negotiation in research interviews are particularly evident/salient in the issue of how researchers position themselves (and are positioned) as insiders or outsiders in the community they are studying. Briefly, in qualitative research, researchers’ positioning in the community necessarily shifts during the course of study: outside researchers must immerse themselves in the culture, and inside researchers must distance themselves from it (Labaree, 2002). Conducting research from insider positioning has profound benefits: beyond intimate knowledge of the context, insider status can entail greater levels of trust, intimacy, and openness from participants. However, insider status also carries with it expectations from the community under study, such as that of representing the community sympathetically, which can be limiting (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). As a result, it may be both necessary and inevitable for qualitative researchers to move strategically between insider and outsider identities (Nero, 2015), a practice which can create both ethical and methodological dilemmas for researchers.

Drawing on work theorizing the negotiation of subject positioning in interaction (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990; Bucholtz & Hall, 2008), Shondel Nero examined her own insider/outsider positioning during her research in Jamaica around Creole language practices, which entailed what she describes as “a discursive dance” of ideology and identity with her participants (2015, p.346). She concludes that the tidy dichotomy between insider and outsider simply does not exist – that instead, qualitative researchers construct an identity within and through the process of research, and that as a result, insider status is “always subject to negotiation” (p.364). Thus, the identities of researchers and participants in interviews should be understood in a post-structuralist sense as evolving in and through interaction, as “social actors claim, contest, and negotiate power and authority” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2008, quoted in Nero, 2015), and it is this understanding of identity which I adopt in reflecting on my own positioning (see section 3.5 for my reflections).

Case study

Most broadly, a case study can be defined as research that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when

the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2014, p.18). Similarly, Hancock & Algozzine (2006) note that case studies research a phenomenon in “its natural context, bounded by time and space” (p.15). The key point here is that case study research is undertaken when the phenomena under study cannot be easily or distinctly separated from its setting – as opposed to experimental studies, which attempt to isolate the phenomena in a laboratory setting. This approach is well-suited to my focus on locally emergent pedagogy, which by its nature cannot be understood independently from the context in which it occurs.

Case study research has been criticized for a lack of generalizability – that is, critics have argued that it is impossible to generalize from a single case, that case studies are too dependent on an individual researcher’s interpretations, and that ultimately case studies lack validity (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.219). However, Yin (2014) notes that case studies should be understood as “an opportunity to shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts or principles” (p.40) and used to develop working hypotheses for other studies and to refine existing theories. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues more strongly still for the value of case studies, claiming that in the social sciences, there simply are no predictive theories or universals, because all knowledge is concrete and context-dependent, and that case studies are the best means for producing such knowledge (p.223). He also argues that though case studies are often critiqued for simply confirming the researcher’s preconceptions, in fact most case study research results in the falsification of those original ideas, as the research itself constitutes a form of learning and growth (p.235-236). This tendency, coupled with the self-reflexivity demanded by the critical ethnographic approach, means that this ethnographic case study has the potential to produce, not generalizable knowledge, but “rich and contextualized detail that allows for contemplation...not prediction but understanding and awareness”, which is the true value of qualitative research (Matsuda, 2012, p.301).

3.3 Data collection

Both the ethnographic and the case study approach are grounded in the collection of multiple types of data, which enables the researcher to view the phenomena under study from a variety of perspectives (Heath & Street, 2008; Yin, 2014). In the following section I will describe each source of data I collected for this study at my primary research site, Southern Serbia University: formal and informal participant-observations, interviews with writing instructors, students, and other community members, and textual artifacts such as textbooks and student writings. I then describe the more limited sets of data I collected following similar protocols in two additional research sites: Central Serbia University and a local high school, Grad High School. Ultimately, the data I analyze comes primarily from the two university sites, and the high school data collection provides background for my understanding of the local educational ecology.

Throughout my data collection, I remained flexible in my data collection schedule and methods, in order to be sensitive to the concerns of participants and local

stakeholders, and to pursue new opportunities as they arose. The nature of ethnographic research (in fact, of any naturalistic study) is that of constantly changing conditions, positions, and understandings, and it is the role of the ethnographic researcher to remain adaptable, in order to see new and shifting situations as opportunities rather than threats to the research design (Yin, 2014). Likewise, using the constant comparative method (Birks & Mills, 2011), the research stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation are recursive, as emerging themes guide the researcher in selecting which avenues of data collection to pursue.

Observations

In order to immerse myself in the practice of writing instruction at Southern Serbia University (SSU), I conducted a series of classroom observations. During all observations, I took field notes by hand, and every few days I typed up my field notes, converting my jottings into more formal field notes, and filling in detail, with the goal of creating a sort of log of the field notes that was “organized, categorized, complete, and available for later access” (Yin, 2014, p.125).

I first selected one section each of the MEL 3, 5, and 7 writing classes, and aimed to observe the class each week for eight weeks. However, classes, particularly the MEL 5 class which met on Fridays, were often disrupted by holidays, department events, and other teachers’ research projects. In total, I attended eight MEL 3 classes, four MEL 5 classes, and eight MEL 7 classes, for a total of approximately 30 hours of classroom observations of these core writing classes (see Appendix B for a list of classroom observations). These core writing classes were audio recorded with teacher and student permission, and later selectively transcribed.

Within the English department, I aimed to understand how the writing classes were situated within the overall English curriculum. I observed a MEL 1 story-retelling practice session (the writing intensive task within the first year MEL curriculum), and a MEL 3 lecture class. I also observed a session of the master’s level writing class, a class sessions of the third year elective course Intercultural Communication, and an oral exam from the spring semester Form and Content elective course. To get a sense of how English classes were conducted in the university beyond the English department, I observed an English class taught within the sociology department, and an English class taught at the faculty of law. At the secondary level, I observed English classes in a local high school, junior high, and elementary school.

In addition to the more formal classroom observations, I also conducted less formal observations of school activities around writing, such as office hours, and the physical spaces of the school settings. Where possible, I took photographs of artifacts such as fliers advertising school events and posters displayed in classrooms. As part of my immersion in the context, I accepted all invitations extended to me to participate in curricular and extra-curricular events. I was able to attend two meetings of the local English Language Teachers’ Association (ELTA), to present at a language teachers’

conference hosted by ELTA and the department, and to visit several secondary schools as a “guest speaker”. I also attended two students’ performances: a “Happy English Day” at an elementary school, in which second grade students presented skits and songs, and the local language high school’s production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. I recorded field notes each evening after these interactions

Interviews

I initially planned to conduct interviews with participants from three categories: university writing instructors, other faculty and administrators, and current and former students. As the study progressed and the influence of high school education on university writing instruction emerged as an important theme, I added a fourth category: students and teachers from secondary schools. All interviews were audio recorded and later selectively transcribed, and I also took field notes during the interviews.

Interviews were semi-structured: I prepared interview protocols with specific questions, but also devoted considerable time to following up on participants’ answers as needed to fully understand their meanings and perspectives (Spradley, 1979). In ethnographic research, the questions asked in formal interviews should arise in part out of casual observations; that is, the researcher should spend enough time immersed in the research site so that the interviews can become, to an extent, formal documentations of her impressions – what Heath and Street (2008) call “hunches” (p.34). This principle, together with a desire to be sensitive to the needs and emotions of participants, led me to develop a system of “pre-interviews” for participants whom I did not know well, especially those to whom I was introduced for the purposes of the project. I first met the participants, usually at a coffee shop, and spent time talking with them about the project, myself, and their teaching, essentially rehearsing many of the questions I would ask during the formal interview in a more relaxed setting. These pre-interviews served both to build rapport and to enable me to adapt my interview protocols to individual participants. For example, my initial meeting with a local high school English teacher, Marika, took place at an outdoor café in a public park; most of the time was spent with her asking me questions about my background, my travels, my time in Grad previously, and my friendships, in addition to the nature of my project; I also asked her about her teaching background and her current classes, but she focused most on telling me about her family life and history. The function of the meeting, for her, seemed to be for us to get to know each other as people, to build a sense of each other’s social networks, so that she could, in a sense “locate” me as a researcher and as a person in this densely interwoven society. In contrast, Dragana, the instructor of the master’s level writing course, seemed most concerned with rehearsing the specific questions I would ask, in English, before I turned on the tape recorder, and in our official interview she expressed a few times that she felt nervous about speaking English and forgetting the words she needed; my pre-interview meeting with her, because it covered most of my interview protocol, enabled me to

pinpoint specific pedagogical choices she made and how they did (and did not) reflect her written syllabus.

University writing instructors

In the semester I observed classes at SSU, the MEL 3 and 7 writing “practicals” were taught by one instructor, and MEL 5 was taught by another. These two teachers were my primary informants, although I also conducted interviews with the teacher of the MEL 4 writing class. I conducted a series of interviews with each participant, including semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 1.5-2 hours. As Hancock and Algozzine (2006) note, the best spaces for research interviews are “private, neutral, and distraction-free” (p.40). As neutral university space was rarely available (and even more rarely distraction-free), I conducted research interviews in my own residence, the participants’ residences and offices, and coffee shops, as was most convenient for the participants.

The first interview with each participant, conducted prior to class observation, focused on the participants’ history, teaching experience, and beliefs about writing (see Appendix C for all interview protocols). The second interview (for the MEL 3 and 7 teacher, this required two interviews) took place early in the observations, and was focused on teachers’ conceptions of their course and beliefs about writing instruction. The final semi-structured interview took place after the observations concluded and was focused on reflection on the progress of the semester, the assignments and exams, and plans for future iterations of the course.

During my observations of each teacher’s course, each writing instructor also participated in multiple stimulated recall sessions, with the goal of understanding how these teachers conceptualize their teaching practices and what motivates their pedagogical decisions (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Because my research focus was on the negotiation with international materials and practices, I choose two data sources to prompt teachers’ reflections: the first stimulated recall interview was a “think-aloud” protocol (Gass & Mackey, 2000) in which I selected a portion of the textbook and asked the teacher to read through the selection and describe her thinking about why she selected that material and how she planned to (or did) use or adapt it in the classroom. For the second stimulated recall, I selected excerpts from classroom recordings which seemed to reflect emerging themes in the data around negotiation with materials and teachers’ beliefs about writing or teaching. In selecting these excerpts, I focused on moments in which teachers added to or contradicted course materials, or explained expectations for assignments and exams. The teacher and I listened to the excerpts together, and I paused the tape periodically and asked her to describe her thinking at the time of the interaction, asking follow up questions as necessary, following a procedure similar to dialogic video protocols for teacher education (Golombek, 2011; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). I also invited teachers to identify their own topics and artifacts for discussion – although neither

of them did, which perhaps reflects the fundamental imbalance in both power and investment in the interviews between researcher and participant (Horner, 2004).

Other participants

To deepen my understanding of the nature of writing instruction in this context and the views of the community, it was necessary to have the students' perspectives. I made efforts to recruit students from the MEL 3, 5, and 7 writing classes for small group interviews both in person through class visits and through email. In the end, I conducted three interviews with MEL 5 students and two interviews with MEL 7 students, all in groups of 2-4 students. The interviews were conducted at my residence and lasted approximately two hours. The interviews had two parts: a semi-structured portion, covering students' general experiences with writing in Serbian and English at the high school and university levels and outside of school, goals for study, and opinions of the writing curriculum. The second portion was a stimulated recall session, which included both excerpts from audio recordings of their writing classes and the students' own writings with teacher commentary. I reviewed the excerpts and artifacts together with the students and prompted them to reflect on how they understood the teachers' intentions for the lessons, assignments, and feedback, and how they themselves understood the material (see Appendix C for interview protocols).

To get a better sense of the institutional positioning of the writing courses, I also conducted interviews with faculty who taught non-writing courses within and outside the department. I identified before my fieldwork began several participants in addition to the writing instructors who I anticipated would be key informants – participants who are “thoroughly enculturated”, currently active in the culture, and have adequate time and patience for the research project (Spradley, 1979, p.46). Via email, I recruited those I had identified, including the professor leading each year of the MEL courses, and the instructors of the third year writing-intensive elective courses. In the end, I conducted interviews with the professors leading MEL 1, MEL 3, and MEL 5, and the professors teaching both third year elective courses, Form and Content and Intercultural Communication (see Appendix D for a list of interviews cited).

In the process of the study, I was also connected to instructors who teach English beyond the undergraduate English department population. Specifically, these were the instructor of the master's level writing course in the English department; the instructor of the English courses for sociology students (who works within the Faculty of Philosophy), and the instructor of English at the Faculty of Law at Southern Serbia University. These interviews were conducted at the participants' choice of location, including classrooms, their offices, and their residences. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the instructors' own educational backgrounds, their goals for their courses, their choice of curriculum and materials, their perceptions of students' needs, and their beliefs about writing and writing pedagogy (see Appendix C for interview protocol).

Finally, in order to gain perspective on how the literacy gained through these writing courses translates into professional or academic literacy, I interviewed former students who had graduated from Southern Serbia University. These students were recruited primarily through social media, relying on my own connections as a teacher in this context, and were primarily recent graduates (within the past 2 years). In total interviewed 11 former students, some individually and some in groups of 2-4, as the participants preferred. The interviews were conducted at my residence and lasted approximately two hours. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on students' experiences writing in English and in Serbian at the university, and the use of their English writing abilities in their lives post-graduation (see Appendix C for interview protocol).

Instructional artifacts

In addition to the classroom observations and interview data, I collected copies of the textbooks and other instructional materials used by each participating teacher, including course syllabi, class handouts, and PowerPoint slides. I also asked instructors for permission to access the instructional websites they used, which included a class blogging site and a wiki site (PBWorks) used for sharing documents. Where documents were written in Serbian (rarely), I asked instructors for assistance in translating. With students' permission, I collected copies of practice essays they wrote during the time of observation, with teacher comments [from MEL 3, two sets]. I also asked student interview participants to provide me with copies of previous papers with teacher comments, as they felt comfortable sharing them. I was not permitted to collect copies of exams, as these are considered sensitive documents.

Additional research sites

At Central Serbia University (CSU), I gathered essentially a more limited set of the same types of data I collected at SSU, following the same procedures and beginning with the same interview protocols. My entry into this community was facilitated by connections I had developed during my time as a teacher in Serbia; I was introduced to the writing instructors via an email from one of their colleagues, and made arrangements for observations and interviews. I observed one session each of the MEL 1, 3, 5 and 7 writing classes, during which I took field notes; I conducted formal (audio-recorded) interviews with the MEL 1, 3, and 5 writing instructors, and informal interviews with the MEL 7 instructor and the English instructor for psychology and communications students; and I conducted interviews with two MEL 5 and two MEL 7 students, who were suggested to me by one of their instructors. At CSU, interviews were conducted in coffee shops and restaurants, as well as in the teachers' office. I also collected copies of

textbook pages and handouts used in class, and the student interview participants provided me with some of their course writings.

To triangulate participants' reports about the nature of writing instruction in English at the high school level, I conducted interviews with teachers and students from secondary schools in Grad. I was introduced to these teachers through my involvement with the local English language teachers' association, and recruited participants both face to face and via email. In total, I interviewed three English teachers from a local high school and one junior high teacher. These interviews were conducted at the participants' choice of location, including the teachers' residences and the school's teachers' room and residence, and lasted between 30 minutes and two hours. For these interviews I used the protocol for the background interview with writing instructors (see Appendix C). I also interviewed two high school students who were nominated by their teacher. I interviewed them for approximately an hour in a private room at their school, using the interview protocol for current university students, focusing on their experiences writing in English and in Serbian and their opinions about the writing instruction at the high school. This data was not transcribed and primarily provided background for my understanding of the overall educational ecology in this research context.

3.4 Data Analysis

Following data collection, all interviews were reviewed and selectively transcribed by the researcher using broad verbatim transcription conventions (see Appendix E), as were the class recording excerpts used in the stimulated recalls. Additional excerpts from classroom recordings that became significant during further analysis (constant comparative) were also transcribed by the researcher.

According to the principles of grounded content analysis, analysis begins with open or initial coding of the data, identifying themes that emerge from the initial observations and interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In a constant comparative approach, analysis happens alongside data collection and the categories that emerge drive theoretical sampling of the data (Birks & Mills, 2011). Thus, my analysis began during my fieldwork in Serbia, as I reviewed my early classroom observations, textual artifacts, and interview data to create questions and themes for the stimulated recalls.

More specifically, as I typed up my field notes from observations and initial meetings with interview participants, I began to create memos of emerging themes, which I stored as individual word documents alongside my data. Memos can be thought of as putting into writing preliminary interpretations as they arise (Yin, 2014). Initial memos included themes such as the role of foreign teachers, the impact of high school writing instruction, and the prevalence of beliefs about the differences between Serbian and English writing styles. These memos helped to shape the path of data collection as my study progressed, and I continued to create and add to the memos throughout the recursive stages of analysis.

The next stage of data analysis was to creating a “thick description” (Geertz, 1994) of each teacher’s pedagogical practices and approach to planning, instruction, and assessment. This description drew mainly on classroom observations, teacher interviews, and textual artifacts. Through the process of writing this thick description, I reviewed transcripts and fieldnotes many times, becoming deeply familiar with the data and further identifying emerging themes, which I used to expand and add to existing memos (Yin, 2014).

After this initial identification of themes and patterns, I applied a theoretical framework to the data – that of cultural-historical activity theory (described in detail in Chapter 2). The goal was, first, to identify the components of the activity system which shape writing instruction and how they interact, and second, to identify point of tension or contradictions in the activity system which were resolved through teacher innovation.

The final stage of analysis is the use of member checks with my key informants – the writing instructors – by soliciting their comments on drafts of my findings. In taking on the study of a periphery community in which I am an outsider, that there is potential for my work to be imperialist – that of a center scholar interpreting and speaking for “natives” (Canagarajah, 1996). Beyond the need for self-reflexivity, it is important to give participants the opportunity to speak back to my interpretations of their lives and work, though it is equally important not to expect or demand their equal investment in this part of the research (Horner, 2004). For me, the member checks constitute one component of a process of paying attention to what Yin (2014) calls “contrary evidence” (p.73) in order to examine possible rival explanations for my findings, a process which also includes actively reflecting on my own positioning and assumptions.

3.5 Reflections on my positioning

Kirsch and Ritchie (1995) argue that as researchers, it is not sufficient to simply make space to state our identities within our writing; instead, we must engage in “rigorously reflexive examination” (p.9) and in the process we must do more than merely “claim the personal and locate ourselves in our scholarship” (p.8). In fact, it is not possible for us to ever fully recognize our own perspectives – instead, what we can do as researchers, and what I aim to do in this section, is the act of “noticing the multiple and contradictory positions researchers and participants occupy, complicating and politicizing our investigation, [and] valuing the individual and the local” (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1995, p.10).

Like Nero (2015), my role as a researcher had elements of both insider and outsider status. On the insider side, I was a former colleague of my research participants, having taught with them side by side (and in the case of one teacher co-taught a class) for a full academic year. I had lived in the city and had spent considerable time socializing with my colleagues both at work and in the community, including at their homes. My relationship with several colleagues extended beyond collegiality firmly into friendship.

This level of access to and good faith with the participants from the insider status (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), together with deep familiarity with the context, was in no small part what led me to select this research site. In Geertz's terms, I had some amount of "experience near" (1974, p.28).

However, these elements of emic-ness are in many ways at odds with my decidedly foreign status both in my initial teaching experience and in my return as a researcher. My entrance into the community came about as part of a U.S. State Department fellowship; I was brought in specifically as an expert, native speaking instructor, in order to "enhance" the teaching of English ("English Language Fellow Program", n.d.). My limited skills in Serbian meant that my research was conducted in English, and part of the draw of volunteering for my research interviews surely was, though I did not specifically promote this aspect, the chance to spend time conversing with a native speaker. As an example, through my interactions with the local English teachers' association, I was connected to the community of secondary English teachers, which enabled my observations at the secondary schools. As part of building these relationships, I visited several high schools as a "guest speaker", which mostly consisted of answering students' questions about myself and life in the United States. These experiences enabled me to interact with students and teachers outside of my more formal researcher role, to build goodwill with my participants, and to observe through interaction students' goals, interests, and proficiency in English, will also giving me greater access to the secondary school teachers' lives (for example, spending time in their teachers' lounges, and seeing their hectic schedules) – clearly a significant advantage in the research process. Yet, as the "guest speaker from America", I was also accepting and trading on a visibly othered status, using my identity as almost a bargaining chip to gain access.

This markedly foreign/outsider status created two dilemmas for me. The first was the negotiation of privilege: throughout the project, I was highly conscious of my role as the "exported" expertise in teaching writing (Donahue, 2009), and of the fact that as a native speaker of English, I was continually accorded the privileges associated with being considered "authentic" (Widdowson, 1992). I was also aware, as a Western researcher in the global periphery, of the power hierarchies in which my work was both embedded and in some ways complicit – I came from the place in which "knowledge" was produced, and, as critical ethnography has thoroughly unveiled, there was a potential for my work to be imperialist, that of a privileged researcher interpreting and speaking for "natives" (Canagarajah, 1996).

The second (interrelated) dilemma was that of negotiating the ownership of teaching expertise. Here, I need to acknowledge my own ideological stance – motivated by Donahue's (2009) call for the internationalization of composition and the explicit goal of overturning the import/export model, I came looking to not only document but also honor the expertise and lived experiences of these teachers. I thus began by orienting to the participants as expert teachers, and yet, perhaps inevitably given my status not only as a Western researcher but as a Western researcher of L2 writing, the teachers themselves oriented to me as the greater expert. These competing statuses were complicated by relative academic status within the deeply hierarchical Serbian university – as a PhD student, I ranked lower than the professors but higher than those who had completed a

bachelor's or master's degree – and had to be continually negotiated during interview interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008) .

However, these dual positions mean that I have, in addition to limited “experience near” or insider knowledge, a greater amount of “experience distant” knowledge, which is the kind which specialists “employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims” (Geertz, 1974, p.28). My privilege as a center researcher entails access to academic knowledge about the teaching of writing across contexts, which can then be used as a resource: the meeting point between these two perspectives can be the site of discovery and learning, not only about the self and the other, but about the meaning of events and symbols and systems. More specifically, as a Western researcher, I could be considered “an embodiment of 'the center'”, allowing participants to verbalize their beliefs about the role of English in their lives, the exported teaching practices, and the implicit power hierarchies in which the teaching of English is always embedded (Verity, personal communication, January 28, 2016). Thus, my interactions with local scholars, as well as my application of CHAT as an analytical framework, can provide them a space to articulate their own understandings as an educated sounding board, to uncover patterns, contradictions, and points of interest, empowering them not only to develop their pedagogy, but to find what in it is already valuable.

Chapter 4

Factors impacting pedagogy

RQ: What social and institutional factors shape writing instruction in this context?

As discussed in Chapter 2, in the growing literature on EFL writing instruction, there is movement from an adaptation approach to towards an appropriation phase; that is, towards an understanding of and appreciation for the power of local teachers to appropriate pedagogy and the potential for EFL writing scholarship to contribute to pedagogy in the center (e.g., Cimasko & Reichelt, 2011; You, 2010). However, there is a lingering thread of scholarship in which EFL writing instruction is seen as ESL pedagogy which has been adapted to local conditions (e.g., Elqobai, 2011; Tarnopolsky, 2011; Schenck & Choi, 2015). The local conditions represented in the literature, in both the adaptation and appropriation approaches, include practical factors such as large class sizes, limited financial resources, and limited teacher training, and ideological factors such as an assessment-based culture, still neatly matching the heuristic presented by Leki (2001) for understanding the challenges associated with teaching EFL writing, even fifteen years after its publication. In other words, some of the scholars who describe EFL writing pedagogy – both pedagogy as it is (Reichelt, 2009; Tarnopolsky, 2011) and pedagogy as they hope or wish it might be (Lee, 2011) – are still describing how center pedagogy must be imported and then adapted.

Furthermore, the EFL writing literature portrays these factors as fairly geographically limited – that is as the physical realities or particular hardships of EFL teaching contexts: in Tarnopolsky’s words, the “local peculiarities”, which for him include “the conditions of learning and teaching, the students, [and] the teachers” (2011, p.184). These factors are seen as facts about a local place by the scholars who work there, even when they are viewed as trends or patterns across countries (Reichelt, 2009). This portrayal is in many ways a useful rhetorical move which bring attention to local circumstances as a way of justifying the need to adapt imported pedagogy, addressed to an audience which might otherwise view adapted pedagogy as impure or deficient (Leki, 2001). However, it also sets up a false dichotomy between global and local, reflecting and perpetuating the hierarchy between ESL and EFL pedagogies, in which ESL is seen as globally marketable (and exportable) and EFL as only locally useful or relevant.

To break down this problematic dichotomy, and move past the conception of the factors shaping EFL writing instruction as mere “local peculiarities”, I argue that such factors are never purely local, but that they can instead be understood as operating at multiple scales: instantiations or impacts of global and national level policies and practices, which teachers must. Through a CHAT analysis, I am able to consider how

teachers' practices are shaped by conflicts and negotiations with these factors at the local level. In examining these factors, I aim to bring attention to the impact of broader social and economic contexts on writing pedagogy, including the influence of institutional regulations and educational goals. These are themes which, Reichelt and Cimasko (2011) point out, though "necessarily in the foreground of FL writing, are sometimes neglected in the ESL writing literature" (p.vii), and it is precisely this foregrounding which is the advantage of foreign language writing research.

In this chapter, I examine three key factors (*rules* and *artifacts*) impacting pedagogy in the English department of Southern Serbia University, considering the origins of each factor, its effect on the writing curriculum, and the reactions of the students (*community*). I first examine the curricular goals of the English department, specifically the goal to develop students' linguistic competence in order to prepare them for future work as graduate students or English teachers. I next examine the ideology circulating among teachers and students about the profound differences between Serbian and English writing, and how this ideology emerges from a pedagogical simplification and negotiations with international writing textbooks. Finally, I analyze the role of foreign lectors in the department, tracing the ideologies about native-speaking teachers and policies which ensure that foreign lectors are most often placed in writing classrooms. Though these factors are deeply interconnected, I separate them here for the purpose of analysis and elaboration. Each factor is already represented in the EFL writing literature, and my aim is to (re)examine the ways in which these factors are not purely local. I consider how each factor operates at multiple levels, tracing up from the departmental level through national and international, and down to consider impacts on individual teachers' beliefs and classroom practices.

In Chapter 5, I will examine these factors as elements of the activity system (primarily *artifacts* and *rules*), which like the activity of English language teaching itself, are dynamic and evolving, created out of contact with other activity systems and resolution of contradictions. I will examine how contradictions between individual instructors' goals and these rules and artifacts arise, and how the resolution of those contradictions is accomplished through negotiation which leads to pedagogical innovation. In this chapter, my purpose is to demonstrate that these *rules* and *artifacts*, far from being "local peculiarities" (Tarnopolsky, 2011) as they are portrayed in the literature, are instead richly layered – operating at multiple "scales" or levels from local (micro) through intermediary levels such as regional and national to global (macro) (Blommaert, 2010, p.32). The pedagogical tasks which are shaped by these factors are thus part of a "locally appropriate" pedagogy (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996), one which is embedded in layers of context which are simultaneously local and global, operating in a dialectic unity.

4.1 English department curricular objectives

The curriculum of the English department at SSU is designed, first and foremost, to produce students with fluency and accuracy in the English language, as well as broad knowledge of English language linguistics, literature, and culture, in preparation for careers as teachers or other language professionals. The objectives of the program, as stated on the department's website, include the following: students should acquire theoretical and methodological knowledge in linguistics and literary analysis, familiarity with the cultures of several English-dominant countries, competence in an additional foreign language, skills in critical thinking, intercultural communication, and self-reflection, and finally "awareness of the necessity of life-long intellectual and professional development" (Departman za anglistiku, 2015). The three curricular objectives which most impact the teaching of writing are related to students' linguistic competence, preparation for teaching, and qualification for future study. Each objective will be discussed separately below first, and then following that their impact on classroom practice. The goal of developing linguistic competence, in particular, is highly apparent in the organization of the core curriculum of the MEL courses.

It is axiomatic in the EFL writing literature that one of the reasons writing pedagogy looks so different in EFL settings is that writing is "in service" to the acquisition of overall linguistic competence, a tool for integrating, practicing, and refining grammar, vocabulary, and use (Casanave, 2009; Leki, 2001a; Reichelt, 2009). However, I suggest that the focus on developing linguistic competence as the overarching goal of the writing classroom is not purely a local value, but rather operating on multiple scales – particularly when it is tied to preparation of future teachers – and that it is not the limitation the literature portrays it to be, but rather a fundamental part of locally appropriate pedagogy in this setting which meets the needs of students.

Linguistic competence

In the four years of study at SSU, students are expected to "develop language skills and competences" in English as a Foreign Language to the level of C1 or C2 in the Common European Framework for Languages (Departman za anglistiku, 2015). In addition to a more traditional definition of competence as "the synthesis of integrated skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) with knowledge in the field of grammar, vocabulary and use of language", students are expected to develop "pragmatic and communicative competences", including "an understanding of different linguistic styles and varieties" (Departman za anglistiku, 2015). These programmatic goals suggest that students should not only know English grammar and vocabulary, but should be able to use the language productively and appropriately in a variety of settings.

Both the overall curricular goals and the specific framing of linguistic competence, while created and operating at a local level, are also instantiations of more global educational policies, specifically, the CEFR and the Bologna Process. The

adoption of the CEFR across eastern Europe (Komorowska, 2001; Stoicheva & Stefanova, 2012) has been uneven, and in some places somewhat superficial, associated primarily with the visible use of the reference levels (Alderson, 2007; Komorowska, 2001; Stoicheva & Stefanova, 2012), and to some extent this is true in Serbia as well. In the English department at SSU, the most visible impact of CEFR is the use of level descriptors to specify the proficiency goal in English as a C1 or C2 level, and to specify the desired competence in an additional foreign language at a B2 level. However, the framing of competence as “pragmatic and communicative” [pragmatska i komunikativna kompetencija] also reflects CEFR’s emphasis on students’ communicative use of language (Little, 2006), and the curricular goals include students’ attainment of a B2 level of competency in an additional foreign language, such as Greek, Russian, or German (Departman za anglistiku, 2015), demonstrate at least a nod to the CEFR’s promotion of plurilingualism, and perhaps of a pan-European identity, which the CEFR explicitly promotes by emphasizing unity through language learning and valuing Europe’s linguistic diversity (Byram and Parmenter, 2012). Finally, the curricular goals emphasize that students should develop not only motivation for life-long learning, but also “the ability of self-evaluation and self-reflection” [sposobnost samoevaluacije i autorefleksije] (Departman za anglistiku, 2015), reflecting the CEFR’s emphasis on self-assessment as a fundamental tool for learning (Little, 2006).

In addition to being influenced by European educational reforms, this objective is also impacted by a national level educational reform - the standardization of the MEL curriculum across Serbia. Specifically, Professor Tasić reported that in the 2003/2004 school year, there was a national project to develop a “general framework standardization, not only in our department but in all the English departments in all the state universities in Serbia” through a series of meetings in which professors “exchanged experiences and talked about how we organize our language courses... primarily focused on English language courses and English language teaching courses” (Professor Tasić, March 6)⁸. The result of these meetings was an agreed-upon set of guidelines for the MEL classes in each year which continue to guide the courses’ content. The overarching goal of developing students’ overall “language skills and competence” [jezičkih veština i kompetencija] (Departman za anglistiku, 2015), thus represents an instantiation of both the pan-European and national scale-levels.

Teacher preparation

The second curricular goal which impacts writing instruction at SSU is that students should be prepared, by the time they graduate, to teach English as a foreign language in Serbia. Specifically, they should have:

⁸ Professor Tasić was the only participant who mentioned this project, most likely because she was the only person I interviewed who was a full professor at the time it occurred (division of labor).

gained knowledge and competence in the field of English language teaching methodology, as well as pedagogy and psychology which are necessary for teaching English as a foreign language at different levels in the educational institutions of the Republic of Serbia (Departman za anglistiku, 2015)

This objective reflects the local as well as national economy, as most students will be employed after graduation, primarily as teachers either in public schools or in private language schools. While many students reported that they entered the faculty with the ambition to be teachers (Student interviews Dec 4, Dec 6), others find themselves teaching as a means to support themselves as they complete degrees, apply for graduate programs, or look for other work (Student interviews Dec 4, Dec 6, Dec 7).

Many students have strong ambitions to leave Serbia for Europe or the United States, primarily for economic reasons; as one fourth-year student put it, “I also wanted to be a teacher...but I think in Serbia you can never really prosper there's no future in that” (Student interviews Dec 7). It’s an unfortunate reality that few of them will. The English they have labored to acquire, though it is required for many kinds of international mobility, does not overcome Serbia’s position in the margins of the global marketplace, a position Prendergast (2008) describes as “sharply defined and decidedly second-class” (p.3). Nonetheless, this goal among the students is known among teachers; for at least one teacher, Sara, it spurs her desire to teach students business writing genres which would have currency at a higher scale-level (Blommaert, 2010), as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

This position is further reflected in the fact that increasingly, these former students are now teaching online, in a far more international context than that envisioned by the curricular goals. A group of student who had graduated from the faculty a few years prior to my data collection reported that they were each teaching Japanese adult English learners through an international website, and that after conducting speaking lessons by Skype, they had to write “lesson notes”, consisting of comments both to the students and to other teachers about “how the class went”, the content covered, and what skills students should work on in the future; one former student, Milan, reported that he wrote these lesson notes more or less on a daily basis (Group, Nov 9).

This new form of teaching grants students’ written competence in English even more significance than it might have in traditional classroom settings, as it becomes the main way in which these novice teachers communicate with their international colleagues and supervisors, and also reflects the ever-expanding role of English as an international language. Yet for students who are so eager to leave Serbia, this sort of outsourced labor, which they not only can but must do from their homes, also keeps them firmly in place. As for Prendergast’s participants in Slovakia, these students have through their acquisition of English (a result of their own efforts and the work of their teachers) gained a position in the global economy, but only one of cheap labor for the global center.

Graduate education

The third curricular objective is that students should be “qualified for further education through master's and doctoral programs” (Departman za anglistiku, 2015). This goal, hardly unusual for undergraduate study internationally, may in some small way reflect the influence of the Bologna Process and its efforts to standardize higher education and smooth the process between degrees. However, the influence of this goal has become stronger recently in the English department of SSU due to a ministry of education decree which specified that Serbian teachers in elementary and high schools need to have master's degrees: “there is this requirement by the ministry that all of them should have MA before they start working at school” (Lana, Nov 21). Likewise, Maja reports that “most of [the students] have to do their master's in order to be able to teach...even in elementary now, uh so most of them take these master courses because they're worried that they won't be able to find jobs or that people with a master's degree will be the preferred candidates” (Maja, Dec 1).

My participants reported that this new regulation has significantly increased the number of students enrolled in the master's program in English, as about 50 students enroll now in the master's program each year, which is more than half the number of students who graduate from the faculty. Lana, who teaches first and third year students, described a great deal of confusion around this regulation:

actually there are two laws on education, one is uh uh regulates the work of schools, elementary and secondary, and uh the other with higher education and there is a disbalance and mismatch between the two, because the uh law of higher education says that they can work with their BAs at schools? but the other law says they should be MA and there is a (constant) conflict and even school principals are not sure which of these laws to follow (Lana, Nov 21)

This confusion further gives an opportunity it to school administrators to play favorites, as “actually it's up to the principals to hire who they like” and with “this ambiguity in the legal regulations it's very difficult to prove... who is right” (Lana, Nov 21), it is not surprising that students aiming towards teaching as a career are enrolling in the master's program in greater numbers. This increased enrollment, a consequence of the ministry's policy, trickles down into not only the curricular goals of the department, but into the overall curriculum and into individual teacher's cognition/planning, reinforcing the need to prepare not just the elite students but all students for graduate study.

Impact on teachers' goals

These three goals – linguistic competence, preparation for teaching, and preparation for master's study – emerge again and again as interrelated concepts in interviews with teachers across the four years of study. For example, when asked about

her goals for the students in that semester, Professor Vidić, the supervising professor for MEL 3, responded that students not only need to speak English (linguistic competence) but they “need to know *about* English”, to know grammatical rules and linguistic theory, precisely because “they need to teach someone else English” (Professor Vidić, Oct 28). Even more explicitly in preparation for teaching, Professor Tasić, the supervising professor for MEL 5, described an activity she uses in her lecture in which students created grammar tests based on grammar concepts present in their course book, and then other students critiqued the tests, noting that she “wanted to show [the students] that they are on their way to becoming English language teachers so they have to put on the teaching shoes every now and then” (Professor Tasić, March 6). This activity thus reinforced the students’ status as future teachers while also providing opportunities for language learning: “of course it was uh good for their language...it was a sort of task based learning because focusing on something else and using English as a tool for the process” (Professor Tasić, March 6), effectively instantiating two of the overall curricular objectives. Likewise, Maja emphasizes that her goals in the fourth year essay course are centered around helping students learn vocabulary and methods of development because “hopefully they end up using some of that when it's time for them to write their master's thesis next year” (Maja, Dec 1).

The department’s objectives for students emerge in the teachers’ reports of as an *artifact* or tool which guides and motivates their classroom practice. Thus the pan-European policy of CEFR, as well as the national level ministry of education decisions, and the local economy (which is of course imbedded in the global economy and its needs and restrictions) impact the daily work of writing teachers in this context – their classrooms are not only local but also global. This is hardly a new idea in theorizing classroom pedagogy; teachers’ classroom objectives and practices everywhere are impacted by national level education reforms and mandates (see, for example, Ahn, 2011; Kim 2011; Markee, 2013). The point is that these three objectives, especially developing linguistic competence, shape the teaching of EFL writing in this context because they shape the nature of the MEL classes, which are the core of the curriculum and the most visible place for writing instruction. If the MEL courses weren’t designed primarily to develop students’ linguistic competence (with the subsidiary goals of preparation for teaching and graduate school), the core writing classes would look very different.

Impact on curricular structure

The Modern English Language (MEL) courses, which are explicitly designed to improve students’ vocabulary, grammar, and fluency in speaking and writing are the foundation of the departments’ curriculum, making up a large proportion of students’ work each semester. These courses are, as mentioned previously, taught side by side each semester with substantial coursework in English language literature, culture, and linguistics, reflecting the departmental objectives described earlier in this section. While all of these courses contain writing components, including written exams, it is the writing

“practicals” of the MEL courses which offer the most explicit writing pedagogy. As the MEL “practicals” are aimed at developing students’ linguistic proficiency, in addition to their preparation for teaching and graduate study, it is this focus which ultimately dictates the content of the MEL writing courses.

A good example of the impact of this objective is the structure of the first year of MEL courses. In the first year, the MEL “practicals” consist of a grammar course and two classes of “Use of English”, focused primarily on vocabulary development. The main goals of the first year MEL courses are to build up the students’ grammatical and vocabulary knowledge and textual analysis skills in preparation for their university studies. The syllabus for MEL 1 describes the class as “an introduction-to-language-studies course” (CE1 syllabus) in which students investigate how language functions. However, the syllabus primarily emphasizes students’ development of active and passive vocabulary and the four language skills, including “accuracy and fluency in your written and oral performance” (CE1 syllabus). More specifically, MEL 1 and 2 courses aim to get all students to a B2 level in the CEFR by the end of the first year (Professor Dević, Dec 2). Thus, the grammar practical focuses on “revising, consolidating, and practising the same grammar points” from the entrance exam (CE1 syllabus), and the Use of English “practicals” work on developing students’ active and passive vocabulary, through attention to “word formation, multi-word verbs and idioms, prepositional phrases and collocations” (CE1 syllabus).

This orientation to the MEL courses’ purpose of improving students’ language is also exemplified in the organization of the third year MEL courses. When asked about her goals for students, Professor Tasić, the supervising professor of the MEL 5 courses, emphasized the linguistic level students should achieve: “the outcomes of this class... is defined in terms of uh the expected level of achievement of their linguistic competence... usually described as B2 plus” (Professor Tasić, March 6). This is further reflected in the third year syllabus, which describes the aim of the class primarily as:

to teach students the English language on a higher and more advanced level (B2 + to C1), in each of the four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking), to have theoretical and more importantly practical knowledge in advanced level use of grammar and lexicon in different registers... (SEJ5 syllabus)

This focus on language guides the course content throughout the MEL components. A good example is the use of class books, what are called here “obligatory readings” (Professor Tasić, March 6). Each MEL semester has a book selected by the professor that students read and discuss during the semester as part of the lecture courses. Professors select these books based on both potential student engagement in the topic and on linguistic level – the books should provide new vocabulary for students but not be so challenging that students are discouraged. Thus, Professor Dević, the supervising professor of MEL 1, notes that he is not happy with the course book for the first year (a young adult novel called *The Diary of Adrian Mole*) because the content is dated, but that he has rejected more current replacements either because the language is either “too simple” or “too complex for the first year students” (Professor Dević, Dec 2). Likewise, Professor Tasić reports that she chose the book she uses in MEL 5, *Watching the English*

by Kate Fox, based on both its theme and vocabulary. Specifically, she selected a book written by an anthropologist which discusses culture in an effort to promote a connection to the third-year elective course in intercultural communication. However, she continues that

the language of the book is great, I think it's just the right level for them...it is not too formal but still it's not just everyday vocabulary... I wanted something that would be at the same time good for their English but also intellectually challenging (Professor Tasić, March 6)

She concludes by adding “and it's a beautiful book”, suggesting that aesthetics and enjoyment also play a role in book selection.

In the lectures, the professors mine these books for vocabulary and grammatical structures, while also using them as the basis for thematic activities and discussions - sort of gives the class a theme. During classroom observations, Professor Vidić seemed to use the textbook primarily as a source for focus on form activities, and in her interview, she confirmed that she emphasizes language forms, because the students need the practice; specifically, she uses the course book for dictation exercises, asks students to translate sections of it into Serbian, and creates exercises from it to practice articles and verb tenses (Professor Vidić, Oct 28).

Impact on writing classes

It is important to understand how the MEL writing classes are shaped by this goal of linguistic competence. The MEL “practicals” devoted to writing, are, as Professor Tasić explains, not truly writing classes, but rather language classes:

our essay writing courses are not really writing courses. just the same way our translation courses are not really - the focus is not on the skill of translating but they are both different kinds of language practice courses. (Professor Tasić, March 6)

All the MEL components are aimed at improving students’ linguistic competence - the translation classes are not vocational training for students to be translators, but rather language development courses using translation as the backdrop. Neither translation nor developing academic writing skills, per se, is a curricular objective. Rather, both the writing and translation courses are, as Professor Tasić points out, classes which should develop students’ linguistic proficiency:

they do get the basics of writing in terms of they do learn about the topic sentence, about the primary supports and secondary supports, but that's not the main focus of those courses...the point is to...develop their writing skill as a

language skill, so it's not academic writing course, it's a language course in which the focus is on written language (Professor Tasić, March 6)

As a result, the work that Sara, the third year MEL writing instructor, does is focused heavily on language, in the form of grammatical accuracy and vocabulary development:

so at least half of her attention and work and at least half of their final grade in the writing course is uh the language grade. so [she] focuses on their grammar accuracy and their grammatical expression and their vocabulary building exercises (Professor Tasić, March 6)

This orientation to improving students' language as the main objective in the MEL courses deeply shapes individual writing teachers' practices and goals; as individuals working within the activity system of writing instruction, the course objectives, as *artifacts*, mediate their choice of object. Thus, Sara, when asked about her goals for the students in this year of study, talked about developing three qualities she wanted to see in their writing, namely fluency, organization, and vocabulary:

those two big things for our students are fluency and organization of their thoughts. I mean of course vocabulary...you want to see variation don't you... I want to be able to equip them with those skills to produce structures that they can use and refer back to, so that they have a set of skills actually that they can put into practice (Sara, Oct 21)

Likewise, Maja's primary goal in MEL 7 is that students should be able to write with both clarity of thought and appropriately formal language. Specifically, her goal is that students:

should be able to present information verbally or in written form so it has a clear organized structure clarity and...in a formal enough fashion...so that whoever's listening to them can say ok that was presented very clearly and the language that you used was also not um dumbed down it was appropriate for the level for an academic setting (Maja, Dec 1)

In line with her emphasis on students' use of language that is "appropriate for the level of an academic setting" and "not dumbed down", Maja devotes considerable class time in the MEL 7 class to developing students' vocabularies through examining individual vocabulary words from reading passages and vocabulary exercises and discussing their nuances in translation; for example, in the first class of the semester, Maja spent about a third of the class on a vocabulary exercise in which students matched formal and informal words, and provided a list of rules for "appropriate and formal language" for essay writing, including using "one" rather than "you" and avoiding contractions, phrasal verbs, and idiomatic language (Field notes, Oct 8).

The focus on developing linguistic proficiency as the purpose of the MEL class, as linked to preparation of master's students and future teachers, reflects a variety of scale-levels: the pan-European scale through the use of the CEFR level descriptors, the

national scale through the conformance to the standardization of English curricula and the impact of the educational policy requiring teachers to have master's degrees, the global scale through the liminality of Serbia's position in the global economy, and the local scale through the arrangement of the local economy. This objective of developing linguistic competence must be negotiated by teachers, whether as an internalized motivation for their practice, or as an *artifact* in their activity system they must negotiate with in order to accomplish other goals in the writing classroom.

In the literature on EFL writing instruction, the fact that writing classes are understood as sites for linguistic development means that writing itself is seen as a skill of secondary importance, either an opportunity for pushed output (Ortega, 2009) or a way to enhance other linguistic skills (Leki, 2001a), automatically resulting in writing instruction that is overly focused on grammatical correctness and lacking in freedom of expression (Reichelt, 2009). My data suggests that this orientation towards developing linguistic competence is not the negative factor the literature portrays it to be. In the Serbian context, it is true that the classes which are most visibly writing classes are, in fact, language oriented – as Professor Tasić reports, otherwise there would be no need for the separate writing class she created, Form and Content. Yet this is not the same as saying that writing is secondary to speaking in this context, but rather that the goals of the program are overtly aimed at improving students' language abilities. This objective, because it is shaped by the multiple layers of context in which this activity system is embedded, is one which is fundamentally locally appropriate.

As Leki (2001b) points out, the emphasis on language in writing classes is often portrayed in the literature as a recalcitrance, a reluctance to adopt progressive, modern process writing pedagogy (e.g., Schenck & Choi, 2015). In the Serbian context, the goals of the program are specifically to produce fluent speakers and writers in order to produce competent future teachers, goals which are informed (if not dictated) by their local economic and educational ecology, in line with layers of national and European policies. Individual teachers, exercising their agency and drawing on their knowledge of students, may still have goals in conflict with this objective, and they will negotiate with it (as will be discussed in Chapter 5), but overall, this goal is the locally appropriate one.

Beyond this context, it is worth re-considering the value of embedding writing instruction in an overall focus on developing linguistic competence, treating writing as not a discrete skill but part of a complex of skills both oral and written, including control of register and language variety – what might be termed linguistic awareness. Sara describes her goal as for students to develop skills they can “put into practice” in the future, inside and outside the classroom; Maja's focus on developing high-level vocabulary is paired with developing clarity of thought and expression and an ability to be understood by sophisticated audiences. As Maja describes, she wants her students to

learn how to present material properly, maybe as teachers tomorrow maybe they're going to do correspondence maybe they're going to be translators whatever they do that they be able to organize it a little better (Maja, Dec 1)

Just as local practices are embedded in and can support pedagogical goals at higher scale-levels, linguistic development goals can be embedded in and support the acquisition of writing skill.

In contrast to ESL writing contexts, where the focus is on equipping students for writing in an English-dominant context, a scholarly and pedagogical interest in language development in the writing classroom tends to disappear and reappear with shifting trends, and when not in fashion is often covert, depending on individual teachers (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015). In this EFL context, the goal of improving students' language is not hidden (except from my own naïve eyes as a novice imported instructor) and does not waver, and far from automatically interfering with or hindering teachers' efforts to develop students' writing abilities, it can support a sound, locally appropriate, rhetorically sophisticated pedagogy.

4.2 Contrastive rhetoric ideology among teachers and students

The members of this community, from administrators to students, believe strongly that the writing done in Serbian, particularly as it is taught in Serbian high schools, is completely different from the writing done in the English program at the university. That is, they believe that the “Serbian style” of writing is completely different from the “English style”, sometimes also described as the “American style”. This belief, what might be considered a sort of lay or folk contrastive rhetoric, emerges from the interactions between local teaching practices and internationally circulating materials, creating an ideology which has “sedimented” – become an accepted practice in a culture through repetition over time (Pennycook, 2010). Thus, it demonstrates especially clearly the layered or dialectic nature of the factors which shape writing instruction in this context. In this section I first describe this belief, then consider its origins, and finally trace its impact on writing pedagogy, particularly the ordering of writing assignments throughout the MEL courses.

The contrastive rhetoric beliefs that my participants evince are far from unusual in the EFL writing literature. Across contexts, L1 rhetorical traditions are often seen as interfering with the successful mastery of the Western or English rhetorical style (Harootunian, 2010; Reichelt, 2005, 2009). Tarnopolsky's (2011) description of writing pedagogy in Ukraine nearly duplicates my participants' characterization of Serbian writing, as he emphasizes the difference between the “practically obligatory” five paragraph essay structure of thesis statement and topic sentences in English writing, in contrast to the “more amorphous” Ukrainian academic essay (p.186). This ideology, elsewhere as in Serbia, is inextricable from the sense that students are not taught to write “properly” in their L1 in high school⁹ (Reichelt, 2009). That these ideologies persist,

⁹ The data I collected in a high school contests this ideology, suggesting that there is far more emphasis on writing structure, feedback, and revision in high school classes than my university participants believe, but my intention here is to focus on the ideology's impact on the university writing curriculum.

despite evidence that the relationship between L1 and L2 rhetorical styles is complex and provides potential for creativity and innovation (e.g., You, 2010), suggests that it is worthwhile to understand their origins and impact.

“Serbian” versus “English” writing

The general characterization of Serbian writing among the members of this community is that the Serbian style is loosely organized, meandering, and somewhat stream of consciousness, and that the English style is concise, tightly organized, and logical; where the Serbian style is lyrical and elegant, the English style is simple and precise. A typical description of the “Serbian writing style” comes from Professor Dević, who leads the first year MEL courses. He describes the writing done in Serbian high schools as poetic, highly focused on displaying a literary sense of language, including an elevated vocabulary:

writing in Serbian schools is just I don't know closer to poetry than to uh than to I don't know structured essays...what they want you to do is to...replicate the writing of famous writers...to use strange vocabulary in a strange way, to use long structures and to show off whatever you know (Professor Dević, Dec 2)

Professor Dević sets up a sharp contrast between “structured essays” (those taught at the university level) and the sort of literary style which is valued in Serbian secondary education. He elaborates that:

what they (1) ask you to do there [in Serbian high schools] is to embellish your uh language to a certain degree, and what we ask them to do here in our department is to be well-structured, concise, precise, and...to convey their thoughts in a way that could be understood properly (Professor Dević, Dec 2)

This difference in styles is not considered equal, but rather represents a hierarchy which privileges English writing as the more “precise”, more “proper” way, as well as the way more concerned with audience awareness or the needs of the reader, writing “in a way that could be understood properly” – a hierarchy which is reflected throughout the literature on EFL writing pedagogy, where students’ L1 writing traditions are figured all too often as a deficit to be overcome in their quest to master English language writing (Leki, 2001b, Reichelt, 2005).

What also emerges from Professor Dević’s description is that this contrast is drawn across two pedagogical locations: high school writing in Serbian, which is done in the context of Serbian language and literature classes, is being compared to the writing done in the university’s English department. Thus, this belief in contrastive rhetoric is deeply intertwined with differences between high school and university writing, with high school writing coming out the worse in the comparison – a phenomenon common

across contexts, as writing in college is likely to be more highly structured and have greater expectations placed upon it than in high school pedagogy.

This distinction between writing styles is also conflated with distinctions between argumentative (often called simply academic) writing, and literary writing. Essentially, this ideology reinforces a simplified dichotomy between English writing as argumentative, and Serbian writing as literary, a dichotomy which is especially apparent in students' perspectives discussed below, even (perhaps especially) for those students who write creatively in English in their free time. This suggests, as I argue below, that the simplified distinction serves a pedagogical function in this context, one related to goal of linguistic development and to the mediating force of the MEL exam structures.

However, for at least one faculty member, the contrast between the two styles is not exclusively tied to argumentative writing. Professor Nović, who teaches intercultural communication, finds that the Serbian style of nonfiction generally is similar to the French style – more circular and less linear. She reports that when she read nonfiction in French, “it was really difficult to follow the idea because they-the French people I think they also write like we do like in circles and digressions” (Professor Nović, Oct 1). When asked to elaborate, she clarified that this circularity is linked to repetition of ideas, but mostly to the English emphasis on topic sentences:

in English paragraph you have a like a thesis? or a topic sentence and then you know...what the whole paragraph is going to be about, and you know there is going to be some support, but in French not necessarily so (Professor Nović, Oct 1)

Her rejection of the French style, and implicitly, the Serbian style, as “difficult to follow”, challenges the notion of culturally-specific rhetorical styles as inherently following the logic or thought patterns of that culture (Kaplan, 1966), but it also speaks to her internalization of “English” ways of writing as an academic working in the semi-periphery, a writer who has been reading and writing almost exclusively in English as part of her professional life, as the field of academic publishing across disciplines demands (Canagarajah, 2002b; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Bennett, 2014). The belief in this contrast has also been supported by empirical work in Serbia: Blagojevic (2012), who studied the use of signal phrases in English and Serbian journal articles, describes the English style of writing as more reader-friendly and more effective for communicating on a global scale.

For teachers in this context, it is the presence (or absence) of topic sentences which comes to represent, metonymically, the whole sort of “English” structure of writing, and its “concise, precise” style. This “English” structure with its iconic topic sentences is then contrasted sharply with the supposed lack of structure in Serbian writing. As Sara, the third year MEL instructor originally from England, describes:

it's so Serbian...you just put everything on the paper and it's this kind of beautiful sprawling kind of (laughs) discussion of everything all in one big paragraph with a very small introduction and a very small conclusion and we just don't think like that do we, we don't organize our thoughts or our ideas like that (Sara, Oct 21)

As will be discussed below, Sara's perspective on the two styles, as an imported, native-speaking in this context, is part of the larger global flows which have helped to create and reinforce this belief – that “we don't organize our thoughts like that”. The two qualities she describes – topic sentences versus a sort of permissible stream of conscious style, and the relative importance or unimportance of the introduction and conclusion – form the basis of the distinction between the two styles in the ideology of the SSU English department; these two qualities also emerged in students' perspectives on the differences in writing styles.

Students' perspectives

The student participants in my study consistently describe the same belief in the contrast between Serbian and English styles, though their reactions to it vary: some students found the sort of writing they were asked to do in the MEL courses, particularly at the paragraph writing level, either reassuringly formulaic or frustratingly mechanical, depending on their individual attitudes towards writing.

On one hand, many students in the third year, those who had recently completed the MEL 3 and 4 courses, regarded the paragraph structures taught in MEL 3 as extremely restrictive and reductive, but not difficult. As one third year student, Nikola, described his first encounter with paragraph writing (and hence the “English” style):

it wasn't really hard at least not for me because [Maja] gave us a sort of a form how to write paragraphs? and if we stuck to that, well it was an easy at least 6 [a passing grade]....it was a topic sentence and then three supportive sentences because you had to have three arguments...and then the conclusion (Student interviews, Dec 4)

Nikola finds the somewhat mathematical formula for constructing paragraphs, in which the number and type of sentences are specified, both manageable and a useful tool for passing exams. Another third year student, Mihailo, added, however, that though the writing he produced using this formula was indeed successful on the exam, it was not high quality: “on the exam I got a 9 I think and I personally think it was [an] awful paragraph but the form was right” (Student interviews, Dec 4) This mechanical orientation to the writing done in the early MEL classes is satisfying to some students, those who value simple formulas which can be fulfilled in order to pass the obstacle of the exam. The second student's comment, however, suggest that though an exam-driven educational culture can mediate the definition of successful language learning to be passing scores on language exams (e.g., Lee, 2011), students recognized the formula for what it was: a simplified script or tool, rather than a recipe for “good” writing.

Other students described the transition from high school to university writing as a shift from focusing on aesthetics to focusing on arguments – evincing the conflation of

high school writing with “creative” or poetic writing and university writing with argumentative writing. As Andrej, a former student puts it:

I found uh essay writing and paragraph writing before that like as quite a relief (laughs) because I didn't like creative writing in high school... this was something that you could approach logically and reasonably and not think that much about the aesthetics, concentrate on the form and on what you say, actually the arguments (Group, Nov 9)

In contrast, other students found the narrow structure “strange” and “really very restrictive” (Student interviews, Dec 4). This was especially so for those students who described themselves as having more literary or poetic bents, who read literature and write creatively in English in their free time. This sense of the restrictiveness seems to emerge from a sense that in high school Serbian writing, as Sara described, the body of the essay was a place for relatively free expression – a feeling echoed by several student participants. Mihailo, a third year student, who reported that he wrote poetry in his free time (not uncommon amongst my volunteer participants), described the contrast between his previous writing experience and writing in the MEL 3 course as the difference between freedom of expression and following “a classic model”:

I was used to writing to write freely what's on my mind... and when I met with this certain restrictive method of writing I was just horrified I can say. (Student interviews, Dec 4)

Nikola, another third year student, echoed his sentiments, saying: “I wasn't used to writing [that way] I just-what comes to my mind I write it down” (Student interviews, Dec 4). A student who had graduated two years prior, Ana, noted:

in high school we were used to writing like introduction then the body then the conclusion...and that was it and you could write anything you wanted but now it was really structured and you couldn't think outside of the box (Group, Nov 9)

Finally, Dana, another student who had graduated and recently completed her MA, echoes that in Serbian writing in high school:

so you just need to have an introductory paragraph and a conclusion paragraph and the main part...but no one mentioned anything about a topic sentence, or about defending your arguments so it was perfectly fine if...you write about something for two sentence then you go to something else then you go back to what you wrote in first two lines...your stream of consciousness writing was perfectly ok (Dana, Nov 2).

She even suggests that the appropriate length of introductions and conclusions was measured, in her high school, not by the ideas covered in each but by the (handwritten)

space they take up: she calls this the “two finger rule”, as in the introduction and conclusion should each be the length of two fingers together laid lengthwise on the paper:

oh my god in high school no one worried about technique the only thing they told us about technique was...that you should have an introduction, that it should be like the same or similar length as your conclusion which should be like two fingers long (Dana, Nov 2).

In Dana’s description of her experience, high school writing in Serbian was more about visually following a model than learning to structure or organize content – after moving through SSU and beginning to teach in a private school, this is how she remembers, and presents to her former teacher, about her high school pedagogy. These student depictions echo and support the distinctions faculty draw between the two writing styles, in a mutually reinforcing ideology.

This ideology, with its strong binaries, is a drastic simplification of the reality of writing across two cultures, which are complex and influenced by audience, purpose, genre, and topic. This is in fact one of the main critiques of traditional contrastive rhetoric, that writing is always contextual and cultures are not monolithic. The binaries the students and teachers describe do not account for the small cultures which exist within and across each other in EFL writing (Connor, 2011) – for example, the culture of writing perpetuated by international standardized tests such as the TOEFL or IELTS, which cut across “Serbian” and “English” cultures. The stereotyped style of Serbian high school writing my participants reported to me is a mythologized stereotype for the benefit of the uninformed researcher, as the participants and I negotiated our identities in interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008).

While I did not explicitly ask interview participants to contrast writing in English and writing in Serbian, I did frequently ask participants what writing was like in their high schools, and in doing so I deliberately positioned myself as an outsider- if not to teaching writing at SSU, definitely to the culture and practices of Serbian high schools - in order to elicit information from participants about the “Serbian” style or Serbian high school education. Playing deliberately on my foreigner status, I sought to elicit descriptions of Serbian writing practices, which the participants created for me, not as a neutral party, but as a representative of the culture which produced this “proper” writing style. For Sara, I was at times a fellow stranger in a strange land, aligned against the “sprawling” Serbian style. For the current students, I was a newcomer who needed to be initiated into the ways of the Serbian high school, and for the former students, I was one of the people who had taught them about the “English” style of writing. For all groups, I was a sounding board for articulating their thoughts on writing and writing pedagogy, perhaps for the first time. It is worth recognizing here that their depictions of are shaped by these myriad, shifting roles, as well as by a desire to play the additional role of a good research participant, and may well be intentionally or unintentionally exaggerated – particularly for those current students whose understanding of the writing style they are learning is still nascent.

A related caveat is that, although I deal here with this perceived contrast simply as a factor impacting pedagogy, it is important to be aware of the potentially harmful effects

of this type of oversimplified dichotomy on students, one of the other major critiques of contrastive rhetoric (e.g., Leki, 1991). As Xu, Huang, and You (2016) recently point out, employing these sharp dichotomies in writing pedagogy can teach students that their own rhetorical patterns are “different, undesirable, and thus to be avoided in English writing”, that “any writing that falls short of meeting the Anglo-American conventions is unsatisfactory” (p.69) - an attitude that is echoed in SSU instructors’ description of the English style of writing as the “proper” way of expressing yourself (e.g., Professor Dević). By strongly emphasizing differences rather than similarities in communication styles, adherence to this dichotomy can also negatively impact students’ cross-cultural understanding, and their development as open-minded and cosmopolitan citizens (You, 2016). In my data, students’ negative, even “horrified” reactions to the restrictive patterns of paragraph writing as they are first presented in MEL 3, even if they are performed for the benefit of the native-speaking interlocutor, if they are not interrogated through later classroom experiences, could lead to precisely this shutdown of cross-cultural understanding. However, in this context, at least some students report that they learn to see the value and utility of both styles of writing for different purposes, and come to understand the restrictive style of writing as the pedagogical tool it is intended to be.

Origins of this belief

This deeply held belief emerges from teachers’ and students’ negotiations with internationally circulating textbooks and the version of academic writing they present, tied up with a comparison to how L1 writing is taught in Serbian high schools – which is, given the practices of this department, very often the last time these students wrote for school in Serbian¹⁰. As discussed in Chapter 2, the five-paragraph essay is considered by at least some composition scholars to be an “indigenously American” form, one deeply identified with American culture (Emig, 1971, quoted in Crowley, 1998) and with the writing materials exported from the U.S. In modern composition lore, the five-paragraph comes to stand in metonymically for a whole set of beliefs and practices around current-traditional rhetoric, and to be vilified as a particular type of bland, formulaic, predictable writing, best suited for timed essay exams. For example, in a blog post entitled “Kill the 5-Paragraph Essay”, Warner (2016) argues that because the five paragraph essay is written from sets of rules, rather than from a genuine rhetorical purpose, it almost inevitably becomes “a Frankenstein’s monster of an ‘essay,’ something that looks vaguely essay-like, but is clearly also not as it lurches and moans across the landscape, frightening the villagers.” This justified but unflattering description, rooted in the context

¹⁰ I have only anecdotal data about academic publishing by the faculty, but it also seems to be primarily in English – which makes sense given arguments by people like Bennett and Lillis and Curry about the nature of publication in the periphery/semi-periphery. Doctoral students must write dissertations in Serbian, as they are considered official government documents, but because all previous academic writing in the department is done in English, they report that this is actually difficult and somewhat frustrating for them to do.

of American higher education, resonates with some students' reactions to the mechanical "English" style they encounter in the MEL writing classes, as well as with the more qualified distinctions instructors such as Sara and Professor Tasić make between MEL writing and "serious" or "academic" writing – that is, master's theses and scientific journal articles. However, this "Frankenstein" serves a purpose in the context of MEL writing, as a localized pedagogical tool, shaped by the particular textbooks adopted in this setting and sedimented over time by the practices of teachers and students.

Because of the deep connection between this type of writing and international standardized exams, it is worth considering how the reductive essays forms demanded by tests such as the TOEFL (or more commonly in Serbia, the IELTS) impact what teachers and students think of as appropriate or necessary English writing. While few of my participants at SSU explicitly mention these exams, many students do discuss with longing their desire to study or live abroad, suggesting that they will at some point care very deeply about their scores on such an exam. At Central Serbia University, in fact, one writing exam task in the third year is an adapted IELTS task, chosen specifically because it was perceived as being very practical for students who might wish to travel abroad to be familiar with (Alina, Nov 25). In addition, one former student now teaching at a private school reported that her students are primarily concerned with passing exams like the IELTS (Nena, Nov 17), suggesting that private schools, which a great many of students attend and will eventually teach in, may put more emphasis on explicit preparation for those international exams. However, at SSU, the main touchstone for the five-paragraph essay styles seems to be writing textbooks.

Although the textbooks in use throughout the MEL courses reflect this five-paragraph style, the textbook which Maja uses in MEL 3, is the most influential/representative, because of its long use in the department. Published in 1986, *Structuring Paragraphs* has been used to teach the writing "practicals" in the second year since before Maja herself was a student (and was given to me as the course book when I taught MEL 3 in 2010). Although it is no longer the primary textbook for that course, it is still circulating both overtly, as Maja still hands out pages, and ideologically, as it has been a core textbook within the department for at least twenty years and the introduction to "English" writing for the rising generation of instructors.

The version of writing presented in its pages will be familiar to anyone who has taught introductory writing: in one section which Maja used in her MEL 3 coursework, from the first chapter of the book, students are presented first with an example paragraph about Mexican food, then a list of broad topics on which they might wish to write paragraphs (including "automobiles", "discrimination", "exercise", "jobs", and "pets"), and then a description of the nature of a topic sentence (see Figure 3 below).

The Topic Sentence and the Controlling Idea

Whether you select a topic yourself or are assigned one by your instructor, once you have a topic, you are ready to think about constructing a paragraph. In the general-to-specific paragraph, the first sentence announces your topic and makes a general statement about it that the rest of the paragraph will explain or justify. This sentence is known as the *topic sentence*. The remaining sentences in the paragraph are subordinate to it and, as we have seen, provide specific supporting ideas. Because the entire paragraph is constructed around the topic sentence, this sentence is the most important one in the paragraph.

Not only does the topic sentence announce what the paragraph is about, but, even more important, it also conveys the *controlling idea*. To understand this concept, consider the second paragraph on Mexico (p. 11). It is clear from the opening sentence that the topic of the paragraph is “Mexican foods.” But besides identifying the topic, the topic sentence signals to the reader what *aspect* of the topic the writer will focus on. Here we learn that the author will show that many modern Mexican foods *have come down from the days of the Aztecs*. This idea—the aspect of the topic that will be focused on in the paragraph—is the controlling idea. As in this example, the controlling idea is expressed in certain words or phrases that appear in the topic sentence.

Figure 3. The topic sentence and the controlling idea (Parks et al, 1986)

This textbook, as with all course materials in the English department of SSU, is distributed through the “copy shop”, and having gone through so many generations of copies, is filled with layers of teachers’ marks, underlining, and notations. The paragraph reproduced above, in the pages Maja gave as class handouts, bears not only underlining but additional lines and emphatic marks. For example, the already italicized term *topic sentence* in the first paragraph has been underlined once and then again, more darkly; the already italicized term *aspect* in the second has been underlined, underlined again, and then boxed in and shaded. The origins of these marks would be difficult to trace, given how long the text has been circulating in this context, passed on from teacher to teacher – Maja reports that when she began to teach the course she received the copied book “in its current scribbled form” (personal communication, August 9, 2016). As a result, the very text itself displays the layers of use, negotiation, and internalization to which teachers and students have subjected it, suggesting how deeply the text is embedded in the writing curriculum, and visibly representing the sedimentation process over time.

The rest of the chapter goes on to reinforce this heavy emphasis on the importance of the topic sentence together with the “controlling idea”, defined as “the aspect of the topic that will be focused on in the paragraph” (Parks et al, 1986, p.13) as the key to good writing. After an exercise in which students identify topics and controlling ideas and construct practice topic sentences, the textbook warns students against the dangers of writing freely:

Deciding on a Controlling Idea

Because the controlling idea is crucial to the success of a paragraph, don't start to write a paragraph until you have decided on both your topic and your controlling idea. If you simply start writing about a topic with no controlling idea in mind, you may wander off in different directions and deal with a number of ideas, each of which could be better developed in a separate paragraph.

Figure 4. Deciding on a controlling idea (Parks et al, 1986)

This passage displays some of the same layered marks as the earlier excerpt, suggesting that both the concepts of topic sentence and of controlling idea have been picked up as significant in the MEL 3 class across generations of teachers and students.

These highly controlled practice exercises and the emphasis on planning before writing is emblematic of the current-traditional approach to writing pedagogy (Crowley, 1998; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015), which Maja's use of the text in class reinforces. She asked individual students to read these portions of the text aloud, while commenting on the importance of what they were reading (Field notes, Oct 23 – discussed further in Chapter 5). As she drew students' attention to underlined portions, her use of the text in class thus echoed the ways in which the text had been marked, further reflecting its sedimentation in her practice.

Though this textbook represents an extreme current-traditional approach, all the textbooks circulating in the MEL 3, 5, and 7 classes draw on the current-traditional model at least in part, putting direct emphasis on following provided paragraph and essay level structures, with topic sentences featured prominently in many books. For example, the text which is now the main course book for MEL 3, *Great Writing 2: Great Paragraphs* (Folse et al., 2010), though it includes a chapter on brainstorming and an early introduction of peer review techniques, also features a full chapter on "The Topic Sentence" and introduces patterns of paragraphs along current-traditional lines including a definition paragraph, process analysis paragraph, and opinion paragraph (Folse, et al., 2010). Likewise, the traditional primary text for MEL 5 and 6, *Successful Writing* (Evans, 2000), offers patterns to follow so that students can produce current-traditional essay forms such as for and against essays, opinion essays, and "essays suggesting solutions to problems"; among the "Points to Consider" for students writing such essays are the following pieces of advice:

- A well-developed paragraph contains a clear **topic sentence**, which summarizes the content of the paragraph, as well as a clear **justification**, explanation or example in support of the point presented.
- **Before** you begin writing, you should always make a list of the points you will present.

(Evans, 2000, p.54, formatting in the original)

The emphasis on the topic sentence echoes the other texts as well as the contrastive rhetoric beliefs reported by teachers and students, and the stern warning to plan out the essay before writing shows the powerful influence of current-traditional rhetoric, brainstorming exercises notwithstanding.

While some instructors take a more critical approach to the texts themselves (discussed in Chapter 5), what is evident in these textbooks is, of course, not a monolithic “English” or “American” style of writing, but rather a particular “small culture” (Connor, 2011) of a kind of stereotypical current-traditional textbook writing. These textbooks are not marked as being for either ESL or EFL contexts, and they do not represent all international teaching materials circulating globally, or even within Serbia (for example, the British Council and its representatives, as discussed earlier, have a long presence in the region and have disseminated both materials and pedagogical practices). The textbooks selected for these courses and sedimented into the departmental culture through long practice are, however, somewhat uniform in their approach to writing, conforming to this small culture.

The students and teachers in this context read extensively in English in a wide variety of genres both professionally and personally – if nothing else, the SSU curriculum includes courses in British, Irish, American, and South African literature, and students and professors read scholarly texts on morphology, syntax, and other linguistic topics, as well as teaching methodology. It is highly likely that they could easily recognize the limitation in the type of writing that is presented, and yet the dichotomous, stereotypical differences remain as part of the ideology of writing pedagogy in this context, at least as it is represented to a foreign interlocutor. I argue that there is a utility to this ideology – that this simplified distinction serves a specifically pedagogical purpose, playing neatly into the department’s purposes. Namely, this type of formulaic writing is more easily taught and assessed, as it is in some sense designed to be reproduced on timed exams – the singular means of assessment in the MEL writing courses. Once this powerful distinction is accepted as a pedagogical tool, it has an impact on not only the classroom practice of individual teachers, but on the entire structure of the MEL writing program (discussed below).

As with the curricular objective to develop students’ linguistic competence, the contrastive rhetoric ideology in this context is not a “local peculiarity” (Tarnoplosky, 2011), but a factor embedded in several scale-levels of context, influenced by the global flow of both people and pedagogical materials. This ideology is also, rather than the limiting factor the EFL literature portrays it to be, part of the nuance of a locally appropriate pedagogy.

Curricular impact

At the level of individual teachers’ practice, this contrastive rhetoric ideology shapes teachers’ goals for their students, which, as discussed earlier, are framed in terms of students’ learning a “proper” way of expressing their thoughts. Sara, for example, reports that one of the goals of her courses is to teach students “to organize their thoughts and to think in **an English way**” (Sara, Oct 21, emphasis added). Maja believes even more strongly that her role is to uphold the styles presented in the textbooks. Specifically, she says her job is to tell students “what the rules are [about]...the structure of the

paragraph” and then to reinforce the rules by “constantly repeating” and providing individual support; the rules come, she says, from “coursebooks, the books we’ve covered... basically people who do this for a living who work whose primary job is um to write coursebooks on writing... they basically make up the rules I just try to enforce them” (Nov 6). For Maja, the textbooks represent the authority on the type of writing she should be teaching.

Although the contrast between the “English” and “Serbian” styles emerges very strongly in teachers’ interviews, in my observations it was (surprisingly) rarely if ever overtly discussed in class. Instead, this contrast manifests in assessment practices, as the adherence to the narrowly defined forms is required on the exams and taken to be exemplary, for these brief timed exam purposes in MEL, of students’ having mastered the “English” style sufficiently.

The assessment practices, like all of the teachers’ practices, are shaped by their negotiations with a wide variety of factors, as will be further explicated in Chapter 5, of which contrastive rhetoric ideologies are only one. My point here is that the contrastive rhetoric ideology, at least as it was presented to me by participants packaging their understandings of rhetorical style for the native-speaking foreign teacher, is a result of the deeply internalized, long sedimented use of these formulaic essay and paragraph patterns, drawn from internationally circulating materials and reinforced through years of classroom practice in this context. Ultimately, this ideology becomes a *rule* in this activity system, an ingrained part of pedagogical culture, reinforced by individual teachers’ approaches to writing as well as by the MEL exam structure.

At the curricular level, one of the most visible effects of this contrastive rhetoric ideology is in the somewhat delayed start of writing instruction into the second year of SSU’s English curriculum – in contrast to other university English departments, such as Central Serbian University’s, which begins with paragraph writing in the first year of MEL coursework. Some faculty members emphasized that this contrast between English and Serbian writing makes the students unprepared to begin writing when they first reach the university:

...so they come to their mm essay classes uh not well equipped with structure. with the notion of structure... we are trying to-to make them think about how they do it in-in England or in the States (Professor Dević, Dec 2)

Thus the sense of strong difference between writing styles, derived as well from the idea that students in high schools are not taught to write in a structured way (again, a belief hardly unique to Serbian university writing teachers), contributes to the sense that students need to be gently eased into this type of writing

In the first year of MEL courses, students do not have a dedicated writing course as one of their three “practicals”, as they do in the other years of study. Instead, they have two courses of “Use of English”, primarily focused on vocabulary building, and one grammar course, as the three “practicals”. The writing tasks in these three classes are shaped by the faculty’s strong sense that students are unprepared for “English” writing, due to both the strong contrast they see between English and Serbian writing styles and their sense of how writing is taught in Serbian high schools, to the extent that the writing

tasks might even be regarded as a sort of curricular-level negotiation with this deeply-held ideology. Thus, students are eased into writing in English in the first year through both brief written homework assignments, and more significantly, an exam task known as story-retelling¹¹.

First, as a small part of the MEL 1 and 2 curricula, students produce short, fairly free-form written homework assignments in the grammar courses, sometimes called journal entries. These are roughly a page long, with an emphasis on students interact with English outside of the classroom through music, movies, or books; as one student put it, “basically [Professor Tasić] wanted to see our experience with English we put on paper” (Group, Nov 9). Students regarded this writing as enjoyable, because it was relatively unrestricted: they described these tasks as “creative”, and “fun because we could write basically whatever we want” (Student interviews, Dec 4). Besides the free choice of topic, students described feeling comfortable with this sort of writing precisely because it was personal and unstructured:

the form was not really important because we made our personal observations about something...and then it was kind of hard when we had to do it really structured. in a structured way (Group, Nov 9)

From the students’ perspective, then, these more personal and free writings are, in contrast to their later work, relatively easy precisely because they are closer to the “Serbian” style of writing, and thus the assignments serve to ease them into the more structured academic writing of the next years. As Professor Dević, the supervisor of MEL 1, describes these writing assignments, there are eight in total, six of which should be “a paragraph or two related to some familiar topics or to the book we are reading”, and the other two are “reflection assignments” in which students should review what they have learned during the semester, in preparation for the midterm and final exams (Dec 2). He also reports that these assignments serve as the initial writing instruction of the program: “so this is where their writing...instruction starts”(Professor Dević, Dec 2), echoing the students’ sense that these assignments are a bridge between their high school and university writing work.

The second activity, story-retelling, is a task in which students hear a short anecdote of about 250 words read aloud to them twice and then write the story in their own words. This activity was the consistent and primary focus in interviews, whenever I asked participants to describe the writing instruction in the first year curriculum at SSU - possibly because of its institutional status as a stand-alone part of the first year MEL exams, it is both memorable and widely regarded as the precursor to writing exams in later semesters.

From the perspective of Professor Dević, the goal of story retelling is primarily to provide students an opportunity to integrate what they’ve learned across their “practicals” to express themselves, in a still fairly controlled writing space. In their other first year

¹¹ While the MEL first year syllabus mentions “writing letters, reports and reviews” (CE1 syllabus), both faculty and students tended to focus on story-retelling and these short homework assignments in interviews.

exams, they are restricted to short answers and fill in the blank type tasks. In contrast, story-retelling provides the students a chance to be slightly more creative:

in story-retelling the format is a bit more loose. So...they have some freedom when it comes to story-retelling so they're allowed to-to experiment with their English....it's not as creative as essay writing, but it's more creative when compared to grammar or use of English. there you are given a list of things that you have to learn, here you are just given...the broad framework. (Professor Dević, Dec 2)

Sara, who as a “Use of English” instructor is in charge of teaching story-retelling in the first semester, agrees that the point of the exercise is to give students a chance to bring together and practice what they’ve learned across their first year courses:

whatever they've learned in all the other classes they can put it into practice, ok so they've learned grammar now ok now use that grammar, make your tenses agree in a passage that you've, you don't have to think up because it's given to you... (Sara, Oct 21)

Story-retelling is not intended to be either a dictation or an exercise in memorization (though those sorts of exercise would be familiar for the students, given their high school language classes). Rather, the goal is for students to use their newly acquired language to paraphrase, based on content that is given to them:

Brooke: is that how you see it, that you give them the content and they practice their language skills?

Sara: I think that's the point. they're not supposed to remember it's not a memory exercise in the sense that it's got to be the same as it was when it was read, you know the best way to do it is to retell it in your own words (Sara, Oct 21)

Story-retelling constitutes students’ first lengthy written assessment in the MEL courses. The story-retelling task is assessed primarily on the correctness and variety of students’ grammar and vocabulary, though they must also be accurate on the details of the story. Sara reports that students can lose points for grammatical or spelling mistakes, or for missing main events in the story, but they can also be awarded points for elegance and style in language, for “creativity, skill good use of a particular structure, lovely vocabulary you can add kind of extra points for that” (Sara, Oct 21). Story-retelling is practiced several times each semester so that students will be familiar with the structure before the exam, and students can do additional practice on their own from a textbook created by Sara and another lector. The text, called *In Your Own Words*, is a guide to the story-retelling task, composed of a set of twenty stories the teachers wrote or collected over the years, and activities to help students prepare for the exam.

The basic premise of the story-retelling task seems to be to provide the content of the writing so that students can focus as much as possible on the language. As an assessment tool, the instructors believe, in this task the content of the writing is held

constant across the entire group of students, so that students can be graded on their use of language. Story retelling thus functions within the MEL classes as a bridge to longer, structured writing for the students: by supplying the content and structure, the instructors turn the writing task into something more akin to the dictation and other controlled language exercises students have done before and do in their other classes. This task appears to be unique to SSU – though dictation exercises are common across ESL and EFL teaching, the story-retelling task is not practiced in other Serbian universities and is not reported in the EFL writing literature that I have been able to access.

Though it initially appears odd or overly simplistic to those who have not encountered it before (see students' perspectives below), the story-retelling task is a long-standing and deeply ingrained part of writing pedagogy in this context: Sara reported that it had been introduced by an instructor who had left the faculty even before she arrived in 2003, saying, "I have no idea where she got it from... Susa or somebody I think, she introduced it and it's just become part of the curriculum" (Sara, Oct 21). The task's current shape and its stable place in the first year curriculum emerges from teachers' negotiations over time with aspects of their context, not only the *rule* or folk belief in contrastive rhetoric, but also the reactions of the *community* (see below). The task, complete with locally-produced preparation materials, represents a piece of locally appropriate pedagogy shaped and sedimented over time.

Students' perspectives

The initial reactions of many students to the task is quite negative; students described finding story-retelling at first to be "ridiculous" (Field notes, October) and "stupid" (Dana, Nov 2). It is only in retrospect, after having completed their studies, that students perceive the task as valuable, and then only as a bridge between their high school writing and university writing. As one former student, Sneza, put it: "it was useful... we needed to understand that writing in English is really really different", noting that students who were considered good writers in high school writing often did not transition well to the MEL writing tasks (Field notes, October). Her comments, and the reactions of other former students, suggests that as students move through their schooling at SSU and into the working (often teaching) world beyond the university, their zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) for understanding the purpose of pedagogical tasks shifts. Ana, another former student, describes the connection even more strongly:

[Story-retelling] **was similar to that creative writing in high school** because we didn't really have to pay attention to form, I just I remember that I had to pay attention not to use the same words (Group, Nov, 9, emphasis added)

Likewise, for Dana, the purpose of story-retelling as a task at the university is derived from the way English is taught in Serbian primary and secondary schools; she notes that

in those levels, students rarely have a chance to express themselves in written English because of the use of the grammar translation method and the type of short answer writing tasks students did, mostly around reading comprehension:

so when we get to the first year it's even reflected in our writing because we cannot express ourselves...you don't use your own words and our teachers at the faculty know this so I think that's one of the reasons why they give us story-retelling...(Dana, Nov 2)

For Dana, story-retelling serves as a sort of introduction to paraphrasing – moving away from the dictation or short answer exercises the students did in high school, and preparing students to use paraphrasing as part of their “serious” writing in the later years of study:

there's a reason why it's in the first year and not in the fourth year because before getting into serious essay writing you need to develop this ability to write about things in your own words... because when you want to write...a serious essay you cannot just put quotations of other people...you have to paraphrase them (Dana, Nov 2)

Story-retelling serves the dual purpose of easing students gently into longer, more structured writing tasks, while preparing them for the paraphrasing work they will do in later years of study.

Both of these writing tasks in the first year of the MEL curriculum work well within the MEL classes' focus on developing students' linguistic proficiency, with their overt emphasis on fluency and vocabulary rather than content. Both tasks also respond to faculty's understanding of students' language education in high school, and their relative unpreparedness for the perceived new/difficult structure of English writing. These tasks (and the sort of gap year or delayed start to writing instruction that they appear on the surface to represent) serve a very precise function. They are examples of Kramsch and Sullivan's (1996) locally appropriate pedagogy, for the needs and demands of this context.

As mentioned earlier, though story-retelling is deeply ingrained in the curriculum at SSU, it does not seem to be a feature of first-year instruction at other Serbian universities; the students and faculty believed it to be unique to their school, and in my observations at CSU, students start in the first year MEL courses directly with paragraph writing. Faculty members also attribute the current shape of the SSU English department curriculum, particularly in the first year, to the specific student population that they serve: students with diverse preparation for university English study (i.e. students from relatively impoverished rural schools and technical high schools, as well as many students from the high powered local language high school). One goal of the first year MEL curriculum is to make certain that students who arrive with widely varying educational backgrounds are all caught up to the same level of linguistic proficiency:

probably the biggest challenge we have in the first year is this huge gap existing between different students they come from different high schools with different

backgrounds. I hope that first semester will let's say make this gap existing between the students smaller... (Professor Dević, Dec 2).

Professor Tasić, who had been in charge of the first year MEL courses for many years, concurred:

in the first year it is mostly uh bringing all the students [to] the same level because they come from different-different places and... although they all pass their entrance exam, there are huge areas where they can be different such as their vocabulary or their ability to express their thoughts clearly (Professor Tasić, March 6)

Thus, starting in the first year with this controlled, scaffolded writing task seems to be a response to the (sedimented) faculty assessment of student ability and the desire to make sure all students are thoroughly prepared for their university coursework – most especially in the area of writing. This assessment of student ability, and of the challenging nature of writing in English for first year students at SSU, is also a factor operating at multiple scale-levels, influenced by the local educational system in the surrounding context, making the use of story-retelling in the first year (and the delay of paragraph writing to the second year) a part of locally appropriate pedagogy embedded in these layers of context.

Contrast to literature

In the literature on EFL writing, a contrastive rhetoric ideology – the sense that writing in the local language and writing in English are governed by vastly different patterns – emerges as a factor shaping EFL pedagogy, because it is believed that students must unlearn their L1 patterns in order to acquire the English ones (e.g., Reichelt, 2009; Tarnopolsky, 2011). There is also the danger of students learning to devalue their own rhetorical practices in favor of “superior” English ones, if this belief is not interrogated and refined in future pedagogy (Xu, Huang, & You, 2016).

The descriptions of difference from my participants which I have reported here emerged in interaction with me, the deliberately positioned foreign researcher, and as such need to be understood as participants enacting and negotiating a variety of social roles (Bucholt & Hall, 2008). It is significant, then, that with faculty members such as Sara, Professor Tasić, and Professor Dević, the goal of equipping students to write in an “English” style, and the notion of students’ unpreparedness for writing in the “English” style, often emerged as teachers discussed the reasoning between pedagogical tasks and sequences, rather than from my prompting to discuss high school writing.

My analysis thus suggests that this contrastive rhetoric ideology, as in other contexts, has an impact on the writing curriculum at the departmental level, but that it is not a purely local factor nor a hindrance to pedagogy, as the literature might suggest.

Instead, the belief is an (intentional or unintentional) pedagogical simplification, one that has emerged from the deeply sedimented use internationally circulating materials over time. The “English style”, simplified into the use of topic sentences, controlling ideas, and current-traditional rhetorical essay patterns, becomes a valuable pedagogical tool, not only for the purposes of creating and grading exams quickly and consistently for large numbers of students, but more importantly a tool for transmitting a nascent “scientific concept” (Vygotsky, 1978) of what academic writing is. Adopting a pedagogical approach to writing as an over-determined, even mechanical process may be a way for teachers to help their students begin to grasp the technical skills they will need as a foundation for later writing, as teachers do across contexts. And as will be discussed in Chapter 5, where faculty members have felt tension between these pedagogical simplifications and their objects of teaching genres of business and research-based academic writing, they are able to exercise their agency and negotiate.

4.3 The role of foreign lectors

Foreign instructors have long been a consistent presence in English language teaching in the Serbian university system, both independent foreigners who take up long term residence in Serbia, and temporary sojourners sponsored by governmental programs such as the British Council or the US State Department’s English Language Fellow (ELF) program. For example, at the time of my own teaching in Serbia in 2010-2011, I was one of two English Language Fellows assigned to Serbia; at the time of my observations in the fall of 2014, there was one English Teaching Assistant in addition to the long-term foreign instructor at SSU, and four long-term foreign instructors at Central Serbia University, both Americans and British nationals. The intersection of global and local in this factor is particularly visible, to the point of being physically embodied. In the Serbian system, these foreign instructors are typically, although not exclusively, assigned to teach writing classes, a fact which means that the impact of foreign lectors on the educational system is most strongly felt in the writing classroom.

Curricular impact

As will be described below, a set of practical concerns and ideologies surrounding foreign teachers in this context means that these instructors are consistently across time and across universities in Serbia placed in writing classes, which has several effects. First, not only are students more likely to experience writing instruction from foreign teachers than other subjects but it is in the writing classes that *artifacts* (textbooks and practices) and *rules* (expectations) are most often brought by foreign instructors, and shared or left behind for local teachers to pick up. In Serbia, as in the US context, writing classes are often given (when not given to foreigners) to the lowest status instructors,

meaning that the local instructors who pick up where the foreign instructors left off are the most likely to be influenced by those remaining *artifacts* and *rules*, as they are most likely to be regulated by objects such as textbooks and syllabi (Johnson & Golombek, 2003).

The two second year writing classes, Modern English Language (MEL) 3 and 4, perhaps best exemplify the impact of foreign lectors on the writing program. Over the past several years, the two courses have been shifted primarily between foreign instructors and new/contingent faculty. Likewise, at CSU, two English Language Fellows were assigned to teach MEL 5 writing classes, and two longtime foreign residents, Kate and Gail, from the United States and Great Britain, were assigned to teach the MEL 3 and 7 writing classes (Alina, Nov 24). At SSU, the recent lineage of these classes is as follows:

- 2010-2011: Brooke (English Language Fellow)
- 2011-2012: Carissa (English Language Fellow)
- 2012-2013: Carissa (English Language Fellow)
- 2013-2014: Maja/Andrej
- 2014-2015: Maja/Andrej

The MEL 3 and 4 courses were taught for three years by temporary sojourner teachers (me and Carissa) before being passed back to local teachers Maja and Andrej. Maja has completed her master's degree and is working on her PhD while having taught a variety of classes over the past several years, including the fourth year MEL writing course. She was assigned to the second year course in part because she had been teaching the fourth year writing course, which she was assigned to as a new lector, one who had lived in the US and was considered both fluent and familiar with the culture (a sort of approximate native speaker).

However, the most vivid example of the impact of the foreign teachers on the writing curriculum is the teaching of MEL 4 by Andrej. Andrej, like most of the faculty, attended Southern Serbia University for both his undergraduate and master's studies. After graduating with his master's he worked as a substitute teacher in a local elementary school, and began teaching at the SSU as a volunteer when he began his PhD studies (Andrej interview, Nov 20). It was in his first year as a paid instructor at the SSU that he first taught a writing class, the MEL 4 paragraph writing class. As a novice university instructor, he relied heavily on the curriculum left behind by the previous instructor, Carissa:

Brooke: how much um how much did the way [Carissa] taught the class influence the way you taught it last year?

Andrej: I'd say a lot. I'd say a lot, because...the lesson plans included a lot of pair work and group work and I really liked that and I decided to keep that (Andrej, Dec 4)

This reliance on the curriculum included all of the course materials he used, though he chose among the ones left behind:

Brooke: ...so tell me why you picked this book

Andrej: well um to be honest I didn't really pick it it was handed down to me by [Carissa]? who taught this course before me and um I just found certain things that she used and just continued using them (Andrej, Dec 4)

Not only did Andrej adopt the textbooks used by Carissa, but also her pedagogical technology - a major feature of the course was the use of a free blogging website (kidblog.org) for students to post their essays and comment on each other's work. Andrej directly inherited this task from Carissa:

Brooke: ok can you tell me more about the website? how did you decide to use the online=

Andrej: =well the foreign lector who was in charge of this...she used this site and she told me about it and so I could use the same account (Andrej, Nov 20)

Andrej re-used Carissa's account and also structured the assignment in the same way that she did. The use of this particular website and this structure of peer feedback seem to be unique to Andrej's version of the class. Although other instructors make use of class websites, particularly the free wiki site PBWorks, for sharing course material, no other instructors use blogging technology (Andrej, Nov 20). In addition, the type of peer review Andrej assigns is, as far as he knows, a new technique for the students, who have not encountered peer review in either high school or in the first three semesters of their university study:

but [peer review] is not something they're used to I can tell you that for sure...I'm trying to think...if there are opportunities in high school for commenting on their peers work and I can't think of any...this was their second year fourth semester, they might have had some opportunities to do so. um (1) but again I don't think they were too used to this idea. (Andrej, Nov 20).

Foreign teachers are given leeway in this context to introduce new practices and techniques like peer review or blogging websites in part because they are foreign and unfamiliar with the *rules* of the new activity system, and in part because the practices they bring with them therefore have a tinge of "authenticity" (Widdowson, 1994). As Kate explains, in her experience as a long term American lector at CSU,

a lot of things are connected to the foreigners particularly I think they accept that we do things our own crazy way (laughs) and that's sort of part of - they don't really mind students being exposed to that (Kate, Nov 24)

This freedom granted to foreign teachers is not unlimited, as will be discussed in Chapter 5 – to be successful, their innovations must still work within the activity system - but it does mean that the writing classroom is a space in which international materials and practices are regularly circulated, picked up, negotiated, and in some cases, sedimented as part of local practice.

Origins of this practice

The tendency to place foreign instructors in the writing classroom is far from unusual in the EFL writing literature. Native-speaking foreign lecturers at the university are often assigned to teach writing courses, and “typically bring with them teaching materials and practices from home, including the use of process writing and peer feedback” (Reichelt, 2011, p. 10). This tendency seems to be the result of a combination of factors, including the university’s ranking system and the perceptions of the skills of foreign instructors, so that this factor is, in and of itself, a curricular level negotiation, as well as a *division of labor* in this activity system. First, in the European university system, lecture classes must be taught by professors holding PhDs, a *division of labor* specified both by tradition and by the Bologna Process. Foreign instructors in Serbia tend not to have PhDs – although many have master’s degrees (a requirement of the English Language Fellow Program, for one) a few have a bachelor’s degree, which may or may not be related to English language teaching. Thus, during the time of my observation, the long-term foreign instructors I interviewed included Gail, who had trained and worked as a journalist before she began teaching in Serbia, and had earned her master’s degree while she was teaching; Kate, who has a MFA in creative writing and Sara, who had graduated with a bachelor’s in K-12 special education teacher before teaching in Serbia¹². The temporary sojourner teachers I met included an English Teaching Assistant, who had graduated with her bachelor’s degree in linguistics the previous year.

Because of the way the university ranks academics, the foreign lecturers without PhDs are positioned within the university system as “lektors”, lecturers, and as Kate noted, there is little opportunity for foreign teachers to move up beyond this status, for example to hold administrative positions, saying “we won’t move up the ladder” (Kate, Nov 24). Within English departments in Serbia, this means they can assist full professors with lecture courses or, more usefully to the department, can teach “practicals” on their own. Among the three practical courses – grammar, translation, and writing – foreign instructors are seen as best suited to the writing classes. Lana explains it as follows:

but it's very difficult to engage uh a foreign teacher teaching grammar for example, because grammar is uh it should be a conscious- (1) about rules and everything and the native speaker just picks the rules up and do not really bother about that...another course within the English language exams is translation which also cannot be done by a foreigner...so that's how only essay writing is left (laughs) (Lana, Nov 21)

¹² Sara’s lack of a master’s degree did in fact make her job progressively less secure under waves of Bologna reforms, which enforced stricter regulations on teaching staff. The fall after my data collection, Sara was dismissed from the faculty for what she called “Serbian administration and legal changes” (Sara, personal communication, September 2015).

As Lana reports, the perception of native speaking teachers is that their knowledge of grammar is primarily intuitive rather than explicit or “conscious”, and that they are therefore less qualified to teach grammar courses than the locally-trained lecturers, who all hold degrees in English language and linguistics and have themselves learned English grammar explicitly. This distinction between native and non-native speaking teachers is common across contexts, with native speaking teachers often identified as “informal” or “conversational”, “fluent”, “flexible”, and “having communication (not exam preparation) as the goals of their teaching”, in contrast to non-native speaking teachers, who are instead perceived as “applying differences between the L1 and L2”, “being sensitive to the needs of students”, and having a more theoretical understanding of the L2 (Braine, 2005, p.16). In this context, where grammar is the exclusive subject of another “practical” (at least on paper), these categorizations of teachers’ skills lend support to keeping foreign teachers in the writing rather than grammar classes.

In addition, foreign teachers are seen as being unqualified to teach translation due to their lack of Serbian language ability – certainly the case with the temporary sojourn teachers. The placement of foreign teachers in the writing classes is thus perceived to be primarily a practical rather than ideological choice (Lana, Nov 21); at least, in interaction with me (a foreign lecturer who was assigned to teach writing previously), the choice was explained this way. It may be that at least some this understanding of foreign lecturer’s roles is a post-hoc rationalization of the decision, based on the beliefs described.

A further belief in this context is that writing classes in this system are seen as a good forum for native-speaking foreign teachers to use their cultural knowledge and fluency to engage in conversation: “in these classes [writing practicals] you can have some conversation in class, but also you can do some work on the writing” (Lana, Nov 21). This perception is one that Sara, the lecturer at SSU from England, has taken advantage of in her long tenure as a writing instructor in Southern Serbian University:

students can] get so much of the formal side of language from my colleagues, and I think that what I can offer them really is kind of an experiential language, and I think that’s how I’ve played it all the way through really, so we quite often (laughs) go off on a tangent and start talking about something else. and I don’t think that’s wasted (Sara, Oct 21)

Echoing the perceptions of native speakers referenced above, in her writing classes, Sara sees herself as offering her students an opportunity for casual conversation, what she calls “experiential” language, in contrast to the “formal” grammar-focused education offered by her native Serbian speaking colleagues.

This understanding of the foreign teachers’ role as that of intuitive and laid-back, drawing on native-speaker fluency and cultural knowledge rather than formal training, seems to hold as a stereotype regardless of teachers’ actual bilingual abilities. Certainly, the native speaking instructors are fluent in English, but all of the native Serbian speaking lecturers I interacted with were also highly fluent in English, and in fact the English department classes at every level are taught almost exclusively in English, with a great deal of conversation taking place in many classes. Conversely, many of the long-term

foreign instructors I met were fluent speakers of Serbian who did frequent translation work for pay as a way of supplementing their university incomes, and some were deeply integrated into Serbian culture (both Kate and Sara, for example, are married to Serbs and raising children biculturally). However, none of the long-term foreign instructors I met had been asked to teach translation courses, and their typical positioning remained that of native speakers and cultural informants. Thus, these roles for foreign versus local instructors seem to exist independent of any individual teacher's actual proficiency in the local L1. And in fact this sense of writing classes being the most appropriate ones for foreigners to teach is so strong, that when Sara was dismissed from the faculty for not having a master's degree (a regulation under the Bologna reforms), she was replaced by the former English Teaching Assistant – another native speaker. Adopting this positioning, dividing the labor in this way, may be to the advantage of both groups of teachers: for the local teachers, it preserves their authority (and job security), which becomes vested in their formal, explicit language knowledge, their knowledge of their students, and their inside familiarity with local educational practices, ultimately validating their expertise which is grounded in their local context. At the same time, this positioning circumscribes the acceptable roles foreign teachers can play in the university, while also legitimizing the hiring of foreign instructors without specific linguistic training – advantageous for those who want to find a way to remain in Serbia long-term. As the lector position is an untenured, contingent position, the long-term foreign teachers remain in a liminal state, despite the tremendous impact they have on local pedagogy.

Students' perspectives

It is well-documented in the literature that the practices and expectations writing teachers from English-dominant countries import with them often conflict with students' previous educational experiences (Reichelt, 2011). At SSU, the peer review practice which Carissa imported and Andrej adopted, like paragraph writing itself, got somewhat mixed reactions from students. On one hand, some students appreciated the practice, finding it relatively straightforward: “it was useful I think to read what your peers think...I think it was easy for people to comment because you knew like what kind of structure you had to have” (Student interviews, Dec 7). On the other hand, some students in this close-knit community found the practice face-threatening:

I really hated peer review because I believe I can hurt someone's feelings...because what are you talking about you're the same as me can you think better than me, how can you comment on that and then I just, ok I just back down because...(laughs) I would like to maintain the friendly relationship with my peers¹³ (Student interviews, Dec 7).

¹³ In contrast, Kate, who used a similar online system for students to get credit for peer review at CSU, reported that she found the students “amazingly unshy about sharing their work”, she assumed because

In adopting Carissa's material more or less wholesale, Andrej has thus continued what is for his context a complex and challenging set of pedagogical innovations brought in by a foreign lector. This is not to position him as without agency; he still chose to accept this new way of teaching which he himself had not experienced, so that he is stepping outside of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). However, given his relative pedagogical inexperience generally, his lack of training as a writing instructor, and his novice status within the university hierarchy, it is also in some ways the path of least resistance and of greatest safety to follow what the previous teacher has done – given, again, the aura of “authenticity” which surrounds the methods imported by native-speaking teachers purely because of their status as native-speakers (Widdowson, 1994). Precisely because the previous teacher was a foreigner, the university has created a situation in which the path of least resistance (following the previous teachers' lesson plans) is also a path of adaptation of foreign methods and materials. The ideology about the foreign teachers which means they are consistently placed in writing classrooms, combined with the low status of the teachers who replace them, has ensured that the practices of writing instruction the foreign teachers bring with them are continuously circulating in this context. For Andrej, as a novice writing instructor, this is the beginning of a process of negotiation between these elements – the *division of labor* which placed first Carissa and later himself in the writing classroom, the imported *artifacts*, and the expectations of the *community*.

4.4 Chapter conclusion

In the pilot stages of this project, I wanted most to understand why the teachers I had taught alongside in Serbia did not use process writing pedagogy, and I therefore framed my questions as, “Why don't you do this?” As teachers attempted to answer these naïve questions, they emphasized those material factors evident in Leki's (2001b) heuristic: large class sizes, limited time because of heavy class loads, and so on. And while the factors undeniably exist at SSU and exert influence on teaching practices, it would be a mistake to characterize them as the primary factors which shape writing instruction. These surface features of EFL writing instruction (the large class sizes, limited financial resources and teacher training, and lack of local materials), are the ones which immediately stand out to international scholars or to imported teachers. These things are simply reality for these teachers; when I ask them why they don't enact the pedagogy I expect, this is what they say, but when I ask them, instead, to explain why they choose the pedagogy they do, they talk instead about the exam structure, their goals for the students, higher level policy changes like Bologna or the new ministry of

they knew each other so well as a cohort, and reported that she had “never received any resistance about that idea” (Kate, Nov 24).

education requirements for K-12 teachers, the legacy of foreign teachers, and the goals of the curriculum.

As the data presented in this chapter demonstrates, it is inaccurate to characterize teachers' practices as no more than adherence to or rejection of ESL pedagogies as is done in the adaptation approach, which is highly problematic in efforts to understand EFL writing pedagogy as a global enterprise. My data further suggests that seeing EFL writing pedagogy as a local appropriation of internationally circulating practices does not go far enough. At SSU, the local curricular objectives, which inform the language focus of the MEL writing classes, are themselves a response to policy changes at the national and pan-European scale-levels. A belief in the profound differences between "Serbian" and "English" writing styles emerges from the local sedimentation of international textbooks through years of use, and in turn, influences the arrangement of writing tasks across the MEL curriculum, including the unique, locally appropriate task of story-retelling. The positioning of foreign lectors in this context is a product of both international programs sponsoring the mobility of native-speaking teachers and locally appropriate (though internationally common) beliefs about the abilities of those teachers. This positioning, together with local *rules* regarding assigning classes, then ensures that it is in the writing classroom that international materials are most likely to be disseminated and integrated into local practices.

What is clear is that EFL writing instruction is shaped by ideologies, practices, and goals which are neither solely local nor fully global but are rather dialectically both. EFL writing pedagogy emerges from the negotiations of teachers working within a complexly layered set of contextual factors: from departmental policies, to the local economy, to national ministry of education edicts, to pan-European educational reforms and Serbia's position in the global economy. It is in articulating the relationship of the teacher to these multiple scale-levels of context and in showing the emergence of the local pedagogy as it emerges from negotiations and innovations over time, that a CHAT analysis can be most useful. In the following chapter, I apply a CHAT lens in order to trace teachers' negotiations with the factors described in this chapter, and with other *rules* and *artifacts*.

Chapter 5

Negotiation

RQ: Based on their beliefs and understandings, how do teachers negotiate between local and international pedagogies in their practice?

In this chapter, I examine the pedagogical decisions and practices¹⁴ of the EFL writing instructors in my study with the goal of understanding these teachers' pedagogical decisions as efforts to resolve contradictions between various elements within their activity systems, rather than as simple adaptations of international materials and practices to the limitations of local context. I focus most on secondary contradictions (those between elements of the activity system) and tertiary contradictions (occurring when another, more advanced activity system imposes a new object), as both emerge when novel factors are introduced into the activity system (Engeström, 1993); addition, in CHAT-based research on language classrooms and teachers, secondary contradictions are considered “the moving force behind disturbance and innovation” (Engeström, 1993, quoted in Kim, 2011, p.236)

Specifically, I examine how teachers resolved (or are working to resolve) contradictions with the exam structure, with the Bologna process, and with textbooks and other mediating artifacts from internationally circulating pedagogies. I begin with two teachers, Sara at SSU and Alina at CSU, who resolve contradictions between their *objects* of teaching particular genres of writing and the artifacts of the MEL exam structure, in each case producing a new exam task which then becomes part of the locally appropriate pedagogy. I then examine how Professor Tasić resolves a contradiction between her *object* of teaching research writing and the *artifact* of the MEL exam structure by creating an elective course devoted to research writing. I next examine how Professor Dević resolves a contradiction between his *object* of first year students developing the habit of doing homework and attending class and the *artifact* of the Bologna Process, by creating an additional exam policy. I conclude by considering how these negotiations contribute to locally appropriate pedagogy, and how each innovation is successful because it works within the structure of the activity system.

5.1 Negotiation with the exam structure

One secondary contradiction that stands out strongly from the data is that between, on one hand, the *mediating artifact* of the structure of the MEL courses and the accompanying *rules* about the nature of writing exams, and on the other hand, individual

¹⁴ Following Thorne (2004), I define practice as “everyday, often habitual action that is informed by socially structured resources and competencies” (p.55).

teachers' *object* to teach writing as a functional activity and as a meaning-making process. I will examine how these contradictions are resolved at two levels: the first level is that of the individual classroom, where teachers' effort to resolve tensions can produce innovations in assessment and classroom pedagogy, and the second is the level of departmental structure, where resolving contradictions leads to innovations in curriculum offerings.

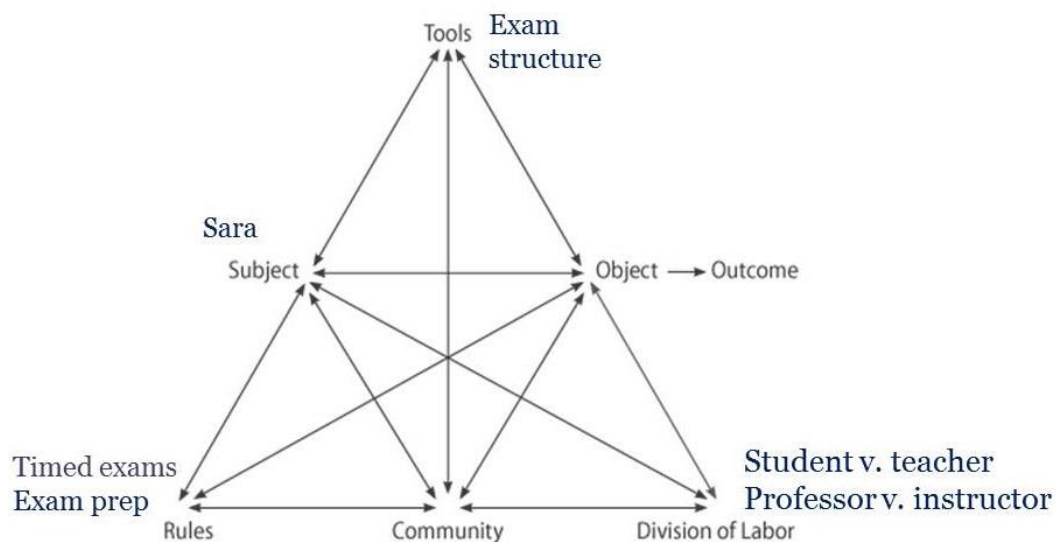


Figure 5. MEL 5 activity triangle (adapted from Engeström, 1987).

The MEL courses are structured so that in each semester the three practical classes (writing, grammar, and translation) together with the weekly lectures are considered to be one unified course, under the guidance of a professor, although each of the four classes is taught by a different instructor and has different content. As a result, there is an *artifact* or tool in the department that each of the “practicals” and the lecture have a separate timed exam, created by the instructor to assess the course content, but the results of these exams are combined to form a single grade (or mark) for MEL each semester. In this exam structure, the writing instructors for each MEL course are not independent; their exams (and the classes leading up to the exams) are considered one piece of a greater structure, and must fit neatly into the structure in order to avoid contradictions with the *community*.

Hence, there is a *rule* in the department that, to be in line with other MEL practical classes, the MEL writing classes must be assessed by timed exam. This *rule* is further reinforced by the *mediating artifact* of the Bologna Reforms, which specifies that instructors must assess students solely by exams at midterm and the end of the semester; as the instructors at SSU and CSU understand Bologna, instructors are not permitted to include homework in determining grades for the course (Professor Dević, Dec 2; Alina, Nov 25). Another associated *rule* is the expectation that class assignments and activities will (directly or indirectly) prepare students for the exam (In Figure 5, this is “Exam

prep”); the *division of labor* apparent in this system is that it is the students’ role to take and pass the exams, and the instructors’ role to prepare students to take the exam.

Together, these *rules* have influenced, if not dictated, the selection of not only exam topics but of class content, pushing instructors towards writing genres which can be assigned for exam tasks and then assessed with relative ease. As Sara puts it, “your course has got to have something in it at the end of the day to do” (Sara, Nov 7), and traditionally the writing of various essay forms has been the “something” students do. Exam tasks in the writing “practicals” have typically been paragraph writing tasks for second year courses, current-traditional essay forms such as for and against, opinion, and solution to problem essays for the third year, and lengthier opinion essays for the fourth year. Against this backdrop, a notable exception is an exam task from the third year MEL course (MEL 5) in which students write a letter of application based on a provided CV and job description. This innovation emerged from a contradiction between the goals of the instructor, Sara, and the exam structure.

5.2 The object of practical writing

Sara’s goals for the students in this year of study are overall very much in line with the aims of the MEL course and of the English curriculum more generally (as discussed in previous chapter) of developing students’ language skills to prepare them to be teachers in the local economy. She names the three qualities she wanted to see in their writing as fluency, organization, and vocabulary:

I think fluency is - those two big things for our students are fluency and organization of their thoughts. I mean of course vocabulary (2) yes, you don't - you want to see variation don't you... I want to be able to equip them with those skills to produce structures that they can use and refer back to, so that they have a set of skills actually that they can put into practice (Sara, Oct 21)

Because her overall *object* is to a great extent aligned with the *object* of the department as a whole, for most of the MEL 5 and 6 courses then, her course topics and exam tasks follow the expected genres, though she does negotiate significantly with the international textbooks she draws upon (discussed later in this chapter). However, as is beginning to emerge in the second part of the above quote, Sara has a secondary goal for her students related to her students’ use of writing beyond their development of broad language skills: she wants students to write real-world genres, mastering specific forms that they will apply outside of the classroom. As Sara puts it, she wants students to learn writing skills that are not purely for exam purposes:

I-I want them to write normally, I want them to write things that are not just an exam for the sake of it... I just want them to...write things that people are going to actually read, or useful things (Sara, Nov 28)

More specifically, she believes that students should learn how to write a few specific business or professional genres, including professional emails, CVs, and cover letters (also called letters of application) . She wants students to learn what she calls practical or useful writing, a “life skill” (Sara, Dec 9), something that “makes a difference in their lives” (Sara, Nov 7). She sets this goal in opposition to a lot of the other works students do, which she describes as “in the clouds” and “theoretical” (Sara, Nov 7). Her motivation for this goal emerges from her experience with students over the years, as she has personally advised students on writing scholarship applications, applying to master’s programs in other countries, and applying to both foreign companies with local branches and to international companies: when asked why she had selected these genres for her class, she described one student who she had recommended for a job in a British company. The student needed to submit her CV in English to apply for the job and as Sara noted, “it has to be good doesn't it and...it's like her life has been totally changed by it they have to be ready for these things” (Sara, Nov 7).

For Sara, then, the classroom is a multi-layered place; she is preparing her students for the exams, which are important within the department, and developing their language skills for their potential future work in the immediate community, at the level of the local economy, but she also aims to prepare students for a global economy. Her negotiations at the classroom level therefore take on a more global significance, and her *object* in teaching these genres incorporates both local and global concerns.

Contradiction with exam structure

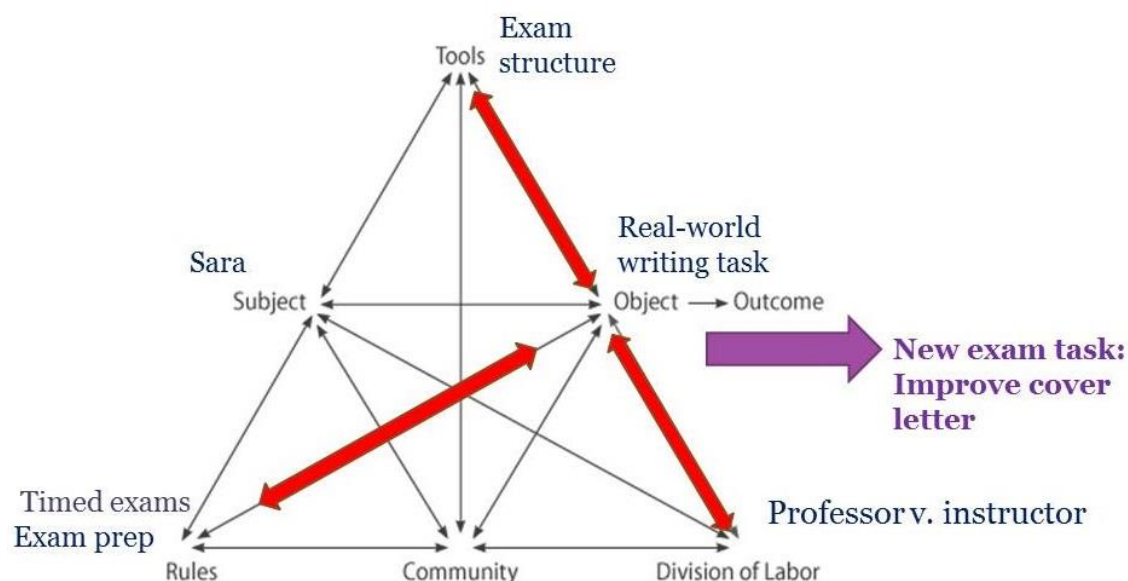


Figure 6. Sara's first innovation (adapted from Engeström,1987).

At the end of both MEL 5 and MEL 6 (the first and second semesters of the third year) the final is a timed essay exam in which students write a five paragraph essay – in MEL 5 this is a for and against essay, and in MEL 6, the students can choose from one of the three types of essays covered during the year. As with other MEL courses, the midterm for each course is supposed to be a shorter and less challenging task than the final which is still a meaningful assessment of the students' progress so far in that semester (Figure 6: Exam structure), which means that it should not require the students to write a complete essay. Given these requirements, finding an appropriate task for the midterm at the third year level has proved somewhat challenging: as Sara says, "I found it very difficult to find a normal writing exercise that would actually be useful for them" (Nov 7); for Sara, "normal" here means something like "intelligible and not excessively academic or obtuse", as one of her main concerns with her materials is that many of them address a highly formal style of academic writing not helpful for the type of essays she teaches (as will be discussed later). Under the direction of Professor Bojać, who had been responsible for leading MEL 5 for several years, the midterm task had shifted a few times, from "correcting" a poorly written sample essay, to writing only the introduction paragraph of a for and against essay, neither of which S had found satisfying as stand-alone tasks.

In previous years, Sara had taught the genres of professional emails, CVs, and cover letters in her course while the midterm exam was focused on the for and against essay, but she had come into conflict with a tacit but powerful *rule* in this activity system: an expectation that class time will be spent preparing for the exam (Figure 6: Exam prep), and conversely that exam tasks will reflect the work that is done in class. This rule is

extremely common across EFL writing settings and regularly conflicts with teachers' efforts to innovate (e.g., Ahn, 2011; Kim, 2011). In this setting, it manifests primarily in students' attendance of classes; because attendance is not mandatory, when classes are disconnected from exams, or when students feel they can pass the exams without the material covered in classes, they tend to skip the classes. As a former student, Aleksandar, explains, when the fourth year classes stopped having essay writing in the midterm, "that's why the (1) well attendance on the essay classes dropped a lot" (Group, Nov 9).

When Sara had attempted to create exam tasks which directly assessed students' ability to produce the real-world genres she was teaching, she had experienced tension with the *division of labor* within the department: that the professor in charge of the MEL semester has the right to dictate the exam tasks (Figure 6: Professor v. instructor). In the year previous to my observations, when Professor Bojać had still been in charge of the MEL 5 course, Sara described Professor Bojać insisting that "she didn't want [the students] to write an essay or a proper letter themselves" on the midterm, and so Sara herself "kind of got round it" (Sara, Nov 28), or came to "a kind of a compromise" (Sara, Nov 7) – that is, she negotiated with the professor's requirements to keep the midterm a "transformation" rather than productive writing task, as a "compromise to actually make it useful":

I wrote (1) a covering letter in really bad English, and I gave them the covering letter and told them to improve the style, quality, grammar, whatever was wrong with the letter to put it right and that's what I marked (Sara, Nov 28).

This outcome was still unsatisfactory to Sara, however, from the point of view of equipping students to produce their own cover letters; she describes the task as "not as good as writing their own letter" and says she "[doesn't] see the point in doing just a transformation on any old thing" (Sara, Nov 28), indicating that she hasn't yet successfully resolved the contradiction between her original *object* and the *division of labor*.

Sara's second innovation

During the time of my observations, the *division of labor* shifted: the MEL 5 course was reassigned to Professor Tasić, who had not previously had experience with the third year MEL courses. Within this activity system, authority in teaching is both hierarchical (those with more advanced degrees and with seniority are granted authority) and also experiential, that is, accorded to those with more experience in teaching a particular course. That is, there are essentially two conflicting *rules* in this context which impact the *division of labor*, a *rule* which distributes authority along a strongly hierarchical pattern, and another which dictates respect for the experience of a teacher in teaching a particular course. Where those two sources of authority are in conflict,

experiential authority may win out. Thus, when asked about how she works with Sara and the other instructors of the third year practical regarding choices of material and topics, Professor Tasić explained:

I really left it to them because - and also they were part of the third year team for quite some time and I'm new in the third year so I relied on their judgments more than on my own. [The translation instructor] needed more guidance because uh he doesn't have enough experience. (Professor Tasić, March 6)

Her decisions suggest that her negotiation of these competing rules grants precedence to the second *rule* about respecting length of experience, as for her teachers with more practical experience teaching the class are trusted to make judgments independently, and teachers with less experience should be guided by those with more. Under the influence of this *rule*, Sara was able to assert more agency in her choice of topics and exam tasks: “we got a new professor, I said that I wasn't prepared to do something that wasn't a proper piece of writing” (Sara, Nov 28).

Due to this shift in the activity system, Sara was able to create for the first time an exam task which directly assesses students' production of the real-world genre of the cover letter. For this midterm, she provided students with a modified CV from a previous student and an advertisement for a teaching job she had written, requiring students to produce a cover letter for the job based on the CV. She chose to provide the CV rather than having students write a CV based on their own experience to permit students to be “more objective” (Sara, Nov 28), and to standardize the exam task; rather than assessing students on their own work and school experiences, she wanted to ensure that she was assessing students on their ability to highlight the connections between a CV and a job description, on how well they had mastered the genre. Although I was not permitted to collect examples of the exam task itself or students' responses (as exam tasks are repeated from year to year and students' exams are considered confidential), the preparatory materials Sara used in class included a list of informal statements about work experience (see Figure 7 below), which students in groups rewrote in more formal vocabulary, before discussing the connotations of the phrases they produced and the effect on an intended audience (Field notes, Oct 24).

Rewrite the following statements to make them suitable for a CV or letter of application.

1. I don't let other people stop me or hold me back *ambitious, motivated (driven)*
2. When my boss tells me to do something I always listen. *reliable, dependable*
3. I always get the job finished. *persistent, hard-working, responsible*
4. I'm really good at tasks that need a lot of detail. *Meticulous*
5. The children I teach think I'm great.
6. I'm always happy at work because I love it. *enthusiastic, motivated*
7. I helped some students pass the Cambridge FCE exam. They did it very well.
8. My classes are always fun, but I can be really strict when I need to be. *able to create a positive learning environment*
9. Everyone says I'm well organized.
10. I always speak my mind.
11. My colleagues always compliment me on the way I keep my register and write down what we did in each lesson. *record-keeping skills*
12. I hate being late. *punctual*
13. I love putting pictures on the walls of my classroom.
14. My colleagues always steal my ideas as they're good! *innovative, inspiring*
15. I'm very good with other people. *cooperative, interpersonal skills*

Figure 7. Vocabulary exercise for business writing¹⁵

The use of this list meant that considerable class time was spent on working with vocabulary, such as the terms “persistent”, “punctual”, “interpersonal skills”, keeping the overall focus of the MEL 5 class in this unit on develop students’ linguistic proficiency. Despite Sara’s introduction of the new genre, the focus on vocabulary use in context meant that her innovation did not create contradictions with the *artifact* of the overall curricular goals. Sara also drew on students’ previous knowledge to brainstorm parts of a CV and cover letter, and handed out a sample job description from an advertisement for a private English language school in Thailand which the class analyzed together, paying attention, again, to the linguistic features of the text (Field notes, Oct 24; see Appendix F for this handout).

This innovation in pedagogy, emerging from Sara’s attempts to resolve a contradiction in her activity system, was further shaped by Sara’s negotiations with rules about assessing student work. To stay in keeping with the third year MEL focus on language formality (*rule*), she graded the students’ work on formality, as well as on structure and content (Sara, Dec 9).

In describing this exam task, Sara emphasized that the task was finally “meaningful” (Nov 7), saying, “I’m really happy that they’re actually going to write something that means something” (Nov 28). This exam task, then, resolved the contradiction between Sara’s goal and the *rules* and *artifacts* to her satisfaction, while creating a new feature of the local pedagogy – this is the innovation that results from a “conflictual *questioning* of the existing standard practice” by the subject (Engeström, 2001, p. 968) and contributes to the “principled eclectic” pedagogy in this EFL context (Min, 2011).

¹⁵ Handwritten notes are the researcher’s.

It should be noted, however, that for Professor Tasić, the leader of the third year and the person ultimately accountable for the curriculum, this change did not constitute a significant shift in pedagogy, as it was still in line with the previously established guidelines for the MEL courses. In explaining how she worked with the instructors under her guidance, she stated that she didn't think she had made any significant changes:

our English language courses are pretty much well established so it shouldn't really matter a lot who teaches what so I think that there should be a line that we should all follow.... I didn't change much (Professor Tasić, March 6)

She went on to explain that the overall MEL curriculum had been established approximately ten years earlier in a series of meetings of the department faculty members. At the time, the faculty introduced translation as one of the “practicals”, and more importantly established “the main point” of each course in each semester, which Professor Tasić sees herself as following:

I think that whoever takes over uh one of those courses will simply continue to do those things that are recognized as the main point of the course? and then change just the details or maybe the approaches used or the the practical activities done in class (Professor Tasić, March 6)

For Professor Tasić, then, this innovation of Sara's does not constitute a radical change, but a detail of the course; it is not subversive per se, but rather a permitted variation within the MEL class framework. Sara's innovation is successful precisely because it does not disrupt or threaten the activity system – it still works within the overarching nature of the class as both she and her supervisor see it. As will be apparent throughout this chapter, for innovations to be successful, they must still fit into the activity system as it exists.

Students reported finding the task useful, precisely because the writing of these documents in English is both challenging and high stakes:

I find it very useful because um I'm interested in hopefully writing my application letter and CV in English so it helped me a lot...mostly because of the language usage in such letters (Student interviews, Dec 6)

Even those students who had already written these materials appreciated the specific vocabulary development:

it's a delicate thing to write a letter of application, I tried doing that this summer to apply for a job and I spent two days working on one page and...it was difficult because...you have to be formal but not too formal, you have to bring out your qualities but not brag.... (Student interviews, Dec 6)

Students' interpretation of the task and its purpose, as well as its placement in the third year writing class, seems to be very much aligned with Sara's understanding of her

students as about to enter a global work force which will demand these documents. When asked why they thought Sara chose the task, one student responded:

because we are probably um almost how should I say um we're close to graduation? and very soon we will be looking for jobs. maybe even now some of us um work? or search for work (Student interviews, Dec 6)

It is likely that students' response to the task, and the fact that students do take advantage of Sara's offer to provide feedback on drafts of their CVs and letters (Student interviews, Dec 6), shapes Sara's satisfaction with and continued adherence to this innovation.

Because there is uptake in the *community* for this exam task, and because the exam task does not create new contradictions, the innovation is successful, and may over time become an entrenched part of the locally appropriate pedagogy¹⁶. More specifically, this innovation works within the *rules* and *artifacts* in the activity system: by maintaining a focus on vocabulary, Sara's class works within the rule that students in MEL course should be developing linguistic proficiency.

5.3 The object of academic skills

For Sara, the resolution of the contradiction between her *object* of teaching business writing genres and the *artifact* of the exam structure created an innovative exam task; for Alina, the MEL 5 and 6 instructor at CSU, working in a highly similar activity system, the result of her negotiations was also new exam tasks, including a business writing task, a modified IELTS exam task, and two tasks aimed at general academic skills, specifically the use of outside sources.

The third year writing curriculum at CSU has several features in common with the third year curriculum at SSU. As at SSU, the three MEL "practicals" and the lecture are the heart of the set curriculum, and have the same overarching goals of developing students' linguistic proficiency. Though there was no communication whatsoever between the writing instructors at the two sites, where Alina's *object* was similar to Sara's, because she had similar *rules* to negotiate with, Alina's outcome was very much the same as Sara's: an exam in which students wrote a statement of purpose. Like Sara, Alina based her *object* on her perception of students' ambitions to study abroad, and so their exam consisted of a description of the UC San Diego graduate program in theoretical linguistics, and the directions provided on the school's website for what should be included in the statement of purpose to apply for the program (Alina, Nov 24). Alina emphasized the authenticity of this task, saying that "this is what [the students] can really find if they want to apply for (a course) abroad" (Alina, Nov 24). Students are

¹⁶ According to the former English Teaching Assistant who took over MEL 5 from Sara this past year, the teaching of CV and cover letter writing has remained part of the curriculum, though the exact exam task has been renegotiated once again, to be a cover letter for an international internship (personal communication, August 3, 2016).

expected to choose the information from the CV most relevant to the job posting and emphasize it in their statement of purpose (Alina, Nov 24).

Alina chose to provide the CV to the students for a reason nearly identical to Sara's – she noted that the task was supposed to test “technique and not content” (Field notes, Nov 4), and she did not want students with more life experience to have an unfair advantage:

our idea was to kind of put [the students] on an equal footing...their kind of life experience is really varied (laughs) so that's why we wanted to...equalize everything, so we just provide it (Alina, Nov 24)

The use of the standard CV, part of the negotiations which made the business writing task into an assessment tool, created some tension with the students, who Alina reports resisted using a provided CV because they preferred to gain experience in writing about themselves:

when [the students] were supposed to write their own statement of purpose, to talk about themselves they were a lot more inspired...when I gave them the actual exam, when I gave them somebody else's CV they're like oh you know so uninspiring how am I going to write about somebody else (Alina, Nov 24)

This suggests that although Alina's innovation resolved some of the contradiction for her between her object and the artifact of the exam structure, it created a new contradiction with the community – the students – and will need to be negotiated further in the future before it is entirely locally appropriate. The similarity in these two outcomes, the two exam tasks, also suggest that locally appropriate pedagogy does not have to be, like the story-retelling task, unique; it only needs to work well within the activity system as a whole.

It is also important to note that Alina portrayed the third year MEL classes at CSU as functioning collaboratively – Alina used the term “we” and “our” as often as “I” and “my” throughout her interviews, and mentions the influence of her colleagues' opinions and advice on several tasks, including the ones described below. This may reflect a cultural difference between the two schools indicating a slightly different division of labor; Kate called each year of the MEL classes a “team” that is “put together” by the leader of that year, and even more evocatively, claimed that “pretty much each year is its own fiefdom” (Kate, Nov 24). However, it also suggests that Alina made an effort to demonstrate to me as the researcher that her pedagogy was not a solo innovation but the work of a group of instructors, one which included native-speaking foreign teachers. I take Alina as the subject of my analysis because of her status as the instructor, but I also recognize that locally appropriate pedagogy is rarely the work of a single person.

Alina's object

Teaching business writing genres was only one of Alina's goals; her other goal, which shaped the other three major writing tasks of MEL 5 and 6 at CSU, was that of teaching students "academic skills" (Field notes, Nov 4), of introducing students to "academic writing, I mean referring to other people what other people have to say on certain topics" (Alina, Nov 24). Specifically, Alina wants to teach students to make arguments from sources, both from scientific or technical data, and then from other texts, through quotation and citation.

Alina's *object* is that students should learn to react to essays and synthesize what they read with their own opinion, because for Alina this intertextuality is the foundation of academic writing, when students learn to synthesize, paraphrase, and quote (Field notes, Nov 4). This goal is primarily local – Alina sees herself as preparing students for the "graduation writing" task, what Americans might call an honors thesis, a research paper students complete in their fourth year in which one of the main purposes is for students to learn to identify reliable and unreliable sources (Field notes, Nov 4).

Contradiction with exam structure: IELTS task

The curriculum and the exam structure (*artifacts*) as well as the culturally-based *rules* are highly similar between SSU and CSU, so it is not surprising that the instructors in each location encountered similar contradictions. However, with the instructors holding slightly different goals (*objects*), the *outcomes* - the pedagogical innovations - are also different. At CSU, in addition to the CV writing task described above, Alina has developed two exam tasks in the third year which represent negotiations with the exam structure.

The first task which students work on in the third year at CSU is in many ways the most minimal negotiation. The mid-term exam or "colloquium" of MEL 5 is a task modified from the IELTS exam, in which students learn to interpret and then describe a graph. Alina describes the task as generally useful, as she considers interpreting and utilizing graphs to be an important academic skill (and thus aligned with her overall *object*), and particularly useful for students who want to study abroad in England or Canada and will therefore need to take the IELTS, noting that familiarity with this particular exam task will "stand them in good stead and that they can use this skill later in life I mean...interpreting graphs is an important academic skill so they should be able to do that" (Alina, Nov 24). Alina's goal for this task, then, is both to teach students skills she believes to be necessary for their work as students within the university, and to prepare students for a global exam which serves as a gatekeeper for students wanting to study in English-dominant countries. Thus, like Sara's motives for teaching the CV, this object of Alina's has both local and global significance – her *object* is aimed at both local and global scale-levels.

The task Alina and her colleagues selected is already an exam task, that is, a real-world writing activity of reading, interpreting, and describing a graph, which has already been adapted into a sort of bounded and quantifiable writing assessment. Alina thus experiences few contradictions with the *rules* around the exam structure for this first exam task, which fits tidily into the MEL exam structure, as a 30-minute writing task with a narrow scope that is relatively easy to grade - in fact, IELTS has already formulated “band descriptors” as a rubric. Second, preparation for the task during class time is “straightforward” with the use of readily available IELTS prep material taken from IELTS websites and books (Alina, Nov 24). In addition, because the IELTS is designed as a test of students’ academic language, the preparation for the task is focused on words and expressions needed to describe numbers and numerical trends, like Sara’s innovation, it easily aligns with the overall MEL curricular objective of developing students’ linguistic competence. The contradictions for this task are thus not with the *artifact* of the exam structure, but rather with the *community*, as Alina experiences resistance from students:

they're not particularly enthusiastic about this type of activity, they say oh this is like maths this is so, like why (laughs)...this is an important academic skill but generally they're not aware of how useful it is (Alina, Nov 24)

Alina must negotiate then with the *community*, but in this case she is protected by the *division of labor*; as the instructor, she has the power to dictate tasks according to her assessment of student needs.

Contradiction with exam structure: citation task

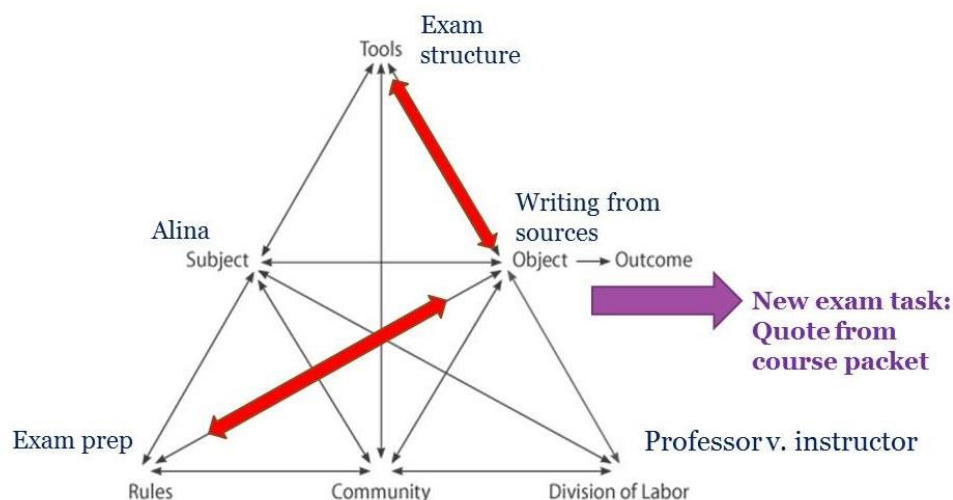


Figure 8. Alina’s innovation (adapted from Engeström, 1987).

The second task students work on in the third year writing course (MEL 5) constitutes a more elaborate negotiation. Here, Alina's *object* is to teach students to use academic sources in their writing. As with other *objects* discussed in this chapter, this object is in contradiction with the *artifact* of the exam structure. The exam structure requires a timed essay task which can be completed without additional resources (i.e. without a computer or books) and can be completed in an exam setting (in a classroom), as opposed to writing from academic sources, which is typically a lengthy process conducted at home or in a library, with access to references. Again, the *rule* that classwork will directly prepare students for the exam means that skills which are not tested on the exam should not be the focus of class activities.

Alina resolves this contradiction by deeply integrating the classwork and exam task in the following way: the class works through a handout (an excerpt from a textbook) which covers academic reading strategies, such as taking double entry notes, or writing short summaries in the left margin and writing reactions to the text in the right margin (Alina, Nov 24). Alina describes this handout as an introduction to learning to incorporate other people's opinions in your writing (Field notes, Nov 2). The students then receive a packet of short readings related to education, mostly 2-3 page opinion essays written by academics but aimed at a popular audience, with titles such as "The Farce Called 'Grading'" and "We Should Cherish Our Children's Freedom To Think". Students are expected to read and take notes on these essays at home, applying the reading strategies they have learned, and then discuss the readings in class. The students then bring with them to the final exam their packets with what should be "copious notes", and the exam itself is a timed essay task of an hour and half, in which students must respond to a question about education, such as "Is grading a useful part of education or not?" (Field notes, Nov 4). Students are required to support their opinion by integrating quotes and summaries from at least two of the readings into their answer, so that Alina jokes that the task might better be called "synthesizing your own opinion on the matter with uh (1) different people's opinions (laughs) (1) on the matter let's call it that way" (Alina, Nov 24).

In class, Alina reports that they spend considerable class time discussing how students can identify good sources, saying that the instructors were "careful to choose a good handout" and to discuss why the sources are reliable (Field notes, Nov 4). Like with the modified IELTS task, class time is spent as well on building students' repertoire of phrases for "incorporating quotations into an essay" and "agreeing and disagreeing" with an author's point (Alina, Nov 24), fitting into the overall curricular objective of MEL courses.

This task represents a pedagogical innovation unique in my observations, in that it manages to resolve many of the contradictions between the goal of teaching "academic skills" like quotation and the rule about timed essay exams; that is, it manages to work within the existing exam structure and yet incorporate skills typically assessed only through out of class work. When asked about the origins of this task, Alina reported that one of her colleagues had found the task in a book in the CSU library, likely an international writing textbook, though she couldn't be more specific; this suggests that the task may have origins in center pedagogy and certainly draws on internationally

circulating materials, but also that its specific shape as an exam task emerges from negotiation within the local activity system.

Alina notes that she is still not completely satisfied with the outcome, as the word limit for the exam task at 400 words is still too short for students to incorporate longer summaries or paraphrases or even many quotes (Alina, Nov 24). This perhaps indicates that there is a further contradiction between her *object* and the *rules* of the Bologna Reforms, which specify task lengths for exams; this further contradiction may yet require further negotiation, and as with all the innovations described in this chapter, the exam task may well change again in the upcoming semesters. Activity systems, as well as contradictions within them, are historical as well as cultural, and evolve over time (Engeström & Sannino, 2011), sedimenting to create the local pedagogy, which must itself continue to evolve over time.

From Sara's example of innovation, it's clear that the *division of labor* is highly salient to which contradictions are experienced by the teacher and what negotiations are permitted in the class activities. It was beyond the scope of my data collection in the secondary research site to interview the professors guiding the instructors' activity at CSU, but based on my observations of Professor Tasić at SSU, it seems likely that the professor overseeing the third year was open to shifts in the curriculum and changes in the shape of the exam tasks.

5.4 The exam structure versus the goal of research writing

At both research sites, SSU and CSU, instructors had the goal of students writing a complete research paper – a task which, because it requires significant out of class work, strongly conflicts with the *artifact* of the exam structure as well as other elements of the activity system. At SSU, the contradiction was resolved through negotiation at the departmental level, in the creation of an elective course called “Form and Content” which focuses solely on the writing of a lengthy research paper. At CSU, on the other hand, the negotiation was at the level of the MEL curriculum, with the research paper incorporated into the third year MEL course as the final exam task. The differing *outcomes* here may reflect differences in the *division of labor* in the two activity systems.

Professor Tasić's object

Both Professor Tasić and Lana, who has assisted with the Form and Content course since its inception, report that the original motivation for the creation of the course was to give students an opportunity to write an essay which is longer and more fully developed than the essays students write in the MEL exams. As Lana notes, this experience is necessary for preparing students to write master's theses:

Professor Tasić thought they should have some experience with writing a longer essay, uh not to just 500 words but longer than that, a proper essay, which would...give students an opportunity to...learn some of the things which are important for academic writing and eventually for- hopefully for their writing MA thesis and everything else in their career (Lana, Nov 21)

Beyond the opportunity to write a longer paper, the course aims to help students develop rhetorical awareness and a sense of academic honesty. When asked about the motivation for creating the Form and Content course, Professor Tasić explained her goals for the course this way:

I expect [the students] to understand that if you want people to understand what you are telling them, you need to think clearly and writing helps you think more clearly, and you need to be honest in uh presenting the arguments, it -you need to take time and energy to do your research, you can't imagine you can just sit down and write your own opinion...you have to support it with facts or other peoples' views and opinions (Professor Tasić, March 6)

Professor Tasić's goals for the course go beyond research skills and citation style to developing students' conception of audience awareness, using outside sources to create ethos, as well as general conceptions of academic honesty and integrity. Thus, although the course has a stated focus on written expression, the aim is broader, to develop students' conception of and skills in scholarly communication. As Professor Tasić notes, students should learn that "this is not about writing only" but about all professional or academic communication (Professor Tasić, March 6).

This *object* emerged from Professor Tasić's experience with students in the department: she describes the class as "a long felt need" in the department, because academic writing and research skills are "something that our students lack" (March 6). More specifically, in her experience, students are not taught the skills of "doing research, collecting information, packing information, thinking clearly, presenting your ideas in such a way as to be understood by other people" in their secondary education, and she sees that as a hurdle for them to overcome in their first few years of study at the university (Professor Tasić, March 6).

Contradiction with MEL course goals and structure

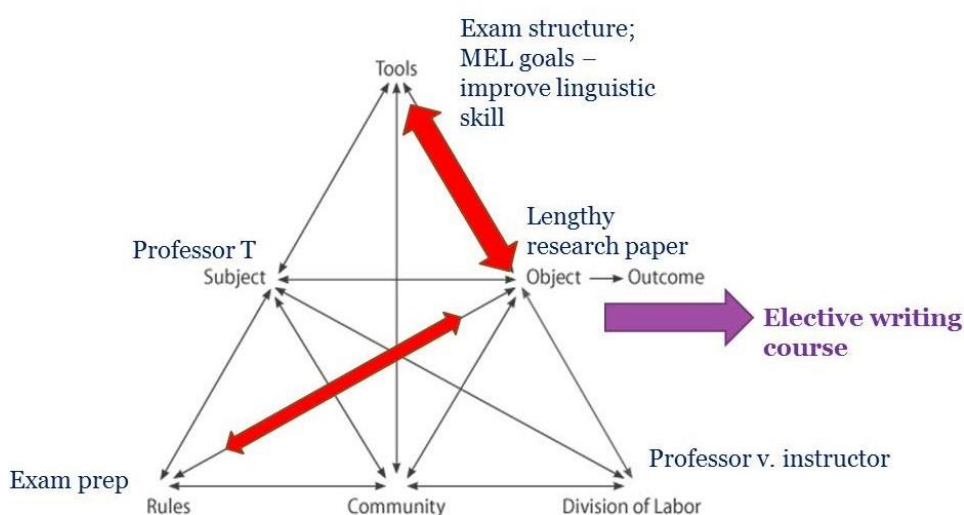


Figure 9. Professor Tasić's innovation (adapted from Engeström, 1987).

Given that the students already have four required years of writing instruction, it might seem unnecessary for these skills and understandings to be taught in a separate course. However, according to Professor Tasić and her assistant Lana, these teaching *objects* are, if not incompatible with, at least outside the scope of the MEL writing classes; this class exists because the MEL writing classes are focused on increasing students' linguistic proficiency rather than on academic writing skills per se. When asked about the need for a separate course, Lana explains that:

we thought that...the essay writing courses within English language are uh still more a test of students' proficiency than really structure and organization (Lana, Nov 21)

Similarly, Professor Tasić describes the MEL writing course as “not [an] academic writing course, it's a language course in which the focus is on written language”, (Professor Tasić, March 6). As described in Chapter 4, this adherence to the *artifact* of

the curricular goal to develop students' linguistic competence means that in the MEL courses, students "do get the basics of writing", but the main point of the class is "to try and help them develop their writing skill as a language skill" (Professor Tasić, March 6). If the MEL writing courses were, as she puts it, "real essay writing courses" rather than courses for improving students' overall proficiency, Form and Content wouldn't need to exist:

extra courses such as the Form and the Content, (1) courses like that wouldn't make much sense if uh if these [MEL] courses were academic writing courses...but basically the Form and the Content is the only academic writing course that focuses on the process of writing and on developing the skills needed for effective writing as a separate not linguistic skill but an extra academic skill (Professor Tasić, March 6)

Professor Tasić's *object* to teach students what she thinks of as "real" academic writing skills related to research, organization, and audience awareness, is thus in contradiction with two aspects of the MEL course—the exam structure, with its timed essay requirements, and more significantly for her, its focus on developing students' linguistic proficiency.

The innovation: Form and Content

In 2007, the activity system of writing instruction at SSU shifted as a result of a new implementation of a Bologna reform which enabled the faculty to begin offering elective courses (Professor Tasić, March 6). In 2007, she created and began teaching Form and Content as an elective in the 6th semester of study. In Form and Content, students complete a 5,000 word research paper over the course of a semester. The course schedule follows the typical process writing stages (Crowley, 1998) quite closely, with the first four weeks devoted to brainstorming, topic selection, and research; the next four weeks devoted to drafting and referencing source materials, and the final four weeks devoted to, peer review, revision, and editing, ending with presentations of students' research and final reflections (F and C syllabus). The syllabus includes due dates for the first draft at 8 weeks into the class, a second draft at 11 weeks, and a final draft at 13 weeks, the conclusion of the class. The main part of the students' grades is the research paper, at 50%, with the research presentation counting for 30% and participation/in-class work making up the other 20% (F and C syllabus). The class is described as a "one and one", meaning a one hour lecture and a one hour practical session per week, although in practice the lectures do not resemble other university lectures but rather further hands-on or discussion activities, conducted by the professor.

The primary course textbooks are *The Holt Handbook* (Kirszner & Mandell, 1998), a text aimed at an introductory university composition class, and a locally-produced book, *Form & Content: Writing an academic essay* (Paunović, Marković, and

Mihajlović, 2014). The foreword of the book describes the impetus for its creation, in what is a strikingly eloquent justification for the local production of pedagogical materials:

while teaching this course for the first time, we found that albeit abundant, up-to-date, and student friendly, the available literature for academic writing courses was still lacking in specific examples of student writing that would be immediately relevant for our teaching context...this book offers just that (p.7)

The book contains ten essays written by previous students in the class, on topics such as the history of the Catholic church, the nature of creativity, and the sentencing of underage criminals. In a concluding chapter, there are also outlines of the students' papers, copies of their Powerpoint presentations, and brief comments from the students reflecting on the value of the course and offering advice for current students, primarily suggestions for choosing topics and admonitions not to procrastinate.

The most recent version of the syllabus, updated in 2012, articulates the goals for the course, centered on the process and nature of research writing and developing rhetorical awareness. First, students should learn to consider how the “form” of writing impacts the reader's perception of the “content” (hence, the name of the class):

The main aim of this course is to show you that '**the form**' of an academic piece of writing – including the organization of your material, the layout of your text, and citing your sources appropriately – indeed matters, because it contributes to the overall quality of your text. Hopefully, by the end of this course you will have understood that **the content and the form should work together to produce the best results**. (F and C syllabus, emphasis in original)

According to the course syllabus, “form” is defined broadly, in three parts: organization of the material, language, and mechanics, described as the “technical and practical aspects [of writing]...for instance, punctuation, spelling and tidy text formatting”. The acquisition of these skills is also explicitly connected to students' other academic work, and developing their overall skills as scholars:

We hope that by the end of this course you will have learned from your own experience that paying attention to small and seemingly irrelevant details is not a sign of a petty and pedantic mind, but a reflection of your responsibility, meticulousness and academic thoroughness – the qualities most desirable in any member of the academic community. In the same vein, **special attention is paid to avoiding plagiarism and developing a strong sense of responsibility in using other people's texts and referencing the sources used for your paper** (F and C syllabus, emphasis in original).

In this section of the syllabus as well as from Professor Tasić's comments, it's clear that this course is designed not only to teach students the mechanics of the research process, but to inculcate in them the attitude that ethical source use is part of being a meticulous

and respectable scholar. This move possibly emerges from a widely-held perception in the English department (and in fact, at both SSU and CSU) that students are extremely prone to plagiarism in their writing classes – more negotiation with local *rules* and the *division of labor* (as Professor Nović once told me, “it’s their job to try to cheat, it’s my job to catch them”). For Professor Tasić, however, that tendency is linked not to dishonesty but to simple unfamiliarity with the conventions of academic writing. When asked about the content of the Form and Content course, she reported that:

then the citing the sources and referencing and quoting and plagiarism uh my impression is that our students are not dishonest...they simply don't recognize the line, the borderline between uh (1) referencing and...something that does not require referencing so that's another big uh thing we have to do in this course (Professor Tasić, March 6)

In either case, this emphasis on teaching ethical source use and the connection between source use and responsible scholarship in the course, represent a further negotiation with a cultural norm or *rule* in this context.

The goals for the class also include developing students’ critical thinking skills, in terms of understanding sources and reflecting on their own writing:

well the primary goal...has probably to do with critical thinking...from stage one from deciding on the topic and researching the topic further, we try to teach them that they have to approach each and every stage critically uh to make a distinction between the sources they can rely on and those they cannot or should take with a pinch of salt (Lana, Nov 21)

In this statement, Lana seems to be defining critical thinking primarily as evaluating sources for trustworthiness, though the syllabus and course content also includes critical thinking as it relates to audience awareness, creating arguments and connecting sources to them, and students’ ability to evaluate and edit their own writing.

Overall, the course goals can be best summed up by the opening line of the syllabus, which claims that the course offers the students “applicable knowledge and practical skills” (F and C syllabus). In this approach, Form and Content is the course in the English department of SSU that most resembles an American required first year composition class¹⁷, aiming to teach writing as a way of getting at general scholarly communication, and its existence helps to break down the idea that writing of this type simply is not taught outside of the U.S. (Donahue, 2009; Donahue & Anson, 2015).

¹⁷ From my data, it is clear that the class has drawn deeply from imported texts designed for the first year writing classroom in the U.S. (the *Holt Handbook*), and thus has been influenced by center pedagogy, but the specific design of the class, as my participants reported it, was developed and has evolved locally.

Students' perspectives

For the students I interviewed, the benefit of the class is precisely that it teaches the skills not taught in their MEL writing classes, the skills associated with doing research:

It actually teaches you about form how to write how to utilize quotes yes how to use those citations styles and how to do research and what is maybe I don't know credible reliable resources (Group, Nov 9)

This is in sharp contrast to those MEL classes in which students are asked to invent sources for their arguments in exam essays (Group, Nov 9; Student interviews, Dec 7). Students reported this was the class on which they drew the most in writing for their master's papers (Dana, Nov 2; Group, Nov 9), suggesting that for at least some students, the outcome matched the instructors' *object* of prepare students for the writing of masters' theses.

Additionally, there does seem to be student uptake of the major concept in the syllabus of Form and Content – an emphasis on awareness of audience. Students report that for the first time in this course they were strongly aware that they were writing not for themselves but for others. For example, Suzana, a fourth year student, described the Form and Content course as the source of an “epiphany” for her about writing, that “you are not writing for yourself” (Student interviews, Dec 7). When asked about the most challenging part of writing the lengthy essay for Form and Content, Suzana replied:

what was most challenging about writing that essay in a way was stepping beyond your view, really, because when I write an essay it seems to me as if I'm putting all those information that I find convenient and that I want to give me a self-reflection really and it was really difficult to realize that you're not writing for yourself...the point is that you have to get the message across and there are other people who should read it (Student interviews, Dec 7).

Her colleague Anja concurs that audience awareness was a major focus of the course for her: “when I was writing the third draft [of the Form and Content final paper] I tried to pay attention to [the audience] and write in a manner which would be self-explanatory for the reader so that he or she understands” (Student interviews, Dec 7). These students' realizations suggest that as they move through the program at SSU, their understanding of the purpose of the reader-oriented writing techniques they are learning develops, and that for at least some students, the Form and Content course, by putting those techniques into the context of a longer, more developed essay, is key in shifting their ZPD around the concept of audience awareness.

Dana, a student who graduated in 2012, also described her experience with the Form and Content course as one of discovering for the first time the importance of audience, and a shift away from a sense of writing for herself:

this was the first rule that [Professor Tasić] told us you always have to have in mind the audience. because you are not writing this for yourself...you have to persuade me with really strong arguments because...whatever you write a poem a novel an academic essay you are not writing it for everyone so you should have your audience in mind all the time...it was good for us because you know you never really think about that I mean I never thought about it before...it's really really useful" (Dana, Nov 2)

Her description of audience awareness as "the first rule" of the course emphasizes how much primacy the concept was given, and her belief, looking back on the course three years later, that she had "never thought about it before" demonstrates how differently the students interpreted the goals of this course from the goals of their MEL writing courses.

Djorde, a fourth year student, adds that for many students, the Form and Content paper was the first time they wrote what they considered to be "a real academic essay", and that this came with a sense of accomplishment:

once it's done you are so happy because now you know you can write a real academic essay and you know that you are capable of doing something (Student interviews, Dec 7).

These two outcomes – the awareness of audience and how organization and clarity are connected to communication with that audience, rather than performative for exam purposes, and the sense of confidence from having completed a research paper – are indicators that this course is, at least for some students, highly effective as locally appropriate pedagogy, and that the outcome of this negotiation meets some aspects of Professor Tasić's *object* successfully.

Ongoing negotiation

Professor Tasić describes the research paper assignment as a "long felt need" in the department, arguing that the many skills involved in writing a research paper are not taught to the students at any other point in their education – that students perhaps should have been taught research and argumentation skills in secondary school and that at any rate the third year of university studies is "late to develop that sort of academic skill" (Professor Tasić, March 6). And in fact, the positioning of the course as an elective in the third year is somewhat contested/lamented, both by the course instructors and by students. Professor Tasić would like to see the course become both obligatory and placed earlier in the curriculum: "so it remains an elective in their third year. and a lot of students feel that it's really something they should have covered earlier...we believe it too" (Professor Tasić, March 6). One former student, Marija, echoed this sentiment, saying that at the very least Form and Content should come in the first semester of the

third year, before the intercultural communication course in which students also write lengthy research papers:

yeah so we even suggested to Professor Tasićanja to change those to have form and content in the first semester...I guess that form and content should really be before... (Group, Nov 9)

That it does not come earlier, despite these concerns, is evidence of the professors negotiating by working within the activity system. Within the broader *community* it is seen as necessary to wait until students have gone through the first two years of MEL and developed sufficient linguistic proficiency to write longer papers, and to place this lengthier paper after the shorter paper written in ICC (Professor Tasić, March 6). Thus, the placement of the course in the overall curriculum is a negotiation at the departmental level, one which may be eventually re-negotiated, as these innovations, like the contradictions and the activity system itself, are historical and evolve over time (Engeström & Sannino, 2011).

Another ongoing negotiation is with a different *rule* around the exam structure, one which permits students to take exams in different semesters from the semester they attend the class lectures. In practice, according to both Professor Tasić and Lana, the multiple draft writing as it is proposed in the syllabus doesn't actually happen. Instead, students frequently wait until the class has ended to write the whole paper, and they then get feedback from the instructors via email, or they wait until a different exam period altogether. As Professor Tasić points out, the task of writing such a lengthy paper is actually challenging for the students, and so despite the drafting listed on the official syllabus, the instructors mostly offer instruction in the process of writing, while students lag behind on the actual output. She reports that course most emphasizes creating an outline by breaking down a larger idea into "logically connected smaller ideas" and academic honesty, as students "need guidance with tracking the sources, quoting the sources, citing the sourcing, referencing, academic honesty so that's something we need to focus on for a week or two":

more often than not students...simply can't follow the pace of the course so somehow they always lag behind instead of producing something and bringing it to class which was our original idea... we have to bring other material for them to work on in class and they then apply what we've done in class on their own materials at home...they expect us to teach something in class and then they apply what we've taught them in their own work (Professor Tasić)

This is a continuing contradiction with *division of labor* – students still expect teachers primarily to lecture, to provide content, which students take away and learn at home to reproduce on exams, and the drafting and workshopping ideas are, if not foreign, certainly new. This continued contradiction make the outcome unsatisfactory for the teachers, and for at least one former student I spoke with, for students, as three years after he had sat through the lectures, he still had not completed the paper, which meant he was not able to formally graduate from the university (Niko, Dec 2).

Lana reports that the compromise the instructors make is to guide the students via individual consultations, when they do decide to take the exam:

unfortunately uh we get what they decide oh it's time to write the essay and pass this exam, so we usually have condensed individual course with these students...without prior conversation with us they just send us the first draft, and then we- sometime in September or October for example...we tell them come to our office hours and let's talk about this (Lana, Nov 21)

This is a further negotiation between their *object* of teaching research writing and the *rule* which permits students to wait to take the exam. This system, in which they read and comment on students' work after the conclusion of the lectures, is not completely to the teachers' satisfaction, but to maintain the innovation of the course and to pursue their *object*, they must work within the activity system and negotiate with both the *rules* around the exams and with the *community* expectations. This negotiation does involve some sacrifice of time on the teachers' part; Dunja, a fourth year student, remember that Lana had made 90 comments on her 15 page draft and returned it to her via email before a fall exam term (Student interviews, Dec 7). Milan, a former student, also recalls receiving "a lot of feedback" from the instructors on organization and use of sources:

we did get a lot of feedback from [Professor Nović] and [Professor Tasić] and from [Lana]...they mostly paid attention again to the structure? and to how well our ideas in a particular piece of writing were developed...they paid a lot of attention in longer works to references, to how well we used them and how valid they were

His description suggests that, as with audience awareness, there was student uptake of another main goals of the Form and Content class, for students to critically evaluate sources, as at least some students had the impression that their references, "how well we used them and how valid they were", was a key component of their writing in the course.

Students at SSU consider these individual interactions with their professors extremely valuable in terms of learning, precisely because teachers' feedback is targeted to their individual needs, as do students across L2 writing contexts (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015). For example, Dunja remembers that

what [Lana] said which was really important for me is to keep referring to my thesis statement...she said always look at this sentence because you tend to get lost and you talk about things that are not relevant for your writing for your essay and that's what helped me (Student interviews, Dec 7)

While it's likely, given the structure and aims of the course, that this idea was expressed repeatedly during the lectures, it is specifically Lana's individual comments that Dunja remembers having the most impact on her understanding.

Finally, it's worth noting that the students also negotiated with the *rules* of the activity system; while they took advantage of the *rule* that permitted them to take the exam in the semester they chose, and the *division of labor* created within the Form and

Content class in which instructors would provide extensive feedback, students also negotiated by selecting appropriate times to request help. Anja reports that we sent our [drafts] to each other as well over Facebook, it was summer you know and you didn't want to disturb your teachers, because they get to have a vacation as well (Student interviews, Dec 7)

This is a useful reminder that though the focus of my analysis is on the teachers' negotiations, students are also agentic actors in this activity system, and can work to motivate, shape, and support the innovations teachers create.

The object of research writing: CSU

At CSU, the instructors had a similar object of teaching research writing, but they negotiated with the MEL exam differently, by entirely substituting a research paper for the exam task. The final task in the third year MEL course at CSU is what the instructor Alina calls a “mini research project” (Alina, Nov 24), with the final paper submitted at the end of April or beginning of May. Students must conduct some kind of small-scale original research, typically done through a survey or interviews with their fellow students, on a topic of their choice; students tend to select topics related to university life, such as the example Alina showed me on the topic of how exercise impacts students' mental health. The paper students submit is required to be 5-6 pages long, to be submitted electronically through a plagiarism-checking website, and to have a minimal review of outside sources, which can be internet-based sources such as newspaper articles in Serbian or in English, or for the students who are “really interested in the topic that they're researching”, even research-based scientific articles (Alina, Nov 24). The structure of the paper, as Alina describes it, should be that of a “proper academic paper”, beginning with an abstract, and then an introduction containing background information including “their motivation for conducting this kind of research” and “saying why this research is useful” (Alina, Nov 24). The papers are required to include sections on research methodology, findings, and “discussion and implications”, concluding with suggestions for future research “like a proper research paper” (Field notes, Nov 4).

Negotiating with the *artifact* of the overall MEL curricular objectives, Alina emphasizes this is an integrated skills course, and that students are supposed to be developing linguistically during this task as well as learning research skills. Students are supposed to use the linguistic skills they learn in the first semester (describing graphs, and language for integrating sources), and in the first part of the class (formal vocabulary), as well as following the linguistic style of the provided model papers (Alina, Nov 24). For grading the research papers, Alina considers both the organization and thoroughness of the writing, as well as “the complexity of language” (Field notes, Nov 4), more specifically, grammatical aspects such as “verb patterns, articles, use of possessive adjectives”, “range of structures, and “use of subordinate clauses”, all of

which she commented on in a student paper she showed me as an example¹⁸. This innovation in the MEL class, like the other innovations discussed in this chapter, thus works within the activity system, adding the *object* of research writing while still adhering to the mandate to focus on students' linguistic competence.

As with the Form and Content course, this “mini research project” draws on imported pedagogical materials, with students provided a packet including chapters from *The Good Research Guide* (Denscombe, 2003) and several other publications on conducting and writing about research, including the APA section of a writing handbook, for which (somewhat ironically) the citations are not provided. Thus, like Form and Content, the origins of the task and the structure of the paper are loosely based on internationally circulating materials, and the project is reminiscent of one which would be found in an American first year composition course, but the exact shape of the task, with the emphasis on linguistic development and building on the skills from the earlier locally appropriate writing tasks, emerges from the instructors' negotiations with layers of local context.

The question I am not able to answer with my data is how this type of innovation, this complete substitution of a research paper for the third year MEL writing exam, is possible at CSU where it was not at SSU. The overall activity systems are highly similar, including, given the national standardization of the MEL curriculum which Professor Tasić reported, the goals of the courses. The longer tenure of foreign lectors in this class, as with Andrej at SSU, may create more flexibility for the local teachers who follow them. As discussed in Chapter 4, Kate, the MEL 3 and 4 instructor at CSU believes that the native-speaking faculty “accept that we do things our own crazy way” (Kate, Nov 24), and Alina described the English Language Fellow who had taught the class before her as “very creative” and teaching “quite differently” to the point that she was considered “too lenient” in accepting revised writing portfolios which “anyone could edit” for the students (Alina, Nov 24); in contrast, Alina's more plagiarism-controlled “mini research paper” might seem relatively conservative, a more acceptable negotiation with the *rules* of the activity system. This would suggest that foreign lectors may, by taking advantage of their positioning in the writing classroom and the authority accorded to them (however problematically) by native-speaker ideologies, create space for negotiation for the local teachers who come after them. Alternatively, given what seems to be a slightly more collaborative approach to the MEL courses at CSU, there may have been less tension with the *division of labor*, indicating the importance of the *division of labor* in creating space for pedagogical negotiation and innovation.

5.5 Negotiation with Bologna

The Bologna reforms are a consistent presence in the activity system of writing instruction at both CSU and SSU, impacting the overall curricular goals, the *division of labor* regarding who is permitted to teach which types of courses, and the length of MEL

¹⁸ Again, as exam tasks are considered confidential, I was not permitted to copy these student papers.

exam tasks, among other factors. The most direct contradiction with the Bologna policies, however, are evident in one particular negotiation, one with the Bologna policy on homework and attendance. Bologna functions as part of an activity system of international educational reform that is “culturally more advanced” (Engeström, 1987), that is, operating at a higher scale-level and with the power to dictate new objectives for the lower-level activity system. Thus, contradictions with the Bologna policies represent tertiary contradictions (Engeström, 1987).

The faculty’s interpretation of the most recent Bologna policies is that students’ homework assignments and attendance cannot count as part of their grades. As Professor Dević, who is in charge of the first year MEL course, explains, “we cannot give them a grade for the assignment...and according to some piece of some law, we are not allowed to create [sic] attendance at all” (Professor Dević, Dec 2). When asked about the law, he confirmed that it was a Bologna related reform, and that the law specifically prohibited grading students on attendance.

The impact of Bologna at SSU is difficult to trace precisely, in part because, as in other contexts, the reforms are unevenly implemented, often adopted piecemeal over time, and classroom practice may for periods of time remain largely unchanged (Despotovic, 2011; Schreiber, 2016). This leads to a fair amount of confusion, especially for lecturers who, according to the *division of labor*, may not be involved much or at all in broader departmental decision-making. For example, Sara, when asked about origins of the attendance policy in her MEL 5 course, responds with considerable hesitation:

Brooke: the compulsory um attendance that's not - is that to do with Bologna or is it just to do with the professors' preference

Sara: (2) I don't know if that's Bologna or not it's um (2) I don't know how long...when I first came 11 years ago, I think it was-was it compulsory? oh gosh, there was a time when it was, and now I think it depends on the professor, I think it used to be you get three [absences], and...then you can't progress in that course (1) so I think you need a signature before you do the exam, (1) I think, something like that yeah (1) (Sara, Nov 28)

Sara’s uncertainty reflects both the *division of labor*, in which professors, not the lecturers teaching the “practicals”, are responsible for the ultimate decisions on whether students pass or fail the course, and the inherent messiness of top-down educational reforms, which will be taken up to a greater or lesser extent by individuals in the activity system (Ahn, 2011; Kim, 2011). To the extent that it is implemented, however, it has created contradictions for two of the professors leading the MEL courses, Professor Dević and Professor Tasić, and their *objects* of securing better class attendance.

The negotiations

One of Professor Dević's *objects* for the first year MEL course is to encourage first year students to develop habits of completing homework and attending class. As he explained, this is important to "stimulate" students "when it comes to handing in their homework and attending classes in the first year, as it's crucial" to their future success as students (Professor Dević, Dec 2). In his course particularly, the resolution was to create a completion bonus – if the students completed and handed in all of their homework assignments, their midterm grades were raised by a small percentage, "which we are allowed to do" (Professor Dević, Dec 2).

In the MEL 5 course, Professor Tasić implemented a similar system for securing attendance which involves counting the number of "minuses" or absences students have during the semester. According to her policy, students with more than 3 minuses will not receive the professor's signature on their "index", the small notebook in which their official grades are recorded, and are therefore not permitted to take the exam. From Sara's perspective as a lector working with Professor Tasić, this is something of an unofficial policy, one implemented only under Professor Tasić:

I don't think, in terms of the statutes of the university I don't think you are supposed to include homework and attendance as part of the grade...we have done that in the past but I think, the actual statutes says you're not allowed to (Sara, Nov 28)

From Sara's perspective, this negotiation has a successful outcome, in that "attendance is much better than it was last year, yeah" (Sara, Nov 28). These two negotiations, resolving tertiary contradictions, are an example of locally appropriate pedagogy which directly responds to educational policies at an international scale-level.

5.6 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have used a CHAT lens to pinpoint specific pedagogical innovations which emerge from teachers' efforts to resolve secondary contradictions with elements of their activity systems. For Sara at SSU, a negotiation with the *artifact* of the MEL exam structure enabled her to implement a new exam task in which students write cover letters from a provided CV; for Alina at SSU, a similar negotiation produced an exam task in which students write statements of purpose for a graduate school program. Two teachers' objects of giving students an opportunity to practice research writing created a series of innovations: with Professor Tasić at SSU, the innovation is an elective writing course focused solely on research writing, from which students reported gaining insight into the importance of writing for an audience. With Alina at CSU, the innovations are an exam task in which students write an opinion essay using a packet of pre-distributed texts as source material, and a "mini research project" submitted in place

of a final exam. Finally, two teachers' efforts to resolve a tertiary contradiction with a Bologna reform policy resulted in grading practices incorporating attendance. Each of these negotiations, as they are renegotiated over time, become part of a locally appropriate EFL writing pedagogy, one which is shaped by multiple scale-levels of context.

The first implication that emerges from these examples is that, across these contexts, these innovations illustrate the importance of teacher agency in developing locally appropriate pedagogy. As the activity systems shifted over time, changing the *division of labor* between instructors and supervising professors, reassigning classes, or bringing in new materials and *artifacts* of educational reforms, teachers created spaces for innovation at the level of individual classroom practice, with new exam tasks, and at the level of departmental curriculum, with new courses.

However, the examples of innovation in this chapter also demonstrate that teachers can exercise their agency even in static moments of the activity system, as they develop new *objects* around the changing needs of their students; even before Professor Tasić took over the third year and permitted more leeway for Sara's exam tasks, Sara had brought business writing into her class, because she perceived her that her student needed to produce such genres for mobility in the global economy. The agency that these teachers displayed was not granted to them by the shifts in the activity system; rather, they were already enacting pedagogy which they thought would most benefit their students. In studies of pedagogical innovation (e.g., Hyland & Wong, 2013), teachers' agency is not always the focus, yet a CHAT analysis makes plain that teachers can work within their activity systems to create significant change. There is no need for a total revolution in educational culture before innovation can occur, as Lee (2011) implies; rather, teachers can negotiate with the *rules* and *artifacts*, resolving contradictions through tasks and practices that evolve over time.

These examples further demonstrate that for the innovations teachers negotiate to be successful they must work within the existing system without disrupting it, by meeting the expectations of the *community* and the *rules* of the institution. The innovations described in this chapter do not change the structure of the MEL exams, but work within it, so that the teachers in other MEL classes can continue their work with disruption; the Form and Content class, as an elective, finds a niche within the curriculum to innovate quietly – so quietly, in fact, that Maja, who has been teaching fourth-year students for several years, wasn't entirely sure what the students did in the third-year Form and Content class or even what the class was called (Maja, Nov 17). As teachers negotiate, the activity system continues to function, with each interconnected but also independent actor pursuing his or her *objects*.

The necessity of working within the system is further demonstrated by the fact that not all attempts to resolve contradictions are successful – as Sara found with the first iteration of her business writing midterm exam task. Likewise, Maja had some years previously attempted to introduce a new task in the fourth year writing class, that of writing newspaper articles:

actually I'd always wanted to do articles and I did [try]...but it didn't work...it would have been I think a better learning experience for them, um it just didn't

seem to work and um so I basically just stick to those types of essays which are...formal...prescribed ...and that seems to work better for them (Maja, Dec 1)

As part of the pilot stage of this project, I used a CHAT lens to examine her attempt at innovation, and concluded that the contradictions she experienced were not, as she herself believed, a result of poor planning or preparation, but rather of not accounting for the contradictions with the *rules* of the activity system. Because she did not negotiate with the *rule* around exam preparation by tying the novel assignment to the exam, her innovation did not succeed (Schreiber, 2012). The negotiation strategies which negotiate with *community* expectations and with *rules* like those regarding the exams are the ones which succeed, produce change, and may eventually be sedimented into a permanent part of locally appropriate pedagogy.

Finally, although the examples in this chapter have focused on teachers' negotiations with international teaching materials and practices to create novel exam tasks, assignments, or courses, this is not the only form of innovation available. Teachers practice according to their own histories and beliefs, which emerge from by their real world experiences and their knowledge of their students and the context (Borg, 2006), and as a result, teachers have a spectrum of relationships to the texts they use. Professor Tasić created a textbook herself from students' essays in order to fill a gap in the international literature, that of "specific examples of student writing that would be immediately relevant for our teaching context" (Paunovic et al., 2014, p.7). Sara likewise takes a casually critical stance to the texts she selects, careful to point out to students where the text does not match their purposes, "I've just got to draw their attention to some things that I think are ok for them or not ok for them" (Sara, Nov 28). These moves away from the standard are most likely to be labeled innovations, yet it is important also to honor the negotiation practices which result in the choice of a more traditional pedagogy. Maja, who characterizes the work of teaching writing as "enforcing the rules" laid out by the textbooks (Maja, Nov 6), presents the content of the textbooks – the topic sentences, the controlling idea, the paragraph cohesion – uncritically to her students. At the same time, she negotiates with aspects of the pedagogy the textbooks represent, incorporating process writing into a teacher-controlled, focus-on-form pedagogy. Students in her class write a new paragraph each week, which she corrects for organization and coherence as well as mechanics; she then asks students either to rewrite the paragraph to correct the mistakes or to move on to a new topic. In this way, process writing becomes a type of drill, one which she credits with training students to produce acceptable (focused on one topic, grammatically correct) paragraphs on the timed exam, and therefore providing students with a strong foundation for future writing (Maja, Nov 6).

As Leki (2001a) notes, "not all resistance is the result of a self-confident refusal to allow outsiders to dictate how to teach...but may instead simply be the reflection of a desire to do things as they have always been done" (p.207). Yet this is also a negotiation practice, one born out of deeply held beliefs about what is most pedagogically sound – most locally appropriate. For Maja, the content of the textbook does not create contradictions because for her it is not foreign, because her own ideas of writing pedagogy are in part derived from it; she incorporates the material into what she

understands to be the best way of teaching, a negotiation which also produces locally appropriate pedagogy.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

My goal in this project was to document the methods of instruction in these particular contexts through the lens of locally appropriate pedagogy (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996). That is, rather than seeing adaptations teachers made to imported ESL methods as the limitations of their material or ideological circumstances, seeing a complex set of negotiations between local and international ways of teaching writing which gave rise to pedagogical innovation: a truly “homegrown pedagogy” (You, 2010). I have employed cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) as an analytical framework in order to highlight the relationship between the individual teacher and the multi-layered context in which she works, and to re-frame adaptations as the resolution of tensions with an activity system, as teachers exercise agency in negotiating with institutional demands, educational policies and norms, student expectations, and internationally circulating pedagogical practices. Through a CHAT-informed analysis of the factors shaping local pedagogy, I have demonstrated that locally appropriate pedagogy is embedded in multi-scaled layers of context, which teachers negotiate with in their choices of materials, exam tasks, assignments, and departmental curriculum; understanding these pedagogical choices in their context can highlight the wisdom behind what can otherwise appear to scholars in the global center be a limited or deficient pedagogy.

In this chapter, I first discuss the implications of my findings for how EFL writing pedagogy is understood, considering the transition from the adaptation approach to the appropriation phase and finally to a CHAT-informed negotiation approach. I then argue that one aspect of locally appropriate EFL writing pedagogy, the overall focus on linguistic development, represents something we might learn as center researchers from writing instruction in the (semi-) periphery. Next, I consider how the factors with which teachers negotiate are multi-scaled, instantiations of the global in the local. I then consider the implications of my study for teacher education, and conclude with the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

6.1 The negotiation approach

In Chapter 2, I drew a distinction between two current approaches taken in the EFL writing literature to understanding EFL writing pedagogy: the adaptation approach and the appropriation phase, and suggested that a better approach is one which, informed by cultural-historical activity theory and theories of teacher cognition, emphasizes the importance of negotiation in creating local pedagogy. In taking this approach, I examine many of the same factors other scholars have discussed, including the focus on language

development, the differences between L1 and L2 rhetorical styles, the way writing is taught in high schools internationally, and the influence of exam structures (e.g., Lee, 2011; Leki, 2001a; Reichelt, 2009; Tarnopolsky, 2000, 2011; You, 2004), but I have taken a different approach from many of the international and especially local scholars who are put in the position of having to justify the adaptations made in their pedagogy by referring to the constraints or “local peculiarities” under which they work. My goal in employing a CHAT analytical lens to highlight negotiations and teacher agency is to move past the need for defense or apologetic stances about EFL writing.

The benefit of a CHAT analysis lies in the ability to pinpoint how locally appropriate pedagogy is produced precisely at moments of tension between teachers’ goals and the context. In contrast to the representations of EFL writing instruction in the literature, teachers in this EFL context are not simply adapting international best practices to local constraints, though those practices are certainly valorized – they are actively negotiating between their goals and a wide range of factors, as do L2 writing instructors across international contexts. This suggests all L2 writing instruction (or all instruction) can productively be seen as a process of negotiation, and that all teachers’ creation of pedagogy could usefully be seen as attempts to innovate in locally appropriate ways.

6.2 Focus on linguistic development

In the EFL writing literature, the fact that writing instruction is part of an overall language curriculum is often understood to mean that writing is of secondary importance to the teaching of other skills, and thus the focus on language in EFL writing classes is necessarily problematic (Leki, 2001; Reichelt, 2009); this is part of the adaptation approach, to understanding EFL pedagogy. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5, the MEL curriculum at both SSU and CSU is shaped by the curricular goal of developing students’ linguistic competence in order to prepare students for graduate study and work as teachers, a goal which is not purely local, but is rather embedded in layers of context including pan-European educational policies and local and global economic forces. The curricular goals, in and of themselves, are locally appropriate; the English programs at SSU and CSU are preparing future teachers, who will need highly developed language skills.

Professor Tasić’s characterization of the MEL classes as “not an academic writing course” but rather “a language course in which the focus is on written language” (Professor Tasić, March 6) is accurate, but as the examples in Chapter 5 show, it does not mean that writing is exclusively a means of practicing and consolidating other language skills. Sara and Alina are still able to teach valuable real-world business writing genres, so that students can “write something that means something” (Nov 28); Alina and her colleagues are further able to negotiate innovative research writing tasks within the linguistic classroom, balancing a focus on linguistic competence with the acquisition of “academic skills” (Alina, Nov 24). Professor Tasić is able to negotiate at the curricular level to ensure that her students will have the opportunity to acquire skills related to

finding and integrating sources and making arguments. In developing her Form and Content class, Professor Tasić accepts that language development is the purpose of MEL, and simultaneously maintains her goal of teaching research writing, because both are key pieces of locally appropriate pedagogy.

Thus, the conceptualization of writing classes as language classes is not an incorrect assumption in the literature, but rather thinking of the writing classes in this way is *locally appropriate*. Applying a Western perspective which privileges process writing techniques— or expressivist writing, or even communicative language teaching – above all else, can lead center researchers and teachers to judge this goal as inferior, and here I include myself as a newly arrived English Language Fellow, startled by the importance of the list of Basic Grammar errors in local writing pedagogy. While it is correct to characterize writing instruction in the English department at SSU as language-focused (grammar-focused, vocabulary-focused) it would be a mistake to therefore dismiss the writing instruction as somehow secondary or lesser than other forms of instruction (and assessment). This is precisely what Donahue (2009) calls the “import/export” model at work, in which researchers and teachers assume that the pedagogy developed in the global center is automatically the most sophisticated (see also Canagarajah, 2002; Leki, 2001a; Sampson, 1984).

As pedagogical innovations, these outcomes continue to experience contradictions; the Form and Content course as contradictions with the *community*, as seen in the low enrollment rate and low completion, contradictions which may never be fully resolved. However, because each of these instructors, drawing on her knowledge of students’ abilities, needs, and goals, formulates objects to teach particular written genres, and then negotiates with the curricular goals to create opportunities for learning, the pedagogy can move ever further towards being locally appropriate, and will continue to evolve over time as the activity system shifts.

My findings suggest the value of a pedagogical approach in which we let writing be part of a functional language pedagogy. If, as Reichelt & Cimasko (2011) argue, the study of foreign language writing has the potential to highlight factors which ESL writing pedagogy might otherwise overlook, this is one option: there is merit in thinking of language learning and writing as integrated processes, rather than separate. While the EFL literature has often portrayed the integration of writing instruction into a language classroom as *necessarily* placing writing in a secondary role to the other three language skills, at SSU and CSU, writing is taught in the context of a language curriculum, suiting the needs of the local context, though not always without contradictions. One contribution of my study is that it brings into sharp focus how learning a language and learning to write are simultaneous processes, not only for EFL students, but for all L2 writers, and for L1 students as well, as language learning is a lifelong process. Writing activities can consolidate, enrich, and expand language learning, and vice versa.

6.3 The local and the global in locally appropriate pedagogy

One of my original research questions asked how teachers negotiate between local and internationally circulating pedagogies, a question which is still framed in the classic dichotomies permeating the literature on EFL writing pedagogy: ESL/EFL, local/international, product/process. My study demonstrates that it is both impossible and unnecessary to draw sharp or static boundaries around local practices, policies, and beliefs. Instead, my findings highlight the ways in which the rules and artifacts of this particular context reflect the complex intersections between local and global scale levels.

In Chapter 4, I outlined three factors which impact writing pedagogy: the curricular goals of improving language, a contrastive rhetoric ideology, and the role of foreign teachers. Each of these elements represents a confluence of multiple scale-levels. The curricular goals, which are a fundamental part of local departmental policy, show the influence of the Bologna Process and the CEFR, and the emphasis on preparing students to be both master's students and teachers is a reflection of policies from the national ministry of education dictating that K-12 teachers must have master's degrees. The contrastive rhetoric ideology is a result of the complex ways in which internationally circulating writing textbooks and their emphasis on topic sentences, controlling ideas, and current-traditional essay forms have been taken up in local writing pedagogy. As a result, the unique task of story-retelling reflects not only the local exam structure, and teachers' perceptions of their local students' preparedness for university level writing, but also the international industry which publishes and distributes these textbooks. Finally, the tendency for foreign lecturers to be placed in the writing classroom, which would not be possible without the sponsorship of international organizations such as the U.S. State Department and the British Council, also reflects Bologna-motivated policies dictating the credentials required for teaching different types of courses, and beliefs about the abilities of native-speaking teachers which serve to safeguard the authority of local teachers. Because each of these elements, in turn, represents a factor (*a rule or artifact*) with which local teachers must negotiate, teachers' innovations are, like their *objects*, drawn from and aimed at multiple scale-levels.

International materials and practices

Certainly, EFL writing instructors integrate into their teaching practices and materials which originate in international contexts; the flow of foreign teachers in and out of the classrooms here, particularly the writing classrooms, combined with the exchange of local teachers to other contexts and now the increasing availability of all forms of media online, has led to a steady stream of practices, concepts, and materials, from which local teachers can draw. Yet a closer examination of locally appropriate pedagogy reveals, beyond simple adaptation, sedimented layers of local practice. The MEL 3 writing textbook at SSU, imported decades ago, has become an integrated part of local practice, with the topic sentence and controlling ideas coming to represent metonymically

the “English” style of writing – even academic writing itself. For Maja, this long-ago imported book is not only a teaching tool, but part of her teacher cognition, through the apprenticeship of observation as well as her own teaching experience; continuing to label the textbook only as “foreign” ignores the ways in which it has been taken up into local practice over time. Likewise, the exam task in MEL 5 at CSU in which students write a timed essay from sources appears to be a locally-created practice, though the materials used to teach about reading strategies and citation, as well as the texts which students read and annotate, are internationally circulating; while the materials were created for the purpose of assisting writers in out of class production of research papers, they are taken up locally for exam purposes, in negotiation with exam structure and departmental policies. The *Holt Handbook*, currently a key text in the Form and Content course, has already been replaced in terms of model essays by a locally-created book developed out of student essays; those student essays were produced using the Handbook, and so its influence has already become sedimented, even if the book itself is completely replaced. In the MEL 4 class at SSU, the recently imported use of class blogs for peer review may well become sedimented in this way in the future, if the practice serves local purposes.

Thus, although I anticipated examining how local teachers grappled with international concepts and pedagogies, and that does happen (particularly among more novice instructors like Andrej), the contradictions which lead to innovations are instead between teachers’ goals and various elements of the activity system, which are themselves operating at multiple levels, as local instantiations of international reforms. Additionally, the pedagogical practices that circulate are not necessarily coming from the U.S. or England, but may as well come from local pedagogical conferences, the national ministry of education, and global online sources. Ultimately, while it is certainly true that the entrance of foreign *artifacts* or *rules* – or in the case of foreign instructors, *subjects* – into the classroom activity system creates contradictions, this is a simplistic and overly essentializing focus. Instead, these two chapters have served to highlight the deeply sedimented nature of local language teaching, the result of layers of innovation over time. My findings suggest that as the activity systems of writing instruction, their contradictions, and the innovations teacher produce continue to evolve, there will continue to be injections of outside pedagogy via internationally circulating pedagogical materials and teachers, and the evolving pedagogy will continue to remain intersected with – not dependent on – the global practice of writing instruction.

6.4 Implications

As discussed at the end of Chapter 5, a major implication of my analysis is a renewed focus on teacher agency as the source of pedagogical innovation. In the pilot stages of this project, I was attempting to understand why local teachers did not use process writing techniques. When asked why they chose *not* to do something, the EFL writing teachers I interviewed cited the reasons Leki (2001a) describes: large class sizes, limited time, heavy course loads, lack of resources. In explaining their choices to

me, the foreign interlocutor, they pointed to factors that differed from the teaching context I was familiar with, the factors I myself attended to most. Yet for the local teachers, those factors are simply the reality of their professional lives.

In this stage of the project, I stopped asking why teachers did not teach the way I expected them to, and started instead asking teachers why they make the choices they do. When I shifted the question I asked, I received answers about teachers' goals for themselves and their students, teachers' understandings of the role of the language in their students' lives, their expectations for students' futures, factors that are more common across contexts. This shift in my approach is a move away from a focus on why international best practices are ignored or adapted – why, as Schenck and Choi (2015) report, teachers “tend to rely on conventional methods of instruction” (p.142) - towards a focus on teachers' agency, on their ability to find ways through and around the constraints and contradictions that characterize every teaching situation on some level.

As Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) point out in regards to language teacher cognition research, one of the most persuasive arguments for continuing to pursue this kind of work is not merely to improve teachers' learning and development, but ultimately to create better learning environments for students:

we need a firmer commitment to understanding those practices of language teaching...that illuminate how teachers can be helped to make a difference to their students' lives in the language classroom (p.442)

Ultimately, the goal of any work on pedagogy, and the goal of the present study, is improvement for the sake that benefits' students learning.

Suggestions for teacher education

It is certainly valuable for teachers to learn about specific innovations in other contexts, for inspiration as to what is possible; the timed exam task which tests use of sources, for example, and the use of an elective research-writing course might each be adopted to bring the teaching of academic sources into many educational cultures which are heavily exam-driven. However, as imaginative as some of the innovations are, many of the specific tasks and class structures will not be transferable (even between the highly similar activity systems of SSU and CSU) but they do not need to be; that's precisely the point of a focus on what is *locally appropriate*. What center researchers and teachers can best learn from descriptions of international writing pedagogies is how these individual teachers were able to enact agency while working within their activity systems, not disrupting them.

What a CHAT analysis provides is a theoretically principled way of examining what is what that these teachers negotiated with, a way of naming the factors with which teachers grapple. For both novice and experienced teachers, particularly those entering new (foreign) contexts, this lens can help to make sense of a fully articulated activity

system in which they themselves are the “strong novel factor” (Engeström, 1987). As discussed at the end of Chapter 4, attempts to resolve contradictions through innovation are not always successful; knowing how to do a CHAT analysis of the teaching context, and understanding from a CHAT perspective how other teachers have negotiated before, will enable teachers first to identify the tension they experience and then to identify locally appropriate options for resolving contradictions. Understanding that activity systems evolve over time as the elements of the system shift may also bolster teachers’ patience and encourage them to persevere in implementing innovations. My study suggests that teacher education programs (particularly those sponsored by organizations like the State Department and the British Council) would benefit from including training in CHAT analysis.

Benefits of outside researcher positioning

Local teachers, between teaching, grading, and negotiating with a myriad of factors at different scale-levels, may not regularly have the time, space, or opportunity to reflect critically on the work they do. As a result, local teachers may believe that they simply do not have local knowledge about their L2 writing or writing pedagogy, an impression reinforced by the focus of local conferences and journals in the local L1 on oral communication. If I can use my research activities to help local teachers to articulate their goals, a vision, a structure to what they are already doing, my research can benefit both their collective and individual expertise.

My position as an outside researcher can be used deliberately as a resource, as my interactions with participants can produce a meeting point of local, experiential “experience near” and international, scientific “experience far” (Geertz, 1974), enhanced and complicated by the fact that I have a small amount of “experience near”. The meeting point between these two perspectives can be the site of discovery and learning both about the self and the other (Geertz, 1974). In terms of articulating theory, as an outside (privileged, center) researcher, I can use my perspective to identify points of pedagogy – innovations- that local teachers may not consider significant or remarkable. Thinking along with my participants, I can look up above the level of classroom practice and frame aspects of their pedagogy with research. In this way, through the collaborative act of eliciting teachers’ descriptions of their practice, I can help to identify teachers’ local knowledge and support their agency.

It is well-documented in the teacher education literature that qualitative research activities (dialogic mediation potential of interviews, especially stimulated recall), can act as mediation for teacher development and cognition (e.g., Golombek, 2011). Like all conscientious teachers, they are sometimes dissatisfied with their own practice, and through the dialogic research process, I may be able to help them articulate their critique – this is something that happened quite clearly with Andrej, who worked out his own philosophy of writing instruction as he was explaining his practice to me, and with Maja, who heard an audio recording I had made of her classroom teaching and recognized for

the first time how quickly she was speaking. As a sounding board or mirror for my participants' practice, I can offer them dialogic opportunities for individual development.

This approach to teacher development is hardly new; Cuban (1984) pointed out that “effective practices exist in different settings in spite of the severe constraints that teachers face”, and these practices should be identified, cultivated, and promoted (p.268). The central question, Cuban suggests, is this: “How can what teachers already do be improved?” (p.268) Through reflection and the application of a theoretically principled lens such as CHAT, teachers can examine the contradictions and tensions they experience in their practice and gain more conscious insight into the innovations that have and have not been successful for them. In promoting local teacher knowledge in this way, this study works to promote teacher agency, and break down the ideologies supporting the “vortex of professional dependence” (Canagarajah, 2002a).

6.3 Limitations and future research

Like all case study research, this study produces knowledge that is concrete and context-dependent, rather than broadly generalizable (Flyvbjerg, 2000; Yin, 2014). My goal has been to examine the practices of EFL writing in detail, and in so doing, reframe the understanding of EFL writing in the literature. I do not make general claims about the commonality of these practices across schools, nations, or regions, but rather point out what is possible.

As a researcher, my outside status provided the benefits described above, yet it is also important to say that I was limited in this study by my own (lack of) language ability in Serbian – an important limitations for those attempting to cross international borders in their research (Donahue, 2009). Likewise, the focus on English language education itself can be considered, if not a limitation, at least a choice which requires justification. As Kubota (2013) cautions: “The predominance of English as a focus of inquiry requires us to critically reflect on our complicity in the ideology that emphasizes the importance of English” (p.431). In selecting EFL as an area of study, I am still focusing on English, and as such, am still partaking in the global project which glorifies the study and teaching of English. At the same time, it is precisely English's dominant role in the world which makes the teaching of it so complex and potentially fraught for those who engage in it, so susceptible to dependence on the global center; this was part of my motivation for highlighting the expertise, innovativeness, and dedication of the instructors in my study. For the benefit of teacher education, future research from a CHAT perspective might further investigate what types of negotiations are most successful, and how teachers can best take advantage of shifts in activity systems over time to implement their goals, using the negotiation strategies uncovered here.

In a push to globalize writing scholarship, many scholars have called for attention to composition pedagogy and research outside of the United States (Muchiri et al, 1996; Donahue, 2009; Donahue, NeCamp, & Horner, 2011; You, 2010), yet this sort of work takes time, investment, and cross-cultural understanding. It is vital to continue to question

our local assumptions about what constitutes effective writing pedagogy (Anson & Donahue, 2015; Martins, 2015). Though the SSU and CSU English departments are language programs, and the instructors consider themselves language teachers, under close examination you see that there is a systematic preparation of students for academic and professional writing. When EFL writing instruction is understood as negotiated, not dependent or limited, a stereotype which hurts all of us by limiting what we know or are willing to know (Donahue, 2009), we can bring insight back to the global center.

However, as Canagarajah (2016) points out, merely overturning the traditional academic binary of local/global or center/periphery by focusing on the traditionally undervalued half of the binary as I have done in this study is not enough. Instead, it is necessary to “to deconstruct the whole center/periphery” distinction (p.446) – a process which I have begun in revealing how “local” factors are in fact responses to and instantiations of the global, and in using CHAT to highlight the commonality of the process of pedagogical innovation across contexts. Future research should continue to push past these dichotomies, finding the increasingly intricate connections between local practice and international factors, and working to reconceptualize the teaching of writing as a global enterprise.

6.4 Coda

In the course of writing this dissertation, I have wondered if the arguments I have made, pushing for EFL writing pedagogy to be re-framed in terms of teachers’ agency to negotiate with elements of their activity system, are unnecessary or outdated – if the increasing calls for research across international contexts (e.g., Reichelt & Cimasko, 2011; You, 2010) and expanding definitions of writing programs (Martins; 2015; Anson & Donahue, 2015) mean that the field of second language writing has already accepted EFL writing instruction on equal footing.

Recently, I witnessed an interaction on social media interaction which suggested to me the field of L2 writing, at least some corners of it, are still stuck in the adaptation approach, or perhaps something more retrograde still – an adoption or imposition approach. A prominent and respected L2 writing scholar Paul K. Matsuda posted this message on his Facebook page: “I declare war on outdated writing instruction in Asia!” (June 30, 2016); a slogan which could not embody an embrace of the import/export model more strongly. In response, Matsuda received a great number of comments, including several asking him to define the pedagogy he was calling outdated. He specified: “Asking students to write for its own sake, and focusing on features and structures without reference to the context. Paragraph writing.” (June 30, 2016). His statement could describe the surface of the pedagogy at SSU and CSU, where certainly, teachers focus on structural aspects of language, and students spend considerable time writing- and taking timed exams on- current-traditional paragraph forms. However, what that superficial description would miss is precisely the layers of context in which the pedagogy is embedded, and the myriad subtle ways in which local teachers enact their

agency to negotiate with the local and global norms, policies, and institutional demands to meet the ever-changing needs of their students.

I was heartened to find, among the mixed responses, one commenter contesting this attitude, pointing out that “many of my colleagues, me including, are able to compose in English and even publish our writings internationally due to the wisdom we learnt from the ‘outdated writing instruction’.” (June 30, 2016). This commenter’s willingness to take a critical stance, validating the strength of pedagogy which appears outdated to a center scholar, suggests that the field of L2 writing is open to the possibility of considering EFL writing pedagogy on its own terms, and open to seeing the wisdom inherent in the locally appropriate.

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Appendix A: Sample list of basic grammar (BG) errors

A LIST OF BASIC GRAMMAR MISTAKES (BG's)

AGREEMENT

- **SUBJECT-VERB – Using the verb which doesn't agree with the subject of the sentence.**
e.g., There *is a lot of cafes. / Ten letters *has been written.
- **SUBJECT-VERB – Using the plural verb with the nouns 'car' and 'door'.**
e.g., The car *are parked in front of the house.
- **DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE/ NOUN – Using the incorrect form of the demonstrative adjective.**
e.g., I like *this dresses.

GENITIVE CASE

- **Omission to make the correct Genitive Case form with: Countable Singular, Countable Plural and Irregular Plural nouns.**
e.g., It's *James book. / She read a few *childrens' stories.
- **Misspelling/ Wrong punctuation of the Genitive Case nouns.**
e.g., my *daughters pen-friend

PRONOUNS

- **Misspelling of the possessive adjective 'its' and the relative pronoun 'whose'**
e.g., The dog moved *it's legs.
This is the woman *who's son I'm dating.

ARTICLES

- **Omission of the article in front of a Singular Countable noun (including professions).**
e.g., I saw *Ø girl in the street.
She's *Ø/ *the engineer.
- **Using 'a' instead of 'an' in front of the word which begins in a vowel.**
e.g., He's *a old bachelor.
- **Using the indefinite article in front of the Countable Plural or an Uncountable noun (EXCEPT FOR: news, advice, information, furniture).**
e.g., There is *a sugar on the table.
The bags contained *a millions of dollars.
- **Omission of the article before a Countable Singular noun in the phrase 'such a + CSg'.**
e.g., She was wearing such *Ø nice dress.
- **Omission of the definite article before the names of: rivers, oceans, seas, mountain ranges, groups of lakes, groups of islands, hotels, cinemas.**

e.g., *Ø Danube runs through Belgrade.
She stayed at *Ø Ambassador Hotel.

- **Omission of the article in front of nouns denoting musical instruments.**
e.g., She plays *Ø guitar.

VERB FORMS – Formation

- **Omission of the suffix –s in the Present Simple Tense 3rd person singular.**
e.g., She *like ice-cream.
- **Using the incorrect auxiliary verb in the Present Simple Tense 3rd person singular.**
e.g., She *don't like English.
- **Misformation of any verb form (regardless of whether it is due to the omission of the auxiliary, or to an incorrect form of the Present? Past Participle, or to the omission of an inflectional suffix...).**
e.g., I *studying now. / She *has went to Belgrade.
He *regret saying that. / It's nice *to had/ *to has met you.
- **Using an incorrect form of the irregular verb.**
e.g., Look! He has *caught a big fish.

IRREGULAR PLURAL OF NOUNS

- **Using the incorrect plural forms instead of: men, women, children, geese, teeth, mice, sheep... and their compounds.**
e.g., She has three *childrens. / Cats chase *mices.
- **Using incorrect plural forms of the nouns ending in –f/-fe: wives, knives, wolves..., the pronoun 'yourself' and their compounds.**
e.g., Children, help *yourselves/ *yourself. / He has had 3 *wives.

QUESTION MAKING

- **Omission to form a correct question.**
e.g., What *you studied? / What did you *studied? / Who *does sing this song?

AGREEMENT

- **QUANTITY WORD/NOUN – Using the incorrect quantity word (EXCEPT FOR: a few/ few; a little/little).**
e.g., How *much children have you got?

DETERMINORS

- **Using the possessive adjective instead of a possessive pronoun.**
e.g., A: This is my house. B: And this is *my.
- **Using the article together with another determiner or a Genitive Case noun.**
e.g., I had *an no apartment.
*A my neighbour likes jazz.
He went to *the Abdul's house.

PREPOSITIONS

- **Incorrect usage of the basic prepositions of time: ON, IN, AT.**
e.g., She gets up *in/ *on 8 o'clock.
I don't work *at/ *in Sunday.
- **Incorrect usage of the basic preposition of place: ON, IN, AT.**
e.g., I was *on the faculty.
- **Omission of the preposition TO with verbs of movement (go, move, travel...)**
e.g., She goes *in Brazil every year.

Appendix B: List of classroom observations

Location	Date(s) in Fall 2014
<i>Southern Serbia University</i>	
MEL 1 – story-retelling practice	October 30
MEL 3 – lecture	October 28
MEL 3 – writing practical	October 9, 16, 23, 30; November 6, 13, 21; December 5
MEL 5 – writing practical	October 24, 31; November 7; December 5
MEL 7 – writing practical	October 8, 15, 22, 29; November 5, 12, 26; December 3
Master’s level writing course	December 6
English for sociology majors	October 29
Intercultural Communication	November 5
Form and Content oral exams	October 4
TEFL Methods class	October 5
<i>Central Serbia University</i>	
MEL 1	November 3
MEL 3	November 25
MEL 5	November 4
MEL 7	December 11
<i>Elementary school</i>	
First, seventh, and eighth grade English classes	October 10

Appendix C: All interview protocols

Interview protocol: teachers

Interview 1 (background)

- When did you begin teaching?
- What courses are you currently teaching?
- What previous experience have you had teaching writing? What other courses have you taught? What are your greatest concerns about teaching writing?
- What training or preparation have you had to be a teacher? To be a writing teacher?
- How would you describe your teaching style? What are your strengths as a teacher?
- How did you yourself learn to write academic essays in Serbian and in English? What kind of writing was valued in your L1 and L2 education? What is good writing to you?

Interview 2 (writing course)

- What are your goals in teaching this writing course? What do you hope students will learn?
- What textbooks do you use in this course? How did you choose them?
- What assignments are part of this course? How did you select them? How are they organized?
- How do you assess students' learning in this course? How did you choose this type of assessment?
- How do you see this course fitting into students' overall English education?

Interview 3 (Stimulated recall 1 – textbook)

Before viewing a selected chapter from the course textbook:

- Why did you choose this textbook? What other books did you consider? What do you like about this book? What do you not like? How does this textbook reflect (or not) your philosophy of teaching? How does this textbook match (or not) your goals for the class?

While teacher and research are looking at the chapter together:

- Why did you use this activity? Why did you not use that activity? How did you modify these activities? What did you hope the students would learn from these activities? Would you use these activities again?

Interview 4 (Stimulated recall 2 – audio excerpt)

Before listening to an excerpt from the audio data of teacher's class:

- What were you thinking as you prepared this lesson? What were your goals for this lesson? How did you sequence the activities? What materials did you choose and why?

While teacher and researcher listen to the excerpt together:

- What were you thinking when you asked that questions? When the student gave that answer? How did you understand the student's response? Why did you decide to do that activity next? How did you feel at that moment?

After listening to the excerpt:

- What do you think went well in this lesson? What might you do differently in the future?

Interview 5 (wrap-up)

- How successful do you feel this course was? If you teach this course again, what might you do differently?
- Would you make any changes to the materials you used? What materials might you use in the future?
- Have your views on teaching writing changed this semester? If so, how?
- What do you think your students have gained from this course?

Interview protocol: current students

Interview 1 (background and writing course)

- When did you begin studying English? Why did you choose to be an English major?
- How do you use English outside the classroom? What does it mean to you to communicate in English?
- How did you learn to write academic essays in Serbian and in English? What kind of writing was valued in your prior education?
- How does this writing course fit with your other English classes? What skills do you think you are learning in this class?
- What kind of writing do you think is valued at this institution? What kind of writing do you imagine needing after you graduate?
- How does the textbook you use fit into your goals for writing?
- How is the writing you do in this course related to your writing in English outside the university?

Interview 2 (stimulated recall)

Before viewing an excerpt from the audio data of teacher's class:

- What do you think the goal of this lesson was? What did the teacher want you to learn? What were you thinking when the lesson began? What did you hope to get out of the class?

While students and researcher listen to the excerpt together:

- What were you thinking when the teacher asked that question? When you gave that answer? How did you understand the teacher's question? How did you feel at that moment?

After listening to the excerpt:

- What do you think went well in this lesson? What do you think you learned? How did this lesson prepare you for future writing assignments?

Interview protocol: former students

- When did you graduate from the university? What courses did you take?
- Why did you choose to be an English major? What career did you hope for?
How did your career plans change while you were a student?
- What skills from your university studies do you use now?
- How much do you use English in your professional life now? In what capacities?
- What kind of writing do you do in English in your professional or academic life now? In your personal life?
- How well do you feel your university writing courses prepared you for your current English language writing? Is there anything else would you have wanted to study in those courses to prepare you for your current work?
- Do you have any recommendations for writing instructors at the university, based on your professional experiences since graduation?
- How has your understanding of the nature and purpose of writing changed since you've graduated?

Interview protocol: faculty

Interview 1 (background)

- What courses are you currently teaching? What other courses have you taught?
- How would you describe your teaching style? What are your strengths as a teacher?
- Do you teach any writing in your course currently? Have you had previous experience teaching writing?
- What material do you cover in your lectures for this course? How do you assess students' learning in your lectures?
- What do you hope students will learn/what skills do you hope they will gain in this year of instruction?
- How does the writing course fit into those goals?
- How much do you direct the teaching of the writing course? How do you view your role as the leader of this year of study?

Appendix D: List of interviews cited

Participant	Date
<i>SSU teachers</i>	
Sara (MEL 5)	October 6, 13, 20, 31; November 6, 17
Maja (MEL 3; MEL 7)	October 21; November 7, 28; December 9
Andrej (MEL 4)	November 20
<i>SSU current students</i>	
Third year (Nikola, Mihailo, Andrija)	December 4
Third year (Aleksandar, Aleksandra, Kristina)	December 6
Third year (Jana, Jovana)	December 6
Fourth year (Djordje, Suzana, Anja, Dunja)	December 7
<i>SSU former students</i>	
Dana	November 2
Group (Aleksandar, Marija, Ana, Milan)	November 9
Nena	November 16
Niko	December 2
<i>SSU other faculty</i>	
Professor Nović (Intercultural Communication; TELF Methods)	October 1
Professor Vidić (MEL 3 leader)	October 28
Lana (Intercultural Communication; Form and Content)	November 21
Professor Dević (MEL 1 leader)	December 2
Professor DP (master's level writing)	December 6
Professor Tasić (Form and Content; MEL 5 leader)	March 4
<i>CSU faculty</i>	
Ivana (MEL 1)	November 2
Kate (MEL 3)	November 24
Alina (MEL 5)	November 25

Appendix E: Broad verbatim transcription conventions

Most important:

- (2) timed pause (noticeably longer than speaker usually pauses)
- (word)** indicates a guess at unclear or unintelligible talk
- ()** talk occurs but is completely unintelligible
- ((laughter))** paralinguistic elements like laughter, gaze, or facial expression
- wo(h)rd** indicates the word is expressed with laughter
- wor-** a word or stream of speech that has been cut off
- ,** slightly rising intonation
- ?** strongly rising intonation (questioning tone)
- .** falling intonation

Transcribe ONLY if very noticeable/seems significant

- wo:rd** indicates elongation of a sound
- word** a stressed word or syllable
- <word>** speech is slower than surrounding
- >word<** speech is faster than surrounding
- gesture*** indicates a gesture in the absence of speech
- {*gesture*}** indicates a gesture overlapping with speech
- [word]** overlapping talk

Appendix F: MEL 5 class handout for unit on cover letter writing

Nong Khai (Thailand)

At least 400 Baht/hour

Part Time ESL Teachers in Laos

Part Time English Teachers FULL TIME PAY

At The Asha Foundation, we help people realize their dreams - dreams of a better career, of studying abroad or of travelling the world. We believe English has the power to create those opportunities and change people's lives. We care about the success of every learner and are passionate about teaching. The ideal candidate will be capable of delivering a valuable and highly engaging educational experience during their lessons, and importantly be extremely reliable and motivated. You will be familiar with a range of teaching methodologies, capable of preparing effective lesson plans and knowledgeable of a range of corporate course materials.

Get paid to Give back...

Are you ready to change people's lives and embark on a rewarding journey of a lifetime? By joining The Asha Foundation in Laos, you will get to work in a professional, yet fun and relaxed environment, helping children and adults learn English and the bonus is all of the profits of our schools go to helping in marginalized sectors of Laos, Thailand, and Philippines. In each country we address three major areas of concerns but due to cultural and political differences we address these needs in very different ways. Education is provided to the orphaned or poor that otherwise would not have this opportunity.

REMUNERATION:

- 400-700THB / Hour (depending on experience and qualifications)
- Part-Time In-House Teaching (16:00-18:00 Children, 18:00-20:00 Adult)
- Part-Time Corporate Teaching: (varying hours depending on corporate contract)
- Medical Insurance (w/ 1 year contract)
- Bonus on completion of a year of service (conditions apply)
- Work permit/Stay permit

REQUIREMENTS:

- Teaching degree/English teaching qualification
- Experience in a group teaching environment – Preferred
- A dynamic, professional with fun approach to teaching
- Passionate about learning and development

** All positions must be able to design lesson plans, test and do student assessment reports.

** For the interview we will ask that you prepare a lesson plan and ask for you to demonstrate your teaching style, as well as rationalize the methodologies you use to approach the language points you cover.

Apply now - send a recent photo and CV with other relevant documents containing clear details of your teaching certification to:

We regret that we are only able to contact applicants who are selected for interview.

For more information, visit: <http://www.TheAshaFoundation.com>

Vita

Brooke Ricker Schreiber

EDUCATION

PhD, Applied Linguistics, Pennsylvania State University, expected 2016
MA, English Language and Linguistics, University of New Hampshire, 2010
BA, Sociology, Stanford University, 2003

SELECTION OF CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Well, you know what it’s like here”: insider and outsider positioning in qualitative research interviews.” AAAL, Houston, TX (2016)
- “Alternative venue: Founding an EFL writing center outside the university.” IWCA, Pittsburgh, PA (2015)
- “Appropriate pedagogy in EFL contexts: writing instruction at a Serbian university.” AAAL, Toronto (2015)
- “Finding a way in: Graduate students promoting multilingual writing pedagogy”, CCCC, Tampa, FL (2015)
- “Definitions of ‘academic writing’: A teacher and researcher reflect”. TESOL, Toronto (2014)
- “Service or disservice: Defining academic writing discursively in the ESL composition classroom” AAAL, Toronto (2014)
- “The bad use of English or the different use’: Composition students’ responses to World Englishes texts”, IAWWE, Tempe, AZ (2013)
- “Digital translanguaging: Students’ construction of local and global identities”, CCCC, Las Vegas, Nevada (2013)

PUBLICATIONS

- Schreiber, B. R. (2016). Macro acceptance, micro resistance? Perspectives from Serbian writing teachers on the Bologna Process. In P. Zemliansky & K. St. Amant (Eds.) *Rethinking Post-Communist Rhetoric: Perspectives on Rhetoric, Communication and Writing in the Post-Soviet Space and the Eastern Bloc*. Lexington Books.
- Schreiber, B. R. (2015). “I am what I am”: Multilingual identity and digital translanguaging. *Language Learning and Technology*, 19(3), 69-87.
- Worden, D., Schreiber, B.R., Kurtz, L., Kascmerek, M., & Lee, E. (2015). Collaborative power: Graduate students creating and implementing faculty development workshops on multilingual writing pedagogy. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 4(1). Available at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol4/iss1/2>.