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Academic writing, scholarly identity, voice and the benefits and challenges of multilingualism: Reflections from Norwegian doctoral researchers in teacher education

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ABSTRACT

Doctoral researchers increasingly write in English where English is a non-ambient language, for example, in Norway. Yet, similar to other contexts, a goal of the Norwegian doctoral degree is that doctoral graduates are able to communicate their research in both national and international contexts, which usually means English. Through narrative analysis of 17 responses from doctoral researchers to a prompt asking about their journeys into academic writing, this article explores perceptions of how multilingualism and academic writing intersect with the emerging identities and voices of doctoral researchers as researchers. In these written narratives, doctoral researchers reflected upon previous experience and academia; audience and choice of language; voice, academic writing, and the perception of linguistic deficit; and academic writing conventions and language. While much previous research has focused on the negative aspects of multilingual and professional identities as academic writers, our narratives reveal how some doctoral researchers use their experiences to create productive strategies and resources. One key finding is that doctoral researchers create virtual transnational communities through their multilingual academic writing, both in terms of academic publishing and social media platforms.

1. Introduction

In many contexts where the ambient language is not a major academic language, e.g., English, French, or Spanish, researchers, including doctoral researchers, often take their data from one linguistic context, but convey their results in a second language. Moreover, researchers from contexts that use internationally major academic languages publish in other languages, most frequently English. The challenges this presents for academic publication are well articulated in Mur-Dueñas' (2019) self-reflective auto-ethnographic chapter that concerns a native Spanish speaker's enculturation into international academia, and specifically the field of Applied English Linguistics. We define multilingual writers, such as Pilar Mur-Dueñas, as individuals who are able "to write in two or more languages" (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2016, p. 365). In this article, we consider multilingual writers in a Norwegian doctoral context, particularly as multilingualism affects their voice and identity as emerging teacher education researchers.

Many Norwegian doctoral researchers in teacher education take their data from a Norwegian school context, but convey their results in a second language: most frequently, English. This act of translation has implications in itself as far as keeping meaning constant and maintaining the voice of the participants (Ho, Holloway & Stenhouse, 2019; van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010). Other doctoral researchers choose to write their doctoral theses in Norwegian. For Norwegian doctoral researchers, developing academic writing skills in Norwegian and English is necessary in order to complete their doctorates and to increase their employment opportunities within the academy. In Norway, all doctoral programs consist of courses and a thesis, but there is no equivalent of the taught/professional doctoral programs such as the professional doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) offered by some UK universities (Park, 2005). Please see Section 5.0 for more details on the Norwegian doctorate.

Much research considers second-language doctoral dissertation writing in ambient settings—where the language of writing is the language of the country where the dissertation is being written—e.g., Botelho de Magalhães, Cotterall & Mideros (2019). Other research examines the process of academic writing for publication in non-ambient contexts—where the language of writing is not the language of the country in which the publication is being

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written (Li, 2002, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). However, there is little research that considers second-language *dissertation* writing in non-ambient contexts, that is, contexts where the language of dissertation writing is not the language of the country where the dissertation is being written. We therefore decided to explore Norwegian doctoral researchers' perceptions of their journeys as doctoral researchers and academic writers in a setting where the dissertations are frequently written in a non-ambient language. These doctoral researchers have "knowledge of more than one language in the same mind or the same community" (Cook, 2012, p. 1). Furthermore, following Botelho de Magalhães et al. (2019), McAlpine (2012, 2016) and McAlpine and Amundsen (2009), we placed the views of the doctoral researchers in focus. As noted by Odena and Burgess (2017), "the students' voice remains an aspect relatively underexplored in postgraduate research education" (p. 575). One exception is the work of Wisker et al. (2010) which considered doctoral learning journeys more generally, indicating that these journeys are "experienced as multi-dimensional, involving ontological, epistemological, emotional and professional development, as well as cognitive shifts in understanding, which are closely interlinked" (p. 16).

To place the Norwegian doctoral researchers – their attitudes to and perceptions of writing their dissertations – in focus, we employed narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McAlpine, 2016; Schiffrin, 1996). We hope that the perspectives offered here, including our finding that doctoral researchers use what we refer to as "virtual transnational communities", can assist in the development of writing support that best enables doctoral researchers to meet the demands of the global academy.

In this article, we begin by discussing the critical concepts of identity and voice, particularly as related to multilingual researchers. Then we survey the research on multilingual academic writers, with a focus on multilingual academic writers in non-ambient environments. We then discuss the use of narrative inquiry to illuminate the experience of doctoral researchers before providing greater detail about the context of the study: a Norwegian doctoral program in teacher education. We then describe our methodology and apply it to a set of narratives collected from doctoral researchers in a Norwegian doctoral program in teacher education. In our findings, we delimit several themes and sub-themes and present them in detail before a discussion. Finally, we present conclusions and implications of the study.

2. Identity and voice

The relationship between academic writing and the two related concepts of identity and voice has been widely discussed (e.g., Hyland, 2010; Ivanič, 1998, 2004; Tardy, 2016).

Identity. Following Botelho de Magalhães et al. (2019), we understand academic identity to mean the doctoral researcher's self-awareness as a member of the scholarly community. In the words of Paré (2019), "writing is identity work, and dissertation writing presents the author with some fundamental questions: who am I in this text? With what authority and freedom do I speak? With and to whom am I speaking?" (p. 81). The identity trajectory framework of McAlpine, Amundsen & Jazvac-Martek (2010) locates three distinct strands of scholarly identity: networking, institutional and intellectual. Botelho de Magalhães et al. (2019) considered writing in relation to this identity trajectory framework. There is, however, limited research that considers the complex identity of the doctoral researcher writing in English in an environment where English is not ambient. In our case, Norwegian is the socially-ambient language. With a focus on writing in such an environment, we examine the role of multilingualism and writing upon the emerging academic identities of doctoral researchers. As described in the section below, a further component in our study involves the recalibration from one professional identity (i.e., as working teachers) to another (i.e., as academics). Multilingualism impacts this professional shift, as well as the demands to communicate and publish in English as indicated in the national goals for Norwegian higher education (NOKUT 2014) .

Voice. Various discussions of voice have been synthesized in the vast literature based on two primary understandings: individualized voice and social voice (Tardy, 2012). Individualized voice includes qualities associated with personal style, and social voice reflects more socially-constructed qualities that engage writers and their particular contexts with readers and their particular contexts. Whereas scholars tend to think of voice in this latter social sense, writers and teachers tend to think of voice as having to do with individual style (Tardy, 2012, 2016). This polysemous meaning of voice was important to keep in mind when reading the doctoral researcher narratives (described later) as they might have had an understanding of voice that differed from the understanding put forward by researchers.

Tardy (2016) has recently noted that many influential studies on identity and voice have considered L1 writers:

> There is, therefore, a need for more research on identity and voice that looks specifically at multilingual writers and their texts…Such work will be important in understanding more about how identities and voices are constructed in the transnational contexts that are increasingly common in today's globalized world (p. 360).

Some studies have looked at the development of voice over time among L2 doctoral researchers but in an ambient environment; i.e., non-native English-speaking doctoral researchers writing English in an Australian university (e.g., Morton & Storch, 2019). This study revealed that "while there was consensus that voice is a key aspect of academic writing…supervisors were challenged by the task of identifying voice features they considered to be salient and in determining whether there was development of voice over time" (Morton & Storch, 2019, p. 22). Our study is an attempt to contribute further to this field by focusing on doctoral researchers writing in a non-ambient context from the point of view of the writers and not the supervisors and readers.

3. Academic writing development in multilingual research education

Much research has focused on the challenges and anxieties encountered in second language (L2) writing by academics (Flowerdew, 2008; Ingvarsdóttir & Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2017; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Other research has focused specifically on the supervision and experience of international doctoral writers of English in English-speaking countries (e.g., Botelho de Magalhães et al., 2019; Cotterall, 2011; Ma, 2020), whereas little research has focused on the experience of writing English in contexts where English is non-ambient (e.g., Langum & Sullivan, 2017, Langum & Sullivan, 2020). As for the specific role of language in second-language graduate writing, Gao's (2012) semi-structured interview study of three Chinese graduate students—two doctoral researchers and one master's student at an American university—acknowledged linguistic and rhetorical differences between Chinese and English. However, the study found that the effect of these differences was minor. Gao noted that "the major" factor impeding academic writing in English was "content familiarity" (2012, p. 15). However, this study was conducted in an L1 environment and not an L2 environment, such as is the case in this current study.

As pointed out in the introduction, comparatively rare are studies of second-language doctoral writing in which researchers were not situated in universities where the language of the thesis was ambient (L2-L2) (e.g., a German doctoral researcher writing a the-

sis in English at a German university). Furthermore, studies of L2-L2 writing, that is, studies that consider academic writing in languages where the language of writing is not ambient, have tended to focus on scholarly writing for publication in the sciences and social sciences (e.g., Gosden, 1996; Ho, 2017; Li, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). In one of the few investigations of doctoral researchers' self-perceptions of L2-L2 academic writing more generally, (Langum & Sullivan, 2017) identified two key themes: deficit and commonality. Deficit refers to the perception that second-language writers are at a disadvantage in terms of both language and academic writing skills compared to their first language colleagues (e.g., Hyland, 2016), and commonality refers to:

> the perception that writing in academic English shared the same attributes and features as academic writing in their native languages, and that their perceived weaknesses in academic writing in English reflected the same or similar weaknesses in academic writing in their native languages. (p. 24)

However, (Langum and Sullivan 2017) did not focus on aspects of academic identity in relation to academic writing engaged in by the multilingual doctoral researchers. In order to place doctoral researchers' perceptions of their own academic writing development in the context of their "lived experiences," Cotterall (2011, p. 416) used thematic narrative analysis. In her study of international doctoral researchers enrolled at an Australian university, the researcher focused on the two of her six participants who had the most extensive experiences of academic writing, one writing a monograph and one a doctoral graduate by the time of publication. She found that supervisor-student relationships are critical and suggested that more attention be paid to different disciplinary genres in academic writing. In another study, after analysing data from all six doctoral researchers, Cotterall (2013, 2015) found that scholarly identity is influenced by the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) of both supervisors and doctoral researchers. Cultural capital consists of assets, including education, skills and knowledge thought to contribute to social mobility. The importance of cultural capital is further seen in Botelho de Magalhães et al. (2019) who used narratives to explore two doctoral students' experiences of the challenges associated with writing. Duff (2015) has confirmed that narrative methods allow the "discursive constructions of transnational identities" (p. 62) through a variety of media, including writing.

4. Doctoral education and narrative inquiry

The advantages of treating doctoral researchers as individuals is highlighted by Starfield (2010) who considered case studies and autobiographic accounts of international doctoral researchers. The researcher reflected how stories illustrate the role that serendipity plays in how well L2 doctoral researchers acclimate into their new language communities. These findings suggest a need for structured support which incorporates membership of the researchers as holistic individuals to enable their "legitimate participation in the communities they seek to join" (Starfield, 2010, p. 139). Other scholars (e.g., Guerin, Kerr & Green, 2014; Trahar, 2014) have employed narrative methods in their research on doctoral studies. For instance, Guerin et al. (2014) used narrative enquiry to examine the perceptions of individual supervisors in order to "allow space for appreciating the institutional, historical and emotional context in which events occur and informants make sense of their experiences" (p. 109). Trahar (2014) conducted a narrative study on international doctoral researchers and academics in Malaysia. She explained her method as accounting for her interviewees' "different contexts whose worldviews may different significantly" from her own (p. 220).

However, researchers have also reflected on several potential methodologically-limiting factors to keep in mind. For instance, Trahar (2009) has explored three critiques of narrative inquiry. The first involves the potential therapeutic aim of the storyteller which might limit the contents to matters of grievance. Another concerns the representation of narratives as somehow more "authentic" than other modes of representation and data collection. The third critique involves the trap of privileging the individual over the group or the group over the individual when both are possible. Furthermore, the involvement and impact of the researchers in the construction of the narratives as discussed by Barkhuizen (2011) means that the representations of the narratives must be viewed as static interpretations that have emerged from numerous re-readings of the data.

Taking into account both the positive and negative discussions of narrative methods, with particular attention to second-language doctoral researchers, we employed a narrative approach to explore individual perceptions of midpoint doctoral researchers, examining how multilingualism and academic writing interact with their emerging identities as researchers. We chose narratives over questionnaires and interviews so that the doctoral researchers were not constrained by a particular line of questioning and because narratives allowed the doctoral researchers more autonomy and creativity in their descriptions (Langum & Sullivan, 2017).

5. Context for the study: doctoral studies in Norway

The Norwegian Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is a three-year program of courses, seminars and thesis. There are no fees for doctoral education, instead every supervised doctoral researcher is employed by the university for three years of their doctoral candidacy. The Norwegian PhD degree is aligned with the Bologna Framework that started with the Sorbonne declaration (1998) and the Bologna declaration (1999), and the European Qualifications Framework that was adopted in the Bergen Communiqué (2005). Hence, today's Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NOKUT, 2014) contains learning outcome descriptors that expect the doctoral researcher to learn to "communicate research and development work through recognized Norwegian and international channels" (p. 26), and to be able to "participate in debates in the field in international forums" (p. 26). Both of these learning outcome descriptors require that successful doctoral researchers can communicate in Norwegian and at least one foreign language, usually English. Researchers have noted that higher education language policies associate English with "excellence" and Norwegian with "responsibility" in research (Muir & Solli, 2019).

In pursuit of the abovementioned goals—to communicate their research in Norway and international contexts—emerging doctoral researchers develop multilingual identities, particularly in their academic writing. Their theses—in English, Norwegian or another language—can take the form of a monograph or as a collection of articles (published or otherwise) that is prefaced by a substantial synthesis text. There can be disciplinary and university-specific requirements as far as number of articles and principal authorship, but there is no mandated word count.

To facilitate timely completion of doctoral degrees, there are a range of national thematic postgraduate schools in Norway that support doctoral researchers enrolled at universities and university colleges across Norway. Nasjonal forskerskole for lærerutdanning [The Norwegian National Research School in Teacher Education] (NAFOL) is one of these national postgraduate schools, and is a partnership between seven Norwegian universities and 12 university colleges (see Østern & Smith, 2017, for details). Doctoral researchers who participate in these national schools meet about three times a year for seminars and conferences. The seminars are held both in Norway and in other European countries such as Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Iceland and Sweden. Doctoral courses, including academic writing, are integrated into the semi-

nars. NAFOL's academic writing course has the following learning outcome descriptors:

Knowledge: The candidate has in-depth knowledge of academic writing genres with the main objective of writing a PhD dissertation (both monographs and articles) and has relevant and up-to-date high-level knowledge in academic writing.
Skill: The candidate has skills in academic writing both in Norwegian and English; can formulate issues and has analytical skills.
General competence: The candidate has general competence in identifying and using relevant writing methods within academic writing with high recipient awareness and focus.
(PLU8014 – Akademisk skrivning)

6. Methodology

We investigated a cohort of mid-point Norwegian doctoral researchers who were then attending the seminar in Sweden titled, "Developing academic identities in research and writing". We anticipated that there might be a tension between their emerging identities as doctoral researchers and their identities as members of the school-teaching profession at this point in their doctoral training, as they were no longer school-based teachers but also, not yet full-fledged academics. Research has focused on the general gap between theory and practice in teacher education (Macken-Horarik, Devereux, Trimingham-Jack, & Wilson, 2006). When most students take lower teaching education degrees, they have only had teacher-training placements rather than longer term work experience in schools. For doctoral researchers in teacher education, most return to academia after longer work experience in schools.

6.1. Participants

Twenty-four full-time Norwegian doctoral researchers in teacher education attended the seminar in Sweden. All spoke English and Norwegian, and some had additional European languages. Seventeen ($M = 4$; $F = 13$) responded and gave permission for us to use their narrative responses for research purposes. All these doctoral researchers were enrolled as students of NAFOL member universities and university colleges around Norway. The doctoral researchers in teacher education that we approached to participate in our study had already completed four of the six modules of the NAFOL academic writing course (Introduction to academic writing, writing activities, forming a scientific text, and writing a literature overview), but had yet to take the module "Writing your article in English." Given that NAFOL's web page includes detailed presentations of participating doctoral researchers, we provide no more specific detail about the universities or student backgrounds to help assure participant anonymity.

6.2. Procedure

In order to stimulate their reflections before the seminar, we asked the doctoral researchers attending the seminar in Sweden to write their journey into academic writing with the following prompt, which is structurally similar to one used in a different national setting and with a different cohort (Langum & Sullivan, 2017):

> Before the joint seminar we want you to prepare between 500 and 1000 words where you narrate your journey in academic writing in your first language and in English, and the challenges and possibilities it creates for your research and your developing identity as a researcher. These texts can be written in English or Norwegian.

The definition of identity was deliberately left open and no pre-seminar readings inflected their reflections or provided a definition of identity. We recognized this openness might lead to multifarious interpretations of the concept, not least due to the participants' professional backgrounds as schoolteachers. Further, as these doctoral researchers had not yet taken the NAFOL module "Writing your article in English", their journey would not have been shaped by this course.

6.3. Narrative inquiry analysis

Nine of the narratives were submitted in English (or in both languages), and eight were submitted only in Norwegian, totalling 17 narratives. Following Patton (2014) and Langum & Sullivan, 2017, we employed iterative inductive analysis. That is, we first read the narratives without commentary or discussion. We then read each narrative independently again, this time identifying key themes and sub-themes, as well as noting impressions and highlighting key quotations from the narratives. Our independent themes included but were not limited to: (a) different potential for personal voice in Norwegian vs. English; (b) monograph and articles; (c) professional vs. academic; (d) different styles in Norwegian, English and other languages; (e) intended readers impact choice of language; (f) reading as a strategy for writing; (g) patchworking as a strategy for writing; (hh) teaching as a strategy for writing; and (ii) collaboration as a strategy for a writing. Then, we met later to read the narratives and confer on themes and sub-themes, prior to a final joint reading where we confirmed our analysis and allocation of themes and sub-themes.

In our initial discussion, we paid particular attention to each quotation that we had individually highlighted and discussed theme assignment. Some quotations were only marked by one of us and others by both. We discussed extensively those quotations which were only marked by one of us and those marked by both of us that we interpreted differently. During this discussion, we noticed that some themes were less central to our research aim concerning multilingualism, for example, "patchworking as a strategy for writing". These less relevant themes were eliminated while remaining themes were combined under new headings that we agreed upon. We then put the narratives aside for a month. When we reconvened, we discussed the themes again and confirmed that we were satisfied that the themes reflected the narratives, and tweaked our theme and sub-theme labels slightly. Ultimately, our process yielded two main themes and four sub-themes with the labels being further modified during the peer review process.

The first theme identified was "scholarly identity and academic writing conventions" and the second theme identified was "benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing." The first theme, "scholarly identity and academic writing conventions" included two sub-themes: "potential for 'personal' identity and voice in academic writing, and specifically in L1 and L2" and "practice and theory." The second theme, " benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing," also included two sub-themes: "differing academic styles but language" and "intended readers impact choice of language."

In the presentation of our findings and in our discussion below, English narratives are cited directly as written, with only minor grammatical mistakes corrected to improve readability. We translated the Norwegian narratives as faithfully as possible. We use the gender-neutral pronoun "they" and "their" in all cases to further anonymize the narratives and protect participant integrity.

6.4. Ethical considerations

Given that data were collected in Sweden, we followed the Swedish Research Council's ethics requirements

Vetenskapsrådet (2011) and Lag om Etikprovning av forskning som avser människor (Swedish Ethical Review Act) (Law 2003: 460 §5) which restricts the geographical application of the law to Sweden. Submission of the narratives was voluntary and the participants were made aware that they could be used for research purposes. In their instructions, participants were notified that anonymity would be followed in the seminar and research outputs. They were told that their names, names of other people and places, as well as any other identifying details mentioned in their reflections would be anonymized. The exercise was optional with consent for research purposes provided by submission of their narratives.

6.5. Author positionality

As authors, our backgrounds as immigrants and multilingual speakers served well for the purpose of analyzing the narratives, and so did our involvement in the teaching of doctoral researchers in Scandinavia. We are both native speakers of English, have lived and worked in Scandinavia for decades, and can competently read English and Norwegian. This proved helpful as we iteratively categorized the narratives independently and collaboratively. Although neither of us had met the students involved in this study prior to the NAFOL seminar, the second author did jointly-organize the course with other academics from Norway and Sweden, and had insight into the work of NAFOL. The first author did not have this insight and was therefore able to bring an outsider perspective to the joint-reading phase of iterative analysis of the narratives. We acknowledge, that as multilingual researchers who publish in the Scandinavian languages, English, and other European languages, multilingualism is not alien to our lived experience in academia. At all stages of the iterative analysis, we attempted to not to favor aspects of the narrative that aligned with our personal views about the positive nature of multilingualism.

7. Findings

As indicated previously, we identified two themes in the narratives: 1) scholarly identity and academic writing conventions and 2) benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing. As also stated earlier, the first theme – identity and academic writing conventions – was further divided into two sub-themes: i) potential for "personal" identity and voice in academic writing, and specifically in L1 and L2; ii) practice and theory. The second theme – benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing – was further divided into two sub-themes: i) differing academic styles by language and ii) intended readers impact choice of language.

7.1. Theme 1: scholarly identity and academic writing conventions

In the theme "scholarly identity and academic writing conventions," we captured responses having to do with the researchers' negotiation of a personal style in relation to the conventions of academic writing, further complications when writing in an additional language, as well as how their writing relates to their professional and academic identities.

7.1.1. Theme 1: scholarly identity and academic writing conventions, subtheme i: potential for 'personal' identity and voice in academic writing, and specifically in L1 and L2

Several doctoral researchers reflected upon the difficulty of finding a "personal" voice or style within the conventions of academic writing. The author of Narrative 1 described their journey as a writer, which entailed a certain tailoring to fit particular audiences and journals. While acknowledging the significance of writing in a particular way in order to participate in the scholarly community, the doctoral researcher added, "I see that there may be a collision between your personal style in writing" and the "academic writing" accepted by the academy. Other writers found that developing academic writing was essential to "academic identity." As one claimed, "Researchers, I think, are not researchers before they can convey what they have discovered in written form. I feel that I identify my academic identity through the writing itself" (Narrative 8). Researcher identity is intertwined with writer identity; only when researchers can be understood by others can they be called researchers.

While most did not specify what a personal voice or identity in academic writing entailed, one writer explicitly strove to "partly challenge the academic genre if it can be defined as a genre" (Narrative 15) by blending concepts of "academic" and "literary" writing. The author found it difficult to "write precisely" and use "academic concepts" while also writing in a "literary" way. By "literary," the author meant that "language is interesting and readable." Their strategy for this was to develop a voice which balanced "a sense of security in message and form" on the one hand and "play" and "pleasure" on the other (Narrative 15).

One writer detailed an emotional shift and development of confidence in regards to academic writing. The author of Narrative 17 understood academic writing to consist of "nitpicky rules." These rules, according to the researcher, interrupt and impede the more intellectual process. For example, while the researcher was trying to sort out questions that were significant and insignificant, interesting and uninteresting, "someone says: you cannot write a literature review like this…or you cannot do this first, you must do this first." Initially "touchy and angry," they developed confidence when to ignore and when to accept criticism, feeling gratitude for useful feedback (Narrative 17).

Although these reflections could equally apply to academic writers of any language, one researcher discussed the additional difficulties of finding their personal voice in academic writing in a second or even third language. Despite having written their master's in Norwegian and not having much experience in English, the author of Narrative 7 chose to write their dissertation (PhD by publication) in English, early on in their doctoral studies. While they did not mention any particular motivation to write in English (other than perhaps what is implied in the intention to publish in international journals), they detailed some of the perceived difficulties of writing in English: "I lack the nuances and words that are needed to write rich descriptions and to write excellent articles…and the words and expressions that bind the text together and make it flow" (Narrative 7). Despite these difficulties, the researcher noticed improvement and increased ease in their writing as they advanced in their doctoral studies, crediting their "patient and wise supervisor" who provided "support and help in formulating (her) articles" (Narrative 7).

Other researchers clarified that issues with writing in English were not about grammar or proofreading. For example, one researcher explained, "Word does not light up with red spelling lines or blue grammar lines" (Narrative 10). Instead, they were concerned with more elusive qualities of developing their voice in academic writing in English. For this writer, English functioned as a "filter" where even a "light tone turns quickly rigid" and the writing became simply a "collection of words" (Narrative 10). The idea of a "filter" was expressed in another narrative where the writer worried about their choice of writing in English as having affected their writing and the expression of their "personality as a researcher" (Narrative 11). By this, the writer meant not only a personal voice but the particular research context itself: "this has to do with language skills, but also that it took place took place in

a Norwegian setting. Everything happened in Norwegian" and English "puts a filter on" (Narrative 11). This writer's use of a proofreader "might add another filter to the distance" obscuring their own "personality as a researcher" (Narrative 11). The writer reflected both on general challenges within academic writing and specific challenges to writing in a second language. Of the general issues, they felt that academic writing could be "intimidating" and "challenging." It was "intimidating" in the sense of wanting "to stay true and sincere" to their data "and towards the people that are a part of my data." It was "challenging" for "all the insecurities surrounding the how, what and where to write." While not having begun their graduate studies with much confidence in their English, the researcher "forced" themselves to write in "another language than [her] own." They decided to do this in the interests of joining a wider scholarly community. However, the general worry of being "true" to their data was even more pronounced in English: "There are many phrases and cultural settings in Norwegian research that seem to get lost in translation" (Narrative 11). Some writers decided to write in their first language, at least in part, due to this perceived loss of identity. One remarked that they "cannot be the researcher [they] want to be in English," in part because "[their] personal style disappears in the translation process" (Narrative 12).

However, other researchers focused on the challenge of mastering academic writing in any language or disregarded the question of personal voice. One researcher writing in their L2 language thought that "reading and writing as an academic skill is hard to learn" in any language (Narrative 14). Another writer described that in their choice to write in English, the question of "voice" was moot as of yet. While claiming that writing in English was "fun," the goal at this stage was to simply write "competently" (Narrative 15). Yet there was a positive suggestion for the future: "in order to achieve writing pleasure and a personal writing style, one simply has to write a lot" (Narrative 14).

Regardless of their confidence in language or their development of a particular voice, it was clear that the researchers viewed writing as integral to the development of their academic identity. As one wrote, "my strategy…is to write my way into academic confidence" (Narrative 13).

7.1.2. Theme 1: scholarly identity and academic writing conventions, subtheme ii: practice and theory

Several writers noted the distinction between practice and theory (academic study) of the practice of teaching. Despite familiarity with the practice to be discussed in their academic writing, one author was surprised by the difficulty of learning the constraints of academic writing, in particular "the article genre" (Narrative 7). Furthermore, another writer expressed their concerns with finding a voice in terms of how their research could be used and understood by readers beyond the academy. For the author of Narrative 5, writing style was integral to their identity as a researcher: "do I want to become a dusty professor, alone in my office with all my big thoughts" or "do I want to be an academic and researcher who passes on my knowledge and empirical findings in uncomplicated and understandable language?" The writer built an opposition between "theoretical debates and discussions" which might "not be as accessible or even interesting to my audience" and accessibility to a general reader (Narrative 5). Ultimately, the researcher wanted to balance these qualities and wished their writing style to be one of the "contributions to [her] field of research": "When someone reads one of my articles, I want it to flow. And when they are done reading, I want them to have gained more knowledge and understanding than when they started, (almost) regardless of academic degree of profession" (Narrative 5). While writing in a way that is accessible to readers "regardless of academic degree or profession" was opposed to being "a dusty professor," the critical skills – "how to build an argument and make knowledge easily accessible for others" needed to reach this goal were "not mastered" until the PhD program (Narrative 5). The same researcher described the difficulty of entering research as a practitioner: "I struggled with how little I knew about this academic landscape and how I could relate my knowledge from practice to it" (Narrative 5). Another researcher stated an initial temptation to choose a theory in order to "defend what practice you yourself think is best" (Narrative 9). However, in the course of "process-oriented writing" classes for their master's degree, the author developed their practice of academic writing, particularly self-criticism and reflection. "I was constantly writing texts, being constantly challenged to go deeper into the research and theory that I related to in my texts" (Narrative 9).

A further researcher reflected upon how their previous experience of teaching improved their academic writing. A former teacher of both formal science and humanities, the author of Narrative 4 discussed how they pooled qualities from both subjects—"logical stringency and clear argumentation lines" on the one hand and "text composition, punctuation, grammar and literary characteristics" on the other—in order to produce academic writing that has "both textual qualities of communication and cohesion," as well as "transparency and logical reasoning" (Narrative 4). These criteria corresponded to those eventually identified in their new career as an academic writer.

7.2. Theme 2: benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing

The theme "benefits and challenges of multilingualism to academic writing" captured responses that relate to differing academic styles by language and the motivations and difficulties concerned in the choice of language.

7.2.1. Theme 2: benefits and challenges of multilingualism: differing academic styles by language

Two writers reflected on the experience of academic writing as native speakers of neither Norwegian nor English. The writers of Narrative 2 and Narrative 3 detailed the differences in academic writing in Norwegian and English. These differences concerned style, the writer identity, references and content. The author of Narrative 2 had studied at universities in Norway and in an English-speaking country. The narrative discussed the challenges and differences of writing academic texts in both languages. In the multilingual context of the writer's first PhD course, the writer was "forced" to write in English, yet "enjoyed it." As far as style, writing in English allowed the author to be "more straightforward" with "less fear of making a point." The author of Narrative 3 pointed out that in English "sections are more precise and concrete in the way that they present the substance." In regards authorial identity, both researchers emphasized that academic writing in English favors greater neutrality where the use of "I" is "more an exception than the rule" (Narrative 3). In contrast, academic writing in Norwegian insists on greater "acknowledgement of the researcher role" (Narrative 2) and the use of "I" is "very common in Norwegian academic texts" (Narrative 3). Additionally, the choice of language affected the choice of references: Norwegian references for academic texts in Norwegian and English references for academic texts in English (Narrative 2). However, beyond these concerns, the actual content of the writing also changed depending on the language employed, specifically in regards the use of conceptual terms. "The way concepts, notions, and phenomena are described have a direct influence on my writing" (Narrative 2). To this end, the writer strove for greater contextualization rather than direct translation in terms of concepts, regardless of the language employed.

Furthermore, a researcher with L1 Norwegian and L2 English also reflected on the benefits and challenges of writing academic

English. Despite initial fears, the author of Narrative 9 found that producing academic writing in English was not as challenging as anticipated. Difficulties in writing were described as "not so much due to language" but rather finding the adequate words and concepts needed for the research. Having mastered the jargon of writing about their research in their L2 English, they reflected that it became "more difficult to write or speak" about their research in their L1 Norwegian: "In English I have established a vocabulary that I can quite easily use…I have not established the same in Norwegian" (Narrative 9). However, this realization led to a reflection and improvement about set phrases and concepts used in English "automatically" which can be "somewhat unclear." Thus, while continuing to write in English, parallel thinking and articulation in Norwegian caused the writer to "revisit the English phrase and question what I really mean by using it" (Narrative 9).

7.2.2. Theme 2: benefits and challenges of multilingualism: intended readers and audience

Several writers based their decision to write in a particular language on their intended readers and audience. For some researchers, writing in English guaranteed wider communication (Narrative 1, Narrative 2, Narrative 9, Narrative 11, Narrative 14). While not explicitly commenting on the distinction of writing in Norwegian or English, the author of Narrative 1 implied what was at stake in their choice to write in English. The researcher stated that academic writing is significant to participation in a "worldwide fellowship." Furthermore, the journey of academic writing repositioned the researcher from the initial project description "based on individual thoughts" to "something bigger." This something larger referred to both the community who might read the texts, as well as relating "to the works of other writers, through references and intertextuality" (Narrative 1). Likewise, the decision to complete doctoral work in English was a conscious choice to contribute to a wider understanding of pedagogy and psychology with "a European or Nordic approach." Thus, the choice of English opened up non-English research to a wider audience (Narrative 2). One researcher further remarked that it was "easier to relate to literature and theory in the research field when writing in English," (Narrative 9). Others felt that the scholarship in their chosen field was too marginal in their L1 language (Narrative 14).

However, the desire to reach out to a wider research community did not always lead to an easy choice to write in English. Another researcher detailed the difficult choice between "reaching more people, and being in dialog with researchers from all over the world" which makes writing in "English a necessity." Yet English presented difficulties in "stay[ing] true and sincere to my data" in Norwegian (Narrative 11). Another researcher chose to write in Norwegian specifically to address practitioners and policy makers directly instead of an international academic audience (Narrative 12).

8. Discussion — incorporating what we have learned

In order to investigate how doctoral researchers' perceptions of multilingualism and academic writing interact with their emerging identities as researchers, we employed narrative inquiry. What did these narratives reveal? As anticipated, the doctoral researchers commented on the tension of their previous teaching experience with the new academic writing requirements. The gap between theory and practice found in undergraduate teacher education (Karlsson Lohmander, 2015), however, turned productive at doctoral researcher level; i.e., having prompted them to reflect on their identity and voice as researchers and their own critical stance.

Additionally, the motivation and disciplinary development perceived by some of the researchers reflect some of the advantages of the PhD by publication articulated elsewhere (e.g., Niven & Grant, 2012; Robbins & Kanowski, 2008). We suggest that when supporting doctoral researchers with professional backgrounds, the tension between practice and academia, which may be traditionally seen as a negative, can be turned into a positive and productive resource in academic writing courses. For example, new doctoral researchers could be mentored by more advanced doctoral researchers with similar professional backgrounds.

Moreover, the narratives reveal wider concerns about identity within academic writing and specifically multilingual academic writing, transnational community, and the expectations of academic writing. Hence, these narratives contribute to earlier research which considered the difficulty of finding a personal voice within academic writing, both in general (e.g., Potgieter & Smit, 2009) and among early career researchers (e.g., Robbins, 2016). The significance of personal voice in L2 writing has long been controversial, with some scholars having suggested that L2 writers prefer to focus on language and structural proficiency (Casanave, 2004; Hedgcock, 2012). However, these narratives suggest that personal voice is a priority and a theme of reflection among our doctoral researchers, which in some cases even impacted the choice of language. As Thompson (2012) highlighted, doctoral researchers need to establish their personal "voice of authority" in their dissertations. This goal also seemed critical to the doctoral researchers in this study. We, therefore, suggest that discussions about the "voice of authority" and any potential complications due to multilingualism should be offered regularly during the doctoral process in supervisions and in specially targeted workshops to reduce doctoral researcher anxiety. Relevant narrative publications discussing the finding of authorial voice (e.g., Atkinson, 2003; Matsuda, 2003) could be assigned in advance.

Furthermore, the narratives contribute new findings to the linguistic deficit discussion about L2 academic writing. Rather than seeing writing in a second or even third language in terms of an unequivocal linguistic deficit (Hyland, 2016; Langum & Sullivan, 2017, Langum & Sullivan, 2020; Tardy, 2004), the doctoral researcher narratives collected here suggest that practice hones awareness of stylistic conventions and their first language use. In line with Gao's (2012) findings, several narratives explicitly express that issues of content familiarity and academic writing conventions are more central than language. Our data shows a wide variety of intellectual and emotional responses toward academic writing in a second language. Therefore, having a structured exchange of ideas among doctoral researchers should allow otherwise unforeseen advantages and techniques to come to the fore for those concerned about linguistic deficit.

Whereas transnational multilingual communities are often studied in reference to physical movement (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Duff, 2015; Hornberger, 2007; Vertovec, 2004, 2009), the doctoral researchers inhabit a *virtual transnational community* through their multilingual writing communities, or as one doctoral researcher said "being in dialog with researchers from all over the world". Extending Hornberger's (2007) description of transnational spaces—"contexts of biliteracy, multimodal communicative practices are biliterate media, identities constructed and negotiated through transnational literacy practices are expressions of biliterate content, and trajectories across time and space are pathways of biliterate development" (p. 333)—we view virtual transnational communities as similar multilingual contexts. Regardless of how much time they spend abroad, the researchers conceive of a *virtual transnational community* through their multilingual academic writing, including both academic publishing and social media platforms.

Communities that exist online, using new media technologies and social fora, including publication networks, we view as *virtual communities*, in line with researchers such as Porter (2004). Porter (2004) defines a virtual community as "an aggregation of

individuals or business partners who interact around a shared interest, where the interaction is at least partially supported and/or mediated by technology and guided by some protocols or norms" ("Defining Virtual Communities," para. 2). We extend this concept to a *virtual transnational community*, which we refer to as international communities of academics including doctoral researchers enabled through new digital communication technologies and fora, including publication networks. The doctoral researchers' ties to such communities may be intermittent, and vary in strength, and these communities vary in specialization. The members of these virtual communities intertwine their offline academic lives on campus with their virtual lives online. The intertwining of these lives is important to our doctoral researchers as they connect with other academics across national borders and become *transnational*, hence we view these as *virtual transnational communities*. The identities developed in such communities are complex, demanding, and worthy of further research, as this will allow more appropriate and nuanced support to be developed.

From the responses of the doctoral students in these communities, it is clear that many conceive of themselves as part of a scholarly community, either through their engagement with texts or more personal relationships with other academics, locally or internationally as part of their virtual transnational community. Such relationships are potentially bolstered by NAFOL's international seminar programs. However, it is also clear that many doctoral researchers in this study perceive a loss due to the emphasis on international communication. This loss, in large part, involves the communication of their research in English rather than Norwegian, and the ethical implications of hindered access upon local impact, as well as the accurate representation of the data and research through the "filter[*ed*]" language (Narratives 10 &11). This concern highlights the challenge of creating equivalence in translation (Chen & Boore, 2009), and the difficulties of translating the social context in which the data emerges (Wong & Poon, 2010). The national goals place "Norwegian and international channels" (Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, p. 26) on par. This is more clearly operationalized in the academic writing course goals (PLU8014 – Akademisk skrivning). These stated goals belie the difficult choice inherent in choice of academic language and its implication upon the academic identity of many of these doctoral researchers and the tailored support required to become multilingual academic writers. The need to choose an academic language creates the perception of a duality, English versus Norwegian. However, most doctoral researchers inhabit a fluid continuum of neither the English nor the Norwegian of the academic journal. Such linguistic fluidity has been noted in variances of English (Flores, 2013). As already mentioned, multilingual doctoral researchers participate in virtual transnational communities with speakers of many languages, and hence, varieties of English. It is likely that these communities facilitate transnational linguistic fluidity where language use transcends national contexts (Smith, Warrican & Alleyne, 2020).

Given these findings, we suggest a longitudinal study that follows doctoral researchers similar to those in the study (i.e., researchers who are writing in a language different to the ambient environment) from the start of their programs to their establishment as early career researchers. This will provide greater insight into the interaction of the discourse of multilingual academic writing and time, which as Burgess & Ivanič (2010) have pointed out, is necessary to understand the development of writer identity comprehensively (i.e., identifying what conditions trigger the previously mentioned findings). One method would be to use the construct of the "individual network of practice" (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015) that draws on social network theory and community of practice. The individual network of practice construct produces "fine-tuned qualitative investigations that seek to present rich descriptions of socialization and enculturation through detailed, systematic analysis that can be complemented by other forms of analysis" (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015, p. 360). We suggest that the other form of analysis to complement this approach could be phenomenographic analysis (Marton, 1981) that "aims at description, analysis, and understanding of experiences" (p. 4). This combination of individual network of practice and phenomenographic analysis would allow a focus on the individual's virtual transnational identity rather than an emphasis on group behaviors. Each doctoral researcher has an individual network of practice that shifts simultaneously with the doctoral researcher's virtual transnational identity over time, thereby creating what we refer to as a fluid *individual network of multilingual writing practice*. Using semi-structured interviews at regular intervals, it is possible, therefore, to determine and track the entry of transnational parties and how the development affects their identity as multilingual academic writers.

9. Conclusions

The research to date indicates that English as a Second Language doctoral researchers in ambient English environments reported that academic writing courses tend not to empathize with their positions as multilingual writers and do not address their particular situations Odena & Burgess (2017). Building on the scholarship of Odena and Burgess (2017) with our own findings in the current study, we propose the following actions:

- A mentoring program for doctoral researchers with mentors being more advanced doctoral researchers from the same professional background;
- Workshops dealing with the "voice of authority" and the related complexity of multilingualism to be offered at regular intervals during the doctoral research process;
- Workshops focused on L2 doctoral writers, specifically for those concerned about linguistic deficit, that may reveal advantages and techniques. Such techniques could include translanguaging in advanced writing (Langum & Sullivan, 2020; Skein, Knospe, & Sullivan, 2020);
- Workshops focused on the issue of translation of data from one language to another concerning not only linguistic but also socio-cultural translation;
- Workshops that open "a path for critical choices as to which languages (e.g., English vs. Spanish) or varieties of language to use (e.g., standardized vs. nonstandardized English[*es*]) and how to use them when writing science for particular audiences" (Corcoran, 2019, p. 561). While acknowledging the former discourse of "standard" and "non-standard" English, which may have heretofore informed doctoral researchers in their approach to writing in English, these workshops would prefer the terms "standardized vs. nonstandardized" as there is no ideal standard form of English but rather many varieties (see, Kachru, 1992; Smith, 2016, 2019; Smith et al., 2020). This would alleviate the burden of multilingual doctoral researchers from chasing an ideal form of English which does not exist;
- Master classes concerning the above topics and others taught by a leading academic with extensive supervisory experience for selected doctoral researchers with open observation so that others may also learn from the discussions (Li & Cargill, 2019). This is a way of integrating international expertise (Englander & Corcoran, 2019).

These suggestions are not only useful improvements for the NAFOL program but for all doctoral programs involving multilingual doctoral researchers in many disciplines in non-ambient settings.

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