

Looking Back On My Personal Academic Literacy Development In English: An Autoethnographic Approach Of Second Language Literacy

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Introduction

Literacy autobiographies in narrative have emerged in the second language writing (L2 writing) field and played a significant role as an accessible research methodology (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Autobiographical research illustrates accounts of literacy achievement as well as language learning by multicultural writers; it also shows processes of literacy development, writing struggles, and teaching practices in second language classrooms (e.g., Belcher and Connor, 2001; Blanton and Kroll, 2002; Casanave and Vandrick, 2003b). Such reflective studies have resulted in generating substantial benefits to interested parties by allowing them to explore the writer's experiences and one's insider perspectives in some detail. These tales constructed by writers have validity in fostering better understanding about personal realities and elucidate interpretive accounts (Bruner, 1990).

However, this type of retrospective research seems to have been somewhat set aside in the field of second language education. As narrative inquiry deals largely with subjective as well as reflective oriented stories, it is not objective, scientific, or universal. Many of the previous investigations into language development have attempted to quantify the degree of how participants achieved the language acquisition as a quantitative research. Although measuring the amount of success and performance is a proper way of research, such approach lacks any insight into a holistic view and personal frame of reference. In order to further understand individual affective experiences or complexities, it is significant to take more into account the qualitative nature of individual investments of language learning. Hence, self-reflective explorations in narrative provide the potential merits of interpreting the writer's self and beliefs.

This paper primarily emphasizes my reflective accounts of academic literacy in English, offering my personal experiences of academic reading and writing in English during my graduate studies in the USA with an autobiography in narrative. This study

especially illustrates the challenges and complexities of developing academic literacy in English that I confronted in an American graduate program, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The reflective tales explore my recollections of the academic reading and writing in English I went through in the TESOL program. I examine how different sociocultural contexts have influenced the literacy progress in academic expertise.

1. Review of the Literature

Autoethnography is a significant issue of qualitative research. This approach illustrates a writer's lived experience to understand how he/she contended with various contexts. In this case, writer is a researcher as well as a research participant and attempts to express thoughts and feelings, combining self with culture. To interpret the living realities and experiences enhances the value of self-explorations.

Autoethnographic research has contributed greatly to the area of L2 writing. As one of the specific investigations, autobiography is regarded as a key element to show more individual perspectives. Literacy autobiographies reveal self-reflective research issues on experiences of (multi)literacy events and learners' struggles with reading as well as writing development in academic contexts (Belcher and Connor, 2001; Casanave and Vandrick, 2003b; Fox, 1994; Heath, 1983; Shen, 1989). These autobiographies mostly reveal the complexities of the literacy processes and the difficulty in reconstructing one's renewed identities. However, there exists a paucity of research on literacy development employing autobiographies in narrative or the "voice" of writers themselves and research participants in current L2 writing and education. In fact, statistical analyses, such as correlational investigations, seem to be normally utilized to prove the achievements of language performance. Such attempts to quantify any improvement do not take fully into account a holistic picture of in-depth sociocultural and personal background. As a result, critical explorations of individual frame of reference would be valuable to verify the complex learning processes and to deepen understanding of affective management.

To some extent, autobiography or the notion of inquiry into voice itself is consistently underrated as a research aspect on L2 writing scholarship because the definition of voice contains the controversial issue of autobiographical studies (i.e., the meaning of voice still remains ambiguous, Atkinson, 2001; Hirvela and Belcher, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Stapleton, 2002). As the definition of voice is equivocal, it is necessary for researchers to consider its special significance in scholarly writing.

Furthermore, scholars show reluctance to expose individual formative experiences of literacy development and to show the hidden truth and agony in a

writers' heart. Showing a writer's own disagreeable experiences can be considered as a secret to be disclosed even though the inner perspective provides a valuable insight for the narrative approach. Such interpretations in hidden truth have profound influence on resources of narrative inquiries, clarifying numerous sociocultural aspects.

Although identifying the voice still lies in obscure explanations, the narrative inquiries or voice research issues reveal the theoretical and practical effectiveness of voice in L2 writing classrooms. Using literacy autobiographies as a pedagogical tool in writing classrooms lies in question under debate, while autobiographies offer "windows on learners' metalinguistic awareness, capable of telling us much about their conscious use of language learning strategies" as Belcher and Connor (2001, p. 3-4) note.

Recent narrative inquiries used in the L2 writing field affect "how researchers, teachers, and students deal with conflicts and find meaning in the events and actions that make up the activities of studying, teaching, and engaging in writing" (Casanave, 2005, p. 17). The self-reflective studies of autobiographical narrative can also provide scholars with richer resources as well as research data to enrich deeper knowledge of a researcher's professional area, contributing to metadisciplinary narratives (Casanave, 2005; Matsuda, 2005). Since analyses of autobiographical use in the L2 writing area have been unsubstantiated, more exemplifications based on autobiographical studies with the clear definition of voice, as Hirvela and Belcher (2001) address, are required.

2. Research on Biliteracy Development: Joining the New Academic Community

I enrolled in a graduate TESOL program in Pennsylvania, the United States in 1999. Looking back on my personal experiences of academic literacy in English, I especially struggled with building my new-found identity; trying to pass for an L2 graduate learner in this discipline. My identity always clashed with the expectations of the academic community as well as of the target society during the academic literacy processes. I wondered how I should adjust myself to the disciplinary area and whether or not I should modify long-held cultural beliefs, values and attitudes embedded in my mind.

Before arriving in America, I worked in a private preparatory school in Japan where I taught English to junior/senior high school students for about one year. While teaching in the school, I often felt the importance of obtaining adequate professional knowledge as a language teacher in an English-speaking country as well as of being a highly motivated English teacher. I realized that the most important task after enrolling the graduate program was that I should focus mainly on developing new schema with regard to reading and writing for the TESOL area. I gained no background knowledge toward the linguistic and the L2 educational field at all during my four-year college

studies in Japan because I majored in International Economics. As previous research on schema theory indicates, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) reveal the definition of schemata as “previously acquired knowledge is called the reader’s background knowledge, and the previously acquired knowledge structures are called schemata” (p. 556). On the basis of schema theory, several researchers attempt to examine the relationship between the theory and reading comprehension (Carrell, 1983a, 1983b; Reid, 1993). I still remember that I especially struggled with reading as well as writing assignments in my first semester. While taking the program courses, I just wondered how I should construct my as yet non-specialized knowledge of TESOL and find the solutions to follow the coursework.

The courses in which I participated were practical in addition to theoretical courses: Introduction to TESOL, English Grammar, Cross-Cultural Communication, Observation of Teaching, TESL/TEFL Methodology, Linguistics and English Teacher, Teaching ESL/EFL Writing and so forth. On my first day in each class, I became confused because it was the threshold of stepping out into a new academic field. When I entered the classroom, there were both native speakers and multicultural students. I had never seen this type of classroom environment. When I was an undergraduate student in Japan, hundreds of students whose major and ages seemed the same as mine attended the classes, sat on the chairs in a large classroom, listened to the professors’ lecture carefully, and took notes on what professors wrote on the blackboard. In this graduate class, I experienced a novel mixture of ages and backgrounds. I felt slightly nervous, thinking “Can I follow the coursework?” and “Will I be able to understand what the professors and my classmates are saying?” When the class began, half of the course activities emphasized discussions about the textbook chapters. I read the assigned chapters several times at home, but the terminology really prevented me from following the content. During the discussions in groups, I was very reticent. I did not try to mention any points about the chapters, lamenting that my lack of knowledge inhibited the positive participation in group discussions. Thus, I became more aware that the crucial work for me was the development of new schemata in the TESOL field.

2-1. Struggles with Academic Reading Development

Once I enrolled in my graduate program as a full-time student, I had various reading assignments: book chapters, journal critiques, and supplemental journal prints every week while taking courses. In fact, it took a long time to be able to read texts and understand the content quickly since I had not had enough fundamental knowledge as well as background knowledge of teaching English and Applied Linguistics. As for that reason, my personal diary that I kept demonstrates my undue anxiety:

I don't understand the terminology of this course (Introduction to TESOL). I don't wanna read this text anymore. Sometimes, I feel that I don't have enough reading skills to follow my graduate course. I just wonder if I can follow this TESOL course and succeed in this program (Personal diary on September 25, 1999).

This memory reminds me of my negative feelings in classrooms; anxiety, frustration, emotional isolation and an identity clash. Thus, I had to discover some solution to follow the classes that I joined. To construct my brand-new academic knowledge, I attempted to make "terminology cards" by myself when I encountered difficulties in understanding the technical terms. At first, I looked up the words in a technical terminology dictionary and transcribed the definitions on the card. Afterwards, the cards were filled up with the scholar's name, the publication year, and the journal article/book title in addition to the definitions in order to cultivate further understanding of the professional fields. Due to this strategy, I became accustomed to reading academic materials and would gradually develop my new academic scholarship of my major field.

Moreover, dynamic peer mediations encouraged me to enrich the overall knowledge of the professional area and to reflect deeply on the research issues. Recalling my academic reading development, social interactions with acquainted peers enormously influenced my specialized knowledge construction in excess of producing the terminology cards. Especially, group discussions in the classrooms and informal meetings with peers outside classrooms led to a vivid process of reading development and valuable insights into academic research as well.

As a solution to my reading anxiety, my peers and I often held a "study session" outside classes. We discussed the assignments with the current research issues related to TESOL as well as Applied Linguistics. This form of social learning hastened my literacy development by showing me what and how to focus on the reading assignments. We decided to get together in the library or cafeteria on weekends and shared our ideas regarding the questions that we wanted to ask. A female native English speaker played the role of coach and guided us to authentic discussions. She clearly explained our questions in easy terms so that we could comprehend. This use of a social strategy for acquiring understanding was essential for surviving my coursework.

In addition, I negotiated textual meanings with my Japanese Ph.D. candidate peers in the same program. Of course, the discussion was in Japanese, but I enjoyed hearing and engaging with them when I heard their sophisticated interdisciplinary knowledge. Before having had such discussion meetings with my Japanese peers, I had

a strong bias in my mind: I should be independent as a graduate student and study the work without any support from others. If I become dependent, my professional expertise will not improve at all. At first, I wanted to be an independent learner and felt ashamed about this interdependent behavior with an egocentric feeling as a graduate learner. However, as time went on, this prejudice faded away. I attempted to ask several questions of my Japanese peers like an apprenticeship. Hence, I felt the importance of a “more capable peer” to use Vygotsky’s (1986) term, in supporting my academic reading development. This peer interaction continued with discussions on numerous topics in our major area. Through my negotiations with peers, I surely improved my academic reading comprehension, establishing my disciplinary schemata as well. This experience of informal discussions allowed me to construct a new identity to apply to the American academic society.

3. Struggles with Academic Writing in English

3-1. Difficulties in Writing Academic Research Papers

My academic writing practice caused hardship beyond all expectations. Consequently, writing in English resulted in the most time-consuming and laborious task of my graduate coursework. Through experiences in professional settings, I realized that my writing in English had been dissatisfying and challenging. I had not been satisfied with my writing in English since I began participating in graduate courses.

From the start of my graduate program, I had to write research papers. I had never experienced the discipline of “academic research writing” in English when I was a college student in Japan. Through my M.A. coursework, I realized the importance of writing in English and the necessity of more academic writing practice.

The first time I encountered difficulties with academic research writing was how to write an academic paper. The professor informed us in the classroom, “Let’s find a research topic about this course. Be careful of the writing style. Follow the APA (American Psychological Association) style.” Even though I had a specific topic for my research paper, I could not continue to develop my main theme. I always lamented my lack of writing research paper skills. At first, I completely lost my confidence about studying in the States and wanted to escape from this harsh reality because my peers seemed to have no problems with their term papers and to keep working on it.

After the half semester had nearly passed, the professor assisted me with my term paper since I found no solutions how to complete the research work. He lent me several doctoral students’ well-written academic papers as his support which followed the prescribed APA format. I was astonished about how distinctive the English academic

written discourse was compared with that of Japanese. I noticed that I had to find some resources concerning my research topic in the library and read them critically. It was a process of research writing that I had never experienced before: summarizing the empirical research, generating the ideas in a notebook, producing supported paragraphs, avoiding plagiarism and so forth. After finishing the drafts, I asked ESL teachers to check them and received feedback. However, whenever I received written commentary from professors, I lamented how inexpert and deficient my academic writing performance in English was. Teachers simplified my written texts, identifying several weak points to be revised on the papers. The critical feedback such as “awkward” or “unclear sentences” often puzzled me when I attempted to improve further; how should I clarify my discursive writing style in addition to the indefinite content? What I did was I recognized English academic writing by reading student models and receiving critical feedback.

3-2. M.A. Thesis

After completing the graduate coursework, I became aware that more considerable expertise in TESOL was acquired. Thus, even though a thesis was not required, I decided to write a thesis as a challenging task and as a wonderful opportunity to enhance my writing proficiency in English as well. Before starting to write a thesis outline, I read diverse publications of L2 writing, applied linguistics, and TESOL related to my thesis as support. My thesis emphasized my formative biliteracy experiences both in Japanese and English, but also referred to critical cultural contexts between Japan and the States. It was very beneficial for me to do research on the education, culture, and society of the two countries, but it took quite a long time to read the piles of textbooks and journal copies and analyze them. I attempted to examine more important sentences from the materials and then, paraphrase them to strengthen my thesis. I learned how important reading is to support research writing in addition to recognizing the values of reading-writing connection. Moreover, I often asked my peers about these cross-cultural issues. During these casual discussions, I learned many essential points.

Initially, I handled prewriting with diverse key words about each chapter. Then, I noted sentences, organized the paragraphs in a notebook, and typed them. After producing the first thesis draft, I showed it to my thesis committee members to make revisions. Surprisingly, whenever I received feedback from the committees, they corrected my texts, identifying my writing redundancy. I was still puzzled about why my writing was awkward. I learned that one specific difference of writing between in Japanese and English is “clarity.” I carefully considered the meaning and tried to

describe my ideas as precisely as possible. However, most of the feedback that I received indicated my insufficient text constructions and can be demonstrated such as “add some examples,” “why? Explain more,” or “be clear in this part.” even though I proofread the drafts many times, negotiating the meaning of every text. When I gained such criticisms, I felt a strong anxiety about writing in English because of the difficulties in distinguishing redundant writing from clear writing.

In the end, even though I had completed the academic coursework, I struggled to write my thesis. I discovered that I still needed further discipline to write well in English. Yet, this thesis experience encouraged me to facilitate my writing process and proficiency as a scholar by allowing me to notice the necessity of further English writing development since our literacy is always incomplete if we stop learning. Overall, by undertaking this thesis, I learned what it means to be an author of texts for native speakers of a language other than my own and the standards of completing required by that task.

4. Retrospective of English Academic Literacy Development

4-1: Breaking My Identity of Academic Reading

After entering a graduate program in America, I had great opportunities to develop my English literacy in the TESOL field. Importantly, it is apparent that I had various experiences to develop my academic reading and writing in English through my graduate coursework that I had never experienced in Japan. I would like to say that such experiences are the cultural gaps of developing my academic literacy proficiency. To develop my academic reading proficiency, I struggled to break my inhibited identities toward language learning.

Classroom discussion in terms of the reading assignments really bothered me. Especially, the classroom discussions in the first semester were the most terrible experience; I did not know how I should respond to my peers. As I mentioned above, I hesitated to discuss the reading assignments in groups and became reticent during discussions. I prepared the chapters for the classes every time, but it was quite impossible for me to participate in the group discussions, even just to get involved in such a novel environment. During the group tasks, my peers discussed the content of assignments and their questions. I felt so nervous and anxious about the discussions. It was so difficult for me to open my mouth. Sometimes, my peers asked me, “Are you listening?” “Did you read the chapters?” or “Why are you so quiet during discussions?” Of course, I did pay much attention to my peers’ talk in the group. Actually, I carefully listened to their ideas and managed to interact with them. But, accustomed to the Japanese classroom environment, I had difficulty in acculturating myself to American

academic culture quickly. My personal identity clashed with the American social expectations in the classroom.

Generally, the classroom environment in Japan and America totally differs. In Japan, students must stay silent and carefully listen to teachers' directions. I used to sit and remain quiet during my secondary school years. The reason for this is because my teachers and parents always talked about my classroom behavior at home and school. "You're not allowed to talk in the classrooms without permission." If I broke the strict rule, they berated me. Sometimes, they bawled at me and then said, "How come you behave so poorly? Everyone can do it, so can you!" I spent my school life in this strict classroom environment for around eighteen years.

In contrast, talkative behavior presents the strong participation in American classrooms. Every student positively discussed and criticized his/her opinions with each other in groups. I was perplexed with the novel classroom situation when I participated in a graduate course for the first time. As I had become so accustomed to the Japanese manner, the most difficult point was how I could break my "inflexible identity" in the classroom.

4-2: Complexities of Academic Writing

Why did my written products illustrate such vague descriptions which confounded the expectations of native speakers even though I invested considerable effort? By reexamining my past written products in my graduate studies, it became apparent that my writing style in English resembled the Japanese one. I became aware that my academic writing in English represented the archetypical characteristics of the formal style in Japanese writing (i.e. being intricate, being writer-oriented and circumferential) as Hinds (1983, 1987) indicates.

In general, academic-level Japanese writing consists of complex sentences which include a few phrases with higher level vocabulary. Long and complex Japanese sentences supposedly identify that the writer has a talent for writing since Japanese people revere convoluted texts rather than simple ones and therefore, attempt to express their ideas in a complex style. Compared to English texts, longer texts, including some clauses and advanced vocabulary in writing, are highly valued, meaning that most Japanese people consider that simple and brief texts represent a low level of literacy. The more complexity the text has, the better the writer is assessed as having a skillful writing facility. On the other hand, English writing prefers simple sentences rather than longer ones. According to Williams (1990), comprehensive expressions in English writing are clear and easy to understand, discussing the concepts of clear writing with the subject and verb structure as "the subjects of the sentences name the cast of

characters, and the verbs that go with those subjects name the crucial actions those characters are part of” (p. 21).

In my case, I incorporated the typical complex Japanese styles into my English writing intentionally because I ascribed to the “wrong” values of being a disciplinary specialist. I strongly believed that academic writers should possess highly sophisticated knowledge in their own professional area. In other words, academic papers had to reveal philosophically complicated issues with more advanced terms in order to be acclaimed among scholars.

As a result of using Japanese-learned academic writing style, some of my texts left unpredictable elements on the papers as the teacher feedback I received mainly showed. It is often quoted from Hinds (1983, 1990) that Japanese writers put their ideas indirectly and inductively leaving an ambiguity in a conclusion or the major part as an inference for the reader to make. Even though the sentences are difficult to comprehend, Japanese writers may not feel responsible for their ambiguous texts based on their knowledge (Hinds, 1990). Rather, readers must make an interpretation of the texts. (i.e. the readers have a total responsibility for interpreting the text). In contrast, English writers prefer short sentences illustrating the main ideas with specific instances. The writers consider the flow of written discourse and cohesion, and then describe the theme directly as well as deductively so that readers can clearly comprehend the meaning of texts. While writing papers, I proofread over and over asking myself about the meaning of every sentence. Yet, I may have unconsciously felt in my mind that the audience would understand my text content without specifics. Moreover, I interpreted the teacher commentary, “redundant,” as sentences that have unnecessary description. But, when I was offered the comment, “please be more specific,” or “you should put some examples,” I always struggled to bridge the gap between specification and redundancy.

The last point of the difficulty was how to clarify my writing. In one Japanese cultural notion, Japanese people think that they should not write texts to the point. This concept reveals that one should remain silent if he/she is intelligent as a Japanese proverb says “still waters run deep.” This proverb correlates to the Japanese cultural aspect of writing, which signifies that Japanese culture has a feature of ambiguity. Thus, I still consider that my academic writing in English incorporated vague writing features of the Japanese academic prose model, *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* (起承転結). Each section of this structure has its own function. For instance, the thesis statement in Japanese is inclined to be shown in the final section, *ketsu* (結), rather than in an introduction. Besides, a conclusion in Japanese writing has to leave a vague statement (Hinds, 1983). However, an introduction in English demonstrates the entire content and thesis

statement with specific points (e.g., background of the topic, problem, reason, result, etc.). I still have difficulty in writing an introduction because of these differences between Japanese and English.

Furthermore, transitions or cohesive ties are used less in Japanese writing than in writing in English. This is because the writers attempt to depend heavily on speculations by the audience and expect non-verbal communication of the readers. Even if transition does not have a precise function, the writers expect readers' understanding of their intentions. Such reciprocal effect exemplifies the Japanese mentality, *ishin denshin* (以心伝心); the way of communication from the writer's/speaker's feelings to reader's/listener's feelings. I thought that it would be "anti-social behavior" to mention opinions directly. In terms of writing, Japanese people would write sentences using emotive language. Instead, I tried to hide my precise opinion and to obtain the consent of the reader regarding the statement.

In sum, maintaining harmony is a characteristic of collectivism that had become an integral part of myself which has prevented me from adapting my attitudes to writing in English. I discovered that such persisting Japanese cultural mentality had a harmful impact on developing my academic writing in English (Fujieda, in press).

5. Summary

This paper examines my English reading and writing experiences in the American academic context and what influenced my English academic literacy development by reflecting on the purpose of English academic literacy development in the academic setting. In this inquiry, I aim to obtain more knowledge about my disciplinary expertise as a second language learner and a researcher. In terms of the social influence on academic literacy, I noticed that the cross-cultural environment (American academic culture) and the social group (teachers and peers) had a strong impact on my development of academic literacy in English through interactions. In this paper, I illustrated my struggles with academic reading and writing in English encountered in the American graduate program by revealing the bare truth. In other words, my own reflective experiences in the American academic context, I tried to discover my own solutions to the mental conflict and identity clash I was going through in reading as well as writing development.

To develop my academic reading proficiency, building the novel schemata played a decisive role. I produced original terminology cards to contribute largely to the specialized field. As time passed, I realized that human interactions as socialization processes were of paramount importance in further improving the discipline and arousing academic curiosity as well. Indeed, the opportunity of casual meetings allowed

me to enhance understanding of the reading assignments.

Although interactions with peers helped in my literacy success, classroom discussion regarding the reading assignments in the first semester really bothered me. I did not know how I should respond to my peers and was plunged into utter confusion. As mentioned, I hesitated to discuss the content of the reading in groups. Every time I prepared the chapters for the classes, but it seemed to be impossible for me to participate in the group discussions because the classroom environment in Japan and America totally differs. In Japan, students must stay silent and carefully listen to teachers' directions.

In contrast, talkative behavior shows the strong participation in American classrooms. Every student thoroughly discussed each other in groups. I was astonished with the novel classroom situation when I joined a graduate course for the first time. As I had become so accustomed to the Japanese manner, the most difficult point was how I could break my persisting ideology in the classrooms. During the group tasks, my peers discussed the content of assignments and their criticisms of the book chapters. I carefully listened to my classmates' ideas and managed to interact with them when I could not understand some parts of the assignments clearly. I felt so frustrated and anxious during the discussions because of difficulties in joining the talks and even in opening my mouth. My peers would often say in an exasperated voice to me, "Are you listening?" "Did you read the chapters?" or "Why did you attend the discussion? I didn't hear your opinions" Of course, I did pay more attention to my peers' talk in the group, however, I had trouble in acculturating myself to American academic culture since I was used to the harsh Japanese classroom manner.

Regarding the challenges of writing in English, I always struggled with identity shift to the target academic community. As mentioned above, I had no training in academic writing in English (e.g., written structure, APA/MLA citations, how to write references, and so on) while I was a college student in Japan. When I had to submit a term paper, the differences of writing annoyed me all the time. Every time professors checked my paper, they strongly criticized my non-directive, ambiguous, and illogical writing as representative characteristics of Japanese writing. Despite considerable investment in writing, I had no means of completing the academic papers. Then, a professor gave me several sample products written by the sophisticated graduate school learners. I carefully examined the capable learners' papers to be aware of academic written discourse. It seemed to be apprenticeship learning outside classes utilizing a supportive other (Brown, Palincsar, and Purcell, 1986). I believed that the borrowed research papers offered me a wide variety of knowledge as well as clearly showing the

distinctions of writing in English as a scaffold to negotiating my own writing style.

Furthermore, written feedback as an interaction greatly contributed to my becoming acquainted with the cultural impact on writing in English. Given that my writing style between Japanese and English was mismatched, my writing in English should be applied to the academic discourse community. Since I utilized the Japanese writing style, I had great difficulty in acculturating myself to American academic culture. Yet, social interactions like written feedback encouraged me to enhance my academic writing proficiency in English over and above remarking the rhetorical conventions of English. This involvement indicated my “construction of the second identity” as Shen (1989) describes.

6. Epilogue

Approximately seven years have passed since I completed the M.A. program, but I still have had some problems in academic reading and writing in English and remain in the ongoing process of improving my academic writing. However, I have been able to develop considerable expertise. Now I am a full-time college instructor in Japan after completing my graduate work. I have had ample opportunities to do research (research papers, college journals, oral presentations, and so forth). I do feel that my identity as an academic has grown in my mind through undergoing the rigorous processes of academic literacy. As Wright Mills (1959) suggests, “the most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other” (p. 195). I strongly feel that I have to further develop my academic expertise as a college instructor, an academic, and a craftsman. This retrospective research has provided me with new horizons toward my further language learning.

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要旨

学術英語リテラシーの回顧

自己エスノグラフィックアプローチによる第二言語リテラシー研究

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第二言語ライティング分野において、語り(narrative)を中心とした自叙伝研究は、重要な研究方法として近年注目されている。自叙伝研究の中には、リテラシーの習得や発達、ライティングの苦悩、教室内の実践報告といった様々な内容が記述されている。

言語習得や発達度を調査する際、多くの研究は量的方法を採用している。量的方法で習得度を測定することは可能であるが、この方法では被験者の個人視点を検証することや内側を垣間見るといった全体論的視野に欠ける。

本研究は内省的に著者自身の英語学術リテラシーを振り返り、英語学術の読み書き能力を発達させるために、どのような活動を行ったのかを語り形式でストーリーを綴り、分析した。研究方法は、個人的枠組みから活動や経験を記述し、解釈するために質的研究の一部分である自己エスノグラフィック方法(autoethnographic approach)を採用した。本調査は、筆者が大学院修士学生として米国に滞在した2年半の学術読み書き活動を省みて、学術リテラシー発達過程の時に経験した苦悩や複雑性に加え、リテラシー発達成功のために試みた策を詳細に著述した。また、これらの経験を通じて、著者の学術リテラシー発達には何が深く影響しているのかも調査した。その結果、異文化環境や教師、クラスメートといった社会メンバーの支援が学術の読み書き成長に大きく関わっていることがわかった。