

## Alternative academic writing in ELT research: backstepping into the narrative turn so as to render issues of teacher professionalization

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In this paper, I focus on academic writing in ELT research, as seen in the published journal article, essay, chapter, and monograph. More specifically, I discuss the manner in which this ELT research writing departs from what seems 'standard' academic writing and consequently engages in 'alternative' academic writing. In so doing, I portray ELT as lagging approximately twenty-five years behind other disciplines in the social sciences with respect to promoting alternative research writing repertoires. This leads me to then explore the strength of the ELT area or discipline to overcome this situation and evolve into an innovator of research writing. One benefit of ELT research now hopping onto the 'alternative writing' train already put into gear by other disciplines – as I conclude – is that ELT research would be able to enact performativity and hence connect on a more affective level with readers on matters of teacher professionalization.

In working through these three phases of the paper and arriving at my conclusion that ELT research on teacher professionalization would be benefited by alternative academic writing, I utilize a methodology or rhetorical style that I would call 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative'. In conceiving this methodology, I follow from the *essay-ist* type of applied linguistics writing long-practiced by Widdowson (e.g., 1972, 1992, 2004, 2006), as developed in more detail in Sughrua (2012, pp. 134–138). This methodology itself could be considered a type of 'alternality' in ELT research writing. That, however, would be the topic of another paper. For the type of 'alternality' discussed in this present paper is different from the 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' methodology. It just happens that this methodology or rhetorical style is utilized in the present paper in order to focus on another type of 'alternality' in ELT research writing, one that is dramaturgically-oriented. Notwithstanding, before I describe this dramaturgical 'alternality' in research writing, please permit me to further describe what I term the 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' methodology or rhetorical style, as it is the repertoire utilized in the present paper.

The most general feature of this methodology is the overall format of the paper. Rather than dividing itself into discrete sections with headings (e.g., 'Analysis', 'Discussion'), the paper evolves in a continuous text whereby transitional sentences and commentary replace section headings. More specifically, this type of methodology utilizes bibliographic referencing throughout the paper. Further, this methodology allows the author's own opinions, experiences, and personal examples; and so pervasive is this authorial presence that it becomes a type of empiricism (Sughrua, 2012, pp. 137–138). In other words, the author's personalized exemplification of the concepts and issues, in some way, appears as a stand-in for empirical data such as field notes or researcher diary entries. Such data, usually out front and center in the conventional research paper, now seem to hover unseen at the backdrop of the 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' paper. In the case of my present paper, I repeatedly refer to three of my own so-called or so-

conceived 'alternative' research pieces (one article and two chapters within a monograph) [Sughrua, 2011, 2016]. I do so *as if* based on a textual or discourse analysis applied to these three papers, while not directly presenting any such discourse analysis methodology, and while not mentioning any instruments nor data such as a criteria listing or completed tables. This – I maintain – would be in line with a Widdowson-esque personalized and expository discussion seemingly informed by an empirical activity that goes unmentioned in the paper (e.g., Widdowson, 1972, 1992, 2004, 2006; cf., Sughrua, 2012, pp. 134–138). The intention of such methodology or rhetorical practice – I believe – is to give more emphasis and profile to the ideas and conclusions of the paper by not allowing them to be upstaged by the presentation of research methodology. In other words, for the 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' methodology, such as that attempted by my present paper, the empirical research methodology can be substituted outright for the author-researcher's own experience; and in such case, there would be no hint of methodology within the paper. Or, the empirical research methodology can be assumed by the reader to have taken place; and in this case, all empirical activity such as data collection and data analysis would be considered a type of pre-writing activity and not allotted space within the final paper, but for perhaps shadowy or indirect allusions (Sughrua, 2012, p. 134–138). In either case, it is the author-researcher's own opinions and examples that are at the forefront.

Accordingly, for the present paper, I hence ask for the reader's indulgence, while I refer to my own humble attempts at 'alternative academic writing' in ELT (2011, 2016) and add my commentaries on and extracts from those works into the mix of referenced discussion and personal perception that spans the length of the paper. Let me clarify that I do not presume to prop up my own alternative pieces as models to follow. My alternative pieces are simply examples; and, more importantly, they fulfil the 'personally illustrative' feature of the methodology of the paper. As well, as mentioned above, this methodology itself could be deemed an alternative writing repertoire by virtue of its disregard for what seem expected conventions in ELT research writing. It clearly eschews, for instance, the typical "IMRD" (introduction-method-results-discussion) format of a research paper (Bennett, 2011, p. 200; Swales, 1990, pp. 132–134). Hence a 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' paper, such as the present one, could be considered a type of 'lite' to 'moderate' altertnality in academic writing in ELT (Sughrua, 2012, pp. 134–136). It is to a more extreme altertnality, however, that I direct myself as a topic of discussion in this paper. This goes well beyond the 'referenced, reflective and personally illustrative' methodology. What do I mean by this 'extreme' altertnality?

This would generally refer to the type of writing that occurs throughout the 'space' of an article, chapter, or monograph in such a way or to such a degree that the anchor of 'standardness' or 'conventionality' seems obviously challenged. This statement, of course, alludes to 'standard' academic writing as the foil or contrastive background to what could be 'nonstandard' or 'alternative' academic writing. This, in turn, begs the question: What is 'standard' or 'conventional' academic writing? I would define 'standard' academic writing in ELT as seemingly consisting of a dominantly third-person 'abstract nominal style' of writing whose 'empiricist repertoire' of fact disassociates from its origins any sense of emotionality or

uniqueness (e.g., 'A sample of 130 reprint requests was assembled') rather than a more 'contingent repertoire' (e.g., 'My own and Bob's down the corridor') [Swales, 1990, p. 124]. While this 'impersonal' voice characterizes the 'writing' (Hewings, 2001), the 'structure' or 'organization' of the paragraphs is characterized by long-established 'deductive' and 'complex-deductive' schemes revolving around the general movement of 'introduction', 'development' and 'conclusion' (e.g., Swales, 1990, pp. 137-174; Canagarajah, 2002, pp. 109-112). The above language and structural requirements of standard academic writing are followed in order to ensure cohesion amongst members of a discourse community such as that of ELT (Hyland 2000, 2004).

It is against this background of standard academic writing where nonstandard or alternative writing would take its shape. For example, a highly personalized written text with a dominant first-person point of view (e.g., 'I', 'me', 'my', and 'mine') which veers into self-introspection may be considered nonstandard writing. For it could be perceived as in contrast to the mostly impersonalized and third-person writing (e.g., 'he', 'she', 'they', 'student', and 'teacher') of what may be considered standard academic writing in ELT research (above). This is but one of many possible examples of nonstandard or alternative academic writing. In more general terms, then, this writing can be considered personalised and story-like expression that occurs not within data extracts or quoted references but throughout an empirically- and/or bibliographically-based article, chapter, or monograph at large, such as within the discussion section. 'Story-like' or 'story,' further, can be defined as 'a written, oral, and/or acted out representation of a real and/or imagined "happening" based on time, place, and action engaged in by a character or characters and/or the narrator' (Sughrua, 2016, p. 6; referring to Barkhuizen, 2008). To reiterate, this story-oriented type of alternative writing would not refer to story-based empirical data (e.g., transcripts of life story interviews or ethnographic portraits) cited within an ELT academic work such as an article, chapter, or monograph. This story-like empirical data, when used, is mostly tucked away within the overall standardized academic paper defined by nominalization, the context-less first-person voice (i.e., 'I' and 'we' simply as author and/or readers), IMRD format (i.e., sections or phases of 'introduction,' 'methods,' 'results,' and 'discussion' or a close variant thereof), and other aspects considered conventionalised (Swales; above). This makes for 'narrative research' rather than 'narrative writing' (cf., Pavlenko, 2008). I would associate 'the more extreme alternality' not with the former but the latter. The latter, 'narrative writing', can be considered story-like writing apart from empirical data that appears in those sections or phases of the paper normally not reserved for empirical data but rather authorial perspective, such as the introduction, discussion, or conclusion.

These standardized sections of the research paper are not directly apparent in 'the more extreme alternative' research paper (hereinafter simply referred to with the adjective 'alternative' or noun 'alternality'). These sections somehow remain in the shadows of the paper while the stories or alternative narratives serve as their substitutes. For example, my paper entitled 'The Las Vegas Thesis' (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 151-179) presents its incognito 'action research' methodology as the fictionalized story of me as teacher and my thesis seminar-students climbing up the same

mountain as does Camus' Sisyphus (cf., Camus, 1955a). This paper begins:

Writing a thesis in English is a mountain to climb. We go up. The aluminum stick in our left hand is the master research question; the guide rope in our right hand, the specific research questions; and in our backpack, bibliographic research.... We're far above the deductive and hypothesis-oriented thesis, and ... now the nylon rope whistling, the sticks snapping the rock ... and all those note cards and paper sheets loose and rattling like ceramic shards in our backpacks, as we go up. (Sughrua, 2016, p. 151)

Towards the end of the paper, at which time the struggle to write the first draft of the thesis has been accounted for during the description of my students and I climbing Sisyphus' mountain, the students and I "[f]ling the aluminum walking sticks" (Sughrua, 2016, p. 172). It is at this moment, on the summit, that we catch up to Sisyphus:

The sticks clang in midair and scatter across the dirt. Up ahead, the helicopter floats down, the red glow pulsating in black beams, illuminating Sisyphus at intervals ... Sisyphus in his long brown cloak with hood and a white-rope belt, leaning to the giant boulder, his arms across his chest, his face clicking black then red then black, his goofy smile. The rudders scrape stones, and he ... squints in the red glow wispy with dirt. He's twenty-five then twenty then sixteen feet up from us, just beyond the scattered sticks aglow in orange neon.

"It was just our way of drawing straws," I call out, to Sisyphus....

I feel a rod, as if greased, jump from the heel of my right boot. I begin to feel that this "twilight seems to be the last, solemn agony, announced ... by a final glow that darkens every hue" (Camus, 1955b, p. 179). But then I shake off that feeling ... as the rods spin under my boots. I concentrate on keeping my balance. "Hey," I call out to Sisyphus, half-shouting, my voice bouncing. The kids laugh. "It was just to see who would be the lucky one. The winner goes with you in the helicopter." (Sughrua, 2016, p. 172)

The dramaticity of this magical-realist moment of the story in seeing Sisyphus about to board a helicopter on the mountaintop is intended to suggest our realization that the adventure in writing a thesis is nothing more than a beginning, an indoctrination into numerous and unrelenting writing projects in our future lives as English teachers and academics. This moment, as the climatic event of the story, hence signifies the end to what could be considered the 'analysis' phase of the action research methodology of the paper.

In this sense, the alternative paper does not outright cast aside the conventionality in the format of a research paper. It generally respects the placement and functionality of the IMRD format and its variants, though somehow submerging this format within the depths of the paper or relying on the academic reader her/himself to bring the format to her/his reading of the paper. This, as explained above, occurs in the 'Las Vegas' paper (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 151-179), whose extended mountainside hike performs the function of the 'methodology' and 'analysis' sections of the paper. Similarly, my other paper, 'Can I Have a Voice in the Nation's

Classroom?’ (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 181–206), attempts to present its ‘literature review of critical pedagogy’ in the form of a short story in which I as first-person narrator and protagonist teach a literature class to a group of students including fictional characters from classic works as well as Malcolm X (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 189–206). To reiterate, in some alternative papers, as in ‘Voice’ and ‘Las Vegas’, such standardized components as a literature review and discussion section seem apparent in the papers, very subtly, underneath the surface of the ‘alternality’. However, on the other hand, those standardized components may seem virtually or all together eliminated, as in my papers ‘The Pretender: A Challenge to Academic Writing’ (2011) and ‘West Town: An Inquiry into Space’ (2016, pp. 103–149), each of which is framed and developed according to an autobiographic incident of my life, a summer evening at an outdoor music concert and a winter night in an urban Chicago neighborhood, respectively. These stories framing or embedded within ‘West Town’, ‘The Pretender,’ ‘The Las Vegas Thesis’, and ‘Voice’ are not so much fictionalized as they are performative (2011, 2016).

What do I mean by performativity as distinct from fictionality? The latter, first of all, can be seen as relying on mimesis. This refers to the sense of experiencing the unfolding drama in the fictional work as if it were somehow ‘real life’ (Potolsky, 2006). Normally, as McEleney and Wernimont suggest, this mimetic effect is the main objective of a fictional work such as short story or novel (2013, p. 123). Suspending or momentarily erasing the reader’s awareness of the fictional work as artifice, mimesis places the reader her/himself intellectually, emotionally, and somehow bodily or physically within the ‘story’. This is more than enough to make the fictional story meaningful to the reader. For the fictionalization, now as ‘real life’ (so to speak), has something to offer every reader: disappointment, revelation, a confidence boost, a warning to heed, a message to live by, and so on. This openness in intended reader effect is significantly reduced in performativity. According to Carver and Lawless (2009), performativity refers to the enactment of a story and often takes the form of fictionalization. While performativity, like fictionalization, relies on mimesis in the sense of pulling the reader into the story, performativity attempts to steer the reader toward a particular intended theme. In this sense, then, performativity is the dramaturgical enactment of an academic or social issue (Miller & Pelias, 2009). Although this issue can be articulated or expositoryly expressed, it is not mentioned directly in the text. It is a type of umbrella theme to overshadow the range of more specific themes that the author hope will resonate with the reader once she/he has finished the text.

The intended umbrella theme of the “Voice” paper, for instance, is that the critical-minded teacher should be “one who questions or brackets her/his own political awareness as well as the political expectations of others in order to foster a critical and post-political classroom accessible to all students” (Sughrua, 2016, p. 10); and from this umbrella theme many particular themes are possible, such as that holding that a Marxist classroom promotes positive social transformation or that considering any ideological-based classroom as totalitarian (2016, p. 11). Because of its singularity of purpose through performativity (i.e., a particular general theme), an alternative paper such as “Can I Have a Voice in the Nation’s Classroom” (Sughrua, 2016, 181–206) cannot rely solely on mimesis whose primary or most

likely only goal is to affect the illusion of real life and hence cast the reader onto an affective stage on which she/he can arrive at countless possibilities of interpretations. Avoiding total or extreme mimesis, in turn, means avoiding complete fictionalization by infusing into the text other genres such as exposition and/or other disciplines such as literary criticism and philosophy. For example, the climactic moment of the fictionalized story (i.e. literature review 'stand-in'; cf., above) within "Voice" involves references to primary literary sources as well as to critical applied linguistics:

Now Piggy-O and Mr. Suit take ... two steps toward the swingset. I watch them from the window, a paper wad ... hitting the side of my face. I wonder what will come out of this class.... Maybe the kids have adopted "imagined communities and identities" with which they can "develop roles, discourses, and values that counter the dominant institutions" (Canagarajah, 2004, p. 134). I can't know for sure. But, anyway, am I entitled to know?

Algren ... holds both arms out, signaling a stop to the paper fight.

Nick comes up to my side.... He glances out the window. "It's that 'foul dust' outside, teach-," Nick tells me. "It 'floated in the wake of his dreams.'" (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 2).

Piggy-O and Fard stop at a swing. Fard kicks the wooden seat, then opens and closes his hand, looking at his knuckles.

"Call the principal, or security," Nick says.

"It's just us."

"Ouch."

"Don't worry." It's Algren. He has walked up to Nick's side. He looks out the window. Behind us, [Malcolm] X and Fitz are picking up the paper wads. "'The isolated man is a loveless man,'" Algren (1961/1987, p. 104) says.

Nick cocks his eyebrows.

"I mean, we're all together here on the inside, we five cats," Algren says.

I know he is right. It is this strange brew of solidarity with a marked sense of difference that can empower our students by helping them to position themselves in the world (Kubota, 2004; Pennycook, 2001). It was the same as in the new suburb of my father back in the late 1940s. Theirs was an egalitarian nation, yet refreshingly ethnic, a lone corn stalk snapping at the iron blade, as the engines idled and the men walked off for lunch, road workers, cooks, bookkeepers, teachers, night schoolers.... All hung together, yet each felt his alienation. (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 203-204).

With the final part of this extract veering into the genre of autobiography (i.e. my ancestral suburbanized Irish ethnic heritage vis-a-vis my father), the intergenre and interdisciplinary mix deepens, now consisting of a *fictional frame* (my students and I peering out the classroom windows at a pending threat developing in the playground area) punctuated by *literary criticism* (the urbanized realism of post-World War II American novelist Nelson Algren), *critical applied linguistics*, *biography* (the African-American activist Malcolm X), and *autobiography* (above). This mix

normally would be maintained, though to differing degrees, throughout the length of the paper. For example, "West Town" (Sughrua, 2016) is generally based on a slightly fictionalized autobiographical incident from a winter night spent at the 'dance club' Juarez Azul located in the pre-gentrified West Town neighborhood of Chicago (pp. 103-149). Weaving in and out of this setting, the paper utilizes a "layered approach" of dramaturgical repertoire and academic argument (cf., Rambo Ronai, 2002). This involves, in the case of "West Town," an integrated and crossover treatment of Malcolm X's unrealized United Nations project, the postcolonial theory of Latin American political philosophers Dussel and Mignolo, a literary analysis of Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*, and Platonic theory (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 103-149).

With regard to this intergenre and interdisciplinary approach as found in "West Town" and "Voice" (2016, 103-149; 181-206), two possible misconceptions should be addressed. First of all, the approach is not indulgent nor ornamental. It is not activated just for the sake of it. As mentioned above, the performativity inherent in alternative academic pieces steers the reader toward a theme that is generalized yet nonetheless particular. In "West Town," for instance, the intended theme involves the contemporary English teacher, as any postcolonial academic, as one who may delve into the critical incidents of her/his life, discovering the limitations of the in-vogue postmodernism as well as the mostly comfortable yet weary refuge of transmodernism (2016, 103-149). In order to bring the reader to this general theme from which a diversity of subthemes can be experienced, an alternative paper such as "West Town" (2016, pp. 103-149) needs to maintain a careful balance between dramatic enactment and academic argument. It is the 'literariness' of the paper (e.g. in the case of 'West Town', the unfolding story at the dance club Juarez Azul) that tugs on the lever of dramatic enactment and the 'expositoriness' of the paper (e.g. regarding postcolonial theory, Hemingway criticism, and Platonic philosophy) that tugs the opposing level of argumentation; and hence the binary of 'rendering or showing' versus 'explaining or telling' remains in balance, as explained in Sughrua (2016, pp. 11-12; 211-212). This allows the reader to both 'feel' and 'understand' the paper, the 'feeling' related to her/his mimetic identification with the paper, and the 'understanding' related to her/his grasp of the intended general theme (2016, pp. 11-12; 211-212). This codependency between 'feeling' and 'understanding' would seem to render moot the perception that alternative academic writing is ornamental.

As well, the perception that alternative academic writing is nonexistent or yet-to-arrive would be erroneous. As far as ELT is concerned, alternative academic writing such as that displayed in "Voice" and "West Town" (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 103-149; 181-206) does indeed seem scarce. Nonetheless, if one combs through the literature in ELT, traces of a minimal yet assertive presence of alterality become apparent; and hence the implication that ELT could prove a future home to alternative academic writing and research. For me at least, three cases in point are Canagarajah's *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching* (1999), Canagarajah's *Geopolitics of Academic Writing* (2002), and Casanave and Vandrick's edited collection *Writing for scholarly publication: Behind the scenes in language education* (2003). These three works present ELT writing as on the cusp of alterality and

innovativeness. Permit me to expound on this, in a self-reflective mode. I begin with Canagarajah's 1999 book.

In this book, I am particularly struck by the prologue to the first chapter. Here Canagarajah begins with three italicized pages about Sri Lankan student Ravi. In this passage, Ravi is at his hometown university, in 1990, sitting in his English class, while 'the military helicopter' hovers 'overhead ... on the lookout for [the] rebel troops' that include 'Ravi's friends from secondary school' who 'were busy making fresh stocks of weapons and ammunition' at this very moment while Ravi, feeling guilty to not have followed his friends into 'the resistance movement', slumps back in his chair and listens to the teacher read aloud a passage about 'Peter [who] is in his final year at the University of Reading', who 'belongs to the photography club', and who 'likes sailing ... and goes surfing whenever he can in the summer term' (pp. 9-10). This blatant discrepancy between the context of the reading text and that of the civil war outside the classroom seems lost on Ravi, who remains ambivalent, distracted by the 'noise of another helicopter in the distance', knowing that 'Mrs K. would go over the passage again at the end, and provide them with the correct answers' (p. 11).

For me, Ravi's apparent affectlessness makes Ravi come alive as a person. I see Ravi as the son of a poor family turned university student, whom I as reader encounter, *in medias res*, on the far end of an emotional continuum resulting from a series of pre-narrative episodes most likely from 'the previous year, when the university was closed ... [and] Ravi had tried to keep up with his studies by day while training with the local militia by night' (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 11). Ravi thus seems at a point beyond cynicism and despair, where with an unsettling matter-of-factness he acknowledges his desire for 'the sort of full and purposeful life enjoyed by Peter in the story' while at the same time wondering 'about the latest fighting, and the rumors ... of another military operation' (1999, p. 11). Emotionally torn between the 'arms factory' and the 'classroom' (p. 11) in the early 1990s of the Sri Lankan civil war, Ravi, as a credible character of narrative, 'exhibit[s] enough conflict and contradiction that we can recognize ...[him] as belonging to the contradictory human race' (Burroway & Stuckey-French, 2007, p. 147).

This identification that I feel with Ravi remains strongly with me as the prologue ends and the 'conventionally' written chapter begins; and I am thus able to not only understand but feel Canagarajah's point 'about the relevance and appropriateness of the teaching material, curriculum, and pedagogies developed by the Anglo-American communities for periphery contexts' (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 12).<sup>1</sup> I believe this manner of arriving at a thematic point (i.e. the irrelevance of Western

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<sup>1</sup> The 'periphery' generally can be defined as (i) non-Western countries (e.g. Armenia, Sri Lanka) and (ii) Western countries considered in the process of economic development (e.g. Mexico, Haiti). References to the 'periphery' naturally include stated or unstated counter-references to the 'center', which can be generally defined as Western countries widely considered to be economically developed (e.g. Canada, UK, USA). Such a generalized definition of 'periphery' and 'center' can be considered overly simplistic in that it (for instance) disregards 'center' representations and sensibilities within 'periphery' contexts (e.g. a community of Western-educated and/or Western-minded politicians or academics occupying positions of power within a 'periphery' country) [Canagarajah, 2002, pp. 39-42]. However, the above generalized definition seems the most commonly held in the literature.



pedagogy for the periphery) through an affective response (i.e. my sense of feeling drawn in by the prologue featuring Ravi as a believable character) is somehow a 'nonstandard' academic reading experience (so to speak); and hence for me the Ravi prologue becomes an example of 'nonstandard' academic writing in that it seems to 'show' rather than 'tell', a caveat of creative expression from the time of literary romanticism as in the novels of Henry James (cf., 1934/2011). In other words, rather than employing informative or argumentative exposition, the text itself becomes a type of 'scene' consisting of overt action, spatiality, temporality, dramatization, and/or characterization that implies or alludes to a conclusion external to the 'scene' itself (Gutkind, 1997, pp. 19, 32). In the case of the Ravi prologue, this conclusion involves the non-universality of Western teaching practice.

By dramatizing or showing this conclusion rather than expositoryly arguing or telling it, Canagarajah's (1999) prologue assumes a position of opposition to what seems standard academic writing (Swales, 1990; cf., above); that is, showing rather than telling by means of enacting a scene (e.g., Ravi in the classroom). However, at the same time, the prologue seems of 'two minds' about breaking away from standard writing conventions. Following 'endnote 1' to the end of the chapter and reading that the Ravi prologue is 'a reconstruction from the observation notes of a class ... which is slightly dramatized' (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 36), one senses that Canagarajah himself is perhaps hedging his innovative Ravi prologue so that it would not be vulnerable to criticism from the mainstream. Canagarajah clarifies that his prologue is a type of research data and the subsequent discussion a type of commentary on this data (p. 36). He thereby suggests that the prologue conforms to standard academic writing often characterized by clearly delineated phases or movements such as literature review, discussion, data analysis (e.g., Swales, 1990; Canagarajah, 2002). In this sense, Canagarajah implies that his Ravi prologue is a legitimate incursion into a type of scenic dramatization within an otherwise standardized academic monograph (1999, p. 36).

At the same time, however, I see Canagarajah attempting innovation at nonstandard writing. For instance, Canagarajah admits that the Ravi passage is 'slightly dramatized' (1999, p. 12); and he places it at the beginning of the chapter in a space not normally reserved for data. This generates a tension surrounding the Ravi prologue: On one hand, it asserts its nonstandardness (above) by being dramatized and appearing at the start of the chapter; but on the other hand, it claims adherence to 'standardness' (above) by clarifying itself as empirical data and indeed by being 'italicized' as if a data excerpt (Canagarajah, 1999, pp. 9-11). One thus wonders: Has Canagarajah foreseen resistance from his mainstream publisher as to the Ravi prologue? Is academic writing in ELT so 'standardized' (above) that Canagarajah feels trepidation in including a three-page apparently 'nonstandard' opening scene within a 216 page-long monograph?

I sense 'most probably yes' to the previous two questions. This I infer from Canagarajah's later monograph, *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing* (2002), as well as his self-authored biographical statement included in Casanave and Vandrick's edited collection (2003). The fourth chapter of Canagarajah's *Geopolitics* book (2002) begins with a two-and-half page autobiographical rendering of the author himself

(referred to in the third-person as 'Raj') trying to find opportunity to write during the civil war in Sri Lanka. Here is an excerpt:

Raj knew that he had to finish writing the paper soon.... From the cramped room in his cousin's house, where he was now staying with his wife and infant daughter, he had made many unsuccessful attempts to start working on the paper. But he could never write more than a few lines without being distracted. He had to search for food for his family in the daytime. He was particularly anxious about running out of milk for his infant daughter, as it was in short supply in the area. To make matters worse, the university staff had not been paid their salaries for some months now, as the government had restricted the flow of cash into regions where there was fighting (pp. 102–103).

Raj – apparently the same character as the Ravi of the earlier *Resisting* book and most likely an alter ego of author Canagarajah – reappears sporadically in the first-third of the *Geopolitics* book (2002) which overall addresses ELT publication issues as to knowledge construction and disciplinary inclusion from a 'periphery versus center' perspective. The Raj excerpts, as with the Ravi prologue, are 'story'-oriented by rendering people, place, and/or action and alluding a type of scenic quality in order to show or perform a certain 'conclusion'. This conclusion, in the case of the Raj excerpt above, seems to involve the difficult 'material conditions' that academics in the periphery often face when conducting research (Canagarajah, 2002, pp. 105).

The exploits of formerly 'Ravi' and now 'Raj', the peripheral academic caught in the prolonged Sri Lankan civil war, are alluded to in Canagarajah's biographical statement in Casanave and Vandrick (2003). This edited collection includes a chapter written by Canagarajah regarding academic writing in the periphery (pp. 197–210). The 'Author Biostatements' section of the book consists of entries written directly by the contributing authors. For his entry, Canagarajah writes:

It would take articles in *ELT Journal* and *Written Communication* in the 90s for me to do anything mildly experimental in my research writing. My forthcoming *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing* (University of Pittsburgh Press) is the most daring in my rhetorical creativity (2003, p. 247).

I interpret 'experimental' and 'rhetorical creativity' as allusions to the 'Ravi prologue' from *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism* (1999) as well as the sporadic 'Raj excerpts' from *Geopolitics* (2002). More specifically, Canagarajah seems to suggest that his 'first-person' writing in ELT journals during the 1990s had bolstered his decision to begin the 1999 book with the story-like Ravi prologue; and that the Ravi prologue somehow had emboldened Canagarajah, four years later, to include the sporadic and multiple Raj excerpts in the 2002 book. Strongly implicit here, also, is that such scenic- and story-like writing would run counter to what could be considered standard academic writing in ELT. One sees that over the past ten or so years Canagarajah has apparently considered himself as bound up in a continual and ever expanding attempt to break away from this standard academic writing.

Further, contending that the Raj excerpts were 'the most daring' of his 'rhetorical creativity' in ELT research writing so far, Canagarajah suggests that, at least as of 2003, altertnality in academic writing in ELT seemed restricted to

narrative-like interludes or asides that remained far removed from analysis and discussion. Such mediated and cautious alternative writing, one hence can conclude, was a contentious issue in ELT, as of 2003. This issue, in addition, seems emergent from the margins or corners of the ELT mainstream, as suggested above by Canagarajah's apparent ten year-long trepidation at infusing his ELT work with what he deemed alternative writing. When I first read the above biographical statement, I thus saw Canagarajah as a brave pioneer. Yet I also wondered: Would this matter of breaking from convention through some type of alternative or nonstandard writing be of concern to others within ELT?

For an answer, I did not have to look far. For in the same edited volume in which Canagarajah's chapter and 'biographical statement' appears (Casanave & Vandrick, 2003), the editors claim:

We ... believe that the narrative form has its own power in exemplifying the issues, and that narratives allow for understanding and connection in ways that straight exposition does not. Truth in academic writing, particularly in the more scientific fields, has been characterized as objective, as written in the third person, as distanced from personal feelings and experiences. Language education, especially ESL, was grounded in applied linguistics, which considered and perhaps still considers itself a science, so these attitudes have been the foundation of scholarly writing in many language-related fields. Yet we contend, as do an increasing number of scholars in our field as well as related fields, that there is another kind of truth to be obtained from narratives, stories, and first-person viewpoints, which people use to construct their realities and interpret their experiences (p. 2; in the final sentence referring to Bruner and Polkinghorne).

Here Casanave and Vandrick, first of all, reaffirm Canagarajah's (1999, 2002, 2003) general perception of what seems alternative or nonstandard academic writing in ELT as "narratives ... [and] stories" (2003, p. 2). Above I have generally defined my use of the term 'story'. But what about 'narrative'? Casanave and Vandrick's (2003; excerpt above) use of the term seems in line with that of other ELT academics. This holds that 'story' becomes 'narrative' once it is appreciated as meaningful by the reader (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 164). More specifically, 'story' can be thought of as the scene-, time-, action-, and/or character-based 'rendering' of the event(s) within the paper, while 'narrative' can be the reader's consideration of the 'story' as somehow connecting with her/him (Barkhuizen, 2008; Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Pavlenko, 2007; Stanley, 2008).

The use of these 'stories' and 'narratives', as pointedly contended by Casanave and Vandrick (2003; above), provides a departure from standard academic writing 'characterized as objective', 'third person', and impersonal (above). Further, because Casanave and Vandrick suggest that departing from standard academic writing conventions would be of relevance to 'language education, especially ESL ... grounded in applied linguistics' (above), one sees the matter of alternative academic writing as potentially important to ELT at large, not only with relevance to Canagarajah's well-established corner of critical ELT from the perspective of 'center versus periphery'. The question for today, therefore, is whether this pro-alternative

perspective promoted by Canagarajah (1999, 2002, 2003), Casanave and Vandrick (2003), and several others such as Braine (2010), Vandrick (2009), and Wong (2006) has caused a reaction in the mainstream ELT literature, whether positive or negative?

It seems not. A bellwether moment seems the 2011 issue of *TESOL Quarterly* dedicated to narrative in TESOL or ELT (Barkhuizen, 2011). Implicitly a 'state of the art' stance on narrative in ELT research, this special issue focuses on 'narrative research' rather than 'narrative writing'. As mentioned previously, in 'narrative research', alternative forms of writing appear exclusively as 'data' within apparently standardized research articles (e.g. auto/biographical story [Merrill & West, 2009]; life-story narrative [Pavlenko, 2007]). In simplistic terms, 'narrative research' involves the implementation of Merrill and West's and Pavlenko's (above) types of empirical data in order to engage in 'the study of experience as story' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). This usually requires managing this data in the form of separate and indented excerpts placed sporadically within an otherwise standardized or conventionally written paper (Merrill & West, 2009, pp. 149–150). On the other hand, and in equally simplistic terms, the alternative type of writing referred to by Canagarajah, Casanave and Vandrick, Braine, and Wong (above) is generally thought of as the author her/himself employing what seems nonstandard academic writing (e.g. story-oriented), at will and apparently freely, throughout the paper as a whole (e.g. Atkinson, 2003; Casanave & Li, 2008). That this 'narrative writing' or 'alternative academic writing' was muscled out by 'narrative research' in the 2011 special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* marks a lost opportunity. Rather than giving a platform to the few but insistent voices of alternative writers within the discipline, *TESOL Quarterly* relinquished all the pages of its issue to narrative-data researchers who, though certainly vital to the discipline, nevertheless practice a research and writing repertoire at least as old as the 1920s Chicago School of ethnography (Blackman, 2010).

This was a time when 'sociologists and social psychologists' at the University of Chicago 'developed the notion of symbolic interactionism to capture the dynamic, learned, malleable and constructed quality of human identity and society, not least through the medium of language' (Merrill & West, 2009, p. 4). In more simple terms, a Chicago School 'paper' of the 1920s appears innovative in that it presents empirical data in the form of indented excerpts of narrative (e.g. diaries; extracts from life story interviews) and frames these excerpts with authorial commentary written expositoryly through nominalization and other such aspects of standard academic writing. Although this writing (again, not to demean narrative research) has long since been acknowledged as commonplace within ethnography and the social sciences in general since the 1920s Chicago School (e.g. Gannon 2005; Reed Danahay, 2006), the *TESOL Quarterly* special issue of 2011, along with much ELT research from 2010 to the present, seems to project this narrative research as an innovative and contemporary turn for the ELT discipline.

What seems advisable, therefore, is for ELT to press the reset button, to backstep itself into the panorama of the 1920s Chicago School of ethnography, and to use that moment as a jumping point into contemporary narrative writing within research papers. This is what other disciplines did approximately twenty-five years

ago, during the approximate period of 1986 to the late-1990s, when a two-step phenomenon occurred within qualitative research: the 'crisis of representation' and the 'narrative turn' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 3). During the 'crisis of representation', roughly 1986 to 1990, patches of 'first person voice' and 'personalized story', as well as authorial prologues and epilogues, appeared within research papers so that the author-researcher could sincerely own up to, or constructively channel, her/his self-perceived bias and subjectivity in representing the voices of the research participants (2008, p. 3). It was at this point that qualitative research began to lean toward the autobiographical and anecdotal, while, however, continuing to maintain otherwise standardly written texts structured according to IMRD or a close variant (Merrill & West, 2009; Punday, 2003). This sense of doubting continued on into the 'narrative turn.'

Immediately subsequent to and most likely partially superimposed on the 'crisis of representation' is the 'narrative turn'. At its onset in approximately 1990, it took on the postmodernist stance of not taking the status quo for granted and suspecting a power-play behind the scenes (Baxter, 2007; Fielding, 2012) with regard to standardized research writing in the social sciences. A principal target of the skepticism of the narrative turn is the IMRD structure. According to Canagarajah, the IMRD structure casts the research article, and by extension the community that values it, in a positivistic light: 'The requirement in the IMRD structure that the paper should move from methodology to data to interpretation assumes an inductive, empirical, and presumably positivistic orientation to doing research' (2002, p. 83). This notion of positivism refers to the view 'that science could, and should, produce universal truth in and through the process of producing objective knowledge' (Rapley, 2007, p. 128). It is criticized by Canagarajah as 'a questionable notion according to many post-Enlightenment orientations to knowledge' (2002, p. 83). For Canagarajah, the positivist leanings of the IMRD structure of the research article evidence that 'conventions are ... not neutral, passive, pragmatic tools of thinking and talking' but rather 'loaded with partisan social values and orientations to power' (p. 83). As a result, the 'narrative turn' largely seeks to blur the boundaries between the 'introduction', 'methods', 'results', and 'discussion' phases of the IMRD structure, or to completely dismantle the IMRD structure.

This has resulted in social science researchers decidedly and unabashedly 'turn[ing] toward the language of narrative and storytelling' within research papers (Punday, 2003, p. 4), to such an extent that the IMRD frame becomes a shadowy imprint within the paper or vanishes altogether. This writing has been generally characterized as 'autoethnography', 'reflexive ethnography', 'narrative ethnography', and 'performative narrative' (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2002; Ellis, 2009; Tillmann-Healy, 2002) and more specifically as 'layered text', 'mystories', 'poetic text', 'nonfiction poetry', 'composite fictions', and 'faction', among others (e.g. Denzin, 2010, 2013; Merrill & West, 2009; Piper & Sikes, 2010; Vickers, 2010). This writing has been directly referred to as 'alternative' (e.g. Richardson, 2002); and it has appeared in a range of academic areas or disciplines such as business management, health science, psychology, sociology, and sport science (e.g. Dulek, 2008; Charmaz, 2002; Frentz & Hocker, 2010; Richardson, 2002;

and Sparks, 2002; respectively). These and other disciplines, therefore, apparently have complimented their activities of 'narrative research' with 'narrative writing'.

ELT, in contrast, seems much more dedicated to the former at the exclusion of the latter. ELT is actively engaged in dialogue and scholarship on 'narrative research' (e.g. Pavlenko, 2007; Barkhuizen, 2008; Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Xu & Liu, 2009); and to reiterate, a special issue' of *TESOL Quarterly* has exclusively treated this issue (Barkhuizen, 2011). This can be thought of as the 'analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates' (Bell, 2002, p. 208; referring to Conle, 1992 and Golombek, 1998) according to theme/content, outside reality, and the textual/rhetorical structure of the story itself (Pavlenko, 2007, pp. 165–171). Such 'narrative research' is a growing interest in ELT generally (e.g. Bell, 2002; Barkhuizen, 2008) as well as specifically with relation to methodological issues (Pavlenko, 2002, 2007; Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), teacher's knowledge construction (Xu & Liu, 2009), professional identity formation (Tsui, 2007) and social contexts of teaching (Barkhuizen, 2008). This is to say: For the most part, ELT professional writers seem to treat that which could be taken as 'alternative' writing (e.g. a 'story' [above]) as something to be 'studied' and 'discussed' rather than 'practiced' as a mode or repertoire of writing in and of itself. Consequently, as far as alternative research writing, and when viewed in contrast with other social science disciplines, ELT seems somehow fossilized within the approximate period of the late-1980s, on the brink of the 'crisis of representation' and hence more than a few laps behind the 'narrative turn'.

As a result, a constructive and concerned call for 'catch up' would be in order. Retrospectively, the ELT discipline should now heed the pioneering calls of Canagarajah (1999, 2002, 2003) and Casanave and Vandrick (2003) and allow those calls to take the discipline further into alterality in academic research writing. In particular, one could envision at least two types of alternative research papers. One type would be that very generally or loosely respecting parts of the IMRD conventional format while infusing it with story-like and performative writing; another type would involve dismantling or sidestepping the IMRD format. While the former could refer to the previously discussed papers entitled 'The Las Vegas Thesis' and 'Can I Have a Voice in the Nation's Classroom' (Sughrua, 2016, pp. 151–179; 181–206), the latter can be exemplified by a research paper presented entirely as a drama script with stage directions used in order to report on data apparently generated by a case study investigation. Such papers should be left at the gate.

And for the journal gatekeepers to open the latch, what would be the benefit to their ELT readership and especially those who actively practice and/or research the role of the ELT teacher? As Pelias states, "the aesthetic staging of ethnographic [and presumably qualitative] findings is a mode of scholarly representation, designed to dialogically engage audiences" (2013, p. 398). This is a dialogue not with the author but rather the interpretative possibilities of the dramaturgically rendered paper. This dialogue with the perhaps infinite diversity of interpretations and themes to be had within the general intended thematic plane of an alternative research paper seems ensured by the performativity of alternative writing, as previously explained. To this end, Pollock (2005) comments: "[P]erformance is a promissory act. Not because it can only promise possible change but because it

catches its participants ... in a contract with possibility: with imagining what might be, could be, should be" (p. 2). Here Pollock's modal verbs "might", "could," and "should" suggest an unrelenting Sisyphus-like "mov[ing] outward to culture, discourse, history, and ideology" - to borrow from Denzin's description of his proposed "interpretative autoethnography" (2013, p. 124). This space of discovery or emergence - as provided by the performative nature of alternative research writing - seems especially important to the ELT teacher.

This importance I attempt to invoke in the paper entitled "The Pretender" (Sughrua, 2011). In an interlude in the evolving story, I comment:

... teaching English ... has to do with the way I stand and posture myself on the classroom floor that to me seems a plane of stark yet hopeful emotion. It has to do with the way my students and I move across this vast flatness, projecting some kind of feeling with a certain viable form of sculpted inclines and bowed valleys all around us in the aisles and among the desks. (Sughrua, 2016, p. 12).

And so there be it - I, somewhat cautiously, would now declare. I now have arrived in this paper to the conclusion that the main way alternative research writing in ELT seems beneficial is that it simply evokes an open space in which the teacher and/or researcher readership can reflect on her/his own identity and professionalization. Please do not take this apparently simple and stark 'open space' premise as a cop-out or an excuse for me to not go into further detail or analysis. Ironically, this 'space' premise is a vast area of discussion in classic aesthetic theory (e.g., Adorno, 1970/2002). It hence seems that if I were to go into more detail here, it would not be by analyzing teacher identity as evoked through dramatization but by attempting to tackle the aesthetic concept of 'space' itself.

Fortunately, however, alternative academic research in ELT can be seen as sidled up against, or situated within, the field of autoethnography, where this same 'open space' issue is raised (Denzin, 2014, pp. 26-27, 54, 67). The autoethnographic and critical ethnographic literature, usually within a few sentences, concisely identifies and defines this space (as a prelude to social justice-inspired interpretations, for example); and then wisely goes no further, exerting its energy instead on inviting its readership to explore this space themselves (Denzin, 2014, pp. 26-27, 54, 67; Madison, 2012, pp. 5, 197). Humbly I have tried to do so. For instance, in the same paper as mentioned above, I come to the realization that effective English teaching may be less to do with pedagogic and linguistic knowledge and more with a basic comradeship and solidarity with students:

Such space I see now, as I did back then, within that silent moment of our last night together, in the parking lot, waiting on four-sheets-to-the-wind Socrates to rise up from the littered floor of his trailer.... I feel the same thing each day in my desire ... to let up on the hawking of English and just reach out to my students as one more proletariat trying to get by today and tomorrow, the space there, the void between who we are and who we could be. (Sughrua, 2011, p. 13).

While here in 'The Pretender' (2011) I directly acknowledge this space and the

proletariat-teacher identification that it can offer me, in 'West Town' (2016) I seem unaware of the space but nevertheless grapple or fumble through the space and toward what eventually at the end of the paper emerges as a weary transmodern identity (Dussel, 1993, 2000; Mignolo, 2007, 2011). On the road toward this identity, one part of the paper finds me at the end of three-week stint as a substitute English teacher in an urban high school in Chicago. I am in the classroom, trying to conclude a unit on Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

"Yet how long and drawn out and vulnerable the train ride," I said....

"Pollito con papas!"

Everyone laughed and ... I knew then we were done with ... Hemingway. These kids would have to live on in suspense about precisely how ... Jake did not resolve, but could have resolved, his conflict over nothingness.... I made a show of picking up the novel with both hands, moving in slow motion.

I heard: "... los trenes del sur ..." (Sanchez, 1992).

This phrase was sung, an intentioned voice, and I heard the hands slapping out the 1-2-4-3 button key rhythm (Rios, 2005, p. 1)....

I let loose the novel. It dropped and thudded to the bottom of my briefcase, one of those hard kinds. It had been lain opened on the desk, like a splayed and cut-open double-box. I reached into that box, my right hand way down inside it, as if miming the Jake Barnes-ian fish cleaner that I hope I'm not. I looked out at the students, my right hand in the opened briefcase. We just joked around for the rest of the class hour that day, my final day with those particular kids, the English sub-teacher and his rivers to wade, dams to cross. (Sughrua, 2016, p. 132)

This emergent transmodernism of 'West Town' (2016, pp. 103-149) joins with the proletarianism of 'The Pretender' (2011), the scholarly individualism of 'The Las Vegas Thesis' (2016, pp. 151-179), and the communal criticality of 'Voice' (2016, 181-206) [as developed or suggested above] to exemplify types of English teacher awareness or identity to be dramaturgically evoked by alternative research writing in ELT. One may now wonder: How did I so readily arrive at these themes of transmodernism, proletarianism, scholarly individualism, and communal criticality? Do I not need, here in this paper, to discursively work through 'West Town', 'The Pretender', 'The Las Vegas Thesis', and 'Voice' so as to evidence the emergence of these themes? Not necessarily, as far as alternative research relying on performativity. As mentioned above, performative writing - being 'performative' in the sense of dramaturgically rendered as in a theatrical play, novel or poem - by its very nature rejects overt analysis and direct articulation of its themes. Certainly, direct explanation is a nice afterthought or supplement (e.g., as in literary criticism), but it would not be compatible with a firsthand experiencing of the text in an affective manner (e.g., as in mimesis). It is for this reason that autoethnographer Holman Jones (2005) states that performative writing such as autoethnography and by implication alternative academic writing should remain open and ambiguous as to interpretation (p. 769). Thus so much more an invitation than a directive, alternative research writing requires its author to very generally set the stage for the



reader and then to step back completely, letting the interpretative chips fall where they may (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 769; Sughrua, 2016, pp. 11–12).

For the interpretative chips of my above-mentioned papers, I am wagering on transmodernism, proletarianism, scholarly individualism and communal criticality, these being generalized thematic planes on which the readers can find their own variations of themes and interpretations, however similar or disparate. Granted, even these generalized thematic planes can be 'hit or miss'. But even that would be fine. For one can assume that any sincere and nonviolent affective interpretation of a research paper would be beneficial to an academic area or discipline, in this case ELT. Furthermore, the simple presence of 'open spaces' within research writing, as provided by performativity (cf., above), would at the very least enhance the reflective climate within the academic dialogue of ELT. It is generally to these objectives of reflection, affective reader response, and diverse interpretation that, I believe, ELT-based Canagarajah, Casanave, and Vandrick were aiming toward in their early and pioneering calls for alternative research writing in ELT (1999, 2002, 2003; cf., above). Long pre-dating the work of Canagarajah, Casanave, and Vandrick, this alterality in social science research has been in place for many decades.

So please permit me now, in bringing this paper to close, to briefly explore these roots of alterality in social science writing. My intention is to establish the basis in ELT for the type of alternative research discussed above. As mentioned previously, initial traces of alternative writing became widely noticed during the 1920s Chicago School era. However, as Blackman (2010) states, the narrative quality of Chicago School ethnographic writing had two important precedents in sociology: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America: A Classic Work in Immigration and History* (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918/1996); and *The Jack Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story* (Shaw, 1930/1966). The first of these, *The Polish Peasant*, according to Blumer's (1939/1979) influential analysis of this work, regards the 'extensive social change' experienced by Polish peasants within Poland as compared with and contrasted to those Polish peasants who have emigrated to the United States and to Germany as well as those who have later returned to Poland. Although the five volumes of *The Polish Peasant* include ample authorial commentary and analysis, most of the text consists of 'newspaper archives, bureaucratic records[,] ... immigration applications [.] ... private archives, comprehensive autobiographies, and private letters' (Cargan, 2007, p. 56). On the other hand, *The Jack Roller* (1930/1966) consists of 'the story of Stanley, a young male delinquent whose story is told in first person by himself' (Bulmer, 1984, p. 107). The story is based on a series of interviews that the author-researcher, Shaw, had with sixteen year-old Stanley (1984, p. 107). Sociologist Shaw helped Stanley put the episodes of his story in chronological order (based on 'stenographic records'); did fact-checking and correcting on Stanley's story (e.g. as to family history and arrest records); and included a lengthy introduction of approximately 15,000 words in the book (p. 107). Nevertheless, *The Jack Roller* largely consists of sixteen year-old Stanley's story, as told directly by him in his own voice. *The Jack Roller*, in its literary-like form of a first-person narrated autobiography, has had wide-reaching significance in the field of criminology, on issues such as whether incarcerating juvenile offenders for misdemeanors fosters much more serious criminal behavior in adulthood (Lilly, Cullen & Ball, 2011, p. 144).

From the above description of *The Polish Peasant* (1918/1996) and *The Jack Roller* (1930/1966), it should be obvious that both works appear primarily story- and performative-based and similar to the alternative academic writing that Canagarajah (1999, 2002, 2003) as well as Casanave and Vandrick (2003) both practiced and apparently imagined to be on the future horizon for ELT. Blackman (2010) conveys that *The Polish Peasant* and *The Jack Roller* illustrate a clearly identifiable precedence for alternative academic writing within the discipline of sociology. This precedence, according to Blackman (2010), can be considered 'early-Chicago School'. A historical line, as Blackman (2010) further suggests, can therefore be drawn with regard to alternative academic writing. This line would start at least from 'early-Chicago school' (i.e. approximately 1918–1930); continue up to the crisis of representation in the mid-1980s; go on and through the narrative turn of the 1990s; and go right up to the present.

This, I believe, provides a historical frame or timeline for research writing in ELT to now plug into, if it so chooses. Marking the beginning point of its inspiration as the ninety-four year-old publication *The Polish Peasant*, the ELT discipline can take solace in a historical justification for its alternative academic writing in research. This historicism would also offer an already established body of literature into which ELT could automatically position its own alternative research papers. If ELT does not jolt itself forward into the crisis of representation and then into the 'narrative turn', ELT could become stagnant and not partake in the ongoing evolution of writing and research repertoires, as apparently experienced by other academic communities or disciplines such as those previously mentioned. As a result, ELT runs the risk of 'falling behind the times' within the academic milieu and hence not fully meeting the needs of its writers, teachers, and students alike, especially for instance in the case of researching multilingual and multicultural themes and contexts in which a myriad of narratives and epistemologies come to bear.

I should note, in closing, that the performative attributes of the alternative research writing discussed in this paper would not belong only to alternative research writing *per se*. Nor would this alternative research writing be applicable only to ELT research. To the contrary, performative writing is a wide-reaching characteristic that belongs to the diverse types of autoethnography (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015); and alternative research writing already has proven valuable to a range of academic disciplines including business studies and sport science (cf., above). That the alternative research writing is not necessarily nor integrally particular to ELT does not dismiss its importance to the ELT area or discipline. Finally, I would clarify that alternative research writing should simply be an available option among any other options of academic writing in ELT. Although an alternative repertoire puts up a good fight within the parameters of a particular research paper, it does not hold animosity towards conventional research repertoires. It is content to dwell within the parameters of its own papers, to leave behind its own footprints, its own spaces. At the same time, however, it can be a happy neighbor or cousin to conventional research papers in ELT, even those directly espousing IMRD.

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