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Professional Identity (Re)Construction of L2 Writing Scholars

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Little research has been conducted on the professional identities of L2 writing scholars despite the increasing number of researchers, teachers, and graduate students identifying themselves as L2 writing specialists. While the (re)construction of L2 writing scholars' professional identities have real consequences for their career, the challenges and opportunities resulting from their work, situated in several related disciplines, have neither been explicitly nor adequately discussed. Through an analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006), this study examines the cases of two L2 writing faculty as they (re)construct their professional identities within their institutions and broader academic communities. Using identity in practice as its theoretical framework, the study provides a rich, in-depth account of how the focal L2 writing scholars continue to negotiate and reconcile their professional identities among adjacent fields such as applied linguistics, TESOL, composition, and education. Results reveal that L2 writing scholars (re)construct their professional identities by negotiating their identity positions within their institutional and disciplinary contexts, by defining the boundaries of their professional identities through community membership, and by participating in multiple academic communities. Drawing on these results, the study considers how L2 writing scholars' professional identity (re)construction reflects the development of L2 writing as a field/profession.

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INTRODUCTION

Second language (L2) writing is an academic field situated in related disciplines, including composition studies and applied linguistics (Matsuda, 1998, 1999; Silva & Leki, 2004). Over the past two decades, the field has gained legitimacy through the Journal of Second Language Writing (JSLW) founded in 1992 and its major conference, the Symposium on Second Language Writing (SSLW) established in 1998. As the field continues to grow, we are seeing an increasing number of researchers, teachers, and graduate students identify as L2 writing specialists. These scholars come from diverse graduate programs, including rhetoric and composition, applied linguistics, education, and TESOL, and work in various institutional settings such as English, linguistics, education, or intensive English programs. In addition, due to their various academic backgrounds, they naturally serve multiple roles within their institutions working with L2 related issues. These include teaching L2 writing, TESOL, and linguistics courses, offering faculty workshops on ESL student support, directing ESL writing programs as writing program administrators (WPAs), preparing pre-service K-12 teachers, and

working at writing centers. The complexities and challenges stemming from these scholars' diverse professional trajectories in the field of L2 writing have been documented in various edited collections devoted to issues related to professionalization (e.g., Casanave & Li, 2008; Matsuda, O'Meara, & Snyder, 2017; McIntosh, Pelaez-Morales, & Silva, 2015). While this work has generated a better understanding of the professional development of L2 writing specialists, much remains unknown about how they (re)construct[1] their professional identities. The concept of identity is important to understanding individuals' professional development because it provides a framework through which individuals view themselves and their relationship to others and impacts how they are perceived in a professional context.

To address this gap, this analytic autoethnographic study[2] examines how early-career L2 writing scholars (re)construct and perform their professional identities both in their institutions and broader academic communities in the field of L2 writing. Specifically, we analyze our experiences (re)constructing our professional identities by drawing on our narratives in which we reflect on our professional trajectories as junior L2 writing scholars working as tenure-track assistant professors[3] in the context of U.S. higher education. Grounded in the extant literature on professional identity, our narratives illustrate how our professional identities develop from the socialization processes into our profession's values, how these professional identities are continuously (re)constructed throughout the course of our careers, and how our lived experiences within our professional contexts influence our identities (Slay & Smith, 2011).

One of the goals of this study is to shed light on ways in which junior L2 writing scholars (re)construct their professional identities in the context of a rapidly expanding, but yet ill-defined, field of study that has complex relationships with its related disciplines. To this end, we adopt Wenger's (1998) theory of identity in practice, which characterizes identity as "negotiated experience, as community membership, as learning trajectory, as nexus of multimembership, and as a relation between the local and the global" (p. 149). Using this theoretical framework, we illustrate the intricacies in practicing our scholarly identities in our lived experiences of research, teaching, and service as university faculty. Through our narratives, we not only demonstrate the interplay between the affordances and constraints of our institutional and academic contexts and our own acts of identity (re)construction, but we also reflect on the development of L2 writing as a field/profession.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we discuss the theoretical framework of identity in practice, which guides our study, and review relevant literature on identity and professional identity development.

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[1] We opted to use the term (re)construction (instead of construction) in order to best represent the dynamic and evolving nature of identity construction (Norton, 1995, 1997, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011) in our narratives.
[2] This study is based on presentations (Kim, 2014; Saenkhum, 2014) that we delivered as part of a larger invited colloquium at the 13th Symposium on Second Language Writing in 2014, which explored the professional pathways of a panel of early-career L2 writing scholars. While our presentations focused on issues related to professionalization, our current study aims to address professional identity (re)construction of L2 writing specialists.
[3] We acknowledge that there are various other types of academic appointments in the context of U.S. higher education. However, due to the autoethnographic nature of this study, we specifically focus on tenure-track professorial faculty.

Identity in Practice

We use Wenger's (1998) theoretical concept of identity in practice to ground our investigation of L2 writing scholars' professional identity (re)construction. Specifically, we use it as a lens to analyze our narratives on ways in which L2 writing scholars (re)construct their professional identities while participating in their local institutions and broader academic communities. Identity in practice is built on the idea that there is an inextricable link between practice and identity. Our practices cannot exist in a vacuum; they are carried out within the context of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in which members relate to one another through their actions. Therefore, as Wenger notes (1998), "our practices deal with the profound issue of how to be a human being" within this broader context, and in this sense, "the formation of a community of practice is also the negotiation of identities" (p. 149). The following are characteristics of identity in practice:

1. Identity as negotiated experience. We define who we are by the ways we experience our selves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves.
2. Identity as community membership. We define who we are by the familiar and unfamiliar.
3. Identity as a learning trajectory. We define who we are by where we have been and where we are going.
4. Identity as nexus of multimembership. We define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity.
5. Identity as a relation between the local and the global. We define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and of manifesting broader styles and discourses. (Wenger, 1998, p. 149)

Research on Identity

In the present study, we view identity as historically and socially situated, multifaceted, and dynamic (Norton, 1995, 1997, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Racelis & Matsuda, 2015; Varghese, 2004; Wenger, 1998). This conceptualization of identity allows us to best explore the complex and ever-changing nature of L2 writing scholars' professional identity (re)construction. Due to their varying disciplinary backgrounds and diverse professional pathways, L2 writing scholars are required to continuously negotiate membership in their multiple communities of practice, which, in turn, affects the (re)construction of their professional identities.

Identity research has greatly expanded over the last two decades across multiple areas of study related to L2 writing, including applied linguistics, TESOL, teacher education, and composition studies. This body of research has grown and evolved from early studies on identity (e.g., Norton, 1995, 1997), which focused on language learners in primarily immigrant communities. Recent research on identity includes issues related to a wider range of social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, social class), contexts (e.g., digital and virtual spaces, indigenous, postcolonial, and diaspora sites), and populations (e.g., language learners, teachers, lingua franca speakers, heritage language learners, study abroad learners) (Norton & De Costa, 2018). Naturally, the examination of these broad spectra of issues has started to require a more varied approach to research methods as well. This expansion in research topics and methods

is reflected in recently published handbooks and special issues of journals on identity (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; De Costa & Norton, 2016; Preece, 2016; Varghese, Motha, Trent, Park, & Reeves, 2016). Another area of identity research that has recently seen significant growth is teacher identity (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung, Said, & Park, 2015; Clarke, 2008; Dagenais, 2012; De Costa & Norton, 2016; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Menard-Warwick, 2013; Racelis & Matsuda, 2015; Sayer, 2012; Varghese, 2011; Varghese et al., 2016; Vitanova, 2018; Wernicke, 2018). Many of these studies have looked at how (non-)nativeness, nationality, and ethnicity have affected teacher identities and practices. In the field of L2 writing, previous studies on identity have examined L2 writer identities in terms of their multiple language backgrounds and literacy practices. For example, an edited collection of narratives from Belcher and Connor (2001) includes contributions from renowned L2 literacy and writing scholars who share their experiences of academic literacy socialization into and across multiple languages and discourse communities.

Professional Identity Development

Research in higher education has also seen an influx of studies exploring a wide range of issues related to identity, especially professional identity. Some of these studies do not explicitly refer to professional identity, but examine adjacent concepts, such as values, reasoning skills, professional expertise, critical thinking, and self-reflection (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012). One of the most prominent areas of interest in this body of research on professional identity is professional identity development (Trede et al., 2012). Most notably, studies in this area have examined the processes through which individuals develop their professional identities. These studies have found that individuals develop their professional identities through socialization processes and experiences (Hall, 1987), and that professionals also draw from various occupational rhetorics to shape their professional identities (Fine, 1996).

Research has also suggested that individuals (re)construct their professional identities throughout their careers as a result of adjustment and adaptation, especially during critical periods of transition in careers (Ibarra, 1999; Nicholson, 1984). Also, throughout this process, "life as well as work experiences influence professional identity by clarifying one's priorities and self-understanding" (Schein, 1978, as cited in Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 87). In other words, professional identity intersects with an individual's social context (e.g., a university), and it also interacts with personal and social identities as well. Taken together, these studies shed light on the dynamic and constant (re)construction of professional identities that affect and are affected by the teaching and learning practices in higher education.

Despite great interest in professional identity development, however, researchers have noted that the wide range of definitions and theoretical underpinnings of research on professional identity development points to "an underdeveloped field where there is little agreement among scholars" (Trede et al., 2012, p. 375). With this diversity taken into account, in the present study, we chose to emphasize the "dynamic and continuous negotiation and renegotiation of roles and memberships" (Pettifer & Clouder, 2008, as cited in Trede et al., 2012, p. 374) that occurs in professional identity development. That is, we see professional identity development as "a process of negotiated meaning-making within a community of practice" (Hunter, Laursen, & Seymour, 2007, p. 67), which is in line with Lave and Wenger's

(1991) communities of practice and situated learning theory, two theoretical concepts that inform the present study (see Daly, Palcher, & Pickering, 2003; Hunter et al., 2007 for others).

Professional Identity in L2 Writing

Some recent studies that have looked at writing teachers' professional identities have suggested that L2 writing teachers' professional identities are "shaped by personal educational experiences and ongoing negotiation of various institutional contexts" (Racelis & Matsuda, 2015, p. 203). Similarly, Lee (2013) underlined teacher identity development's characteristic as an "ongoing process" (p. 331) in her study on EFL writing teachers who constructed their professional identities through their experiences, context of teaching, and student interactions. This ongoing process of teacher identity development is also influenced by teachers' own "belief about language teaching" (Matsuda, 2016, p. 242) and other relevant factors, including their language learning and teaching experiences. Expanding on such views about factors that affect L2 writing teachers' professional identities, Yang, Kiser, and Matsuda's (2017) narrative case studies of two first-year L2 writing teachers illustrated that although teachers have the ability to negotiate individual traits (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, education, and nationality, and language) in the classroom, this negotiation may be limited. Nevertheless, the two teachers in the case studies were able to "rhetorically…[construct] various types of identity traits" (Yang et al., 2017, p. 99).

In addition to the multiple individual and contextual factors that influence L2 writing scholars' professional identities, the historically situated nature of the field and the complexities of L2 writing scholars' professional pathways make professional identity development an area of study that merits further attention. An excellent example is Sánchez-Martín and Seloni's (2019) collaborative autoethnography on transdisciplinary becoming, in which the authors used feminist rhetorics to unpack the way L2 writing scholars construct their identities and theoretical positioning in doctoral writing through dissertation mentoring. As Gonzales and Rincones (2012) found, more and more universities across the world are responding to the "incessant calls to reform the discipline-bound fragmented approach to knowledge production and academic work" (p. 499). Yet, due to inadequate institutional support, scholars whose work is situated in multiple fields struggle to "bring legitimacy to their boundary crossing work" (p. 497). Thus, in the present study, we advance knowledge in identity research in L2 writing by examining the professional identity (re)construction of early-career L2 writing scholars. Specifically, we ask the following research question: How do L2 writing faculty (re)construct their professional identities within their institutions and across multiple disciplinary communities? This question recognizes that reconciling multimembership across disciplinary boundaries for L2 writing scholars can be a potential challenge that is opaque and inadequately discussed. As Wenger (1998) aptly notes, "the work of reconciliation [of multimembership] can easily remain invisible because it may not be perceived as part of the enterprise of any community of practice" (p. 161). In this sense, we believe it is crucial to examine the lived experiences of L2 writing faculty, which we do through an analytic autoethnographic approach in this study. This approach allows us to generate a better understanding about the experiences of faculty in L2 writing and the ways in which their

practices and interactions within their institutions and scholarly fields affect their professional identities.

METHODS

To explore the professional identity development of L2 writing faculty, we utilize an autoethnographic approach, which is "conducted and represented from the point of view of the self, whether studying one's own experiences or those of one's community" (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 260). Autoethnography also "involves a systematic inquiry into past experiences, based on documents and self-reflection" (Benson, 2014, p. 157); this enables us to tell our stories using narratives to delineate and reflect on our professional experiences as L2 writing scholars. The ways we tell our stories reflect what Anderson (2006) calls *analytic autoethnography*, which includes five key features: "(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue within informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis" (p. 378). This analytic autoethnographic approach shares several characteristics with other traditions of self-reflexive inquiry such as "feminist research, participatory action research, ethnographies, and hermeneutic and poststructural approaches" (Dowling, 2008, p. 748). These traditions of self-reflexive inquiry illustrate how alternative approaches can contribute to methodological diversity in professional identity research, in addition to approaches that primarily use methods such as interviews, surveys, and personal accounts. In this study, we chose analytic autoethnography as our methodological approach as it allows for an analysis of our narratives that provides an in-depth, personal account of L2 writing scholars' identity (re)construction, and it also furthers our understandings of our theoretical framework—identity in practice.

Due to our use of autoethnography in this study, we inhabited the simultaneous roles of researcher and participant. We acknowledge that this reflexive positionality impacted the way that we represented ourselves in narrative form (De Costa, 2014; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007; Norton & De Costa, 2018). That is, the narratives presented here are our own interpretations of our lived experiences as early-career scholars working in the field of L2 writing. The goal is not to generalize, but to offer our stories for insight so as to, ideally, generate a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities L2 writing scholars may encounter.

Settings and Participants

We situate ourselves in the context of U.S. higher education, where both of us hold tenure-track assistant professor positions at our universities. The tenure-track system in the U.S. comprises several ranks of full-time faculty at the assistant, associate, and full professor level. Most newly employed faculty members on the tenure-track start at the assistant professor level, which requires them to work for a five-year probationary period. During this time, faculty members are expected to meet certain academic performance criteria in three different areas, including research/scholarship/creative activities, teaching, and service. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, assistant professors are promoted to the associate level, which grants them more permanent positions and employment at their institution.

Soo is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of New Hampshire working as an applied linguist specializing in TESOL and L2 writing. Tanita is an

assistant professor[4] in the Department of English's Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she specializes in L2 writing with a focus on writing program administration. Having completed our undergraduate degrees in non-English-medium universities, we acknowledge that being L2 writers ourselves is an integral part of our identities as scholars (see Kim, 2010; Saenkhum, 2015a, 2015b). As Norton and De Costa (2018) have pointed out, "a focus on intersectionality is important because social categories are often overlapping and interdependent" (p. 94). However, for the purpose of this study, we mainly focus on aspects of our identities that directly relate to the complexities of L2 writing scholars' diverse academic backgrounds and professional pathways.

Data Sources and Data Analysis

The primary data for this study came from our narratives, which were written in response to elicitation questions on our experiences (re)constructing and negotiating our professional identities as L2 writing scholars. In addition, to complement our reflections on our lived experiences, we also collected and studied artifacts of our work as L2 writing faculty from 2012-2017 (e.g., conference proposal feedback, conference presentations (see Kim, 2014; Saenkhum, 2014), annual review materials, promotion and tenure narratives). In our narratives, we reflected on the (re)construction of our professional identities within our institutions and in the broader academic community. To elicit narratives on our professional identities in our institutional contexts, we asked ourselves: How do we, L2 writing scholars, construct our professional identities at our respective institutions through research, teaching, and service? What are some challenges in communicating specialization in the area of L2 writing to colleagues in cross-department contexts? What are some challenges and opportunities that L2 writing scholars face when taking on teaching and service responsibilities? Questions about our professional identities in the broader academic community included: What are the unique dynamics L2 writing scholars face in publishing and presenting their research across different disciplinary venues?

In order to examine the multi-faceted, dynamic, and complex nature of professional identities, we used the characteristics of identity in practice described by Wenger (1998) as a lens through which we analyzed our data. Adopting this specific theoretical framework for the analysis of our data instead of relying on emerging themes allowed us "to clarify the nature of…[our] conceptual categories and to pinpoint the links between the recurrent themes and conceptual constructs" (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 167). Using this analytical scheme, we first independently coded and analyzed all of the elicited narratives. Data analysis was a recursive process, in that we went through multiple rounds of comparison, discussion, and negotiation of these codes and themes. We also went through a similar process of content analysis with the artifacts we collected and excerpted examples that corroborated or contradicted the findings from our narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analyses of our narratives presented below discuss how we, as L2 writing scholars, (re)construct our professional identities in institutional contexts and larger professional

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[4] During the time this study was being conducted and written, Tanita was a tenure-track assistant professor. She is currently an associate professor at her institution.

communities. As we analyzed the narratives utilizing Wenger's (1998) characterization of identity in practice, we found that the five characteristics were all interrelated. However, to enable us to examine the complex ways that L2 writing scholars negotiate and (re)construct their professional identities through research, teaching, and service, we focused on three characteristics that were most relevant to the concept of professional identity development: identity as *negotiated experience,* as *community membership,* and as *nexus of multimembership.* In what follows, we discuss the results illustrating that as L2 writing scholars (re)construct their professional identities, they simultaneously negotiate their identity positions within their institutional and disciplinary contexts, and their identities are affected by community membership and participation in multiple academic communities. To end this section, we consider how our professional identity (re)construction also reflects the development of L2 writing as a field/profession.

Theme 1: Professional Identity is (Re)Constructed Through Negotiation of Identities in Institutional Contexts

Wenger's (1998) characterization of identity as *negotiated experience* enabled us to understand ways in which L2 writing scholars define themselves and are defined by others through participation in their institutions. While both authors identify as L2 writing scholars and work in multidisciplinary English departments, their roles and positioning as L2 writing scholars within their departments are somewhat different. Soo is often identified as a theoretical linguist or an education researcher by her colleagues and students while Tanita is often viewed as an administrator. These positionings, as a result, prompt them to continue to negotiate their professional identities as L2 writing scholars and also affect their lived experiences in concrete ways. In Soo's case, it manifests as difficulty in establishing her L2 writing course within a program's core curriculum. She commented in her narrative:

> As an L2 writing scholar, the courses I teach are housed in different disciplinary programs and fulfill the needs of multiple majors (e.g., linguistics, English teaching, composition, foreign languages). I have discovered that, while this allows for valuable opportunities for me to interact and work with faculty and students across programs, it also results in its own challenges. For example, unlike the English grammar course which has a large cohort of English teaching majors required to take it almost every semester, the interdisciplinary L2 writing course is an elective course that isn't required in any of the disciplinary programs. Because it is seen as a complementary—perhaps peripheral—course, it is often challenging to bring together a sufficient number of students from multiple programs to enroll in the course as an elective.

Besides the immediate issue of low course enrollment, Soo perceived this as problematic because this institutional constraint limits the way that she is able to position herself in her multidisciplinary department. She further explained that "because courses are the day-to-day medium through which faculty interact with students and colleagues, teaching tends to be one of the more visible ways that disciplinary expertise is communicated and faculty identities are (re)constructed in a multidisciplinary department." Thus, while her appointment across linguistics and English teaching affords her the opportunity to establish a cross-disciplinary identity, the resulting delegation of her L2 writing course to a peripheral role in course curricula also constrains her ability to position herself as an L2 writing scholar.

In response to this challenge, Soo continues to work within the curricular constraints of her position by serving as an active faculty member in both the linguistics and English teaching program, while also developing alternative means (e.g., advising, graduate thesis/dissertation support, and guest-lecturing) to establish her identity as an L2 writing specialist. Through these activities and interactions with her colleagues and students, she negotiates and reconciles her professional identities within the context and constraints of her multidisciplinary department. In a sense, she is acknowledging that her professional identity intersects with her social context (i.e., teaching practices in her institutional context) (Slay & Smith, 2011), and, in doing so, she is taking greater ownership in (re)constructing her identity as an L2 writing scholar by negotiating the way that she establishes her professional identity and the way that it is reified by others (Wenger, 1998).

Unlike Soo, Tanita is recognized as an L2 writing specialist both at the departmental and institutional level. She was hired as an assistant professor specializing in L2 writing. However, she is often seen as an administrator who is in charge of the ESL writing program's day-to-day tasks, including responding to students' and academic advisors' emails about placement, scheduling courses, and serving on various committees as Director of ESL representing L2 writing concerns. This is mainly because she is the only professorial faculty who has expertise in L2 writing at her institution, where she serves as a liaison between her department and other related stakeholders, including faculty in other disciplines, academic advisors, and admissions offices. Given these institutional circumstances, Tanita is aware that it is common that her WPA work is often viewed as service by her colleagues. As a result, she found herself negotiating her identity as a scholar by demonstrating how her WPA work is scholarship using the ESL writing program as a site of research and publishing various works grown out of her WPA expertise. For example, she has conducted studies that investigate issues related to the placement of students into first-year composition courses and ways in which placement practices can be assessed. In her narrative, she emphasized, "I have utilized what I learned from my research to improve the placement practices for multilingual writers in my local context and provide some practical recommendations for other writing programs." She added that her WPA work is grounded in the theory of agency; this is something she had to make clear to her colleagues who prefer theory rather than applications. To disseminate her work, she has published her WPA-related research in various forms, including a single-authored book, a collaborative article, and book chapters. In sum, Tanita's negotiation of her professional identity within her institution further emphasizes the role of the socialization process (Fine, 1996; Hall, 1987) in professional identity, especially when individuals continue to associate with and participate in a professional community in which they are also reified by others (Wenger, 1998). Additionally, the case of Tanita illustrates ways in which "individuals adjust and adapt their professional identity" (Ibarra, 1999; Nicholson, 1984 as cited in Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 87) while establishing their professional profiles.

As can be seen in both authors' narratives, the professional identities of L2 writing scholars are continuously (re)constructed not only by the way that the L2 writing scholars view themselves, but also by the way that others in their academic and institutional contexts position them. In other words, the opportunities and constraints in L2 writing scholars' academic and institutional environments often contribute to shaping and (re)constructing their professional identities.

Theme 2: Professional Identity is (Re)Constructed as a Result of Community Membership

For L2 writing scholars who are often situated in various academic departments, their professional identities could be affected by their community membership, which refers to ways in which "we define who we are by the familiar and unfamiliar" (Wenger, 1998, p. 149). Soo's experience with writing conference proposals for different audiences and collaborating with scholars from different fields as well as Tanita's efforts to communicate publication practices in the field of L2 writing to her literature colleagues illustrate the important role of community membership in professional identity (re)construction.

One of the critical moments that prompted Soo to reflect on how professional identity is formed and affected by community membership was when her conference proposal for an annual international TESOL convention was rejected. In response to her proposal, an anonymous reviewer had commented:

> This proposal is well articulated and presents an interesting and under-researched area of research. The theoretical and methodological basis of this study is clear but the participant outcomes are not...There is potential for this to be a good presentation but the audience it is aimed for may not be the most appropriate.

Through such "revealing moments" (Sánchez-Martín & Seloni, 2019, p. 29), Soo gained the opportunity to reflect on her community memberships in terms of what are considered valued practices and conventions in academic writing. Looking back on this experience, she commented that, as an L2 writing scholar, it is essential to "be fluent in the conventions of multiple disciplines, and to learn how to frame my research for different audiences, sometimes with a greater focus on theory, and at other times, methods or pedagogy."

Soo also found that the boundaries of her community membership come into sharper focus when issues (e.g., disagreements about research methods or writing styles) arise in the context of cross-disciplinary collaborations. Reflecting on how these moments prompted her to reaffirm her community memberships, she acknowledged that these collaborations:

> ...call for the ability to communicate and negotiate my stances with researchers from other disciplines who do not share my disciplinary assumptions. This issue came to the forefront while I was working as a co-editor on a collection with collaborators in rhetoric and composition. I found that the chapter proposals I considered to be clear and informative were perceived as dry, impersonal, and mechanical to my co-editors. While I gravitated towards research proposals that included more empirical data, my collaborators seemed to value research that had more engaging narrative.

This vignette also reflects how, due to the issue-driven nature of the field (Matsuda, 2013), L2 writing scholars from various disciplines approach issues surrounding writing from their own research paradigms and epistemologies. That is, their professional identity as community membership manifests in the various research methods they use and the way they write.

In the case of Tanita, her English department houses various academic programs, including literature, creative writing, and rhetoric, writing, and linguistics (RWL); this also means publication practices for colleagues in different disciplines vary. Given these disciplinary preferences, she found it necessary to communicate her scholarship and publication practices

in the field of L2 writing to her colleagues. "This is to make sure that different publication practices will not pose any concerns regarding my tenure case," expressed Tanita. She elaborated in her narrative that in her department, single-authorship is the norm, and "it is preferred." However, in L2 writing and other related fields like applied linguistics and composition, co-authorship is very common and is as equally valued as single-authored publications. With this in mind, she communicated the publication norms in the field of L2 writing in her annual review in which she outlined rationales for co-authorship and contributions to each piece, which reads:

> We [three authors] worked closely on every stage of this research project. Together, we established research questions and designed an online survey. We separately coded and analyzed data obtained from the survey, and we compared notes. I drafted the manuscript, and the three of us worked on multiple revisions both before and after submitting it to the journal. (excerpt from Tanita's annual review documents for promotion and tenure)

While she associates herself with the L2 writing community in which co-authoring is the norm, she interacts with her colleagues with an awareness that she is also a member of an English department that has different scholarly publication practices. Tanita's communication about her field's publication practices with her colleagues shows how her professional identity as an L2 writing scholar has been affected by her membership in an English department that defines her publication practices as *the unfamiliar* (Wenger, 1998). However, she considered this as an opportunity for her to rhetorically (re)construct her professional identity in ways that would align with her English department community. Tanita's experience is similar to that of two first-year L2 writing teachers (Yang et al., 2017) who expressed that while opportunities to negotiate their identities in the classroom were limited, they found that they were able to rhetorically construct different types of identity traits.

Because the field of L2 writing is situated among several disciplines, L2 writing professionals are likely to come into contact with scholars from different disciplines who bring their own disciplinary orientations, assumptions, and conventions with them. For example, in our cases, this was seen when adjudicating chapter proposals for an edited collection and evaluating scholarly productivity within a multidisciplinary department, respectively. We found that, even when opportunities for reflection manifest in instances of conflict or discord, these experiences play a crucial role in the (re)construction of L2 writing scholars' professional identities. These moments give L2 writing scholars the opportunity to reaffirm, question, and/or re-adjust the belief systems and values that are embedded in their field's conventions; this process contributes to a greater awareness of their professional identity as it relates to community membership.

Theme 3: Professional Identity is (Re)Constructed by Reconciling Multiple Forms of Membership

L2 writing scholars find themselves constantly reconciling disciplinary differences and conventions since their work is often perceived differently from scholars coming from other disciplines. Thus, their professional identities are also shaped by their participation and involvement in various professional activities across different fields of study, including research publications and conference attendance/presentations. The two authors' professional identities in larger academic communities demonstrate Wenger's (1998) characterization of

identity as nexus of multimembership, especially since they find themselves continuously reconciling their various academic communities into their own identities as L2 writing scholars.

As observed throughout this study, L2 writing scholars often come to the field with different, sometimes multiple, disciplinary orientations. In order to most effectively address L2 writing issues from these multiple vantage points, L2 writing scholars continue to engage with various disciplinary communities of practice, and, as they do so, they reconcile and (re)construct their multiple professional identities. For example, Soo's scholarship is centered around issues in SLA, academic writing, writing centers, research methods, and teacher education. Because she is interested in L2 writing issues within these varied contexts, she finds herself putting in "constant work to stay engaged in several different disciplinary communities." Some examples of these communities include: TESOL, Symposium on Second Language Writing (SSLW), American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and the Mixed Methods International Research Association (MMIRA). Soo's experiences here echo the way Cristina, an L2 writing scholar in Sánchez-Martín and Seloni (2019), creates her "unique academic trajectory and…[carves] out her research space" (p. 32). Similarly, Soo participates in each of her communities "…to varying degrees—by presenting at annual conferences, publishing in disciplinary journals, joining community leadership committees, and serving as a manuscript and proposal reviewer." The way she participates in these multiple communities is sometimes akin to juggling, "due to constraints in available resources," and at other times, curating: "I try to be deliberate in the way I allocate my time and efforts to these activities…due to the way that I would like to shape the narrative of my research."

In addition to her purposeful engagement in research communities across disciplines, the reconciliation of multiple memberships in these different communities of practice also contributes to the (re)construction of Soo's professional identity. In the previous section on community membership, Soo shared her experience of getting a conference proposal rejected from the annual international TESOL convention. Upon considering its fit with different scholarly communities of practice, she decided to submit the proposal to AAAL and MMIRA. With its greater focus on methodology, the proposal was received with more positive feedback regarding its relevance at these conferences, which was evident in conference proposal comments she received such as: "This paper is solidly located in this strand. It looks great!" (excerpt from AAAL conference proposal feedback). Similarly, when the process of working on a collaborative research project with colleagues in rhetoric and composition brought to light the different values and conventions of composition studies and L2 writing, "the process of selecting proposals for the edited collection thus required extensive discussion to establish common ground and a better understanding of what we valued as rigorous scholarship and effective writing for our collection." In summary, for Soo, the process of reconciling these multiple communities of membership, either by adjusting her approach based on audience, or by participating in different professional activities to various degrees, constantly (re)shapes her scholarly identity as an L2 writing scholar.

Tanita's scholarship in L2 writing is situated in both composition studies and TESOL. Her multimembership in both fields has led her to continue to (re)construct and (re)shape her professional identity. She attends both TESOL and CCCC, presenting her work on L2 writing in order to cultivate better understandings about L2 writing and writers among different groups of audiences and academic communities that work with L2 students, including TESOL professionals and compositionists. She described that when she goes to the annual CCCC, which is a major conference in composition studies, "I represent the field of L2 writing,

promoting an understanding about multilingual writing and writers among mainstream compositionists." She and her fellow L2 writing scholars have done this through participating in panels and individual presentations as well as organizing workshops, where participants can learn both theoretical and practical approaches to working with L2 writers in various educational settings. At TESOL, Tanita is affiliated with the second language writing interest section, an academic group that gathers researchers, educators, and practitioners who are concerned about issues regarding L2 writing. Like at the CCCC, she and her L2 writing colleagues participate in research-based presentations, colloquiums, workshops, and teaching tip sessions. Through participation and involvement in different professional organizations, Tanita has realized that her experiences in multiple academic communities influence her professional identity (re)construction, especially by enabling her to clarify her priority as an L2 writing scholar who wants to continue to generate better understandings about issues related to L2 writing with other professionals in TESOL and composition studies.

With her scholarship situated in related academic fields, Tanita has found it challenging yet rewarding to research a wide variety of issues to reach different communities in which L2 students are regularly present. For example, she seeks to share her work in various forms (e.g., a book, book chapters, and articles) in order to continue discussing issues related to L2 writing and to subsequently effect change at the administrative level that will benefit diverse student populations. Her target audiences vary, including writing teachers in mainstream composition classes and WPAs whose writing programs continue to enroll multilingual students in their composition courses. This illustrates how one's professional identity is reconciled by negotiating "various forms of membership into one identity" (Wenger, 1998, p. 149). She expressed in her narrative that while she realized it required more work and effort, these academic activities and practices have helped her become a well-rounded scholar. Importantly, "these opportunities have allowed me to share my work in L2 writing with scholars in other related fields and to advocate for multilingual students," she added.

Both authors' examples highlight how the concept of multimembership is essential to the development of L2 writing scholars' professional identity (re)construction. As Silva and Leki (2004) suggest, given the history of the field that "lies at the crossroads of composition studies and applied linguistics" (p. 1), L2 writing scholars should acknowledge what these disciplines offer and "find a middle ground" that would assist L2 writing scholarship "to be seen as contributing to as well as learning from these disciplines" (p. 10). A better understanding of the complexities involved in working across disciplines allow these scholars to best position themselves and their scholarship. This thoughtful positioning enables L2 writing scholars to clearly communicate the nature of their work across multiple communities and ensure their work has impact on their intended audiences.

While in this study, we identified three distinct themes involved in the (re)construction of professional identity, we would like to acknowledge that the process of professional identity (re)construction is non-linear. For example, we negotiate our professional identities in institutional contexts by the way we define ourselves and are defined by others. Meanwhile, it is also possible that the reconciliation of various forms of membership can shape our professional identities in such a way that we gain a stronger sense of community membership in certain communities over others. This, in turn, can affect the way we position ourselves within our institutional contexts, leading to further negotiation.

As this study demonstrates, early-career L2 writing scholars continue to (re)construct their professional identities by reconciling the multiple community memberships they hold. In addition, through our narratives, we observed how our professional identities as L2 writing

scholars are affected by and reflect the history of the field of L2 writing (Matsuda, 1998, 1999; Silva & Leki, 2004). As Matsuda (1999) points out:

> Since both composition studies and second-language studies have established their institutional identities and practices over the last three decades, attempting to consolidate the diverse practices in the two distinct professions would be unrealistic and even counterproductive. Rather, second-language writing should be seen as an integral part of both composition studies and second-language studies, and specialists in both professions should try to transform their institutional practices in ways that reflect the needs and characteristics of second-language writers in their own institutional contexts. (p. 715)

This study shows how two L2 writing scholars strive—and sometimes struggle—to navigate the complexities of their work resulting from the field's history. Specifically, L2 writing scholars are required to continuously (re)construct their scholarly identities within their institutional contexts and reconcile their multiple memberships across various fields such as composition and second-language studies. In sum, the identity (re)construction of the two L2 writing faculty in this study illustrate how, in the face of challenges resulting from a rapidly growing and complex field, L2 writing scholars play an active role in positioning themselves among multiple disciplines and fields of study.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, we examined our professional identities as L2 writing faculty through an analytic autoethnography. We delineated ways in which we (re)construct our professional identities in local contexts (our respective institutions) and broader professional communities (e.g., professional organizations and conferences). To generate a better understanding of the complexities of L2 writing scholars' professional identity (re)construction, we drew from research on professional identity development and used Wenger's (1998) characteristics of identity in practice as a theoretical framework to analyze our narratives.

Our narratives illustrate how, for L2 writing scholars, not only does their scholarship transcend disciplinary boundaries, but their scholarly identities also go through a transformation as they work across different communities of practice. This continuous (re)construction of identities is often overlooked by scholars themselves as well as their academic communities. Moreover, this aspect of scholarly identity is inadequately discussed in the literature and in broader conversations in the field. As a result, L2 writing scholars can struggle with the challenges involved in carefully crafting their scholarship to be in line with their professional identities and career aspirations. Thus, it would be helpful for L2 writing scholars to have the opportunity to think about and reflect on their scholarly identities and professional trajectories: "which disciplinary traditions do we pull from and align with, and how do we engage with those academic communities? How do these choices shape our professional identities as well as our day to day research, teaching, and service?" (Kim, 2017, p. 64).

Each of our narratives in this study reflects our specific lived experiences as L2 writing scholars, and thus may not be generalizable. Further studies are needed to fully understand the (re)construction of professional identities of L2 writing scholars in different contexts and stages of their careers. Nevertheless, the present study is useful as a means to provide insight into issues, challenges, and opportunities that L2 writing scholars may encounter. Our findings

indicate that L2 writing scholars are more likely to be required to fulfill multiple roles across different disciplinary programs, or to work in contexts with which they are less familiar. Therefore, there is a need for greater institutional support to help L2 writing scholars, especially those in the early years of their career, thrive in their work. For example, university or department policies should recognize disciplinary differences in publication practices such as co-authorship (American Association of Applied Linguistics, 2017). Recognizing additional responsibilities such as discipline-specific work (e.g., program administration) and research as valuable and measurable scholarship contributions would be another example of supporting L2 writing scholars (Gunner, 2002; O'Meara, 2002). At the disciplinary level, support for junior L2 writing scholars can also occur through mentor texts or scholarship that provide broad insights into fundamental issues. For example, novice scholars in L2 writing can benefit from insights regarding current and enduring issues through historical inquiries (e.g., Belcher, 2014; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003). Bibliographies on recent scholarship (e.g., see Silva, Wang, & Yang, 2018) can help newcomers to the field understand the ways in which the field has developed and evolved throughout the years. In addition, scholarship that explicitly discusses the professionalization of both established and novice L2 writing scholars (e.g., Casanave & Li, 2008; Matsuda, O'Meara, & Snyder, 2017; McIntosh, Pelaez-Morales, & Silva, 2015) is also a valuable source of mentorship. The present analytic autoethnography represents our efforts to continue and advance these discussions surrounding the support of L2 writing scholars and scholarship, and we hope that it will open up new opportunities for dialogue as well as concrete changes for the professional development of L2 writing scholars.

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