REFRAMING NOTIONS
OF COMPETENCE IN SCHOLARLY WRITING:
FROM INDIVIDUAL TO NETWORKED ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we re-examine the emphasis on individual expertise, through the exploration of two case studies of scholarly academic writing production in two contexts —Spain and Hungary. We argue that the dominant emphasis in ELT[1] on competence as individual knowledge or expertise may be misguided in a number of ways; it does not reflect the real life text production practices of scholars; and it underplays the importance of the opportunities and resources afforded by the material conditions under which scholars work. We call for a shift in emphasis away from the individual producer, towards the relations between the individual, his/her network, and the resources that can be mobilised for text production. Individual knowledge of, or "competence" in, English thus becomes one element of many which lead to the successful production of English-medium academic texts. We end by briefly discussing some implications for teaching.

KEY WORDS: Communicative competence, scholarly publishing, networks, academic literacy, multilingual scholars.

RESUMEN

En este artículo reexaminamos este énfasis en la técnica individual a través del estudio de dos casos sobre la producción de escritos académicos en España y en Hungría. Proponemos que el énfasis dominante en ELT sobre la competencia como conocimiento o técnica individual puede ser erróneo por no reflejar las prácticas cotidianas de los académicos en la producción de textos y por disminuir la importancia de las oportunidades y recursos de las condiciones materiales bajo las cuales trabajan. Defendemos un cambio de énfasis que se aleje del productor individual y se acerque a las relaciones entre los individuos, sus redes y los recursos que se puedan movilizar para la producción de textos. El conocimiento o la competencia individual en inglés, por lo tanto, se entiende como un elemento más entre otros muchos que llevan a la producción con éxito de textos académicos en inglés. Finalizamos el artículo sugiriendo, brevemente, algunas implicaciones para la enseñanza del inglés.

PALABRAS CLAVE: competencia comunicativa, publicación académica, redes, literacidad académica, académicos multilingües.

INTRODUCTION

Given the global status of English in scholarly publications, it is often crucial for multilingual scholars to publish in English-medium journals and books (Canagarajah; Medgyes & Laszlo; Shi; Tardy). In this paper we focus on two case studies drawn from a longitudinal ethnographic study involving some 50 scholars from Slovakia, Hungary, Spain and Portugal to explore the practices which lead to scholars' success in academic writing. We define "success" in terms of scholars' own goals of having papers accepted for conference presentations and academic publication. We have two primary aims: 1) empirical —to contribute to understandings about the practices in which multilingual scholars engage by offering case study data; and 2) theoretical —to discuss how such data problematise a core theoretical notion in the field of ELT, that of an individualised notion of "competence."

We begin by outlining the aims, methodology and theory underpinning our larger research project and summarizing our main findings. We then turn to the key notion of "competence," particularly "communicative competence" which is central in ELT. We then consider two case studies to explore how scholars with quite different levels of expertise in English manage their practices as part of networked activity in order to achieve successful outcomes for themselves and others. We consider how the case studies problematise the emphasis in ELT on competence as an individualised phenomenon and conclude by briefly discussing some implications for EAP teaching and research.

THE LARGER RESEARCH PROJECT
AND METHODOLOGY

Since 2001 we have been conducting a longitudinal study of the academic writing and publishing practices of some 50 European scholars of psychology and education. We are seeking to understand the meaning that publishing in English has for scholars as well as the obstacles and opportunities they encounter. The four national sites in the study —Hungary, Slovakia, Spain and Portugal— form part of the "Expanding Circle" of English language users (Kachru), in which English increasingly functions as a foreign, but important instrumental language. The study draws on social practice theories of academic literacy which view reading, writing, and communication as fundamentally social activities (Barton & Hamilton; Gee, *Social, Literacy*; Street), rooted in specific cultural traditions and ways of constructing knowledge (Bazerman; Lea & Street; Prior), embedded in relations of power (Canagarajah "Multilingual"; Jones & Turner & Street), and entailing complex

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[1] In this paper we use ELT when signaling the broad umbrella category of English language teaching and related research; we use EAP when specifically referring to teaching and research specifically English for academic purposes.

issues of access to and participation in various communities of practice (Baldauf & Jernudd; Lillis; Wenger). We have adopted a "text-oriented ethnographic" approach in which we collect and analyse a variety of ethnographic and textual data to explore the production of professional academic texts. Data include semi-structured literacy history interviews with scholars, email discussions, observations, and drafts of scholars' texts; to date we have collected some 520 texts and conducted 155 interviews.

Findings from the project so far indicate that most scholars feel under increasing pressure to publish in English, and that such pressure is sustained through institutional and sometimes national systems of rewards (Curry & Lillis). However, despite the possibility of considerable rewards for publishing in English, scholars are writing for a number of different communities in national and other languages. Another important finding is that "literacy brokers" are highly influential in English medium international publication and impact on text production in significantly different ways. These brokers are people external to the immediate research and authoring context, such as journal editors, reviewers, academic peers and English-speaking friends and colleagues (Lillis & Curry). Our overall study aims to contribute to understandings about multilingual scholars' academic writing practices. In so doing, it raises questions about key tenets in academic literacy and EAP/ELT research. We now turn to one of these tenets, that of "competence."

THE NOTION OF "COMPETENCE" AS INDIVIDUAL EXPERTISE

A core notion in ELT research and teaching fields is that of *competence.* It is widely used in a broad and non-qualified sense to refer to the capacity to do something effectively with the English language, including writing academic texts (see e.g., Burrough-Boenisch; Canagarajah, "Multilingual" 29; Dreyer; Young). In some instances it is explicitly qualified as "communicative" competence, signalling an ability to communicate appropriately according to context (see, e.g., Chimbganda; Jacoby & McNamara; Olson). The importance of contextual knowledge for successful communication is also signalled by qualifiers such as "interactional" competence (Jenkins & Parra) and "cross cultural" and "intercultural communicative" competence (Sehlaoui). In contrast, an emphasis on knowledge of language is foregrounded in the qualifier "linguistic" competence (see Medgyes & Laszlo; Norton & Starfield). Explicit distinctions are sometimes drawn between linguistic (knowledge of grammatical rules) and communicative (rules of use) competence (Berns; Fairman; Fulcher; Widdowson).

The range of uses of the notion of "competence" in ELT research and teaching brings into relief two traditions continuing to exert powerful influence. The first (chronologically) is the cognitive(ist)-Chomskyan tradition where the emphasis is not only on knowledge of the grammatical rules governing a language (Chomsky, *Syntactic, Aspects*) and captured in the notion "linguistic competence," but also on the notion of an idealised "native" speaker. The second is the Hymesian

tradition which stresses the importance of exploring speakers' and listeners' (and writers' and readers') knowledge of contextual rules for use in order to communicate appropriately in different social contexts, and is captured in Hymes's term "communicative competence" (Hymes "Ethnography," "Competence"). Whilst the former cognitive tradition is clearly evident, particularly in second language acquisition research (Ching; Firth & Wagner; Flanigan), the latter communicative emphasis has held considerable sway in ELT in both research and pedagogy. This is evident in ELT and EAP curricula and pedagogy (see discussion in Hall and Eggington; Paulsten) and in research studies where, as indicated above, a range of qualifiers are used to signal a focus on knowledge of the rules of use in any given social context, including 'academic communicative competence' (Allison; Berkenkotter & Huckin & Ackerman; Swales).

However, whilst a) there are clear distinctions between the two traditions and b) there has been an undoubted influence of Hymes's contextualised 'communicative competence' in much ELT work, the cognitivist-Chomskyan tradition has cast a long shadow across approaches purporting to be context sensitive. This is most evident in the continued privileging of the much criticised notion of "native speaker" (see Cook; Canagarajah "Multilingual"; Norton; Singh). But, more fundamentally, as powerfully argued by Leung, the socially oriented notion of communicative competence "has been recontextualised in ELT," and "been pyschologised" (Leung 138). This echoes Firth & Wagner's claim that much work focusing on second language use, has involved a "cognitive optic" (185).

There are increasing recent calls for a return to Hymes's descriptive ethnographic intent (see Rampton). Leung argues for ELT to

> take notice of real-world social, cultural and language developments in contemporary conditions and to re-engage with a set of reformulated ethnographic sensitivities and sensibilities (119).

Leung's call for a greater recognition of real world conditions —like others who stress the importance of exploring communicative practice but whose emphasis tends to be on the individual gaining control over a specific repertoire of language in a context— appropriate way (see, e.g., Ferenz; Jacoby and McNamara) —does not go as far as arguing for a shift away from the central importance attached to individual competence in EAP/ELT. However, Leung's emphasis on 'ethnographic sensitivities' does signal a need to reclaim Hymes's emphasis on framing communicative activity in terms of networks, individuals and resources:

> One cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or even speech itself, as a limiting frame of reference. One must take as context a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole, so that any use of channel and code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the members draw (Hymes, *Foundations* 4).

It is to the practices, in terms of activity, networks and resources, of academic text production that we now turn.

RETHINKING "COMPETENCE"
AS NETWORKED ACTIVITY

In this section we present two case studies of English medium academic text production to consider how scholars manage available resources in order to achieve successful outcomes for themselves and others. As described above, we are drawing on a range of data including observations, interviews, scholars' records of publication, and multiple drafts of scholars' texts. Both Fidel and Istvan[2] are successful: Fidel has some 46 publications, nine of which are in the medium of English. In addition he has presented at numerous conferences in English. Istvan has published some 88 publications, in 28 of which are in English. Both have secured national and international grant funding for their research. What particularly interests us here are the significant differences between the two scholars in terms of their levels of expertise in and control over English; Fidel has a high level in both speaking and writing; whereas Istvan struggles to express himself in both modes. Yet, irrespective of their marked difference in expertise in English, they both achieve considerable success in English-medium text production, for themselves and others. Our aim here is to sketch out how these scholars, who through engagement in a range of networks, manage the contributions of various members towards producing successful texts.

CASE STUDY 1: FIDEL IN HIS NETWORKS

Fidel is a senior lecturer in education and has been working in the same Spanish university for some 14 years. His main language of communication is Spanish but he uses Catalan on a regular basis and also French and German with some colleagues when communicating about a shared international project. He clearly has a high level of expertise in English which he has been learning since he was eight years old. His academic career activity has been punctuated by extended visits to the US and UK as a student and visiting scholar. These visits afforded him opportunities to engage in English medium academic discourse related to his field of education and also his specialist subfield of vocational education. Fidel sees himself as atypical of his generation-in that his level of English is high, as is evident in both his written and spoken communication. Fidel feels that whilst his English is not "perfect" he is confident enough to use it:

> My view with English has always been, well not always but for a few years now, [is] that I should dare to say it, to speak or to write. I'm not fearful of making mistakes, but for me the important thing is to communicate and I don't mind if I say it wrong, or if I use a word which is not the best one, or if I use an idiom which is mistaken (Int 29/09/01).

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[2] These are pseudonyms.

As already noted, Fidel has published extensively. He considers his principal audience to be national, thus his work is most usefully reported and discussed in Spanish. Moreover, he does not personally feel under pressure to publish in English —although such publications are accorded higher status institutionally, for example towards promotion. But he points to the importance of publishing in English both in order to secure grant funding and to participate with colleagues in European projects. A key reason for wanting such funds is to develop local research activity:

> I do that [take part in funded projects] because that allows me to be in a project in which, first I can do work with others on a certain issue, and second because I, with that I get money and that's, particularly with the European projects, which allow you to hire people, and because no-one else in the department is interested in vocational education, I have a chance to get people who are starting to do their PhD, to work for it (Int 28/09/01).

For several years Fidel has been involved in two interconnecting funded projects focusing on vocational identity, one national and the other international (EU). Both projects involve him working closely with colleagues, research assistants and students across disciplines as part of a local network. Three scholars including Fidel can be considered "core" to the local network in that they work closely together to generate ideas for research activity and collaborate extensively (see FG, MN and JK in the triangle in Figure 1).

The internationally funded (EU) project means that some of the members of the research and writing activity of the local network are directly linked to the international network, with scholars from 6 other national contexts. Figure 1 outlines the networks.[3]
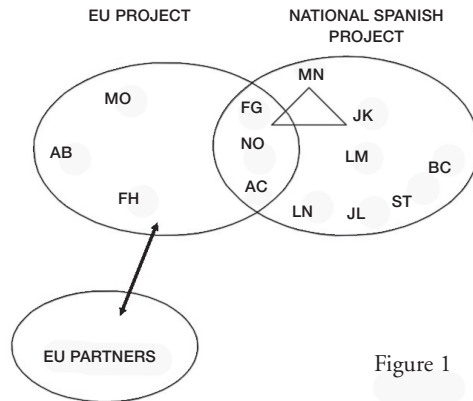

Figure 1

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[3] We are sketching networks in broad terms, recognizing that they are more complex than we have space to discuss in this article.

AN EXAMPLE OF FIDEL'S NETWORK IN ACTION: CONFERENCE PAPERS FOR PRESENTATION AND PUBLICATION

During one of our research field visits, Fidel and colleagues were working feverishly to meet a deadline for the submission of proposals to an international conference. The teams from both national and international projects considered it very important to submit proposals, not least as evidence of dissemination activity from the funded projects:

PREPARING CONFERENCE SUBMISSIONS
(FIELD NOTES, TL JAN. 2001)

It's early evening, around 6 pm. I'm waiting to interview Fidel about his latest writings. Fidel is busy, walking in and out of his office from his desk to the printer in another office. NO and AC are discussing in Spanish the draft submissions they are preparing for an English medium European conference. The deadline is imminent and they are all anxious to get these proposals in. Fidel is engaged in several tasks at the same time. He is trying to write a single authored proposal in English, as well as support NO in producing his single authored text in English. Fidel sits at his desk AC comes in and looks at NO's draft and also adds comments. I'm there so I offer to look at NO's draft too. The phone rings and Fidel is talking on the phone to MN and they are discussing in Spanish a version of another proposal they are preparing together on behalf of two other colleagues [JK and JC in Figure 1], also involved in one of the research projects. Fidel listens and responds in Spanish on the phone as he writes at his computer in English, and MN writes at hers.

In the event, 9 proposals of approximately 1000 words were produced to schedule, involving 13 scholars working across two projects; 3 scholars were involved in the EU project, 7 involved in the national project, and three were working across both projects. All 9 proposals were accepted for the conference and, following the conference, of the 9 presented papers, 6 were submitted and published as conference proceedings. The overall activity was clearly successful.

Whilst the texts produced were drawn from two distinct projects, the extract from field notes above —along with other data sources such as draft texts and interviews-gives some impression of the amount of activity involved and the ways in which members from across both projects supported each other's English medium text production. Fidel draws on the network as a resource for his text production: a colleague in the core group (see MN in Figure 1) regularly comments on his English -medium texts, including texts for this conference. But Fidel is also an important resource for others within the network. Fidel translates, comments on Spanish drafts in Spanish, comments on English drafts in English and Spanish, makes revisions to Spanish and English drafts. See Extract 1 for one example of the way in which Fidel helps move one text from Spanish and English towards submission in English for the conference.

Draft 1 by junior colleague in Spanish and English	Draft 2 by Fidel in English only
[1] Results of this research *provienen del análisis de un* questionnaire, that it *indaga* about the next points: labour *trayectoria,* initial and continuous formation, *condiciones de trabajo y visión de la* profesión. [2] It will be analyse the relationship *que* existed *entre estos rasgos de los docentes y su concepción de identidad.*	[1] Our analyses will be based upon the replies of these teachers to a questionnaire which interrogates into the following points: career, initial and continuing training, working conditions, their images of the profession. [2] Teachers identity will be framed within these features

The shift involves translation, reformulations at word and phrase levels (*questionnaire* and *next* in draft 1 become *replies* and *following* in draft 2) and deletions (reference to the research/paper is cut in sentence 2, draft 2).[4]

Fidel's role in the stages of another text produced for the same conference can be illustrated by briefly considering the trajectory (below) of another of the 9 texts produced for the same conference, which involved some members of both the local and international network.

STAGE 1: RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY TEAM AND TAXONOMY GENERATED-PREDOMINANTLY SPANISH MEDIUM COMMUNICATION

N drafts a paper based developing a new taxonomy in Spanish
Taxonomy paper discussed by local team in Spanish
Professional translator translates text into English
Fidel checks and revises translation

STAGE 2: WRITTEN TEXT DISTRIBUTED FOR DISCUSSION AMONGST EU COLLEAGUES-ENGLISH MEDIUM COMMUNICATION

O comments in English on taxonomy on behalf of Czech team who suggested additional type in taxonomy

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[4] See Lillis & Curry (2006) for a heuristic for tracking text changes across drafts.

STAGE 3: TAXONOMY REVISITED AND REVISED ENGLISH MEDIUM TEXT PRODUCED —SPANISH AND ENGLISH MEDIUM COMMUNICATION

Team discuss in Spanish and English
N makes revisions in line with O suggestions in Spanish
F translates new type
N develops paper further
F translates Spanish additions

Fidel plays a pivotal role not only in the research activity in both projects but in the crafting and drafting of the English medium academic texts —both his own and those which are co-authored or single authored by others. In the next case study we explore how another equally pivotal multilingual scholar but with a different level of expertise in English achieves English-medium publication.

CASE STUDY 2: ISTVAN IN HIS NETWORKS

Istvan is a professor of psychology and director of an institute at the Medical School of a Hungarian university where has worked for 25 years. The language he commonly uses is Hungarian. Like many of his generation, Istvan only began to study English at university; earlier he had studied German and Italian. In the past he used English to teach seminars in psychology practice; he now draws on English for communicating with non-Hungarian speakers and reading and writing research articles. Although Istvan has twice visited the United States to work with colleagues, his stays were for less than two months. Istvan feels comfortable reading academic English, but is frustrated with his abilities in conversation and writing. Improving his English is difficult: "To have high level English linguistic skills in case of scientists [is important] but this realistic skills [we] have to [get] in that part when the scientist start his career. After, when he [is] in the middle of his career to get, to have this linguistic experience is very hard" (Int 03/10/03).[5] Although Istvan feels more comfortable in his scientific writing, this quotation illustrates some of the difficulties Istvan faces in both his oral and written communication.

As noted, Istvan publishes prolifically in Hungarian and English. He feels that Hungary has only a small audience for experimental research; he points to the value of publishing in English to his career, most importantly, for securing the grants that have enabled him to build two laboratories where he supports doctoral students (currently 10) and postdoctoral researchers. Sponsoring such research teams allows Istvan to pursue multiple lines of inquiry and support the development of

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[5] Material in square brackets is inserted here to clarify meaning that was evident in face-to-face interviews.

novice researchers: "My job is, my aim… is making collaboration between these groups and a new scientific frame and making some new research project in which provide a group opportunity to work… together" (Int 03/10/03).[6]

Istvan has a deep understanding of the rhetorical conventions of the journals in his discipline(s) but typically seeks help with sentence-level features of English. Since beginning to publish in English, Istvan has called on various people for help with editing his English writing: a British psychology lecturer and Hungarian teacher of English at his university; some of his students and postdoctoral researchers, one of the present authors, and, most recently, another English teacher (see Lillis and Curry [2006] for tracking of this kind of brokering activity).

Istvan is currently involved in at least five clearly identifiable local-international networks. Our focus here is on text production relating to his chief and longest lasting local-international research network activity. This began in 1997 when two U.S. researchers read an article he had published on cognition in a British journal and invited Istvan to visit them, which he has done at least twice. Because this collaboration became official, Istvan later received funds from a U.S. foundation to develop his laboratory in Hungary. Istvan's work with these U.S. colleagues has resulted in co-authoring seven articles since 1999. Istvan plays a pivotal role in this network, connecting his Hungarian laboratory of students and postdoctoral researchers to his U.S. network of fellow researchers (see Figure 2).
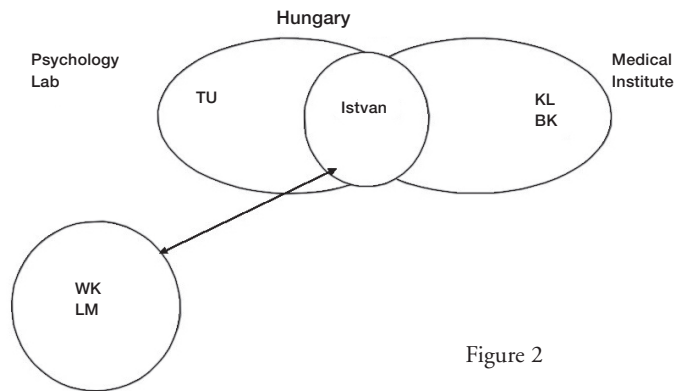

Figure 2

AN EXAMPLE OF ISTVAN'S NETWORK IN ACTION: DEVELOPING AN ENGLISH-MEDIUM JOURNAL ARTICLE

This example illustrates the networked activity that began with experiments conducted in Istvan's laboratory in Hungary and took place over three years. The

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[6] …= indicate omitted material.

writing about the experiments linked Istvan's local network of students and researchers to the U.S. colleagues and ultimately to publication of an article in an English medium international journal.[7] It is possible to identify four stages of activity, as follows:

STAGE 1: CONDUCTING THE EXPERIMENTS IN HUNGARIAN

The experiments were conducted using methods that Istvan had jointly developed with his U.S. colleagues when he visited them in 1998, and subsequently "worked out and refined in personal and email contact" (email communication, 24/03/06). Istvan conducted laboratory experiments with TU, then an undergraduate student and two postdoctoral researchers in Istvan's laboratory. The experiments were conducted in Hungarian using local university students as subjects.

STAGE 2: WRITING ABOUT THE EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH

Istvan then drafted an article about the experimental results in English and asked TU to help with the English writing in early drafts. In addition to having much experience with planning and conducting experiments in the laboratory with Istvan, TU has greater expertise in English and they have co-authored a number of articles. Extract 2 shows TU's tracked changes on Istvan's first draft.

[Note to editors: the tracked changes need to be kept in published version]

EXTRACT 2.

[1.] The present study focuses on the possible sources of intersubjective variation in the ability of acquire spatial information from virtual and from real environment. [2.] The empirical findings of the different ways how people orientate in such spatial tasks have relevance for neuropsychological practice. [3.] Our purpose was to investigate the validity of these performances by searching differences and concordances with the several components of place learning and spatial orientation in virtual and in real arena mazes.

TU's revisions include reducing the overall length, shortening sentences, (the two main points in draft 1 become two sentences in draft 2), reformulating

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[7] See Curry & Lillis for discussion around classification of national versus international journals.

phrases (for example, to foreground the contribution of the study in sentence 2), making phrasal additions and deletions, correcting verb usage, and supplying missing verbs and prepositions. After more revisions negotiated with TU and minor feedback from one of the U.S. colleagues, Istvan submitted the manuscript to an English-medium journal, which rejected it. The reason given for this decision was methodological, that only female subjects had been used.

STAGE 3: DOING THE EXPERIMENT WITH
NEW HUNGARIAN SUBJECTS

To address this methodological concern, Istvan secured funding for TU to re-conduct the experiment with male subjects, again Hungarian university students to match the first sample. The research was carried out in Hungarian and formed the basis of TU's master's thesis.

STAGE 4: CRAFTING A NEW ENGLISH-MEDIUM ARTICLE

After the additional experiment, Istvan drew on TU's findings to craft a new English-medium article focusing on "more interesting results" from the analysis than the first article had presented (email communication, 02/02/05). Istvan combined these results with parts of the first manuscript and added new sections written by himself and sections by one of his postdoctoral researchers. He sent this manuscript to the U.S. colleague. The colleague's comments to Istvan in his covering email illustrate his considerable involvement in the development of the article, including rewriting several sections:

> I agree that the introduction is way too long. I started to read and edit it, but soon realized that I didn't know the point of the paper... I then worked on the Method and Results sections, trying to get them into language that I understand. Please check those sections, answer my comments, and accept or reject the changes that I have made (email communication, 17/05/04).

Thus this English-medium text-production involved members of both the local and the international networks. Istvan submitted the revision to a new English-medium international journal, which accepted the article pending changes. Again Istvan enlisted TU's help in making these revisions, which were accepted and the article published. This example shows the wide-ranging types of activity across one of Istvan's networks, from the initial experiment conducted in Hungarian to the various contributions to the writing by different people in different locations at different moments. It demonstrates how Istvan 1) draws on a variety of resources within his network to produce English-medium texts and thus publish his research in English-medium journals, despite limitations in his command of English; and 2) acts as a pivotal resource for others in his network, enabling them to participate in the international research network and publish in English as well.

CONCLUSION

These case studies illustrate how the production of English-medium academic texts by multilingual scholars often takes place within networks of activity, involving a range of resources and participants with different types of expertise and experience. The network and its resources can be seen as a form of what Bourdieu calls "social capital":

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition —or in other words, to membership in a group (Bourdieu 248-249).

Social networks function as a key type of social capital which enables the production of an important type of global cultural capital, English medium academic texts. As these case studies of networks in action indicate, some people play pivotal roles which are not necessarily linked to high levels of competence or expertise in the use of English. Istvan draws on others, both co-researchers and co-authors, in addition to external literacy brokers (see Lillis & Curry), to produce texts acceptable for publication. At the same time he acts as a key resource for others in his network in a number of important ways: by contributing expertise in research and experience gained from publishing across different linguistic contexts; by providing access for members of his local network to his international networks and thus to English-medium publishing contacts. Even where the level of expertise of English may be high, as in Fidel's case, scholars draw on others as resources for producing their own texts. They do so for a number of reasons notably time and resources. Moreover, as has been shown with Fidel, scholars with expertise in English function as an important resource for the production of other scholars' texts, thus facilitating English medium text production for scholars with a range of expertise in English.

Our intention is not to deny the reality or desirability of individual expertise in distinct languages. However, we think it is important to recognise that in multilingual scholars' busy, pressured and complex writing contexts, scholars often do not-and cannot-successfully produce English-medium academic texts in isolation from colleagues. Looking at actual instances of successful academic text production may offer an alternative model to students of English —whether they are "students" or professional academics: one where they can be encouraged to draw on a range of strengths and interests within a given group or network and where it is not assumed that everyone has to have the same level of English. Blommaert & Collins & Slembrouck emphasise the need to situate competence/ies socially and historically and, most importantly from the perspective of this paper, to, "destabilize the seemingly static notion of competencies as a set of attributes of individuals" (199). For the many "learners" in ELT contexts who are already practitioners and scholars, the instances of text production provided in our case studies may more strongly reflect their lives and material constraints and thus the possibilities for their successful participation in English medium text production.

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THERESA LILLIS & MARY JANE CURRY

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