Writing the self: the discoursal construction of identity on intersecting timescales

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In this article I reflect on some of the factors which I believe are central to Jon Smidt's intellectual project, as set out in his 'ecological theory of writing development' (2009). I present a view of writing as a social practice, proposing the value of the term 'wrighting' rather than 'writing', and introducing the notion of timescales as an additional perspective. I draw my examples from an act of wrighting in the context of a training restaurant providing vocational education. I focus particularly on the way in which wrighting coordinates different timescales, and on the resulting interplay between wrighting and identity. I outline five ways of thinking about wrighter identity which I believe to be in harmony with Smidt's 'ecological account of writing' and which, taken together, show how wrighting the self contributes to discoursal change.

Introduction

People do not just 'write': they always write *something*. This is not just a question of content – what they are writing about, but also a question of the context in which they are writing: for what purpose, with and to whom, under what conditions, when, where and how. These factors interact with the life history and sense of selfhood which people bring to the act of writing to shape the text which they produce, and to shape the impression they convey of themselves through their writing. Jon Smidt calls this way of thinking about writing 'an ecological account of writing' (2002), and has extended it into 'an ecological theory of writing development' (2009), to make it applicable to pedagogy. In this chapter I aim to reflect on some of the factors which I believe are central to Smidt's intellectual project, illustrating them in relation to an act of writing from my own research.

Figure 1 is an A4 information sheet about 'Speciality Evenings' produced by Logan,[1] a 20-year-old student on a vocational course in catering and hospitality at a

1 'Logan' is a pseudonym.

technical college.[2] Logan had not been successful at school, and had left at the age of 16 with no significant qualifications. He had not liked any of the jobs he had taken until he started working in a restaurant. He said,

> I'm more of a hands-on person, and I like, I like making people happy.

This was the first course Logan had enjoyed, and he was doing well for the first time in his life. Much of the time was spent in the real work environment of the college training restaurant, Coulson's. Reading and writing in this environment were practical and purposeful, often located in interactions with other trainee chefs and waiters, and with customers. After they were seated, each customer received a large folded menu holder, with information about the current activities of the restaurant on the left hand side, and the menu of the day on the right. We asked Logan if designing the information sheet was a college 'assignment', and he said,

> It is and it isn't. I mean, it's like, you can be asked to do them or you might not be asked to do them.

From discussing it with him further, we understood that he had done it of his own choice, keen to contribute to the running of the restaurant.

Even though this writing was located in an educational context, it was very different from the sort of writing he remembered from his school days.[3]

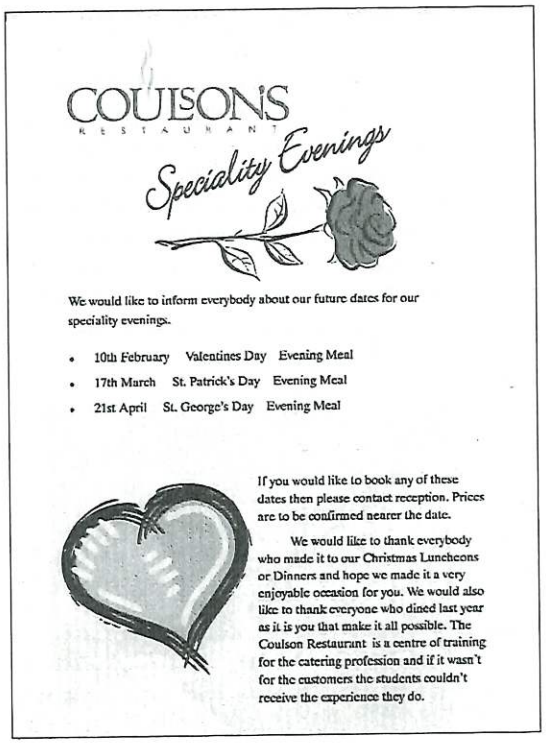
In the rest of this chapter I will present a view of writing as a social practice, using Logan's writing in the Catering and Hospitality course to provide examples. I will focus particularly on the way in which writing coordinates different timescales, and on the resulting interplay between writing and identity.

The components of writing events

Figure 2 represents two concurrent acts of writing, one in the centre of the picture, and one in the top right hand corner, and proposes that a written text should be viewed in its context of production, and that any theory of writing should take account of the situated nature of writing. This is a picture, rather than a list or a diagram, in order to emphasise the significance of the actual observable moment at which text is produced, amenable to ethnographic research through participant observation, audio-visual recording and/or through detailed discussion with one or more of the participants. The picture has been drawn to represent a number of points about specific instances of

2 I am grateful to Candice Satchwell who collected the data on which this analysis is based.

3 For further discussion of this example, see Ivanič, 2006; and of literacy practices in vocational education settings, see Ivanič *et al.*, 2007, 2009; Satchwell and Ivanič, 2007; Pardoe and Ivanič, 2007, and the website http://www.lancs.ac.uk/lflfe/.


COULSON'S
RESTAURANT
Speciality Evenings

We would like to inform everybody about our future dates for our speciality evenings.

- 10th February Valentines Day Evening Meal
- 17th March St. Patrick's Day Evening Meal
- 21st April St. George's Day Evening Meal

If you would like to book any of these dates then please contact reception. Prices are to be confirmed nearer the date.

We would like to thank everybody who made it to our Christmas Luncheons or Dinners and hope we made it a very enjoyable occasion for you. We would also like to thank everyone who dined last year as it is you that make it all possible. The Coulson Restaurant is a centre of training for the catering profession and if it wasn't for the customers the students couldn't receive the experience they do.

Figure 1: 'Speciality Evenings' information sheet designed by Logan

writing, sometimes called 'writing events' or 'literacy events' (see for example Barton, 2007). Although these elements in the 'real life' context of writing may seem obvious, they are crucial for a socio-cultural understanding of writing as developed below. In particular, what is going on in the mind of the writer is pivotal to the coordination of timescales, to the discoursal construction of identity, to the circulation of discourses and to eventual social change.

Firstly, texts on the page or screen are always not only linguistic, but also visual and material objects; that is, texts are multimodal, and also often multilingual (for more discussion, see Cope and Kalantzis, 2000 and Kress, 2010). This is represented in Figure 2 by the electronic text on the computer monitor, consisting of words in at least two typefaces and a logo-style illustration on the top left-hand corner. Multimodality is relevant to all texts, not just to those which are specifically designed to incorporate visuals or varied materials. The visual and material qualities of the text

being worked on in the right-hand corner will be very different. For this reason, I prefer to use the terms 'wrighting' and 'wrighter'– words I have derived from the suffix '-wright'[4] – instead of 'writing' and 'writer', to emphasise that a text is 'made' from materials in at least three modes, the verbal, the visual and the material, in the same way as a playwright makes a play and a cartwright makes a wheel (for further discussion of this way of conceptualising 'wrighting', see Ivanič, 2004a; Parkin, 2009). The multimodality of Logan's information sheet is not only to be observed in his use of illustrations, but also in his choice of fonts and sizes, his layout and, above all, in that the finished product was to be printed on a sheet of paper for use in the restaurant. It would have looked very different if it had been done in a school exercise book, as is a great deal of 'writing' in educational settings, where its multimodality is often not taken into consideration.

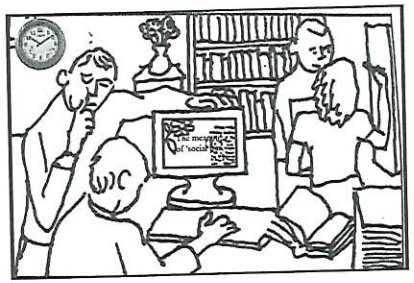


Figure 2: Wrighting in its observable context

Secondly, wrighting is a personal and interpersonal social act. Wrighters are individual human beings characterised by age, gender, and ethnicity, with particular configurations of physical, emotional, intellectual and personality features. They have specific roles in their families, workplaces, educational institutions and everyday lives which may or may not impact on their wrighting. Each brings to the moment of wrighting their own unique life history, feelings, values, attitudes and beliefs, and their sense of themselves as social beings: including, for example, their feelings of confidence, authority, rights and responsibilities. The people in the picture in Figure 2 represent specific people in real time at a specific moment on their life trajectories. The life trajectory of the wrighter can be thought of as crossing the picture in Figure 2 at right angles. This is what I will later call their 'autobiographical self'. At the moment when he was wrighting the restaurant information sheet, Logan was a unique individual, a 20-year-old white man who had recently gained a new sense of his own worth, and was committed to the ethos of the training restaurant where he was working.

4 The suffix '-wright' in English means a craftsman, a person who makes something.

Wrighting is located in social relationships between particular people: both between those involved in the shared production of the text, and between the wrighter(s) and reader(s) (see for example Nystrand, 1986; Evensen, 2002; Smidt, 2002). Both acts of wrighting in Figure 2 are collaborative, with the person at the keyboard being advised by the person standing to the left, the two people at the whiteboard discussing what to wright, and the potential for consultation among all four. In everyday life a surprising number of texts are designed collaboratively, although in educational settings there is still an emphasis on individual authorship because 'writing' is so frequently the medium for assessment. Logan wrought his information sheet alone, but it could have been a joint effort between two or more trainee restaurant staff, as the 'we' in the text suggests.

The picture in Figure 2 does not show the reader(s) of the text, but they are real people in just the same way as the wrighters are, in one or more different physical locations. The reader(s) are consciously or subconsciously ever-present in wrighters' minds, influencing their choices of what to wright and how. They may be individuals the wrighter knows in person, as for example when wrighting a personal letter or an assignment for a particular teacher, or more generalised types of people, as for example when wrighting a notice or poster for public display. The readers for Logan's information sheet were very easy for him to imagine: they are the types of people who sit down to meals in Coulson's.

Thirdly, wrighters wright in a specific time and place, in specific conditions, with particular resources and technologies at their disposal. In the picture in Figure 2, there is a convenient work space with a computer; and books and papers are easily to hand – not always the case in the places where people wright. On the other hand, the space is not dedicated to wrighting: there appear to be several different activities going on in the same room. It seems that there is freedom to move around and consult others or relax while working. At the wrighting moment represented in the picture it is mid-morning, and there may be a deadline for completion of the text. Although my main concern in this paper is to focus on everything that is in play at a specific moment of wrighting, it is important to recognise that texts are not created in an instant, but sequentially over varying periods of time. Some, such as SMS messages, may be produced in just a minute or two, perhaps on the move; others will be produced at one sitting, others again may take days, weeks or even years to produce in many different places and spaces. Logan said that he wrote the information sheet one night on a computer alone in his bedroom at home. He spent hours and hours on it, wanting to get it right. He said:

> If you get me into a project which I'm interested in, I won't be bothered how much time I spend on it, I'll sit there and do it until I'm happy with it.

Fourthly, wrighters engage in both manual and mental processes in order to produce texts. Physical and material processes include the note-taking, planning, drafting and editing that accompany the production of a text. Some wrighters move sequentially through a text, others go backwards and forwards, revising and rearranging as they go. Wrighters differ in the length of time they can concentrate before they need a break, in their preferences for wrighting implements and materials, in their use of electronic aids. In Figure 2, the wrighter at the centre of the picture is using a keyboard and computer programs; the wrighter in the top right-hand corner is using a whiteboard and thick pen. A still picture cannot capture much detail about physical processes, but more could be revealed by a video recording. Perhaps more important are the cognitive and creative processes of wrighting which cannot, strictly speaking, be seen in the picture, because they are features of mental rather than physical space. These mental processes drive the relationship between the form and content of the text. When asked about the process of wrighting his restaurant information sheet, Logan said,

> I'll start off with something and then the end product will end up totally different. Last night when I was doing the information sheet, it started off with quite a lot of graphics and just little bits of writing, but then it changed to more information, a little bit about thank you for coming to the Christmas Luncheons and if it wasn't for the customers then this wouldn't be possible, and all that, and just a couple of graphics.

Fifthly, in everyday life almost all wrighting has a purpose, often an interactive, communicative purpose involving the need to exchange information and understandings with others. In Figure 2, there is a sense that the wrighting of the texts is purpose-driven, although the purpose is not visible in the picture as it is in the minds of the participants. Logan had an extremely clear purpose for wrighting the information sheet: to fill the space on the left of the menu-holder. However, it seems from what he said above that the purposes multiplied and became more complex as he worked on it: he realised that the sheet could fulfil the functions of providing information, expressing gratitude, and appreciating the role of customers more generally.

Finally and crucially, each multimodal text is meaningful. This is a special characteristic of verbal and visual communication: that it can represent events, aspects of the world, states of affairs and social relationships belonging to different times and spaces from the context of production. The meaning of the text is not in the picture in Figure 2: these other realities are drawn into the text by the act of wrighting. Logan's information sheet is very interesting in this respect: it does not represent anything in the context in which he was wrighting (his bedroom), but refers to the context of reading, in the present (*Coulson's, we, everyone*), in the past (*Christmas luncheons or dinners, we made it a very enjoyable occasion, everyone who dined last year*), in the future (*our future dates*); and to elements which are not bound in time and space (the symbolic rose and heart, *if it wasn't for the customers the students couldn't receive the experience they do.)*

The socio-cultural context for wrighting

Figure 3 takes a 'real-life' act of wrighting, as described above, as its starting point, and proposes that it is embedded in historically shaped socio-political constituents of its context. These additional factors are essential to an ecological account of writing, such as that presented by Smidt (2002, 2009). In Figure 3 the additional elements are presented in capital letters, not in pictures, to emphasise that they are mental constructs – generalisations about ways of thinking about the world and of doing things which are derived from many instances. They cannot be researched directly, but need to be inferred from the way they are instantiated in specific instances. In a social-constructionist and critical view of human action, it is essential to include attention to these less visible, more politically charged, culturally sustained aspects of social life, as well as to the observable aspects represented in the picture (as argued, for example, by Fairclough, 1992, 2001). In my view a key feature of these elements is that they are not unitary and they are not set in stone; rather, they are multiple, shifting configurations of cultural resources on which individuals draw according to their own personal dispositions and circumstances. These sociocultural elements in the context of wrighting are learnt by participation, apprenticeship and affiliation.

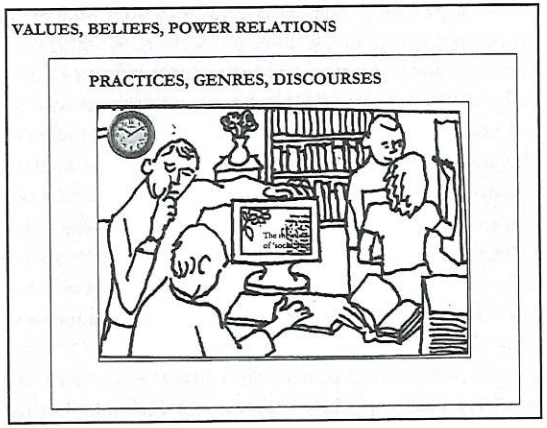


Figure 3: Wrighting in its socio-cultural context (based on Ivanič, 1998, 2004b)

The outer layer in Figure 3 represents ways of being, thinking and relating to others which are jostling for dominance in a culture. The values, beliefs and social relations which are sustained by a culture are often hard to identify, as they are abstract, and often guide human action below the level of consciousness. The social context in which Logan was working was a hybrid between an educational institution and a workplace,

so it supported a variety of values, beliefs and social relations which were sometimes in conflict. There was a strong work ethic for loyalty to the restaurant, there was an unacknowledged acceptance of the commodification of food and drink service for commercial ends, there were various competing values regarding foodstuffs, there were contradictory values regarding spending time on activities involving reading and 'writing', and there were relatively loose social relations between tutors and students, compared with those in compulsory schooling.

The middle layer of Figure 3 represents the socio-culturally constructed ways of doing things which mediate between the values, beliefs and power relations in a social context and the actual instances of social interaction in that context. 'Practices' means ways of doing things which people draw on in their lives, which have values, beliefs and social relations inscribed in them. These are not restricted to wrighting, or even to language or literacy, but apply to all aspects of social action. Practices vary in scale: for example, having business lunches is a larger-scale practice, and establishing eye contact while clinking glasses with fellow drinkers is a smaller-scale practice. (I am not using the terms 'macro-' and 'micro-', because these suggest polar opposites, whereas practices vary in scale along a continuum.)

The term 'practices' is extremely useful for referring to 'literacy practices', which David Barton and Mary Hamilton define as 'general cultural ways of utilising written language, involving values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships' (2000, p. 7). An example of a literacy practice is spreading books out for reference while wrighting, as on the desk in the centre of Figure 3. This may in turn be extended to include text-making (or 'semiotic') practices, such as using word-wrap to integrate clip-art with words or – to focus on the linguistic aspects of text-making, using the first person or using abstract nouns. Logan engaged in the practice of taking a long time over a piece of wrighting: a practice which he had previously seen as something only done by other people, but through his engagement with his new course had begun to participate in himself. Crucially, he had a choice: there were almost certainly other practices which had currency in the socio-cultural context, such as never taking any college work home.

The term 'discourses' is often used in an all-inclusive way to mean culturally recognisable configurations of values, beliefs and practices, including but not restricted to semiotic practices. This use of the term conflates the outer and the middle layers of Figure 3, providing a useful shorthand. Sometimes, however, it is advantageous to make finer distinctions. In particular, 'genres' and 'discourses' are terms used by linguists and language teachers to focus in more detail on what I called 'semiotic practices' in the last paragraph, and to distinguish two types of work performed by texts simultaneously. In keeping with usage by other linguists, I use the term 'genres' to refer to ways of using language according to social purpose, and the term 'discourses' to refer to ways of using language and other semiotic modes which have values and beliefs inscribed in them. Specific genres are conventionally associated with specific discourses, such as the student essay genre with academic discourse, but even in a relatively clear-cut one-to-one relationship like this, a student wrighter might successfully integrate elements from other genres and/or other discourses into their essay. In many cases the association is looser: for example, someone wrighting a newspaper article could in principle select from and synthesise a wide range of genres and a wide range of discourses. Crucially, genres and discourses do not provide watertight models of how language should be used, but they are culturally recognised ways with words which are drawn on, combined and recombined in unique permutations in individual instances of wrighting. It is, however, useful to posit these culturally recognisable patterns in the use of semiotic resources in order to identify instances of them in actual texts.

Genres are ways with words which typify particular functions of language. Genres are often specific to their social contexts; for example, the genre of academic essay would not be expected to be drawn upon in a toy shop, and if it was, it would signal something unusual going on (see for example Swales, 1998). I suggest that a variety of genres were likely to have been circulating in the context of the catering and hospitality course in which Logan was enrolled, available for Logan to draw upon when he wrought his information sheet. Firstly, there were genres associated with the social role of student, and the pedagogic function of being assessed: genres such as log book entries, reports and essays. Secondly, there were genres associated with the social role of restaurant employees, including various genres for publicity, for the provision of information, and for menus. Thirdly, there were genres which were in the domain of the college staff, including pedagogic genres such as task specifications, and publicity genres for the services on offer at the college. Genres also vary according to how the social relations between wrighter and reader are inscribed in them. For example, a report to be shared among colleagues will display different interpersonal relationships from a report written by a student for a teacher.

Discourses in this narrower definition are ways with words which typify particular views of reality. In Logan's course context, I suggest that there may have been two or more competing discourses about key aspects of restaurant work. Taking three aspects which are relevant to the text in Figure 1, I suggest that the discourses of food and drink service included a 'customers are a pain' discourse, a 'control the customers' discourse and a 'make people happy' discourse. Discourses of eating out included a 'special occasion' discourse and a 'cheap and cheerful' discourse. Discourses of Valentine's Day included a 'romantic relationship' discourse and a 'sexual conquest' discourse. As I shall argue below, the choice of which genres and discourses to draw upon has consequences for identity: genres have social roles inscribed in them, and discourses have socio-political positionings inscribed in them.[5]

5 For an application of this understanding of discourses to the teaching and learning of writing, see Carter 2009.

Timescales

In the previous two sections I have outlined the elements of social context which are present at the moment of wrighting, both those present in the immediate, real life context (the wrighting 'event'), and those in the broader socio-cultural context in which that event takes place. I have argued that practices, genres and discourses have a mediating role between the values, beliefs and power relations in the broader context and the social action at a specific moment in time. Amy Burgess has contributed to the richness of a socio-cultural view of wrighting by drawing attention to the way in which wrighting coordinates not only times but also timescales (2010a, 2010b; Burgess and Ivanič, 2010).

Firstly, on the moment-by-moment timescale of lived experience, a text coordinates the time(s) of wrighting with the time(s) of reading, by being amenable to transition from one to the other. Sometimes the times of wrighting and reading are the same – for example, in instant messaging. More often these moments in time are separated, sometimes (for example in the wrighting of a will) by many years. Secondly, as mentioned above, wrighting can bring events and aspects of the physical and social world from other times and spaces into the text, hence coordinating the times of the wrighting and reading with the represented times and spaces. All these instances are in 'real time' – the most immediate timescale relevant to wrighting.

On a considerably longer timescale are the life histories of the participants. At the moment when they participate in a wrighting event they are simultaneously on a trajectory from their birth to their death, and everything they have experienced in their lives up to that point shapes the resources they have at their disposal: their feelings, values, attitudes and beliefs, and their sense of themselves as social beings, as described in the first section. These resources have been accumulated through participation in a unique set of events in their past, including wrighting events, and each act of wrighting will contribute in some small way to the resources which they take forward into the future. Thus this 'life span' timescale is coordinated with the 'moment-by-moment' timescale.

Thirdly, the values and beliefs which circulate in a socio-cultural context, and the practices, genres and discourses which sustain them are located on what Stanton Wortham calls a 'socio-historical' timescale (2003, p. 229). That is, they are not tied to the life spans of individual people, but they are socio-culturally shaped resources which are transformed and shifted in relation to one another by years or even centuries of social action, with patterns of dominance among them changing over time. For example, the value, beliefs, practices, discourses and genres socially available in restaurants in the UK would have been very different 50 years ago, and indeed the whole practice of running a 'training restaurant' in a college would not, as far as I can tell, have existed then. The socio-historical timescale is what provides individuals with resources to draw on for their wrighting on the moment-by-moment timescale, and they adopt and adapt these resources into the timescale of their life span.

The discoursal construction of wrighter identity

These three intersecting timescales and the components of social context outlined above provide a framework within which to discuss the different aspects of identity at play at the moment of wrighting. In what follows I will present five ways of thinking about the identity of the wrighter, which I have developed in my research over the last 20 years:

1 socially available possibilities for selfhood
2 the autobiographical self
3 the discoursal self
4 the authorial self
5 the perceived wrighter[6]

On the socio-historical timescale are located the practices, genres, and discourses of the socio-cultural context which hold out 'possibilities for selfhood' to the wrighter. As outlined above, genres encode roles and social relationships; discourses encode positionings in relation to values and beliefs (see particularly Smidt, 2009 for the terms 'roles' and 'positionings'). These socially available possibilities for selfhood circulate among the participants in a socio-cultural context, not tied to any individual's life history or sense of who they are. They have been shaped by the push and pull of centrifugal and centripetal tendencies over socio-historical time, as individuals have conformed to or contested the values, beliefs and power relations inscribed in them. They will be further transformed by creative recombinations in the future.

On the life-span timescale wrighters make and remake a sense of who they are and who they want to be: an 'autobiographical self'. This is the real person who participates in the act of wrighting at a specific time and place, engaging in the physical and mental processes of text-making, envisaging the readers with whom s/he is communicating, and making the cognitive and creative decisions about the content and design of the text. Wrighters bring their life histories with them to the moment of wrighting, including their encounters with discourses and genres throughout their years so far, and their current sense of the roles and positionings with which they have the right and the desire to identify. It is through the mind of this person that the possibilities for selfhood are sifted, leading to the adoption of some and the rejection of others. The shaping of the autobiographical self coordinates the socio-historical and life-span timescales.

On the moment-by-moment timescale wrighters construct a text which not only contains a message but also a portrayal of themselves: a 'discoursal self'. It is rare for wrighters to be aware that they are inscribing an identity for themselves in their

6 Cf. Peter Hobel & Ellen Krogh's article in this book.

wrighting: this process is more often than not subconscious. They draw selectively on their personal repertoire of possibilities for selfhood according to factors in the immediate social context, particularly according to their definition of the purpose for which they are wrighting, their construction of who will read the text, of the relative status of the reader(s), and of the power relations between them. The nature of the personal repertoire they have available to them depends on their 'autobiographical self': the genres and discourses to which they have been exposed, to which they have had the right of access, and to which they have established a commitment in their life histories up to that point. Consciously or subconsciously, they align themselves with the roles and positionings inscribed in some of the possibilities for selfhood available to them, and not others. In the construction of a discoursal self, wrighters coordinate the moment-by-moment timescale of the immediate context with the life span timescale on which they are living out their lives, and with the socio-historical timescale which has shaped the genres and discourses on which they draw in their text. From the semiotic features of texts, analysts can attempt to identify the genres and discourses on which wrighters have drawn, although they cannot know for certain whether this was intentional, unintentional or strategic alignment with the values and beliefs encoded in them. In what follows I attempt to identify the genres and discourses on which Logan was drawing in his information sheet, and the roles and positionings they afforded him.

I suggest that Logan was drawing on two different genres, taking on two different roles. The first part of the text, with the heading *Speciality Evenings* and the verbs *we would like to inform, please contact, we would like to thank* draw on 'information providing' genres, and cast Logan in the role of a member of the restaurant staff. The final sentence is rather different, with the *we* now referred to as *the students* and *they*, and the *you* now referred to as *the customers*, and the verbs *is, was, couldn't receive* and *do*, stating impersonal facts rather than conducting interpersonal transactions. I suggest that this last sentence draws on a publicity genre for the services on offer at the college, and casts Logan in the role of a member of the course staff. Both these roles are very different from the role of 'student' which he may inhabit in other wrighting tasks at college.

Simultaneously, Logan positions himself in a variety of ways through the discourses he draws upon. He constructs himself as someone who is keen to serve customers by drawing on a 'make people happy' discourse of food and drink service, with the high proportion of personal pronouns *we, you, everybody* and *everyone*, the deferential repetition of politeness markers: *we would like to* and *please*, lexis in the semantic field of pleasure and enjoyment: *'hope', 'very enjoyable'*, and the use of the speech act *'thank'*. His choice of the handwriting font for the heading *Speciality Evenings* also carries this friendly, informal 'make people happy' discourse. A somewhat different positioning is evident in the middle paragraph. The imperative 'contact reception' and the passive 'prices to be confirmed', with their more bureaucratic lexis suggest a 'control the customers' discourse, which constructs Logan's discoursal self as an efficient manager.

Other features of the text draw on a 'special occasion' discourse of eating out, positioning Logan as someone who values elegant eating as opposed to 'cheap and cheerful' eating. This positioning is carried by the lexical items *Speciality Evenings, Christmas Luncheons, Dinners* (with a capital 'D'), *occasion* and *dined*. This discoursal self is also constructed by the restaurant logo, not designed by Logan but willingly appropriated by him, suggesting that this is a stylish eating place. This example highlights the immediacy of the construction of the discoursal self: it is an aspect of wrighter identity which is tied to a particular text; in a different text Logan might have positioned himself as espousing the values of cheap and cheerful eating.

The two graphics – the pulsing pink heart and the perfect red rose – identify Logan with a 'romantic love' view of Valentine's Day, and certainly do not hint at the competing 'sexual conquest' discourse (see Ivanič, 2006 for a more detailed analysis of these graphics). These graphics might be seen as blending the positionings discussed above: Logan is constructing a discoursal self as an almost sickly sweet, enthusiastic and deferential member of restaurant staff, innocent or ignorant of the commercialisation and commodification of food and drink service in which he is participating. Wrighting can be seen as an act of identification, affiliating wrighters to positions which they may or may not want to own, constructing a 'discoursal self' which is specific to this particular text, and may be different in another text. The wrighter identity which is written into texts as the 'discoursal self' may be not so much a revelation of wrighters' real values, beliefs and commitments, but rather an indication of what they think is expected of them, of conforming to the conventions in the social context, to what James Gee calls the 'Discourses of power' (2009, p. 46). This act of 'wrighting the self' may, in its small way, realign the wrighter's 'autobiographical self' and, if the text is read by others, will contribute to the circulation, reproduction, or contestation of patterns of dominance among socially available possibilities for selfhood.

The 'authorial self' is a specific component of the 'discoursal self' which I find useful to single out, partly because it is an aspect of wrighter identity which is often addressed by other theorists (see, for example, Tang and John, 1999). One of the ways in which wrighters position themselves in their texts is by revealing where they stand on a scale of assertiveness and authoritativeness in relation to their readers. Logan subliminates his own identity by using the first person plurals *we* and *our*. In association with others encompassed by the *we*, he constructs an unassertive and deferential position in relation to the reader. This changes slightly with the change of genre in the final two lines, where he uses the categorical present tense to assert a state of affairs authoritatively.

The fifth aspect of wrighter identity, the 'perceived wrighter', is also discoursally constructed on the moment-by-moment timescale, but at the time of reading rather than the time of wrighting. This is the way in which the reader(s) 'read' the wrighter: the impression they take from the text of the wrighter's identity. This may coincide with the portrayal the wrighter consciously or subconsciously wanted to convey, or it may be disconcertingly different. For example, had he thought about it at all, which

he probably didn't, Logan may have wanted to represent himself as a responsible member of the restaurant staff, but the 'discoursal self' he constructed may have given an impression of him to some readers as an over-effusive student. As an analyst, it is very difficult to uncover the 'perceived wrighter': the research team did not interview customers who read Logan's 'Speciality Evenings' information sheet, so we don't know what impression they inferred of him from it. Indeed, it is hard for analysts to distinguish the 'perceived wrighter' from 'the discoursal self' since they are themselves readers of the text and are to some extent dependent on their own responses to it to identify the way the wrighter is positioned.

Wrighting the self is played out at the intersection of the three timescales outlined above and consequently contributes to the reproduction, contestation and transformation of the order of discourse, and to social change. As wrighters create a text in a specific social context in real time they bring a life history and sense of selfhood to it, constructed by the genres and discourses to which they have had access. Through their affiliation to some of the roles and positionings encoded in these genres and discourses, and not others, wrighters entrench and/or realign their own values, beliefs and power relations. The 'discoursal self' in a text conveys to readers not only an impression of the wrighter, but also a reinforcement of some values and beliefs, and a demoting of others (although readers are unlikely to be aware of these rejected alternatives). This will, in turn, in some small way contribute to the repertoire of possibilities for selfhood available to those readers next time they wright.

Conclusion

Norwegian theorists and researchers have made an enormous contribution to our understanding of writing as a social practice, and in particular to issues of writer identity (see in particular Eik-Nes, 2008; Evensen, 2002; Igland and Ongstad, 2002; Ongstad, 1999; Smidt, 2002, 2009). In this paper I hope to have complemented their work by presenting my current understanding of wrighting as a social practice, proposing the value of the term 'wrighting' rather than 'writing', and introducing the notion of timescales as an additional perspective. In the second part of the paper I have outlined five ways of thinking about wrighter identity which I believe to be in harmony with Smidt's 'ecological account of writing' and which, taken together, show how wrighting the self contributes to discoursal change.

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Rolle, stemme og posisjonering mellom gyldighet og relevans

Sigmund Ongstad

Denne artikkelen tar utgangspunkt i tre begreper som har vært brukt i studier av tekst og skriving, nemlig rolle, stemme og posisjonering. Begrepene inspiseres, relateres og settes inn i en historisk ramme, særlig knyttet til skriveforskning. Begrepene og spørsmålet om deres gyldighet og relevans blir knyttet til norskdidaktikeren Jon Smidts forskning, dels også til forfatterens. Et sentralt tema er hypotesen om at det hersker en viss motsetning mellom forskeres behov for begrepsvaliditet og praktikeres ønske om relevans. Det argumenteres for at selv om begrepet posisjonering har potensial til å løfte frem konfliktfylte relasjoner mellom gyldighet og relevans, har det også sine begrensninger. Artikkelen skisserer avslutningsvis en noe forenklet teoriramme som kan danne utgangspunkt for drøfting av ulike former for begrepsvaliditet.

Innledning

Jon Smidt har i sine studier av klasserom og tekster gjennom de siste tiår prøvd ut flere metaforer og begreper. Det gjelder kanskje særlig det sosiologiske begrepet *rolle*, Mikhail Bakhtins begrep *stemme* og det kommunikative begrepet *posisjonering* (Smidt 2002, 2004, 2007 og 2011). Rekkefølgen er kanskje ikke erkjennelsesteoretisk tilfeldig, for mens rolle var sosiologiens bidrag til den pedagogiske forskningen, f.eks. i konstruksjoner som elevrolle og kjønnsrolle, gjerne brukt på klasseromsanalyser, ble stemme introdusert som et intersubjektivt begrep som bedre kunne få frem tekstsubjektet (Elbow 1973 og 1981). Etter hvert kom posisjonering i bruk som et mer overordnet, fleksibelt og dynamisk begrep. På dette punktet møttes Smidts og min egen forskning (Ongstad 1997, 1999, 2002 og 2007). Mens begreper som rolle og stemme primært er knyttet til forskningsobjektet, enten dette nå er en elev eller en tekst, innbefatter posisjoneringbegrepet også forskeren selv eller den som forholder

Vi lever i et tekstsamfunn. I alle yrker og i de fleste hverdagslige gjøremål må vi gå veien om tekster i ulike medier og formater for å løse de oppgavene samfunnet gir.

Når man arbeider med et mangfold av tekster, og med lesing og skriving blant elever og studenter, ser man stadig behov for nye begreper og for teorier som gjør det mulig å se tekster og tekstproduksjon i nye sammenhenger. Å lese og forstå er ikke nok; vi trenger også hjelp til å analysere det sosiale språket som er nedfelt i alle tekster, til å tolke forholdet mellom ulike modaliteter og til å forstå tekstene i lys av kontekst og historie.

I denne artikkelsamlingen bidrar en rekke sentrale forskere og lærere innen morsmålsfag og pedagogikk med teoretiske og analytiske blikk på lesing og skriving. De fleste bidragene kommer fra Norge og Norden, men også forskere fra Storbritannia og USA er representert. En sentral målgruppe for boka er studenter i morsmålsdidaktikk, fra grunnutdanning til masternivå, men også andre som er interessert i tekstarbeid, som for eksempel lærere og forskere.

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