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A Student and Teacher Supervising a Student and Teacher: Examining the Trajectory of a TESOL Master's Dissertation

学生として教員として指導し合う—TESOL修士論文の指導過程の検証

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This investigation presents an exploration of the process of producing a master's dissertation leading up to submission for a degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). It uses a new literacies studies (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 2003) inspired analysis of the dissertation supervision and supervisee experience of negotiating and discussing the expectations of written postgraduate work. This study employs Lillis and Curry's (2006) "text-oriented heuristic for tracking changes across drafts" (p. 10). This tool is used to examine the writing and revision of a master's dissertation as negotiated between a student (Tracy) and tutor (Theron), both based in Japan and working together through a UK university (both part-time, one for a degree, the other as an adjunct Associate Tutor). A text trajectory of the dissertation writing process is developed, graphically representing the different dissertation versions and supervision exchanges. At the time Theron was supervising Tracy's dissertation, he was himself a PhD student working toward a degree with a UK university. At the same time Tracy was working toward her master's degree she was herself teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. How our respective experiences as supervisor/teacher/student influenced those other domains of our practice as supervisor/teacher/student are explored.

本論文は、TESOL (英語を母国語としない人々への英語指導の国際資格)における修士号取得へと導く論文指導過程について研究したものである。ここでは、新しいリテラシー研究 (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 2003) を活用しているのだが、それは論文の指導者と学生が互いに意見を交わし、期待されるべき質を伴った修士論文を作成する経験について分析する研究方法である。このリテラシー研究は、リリースとキャリアによる2006年の研究「論文の草稿の修正分析に基づく発見的方法」(10頁)を用いている。そしてこの手法を、今回、学生(トレイシー)と指導者(セロン)との間での、修士論文作成とその修正過程に援用した。両者はともに、日本に居住し、イギリスの大学を通して修士論文作成に取り組んだ。(トレイシーは日本で英語を教えながら、遠隔教育を通じてイギリスの大学の修士学生であった。そしてセロンはその大学の非常勤の兼任准教授であった。)修士論文作成過程におけるテキストの修正跡を図表化することで、何度も修正や変更を施した完成前の修士論文原稿や、指導の痕跡が見えてくる。セロンがトレイシーの修士論文を指導していた際には、彼自身はイギリスの大学の博士課程に在籍していた。そしてトレイシーは、日本で英語を教えながら修士号を取るために研究を行っていた。こうした背景から、個々の経験、すなわち論文指導者、教員、学生であることが、別の側面で論文指導者、教員、学生となった場合に、どのような影響を、テキストにみられる論文修正の軌跡に与えているのかについて明らかにする。

Keywords

postgraduate writing, academic literacies, text trajectory graphic, dissertation supervision, distance learning
修士論文作成、アカデミックリテラシー、テキスト修正の図表化、論文指導、遠隔教育

There has been, and continues to be, considerable interest in the processes of academic knowledge acquisition and production. How knowledge is entextualized in postgraduate education through master's dissertations (Prior, 1998) and PhD theses (Tweedie, Clark, Johnson, & Kay, 2013) is one focus of research. Another focus is investigations into the academic professions through examining processes of writing for academic publication (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Much of this literature takes as its starting point a conceptualization of aca-

demic speciality as a “discipline”, with the job of the supervisor and student (or author in the case of writing for publication) to initiate/be initiated into a given discipline’s “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 42).

While there are some limited investigations of students studying for their master’s degrees via distance learning (Ross & Sheail, 2017), most investigations available explore study modes where students are located full-time at the institution at which they are studying (such as Dysthe, 2002 and Prior, 1998). Furthermore, many of these studies take as their starting point assumptions about student-supervisor roles that may be limiting as they do not encompass the full range of roles involved in the supervision process. For example, that supervisors may be students themselves and students may also be teachers tends to not be discussed. However, in the TESOL field, part-time distance students may be employed as teachers in addition to pursuing their studies. Further, in the case examined here, the supervisor (Theron) was also pursuing a PhD degree as a part-time distance student at the same time as supervising a part-time distance student’s (Tracy’s) master’s dissertation. These multiple roles of supervisor and supervisee as both teacher and student present potentially interesting insights into the overall process of master’s dissertation supervision.

We open by describing the context for the investigation before a literature review of research into writing practices, including the writing of master’s dissertations, noting what these studies have found and identifying some of the problematic assumptions embedded in them. This is followed by a description of the constructivist, ethnographically informed (Williamson, 2006) methodology and methods used for the investigation presented here, which draw particularly heavily on new literacies studies (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 2003). Next, the findings and discussion are presented, first through a graphical text history developed to track the overall process of supervising Tracy’s dissertation. This is followed by a discussion of how the supervisor-supervisee relationship was negotiated in the correspondence analyzed. Implications of this investigation for studies of postgraduate writing are detailed in the conclusion along with some implications for methods of investigating writing in postgraduate education.

Describing the “Context” of This Investigation of a Dissertation Supervision

As is outlined in the literature review in the next section, much of the research into master’s dissertation supervision has concerned itself with investigating students and supervisors based at the same university full-time (such as Dysthe, 2002 and Prior, 1998). However, the reality of postgraduate education is becoming increasingly complex, and while it’s important not to idealize a “campus imaginary” (Ross & Sheail, 2017, p. 842) around full-time, campus-based study and supervision, it is also important to consider the affordances and constraints of distance modes of study and dissertation supervision.

Specifically, with regard to this investigation, there are at least five universities involved (directly or indirectly) in Tracy’s dissertation supervision. There is the UK-based ‘degree’ university where Tracy was enrolled as a part-time postgraduate student, there is the university she was employed at and where she conducted her research or the ‘research’ university. Further, Theron is employed as a full-time faculty member at a Japanese national university. However, part-time he is responsible for tutoring, dissertation supervising, and marking at the degree university and a second UK-based university. Further, at the same time as he was supervising Tracy’s dissertation, he was himself pursuing a PhD part-time at a third UK-based university. In addition to this, Tracy is from Jamaica, which as a former UK colonial territory, uses similar academic conventions to the UK. Theron has studied or worked in UK higher education since 2002.

Supervisor Profile: Theron

I have been based in Japan since 2000 and have been an Associate Professor at the University of Toyama since 2011. I graduated from the degree university with my master's in TEFL/TESL via distance learning in 2004 and have been working with the distance learning program there part-time since 2005. In 2012 I enrolled in a part-time distance PhD at Open University, UK which I completed in November 2018 shortly before first-marking Tracy's dissertation. Between the two UK-based universities I do part-time postgraduate work for, I am responsible for about 15 students at any given time, a few of whom may be working on their dissertations. This is in addition to my responsibilities as a full-time University of Toyama faculty member. My PhD is in the writing for academic publication experiences of Japan-based language teachers (Muller, 2018), and I felt that the methods of investigation I used for that research would be applicable to the investigation of supervision experiences explored in this special issue, which led me to approach Tracy about working together on the research described here.

Supervisee Profile: Tracy

I came to Japan in 2008 as an assistant language teacher working at public elementary and high schools in Yokohama, Japan. Since 2015, I have been working as an English Instructor at a private university in Tokyo, Japan (the 'research university'). This was when I started the Masters in TESOL (the 'degree university') via distance learning. After completing my dissertation I graduated in July 2019. As my first degree was in the natural sciences, the dissertation was my first attempt at a major research project in the social sciences. I found the process of writing up the dissertation much more enjoyable than I had originally thought it would be, and so was very happy to be a part of this research when approached by Theron.

Literature Review of Investigations into Master's Dissertation Supervision

As one of the primary functions of higher education is the production and dissemination of knowledge, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is a considerable history of interest in researching its processes of knowledge production and dissemination. This includes investigating processes of publishing academic texts (Knorr-Cetina, 1980; Lillis & Curry, 2010) and investigating postgraduate education, both for master's (Prior, 1998) and PhD degrees (Tweedie, et al., 2013). Here we review literature that is of particular interest to the investigation, which examines the process of producing Tracy's master's dissertation. We characterize this literature as falling into two broad categories: new literacies studies investigations of processes of text production (Lillis & Curry, 2010) and postgraduate education-focused investigations of the dissertation supervision process (Prior, 1998).

New literacies studies investigations such as those described in Lillis and Curry (2010) have shown that published texts tend to represent a co-constructed hybrid that has been shaped by a variety of different "brokers" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 93), such as editors and/or reviewers. These brokers shape manuscripts in different, sometimes conflicting, ways. For example, they document how following review one manuscript is changed "from contrast to confirmation" (p. 105) of a theory. Further, they note that these changes are not 'neutral' but rather echo disparities in the distribution of power worldwide, with scholars outside the 'Anglophone center' confronted with expectations that they conform to "centrifugal" (Lillis, 2013, p. 133) pressures to represent knowledge in certain ways. In terms of research methods, new literacies studies investigations tend toward "rich description" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128), including the investigation of multiple versions of manuscripts and correspondence related to

them, such as reviewers' reports and emails or letters between authors and editors (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Thus the focus of attention is on the process of textual production rather than analysis of final texts alone. It is new literacies studies' interest in processes of textual production and how the consequences of differences in power influence texts that are of particular relevance to our investigation.

The majority of investigations focusing on master's dissertation supervision have concerned themselves with modes of postgraduate study where supervisors and students are based full-time at the same institution. One such investigation is Prior (1998), who followed students studying for a master's degree in four different disciplines as they worked through their coursework toward final dissertations. Similar to new literacies studies-style investigations, he examined multiple versions of manuscripts, supervisor comments on the manuscripts, and notes on graduate student seminars held as part of the students' degree studies, along with text-focused interview data. He documents how the supervisor not only comments on and evaluates the students' texts, but also how these comments and evaluations represent evaluations of the students themselves, such as whether they "could handle" (p. 59) a given proposed research project. He characterizes "three modes of participation in graduate study: passing, procedural display, and deep participation" (p. 59), with each mode representing more (deep participation) or less (passing) engagement on the part of students.

Another way postgraduate study has been investigated is through the use of questionnaires and interviews without the inclusion of samples of texts and feedback from supervisors. Dysthe (2002) describes different approaches to the master's supervision process at a Norwegian university, largely correlated with different departments of study, with the sciences department tending toward more normative, text-centered supervisions and humanities toward dialogical supervisions of students' dissertations. Ross and Sheail (2017) describe, in an interview study with distance master's students, how their conceptualization of a "campus imaginary" (p. 842) can hinder their progress and performance on their degrees as they tend to attribute difficulties they face to their mode of study (distance). Ross and Sheail (2017) contrast the campus imaginary with studies showing that on-campus students tend to face the same kinds of issues described by the distance students in their study, noting that this idealization of "being physically located at the university" (p. 840) could hinder the distance students' ability to see and seek alternative solutions to the issues they face.

Our study can add further depth to the descriptions of master's dissertation writing experiences reviewed here. Specifically, there are several assumptions that appear to underlie investigations into master's dissertation supervision which we hope to probe. One concerns the 'place' of master's supervisors and students at their institutions. There tends to be an assumption in the literature reviewed that supervisors are full-time, academic members of the university faculty at which they are supervising master's dissertations. Furthermore, descriptions of supervisors' and students' experiences are relatively narrow, focusing almost exclusively on their classroom, writing, and supervision experience to the exclusion of other aspects of their lives, such as potential domestic obligations and other teaching obligations. This tends to lead to representations of the supervision process as unbounded, or time constraint independent, such as Dysthe's (2002) account of a student presenting "texts to my supervisor every fortnight for one and a half years" (p. 527). Finally, such investigations tend to take place in the context of programs where students take courses intended to assist them in the preparation of their dissertation plans (Prior, 1998), which means the students' experience of dissertation writing spans a wide variety of activities, making capturing a full picture of the complexity of their dissertation planning and writing difficult to accomplish.

Our investigation addresses the issues raised above in the following ways:

- The multiple roles that Theron and Tracy fulfill at their various institutions, and the impact these potentially have on the dissertation supervision, are made explicit in the discussion presented here.
- Effort is made to document obligations and experiences emerging from outside the immediate focus on producing Tracy's dissertation text that impact the process of producing that text in various ways. Particular attention is paid to potential constraints on supervision and dissertation writing.
- As Tracy's supervision was completed via distance, primarily through email exchanges, a more complete picture of the overall dissertation supervision process can be examined and represented than that presented in the studies reviewed, as electronic communication is more conducive to archiving and analysis than face-to-face, spoken supervisions.

Research Methodology and Methods

As our investigation of the supervision of Tracy's dissertation is concerned with "the meanings and experiences of human beings" (Williamson, 2006, p. 84), we take an interpretivist stance, which holds that "people are constantly involved in interpreting their ever-changing world" (p. 84) resulting in a "social world" "constructed by people" (p. 84). These social worlds are investigated here using a new literacies studies (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 2003) lens.

New literacies studies research explores insider perspectives regarding how texts are produced, viewing "literacy as a social practice" (Street, 2003, p. 77; 1984). In doing so, new literacies questions paradigms that view literacy as a neutral, universally transferable skill, seeking to demonstrate the importance of context in how individuals learn about and engage with literacy practices (Street, 2003). It is new literacies studies' interest in examining writing for academic publication in higher education through attention to the processes underlying textual production that was of particular interest to us. New literacies studies is also compatible with an ethnographically informed perspective that seeks to take time to research and for researchers to make the familiar more distant or different (Rampton, Tusting, Maybin, Barwell, Creese, & Lytra, 2004), which Lillis (2008) refers to as, "making the strange familiar and the familiar made strange" (p. 382). This can be accomplished through repeated exposure to data and attention to insider and outsider perspectives.

With regard to the methods of the research, or how our data was collected and analyzed, two parallel tracks were pursued. One involved producing a 'correspondence history' of the email interactions between Tracy and Theron. The concept of a correspondence history is based on Lillis and Curry's (2006) "text history" (p. 8), which is explained in the next paragraph. As the supervision was entirely conducted via email, the correspondence data represents a complete record of the interactions between Tracy and Theron about her dissertation, including discussions of the process of planning and executing her research and writing the dissertation manuscript. The total email correspondence, including messages from the degree university's administration, was about 13,000 words across 68 emails, 36 sent from Theron, 24 from Tracy, and 8 from the degree university's administration along with about 20 files, including (mainly) Microsoft Word documents, Google drive documents, PDF documents, and one blog post between March and November of 2018 (see Figure 1). By way of comparison, Tracy's full dissertation, including all appendices and references, was just under 17,000 words, so the email correspondence, while shorter in total length, is comparable in size to the text of her dissertation. This correspondence was arranged chronologically in a single Google Document file that we then commented on, developing "conversational narratives" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 2) about the supervision process that formed the basis for the analysis of the correspondence discussed here. In total, this conversation involved 17 comment threads

and a total of 32 comments. This correspondence was analyzed using Fairclough's (1992) critical discourse analysis, specifically seeking to describe the "exchange structure" (p. 153) of our interactions, or the "recurrent patterning of the turns of different participants" (p. 153). The intention was to give "attention to the process of text production" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 7). In addition, the correspondence was examined to determine what was important in terms of 'uptake' in the dissertation text, with Austin's (1962) conception of "uptake" (p. 116) used, which refers to linking within sets of correspondence. This linking can refer to changes made to the dissertation text and themes taken up in subsequent supervision correspondence.

In addition to examining the correspondence history between Tracy and Theron, a text history of the different versions of her dissertation manuscript and associated files, such as early proposed tables of contents and research questionnaires, was developed, tracking the changes made to the files associated with her dissertation and when. This data and the correspondence history was incorporated into the graphic representation of the trajectory of her dissertation (see Figure 1 below). Lillis and Curry (2010) describe text histories as "a key unit of data collection and analysis" (p. 4) that facilitates "exploring the trajectories of texts" (p. 4) and which can be used to construct a picture of a text's trajectory and the changes made to it over time. While the text history as an investigative tool was originally developed for research into writing for publication, as a research instrument it is applied here to investigate the process of producing Tracy's dissertation.

Findings and Discussion

This section opens with presentation and discussion of the text trajectory graphic developed to represent the overall process of producing Tracy's dissertation. This is followed by a discussion of the critical discourse analysis of the correspondence between Tracy and Theron about writing her dissertation. All of our correspondence was in English and the extract examples included are verbatim reproductions of the original.

Dissertation Text Trajectory Graphic

The text trajectory graphic developed for Tracy's master's dissertation is shown in Figure 1. In order to accommodate printing the figure in the space available, the representation of Tracy's dissertation's text trajectory graphic has been split into two parts, the first on the top spanning from March to October 2018 and the second on the bottom from October to November 2018. However, this division is arbitrary; the figure should be seen as representing a continuous trajectory rather than a trajectory divided into two different functional 'parts'. The arrow at the top of both parts of the figure maps her dissertation's timeline, noting the dates of each of the different exchanges we had. The arrow immediately under that arrow in the bottom half of the figure documents the total number of changes between Versions 1 of her dissertation (for each of the different parts of the dissertation she sent) and its final version, quantifying the total number of changes to the overall text between the first versions of chapters sent for comment and their final versions submitted for evaluation to the degree university. The solid rectangular boxes summarize each of the different exchanges regarding Tracy's dissertation during the supervision process. Where appropriate, the white rectangular boxes summarize the contents of the exchanges and their outcomes, such as the number of changes tracked in files returned to Tracy and Theron's evaluations of different parts of her dissertation. Finally, the arrows at the bottom of the figure document commitments and developments in our lives outside of Tracy's dissertation, with Tracy represented in the top blue arrows and Theron in the bottom green arrows. These elements were included to help illustrate how, while our focus of analysis is the production of Tracy's dissertation, neither Tracy nor Theron were 100% engaged in the super-

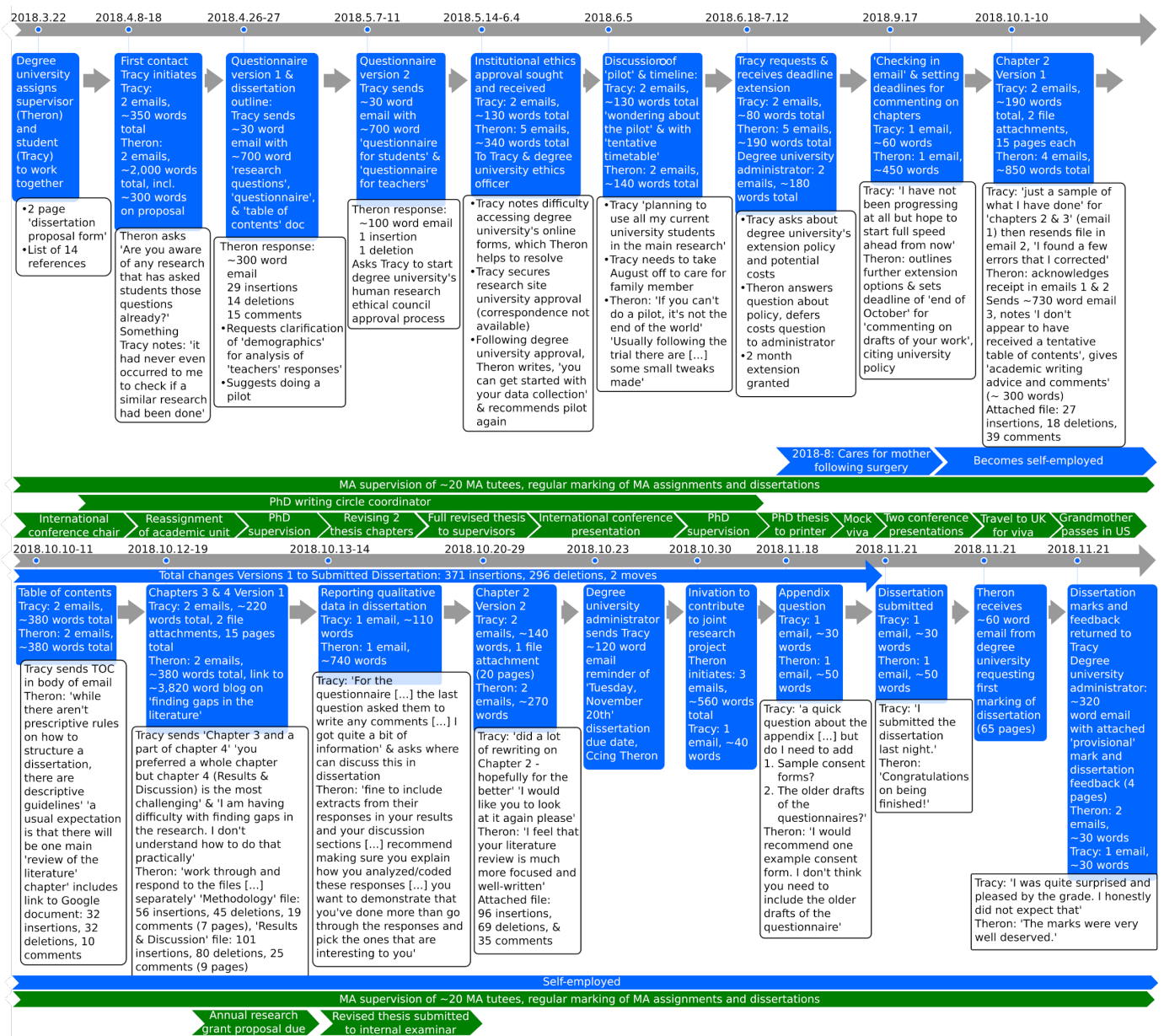


Figure 1. Text trajectory graphic for Tracy's master's dissertation.

vision of her dissertation throughout the period documented in the trajectory graphic. Rather, we were both moving between working on her dissertation and other professional and personal commitments that potentially influenced our interactions in complex ways.

In total, the text trajectory graphic documents 15 different thematic exchanges between Tracy and Theron regarding her dissertation. In addition to these exchanges between Tracy and Theron, there are four administrative messages sent from the degree university.

One lens through which to examine the dissertation trajectory is the degree university's official representation of the responsibilities of master's dissertation supervisors, which proposes a supervision "schedule" of "a minimum of six substantial contacts/communications" that "should represent a major element of the dissertation, and will usually include sending drafts of substantial sections of work, e.g., a chapter, possibly annotated with queries in the margins for your supervisor to answer. It will also include queries on other matters such as how to design data collection instruments, organize a report of data, suggestions for further

reading” (Document 2019-5-28-1, p. 12). While the definition of a ‘substantial contact’ is open for interpretation, in the case of the 15 exchanges between Tracy and Theron, there are perhaps eight that would qualify as such; the initial two in April where Theron responds to her proposal and then to her questionnaire, the exchange in May surrounding gaining institutional ethics approval from the degree university, then the five exchanges between October 1 and 29 where different samples of Tracy’s writing are exchanged and commented on. Of the remaining six less substantial exchanges, there is the exchange about Tracy’s revised questionnaire May 7 to 11, a brief discussion of a ‘pilot’ and the need for Tracy to care for her mother following a surgery that leads to her requesting and receiving a deadline extension between June and July (2 exchanges), the ‘checking in’ exchange in September following Tracy’s mother’s surgery, two relatively brief exchanges in November about the contents of her appendices and confirming submission of her dissertation, and then finally an exchange on November 21 following the completion of marking and the announcement of the provisional results of Tracy’s dissertation from the degree university administration which leads to a final exchange between Tracy and Theron. While the process of producing this article is not a focus of analysis, as Tracy and Theron were discussing whether to submit a proposal to this special issue at the same time that she was working on her dissertation, and our working together on this investigation is integrally tied to our having worked together on her dissertation, when Theron approached her about this project in her dissertation trajectory is also documented (October 30).

Finally, regarding developments in our personal lives, Tracy’s caring for her mother following surgery and moving into self-employment are documented in the first arrows at the bottom of the two parts of the figure. Theron’s responsibilities as an adjunct Associate Tutor on the two UK universities’ distance master’s programs are documented next. The next two arrows document various additional responsibilities that demanded Theron’s time and attention during Tracy’s dissertation supervision. These include PhD supervisions and other commitments as a postgraduate student, professional responsibilities such as conference chairing and attendance, and developments in his personal life, such as his grandmother passing in the US while he was traveling to the UK for his viva.

The dissertation trajectory presented in Figure 1 evidences the amount of work that went into the supervision of Tracy’s dissertation, in terms of the work of producing the text and the correspondence work underlying that textual production, which involved framing the research and methods for the dissertation and interactions with the degree university to secure permission for the research project and a deadline extension. In terms of the timeline of Tracy’s dissertation, Figure 1 illustrates that much of the work of setting up the methods of research for Tracy’s dissertation investigation occurred early in the supervision process between April and May. This includes designing the questionnaire used and securing the necessary institutional permissions to conduct the research. The majority of the writing and revising of her dissertation text and the correspondence associated with that occurred quite late in the supervision schedule, exclusively in October with a few minor exceptions concerning responses to specific queries in November. This is in part attributable to the degree university’s policy regarding dissertation supervision, which states that “Supervisors are under no obligation to give feedback on drafts or queries received after the end of less than three weeks before the submission date” (Document 2019-5-28-1, p. 12), a policy Theron raised with Tracy directly in a September 17 email, and which Tracy noted provided “a really strong motivator and helped me to finish even more quickly than I would have normally” “because I work well with deadlines” (May 14 2019 Comment). This evidences a potential constraint on dissertation supervision not previously explored in the literature reviewed earlier; the limitations placed on the supervision relationship by institutional policies and deadlines which can shape when and how much feedback students receive. This issue is returned to in our conclusion.

Negotiating the Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship

The dissertation interactions tracked in Figure 1 suggest a clear “exchange structure” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 153) to the correspondence, with Tracy initiating contact in a relatively short message with a specific query or request that is subsequently followed up in a longer response from Theron answering the question asked and/or responding to the query, generally with a pedagogical expansion on his answer beyond the immediate question asked (an example is included below). In cases where this includes Tracy submitting a file for comment, this file is invariably modified by Theron with the changes tracked and returned to Tracy along with a substantial email reply. In all of the interactions represented in Figure 1, Theron’s total message word count is greater than Tracy’s, and is often close to or more than double the total length of her messages. This is perhaps unsurprising given the pedagogic nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship but is, to our knowledge, evidenced using empirical data here for the first time.

Next, we consider three different themes addressed in the supervision discourse. The most prominent concerns the production of Tracy’s dissertation text, including more general discussion of how to demonstrate “criticality” (Theron October 14 Email) in her writing and questions about what Tracy “can” (Tracy October 13 Email) write where in her dissertation text. The other two themes concern issues of doing formal dissertation research for a degree through a university and social interactions between individuals. Borrowing broadly from Habermas (1984) generally, and Mishler (1981) and Barry, Stevenson, Britten, Barber, and Bradley (2001) more specifically, the former involves “system” (Barry, et al., 2001, p. 488) discourse and the latter “lifeworld” (p. 487) interactions. These lifeworld interactions are constrained by the ‘system’ supervisor-supervisee relationship in important ways that are discussed below.

Production of the Dissertation Text

The broad theme concerning the production of Tracy’s dissertation generally arose through questions regarding how to handle information or data. For example, in an October 13 email Tracy wrote, in part:

For the questionnaire I gave to the teachers, the last question asked them to write any comments that they had about L1 use in the L2 classroom [...] If I would like to use any of their comments, can it only go in the results section?

These questions, when they appeared in the correspondence, tended to be answered by Theron in his follow-up correspondence (as opposed to moving the discussion into the text of a draft). For example, Theron responded to Tracy’s above query with the following:

It would be fine to include extracts from their responses in your results and your discussion sections. I would recommend making sure you explain how you analyzed/coded these responses; in your thesis you want to demonstrate that you’ve done more than go through the responses and pick the ones that are interesting to you. For example ... [approx. 200 words omitted]

The pedagogical nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship comes through in analyzing Theron’s response, as he both answers Tracy’s direct question (include extracts [...] in your results and your discussion sections) and provides recommendations about how to do this that represent more than a direct answer to Tracy’s immediate question (I would rec-

commend [...] interesting to you), including some sample hypothetical analysis text (omitted above). While Tracy's question raises concerns about where in her dissertation she should include sample open-ended responses from her questionnaire data, Theron's answer addresses both the question of where to include those extracts and how to demonstrate to her readers the systematicity of her research in choosing those extracts for inclusion from her wider data. An example of how she applied this advice in the text of her dissertation follows:

In response to the frequency with which the L1 should be used, **only 2 teachers out of 36 said never** [...] **One** of the teacher respondents who thought L1 should never be used (**Teacher 008**) commented that [...] **The other teacher** who thought the L1 should never be used commented that [...]

In the above extract, the boldface text shows Tracy's attention to signalling the extent of coverage of her respondent's answers in her data, in this case evidencing how she has shared the perspectives of both of the two teachers who answered a certain way on a certain item in her questionnaire.

Commenting on the relationship more broadly, Tracy recalls being unsure about whether this was the kind of topic that Theron, as dissertation supervisor, could or should comment on. Specifically, she recounts being worried about how "silly" (Personal correspondence, 2019-9-22) the question may have appeared. From a supervisor perspective, Theron feels this is precisely the kind of question a student should ask in regard to their dissertation text; how and where to include primary data, and how to demonstrate criticality and attention to detail in analysis.

System Discourse

While Barry, et al. (2001) analyze doctor-patient medical discourse, their explanation and representation of 'system' discourse is a useful one to characterize the second theme addressed in the dissertation correspondence. This concerned the technical aspects of doing dissertation research for a degree with a university. Barry, et al. explain system discourse as "action oriented to success and the ends are defined by technical, not moral considerations" (p. 488). System discourse arises in the correspondence regarding deadlines, ethical approval, and how many versions of dissertation chapters can be submitted for feedback. While this theme is considerably less frequent in the correspondence than the themes concerning production of Tracy's dissertation text, it is nevertheless an important part of our interactions representing dissertation supervision, as opposed to writing support more generally. Here we discuss the ethical approval process in more detail.

This is first raised by Theron in a reply to Tracy's sending her "questionnaire that I am thinking of using" (Tracy April 26 email) which she wanted to submit to the research university for approval "as soon as possible" (Tracy April 18 email). Theron replied:

Before you collect any data, though, you also need to complete the [degree university]'s ethical approval process. I would recommend getting started on that right away since you're in a hurry to administer your questionnaire. (April 27 email)

In later correspondence Tracy mentions difficulties in accessing the necessary ethical approval forms through the degree university's website and that her research university granted "permission for me to give the questionnaire to my students" (May 23 email), noting, "This is extremely good news so I can go full steam ahead." Theron provides links, documents, and

forwarded messages from the degree university about its ethics approval process, cautioning Tracy to “wait for approval from the [degree university] before” (May 26) collecting any data.

These interactions represent an explicit ‘system’ constraint on the dissertation supervision process because the degree university’s policy that all dissertation research involving human subjects must receive pre-approval from its ethics review board before any data is collected was of considerable concern to Theron, as failing to follow this policy could compromise the entire dissertation. There is moral and ethical reasoning behind these requirements. However, this represents a ‘system’ action because whether Tracy received approval from the degree university’s ethics review board before collecting data is a technical consideration. If she collected data before approval was received, regardless of whether it was collected ethically and whether the research institution granted permission to do the research, Tracy would not have been able to use it for her dissertation.

As a first-time dissertation student, Tracy was not necessarily aware of what the system requirements at the degree university were or what the potential consequences of not following those requirements would be. Further, as a teacher Tracy was interested in collecting data according to a timeline compatible with the semester system in Japan and was conscious that missing this critical timing could have affected the timeline for her dissertation submission and graduation. Thus from her perspective, looking back on the dissertation supervision process, this was one point where she was particularly reliant on Theron as her supervisor to guide her through the process. She also feels that the institutional communications from the degree university regarding expectations about official processes such as ethical approval were not necessarily transparent. This made Theron as her supervisor particularly important as a mediator of institutional requirements at key points during her supervision. As a supervisor, Theron had been through the process with multiple students and was familiar with the requirements. He felt it important to clearly communicate them so Tracy’s dissertation would not be adversely affected. Ethical approval for research as part of the dissertation supervision process is not a theme raised in the literature reviewed earlier, illustrating a further contribution our investigation can offer to current understanding of master’s student dissertation supervision.

Lifeworld Discourse

The ‘lifeworld’ refers to “contextually-grounded experiences of events and problems in [one’s] life” (Barry, et al., 2001, p. 487). These interactions between Tracy and Theron were the least frequent in the data, which is perhaps emblematic of the system-oriented supervisor-supervisee relationship. Further, when they arose in the discourse, this tended to be in relationship to the impact they would have on Tracy’s dissertation submission timeline. The primary instance of this was her mentioning her mother’s surgery, for which Tracy would “fly home” and following which she expressed a desire to “be with her mentally - not worrying about the dissertation” (June 5 Email). This ultimately led to Tracy successfully applying for a deadline extension due to the interruption this life event caused in her dissertation timeline.

Tracy’s mention of the lifeworld requirement to care for her mother is particularly telling in light of the lack of that kind of discourse in Theron’s correspondence with Tracy; while he acknowledges her lifeworld correspondence, writing that the timeline Tracy proposes “sounds fine to me,” adding “I hope everything goes well with your mother’s surgery” (Theron June 5 Email), he doesn’t raise lifeworld issues or topics of his own. The reasoning behind this is likely complex and involves a variety of potential causes, including the fact that Tracy as a student is required to justify delays in her progress on her dissertation while Theron, as supervisor, is perhaps (implicitly) not required to or expected to justify delays in responding.

Additionally, as an adjunct, Theron may be particularly vulnerable to the consequences of negative student feedback being passed on to the degree university, leading to caution in how much he reveals to students about his private life. This has been raised as an issue explicitly by the UK universities he works for in the past, and so was something he was particularly conscious of at the time. Further, there is Theron's own experience as a PhD student, where his supervisors frequently cited being extremely busy when he sent correspondence, an experience which may have made him more conscious of the message such communications might send to the distance students he interacts with. Finally, there is the issue of how much of a lifeworld connection it is appropriate for a supervisor and supervisee to seek to establish over the course of a dissertation supervision. For example, as a teacher, Tracy notes not sharing her mother's situation with her students. However, as a supervisee, she was obligated to share this information with Theron. Similarly, Theron shared the fact that his grandmother had passed away with his PhD supervisors but did not share this information with his students at the time, including Tracy as his supervisee. There are perhaps also cultural issues at play as well here in regard to what is appropriate and expected for teachers and students to share with one another which are likely dependent on a variety of personal preferences and social conventions. Examining the supervision discourse, the fact remains that Theron's grandmother's passing, his travel to the UK for his PhD viva, and the variety of other life events and professional obligations tracked in Figure 1 are largely absent from the correspondence. When reasons for delays in his returning feedback are offered, these are almost always attributed to other adjunct work duties, such as, "I'm still working through the [master's] marking I need to do before I can get to your work" (Theron Oct 6 Email) and "I have another student ahead of you in my queue but will try to respond before the end of the coming week" (Theron Oct 21 Email). However, reasons for delays aren't always given, such as one response that reads, in full, "I wanted to let you know I received your message. I'll aim to reply in detail sometime next week, hopefully" (Theron Oct 12 Email), sent in response to a Friday email received from Tracy. These lifeworld interactions are not discussed in relation to the master's supervision process in the literature reviewed, and perhaps represent one of the constraints of a system-oriented supervisor-supervisee relationship on the supervision correspondence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have presented a complete graphical representation of Tracy's dissertation supervision in Figure 1, documenting the work underlying the production of her text, in terms of correspondence and in terms of writing and revision of her dissertation text. The "exchange structure" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 153) embedded in this correspondence was analyzed next, in terms of its focus on the text of her dissertation, on the system elements of doing a dissertation for a degree, and on the elements of the lifeworld that came through in the correspondence. Our ethnographically informed perspective toward our research involving repeated exposure to our data facilitated the documentation of a number of issues that were not raised in the literature reviewed. One concerns the bounded, constrained nature of Tracy's dissertation supervision; the literature reviewed tends to represent the production of a master's dissertation as an open-ended, exploratory process. However, in this case, the focus was very much on the goal of completing the dissertation throughout the correspondence, including system-oriented correspondence specifically related to aspects of completing university master's degree study. The multiple roles that Theron in particular was filling at the same time as he was supervising Tracy's dissertation appear to have influenced his interactions with Tracy in complex ways, such as by restricting the lifeworld information he shared in the correspondence. In contrast, Tracy shared lifeworld information but only in contexts where it immediately impacted the timeline of her dissertation, such as with her mother's surgery.

Our analysis shows that the process of supervising Tracy's dissertation shaped her dissertation text in important ways that an analysis of the final text alone would not necessarily be able to identify or explore. This illustrates the usefulness of a new literacies studies lens in examining the production of master's dissertation texts. As the focus of our analysis included the process of producing Tracy's dissertation and the correspondence underlying that process, how her dissertation text was shaped by that process was only given limited attention. There is considerable potential for future research to examine how the correspondence between supervisor and supervisee and rounds of feedback on versions of dissertation text shape the final dissertation submitted for evaluation.

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