

# Exploring the supervisors' writing experiences and their effects on undergraduate thesis supervisory practices: A comparison of Japanese and Swedish contexts

Research in Comparative &  
International Education  
2024, Vol. 0(0) 1–23  
© The Author(s) 2024  
Article reuse guidelines:  
[sagepub.com/journals-permissions](https://sagepub.com/journals-permissions)  
DOI: 10.1177/17454999241226773  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/rci](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/rci)



**Naoki Fujimoto-Adamson**

Niigata University of International and Information Studies, Japan

**John L Adamson**

University of Niigata Prefecture, Japan

**Mariya Aida Niendorf** 

Dalarna University, Sweden

## Abstract

This study explored the effects of the writing experiences of supervisors on undergraduate English language thesis supervision, specifically focusing on the Japanese and Swedish tertiary contexts where English medium instruction (EMI) is delivered to students whose first language is not English. Employing a Collaborative Autoethnographic (CAE) approach, three teacher-researchers working at universities in Japan and Sweden jointly co-constructed their narratives about their own literacy practices in the historical development of their writing and current thesis supervision. Findings demonstrated limited influences of the teachers' personal experiences on their practices, with social and educational norms in each country emerging as more significant factors. Particularly, the teacher-centeredness and exam-orientation were observed by the Japan-based supervisors to affect Japanese students, whereas the more horizontal relationship between students and teachers in Swedish education was reported as impacting university students' autonomy in thesis writing. We concluded that in both tertiary EMI contexts, local embedded educational norms largely influenced teachers' supervisory practices.

## Keywords

Thesis supervision, English medium instruction, social and educational norms, Japan, Sweden

---

## Corresponding author:

Naoki Fujimoto-Adamson, Niigata University of International and Information Studies, 3-chōme-1-1 Mizukino, Nishi Ward, Niigata 950-2264, Japan.

Email: [fujimoto@nuis.ac.jp](mailto:fujimoto@nuis.ac.jp)

## Introduction

This study explores thesis supervisory practices for undergraduates writing in their second language (L2), specifically focusing on three supervisors' own writing experiences and the possible effect upon their pedagogical implementation. Various types of research have been conducted concerning thesis writing, some of which focus on the final writing outcomes, or products of writing, such as analyzing PhD theses (Paltridge and Starfield, 2020), and those which investigate the process of writing. In particular, Bazerman (1980: 657) initially paid attention to the "conversation" between supervisors and students in the US tertiary context where students engage in academic writing in English as their first language (L1). Recently, due to the growing number of international students in the "inner circle" countries (Kachru, 1992: 356) where English is used as a mother tongue, studies concerning students who write their theses in English as their L2 have been increasing. Corcoran et al. (2018), for example, examined the assistance given in L2 thesis writing for postgraduate students in Canada, and Basturkmen et al. (2014: 433) looked at the interaction between supervisors and students in New Zealand from an "academic community discourse perspective". Moreover, Bitchener (2018) offered pedagogical guidance for supervisors dealing with postgraduate students who are L2 English writers.

In the case of the "expanding circle" countries (Kachru, 1992: 356) where English is used as a foreign language, Bastola and Hu (2021) investigated supervisors' feedback across the field in the Nepalese tertiary context for masters thesis writing. Adamson et al. (2019) carried out research into both undergraduate and postgraduate thesis supervisory practices in the applied linguistics field in the Japanese tertiary context. However, we realize that studies conducted in the expanding circle countries are rather limited in quantity compared to those conducted in inner circle countries. Also, although some studies have focused on postgraduate thesis writing, studies of undergraduate thesis supervisory practices remain scarce. Since the volume of undergraduate thesis writing and supervision is enormous around the world as a consequence of the large number of students aiming for a degree at that level, more studies are needed to fill the gap in this area. In addition to this paucity in the research literature, we also note that most studies, particularly those investigating the genre of completed texts, concern short-term effects on writing such as feedback and interaction between students and supervisors. In light of this, we consider long-term ethnographic research to be an insightful means to see how supervisors' own writing and literacy learning experiences and present perceptions of the thesis writing process influence their supervisory practices. Literacy practices can be defined as 'culture-specific ways of utilizing literacy in everyday life, related to people's social roles and identities' (Richards and Schmidt, 2014: 345). In our diverse contexts, we refer specifically to academic literacy, particularly the skills inherent in preparing students for thesis writing.

The underlying rationale for this exploration of our own practices is therefore based on ethnographic, reflective experiences on our own learning histories and current pedagogies in the two expanding circle sites where we are located, Japan and Sweden. The initial contact between us as supervisors in this study started in 2017 when we invited our respective undergraduate students to mutually attend their mid-term presentations and thesis defense sessions regularly online. This served to motivate and improve their knowledge base. Importantly, these exchanges aimed to give our students various perspectives on the content of their theses which were commonly focused on Japanese cultural and linguistic themes. However, these experiences revealed significant differences in the depth of critical thinking, linguistic proficiency, and confidence in presenting publicly among our students. This prompted us to explore to what extent our own experiences in academic literacy practices impacted how we supervise our students in our particular contexts. The contribution of such long-term ethnographic study allows us to reflect more deeply about our pedagogies of

supervision and encourages other supervisors to conduct similar collaborative reflections on their practices. This way of researching is fundamentally an awareness-raising process which can be ultimately of benefit to supervisors and their students.

A qualitative approach which includes the researchers' own narratives, specifically collaborative autoethnography (CAE) (Chang et al., 2013) was employed to gather data for the current study. Hernandez et al. (2017) define CAE as follows:

CAE is autoethnography that engages two or more autoethnographers in a research team to pool their lived experiences on selected sociocultural phenomena and collaboratively analyze and interpret them for commonalities and differences (Hernandez et al., 2017: 251).

The merit of CAE is that individual narratives are jointly constructed between participants, meaning that they are enhanced and challenged among each other (Chang et al., 2013). Therefore, we believe that this methodology allows us to achieve a deeper understanding of our thesis supervisory practices in the two countries. In light of our own experiences in Japan and Sweden in thesis supervisory practices for undergraduates, we chose to explore the following three research questions:

## Research questions

1. How do we, as three teacher-researchers, describe our literacy practices in writing over the years?
2. How do we think these literacy practices affect our thesis supervisory practices in Sweden and Japan and how do those practices contrast?
3. What are the advantages and challenges in our thesis supervisory practices, and how can we possibly improve them?

The first question investigates the histories of our own literacy practices in writing in our educational experiences. The second question seeks to delve into the specific influences that those historical practices could possibly have in shaping our current practices in Sweden and Japan. Finally, the third question considers the merits, difficulties, and further improvement of those practices. As our study fundamentally considers our thesis supervision in Sweden and Japan, it is important at this stage to present an overview of what educational and social norms underpin our pedagogies. In Table 1 below we illustrate these norms as follows:

From Table 1, we can see significant differences between Sweden and Japan in terms of EMI, general pedagogical approaches, social mobility, and English competence, as well as hierarchical norms. These norms permeate our supervision in both direct and discrete ways and will be reflected in our CAE responses.

Due to the inherent interactive nature of the CAE methodology, we are afforded space and encouragement in the exchange and comparison of experiences and views on our histories and pedagogies. This acts as a means to potentially develop our understanding of supervisory practices and is seen by us as a research objective in its own right, one which reflects on our past and present practices.

**Table 1.** Educational and social norms in Sweden and Japan.

Norms	Sweden	Japan
Educational: EMI	EMI practices common (Bolton and Kuteeva, 2012) with many international students; more than 10% of student body and 36% of teachers and researchers are of foreign background (UKÄ, 2020a, 2020b).	EMI spreading but less common; 770 universities (MEXT, 2017); lack of teacher competence (Takagi, 2013).
Educational: pedagogy	Process-oriented; high levels of student autonomy expected (The Higher Education Ordinance, 1993:100) in all forms of study.	Product-oriented to tests; less student autonomy; teacher regarded as source of knowledge (Mulvey, 2016).
Educational: degree thesis	Purpose of writing a thesis, expected outcomes and procedures are strictly regulated by The Higher Education Ordinance (1993). Thesis writing and oral defense are required for graduation.	No national norms exist. The expected outcomes for a thesis in Japanese or English in its content and length are set by individual universities and departments and differ widely. Some universities may not even require a thesis for graduation.
Social: mobility & English competence	English competence more widespread (EF, 2023) due to small number of Swedish speakers in the world (0.001%) (Malmström and Pecorari, 2022), frequent travel abroad, high levels of immigration, English media consumption, and early start of L2 English education among other factors (Howe, 2015; Sundqvist, 2009).	Inward-looking youth prefer EMI at home, not abroad due to job-hunting pressures (Burgess, 2014).
Social: hierarchy & social values	Egalitarian relationships common between teachers and students and across society; <i>du-reformen</i> (n.d.) in the late 1960s to promote egalitarianism: Polite form of 'you' and the use of titles were significantly reduced and they are almost eliminated today as a result (Cf. Language Council of Sweden).	Vertical relationships with teachers and seniors and stricter stratification exist in society at large (Ide, 2006; Matsumoto, 1993) and conformity is highly valued. Individuality is less valued than in Sweden (Ogihara et al., 2014).

## Literature review

We review related literature from the following three perspectives: the first aspect considers thesis supervisory practices around the world; the second aspect reflects upon the research conducted into English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Japan and Sweden; the third examines literacy practices. We examine these three perspectives as our research has been conducted in the field of supervisory practices in EMI in expanding circle countries.

### *Thesis supervisory practices*

Firstly, regarding the research into theses as final written products, Paltridge and Starfield (2020) analyzed PhD theses across the fields in inner circle countries such as UK, Canada, and Australia,

with the purpose of raising teachers' awareness how to supervise students. Secondly, as for the process of thesis supervision, Bazerman (1980: 657) initially paid attention to the relationship between supervisors and L1 writers in the US tertiary context, looking into the tutorial "conversation" to guide them into the expected academic norms in their field. Due to the increase of international students, key studies have focused on L2 English writers in inner circle countries. Notably, Basturkmen et al. (2014: 433) investigated interaction between L2 English writers and supervisors in New Zealand and advocated an "academic community discourse perspective" to construct a collaborative pathway for postgraduate students to enter the research community. Significant in their findings was that the opportunities for supervisors to develop their own pedagogical skills necessary for supervision were limited internally within their institutions (Basturkmen et al., 2014). As a response to this shortfall in supervisory knowledge, Bitchener (2018) provided a detailed pedagogical guide for supervisors who teach postgraduate students of L2 English writers. In particular, Bitchener (2018: 1) stressed the importance of supervisors' 'pre-writing advice' and 'post writing feedback' during the thesis writing process. Interestingly, in the same community-focused vein as Basturkmen et al. (2014), Corcoran et al. (2018: 12) explored L2 thesis writing support for postgraduate students in Canada where they recognized the importance of peers, or "language literacy brokers," in L2 text construction. Such brokering of writing knowledge and assistance resonated with the L2 writing process for emerging multilingual scholars for academic publication as investigated by Lillis and Curry (2010).

Concerning the studies from expanding circle countries, Bastola and Hu (2021) examined supervisory feedback in various fields in the Nepalese tertiary context, particularly for masters' theses. The interview data for both supervisors and students revealed that the supervisory feedback surprisingly did not meet students' needs and expectations. With this in mind, pedagogical development and training may be necessary in giving supervisory feedback (Bastola and Hu, 2021). Meanwhile, in the case of the Japanese tertiary contexts, Adamson et al. (2019) investigated supervisory practices for both undergraduate and postgraduate thesis writing, focusing specifically in the field of applied linguistics. A significant point of this study outlined the pedagogical practices such as scaffolding students' writing and bilingual discussions between supervisors and students allowing students' L1 (Japanese) use to deepen their understanding of the content. The purpose of these practices was to "promote students' agency in their own writing" (Adamson et al., 2019: 14). In fact, language use for L2 English writers during supervision was particularly important as it affected the progress of their study significantly. Findings from Adamson et al. (2019) revealed how lower proficiency Japanese undergraduates achieved higher scores on report writing when encouraged to access Japanese language literature and engage in Japanese discussions when collaboratively drafting their work.

### *EMI in Japan and Sweden*

EMI has spread beyond the Anglophone center to become a common addition to tertiary curricula in non-center contexts, such as Europe and East Asia (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). Since English is considered as a global language (Crystal, 2012), and used for teaching and learning, EMI has been introduced in tertiary education in expanding circle countries to attract students from different countries (Stigger, 2018). This is a world-wide trend, particularly in Europe where Wächter and Maiworm (2014) reported that EMI degree courses for both undergraduate and postgraduate increased over 1000% from 725 to 8089 from 2001 to 2014. As for East Asia, such as China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, governments and universities have supported the development of courses taught in English (Kirkpatrick, 2014). In the case of Japan, approximately

800 universities—representing almost one third of institutes—are said to currently provide EMI (MEXT, 2015). This may be due to young Japanese increasingly unwilling to embark upon long-term overseas study as it interferes with the all-important final year job-hunting (Imoto, 2013), but still keen to engage in EMI within Japan (Burgess, 2014). Nevertheless, unlike European universities, the number of full-degree EMI courses is extremely limited (Bradford and Brown, 2018), meaning that although some EMI courses are offered in Japanese universities, most non-EMI courses on the wider curriculum are predominantly taught in Japanese. Possibly as a unique aspect of EMI in Japan, this means that it is rare to find programs or courses taught solely in English, as local teachers are reluctant to teach in English due to fear of exhibiting less than perfect language abilities (Ishikawa, 2011; Yonezawa, 2011). In fact, the situation of the two authors' affiliated universities in Japan is no exception. Consequently, EMI remains linguistically and pedagogically challenging for both students and Japanese faculty with an overall effect, as Takagi (2013) noted, that the spread of EMI in Japan continues only in institutions where faculty are linguistically proficient enough to do so.

In Sweden, both the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket, 2008) and individual universities have been promoting *internationalization at home* during the past decade in an attempt to make it possible for all students to engage in internationalization regardless of their financial and other circumstance that prevent them from traveling abroad (Aida Niendorf, 2013). Malmö University, for example, described that one of the purposes of *internationalization at home* was “to give suggestions to various operations in order for all students and staff members within the university during their study/work to have opportunities to gain their international and intercultural competence” (Trulsson and Ullberb, 2003: 14). An examination of the internationalization documents of various universities (Malmström and Pecorari, 2022) indicates that most of the universities in Sweden agree that offering courses in English is an essential element in *internationalization at home* as it has been implemented widely within the European Union where many universities offer tuition-free study opportunities. As Swedish students excel at speaking English since they are exposed to English extensively from a very young age both in school and outside school by consuming English language media (Howe, 2015; Sundqvist, 2009), there is hardly an obstacle to offer courses completely in English in Sweden though their academic writing skills can be sometimes questionable.

EMI lessons are not commonly taught in Japanese schools apart from some international schools, therefore, most students usually experience EMI for the first time in tertiary education. Adamson and Coulson (2015) investigated such an EMI preparation module for first year university students whose major was social science. The purpose of this module was to prepare the students for local EMI lectures to develop their listening, critical thinking, and academic writing skills by integrating some Japanese use into the lessons, for example, by accessing Japanese readings and discussions on the lecture theme. The findings showed that the lower proficiency students gained confidence, whereas, upper proficiency students tended to use monolingual English references in their writing due to a sense of “guilt” (Setati et al., 2002: 147). This was expressed by the upper proficiency students in questionnaire feedback after reports had been analyzed, with the lower proficiency students stating that reading Japanese articles for their report improved their comprehension. This situation had some resonance with Toth and Paulsrud's (2017) study into the primary science class in Sweden concerning possible risk and tension of the “contact zone” (Thesen, 2014: 3) between languages. In addition to this, Fujimoto-Adamson and Adamson (2018) examined EMI modules in applied linguistics for second to fourth year students including thesis supervisory practices at two Japanese universities. The pedagogical focus of this investigation was the concept of “hybrid EMI practices” (Fujimoto-Adamson and Adamson, 2018: 217) which scaffolded not only language, but

also content with the use of figures and rubrics. Finally, it is apparent that although there are some studies investigating the initial tertiary years introducing of EMI in non-center contexts (Adamson and Coulson, 2015; Mulvey, 2016; Toth and Paulsrud, 2017), research focusing on the final graduation stage such as thesis writing in these contexts is limited.

### *Literacy practices*

Richards and Schmidt (2014) defined literacy as “the ability to read and write in a language” (354), with its use in society termed as “literacy as social practices” (354). Also, due to economic globalization, increasing migration for work and study requires biliteracy, the ability “to read and write in two languages” (354). In the case of our study, we focus on academic literacy practices which concern “reading and writing within disciplines” (Lea and Street, 1998: 158). These practices can be viewed from three interrelated perspectives: (1) macro, meaning the global and national influences on literacies; (2) meso, which are the institutional influences, for example at departmental level; and finally, (3) micro, the individual influences shaping literacy practices. Regarding the macro and micro perspectives, Holliday (1994) viewed classroom practices as a microcosm of wider society, with various national and individual cultures intersecting in what Kubota (2015: ix) termed as a “complex interplay.” The concept of academic literacies has emerged from the field of “new literacy studies,” which, according to Lillis and Curry (2010), refocuses literacy teaching and learning away from the traditional emphasis on text construction and genre analysis onto the learners themselves and the context in which they engage with that text. In the site of this learning, the “conversation of the discipline” (Bazerman, 1980: 657), the tutor imparts the norms expected within that field. This conversation about the required literacy practices now frequently embraces the idea of “literacies” (Turner, 2012: 24) where it is recognized that the L1 literacy skills of the learner should be combined with their new L2 (English) literacy skills and that a focus on what L2 learners lack in English literacy skills is a damaging deficit view of their whole repertoire of literacy skills. Such a negotiation of literacies may naturally encounter a degree of tension as to which literacy takes precedence (Thesen, 2014). Other possible conflicts in this conversation concern whether monolingual Anglophone teachers give sufficient space for the learners’ L1 literacy practices (Kubota and Lehner, 2004), an argument countered by Mulvey (2016) in the Japanese context who argued that both L1 and L2 writing are mostly ignored at the high school level. This implies that Japanese students’ first encounter with writing is often in tertiary English classes.

With these insights from the literature concerning thesis supervisory practices, EMI in Sweden and Japan, and finally literacy practices, we now turn to our methodology.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology adopted in this study is broadly based on a qualitative and interpretive approach, specifically, an autoethnographic tradition is employed. A strong characteristic of the ethnographic approach is its subjectivity by giving an “insider’s view” of the issue under investigation (Blommaert, 2007: 682) and to “show evidence of the researcher’s own involvement in the field” (Prasad, 2018: 91). This stance contrasts with the quantitative approach which requires objectivity and seeks generalizations. We adopted the ethnographic approach in order to reveal “telling cases” in our data (Mitchell, 1984: 239) rather than trying to make generalizations. Consequently, our research explores three particular contexts of our thesis supervisory practices in Japanese and Swedish contexts.



Autoethnography is defined as “the use of personal experience to examine and/or critique cultural experience” (Jones et al., 2016: 22). One advantage of this approach is a better understanding can be achieved of ourselves through “deep reflection” (Ellis, 2016: 10), but it is also extended to our role in society (Wall, 2008) “by looking at oneself in a wider context” (Cohen et al., 2018: 297), which includes the observer’s perspective. Nevertheless, the challenge is that since the solo narratives elicited in autoethnography represent a “highly personal process” (Chang, 2016: 107), they may be susceptible to gaining only narrow, intrinsic insights into one participant’s experiences and beliefs. In order to compensate for this overly intrinsic nature, we have adopted the model of collaborative autoethnography (CAE) proposed by Chang et al. (2013), which compares and contrasts personal narratives of our thesis supervisory practices in Japanese and Swedish tertiary contexts. This methodology has also been termed as *duoethnography*, defined as follows:

Duoethnography is a collaborative research methodology in which two or more researchers of difference juxtapose their life histories to provide multiple understandings of the world (Norris and Sawyer, 2016: 9).

Since its collaborative nature is similar to CAE which engages “two or more autoethnographers” (Hernandez et al., 2017: 251), we consider duoethnography as similar in its aims to CAE. Chang et al. (2013: 26) identified one key objective to CAE as “power sharing among researcher-participants.” Although researchers and participants traditionally have unequal relationships, “power among researchers is diffused through collaboration” (Chang et al., 2013: 26), and, as a result, CAE seeks to achieve equal contribution. This collaborative process enhances “a deeper understanding of self and others” (Chang et al., 2013: 28) by challenging each other’s narratives and prompting each other for clarifications and extensions compared to the solo narrativization of autoethnography. In fact, De Fina (2015: 193) expressed a similar view towards the process of “interview-based narratives” in that narrativization could be strengthened by elements of interaction. Furthermore, when considering the outcomes of jointly-constructed CAE, Norris and Sawyer (2016: 10) noted that “new hybrid texts” are created as a product of the transcribed interaction, which then enable the process of “regenerative transformations” (Breault, 2016: 778) among participants as they interact and then revisit the meanings embedded in CAE. Meanwhile, concerning potential difficulties of CAE, Breault (2016: 782) recognized the potential pitfall of “parallel talk” in which participants tell their own story without interaction with other participants. In that case, “theory confirmation” (Breault, 2016: 782) might occur, where participants position themselves as representative of a theory and are unwilling to face challenges to that theory. Consequently, the aim of encouraging a transformative process in participants’ beliefs cannot take place. Furthermore, when considering the deeply personal and sensitive revelations typically associated with CAE, Chang et al. (2013: 30) recognized the “vulnerability” of the relationships among participants, so in order to overcome those difficulties, “trust and goodwill among participants” should be nurtured. With this ethos in mind, as Ochs and Capps (2001: 2) suggested, “telling a story to each other” needs to become “telling a story with each other” and acts as a means to challenge each other’s “parallel talk” and “theory confirmation” (Breault, 2016: 782) in an egalitarian manner by asking for transparency in whatever claims are made in the narrative process.

### **Data collection**

Regarding the data collection procedure, the leading researcher created closed Google shared files that were only accessible to the participants of this research. This was helpful to compensate for



“logistical challenges” (Chang et al., 2013: 30) due to the physical distance and time differences between Japan and Sweden. Also, since traveling was severely restricted due to the spread of COVID-19, using digital tools was a convenient research method in the global pandemic (Roy and Uesuka, 2020).

## Participants

There are three participants in this study: two Japanese females and one British male currently working in Japanese and Swedish universities supervising undergraduate thesis writing in the social science field. All participants gained Master’s degrees or higher, and two had Doctorates. This information was shared in Google docs in English, our lingua franca; where participants wrote brief self-introductions. Table 2 below shows the backgrounds of the participants.

## Autoethnographic dialogue

The research questions were addressed by creating “narrative frames” (Warwick and Maloch, 2003: 59) which were questions or prompts intended to stimulate thoughts and interaction. They were proposed by the leading researcher, Naoki, in August 2020 to initiate the CAE. As we were working in different time zones with great distance separating us, it was decided to conduct the CAE in written format in English online for our convenience. Warwick and Maloch (2003: 59) stressed the importance of “negotiating the frames” among all participants before sharing their “storied experiences” (Barkhuizen and Wette, 2008: 374). Therefore, we conceived 5 frames online and 1 year later on August 9, 2021 decided to add a sixth frame as seen below:

## Five frames in the initial stage in August 2020

1. How did you develop your own writing literacy practices in L1 and L2 (or L3) over the years? What were some critical incidents which shaped those practices?
2. How do you supervise your students’ thesis writing?
3. Do you think your own writing experiences affect your thesis supervisory practice?
4. What are the advantages and challenges of your thesis supervisory practice?
5. How do your thesis supervisory practices possibly improve?

**Table 2.** Participant backgrounds.

Name	Nationality	Gender	Qualification	Teaching Experience
Naoki	Japanese	Female	BA in Japan MA/M.Ed. in UK	Former English teacher at public secondary schools in Japan Currently teaching both language and content at a university in Japan. She has 9 years supervisory experience.
John	British	Male	BA in UK & Germany MA/Ed.D. in UK	Has been teaching English in UK, Thailand, Germany and Japan Currently teaching both language and content at a university in Japan. He has 19 years supervisory experience.
Mariya	Japanese	Female	BA in US MA/Ph.D. in US	Former English and Japanese teacher in Japan and US. Currently teaching content at a university in Sweden. She has 12 years supervisory experience.

## An additional frame in August 2021

### 6. What have we learned through the process of CAE?

We admit that during the initial stage of data collection, we wrote our individual stories without interaction, a tendency identified by Breault (2016: 782) as “parallel talk.” However, John, recognized this and suggested more interaction to co-construct our narratives. Afterwards, we referred to other members’ narratives and gradually became comfortable “telling a story with each other” (Ochs and Capps 2001: 2).

Concerning the process of data analysis, a modified “ethnography as method” (Lillis, 2008: 355) was employed. Common sub-themes within the frames called Macro Reviews (MRs) (Chang, et al., 2013: 103), and key incidents in our lives called Critical Incidents (CIs) (Butterfield et al., 2005: 480) were identified in our narratives. Initially, we analyzed our own data, and afterwards collaboratively looked at the other members’ data by adding and responding to comments in the Google docs comment function on numerous occasions. To ensure rigor in our interpretative analysis, Naoki summarized the CAE narratives and shared them among the three members. We had our second online meeting on May 5, 2022 to discuss the choices made about which MRs and CIs were representative of our experiences. In terms of writing the manuscript, in order to achieve stylistic consistency, Naoki wrote the initial draft in the Google shared file and the other members, John and Mariya, revised and edited it. Consequently, the three of us collaborated in writing narratives, data analysis and writing this research paper.

## Findings and discussion

This section presents the findings and discussion according to the six narrative frames of our CAE highlighting MRs and CIs. It also compares and contrasts the Japanese and Swedish contexts explored in our thesis supervisory practices and identifies their possible influences.

### *Development of our literacy practices*

Regarding the first frame, the development of our own literacy practices, three MRs emerged. The first was literacy practices at home with family support, which all of us experienced in our childhood of mainly L1 literacy practices. In particular, John’s mother bought one book for him every week on her way back home from work on Fridays. Similarly, Mariya’s mother who was a former preschool teacher created an educational environment for her children with a fine selection of books. In the case of Naoki, she also had a few occasions to realize the importance of L2 literacy practices. Her father, an engineer, regularly wrote academic papers in English and told her the importance of writing papers in English as illustrated in Extract 1.

#### [Extract 1: Naoki]

*He also told me that if we write a paper in Japanese only Japanese people can read it, but if we write in English, more people can read it. Say there were 300 readers for a Japanese paper, if the paper were written in English, the number of the readers would be 3,000 or 30,000. One day, my father received a letter from Hungary commenting on my father’s research. I recognized the power of English at that time!*

In the 1970s, Naoki's father received a letter from Hungary, a time when, as Takagi (2013) explained, Japanese people did not travel abroad freely and pre-dated the spread of EMI in tertiary education. That was the CI for Naoki to recognize what Crystal (2012) noted as the global importance of English among academics, at a time when she herself had no English language competence. Interestingly, she only encountered issues of using English in content instruction decades later when asked to teach EMI but, in contrast to the reticence among Japanese faculty observed by Ishikawa (2011) and Yonezawa (2011), she approached this challenge with more enthusiasm as she had acquired the L2 content knowledge of her classes (sociolinguistics and discourse analysis) when studying abroad in English. Concerning the second MR, the importance of literacy practices at school and university became apparent as we all experienced collaborative learning in that setting. In the case of Mariya and Naoki, they received formal training for L2 academic writing; Mariya in the United States and Naoki in the UK. As for the third MR, Naoki, Mariya, and John recognized the value of independent learning at certain times in our educational development. When John was 8 years old, for example, he was enthusiastic about soccer reporting and decided to write his own reports weekly in English, his L1, as can be seen in Extract 2.

**[Extract 2: John]**

*Every week for several years, I wrote the Saturday soccer report after each game over the weekend and tried at the end of the season to write summaries of that year's performance – I created my best 11 team, best matches, best goals, best saves and best tackles from my reports. All the important skills were there which I use today - multimodality/intertextuality, as well as longitudinal/ethnographic-style research, with end of season reports acting like a researcher's reflections.*

John recalled that this was a CI incident for him in developing his L1 literacy practices as it included a diverse repertoire of literacy skills, such as listening and watching the game on TV, reading the report in the newspaper, selecting key information in the text and passing his own critical verdict on his team's performance. Moreover, he discussed the game with his father and even replicated the action on the lawn. Interestingly, he reflected in Extract 2 that the skills of writing a soccer report when he was a little boy resembled the diversity of strategies he uses now as a researcher in that writing embraces more than just reading and writing and, depending on the individual, collaboration to check comprehension.

**[Extract 3: John]**

*Later when studying business administration in German - my L2 - at university in Germany, I struggled linguistically but compensated by joining study groups with German, French and British classmates where lessons were discussed multilingually. German friends kindly highlighted the key German language needed to cope with the academic tasks like reports and presentations. Such collaboration is something I encourage my Japanese students to do now.*

In extract 3, studying content in German as a L2 was for John a valuable insight into the struggles faced by his own students in EMI. Although this experience took place in the early 1980s, he remembers the essential role of peer support and collaboration.

### *Our thesis supervisory practices*

In terms of the second frame, which addressed our thesis supervisory practices, two MRs were identified. Firstly, “scaffolding” was a common approach among all of us, specifically for John who uses mind-mapping in the planning stage to nurture students’ autonomy. Mariya also stressed the importance of planning because it aids the later writing process. Meanwhile, Naoki offers students model theses not written by L1 but L2 writers, such as herself and even previous students who have the same linguistic and cultural background as her current students. This followed the idea of the second MR, “near peer role modeling” (Murphey, 1996: 21) in which models by fellow students are seen as more linguistically attainable for students. Mariya noted how her thesis writing course in Sweden makes her students prepare their initial stage referring to previous students’ theses.

#### **[Extract 4: Mariya]**

*In our thesis writing course, we start by having each student choose an existing BA thesis relevant to their project out of the national archive ([uppsatser.se](http://uppsatser.se)) and write an analysis of the paper they chose. Students are expected to examine the structure of the thesis, what elements are included in each chapter; whether the research questions are clearly stated and answered, the nature of the language used, overall content, etc.*

On the whole, near peer role modeling rather than that of perfect Anglophone English plays a vital role in both Japanese and Swedish contexts under investigation.

### *Influences of our writing experiences on our supervisory practices*

Concerning the third frame, influences of our writing experiences on our supervisory practices, two MRs became apparent. The first was whether our personal experiences affect our supervisory practices or not. John and Naoki saw some degree of influence of our personal experiences on our thesis supervisory practices. In the case of John, his writing experiences when he was a little boy affect not only his own writing in his later years, but also his thesis supervision as can be seen in Extract 5.

#### **[Extract 5: John]**

*As you can see from my own experiences in writing in my childhood, I think the key is to draw upon multiple sources of information, collaborating/sharing what I have planned and written in numerous drafts. I stress this ‘process’ to my students and evaluate them on it.*

Naoki agreed with John in that she also realized the importance of collaboration, peer support, and the evaluation process, so she frequently looks at her students’ notebooks and files. In addition, she sometimes shows the previous students’ notes and mind-mapping as examples. Particularly, Naoki’s supervisory practices, which focus on process, were influenced by her previous learning experiences when she took a pre-session course in the UK in preparation for postgraduate studies. Both Naoki’s and John’s experiences, although culturally different, reinforced the importance of Bazerman’s (1980: 657) “conversation” of disciplinary norms and how to achieve them through an “academic community discourse perspective” (Basturkmen et al., 2014: 433) and brokering among peers (Corcoran et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, unlike John and Naoki, Mariya did not think that her personal learning experiences influence her thesis supervisory practices due to the differences in backgrounds between her students and herself. Those differences may be culturally bound, referring to Swedish and Japanese educational norms, and also indicate generational differences between students in their 20s and their supervisors in their 50s. In this respect, Mariya noted that only Naoki shares the same cultural and linguistic background with her students in Japan, so hypothetically it could be easier for her, as a Japanese, to conduct her thesis supervision with fellow Japanese students as she is cognizant with the tensions and negotiations between L1 and L2 literacies, as noted by [Bastola and Hu \(2021\)](#). In comparison, Mariya stated her challenges dealing with her students due to the different expectations of the role of teachers in Sweden.

**[Extract 6: Mariya]**

*I am also struggling with the social expectation of the role of teacher in Sweden, which differs very much from those prevalent in Japan or even the US. In Sweden, teachers are seen as mentors and students' equals from a very young age, and school teachers and college professors are always referred to by their first name.*

This was a significant finding, because we initially predicted that our personal experiences might play an important role. Instead, Mariya's students' educational background was more influential than her own personal experiences. Consequently, the second MR in this frame was 'students' educational background', which can be also relevant to the Japanese context. In fact, John noted that, due to the product-oriented nature of study in Japanese secondary schools, as noted by [Mulvey \(2016\)](#), he tries to counterbalance the over-emphasis students have on test scores and how that affects university students' learning style by stressing the process of studying, for example, making drafts of writing and discussing report content with classmates. This is less common in secondary schools in Japan.

**[Extract 7: John]**

*If I don't evaluate them on the process, I know they will probably skip it as Japanese students at secondary school are very much product-oriented with the emphasis on standard tests and entrance exams.*

Naoki recognized similar educational norms, such as focusing more on exam scores of test preparation in secondary school education in Japan, so she had a culture shock in the UK because the process of learning was emphasized. Later, this experience affected Naoki's thesis supervision, specifically as she put more emphasis on the process than the product.

**[Extract 8: Naoki]**

*As John mentioned, it is true that Japanese secondary school education is very much product-oriented with the emphasis on entrance exams. Therefore, I experienced culture shock when I started to study in a pre-session course in Reading University, because teachers emphasized on 'process'. In particular, they encouraged students to learn from each other through discussion in pairs and small groups.*

To sum up, both Naoki's and John's personal experiences and students' educational backgrounds were reported as playing important roles in thesis supervisory practices. Their experiences studying

abroad constituted an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975: 60) which permeated their current practices in subtle ways and transcended their teacher training. However, Mariya cannot apply her personal experiences due to what The Higher Education Ordinance (1993: 100 Annex) observed as the Swedish educational norms of respecting her students’ stronger tendency towards autonomous learning, as illustrated in Table 1. These narratives problematize the notion of “third space” (Moje et al., 2004: 41) and its merging of L1 and L2 literacies as that new space intersects with the added dimension of the teachers’ own literacy experiences, clearly exhibiting the diverse tensions inherent in the “contact zone” (Thesen, 2014: 3) between literacies.

### *Advantages and challenges of our supervisory practices*

As for the fourth frame, advantages and challenges of our supervisory practices, John reflected that one of the advantages was his specific pedagogy of a “working backwards” approach in order to make his students write effectively.

#### **[Extract 9: John]**

*My ‘working backwards’ approach has the advantage of focusing early in the supervisory process on the data itself. Reading too much literature early in the year can be a waste of time as the final year in which most Japanese students need to write their dissertation is taken up by job hunting in the first semester.*

In this sense, John rejected the expected L2 literacy practices and academic norms of academic report writing in the standard sequence of reading, data collection, analysis and comparing findings with the literature. Instead, his realization of job-hunting priorities (Imoto, 2013) led him to reject “assimilationist teaching” (Kubota and Lehner, 2004: 20) due more to practical considerations rather than on theoretical grounds. Moreover, Naoki also alluded to the effectiveness of her supervision through the use of a model thesis written by herself because it scaffolds students’ writing. In particular, the word length of her model is approximately 4000 words which they often exceed. However, some students overly rely on the model by making the minimal effort in writing due to their lack of confidence and experience in academic writing in both Japanese and English, as noted by Mulvey (2016).

#### **[Extract 10: Naoki]**

*For example, in the case of this year (2020), although the length of my model thesis is approximately 4,000 words, they wrote almost 6,000 to 9,000 words. I believe that the model scaffolds the students’ writing, as a result, it enables them to expand their own writing. However, I noticed that some students heavily rely on the teacher’s model and they do minimal. Specifically, they just follow the model and do not try to add new references by themselves.*

Surprisingly, Mariya said that her students show a tendency not to follow the given template, instead writing typically much more than Japanese students. Specifically, the average word length of the theses of Naoki and John’s students is around 5000 words. In contrast, an undergraduate thesis in Sweden amounts to between 8000 and 12,000 words, with some of her students often writing 30% more. However, despite the absence of any difficulty in achieving minimum word limits, Mariya’s students have difficulty in judging what is truly essential information and what can be left out.

Consequently, having colleagues to discuss supervisory issues, as in this study, was a useful reflective exercise. Mariya’s experiences in Sweden also acted to raise John and Naoki’s awareness

of different realities facing thesis supervisors. In Mariya's case, this means an understanding of the local educational norms impacting Swedish university students' academic and literacy practices, rather than the primarily linguistic issues Japanese students encounter.

**[Extract 11: Mariya]**

*BA thesis supervision is not just about supervising students' writing; it is much more involved and complicated.*

The MR emerging in this frame could be labeled as “educational norms” surrounding our thesis supervisory practices. Particularly, Japanese students write their theses strictly following their teacher's model due to the influence of teacher-guided, exam-oriented learning (Mulvey, 2016), whereas Swedish students may avoid given templates, a tendency mirroring their more deeply embedded autonomous learning style from their youth. These educational norms even affect teachers' pedagogy. In the case of Japan, effective supervision may also be related to external, social factors such as job-hunting which takes up considerable time in the final year of university (Imoto, 2013). By contrast, in Sweden, teachers allow for each student's learning style to reflect their social values of respecting individuality.

### *Suggestions for improvement of our supervisory practices*

Regarding the fifth frame of suggestions for improvement of our thesis supervisory practices, two MRs were identified. The first was about “critical thinking,” where John suggested that it is difficult for Japanese students, especially the literature review which tends to be written in an overly descriptive way. Extract 12 demonstrates why he would like to introduce critical elements:

**[Extract 12: John]**

*I am looking at ways to teach more critically in writing the literature review. At the moment, my students tend to write quite descriptive literature reviews and leave the criticality to the discussion section. I think for undergraduates this may be common in thesis writing. Criticality is a tough aspect of academic writing for Japanese students, I feel, and needs to be introduced step by step.*

Naoki concurred that critical thinking is a very important issue to teach to her students. She reflected on the theses written by Mariya's students and was impressed about one thesis in which a student of Japanese linguistics challenged the existing analytical framework. In fact, Mariya noted how Swedish students already have a sense of critical thinking even from primary school. This indicates how Swedish students' L1 literacies applicable to L2 writing are more easily transferred into L2 thesis writing than Japanese students, and that they retain a high sense of agency and negotiation rights to utilize their L1 literacies in that transition (Bastola and Hu, 2021). Certainly, awareness of criticality appears to be the significant difference between Japanese and Swedish students. Consequently, Naoki reflected on her own supervisory practices in that, although a model thesis written by herself scaffolds her students' writing, it also acts to limit flexibility in writing style.

**[Extract 13: Naoki]**

*Another point which I would like to introduce is more flexibility in order to improve my thesis supervisory practice. I usually show my model to the students and most of them follow the model strictly. However, I*



*am thinking of telling them that it is up to them to follow the model or not. Hopefully, this will lead to learner independence.*

Naoki is obviously seeking to introduce autonomous learning to counter the exam-oriented learning propensities embedded in Japanese students since secondary school. With this in mind, the second MR in this frame emerged as “autonomous learning,” because a similar idea was suggested by Mariya who was trying to encourage further collaborative learning during the whole process of thesis writing, as in Extract 14. On reflection, Naoki realized that instructing students to become autonomous is not sufficient and more guidance into learner independence may be necessary as she develops her practices.

**[Extract 14: Mariya]**

*The key is to have students do more peer reading prior to final draft submission, i.e., before I have to read and comment on their drafts thoroughly, in order to improve the level of completion and consequently reduce my workload. How I can make students read their own work as critically as they do when reading papers written by others is something I still struggle to figure out...*

In fact, peer reading of theses is already conducted in the university where Mariya works, particularly after students finish writing their drafts for the purpose of thesis defense. Apparently, at this later stage of students’ thesis development, she expressed the wish for students to collaborate with each other more, as in [Corcoran et al.’s \(2018: 12\)](#) investigation into peer “language literacy brokers,” rather than teacher involvement at every stage of the writing process. In short, although the levels of autonomous learning between Japanese and Swedish students are noticeably different, both Naoki and Mariya were aligned in their desire to step away from over-involvement in providing guidance at key stages of the writing process. This suggests that the concept of academic literacy development for both Naoki and Mariya transcends language(s) literacy and embraces a variety of other literacy skills embedded in the journey towards the completion of the thesis.

### ***What we learned from CAE***

Finally, the sixth frame looked at implications about what we learned from this study, in particular, according to [Breault \(2016: 778\)](#), “regenerative transformation” that is expected during the process of constructing and analyzing CAE data. Notably, John suggested that it was difficult to identify specific points that transformed his practices. Instead, he recognized a kind of affirmation of his current approaches to supervision which afforded him more confidence in his practices. Initially, he used to consider that although his supervisory practices were pragmatic, they lacked an innovative edge, basically due to the necessity to focus so much on his students’ low language proficiency in writing. In fact, [Mulvey \(2016\)](#) implied that Japanese students’ lack academic writing skills in English and also in Japanese. For this reason, John has been spending a considerable amount of time focusing on employing bilingual means—the use of the students’ L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English)—to support the learning process. As his students are predominantly monolingual Japanese speakers, he realized the importance of strategic Japanese language use as a pragmatic and also empowering and imaginative pedagogical approach, as expressed in Extract 15.

**[Extract 15: John]**

*So from what I see in my own CAE and Naoki's perhaps has a commonality in the sense that .... using the students' L1 (Japanese), is OK. It's pragmatic (because students don't have fluency in English) but also, I believe, students have the right to use their own L1 and L1 literature in discussing the thesis and referring to Japanese sources.*

Naoki supported John's idea of this strategic use of the students' linguistic repertoire. This was driven primarily by a pragmatic awareness in the Japanese context of low English language proficiency, as seen in [Adamson and Coulson \(2015\)](#). In contrast, Mariya only uses English because her students' target language proficiency is sufficient to communicate with their teacher during the supervision as illustrated in Extract 16. Therefore, she stated that she faces different challenges in Sweden. Interestingly, Mariya was not initially aware of the influence of Swedish educational norms on her supervisory practices, but due to Naoki's recognition of this in the CAE itself, she became more conscious about them. This points to the healthy transformative nature of CAE ([Breault, 2016](#)). Possibly, Mariya's current challenges are more related to the social and educational norms in Sweden.

**[Extract 16: Mariya]**

*Unlike John and Naoki, I have no choice but to use only English when supervising my students. It is not a problem since the students' spoken English proficiency is quite high in Sweden. So I definitely face different challenges than those teaching in Japan. It is also interesting to note that Naoki recognized that my supervisory practice is affected by Swedish social and educational norms rather than my own literacy practice, which I was not consciously aware of.*

Naoki learned through CAE that the students' educational backgrounds affect our thesis supervisory practices both in Sweden and Japan, as in Extract 17.

**[Extract 17: Naoki]**

*One point which I learned through CAE is that thesis writing can be the reflection of our students' educational backgrounds, including their secondary and primary schools. For example, Japanese students have difficulty in critical thinking due to the exam-oriented education in their school days. On the other hand, Mariya suggested that Swedish students are used to critical thinking because they are trained in their early age.*

In light of those different educational practices from primary to tertiary levels in the Japanese and Swedish contexts, they can be said to be governed by the social and educational norms of each country. Therefore, a key MR, that of those different "social and educational norms," affects both students' learning styles and teachers' supervisory practices. The claim of "assimilationist teaching" ([Kubota and Lehner, 2004: 20](#)) would then appear to be avoided by all participants reacting to, and negotiating with, local norms and competences of literacy practices.

## **Conclusions and implications**

Returning to our three research questions, the following conclusions can be drawn from this study into literacy practices. The first question is: *How do we, as three teacher-researchers, describe our*

*literacy practices in writing over the years?* All of us developed our L1 literacy practices at home with family support. Furthermore, schools and universities offered us opportunities to study with fellow students through collaborative learning. As for L2 academic writing, Mariya and Naoki improved their skills at universities studying abroad in inner circle countries. Importantly, all of us learned autonomously and gained confidence at certain times in our personal journeys into literacy development.

The second question asks: *How do we think these literacy practices affect our thesis supervisory practices in Sweden and Japan and how do those practices contrast?* Interestingly, although John and Naoki believed their personal experiences influence thesis supervisory practice, Mariya did not think so due to the different educational backgrounds of her Swedish students who had already acquired an autonomous learning style. In this respect, she noted personal difficulties with the educational norm in which teachers are considered more as mentors and are expected to respect and assist individual student's own preferred way of learning. Moreover, the influence of students' educational backgrounds upon the thesis supervisory practices was evident in both Sweden and Japan. In this sense, John and Naoki bemoaned the effect of exam-oriented study in Japan on their thesis supervision, as it inhibits the development of autonomy and critical thinking in academic writing (Mulvey, 2016).

Finally, the third question is: *What are the advantages and challenges in our thesis supervisory practices, and how can we improve them?* In response, John and Naoki recognized that their pedagogy was advantageous for their students who have a relatively low level of English proficiency. However, teaching critical thinking to Japanese students is challenging, whereas for Swedish students, it is an embedded feature of learning from an early age. Therefore, the challenges for Mariya differ to those facing John and Naoki. In conclusion, the influence of different educational norms in both Japan and Sweden is of some importance to us, because those norms affect students' learning styles and our thesis supervisory practices considerably.

Looking at potential implications for this study, we could firstly draw upon student perspectives on the supervisory process by means of similar ethnographic approaches to combine with the data gathered from teachers. Interviewing students individually or asking Swedish and Japanese students to engage in CAE research together over time, such as conducted among teachers, may reveal important insights into the student experiences which teacher-based research alone cannot give. Secondly, the methodological framework we have adopted for sharing our experiences and beliefs that of CAE, could be used among other researchers wishing to explore similar themes.

As seen in this study, this collaborative approach to investigate our own supervisory practices across cultural contexts has served to raise awareness of and contrast our own pedagogies. At times, as CAE literature indicates (Breault, 2016), this serves to transform them, and at others, as our data suggests, simply to affirm existing practices or raise awareness of social and educational norms and realities. The ethnographic nature of CAE with its longitudinal potential to revisit narratives and interact with others has yielded rich, insightful data primarily of use to our own personal development. Despite the perhaps limited resonance with practitioners in other teaching contexts, the process of constructing and analyzing the CAE may nevertheless represent a powerful means for a wide range of thesis practitioners and students to investigate and reflect upon supervisory practices. In response to calls by Basturkmen et al. (2014) and Bastola and Hu (2021), engagement in CAE can create a research space to develop supervisory practices in the absence of institutional programs to support them.

## Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## ORCID iD

Mariya Aida Niendorf  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1281-6966>

## References

- Adamson JL and Coulson D (2015) Translanguaging in English academic writing preparation. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning* 10(1): 24–37. DOI: [10.1080/22040552.2015.1084674](https://doi.org/10.1080/22040552.2015.1084674)
- Adamson JL, Coulson D and Fujimoto-Adamson N (2019) Supervisory practices in English-medium undergraduate and postgraduate applied linguistics thesis writing: insights from Japan-based tutors. *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 6(1): 14–27. <https://www3.caes.hku.hk/ajal/index.php/ajal/article/view/594>
- Aida Niendorf M (2013) Internationalization at home: effectiveness of online joint-seminars with overseas university students – results from a pilot study. In: *The Proceedings of the 7th International Technology, Education and Development Conference*, 4–6 March 2013. Valencia: International Association of Technology, Education and Development, 5242–5247.
- Barkhuizen G and Wette R (2008) Narrative frames for investigating the experience of language teachers. *System* 36(3): 372–387. DOI: [10.1016/j.system.2008.02.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.02.002).
- Bastola MN and Hu G (2021) Supervisory feedback across disciplines: does it meet students' expectations? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 46(3): 407–423. DOI: [10.1080/02602938.2020.1780562](https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1780562)
- Basturkmen H, East M and Bitchener J (2014) Supervisors' on-script feedback comments on drafts of dissertations: socialising students into the academic discourse community. *Teaching in Higher Education* 19(4): 432–445. DOI: [10.1080/13562517.2012.752728](https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2012.752728).
- Bazerman C (1980) A relationship between reading and writing: the conversation model. *College English Teaching & Research* 41: 656–661.
- Bitchener J (2018) *A Guide to Supervising Non-native English Writers of Theses and Dissertations*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Blommaert J (2007) On scope and depth in linguistic ethnography. *Journal of SocioLinguistics* 11(5): 688–982.
- Bolton K and Kuteeva M (2012) English as an academic language at a Swedish university: parallel language use and the 'threat' of English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33(5): 429–447. DOI: [10.1080/01434632.2012.670241](https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2012.670241).
- Bradford A and Brown H (2018) English-medium instruction in Japanese higher education. *Bristol & Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters*.
- Breault RA (2016) Emerging issues in duoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29(6): 777–794. DOI: [10.1080/09518398.2016.1162866](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1162866).
- Burgess C (2014) To globalise or not to globalise? 'Inward-looking youth' as scapegoats for Japan's failure to secure and cultivate 'global human resources. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 13(4): 487–507. DOI: [10.1080/14767724.2014.966805](https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.966805).
- Butterfield LD, Borgen WA, Amundson NE, et al. (2005) Fifty years of the critical incident technique: 1954–2004 and beyond. *Qualitative Research* 5: 475–497. DOI: [10.1177/1468794105056924](https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794105056924).

- Chang H (2016) Individual and collaborative autoethnography as method. In: Jones SH, Adams TA and Ellis C (eds) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge, 107–142.
- Chang H, Ngunjiri W and Hernandez KAC (2013) *Collaborative Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K (2018) *Research Method in Education*. 8th edition. London & New York: Routledge.
- Corcoran J, Gagne A and McIntosh M (2018) A conversation about ‘editing’ plurilingual scholars’ thesis writing. *Canadian Journal for Studies in Discourse and Writing/Redactologie* 28: 1–25. <https://journals.sfu.ca/cjsdw>
- Crystal D (2012) *English as a Global Language*. 2nd edition. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- De Fina A (2015) Afterward. In: Piazza R and Fasulo A (eds) *Marked Identities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 192–196.
- Education First (EF) (2023) EF English proficiency index: a ranking of 113 countries and regions by English skills. Available at: <https://www.ef.se/epi/> (accessed 21 December 2023).
- Ellis C (2016) Preface: carrying the torch for autoethnography. In: Jones SH, Adams TA and Ellis C (eds) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge, 9–12.
- Fujimoto-Adamson N and Adamson JL (2018) From EFL to EMI: hybrid practices in English as a medium of instruction in Japanese tertiary contexts. In: Kirkgöz Y and Dikilitaş K (eds) *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes. English Language Education*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, Vol. 11, 201–221.
- Hernandez KAC, Chang H and Ngunjiri FW (2017) Collaborative autoethnography as multivocal, relational, and democratic research: opportunities, challenges, and aspirations. *The Autobiography Society* 32(2): 251–254. DOI: [10.1080/08989575.2017.1288892](https://doi.org/10.1080/08989575.2017.1288892).
- Högskoleverket (2008) En högskola i världen: internationalisering för kvalitet. *Högskoleverkets rapportserie* 2008: 15R.
- Holliday A (1994) *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Howe S (2015) Learning English in Sweden and Japan: an overview. *Fukuoka University Review of Literature and Humanities* 48(1): 97–128.
- Ide S (2006) *Wakimae No Goyooron [Pragmatics of Wakimae]*. Tokyo, Japan: Taishukan.
- Imoto Y (2013) Japan: internationalisation in education and the problem of introspective youth. In: Hsieh P-T J (ed) *Education in East Asia*. London, UK: Bloomsbury, pp. 127–152.
- Ishikawa M (2011) Redefining internationalization in higher education: global 30 and the making of global universities in Japan. In: Willis DB and Rappleye J (eds) *Reimagining Japanese Education: Borders, Transfers, Circulations and the Comparative*. Oxford, U.K.: Symposium Books, 193–223.
- Jones SH, Adams TA and Ellis C (2016) Introduction: coming to know autoethnography as more than a method. In: Jones SH, Adams TA and Ellis C (eds) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge, 17–47.
- Kachru BB (1992) Teaching world Englishes. In: Kachru BB (ed) *The Other Tongue*. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 356–365.
- Kirkpatrick A (2014) English as a medium of instruction in East and Southeast Asian universities. In: Murray N and Scarino A (eds) *Dynamic Ecologies: A Relational Perspective on Languages Education in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Dordrecht: Springer, 15–29.
- Kubota R (2015) Foreword. In: Horiguchi S, Imoto Y and Poole GS (eds) *Foreign Language Education in Japan*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. vii–ix.
- Kubota R and Lehner A (2004) Toward critical contrastive rhetoric. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13(1): 7–27. DOI: [10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.003).

- Language Council of Sweden (n.d). Fråga: Vad menas med *du-reformen* och när genomfördes den? [Question: What does *du-reformen* mean and when was it carried out?]. Available at: <https://frageladan.isof.se/visasvar.py?svar=39445> (accessed 09 November 2023).
- Lea MR and Street BV (1998) Student writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education* 23(2): 157–172.
- Lillis T (2008) Ethnography as method, methodology and deep theorizing: closing the gap between text and context in academic writing research. *Written Communication* 25(3): 353–388. DOI: [10.1177/0741088308319229](https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088308319229).
- Lillis T and Curry MJ (2010) *Academic Writing in a Global Context: The Politics and Practices of Publishing in English*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Lortie DC (1975) *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Malmström H and Pecorari D (2022) *Language Choice and Internationalisation: The Roles of Swedish and English in Research and Higher Education. Reports from the Language Council of Sweden No.19*. [https://research.chalmers.se/publication/531286/file/531286\\_Fulltext.pdf](https://research.chalmers.se/publication/531286/file/531286_Fulltext.pdf)
- Matsumoto Y (1993) Linguistic politeness and cultural style: observations. In: Clancy PM (ed) *Japanese and Korean Linguistics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Vol. 2, 55–67.
- MEXT (2015) *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*, Japan. Heisei 25 nendo daigaku ni okeru kyoiku naiyoutou no kaikaku joukyou ni tsuite [About the state of affairs regarding university reforms of education in 2013]. [https://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/koutou/daigaku/04052801\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/09/10/1361916\\_1.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/daigaku/04052801_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/09/10/1361916_1.pdf)
- MEXT (2017) *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*. Japan. Heisei 27 nendo no daigaku ni okeru kyoikunaiyao tou no kaikaku joukyou ni tsuite (gaiyou) [State of curriculum renewal in 2015 (Overview)]. [https://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/koutou/daigaku/04052801/icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/12/13/1398426\\_1.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/daigaku/04052801/icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/12/13/1398426_1.pdf)
- Mitchell JC (1984) Typicality and the case study. In: Ellen RF (ed) *Ethnographic Research*. Cambridge US: Academic Press, 238–241.
- Moje EB, McIntosh Ciechanowski K, Kramer K, et al. (2004) Working toward third space in content area literacy: an examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 39(1): 28–70. <https://lycketch219.pbworks.com/w/file/etch/84468625/WorkingTowardThirdSpace.pdf>
- Mulvey B (2016) Writing instruction: what is being taught in Japanese high schools, why, and why it matters. *The Language Teacher* 40(3): 3–8. DOI: [10.37546/JALTTLT40.3-1](https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT40.3-1).
- Murphey T (1996) Near peer role models. *Teachers Talking to Teachers, JALT Teacher Education SIG Newsletter* 4(3): 21–22.
- Norris J and Sawyer RD (2016) Toward a dialogic methodology. In: Norris J, Sawyer RD and Lund D (eds) *Duoethnography: Dialogic Methods for Social, Health, and Educational Research*. New York: Routledge, 9–39.
- Ochs E and Capps L (2001) *Living Narrative*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press.
- Ogihara Y, Uchida Y and Kusumi T (2014) How do Japanese perceive individualism: examination of the meaning of individualism in Japan. *Psychologia* 57: 213–223. [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/psysoc/57/3/57\\_213/\\_pdf](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/psysoc/57/3/57_213/_pdf)
- Paltridge B and Starfield S (2020) Change and continuity in thesis and dissertation writing: the evolution of an academic genre. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 48: 1–48. DOI: [10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100910](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100910).
- Prasad P (2018) *Crafting Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. New York & London: Routledge.
- Richards JC and Schmidt R (2014) *Longman Dictionary of Language and Applied Linguistics*. 4th edition. Harlow, U.K.: Routledge.



- Roy R and Uesuka S (2020) Collaborative autoethnography: 'Self-reflection' as a timely alternative research approach during the global pandemic. *Qualitative Research Journal* 20(4): 383–392. DOI: [10.1108/QRJ-06-2020-0054](https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2020-0054).
- Setati M, Adler J, Reed Y, et al. (2002) Incomplete journeys: code-switching and other language practices in Mathematics, Science and English language classrooms in South Africa. *Language and Education* 16: 128–149. DOI: [10.1080/09500780208666824](https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780208666824).
- Stigger E (2018) Introduction: internationalization in higher education. In: Stigger E, Wang M, Laurence D, et al. (eds) *Internationalization within Higher Education. Perspectives from Japan*. Singapore: Springer, 1–19.
- Sundqvist P (2009) *Extramural English Matters: Out-Of-School English and its Impact on Swedish Ninth Graders' Oral Proficiency and Vocabulary*. PhD thesis. Sweden: Karlstad University.
- Takagi H (2013) The internationalization of curricula: the complexity and diversity of meaning in and beyond Japanese universities. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International* 52(4): 349–359. DOI: [10.1080/14703297.2013.820138](https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.820138).
- The Higher Education Ordinance (1993: 100) Annex 2. Swedish Council for Higher Education. Available at: <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/Annex-2/#Degree-of-Bachelor> (accessed 20 August 2023).
- Thesen L (2014) Risk as productive: working with dilemmas in the writing of research. In: Thesen LL and Cooper L (eds) *Risk in Academic Writing*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 1–24.
- Toth J and Paulsrud B (2017) Agency and affordance in translanguaging for learning: case studies from English-medium instruction in Swedish schools. In: Paulsrud B, Rosen J, Straszer B, et al. (eds) *New Perspectives on Translanguaging and Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 189–207.
- Trulsson J and Ullberg S (2003) *Internationalisering På Hemmaplan – En Fråga Om Attityd, Kunskap Och Kompetens! En Pilotstudie Om Interkulturella Och Internationella I Malmö Högskolas Programutbud Hösten 2002, Assessment Report, IMER*. Malmö University.
- Turner J (2012) Academic literacies: providing a space for the socio-political dynamics of EAP. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 11(1): 17–25. DOI: [10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.11.007).
- Universitetskanslersämbetet (UKÄ) (2020a) Antal inresande studenter [Number of inbound students]. <https://www.uka.se/statistik-analys/hogskolan-i-siffror/statistik/beskrivningar-av-statistiken-i-databasen-hogskolan-i-siffror/utbildning-pa-grundniva-och-avancerad-niva/internationell-studentmobilitet/internationell-studentmobilitet/2018-10-29-inresande-studenter.html>
- Universitetskanslersämbetet (UKÄ) (2020b) *Universitet Och Högskolor: Årsrapport 2020 [Higher Education Institutions: Annual report 2020]*. [https://www.uka.se/download/18.65fbdad5175926cbdd099be/1606809482442/UK%C3%84\\_%C3%85rsrapport\\_2020-12-01.pdf](https://www.uka.se/download/18.65fbdad5175926cbdd099be/1606809482442/UK%C3%84_%C3%85rsrapport_2020-12-01.pdf)
- Wächter B and Maiworm F (eds) (2014) English-taught programmes in European higher education: the state of play in 2014. ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. Bonn: Lemmens.
- Wall S (2008) Easier said than done: writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7(1): 38–53. DOI: [10.1177/160940690800700103](https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700103).
- Warwick P and Maloch B (2003) Scaffolding speech and writing in the primary classroom: a consideration of work with literature and science pupil groups in the USA and UK. *Reading* 37(2): 54–63.
- Yonezawa A (2011) The internationalization of Japanese higher education: policy debates and realities. In: Marginson S, Kaur S and Sawir E (eds) *Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 329–342.



---

**Author biographies**

Naoki Fujimoto-Adamson is an Associate Professor at Niigata University of International and Information Studies (NUIS) in Japan. Currently, she teaches academic writing, test taking skills, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis.

John L Adamson is a professor at the University of Niigata Prefecture in Japan. He received his Ed.D. from Leicester University, UK in 2002 and teaches English for Academic Purposes, Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis.

Mariya Aida Niendorf received her PhD in Central Eurasian Studies from Indiana University Bloomington in 2005. She currently works as a Senior Lecturer in the Japanese Department at Dalarna University, Sweden, teaching linguistics, anthropology, and intercultural communication. Her research interests include intercultural communication, cultural anthropology, and identity development.