

**WRITING
FOR SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION**
BEHIND THE SCENES
IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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The Privilege of Writing as an Immigrant Woman

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The stories they are waiting for—of a brave but disadvantaged immigrant woman trying to understand an unfamiliar language, missing the customs and the foods of the homeland, overcoming one ‘culture shock’ after another—have nothing to do with me. I resent being expected to tell such stories because I have none to tell and also because, even when they are the true stories for many first-generation immigrant women, there is something self-congratulatory or condescending in most listeners’ attitudes. The stories of immigration are often heard by nonimmigrants in the spirit of ‘I am so lucky that I was always an American.’ They are the adult, quality-of-life versions of ‘those poor starving children in China’ for whom we were supposed to eat all the food on our plates. (Mori, 2000, 138–39)

This chapter is supposed to be about academic writing. However, I cannot help but think that who we are is extremely relevant to how we write and what we write about and that every time we write something, we put our own selves on the line. Thus, what follows is my own story, which is not only about how I have written and published a number of chapters and articles, but also about what took place behind the scenes—what led me to academic publishing, what made certain topics more important than others, and what made me react in particular ways to interactions with editors and publishers. It is also a story of ways in which I gained membership in a scholarly community and constructed an authoritative voice, with a trace of an accent (which I prefer to see as bilingualism and double vision). In telling this story, I will try to demonstrate that an “immigrant woman” is not

a singular subject position: Whereas for some aspiring scholars it can be a source of disempowerment, for others, myself included, being a refugee, an immigrant, and a female is a privilege and an ultimate source of strength, critical consciousness, and multiple perspectives.

A REFUGEE JOURNEY: LEARNING TO DARE WITH NOTHING TO LOSE

Two distinguishing features of successful academic writers are, for me, a belief in what you have to say and an ability to start over, time after time, revising and rewriting draft after draft. What helped me most to learn how to do both was the experience of starting my own life over from scratch with nothing but symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) and a deep belief that this time things could be different. This experience also informed my views on gatekeeping, helping me differentiate between actual gatekeeping and critical—but constructive—comments.

My life took a major turn in the summer of 1988 when I unexpectedly got pregnant and made a decision to raise the child as a single mother. At the time, I was between jobs and living in my native city of Kiev, Ukraine, one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Europe. It was also one of the most anti-semitic ones, offering very few educational and employment options to Jews in general, and even fewer to Jewish women. In 1981, after graduating from high school with what would be considered in the United States a 4.0 grade point average, I had enormous difficulties entering college, in my case Kiev Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. Despite the fact that I got *As* on all my entrance examinations, was a winner of a regional competition in French language proficiency, and spoke five other languages, my name was not on the list of those admitted. My mother, an alumna of that college, and I stood outside the entrance doors, together with other hopefuls, reading admission lists, straining to find my name. Nope, I was definitely not admitted—but I did see a few names of those who took the tests with me and got *Bs* and *Cs* (privacy of information did not mean much in the U.S.S.R.). Mom and I hugged each other and cried.

Luckily, my grandmother, who had a number of connections in the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, took a less passive approach, and soon, in a typical Soviet fashion, my name appeared on the “additional list” with all others who had to take a roundabout approach to get into college. Ironically, whereas some have been accepted despite their low grades, I needed connections to be accepted despite my ethnicity. Five years later, in 1986, I graduated *summa cum laude* and even more in love with languages and linguistics. All I wanted to do was to continue research and go on to graduate school. I had, however, reached a glass ceiling—even the roundabout approach and the Ministry connections did not help this time—the graduate school of my alma mater already had a token Jew and

had no interest in or need for another. I encountered a similar attitude when applying for jobs: People who knew me and seemed extremely interested in employing someone with the knowledge of several languages would become disappointed when they opened my passport and discovered that I was listed as Jewish (in all fairness, my being Jewish did not matter to many of them all that much; what mattered was the line in the passport—to have a listed Jew was not good for their personnel records). Thus, prospective employers would immediately remember that the position had already been filled and thank me for my interest, wishing me lots of luck in the future.

Meanwhile, that future behind the Iron Curtain seemed rather hopeless. While the West was becoming increasingly excited about our new leader, the Soviets were rather skeptical about Gorbachev's efforts, and even now many remain convinced that the U.S.S.R. fell apart not because of his attempts to establish a more democratic government but because of his inability to keep the house of cards from tumbling over. The only effort of his that many of us appreciated was the reestablishment of immigration policies of the 1970s that allowed Soviet Jews to leave the country because of religious and ethnic persecution or for reunification with real or fictional relatives in Israel. For me, in 1988, after almost 2 years of unsuccessful attempts to get into graduate school or to find a professional job, to leave the country seemed like the only way out. This desire became even more imperative when I got pregnant—my life might have been over, but I did want my unborn child to have a better future, one that included options and possibilities. On the other hand, both my mother and I were concerned about finding work in the United States, where we hoped to go. Our main field was languages, and the knowledge of English may have been somewhat valuable in Kiev, but in the United States everyone else spoke English, too. Nevertheless we decided to try, and in the Fall of 1988 applied for exit visas. At that time, immigration departments were overwhelmed with applications, and the waiting period took months and months, which gave us time to ponder over our decision while giving private English lessons to other potential refugees.

My son was born in April of 1989; the exit visas were still not there, and our doubts about our future in the West grew. And then the relatively peaceful world of Soviet citizens was shattered by events in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, where ethnic hatred finally boiled over and where militia and the military failed to protect ethnic minorities from murder, rape, and other forms of violence, at times conspiring with the persecutors instead. In May of 1989 the ethnic unrest reached Kiev, and rumors of an upcoming pogrom started circulating among the population. We gave no heed to such rumors (What *pogrom*, we do not live in tsarist Russia!) until one fine morning when there was a knock on the door of our apartment. A Russian neighbor we knew only superficially stood there and asked for

permission to come in. When we locked the door behind her, she whispered that she and her husband had heard the rumors and wanted to hide us in their apartment during the upcoming pogrom (she knew as well as we did that the government and its militia would not be of much help if the pogrom were to occur). It was then that the possibility of a pogrom became entrenched in our minds and our decision to leave the country became irreversible (the pogrom ultimately did not occur—but everyone believes that it could have). I had reconsidered my ambitious dreams and firmly stated that I was ready to wash dishes for the rest of my life in order to ensure that my son was safe, sound, and happy. (All this was to change very soon, as the reader will see—once in the United States, I refused to wash dishes for a living, and nowadays it is my son who—albeit safe, sound, and happy—makes dinners and washes dishes while his mom is working on yet another important academic paper. Thanks, Nik, for being the best son an academic woman could have!)

Finally, in November of 1989, we received our exit visas. There was one problem, however: Emigration with refugee status was officially over and we had a choice of leaving the country almost immediately with no possessions or staying to see whether the new regulations would allow us to leave. My mother and I looked at each other and decided that we might as well leave everything behind. And so we did, leaving a fully furnished apartment to relatives to deal with and embarking on our historic journey with \$300 and three suitcases filled mostly with old family pictures and cloth diapers. The 2-day trip from Kiev to Vienna with a stopover in Poland culminated in the Vienna airport where we sat, smelly and tired, in our heavy Russian coats, surrounded by our earthly possessions, awaiting the arrival of the representatives of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), who were supposed to meet us and take us to some hotel or other. The representatives did not show up. Here we were in the West, and the beautiful people were passing us by trying to avoid the pathetic refugee family, and we had no idea what to do next.

Soon, however, little Nik made his needs known, and I wandered around in search of a bathroom where I could change his diapers (by now, we were down to a single cloth diaper). While looking for a bathroom, I noticed another family that seemed equally pathetic and even more firmly ensconced in the airport, and attempted to talk to them. After having tried a couple of languages, I eventually succeeded with French and a smattering of Arabic, finding out that these people were refugees from a war-torn Lebanon, with no papers, and had spent 2 days in this airport trying unsuccessfully to communicate their ordeal to authorities. Finally there was something I could do! Even if I couldn't help myself I could help these people, and so I immediately took charge and acted as a translator between the family and the customs officers who, in turn, called the Red Cross representatives. The family was successfully exited

from the airport, and I realized that stripped of all my social identities and material possessions, I still carried around some cultural and linguistic capital that could be put to good use. Hey, if necessary, I could ask the same Red Cross to take care of me and my family. This was, however, unnecessary, as the HIAS representatives finally arrived, and transported us in a little van to a refugee-populated hotel in a working-class area of Vienna. Our new life in the West had officially begun.

Like many other refugees, we stayed in Vienna for a month; then, after we declared our desire to go to the United States rather than Israel, we were transported to Italy to stay in a refugee settlement waiting for some Jewish community in the United States to sponsor us. The arrival in Rome was quite grand—our refugee-filled plane was met by the carabinieri with dogs and machine guns in order to protect us from possible terrorist attacks. This sight filled us with both sadness and gratitude—how ironic that another country cared more about our safety than our former motherland! Soon, the journey that started with apprehension became an adventure. Although we may have been staying in refugee settlements and working at low-paying jobs for extra cash (a friend and I cleaned apartments for a while), we were also enjoying life as never before, entertaining new hopes and possibilities, partying, and exploring Italy. Before long, the Russian Jewish community of Torvaianica where we were staying organized a school for refugee children, and once again I was in the thick of events, teaching English and translating between English, Italian, and Russian during business meetings between the community leaders, local authorities, and HIAS representatives. I was delighted to see that here as well my linguistic capital had some market value.

Our next stop was Reading, Pennsylvania, where the Jewish community offered to sponsor our refugee family of three. I will be forever grateful to the Jewish Federation of Reading for this kind-hearted decision, as our family did not look very promising in terms of self-sufficiency: an elderly mother, a daughter with no profession but knowledge of English, and a baby. In May of 1990 we arrived in New York City and then flew to Reading where we were met by the members of the Jewish Federation and driven to our own apartment, all furnished with donations from members of the local Jewish community; they even included a playpen for my son with books and toys. Dinner was already on the table, and so were Friday night candles; we were finally home. And so my mom and I looked at each other—and yeah, there we went crying again.

Unfortunately, the relationship between us and the Jewish Federation soon turned sour. I was offered what seemed like a dream job back in Kiev—washing dishes and cooking kosher food in the Jewish wing of the local hospital (simultaneously, I was sent on a couple of blind dates). The problem was that by that time, having realized the value of my education, I no longer wanted to wash dishes, nor was I interested in dating. And so I

refused, pointing out that my cooking abilities would only further damage the hospital patients (and the marital prospects). I asked for a 3-month extension during which I could look for a job on my own. Our sponsors kindly agreed, and so I went to the local library where I copied down addresses of all colleges in Pennsylvania that offered Russian, or for that matter French or Spanish, and started applying for jobs, regardless of how far away the colleges were and regardless of whether they were actually looking for anyone (job ads were at that point an unfamiliar concept). Even though I had no firm understanding of how higher education in America worked, I knew that I had nothing to lose by trying (the kitchen job was still waiting) and everything to gain.

As a result of my letter-writing campaign, I got seven job interviews and four offers to take part-time adjunct positions in various languages. This outcome firmly reinforced my belief that now I could do whatever I put my mind to. In contrast, our sponsors were in despair trying to point out that I would be unable to support myself and my family on an adjunct salary with no benefits (yet another unfamiliar concept). I, on the other hand, was elated to be considered acceptable for a job in my field and was already thinking about the next step—becoming a full-time academic (with benefits, whatever those might be). In shock, our poor sponsors tried to counteract and set up a meeting for me with a local college professor who told me his own story of 7 miserable years in graduate school. Luckily, what was considered poverty from a middle-class American perspective was a very acceptable standard of living for a newly arrived refugee. In my mind I also figured that if it took the professor 7 years to finish his dissertation, I could probably do it in 5. And so, 4 months after my arrival in the United States, I was working two part-time jobs, teaching Spanish in one college and Russian in another, and getting ready to take my Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examinations (GREs). Three months into the fall semester I took the tests, got my scores back, and started applying to graduate schools—to become an American academic. So what if some schools do not accept me, maybe others will—what have I got to lose?

BECOMING AN AMERICAN ACADEMIC: THE JOYS OF DOUBLE VISION

Yet another advantage of my refugee background is the inside perspective on the immigrant experience, second language (L2) socialization, and bilingualism that allows me to walk back and forth across the divide that in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) often separates “us” (academics) from “them” (L2 learners and users). Perhaps, if I were to remain a foreign language user, I would not be so tempted to rebel against each and every tenet of the field and to search for alternative approaches that

reflect ways in which our languages are so tightly—and at times painfully—interlocked with our multiple identities and desires.

This rebellion was about to take place at Cornell, the school where in the Fall of 1992, 2 years after my arrival in the United States, I started yet another new life, that of a graduate student. I had selected Cornell as one of the few schools to which I applied on the basis of a description in yet another catalog in the local library in Reading, Pennsylvania. The notion of “Ivy League education” and various stratifications in American higher education did not mean anything to me at that time, and so my search was guided by the focus of the particular programs. Ever since my undergraduate years in Kiev, I had been interested in the study of SLA and in psycholinguistics, and so I selected programs that specialized in either one or both. A particularly appealing one was offered by the University of Delaware, where the professors seemed to be interested in Soviet psycholinguistics. My essay described my own background and familiarity with the work of Leontiev and Vygotsky, and soon I got a phone call from one of the faculty members at Delaware, Professor James Lantolf, telling me that I was accepted into the program. He also told me at that point that he was leaving Delaware for Cornell. Because Cornell was on my initial list anyway and I did want to work with James Lantolf, whose articles really impressed me, I forwarded an application there and was accepted as well—even though I had to wait another year to get a teaching assistantship before going to Ithaca.

And there I was in the picturesque city of Ithaca—29 years old and finally fulfilling my own dreams of being in graduate school (long gone my desire to sacrifice myself to my son’s better future). My first course, in L2 reading, required a final paper that would be ‘publishable’—whatever that meant. The concept was somewhat mysterious, and our professors did not disclose how one might go about creating something publishable. I was determined to succeed, however, and so, once again, the library seemed like the place to find an answer. During that first semester, I examined what journals existed in SLA and what type of work they published. Since I also needed to learn to write scholarly work in English, I studied closely how other people constructed sentences and which pronouns, qualifiers or verbs they chose. By the end of that first semester I had conducted my first case study of reading development of a learner of Arabic and wrote a paper that closely imitated the published work I had seen. I tried to impose a similar structure (introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions), appeal to a similar “objective” manner of presentation (lots of passive constructions), and use similar methods of data collection and analysis. I must have been successful from the point of view of my instructors as I got an A. The paper itself, however, left me cold—it wasn’t something I was particularly proud of or would ever be interested in publishing. Instead, I had started searching for alternative

topics and ways of writing that would take me beyond imitation and repetition and outside the boundaries of the well-known and familiar.

From then on, I spent the happiest years of my life in Olin library: in my carrel, in the stacks, and in the computer and copy rooms. I was greedily absorbing knowledge, trying to learn all I could about various databases and bibliographies, reading and compiling information on various areas in- and outside of SLA and poring over the debates in the field. My desire to be systematic led me to explore the areas one after the other, familiarizing myself with every possible aspect of SLA, from individual differences in L2 learning, to language-learning strategies, to neurolinguistics of the bilingual brain. All my extra earnings from tutoring and translation were spent on books and on xeroxing what I thought were the key papers in various areas, which I then put into binders by topic. My desire to be comprehensive also led me to write some of the longest papers my professors had ever been subjected to. Ultimately these explorations taught me a lot about what's hot and what's not in the field, pointing to some areas that had been underresearched and underexplored. They also allowed me to internalize the basics of expository writing.

Unfortunately, my reading also led me to conclude that I deeply disliked both mainstream linguistics and SLA. The scholarship simply did not reflect me nor anyone I knew, living, breathing individuals, at the nexus of multiple power relations that often determined what—and how much of it—gets or does not get acquired. Nor did it recognize the fact that more than half of the world population was multilingual which made monolingualism and monolingual-like competence an exception rather than the rule. The departmental emphasis on mainstream generative linguistics seemed absurd and meaningless to my novice eye, and while my classmates were diligently solving syntax problems, I struggled to understand what the point of the problems was. Similarly, my SLA readings seemed to suggest that most SLA studies focused on questions that to me were incredibly minute and trivial and avoided the “real” issues of power, access, and identity. And so I slowly started asking questions and voicing opinions in my graduate classes. Oftentimes my questions and statements were ignored, and I was beginning to wonder about their validity. Then I enrolled in a graduate seminar where the process of my “devoicing” took a particularly humorous form. I consistently made points that would be brushed off by my professors. Then, a few turns later, my male classmate would make the same point—worded differently—and would be rewarded with “Yes, Rich, that's absolutely right—this is an excellent point.” (To Rich's credit, I must say that he always tried to interject that Aneta had just made the same point.) I was upset, frustrated, and grateful for the lesson—I had learned that my points were valid indeed but that I didn't have the necessary linguistic capital to make them heard. Thus, I set out to develop ways in which I could make my points and be heard. And because in

academia being published is often paramount to being heard, I focused on strategies that would make my arguments legitimate in writing.

To begin with, I enrolled in a course in the writing program with an unforgettable Barbara Legendre, who continued to meet with me one-on-one for 2 years, long after the course ended and up until the point of my defense (I am forever indebted to her for this generosity.) Reading through my dissertation chapters with Barbara taught me how to look at texts from a reader's perspective and forced me to think about cohesiveness, coherence, and reader-friendliness in ways I never did before. Another helpful experience was coediting *Cornell Working Papers in Linguistics*, with a classmate, Rafael Salaberry, in 1996. The process, from a call for papers, to review, to acceptance of revised papers, was an extremely informative one. Of particular importance for me was learning how to write reviews of others' work, starting with what kinds of things one might comment on and ending with how one might word the comments in supportive and constructive ways. It was also revealing and uplifting to see that native speakers of English were not necessarily better writers than nonnative speakers: Some also had problems imposing logical structure on the text and maintaining coherence and cohesiveness. From then on, I have always divided the writers into experts and novices, rather than native and nonnative speakers, and my later editing experiences only reinforced this perspective. Yet another helpful experience was reviewing conference proposals for the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and the Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) and manuscripts for *Applied Linguistics*. This experience made me think about multiple ways in which people position their scholarship within the field and link it to the work of others.

Simultaneously, I started looking for a theoretical framework that would accommodate my multiple questions and for an academic community that would legitimize them. There, being a former Soviet citizen was tremendously helpful once again. Unlike many of my classmates, I was completely at ease rejecting dominant mainstream theories as ideologically oppressive discourses. Nevertheless, the critical route I chose was not an easy one, and I would probably have dropped out of graduate school were it not for my wonderful mentor, Jim Lantolf. A maverick and a critic of mainstream SLA practices himself, Jim never imposed on us his own chosen theoretical framework, sociocultural theory, and encouraged all our attempts at critical thinking and reading outside of the “accepted body of literature,” introducing his students to critical theory and poststructuralism. And so I read on, embracing first social constructionism and then feminist poststructuralism and looking for an academic home where the questions I was interested in could be raised. Eventually, I found such a home in the interdisciplinary field of bilingualism, where poststructuralist approaches seemed as welcome as functionalism or Uni-

versal Grammar, where conferences entailed friendly and collegial exchanges, and where many scholars were openly concerned with issues of language, power, identity, and social justice. My immigrant past once again served me well—I was not afraid of changing tracks or fields, even midway through the graduate program. Once again, I proceeded to read work and conduct empirical studies in diverse areas of bilingualism, creating more binders, acquiring more books, and formulating questions I would eventually want to ask in my dissertation.

My five years of graduate school were filled with exciting reading and multiple learning experiences, yet they were far from idyllic. The professor from Reading was right in warning me that one cannot survive on a teaching assistantship and moreover support a family. And so I once again ventured into the world and landed a part-time job in a local Refugee Assistance Program, working as a job developer and translator with Russian, Ukrainian, and Bosnian refugees. In addition, I subbed as an ESL instructor, worked as a court and medical interpreter, and taught Russian for the local adult education program, while my mother helped me out babysitting my son. And even though wearing so many hats was time-consuming and frustrating, and being a good student and a good mother seemed like options that canceled themselves out, I continued feeling grateful for the privilege of being a student in an institution that accepted me on my own merits, rather than because of—or despite—my ethnicity. What may have seemed like misery and drudgery to the Reading professor, seemed like a luxury to me—and I reveled in it. I was finally doing graduate work, while my teaching assistantship and my other part-time jobs kept me firmly grounded in the reality of learning and using additional languages.

Eventually these multiple experiences allowed me to identify several lacunae in the scholarly literature and I attempted to address one of them in my dissertation, which examined the implications of the theory of linguistic relativity, or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, for bilingualism (Pavlenko, 1997). This dissertation also gave birth to my first published articles—and my first rejections. In what follows, I will discuss my first attempts to write for publication and to develop an academic voice that would reconcile authority (i.e., the right to impose reception, in Bourdieu's terms) with authenticity (i.e., the right to retain my own accented feminine voice and my multiple perspectives, those of a researcher and an L2 user, a Russian refugee and an American scholar, an academic and a feminist).

WRITING ABOUT BILINGUAL WRITERS: LEARNING TO VENTRILOQUATE

The first strategy I developed in trying to become an academic writer was to make my points through ventriloquism. In untangling the complexities of multiple academic debates, I learned about existing camps and found

ways of positioning myself, trying to state my views not in my own words but in those of others (e.g., "as X (1986) convincingly demonstrates"; on learning academic ventriloquism, see also Chris Casanave's chapter in this volume). This strategy worked to an extent as long as other people were addressing the same issues I was interested in. But as time went by, I accumulated a number of important concerns that did not seem to have been raised in the literature or at least not in the way I saw fit. One such issue was the nature of success in second language learning. Although there was a whole body of scholarly literature addressing "the good language learner," this literature—similar to the rest of mainstream SLA scholarship—seemed extremely limited in its focus on the language classroom and exceedingly patronizing in its division into "us" (researchers, teachers, academics) and "them" (language learners, refugees, immigrants). The whole focus of the field of SLA seemed to be on the mythic "language learner" who somehow never became a "language user" or, even less likely, a "bilingual." And although the field of bilingualism encompassed SLA research with ease (see, e.g., Appel & Muysken, 1987; Baker, 2001; Hamers & Blanc, 1989), the field of SLA resolutely ignored research on bilingualism as completely irrelevant to its own endeavors.

It dawned on me that I was on a mission—to bring the two together (filling out a number of gaps in the process). Ideally, I would have liked to use my own experiences in doing so, but that somehow seemed "unscholarly," "biased" and "subjective" (the terms I later learned to revere). And so I looked for others who may have had similar experiences—learning to be adults in their second language—and who had also talked about them, creating a particular brand of narrative truth I could juxtapose to the scientific truth of SLA research. To my relief, I found a whole treasure trove of language-learning memoirs written by bilingual writers and scholars whose experiences, in my opinion, were directly relevant to the field of SLA, but whose voices, up until then, had not been heard. And so I set out to write a dissertation chapter and then a paper where I used these personal narratives to argue that there were numerous successful L2 users out there in the real world and that their language learning was intrinsically linked to their identities. I derived great pleasure from manipulating these voices, from arranging them in the order I felt was appropriate and from thinking that now I would be completely hidden behind this choir, conducting it from the shadows.

Once I showed my explorations of bilingual writers' work to my professors, they seemed excited about this new direction. Encouraged, I immediately submitted my paper to the student-run *Issues in Applied Linguistics*. I also sent it to some of the bilingual writers whose narratives I appropriated, to make sure I had not misstated their points or erroneously depicted their experiences. I got very positive feedback from those I could reach (in particular Anna Wierzbicka, with whom I have remained in touch ever

since). I was particularly elated when one day I saw a package in my mailbox addressed to me by my idol, a Romanian-American writer and radio personality, Andrei Codrescu. In that package was Andrei's latest book with an autograph and a letter stating that I had not misstated his points. What shocked me was the last sentence of his letter: "You are, of course, writing your own autobiography in this essay, a bit like a hand surgeon operating on a hand." So, Andrei did see through me after all, and my attempt to whisper my points "objectively," while hiding behind other people's life stories, had failed. It was a lesson I never forgot—one that forced me to acknowledge my own subjectivity as an interested and invested scholar rather than a hidden puppet-master, and one that several years later gave an impetus to this chapter. And although nowadays I still work with language-learning autobiographies, I no longer use them to tell my own story; rather I try to examine the multiple stories they reveal and hide, including the ones that may be quite distinct from my own experiences.

COLLABORATING WITH EDITORS: LEARNING TO REVISE

Soon the article on bilingual writers was accepted for publication with minor revisions. As it was about to come out in the summer of 1998 (Pavlenko, 1998), I was moving to a new phase in my life—my first tenure-track position, as an Assistant Professor of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Temple University in Philadelphia. There, I had to face academic publishing on my own, as it no longer seemed appropriate to run for help to Barbara and Jim. And in doing so, I had learned critical lessons on how to create new networks of support and on how to view editors and reviewers as gate-openers rather than gate-keepers—lessons that made me into the writer I am today.

The story of my first major publication started when I was still in graduate school and tried to describe the results of my dissertational research in a paper on linguistic relativity and second language learning. Surely, this work, which was extremely positively received at a number of international conferences, would be of interest to journals in the field? I spent a whole summer working on multiple drafts of the paper and then sent the final draft to a major SLA journal. The reviews came back after 6 months, stating that although the article was indeed interesting and refreshing, it would need to be revised and resubmitted, in particular because my arguments lacked statistical support. Undaunted, rather than revise I resent the article to another major journal hoping that perhaps another set of reviewers would understand that my arguments dealt with complex qualitative issues and did not need to be supported by statistics. The next set of reviews was even more damaging—the journal rejected the article straight out, pointing out that I confused language and culture (an argument that sounded too familiar from my graduate school days

among generative linguists) and that to support my points I would need to appeal to statistical inferencing.

Although I had an option of revising and resubmitting the paper inserting statistics, I refused to compromise on arguments that were close to my heart and instead decided to address a different audience, that in the field of bilingualism. At that point, Judy Kroll, one of world's leading experts on psycholinguistics of bilingual memory and a coeditor of a new journal, *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, suggested that I write a new article spelling out the implications of my research for the field of bilingual memory and submit it to the journal for peer review. The paper was to be submitted for a category of keynote articles, which meant that on acceptance the editors would elicit comments on the paper from well-known scholars and publish them together with the author's rejoinder. This seemed like an appealing prospect, and so I started to work on the new paper, putting away the earlier article in the hope that one day I would find a home for it that would accept arguments not grounded in statistics. The work took me 3 months, and fairly pleased with the end result, in September of 1998, I sent the paper—my first tenure-track submission!—to François Grosjean, the editor in charge of submissions. The four reviews arrived in record time, and in November I heard back from François, who told me that despite the fact that my paper was interesting, relevant, and multidisciplinary, it could not be published in its present format and would have to be revised and resubmitted. The concerns were pretty major: "a certain lack of focus and integration, the absence of challenging ideas, a line of argument that is vague and unconvincing, the presentation of ideas that are not exemplified, a rather weak major line of argumentation, an overall structure that remains unclear, etc." To a novice professor this seemed like a death sentence, and I thanked Grosjean for the reviews deciding to abandon the intricacies of bilingual memory as well and to focus on yet another area of research, that of SLA and gender.

However, while I was trying to do just that—and to negotiate the complexities of my first year in a tenure-track position—François did not give up on me and kept bombarding me with weekly messages asking whether I had started (continued, accomplished) the revisions required. I ignored his messages for several months but eventually realized that to stop the persistent barrage, I should just revise and resubmit the paper. I had finally looked closely at the four sets of comments and was amazed to see how constructive and extensive the comments actually were, all ranging between three and four single-spaced pages. I realized that the purpose of the comments was not to destroy my fragile beginner's ego but to actually engage me in a scholarly conversation and provide me with some guidance (see also McKay's chapter in this volume on the relationship between constructive reviews and successful publications). This guidance included advice on how I could better define my concepts and strengthen

and exemplify my arguments, and suggestions for minor stylistic improvements and additional literature I might want to consider. And so, with the help of the four reviews, I created a new version of the paper and sent it to François. In August of 1999, the new reviews arrived: Although all reviewers agreed that the new version was much better and more coherent and challenging, the paper still needed more revisions to be accepted. Once again, extensive suggestions were included. By this time, revising had become enjoyable because I could see that, like a sculptor, I was chipping away at marble only to uncover a statue within. I was delighted to know that others could envision the sculpture as well and took their time to help me deal with the marble. And so yet again I revised, e-mailing changes and more changes to François, to finally have the paper accepted for publication in September of 1999. Even when the paper was deemed ready for publication the process wasn't over—now it had to be sent out for comments to which I, in turn, had a chance to respond (Pavlenko, 2000). When the comments arrived I was once again astounded by the highly professional tone and the generosity of my new academic community: Even people who could have perceived my paper as a critical commentary on their own research chose to see its arguments as building on and expanding their own and responded in a kind and generous manner. In responding, I got a chance to take part in yet another round of scholarly conversations on my favorite topic.

In the Fall of 1999, during my second tenure-track year, my keynote article was published (Pavlenko, 1999), and soon I started receiving congratulatory comments, invitations to submit book chapters, and later on requests to review articles that built on my theoretical proposals. My rite of passage was complete—I now knew that “revise and resubmit” means just that: Revise and resubmit unless you disagree with the direction the revisions should take (see also Sasaki's discussion of the same issue). I would never have learned this lesson without the gentle prodding from a wonderful editor, François Grosjean, and a great team of professionals working with him in *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*. Although later on I would have similarly positive experiences with a number of other journals, and in particular with another highly demanding and equally excellent editor, Claire Kramsch, I credit a lot of my own professional growth and understanding of professional ethics to the editors of *Bilingualism* with whom I first interacted as an author and later on as a manuscript reviewer. Looking at the long, detailed, and extremely prompt responses of the reviewers chosen by François and Judy, I had understood that the goal of a review is to be constructive rather than judgmental and that one should not say anything anonymously that one wouldn't say in a signed review. In fact, a number of the *Bilingualism* reviewers, including Judy Kroll, do sign their reviews, and so from a double-blind process the review becomes a dialogue built on mutual understanding and trust. Another ex-

remely positive aspect of the *Bilingualism* review (which, according to Judy, is typical for the field of psychology) is the fact that all reviewers at the end get to see all of the reviews (which they can use in case they are reviewing the revised manuscript for the second time). To see what other people had to say about the same paper helped me enormously in finding out whether I was on target in my comments, realizing what I might have missed, and adjusting my tone of voice.

Over the years of being an author and a reviewer for multiple journals, I have learned that revisions are the first chapter in an academic conversation, that not all revisions have to be incorporated and accepted, that many colleagues sacrifice their professional and personal time to socialize novice academics into the profession, and that I can learn a lot from my colleagues' advice (even though at times I may choose not to accept their comments). It pains me to see that this role of editors and reviewers as socializers and gate-openers is sometimes forgotten in our daily grind, and I am happy to say to my editors and to my anonymous reviewers—I enjoyed talking to you!

CONCLUSIONS

So where are we now? In 1998 I had started a tenure-track position with one publication. Four years later I have published—or have forthcoming—17 peer-reviewed articles and 17 book chapters. I have also co-edited an edited volume (Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller, & Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001) and three special issues of journals in bilingualism. As I am writing this chapter, I am working on two books and on two more coedited volumes. I would never have been able to be so productive if not for multiple individuals—my editors, publishers, reviewers, and my multiple colleagues and friends—who were always there for me with their help, support, and advice. I definitely did not engage in this activity with a tenure review in mind. Akin to Paul Matsuda's (this volume) need to do something *to* and *in* the profession, I was bursting—and still am—with points to be made, new intersections between various areas of research to be created, and new studies to undertake, all of which would reflect second language learning in context, happening to real people. I feel more at peace now knowing that some of my points have been made, heard, and responded to, and that through panels and colloquia, special issues and edited volumes, I have managed to engage in a number of conversations on issues of importance in the fields of bilingualism and SLA. In all of these years, the issue of my nonnative speakerness never surfaced in any but the most trivial manner (typically, in corrections of those pesky articles and tenses). Consequently, I find that calling myself a “non-native” or “peripheral” writer does not reflect the reality of my own academic existence. I feel pretty involved in some of the key conversations in my two

fields and am also very aware that my own multilingualism positions me at a very privileged angle.

And so, undaunted, I continue writing and submitting my scholarship for publication. Well, what's the worst that could happen? That an original version of a paper will be deemed unacceptable? As long as I am able to get constructive feedback, revisions do not seem to be much of a sacrifice. Never again will I be told that as a Jew I don't belong in the academy (even though I am very aware that this battle was also fought by Jews in the United States, most notably by Lionel Trilling). Never again will I be sitting homeless in the Vienna airport terrified to face the mythical West. Nor will the thought police appear on my doorstep with a chilly: "Oh, are you the one who criticized Chomsky and Pinker? Please gather your belongings and come with us. Your relatives should send you some warm clothing, it is pretty cold where we are taking you." I am pretty comfortable with the fact that there will always be those who disagree with me, just as there are those who think along similar lines. Some battles will be won and some will be lost. Some arguments will be heard and some ignored. Some articles will appear untouched and some will be significantly revised. I continue to be my own harshest critic, creating multiple versions of each argument, multiple drafts of each paper, and feeling disappointed when outsiders' reviews of my work are not as critical as my own (have they read the manuscript?!). And I still do my best work in revisions and reanalysis (sometimes to the deep exasperation of my coauthors and coeditors). What I have learned as a newcomer to academic writing can be summarized in a few sentences:

- In order to visit the other side of the fence, try to engage in the editing of, and writing for, the student Working Papers in your institution; later on try to edit a special issue of a journal or an edited volume; this will give you invaluable insights into the editing process.
- Try to solicit feedback on your research by presenting at conferences.
- Collaborate with peers who can complement your strengths.
- Find colleagues who could peer-review your work before the actual submission (assuming that you would do the same for them).
- Make sure you are addressing the right academic community (i.e., see which papers the journal has tended to publish in the past few years).
- Do not be afraid to contradict accepted authorities; just make sure you know the research in the field and have a compelling argument.
- Most importantly, do not hesitate to work with highly demanding editors and reviewers; the process of revision could be an extremely enjoyable one—it is a start of a long academic conversation about your work.
- And please, do contribute to the field by reviewing others' papers.

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