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Generation 1.5: The LBOTE blind spot

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Against the backdrop of the social inclusion and widening participation agendas in Australian Higher Education (Transforming Australian Higher Education, 2009; Review of Australian Higher Education, 2008), increasing attention and resources are being directed towards access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Patterns of post-migration settlement have shown that low socioeconomic areas are often areas in which high numbers of people report using a language other than English (LOTE) at home. This means that now more than ever, issues of English language proficiency in general, and levels of academic language development and preparedness in particular, are critical. And yet, a significant cohort of domestic language background other than English (LBOTE) student remains poorly understood. These students, known as Generation 1.5 (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988), are students who migrated to Australia from a non-English speaking country during childhood. By virtue of being schooled locally, these students often lack the usual markers of cultural or linguistic difference. Moreover, their native-like "sound" leads educators to assume students are more proficient in academic language than they are. Further contributing to this comparative invisibility, the majority of research into LBOTE students is devoted to international students or more recently arrived migrants. Where research has been conducted, the findings are often contradictory. This highlights the often neglected heterogeneity of this cohort. As such, these students represent a significant blind spot. This paper calls for more research in this area, in particular, into the academic writing of these students and for individual institutions to implement locally targeted academic language and literacies strategies.

Key Words: LBOTE, Generation 1.5, academic literacies.

1. Introduction

With the movement of higher education from an elite to a mass system, accelerated by the setting of governmental targets for both participation and attainment of qualifications (e.g. Higher Education Participation & Partnerships Program, 2009; Transforming Australian Higher Education , 2009; Review of Australian Higher Education, 2008) and the shift to a student-centred funding model in 2012, universities across Australia and indeed many parts of the world (Preto-Bay & Hansen, 2006), have seen an increase in numbers of 'non-traditional' students. University populations now commonly consist of students who may be first-generation tertiary students, from a low socioeconomic background, mature-aged, studying part-time or from a language background other than English (LBOTE). This demographic shift in higher education has already produced concern among many academics about students' general preparedness for tertiary study as well as a growing perception in the wider society of slipping writing standards affecting both the quality of degrees and graduates (Devlin, 2010; Arkoudis, 2011). As a result, there is an emergent sense that "cultural congruence with the academy, and facility in the language of instruction, cannot be assumed for *any* student, whether [international], migrant or

local in origin" (Chanock & Cargill, 2003, p. 15). The challenge then of improving levels of student retention and progression with ever increasing numbers of underprepared students is even greater.

The Good Practice Principles (DEEWR, 2009) were produced in recognition of the need to address English language proficiency across degree programs. However, the focus of these principles was on the language development of international students. Indeed, the vast majority of attention and research into academic literacy needs has focused on this category of LBOTE student. This is so much so that the terms LBOTE student and international student have long been conflated (Jessup, 1990 as cited in Chanock, 2011; Borland & Pearce, 1997).With the exception of equity group designation for those LBOTE students who have been in Australia for less than ten years, LBOTE immigrant students, the so-called "domestic LBOTE" have become what Bartlett and Chanock (2003) refer to as "the missing part of the student profile jigsaw" (p. 4).

Under this domestic LBOTE umbrella, already very broad, is the phenomenon of Generation 1.5. This label emerges from international education literature and refers to students whose "... experiences, characteristics and educational needs may lie somewhere between those of first generation adult immigrants and the U.S [or Australian] born second generation children of immigrants" (Roberge, 2002, pp. 107-108). It is this group that this paper is concerned with. Notwithstanding the propensity for reification, this term has value as a tool for disaggregating students with a longer migration history from other more recently-arrived LBOTEs (e.g. international or equity). For the purposes of this discussion, the term Generation 1.5 will be defined even further to refer to students who arrived between six and twelve years of age. Far from being arbitrary, the decision to restrict the category to this specific age range is due to the fact that there are distinct and tangible differences in patterns of linguistic and cultural assimilation depending on age of arrival (Rumbaut, 2004). However, it should be noted that there is much disagreement in the literature about the boundaries and indeed virtue of the term, Generation 1.5.

Research into the language use and potential needs of domestic LBOTE tertiary students, in particular Generation 1.5 students, has only relatively recently begun in earnest (e.g. Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1999; Roberge, 2002; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Ferris, 2009) and almost all of the data is North American (see Starfield, 2002; Bartlett & Chanock, 2003 for exceptions). This has led to calls for more research into Generation 1.5 writers in other countries (Harklau, 2003). Where it has been undertaken, research at different Australian universities has reported highly varying levels of participation, retention and success of all domestic (non-international) LBOTE students, including Generation 1.5 (Chanock & Cargill, 2003). This variation is due in part to the lack of disaggregation into early and late arriving groups of LBOTE in these studies, as well as the different demographic make-up of each institution. Importantly, it is also due to the inherent heterogeneity in a category such as Generation 1.5, where factors such as ethnocultural background, SES and L1 (first language) impact on the academic trajectory of these students. Since these students are not required to demonstrate English language proficiency as a condition of entry into university, Generation 1.5 students represent a significant cohort who go largely unnoticed and whose relationship with academic language remains poorly understood.

This paper argues that the complexity of the issues impacting on the educational trajectory of Generation 1.5 students and the significant variation in performance reported means a one-size fits all approach to the development of academic literacy and learning is unlikely to be effective. The paper presents a timely analysis of the characteristics of this growing student demographic by critically engaging with issues of official status, bilingualism and identity through the binaries present in the literature: international versus domestic LBOTE; "ear" versus "eye" learner pathways; bilingual versus biliterate; and linguistic versus socio-demographic factors. It is hoped that such an analysis will prompt ALL practitioners and individual institutions to conduct further research into the academic writing practices of these LBOTE students and implement evidence-based, locally targeted academic language and literacy strategies.

2. International versus domestic LBOTE

Despite the multiplicity of terms denoting non-native speaking status (e.g. CALD – culturally and linguistically diverse; ESL – English as a second language; EAL – English as an additional language; ESLL – English as a second language learner; NESB – non-English speaking background), discourses around LBOTE are underscored by a pervasive assumption of homogeneity. Previous research into LBOTE students has tended to lump international, migrant and Australian-born students together, regardless of age at arrival, length of residency, educational background, SES or ethnocultural background (e.g. DEST, 2009; Wilson, 2003; Chanock & Cargill, 2003). The very broadness of the category LBOTE, as commonly applied, tends to undermine the value of any educational policy initiatives purporting to target such students. In Australian higher education, the definition of LBOTE varies slightly from institution to institution, although since 1997, the official definition has been "born in a non-English speaking country, or in Australia with one or both parents born in a non-English speaking country, or Indigenous student for whom English is a second or other language" (MCEETYA, 1997, p. 78, as cited in Ainley, 2000). The definition used to determine equity status is equally broad, adding only a requirement of residency in Australia of less than ten years (DEET, 1994). At the same time, many attempts to separate the different cohorts within the broad umbrella LBOTE have been problematic. By way of predictors of likely educational disadvantage, Martin (DEET, 1994) divided LBOTE into the following groups: born in a non-English speaking country (NES) and recent arrival; born in an NES, early arrival but continuing to live in a NES environment; and born in Australia to parents born in an NES. In practice, the main binary in Australia and other typical "receiving" countries has been international LBOTE versus domestic LBOTE. This distinction can produce at best "crude categorisations of potential disadvantage" (Borland & Pearce, 1997, p. 104).

In the past then, it has been all too easy for institutions to confuse and therefore overlook the complexities inherent in a category such as LBOTE. Much research on typical student outcomes such as access, performance and retention has failed to either distinguish between domestic and international LBOTE or differentiate early and late arriving within the subgroup of domestic LBOTE. A consequence of this has been conflicting data. Studies have variously reported LBOTE students as being over-represented and doing well (e.g. DEST, 2009; Wilson, 2003) or underrepresented and not doing well (e.g. Birrell, 1994; Dobson & Sharma, 1993). Even within the one study there have been contradictory findings. Dobson and Sharma (1993) compared the performance of domestic LBOTE (no finer distinction) and international students at ten Australian universities. They found that domestic LBOTE students outperformed international students in two out of ten universities while the reverse was true in three out of ten. In a more finely tuned study of the 1994 cohort at Victoria University, Borland and Pearce (1997) found only small differences in mean weighted average marks (WAM) between late arriving resident LBOTE (equity) and early arriving domestic LBOTE (non-equity) and English speaking background (ESB) students. However, their results were not consistent across faculties. This confusion has lead to counterproductive discourses about the LBOTE cohort which in turn has the potential to impact strategies undertaken to address the perceived learning and teaching needs of the (enormously varied) students within this cohort (Borland & Pearce, 1997).

3. Who are Generation 1.5?

A large part of the difficulty distinguishing between the different populations of domestic LBOTE is due to the comparative invisibility of many Generation 1.5 students. Compared with international students and more recently arrived immigrant students, longer term local LBOTE, or "disguised foreigners" (Bock, 1982, as cited in Chanock, 2011, p. 49) may have few of the usual markers of cultural or linguistic difference. By virtue of migrating to Australia during primary (elementary) or at the latest, the beginning of secondary (high) school, these students have a high degree of communicative competence in spoken English and an often impressive command of the vernacular. This proficiency in oral communication or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1981), which is readily acquired, sees many Generation 1.5 students using a rich, varied and flexible idiomatic vocabulary, complex

sentences and reduced forms (e.g. "gunna" [going to]) often without a discernable accent. While advantageous in many respects, this facility with spoken language may mean students and lecturers alike assume that Generation 1.5 students are more proficient in academic language than they actually are and as a consequence, do not need any assistance (Borland & Pearce, 1997*)*. It is often not until these students submit writing for assessment that lecturers may first identify their complex linguistic backgrounds. An academic language advisor interviewed in Borland and Pearce's (1997) study described the situation as follows:

> They may talk fluent "working class westie" but their academic writing was littered with grammatical problems that prevented it communicating its point, to such an extent that a support teacher working closely with them, could not even guess at their meaning, only talk to the student to extract the intended meaning and then go back to work on the written text. (p. 107)

3.1. Ear versus eye learner pathways

As a way of explaining the different patterns of language proficiency typically observed between international students and longer-term migrants, Reid (1997) developed the labels "eye" versus "ear" learners. These terms are determined by the nature of L2 learning and pedagogy as well as degree and style of education in L1. "Eye" learners are described as literate and fluent in L1 and having learned English mostly through their eyes; that is, studying grammar patterns and rules and metalanguage (i.e. formal instruction). "Eye" learners have often studied vocabulary formally in class and so have strategies such as using context and/or word class to decipher the meaning of an unknown word. Moreover, a strong foundation in L1 often translates as greater and more flexible vocabulary in L2 (both general and academic).This category fits most international students as well as late-arriving migrants who have had the majority of their education in L1, although there are of course many exceptions. In contrast, "ear" learners, into which category Generation 1.5 students fall, have predominantly learned English by listening to fellow students, friends, teachers, the TV and radio and generally, by immersion in English language and Australian culture. Many Generation 1.5 students are orally proficient in their L1 but not necessarily literate in L1 due to very little formal education in that language. These students are said to subconsciously develop English grammar, vocabulary and syntax rules through oral "trial and error" (Reid, 1997, p. 77). They may therefore have little metalanguage or metalinguistic awareness. The pedagogic implications of this dichotomy lie in the assertion that since "ear" and "eye" learners learned and were taught English in different ways, their language problems (and the potential solutions) may also differ.

In addition to potentially misleading educators about their language proficiency, there is a view that the "informal, conversational English of 'ear' learners is the foundation of many of their academic difficulties" (Reid, 2006, p. 15). Thonus (2003) also notes this propensity to transfer oral patterns of communication to written discourse with the result that lecturers perceive the writing of some Generation 1.5 students as unstructured and stream of consciousness and therefore, difficult to follow. More anecdotal evidence focusing on the writing of Generation 1.5 students identifies the types of mistakes that relate to their "ear" learner pathway: inappropriate register (more "spoken" than written), translation from spoken to written language forms (e.g. "should of" instead of "should have"), and the phonetic spelling of words they have heard but not seen (Ferris, 2009). Underdeveloped sociolinguistic knowledge – an awareness of conventions, register and the appropriateness or otherwise of idiomatic expressions – may be at the heart of these observations, although it is not clear if this is more a function of inexperience in academic register and styles than bilingual background. Again, more research into the writing of these students needs to be undertaken to determine what factors underpin these observations, thereby informing appropriate and effective pedagogy.

3.2. Bilingual versus biliterate

This distinction between bilingualism and biliteracy is integral to understanding the likely language proficiency pattern of many Generation 1.5 students. Many bilingual communities are diglossic (Fishman, 1967) – communities in which there is a clear difference in language use. In

some communities in Australia, English is considered "H"-high prestige and favoured for all formal functions (communicating with officialdom, business and education), whereas the L1 of those in the community is considered "L"-low prestige and reserved for informal functions (home and community use). One consequence of this divide in usage is that there tends to be a limited range of forms, syntax, vocabulary and register acquired in both languages. For Generation 1.5 students growing up in these diglossic communities, this can produce a gulf in competency between one language and the other. This is especially true since in the main, these students' reading and writing skills are acquired in English through the Australian school system. Generation 1.5 students living in such communities then may be bilingual (able to speak two languages with equal or nearly equal fluency) but not biliterate (able to read and write in two languages). Once again, this difference in ability across modes of language has very real and direct implications for pedagogical approaches in the higher education context.

Further potential for educational disadvantage may arise from the aforementioned likelihood that many Generation 1.5 students either lack entirely or have limited literacy in their L1, which can directly impact proficiency in L2 writing. Evidence suggests that literacy in L2 is very much influenced by the level of literacy in a first language. One of the mechanisms for this is that existing writing/reading skills in L1 are thought to transfer easily to L2 and vice versa (Cummins, 1981). Similarly, lexical development in an L2 is enhanced by the existence of a developed L1 vocabulary (Bosher & Rowecamp, 1998; Cummins, 1981; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2006). Anecdotal as well as empirical (both qualitative and quantitative) research supports this notion, finding that many of the most successful students are *not* long-term immigrants, such as Generation 1.5 students, but more recent arrivals who have greater ("eye") literacy in their L1, but also importantly, are more likely to have received formal instruction in English (Reid, 2006; Frodesen & Starna, 1999; Bosher & Rowecamp, 1998; Harklau et al., 1999; Muchisky & Tangren, 1999). Furthermore, international students, despite being found overall to have "weaker L2 skills in certain areas", are nevertheless at an advantage "because their familiarity with context-reduced academic language is greater than that of Generation 1.5 students whose skills are stronger with context-embedded language" (di Gennaro, 2008, p. 71). However, as with other aspects of the Generation 1.5 cohort studied, the available data is far from consistent. Other research has failed to detect any significant difference in linguistic measures (grammar, cohesion, sociolinguistic awareness, and content control) except rhetorical control, with Generation 1.5 students found to conform more to the expectations of markers in terms of textual conventions (di Gennaro, 2009). This inconsistency again reveals the propensity to treat Generation 1.5 as a homogenous group by neglecting to disaggregate along L1 lines (at the very least). This becomes problematic when the findings from such research inform pedagogy.

3.3. Language proficiency versus socio-demographic factors

As the discussion to this point has indicated, the conflicting data in the research pertaining to Generation 1.5 reflect the fact that this category of student, contrary to the way it is employed in the literature, is far from homogenous. There are conflicting findings around performance and retention in higher education of LBOTE designated students and disagreement over the existence of measurable differences between the writing of international and Generation 1.5 students. Such variation in student performance can also be found at the school (primary and secondary) level. Furthermore, the variation inherent in the academic experience and performance of those students termed Generation 1.5 is attributable to many more factors than language alone. For example, many Mandarin speakers, rather than being disadvantaged, are reported to surpass monolingual English speakers in results and graduation rates in Canadian high schools (Garnett, 2010) and national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN) in Australian primary schools. Clearly then, the reliance on LBOTE as a predictor of educational disadvantage is not as well founded as assumed.

It becomes necessary therefore to examine the many other factors that may influence the educational trajectory of long-term domestic, bilingual students, such as: individual factors (education, attitudes, age on arrival, language proficiency in English and L1 and cognitive ability); socio-demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, SES); and educational context (policies,

curricula, structures) (Cummins, 1997; Garnett, 2010). Some of these factors may explain variation in performance among different ethnocultural groups better than linguistic factors. Indeed, in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, SES is not always a reliable predictor of differential educational performance. For example, many of the long-term migrant students interviewed as part of Borland and Pearce's (1997) study at Australian universities identified a lack of support from their family as affecting their ability to succeed. They explained that their parents, who reportedly had a low level of formal education and English language skills, were unable to help with homework or even relate to their educational experience. Students referred to a "cultural fracture between generations which centred around the specifics of their education" (p. 107). This produced a strong feeling of difference among those interviewed when compared to monolingual English students. This cultural fracture, however, could just as easily be experienced by monolingual English speakers with similar socio-economic profiles. Conversely, there is not only familial support but often enormous pressure on students from certain cultural backgrounds to succeed academically. A case in point is the extremely high social and cultural value traditionally placed on educational attainment by Chinese immigrants. In higher education, then, the assumption of need based solely on language background (and increasingly, socioeconomic status) requires further interrogation. The heterogeneous nature of Generation 1.5 and the pedagogic implications of this needs to be more effectively understood.

If then bilingualism is only one of many factors potentially affecting students' educational outcomes, the degree to which bilingualism shapes student writing needs also to be examined. The raft of research demonstrating differences between the writing of bilinguals in their L2 (English) and English monolinguals supports the notion that bilingualism remains a salient factor. Generalisations from corpora of L2 student writing indicate that these students often have a smaller vocabulary to rely on, overuse high generality words and use more spoken forms (Hyland, 2002). Silva (1993), in a review of 72 previous empirical studies comparing L1 and L2 writing made similar generalisations about L2 writing. He concluded that L2 texts are less fluent (fewer words), less accurate (more mistakes), and less effective, although details on how this was measured across studies were scant. L2 writing is also said to be characterised by less use of passive voice, nominalisation and subordination (in favour of more coordination), less lexical cohesion and more reliance on conjunctive cohesion. However, it is not made clear in either the review or the individual studies if the ESL students and bilinguals studied are internationals, migrants (early or late arriving) or a combination. Given what is known about typical patterns of bilingualism and in particular, literacy in L1, this failure once again to disaggregate cohorts of LBOTE significantly undermines the potential application of these generalisations to pedagogy. Rather than generalisations then, what is needed is more research into the academic writing practices of specific groups of domestic LBOTE students, especially Generation 1.5.

Since it is not yet clear to what degree the features present in the academic writing of many Generation 1.5 students can be attributed to their LBOTE status, other factors need to be considered. One of these is simply a lack of exposure to and development in academic writing. In this way, it could be argued that many Generation 1.5 students, like some of their monolingual counterparts, may present at university as "basic writers", a term that denotes writing ability that falls below the minimum standard that could be reasonably expected in first year university writing. That is, the features present in their L2 writing might be a product of beginning level academic writing, especially in the case of the student not having had much exposure or experience in writing in their L1, as is typically so with Generation 1.5 students. Once again, the available evidence is not clear. While there is a great deal of research that distinguishes between ESL/L2 writers and basic writers (monolingual) (e.g. Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 2003; Friedrich, 2006), the problem remains that the distinction is often based on the ESL/L2 writers in the studies being international students. While acknowledging that a resident ESL writer can simultaneously be a basic writer, Friedrich (2006) stresses that this is not necessarily the case (and NAPLAN results analysed by students' L1 demonstrate this). She maintains that basic writer status concerns academic development whereas ESL status is about proficiency in English. And yet, when examining the features of basic writers described in these studies, one cannot help but be struck by the similarity between them and the writing features

said to characterise Generation 1.5 writing. Moreover, the features enumerated by Friedrich (2006, p. 18-19, drawn from Leki,1992; Blumenthal, 2002; Blanton, 1999; Harklau et al., 1999; Thonus, 2003) and intended to *contrast* resident ESL, monolingual basic writers and international ESL, instead serve to highlight the similarities between the first two categories. The few differences to be found are to do with fact that Generation 1.5 students may have a potentially conflicted and ambivalent relationship between their L1, L2 and mainstream culture that could impact on their ability to succeed in first year university and that many have the added frustration of persistent ESL-type errors.

Certainly, what is observable and anecdotally true is that most bilinguals exhibit learner-like features in their writing which persist regardless of direct instruction received or length/amount of exposure to L2. The persistence of "non-standard" features may reflect one (or possibly a combination) of several different factors: an active language learner stage, fossilization of L2 acquisition, use of a contact variety English (a variety of English resulting from acquiring the language largely from other functional bilinguals) or inexperience with (academic) writing. This distinction has important implications for strategy in the teaching and learning of academic literacies. Valdés (1992) argues that if deviations from "standard" writing are the result of incipient bilingualism, referral to specialist student support and/or streaming in the early stages of a student's degree might be appropriate. If however, the features causing concern are due to fossilization and/or the student using a contact variety of English, it is highly doubtful that such interventions would be useful. Valdés (1992) goes on to argue that most functional bilinguals (at which stage Generation 1.5 students typically are upon entering university) never have total idiomatic control over their writing. As such, she argues, remediation may not be particularly appropriate or helpful. This rather pessimistic view of the capacity for improvement in the writing of Generation 1.5 students is not necessarily warranted. While it is true that non-standard features can be entrenched, many students are motivated and able to write in a more sophisticated and accurate way given the opportunity. The question of how best to support the development of these bilingual writers is one that requires more attention.

Table 1. Summary of binaries in Generation 1.5 literature.

Generation 1.5	Equity NESB /International student	Literature
"Ear" learner pathway	"Eye" learner pathway	Reid (1997); Thonus (2003); Ferris (2009)
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)	Cummins (1981); di Gennaro (2008)
Functional bilingual	Incipient bilingual	Valdés (1992)
Bilingual	Biliterate	Fishman (1967)
Combination of linguistic and socio-demographic factors	Predominance of linguistic factors	Cummins (1997); Garnett (2010)
Do not necessarily identity as ESL	Identify as ESL	Starfield (2002); Ortmeier-Hooper (2008)

4. Academic Literacy and Identity

Once the likelihood of "non-standard" features in the writing of Generation 1.5 students is accepted, the question of how to construe these features becomes key. Different theories of literacy and their concomitant pedagogies are likely to view the existence of learner-like features differently. According to the traditional view in which there is held to be standard language and discourse patterns, such deviations would need to be "fixed" through teacher-directed practice and drilling of grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical modes and genres. Occupying the other end of the spectrum are the learner-centred views in which individual meaning making

and freedom of expression are privileged over form. Accordingly, the variations in language and form in the texts of bilingual students would be not only accepted, but encouraged. However, the notion that writers are entirely "free" to express is an ideal. The reality is necessarily more constrained. Such a focus on personal literacy can be at the expense of the development of writers and readers within academic contexts (Johns, 1997). A third perspective, socioliterate views (e.g. Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Johns, 1997) are at once a reaction to and accommodation of these other notions of literacy. In socioliterate views, the socially constructed and constrained nature of texts is accepted but the goal is not to teach assimilation to academic cultures and their texts. Rather, the plurality of texts, the roles of writers and readers and the contexts in which these texts are generated are seen as integral and inseparable.

Models of academic literacy, according to Lea and Street (1998), have moved along a similar continuum. The most traditional view, the study skills model, is based on the assumption that academic literacy consists of a series of identifiable, constant and transferable skills that students can be taught. It has been criticised as a somewhat remedial model, seeking to diagnose and then "fix" problems with student writing, often focusing on surface level errors, such as grammar and the mechanics of writing. The second model, academic socialisation, takes a broader view of academic literacy. It holds that new students need to be inducted into the culture of the academy in order to succeed. In this way, it begins to take account of the cultural context of learning and writing in academia. In practice, it focuses on equipping new students with learning strategies such as interpreting learning tasks, the language of assessment matrices and feedback. This model assumes, however, that the culture of the academy is homogenous and transparent. The third model, academic literacies, takes the broadest perspective. The plural "literacies" reflects the central view that academia consists of a multiplicity of discourses and conventions and that these are often contested and contestable. Academic literacies holds "student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skills or socialisation" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159). It builds on the previous two approaches but also challenges their fundamental assumptions. The academic literacies approach argues that due to the conflicting and contrasting requirements of different disciplines and even individual academics, the "skills" students learn in one subject are not always transferrable. Nor is there considered to be a homogenous academic culture into which students can be easily assimilated.

However, theories and models may not always be aligned with the current reality of academic literacy expectations and practices. Despite the increasing awareness of the academic literacies approach (Lea & Street, 1998), many maintain that academia is still a monolingual/ monocultural institution that insists on "standard" English and pathologises non-standard varieties of both spoken and written English (Benesch, 2008; Leki, 1992; Harklau, 2003; Jarrat, Losh & Puente, 2006). As a result, students' multilingual-influenced writing is often viewed by institutions as "unwelcome deviations from a monolingual standard of English usage" (Harklau, 2003, p. 155). Appraisal of the content and mode of teaching offered in academic language and learning departments in most Australian universities (Towards benchmarking ALL practices, 2007) reveals that a relatively uniform, linear style of rhetorical structure and argumentation is still valued. Implicit in the continuing teaching of this style is the notion that with mastery comes power in the form of a strong social identity, cultural capital, academic success and the possibility of future financial rewards (Jarrat et al., 2006). There are other views however. Proponents of Multiliteracies theory contend that the current understanding and practice of literacy pedagogy must expand to include a multiplicity of discourses resulting from communication patterns increasingly spanning cultural, community and national boundaries (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Canagarajah (2002) goes further, arguing "hybrid texts that accommodate a range of voices are beginning to be appreciated even within the narrow context of academic writing in a single language (English)" (p. 157). To what extent this is true in practice and to what extent bilingual students such as Generation 1.5 may be able to harness their linguistic histories in the construction of their own texts and academic identity can only be understood through further research into this cohort.

It is not simply then a matter of students having to grapple with the linguistic and cognitive aspects of academic language proficiency; they must also come to grips with socio-cultural and

psychological dimensions. The process of negotiating one's identity within an often alien academic culture takes place to some degree with all new students. This process can be fraught, particularly for Generation 1.5 students who are members of more than one speech community, and with the demographic make-up of the University of Western Sydney, are often first in family and/or low SES. According to Edwards (2005), "the joint influence of more than one language upon individual psychologies is best understood as a sort of tension" (p. 21). Indeed, the identity of these student writers is far from straightforward. They may identify as Australian or with the cultural/ethnic/linguistic group/s of their parents (e.g. Lebanese) or hold a hyphenated identity such as Lebanese-Australian. This is often influenced by where these students live. Parts of Sydney are considered linguistic, ethnic and even class enclaves which may produce less acculturated early arriving migrants than would more monolingual English or linguistically and culturally diverse areas (Graeme, 1995). Even the question of what Generation 1.5 students consider their L1 may not be straightforward: it could be their home language, the language of their parents, the language they use to speak to friends or the language they dream in (Ferris, 2009). Therefore, many Generation 1.5 students are likely to experience "... multiple, unstable and ambivalent identities as immigrants, as young adults, as ethnolinguistic minorities ..." (Harklau, 2003, p. 155).

This potential for instability and ambivalence is heightened if these students feel that their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not valued by the mainstream culture (Friedrich, 2006). The question of whether to identify as ESL or CALD at university is often a difficult one: will it afford an advantage (e.g. more accommodation given by lecturers) or will it be stigmatising? For many, the terms ESL, CALD and LBOTE tend to be marginalising terms with strong remedial connotations. There may also be an unspoken expectation that those identified by such terms will never really own English but rather will always remain outsiders. An unfortunate consequence of this potential sense of a lack of ownership is often unwillingness on the part of the Generation 1.5 student to invest in education and university experiences. Another consequence is that these students may be less willing to seek out assistance with their writing. Research from South Africa supports this finding with students ignoring their own obvious language difficulties in order to avoid the disadvantageous label of ESL bestowed by the university (Starfield, 2002). In research emanating from the US, where first year university students can self-select either mainstream or ESL composition classes, many Generation 1.5 students actively reject the term ESL (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). Instead, many students embrace the anonymity that university writing can provide. They see writing as something "free from social, geographic, or national ties" (Ivanic & Camps, 2001, p. 5). Many Generation 1.5 students, despite their rich and complex linguistic backgrounds, may be unwilling to produce distinctive rhetorical styles and discourse practices for fear of standing out or even getting it "wrong".

5. Conclusion

It has been argued in this paper that the cohort known as Generation 1.5 represents a significant blind spot in current discourses of social inclusion and educational disadvantage. This is in part due to the comparative invisibility of this group, a dearth of local research, a tendency to conflate these students with other categories of LBOTE, and the often contradictory findings regarding access, progression and retention in available data. What is known about Generation 1.5 students indicates that their academic trajectories may be different to other LBOTE students. At the heart of this difference are the nature of Generation 1.5 bilingualism and language learning pathways. These students are predominantly ear learners who are bilingual but significantly, rarely biliterate. Socio-demographic factors also complicate the picture. These students often come from the more socially disadvantaged areas of the bigger Australian cities (joining established migrant communities) and have parents with limited literacy in both their L1 and L2. The question of how this complex interplay of linguistic, educational and socio-demographic factors shapes the academic writing of these students and their ability to negotiate their identities as academic writers is at issue. What is clear is that the current wide-ranging reforms to Australian higher education will result in more students and a more diverse student body. Similarly, we can be confident that concerns about the English language proficiency and

academic preparedness of students will remain pertinent. In order then to address these concerns and meaningfully contribute to student engagement, we must do more to understand who Generation 1.5 students are. As a profession, we must continue the work begun in the earlier part of this decade to unpack the nature and needs of this group of domestic LBOTE students, specifically through careful attention to their academic writing.

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