Writing a Manuscript-Style Dissertation in TESOL/Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

This paper draws on autoethnographical insights and genre analysis in offering an introductory guide for writing a manuscript-style master's level thesis or doctoral dissertation in TESOL and Applied Linguistics fields. We report on our own recent experiences writing, defending, and preparing for publication from our own manuscript-style dissertations during and following our doctoral study, both conducted at the same major Canadian research university. While other work in TESOL and Applied Linguistics areas have addressed the manuscript-style format amidst more general discussions of thesis and dissertation writing (e.g., Paltridge, 2002; Paltridge & Starfield; 2007), this article concentrates specifically on the unique characteristics of this dissertation structure and the genre-features, processes, and considerations around planning, composing, presenting, and publishing in this format. The intended audience of this paper is primarily graduate students and supervisors in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, although other stakeholders involved in graduate-level writing across various disciplines can also benefit from our discussion. Our central goal in writing this article is therefore to provide an introductory discussion regarding the nuances inherent in this format of dissertation compared to other traditional monograph forms.

Introduction

The dissertation, as an essential component of the doctorate, is a topic that inspires great interest from students seeking guidance about how to plan and design their research, analyze their data, and, importantly, how to organize and write the dissertation text itself. The study described in this paper contributes to this endeavour by drawing on genre analysis and autoethnographical insights in offering an introductory guide for writing a manuscript-style dissertation[2] in TESOL and Applied Linguistics (T/AL) disciplines. A substantial body of literature exists addressing masters' level thesis and doctoral dissertation writing, from general guidebooks targeting both students and supervisors to more focused studies analyzing the specific and sometimes unique genre characteristic of individual sections. For brevity, we focus primarily on titles particular to TESOL and Applied Linguistics fields or those that address the specific dissertation format (macrostructure) concentrated on in this article.

A manuscript-style dissertation consists of stand-alone manuscripts that have either been published (sometimes as a requirement), are in various stages of submission, or are written and organized in the form of a publishable paper. This style, in all its formats, has been referred to

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[1] Current institution: Analytical Measures, Inc.
[2] Although we focus on the PhD education-based dissertation in this paper, insights can be applied to masters' level and other disciplinary contexts as well.

variously, including manuscript-style, article-style, manuscript-model, manuscript-option, PhD by publication, thesis/dissertation by publication, PhD by portfolio, the Scandinavian model, the "sandwich" model, and the article-compilation format. Although sharing basic similarities in that the thesis or dissertation is comprised of (mostly) stand-alone manuscripts embedded within a central document, some models have slightly different structures, conventions, and requirements that are dictated by the institutional policies where the dissertations were composed or other social influences that shape genre expectations across disciplines and research settings (see also Mason & Merga, 2018a). For example, doctoral programs may require some (or all) of the articles to be published prior to being eligible to graduate, while others do not. Co-authorship of dissertation manuscript-chapters may also be allowed in some universities, and indeed might be standard depending on the authorship/research practices in the discipline (i.e., lab-based environments with multiple collaborators on projects). As a result, some manuscript-style dissertations will be comprised of multi-authored and previously published (or accepted/in-press) manuscripts while others will be manuscript-style chapters that have the potential to be published following the doctoral defence. These nuances will be more greatly discussed below, as will some of the limiting or challenging aspects of published versus publishable manuscript chapters.

The intended audience of this paper is primarily graduate students and supervisors in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, although other stakeholders involved in graduate-level writing across various disciplines can also benefit from our discussion. Our central goal in writing this article is therefore to both reflect on our experiences and, in so doing, provide an introductory discussion regarding the nuances inherent in this format of dissertation compared to other traditional monograph forms. This article might also be seen as a product of the shifting nature of the doctorate and the academic job market, and is premised around the intended function of graduate school as a vessel of academic socialization and means (at least partially) to prepare students for careers after graduate school. Writing manuscript-style dissertations not only socializes students into an important academic genre (primarily the journal article) and all its composite features, but it helps position students as emerging (legitimate, published) scholars writing for international audiences. The forthcoming discussion begins with a review of relevant literature followed by some key issues encountered by the two authors during our own dissertation writing processes, with particular focus on how we navigated the unique genre expectations of this macrostructure.

Manuscript-Style Dissertations

An abundance of handbooks, book chapters, university and faculty guides, and journal articles exist that address thesis and dissertation writing across various disciplines, countries, and perspectives (c.f. Paltridge, 2002; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). The *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* and *English for Specific Purposes* have published widely in this area, with research addressing the specific genre features of individual dissertation/thesis sections, including the generic structures of abstracts (El-Dakhs, 2018), rhetorical "moves" in purpose statements (Lim, Loi, Hashim, & Liu, 2015), the rhetorical structures in introductions, conclusions, and discussions (Bunton, 2005; Hopkins, & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Kawase, 2018), how authors comment on results (Basturkmen, 2009), communicative resources in research questions (Lim, 2014), and authorial stance and genre structure in acknowledgment sections (Chan, 2015; Hyland, 2004). All point to the propensity and even expectation of certain genre

features across individual sections of theses and dissertations, and how these features can differ from other forms of academic writing (including published journal articles).

Two book-length monographs (Bitchener, 2009; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007[3]) have addressed these issues more extensively for students and their supervisors in T/AL, and both approach the writing process from conception to completion with attention to the requisite genre features in and across individual sections of the thesis/dissertation, as well as offering advice to help with the supervision of graduate students' writing. Bitchener (2009) focuses on the first-time writer of an applied linguistics master's-level thesis, but the author's attention to general structure and other genre features are directly applicable to PhD dissertations as well. Although highly informative, this work focuses exclusively on a traditional IMRD[4] thesis, with most of the individual chapters addressing the sections typically seen in this thesis model. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) present a comprehensive guidebook for the thesis and dissertation supervision of additional-language graduate students. Here the authors include specific mention of dissertations comprised of "a compilation of research articles" (p. 72). This section of the book is partly informed by a previous article, Paltridge (2002), which analyzed 30 masters' theses and PhD dissertations written by English-as-an-additional-language students in various disciplines at an Australian university. Drawing on prior work (Dong, 1998; Dudley-Evans 1999; Thompson, 1999), Paltridge categorized four general thesis and dissertation macrostructures from that analysis, summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Thesis and dissertation structures (Paltridge, 2002)

Macrostructure	Description
Traditional: simple	Reports on a single study; IMRD structure
Traditional: complex	Reports on more than one study; modified IMRD structure, typically with separate introductory, literature review, and methods chapters followed by chapters reporting on the individual studies
Topic-based	Reports on a series of "subtopics" under the broad research topic of the thesis, organized as separate interior chapters, bookended with an introduction and conclusion.
Compilation of research articles	A thesis comprised of published or publishable research articles, typically preceded by an introductory chapter and completed with a concluding chapter.

Although now somewhat removed in terms of when this article was published (and therefore might not be representative of more current practices in T/AL thesis structures), Paltridge found only one thesis in this study that fit into the "compilation of research articles" category: a PhD dissertation in the dental sciences. Other research has recorded this thesis structure to be more widely prevalent in the sciences. The proclivity towards this type of thesis structure in these disciplines is exemplified in Dong (1998) who reported that 38% of the 169

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[3] A second edition (Paltridge & Starfield, 2019) was forthcoming at the time of this article's final submission.
[4] Introduction-methods-results-discussion

American science graduate students investigated were writing manuscript-style theses. As Dong notes:

> The article-compilation format gives graduate students on-the-job training, preparing them for what they will be expected to do in their fields after they receive the Ph.D. degree. In addition, the article format reduces the time for publication if dissertation chapters can be submitted directly for journal publication, without requiring extensive pruning and reformatting; therefore, it meets the need for timely knowledge dissemination and it starts to accumulate credits for the student's professional career. (p. 371)

Although attention to the manuscript-style format is sparse in T/AL fields, there has been more focus in other disciplines and research settings. Gustavii (2012), addressing a "hard sciences" audience, refers to this macrostructure as a "compilation" thesis, and differentiates between two distinct types: (1) the *Scandinavian model*, where reprinted journal articles are included as appendices following a general summary of the thesis, and; (2) the *sandwich format*, where reprinted articles are embedded between a separate introduction and conclusion chapter. Gustavii provides a brief yet informative beginner's guide for science-based PhD students interested in this format, yet provides little attention to specific genre-level details as well as other strategic and transitional issues that might arise during the planning, writing, and publishing stages. Gustavii's discussion also presumes the individual articles within the dissertation will be typically co-authored manuscripts, with the doctoral students serving as lead authors. The discussion is also grounded in disciplinary traditions that are familiar with (and increasingly expect) manuscript-style dissertations, and some of the tensions and unfamiliarity that might arise in other fields (like T/AL) are not present in this guide.

As noted above, a common version of the manuscript-style macrostructure is referred to as the "PhD by Publication"—also called "Thesis/Dissertation by Publication"—and typically refers to dissertations consisting of a number of published or publishable papers with an introduction and conclusion chapter binding these papers together. This genre has become widespread in Europe, the UK, South Africa, Australia, Canada, and the United States, in fields notably in the sciences, but can also be seen to a lesser degree in the humanities and social sciences (Dowling et al., 2012; Jackson, 2013; Lee, 2010; Park, 2007; Pretorius, 2017). Although this macrostructure, regardless of its label, remains roughly the same, policies such as the number of papers, publication status of the manuscript, and co-authorship can vary considerably across institutions. Mason and Merga (2018b) analyzed the prevalence of this dissertation model in humanities and social sciences disciplines in select Australian universities and reported on the average number of manuscript-chapters per dissertation (4.5 across the 636 dissertations analyzed), the publication status of these chapters (the majority being published/accepted), the types of manuscripts (mostly journal articles), and authorship/contribution practices (typically co-authored). Jackson (2013) notes that some Australian universities offer "PhD by prior publication" programs in which students can include publications prior to candidature. Peacock (2017) further details this distinction by noting the "prospective or retrospective" PhD by publication; the former (more popular in European contexts) referring to a compilation of publications accrued during the doctorate and the latter which is comprised of prior publications. Despite the global emergence of this dissertation model, however, very little has been written about this macrostructure in North American, and in particular Canadian, contexts despite its

growing popularity in education-based disciplines (Anderson, Alexander, & Saunders, in press) and recent calls to allow better diversity in dissertation writing in Canadian universities (Porter et al., 2018).

Research has also reported on the benefits and challenges of PhD by publication from doctoral students' writing and supervisors' mentoring perspectives (Dowling et al., 2012; Lee, 2010; Niven & Grant, 2012; Park, 2007; Protorius, 2017). Some challenges can include the lengthy peer-review process (which may impact degree completion) and the unfamiliarity of mentoring students in this non-traditional dissertation format. Nonetheless, if supervisors are experienced at mentoring a PhD by publication dissertation, the benefits may supersede these challenges. Doctoral students have reported that they were able to build their scholarly identities as novice researchers writing this dissertation style since their doctoral work was legitimized through the rigorous peer-reviewing process and eventually became "high-circulation published scholarship" (Dowling et al., 2012, p. 293) compared to traditional dissertations that can remain partially or entirely unpublished. Some also report the PhD by publication model is a way of easing the anxieties of a highly competitive job market in which expectations of publications prior to entering the market has become increasingly intense (Dowling et al., 2012; Robins & Kalnowski, 2008).

The authors of this paper also recognize the potential limitations or even critiques of this dissertation macrostructure, some that are research informed and others more anecdotal, the latter which seem fitting to explore within the context of this duoethnography. Both of us either directly or indirectly heard critiques about our decisions to write this type of dissertation, mostly from other graduate students in our department—that it was "easier" than the traditional (IMRD) format disproportionately used both in our fields more generally and, specifically, in our own department. Niven and Grant (2012) acknowledge that the PhD by publication model faces criticism as a potential "easy way out" due to a lack of consensus about what precisely this dissertation model should consist of and, particularly, how many chapters it should contain. We also add that practices and protocols involving co-authorship of these manuscripts is of interest, particularly in STEM[5] (or STEM-informed education fields), and how much doctoral writers are expected to contribute to their own dissertations in terms of research design, analysis, and authorship. Dowling, Gorman-Murray, Power, and Luzia (2012) under a more critical lens ask if "the PhD by publication produces academics as neoliberal subjects" (p. 303) due to the publication-seeking aims of authors within the "publish or perish" demands of modern academe. Paré (2017) notes as well that "manuscript dissertations anticipate a particular trajectory for students: one that leads towards an academic career in an institution of higher education" (p. 411). As such, this dissertation macrostructure might be less appropriate for some doctoral students depending on their future trajectories in non-academic contexts.

We are not sure if our manuscript-style dissertations were easier or more difficult to write compared to a traditional IMRD style, or if people believe we were accomplices in the neoliberal encroachment on higher education. We wanted to take a chance and write a model of dissertation that was (and remains) non-standard in our disciplines and, most certainly, rare and even partly maligned in our former department. We saw the value in learning how to write article-style manuscripts from our supervisors and mentors, all leading international scholars with extensive

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[5] Science, technology, engineering, math

publication records, and our decisions to use this macrostructure was partly informed by this desire. Tim used this model strategically, to better position himself for the upcoming academic job market, but also because it was a conceptual, theoretical, and rhetorical challenge that he was intrigued by and wanted to unravel. Tomoyo, who was open to both academic and non-academic job markets, had another rationale to pursue this model. She saw many PhD graduates struggle to turn their 300-page dissertation into publishable articles and their work not getting published in the end. She saw this model as an effective way to circulate her research and make an impact to scholars and practitioners in the field of Applied Linguistics/TESOL. We therefore counter the claim that we were neoliberal actors or apologists, or at least offer an alternative perspective. The suggestion that certain types of dissertations (including manuscript-styles) can produce academics as neoliberal subjects neglects the agency of doctoral students who choose this dissertation format out of their individual decisions to express their research however they choose, to seek better dissemination possibilities, and to grow as scholarly writers within their academic communities.

Methodology

Aligned with Burri (2017), our paper draws on autoethnographical insights to frame our doctoral student experiences, in this case the dissertation process from conceptualization of the dissertation macrostructure to publication of the manuscript chapters. Autoethnography is a research methodology that focuses on the experiences and interpretations of author-researchers and draws on both autobiography and ethnography (Denzin, 2012; Paltridge, 2014). The authors in particular looked to the emergent approach of *duoethnography*: the process of collaboratively co-constructing dialogue on a shared topic, where two researchers' individual experiences and interpretations are presented both distinctly and as juxtaposed narratives within a newly emerged "third space" (Norris, 2008; Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013). Drawing on duoethnography allowed us time and space for our own experiences to unfold while providing the richness of collaboration to inform both of our reflections and analyses of our respective dissertation writing experiences.

Embedded deeply within these dissertation experiences were concerns about navigating the features and macrostructure of a manuscript-style dissertation—a dissertation type that is prolific in many STEM fields, but which is much less common for qualitatively-focused single-author dissertations in Canada (which both of ours were). The second theoretical foundation guiding this paper is informed by a genre-based approach in analyzing linguistic features, rhetorical moves, and structural components that we found to be vital in the writing of our dissertations. Genre can be broadly defined as "a staged goal-oriented social process" (Martin, 2009, p. 10) and has come to inhabit integral roles in ESP (English for Specific Purposes), SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics), and New Rhetoric studies; each placing different emphasis on the primacy of *context* versus *text*, but all foregrounding the importance of genre as a socially and culturally embedded practice that shapes language expectations and use (Hyland, 2002). As Hyland (2002) notes, "genres are abstract, socially recognized ways of using language (p. 114). Due to the infrequency of this macrostructure within our T/AL fields, we lacked initial knowledge about the expectations of this dissertation structure. The remaining discussion details some of these experiences and how we in turn navigated our dissertation writing processes.

The Context and Authors

The authors both attended the same TESOL doctoral program at a Canadian research university in the province of British Colombia (Canada), with Tim graduating in 2016 and Tomoyo in 2017. The core structure of our doctoral programs included 1–2 years of course work, comprehensive examinations (comprised of three major papers related to their research), and a dissertation proposal with a public defence, after which we advanced to "doctoral candidacy" and ABD (all-but-dissertation) status. We then collected data based on empirical studies and wrote our dissertations followed by a public oral examination involving three committee members, two university examiners, an external examiner, and a dissertation chair. After passing our oral defences, completing the required revisions, and submitting the final versions of our dissertations to the university, our status as students came to an end. We also shared the same three committee members, with different lead supervisors; the relevancy of which is discussed later in this paper. This contextual information is important to situate our distinct but also overlapping experiences and the structure of our programs within the forthcoming discussion.

   Tim's dissertation structure. Tim's dissertation (Anderson, 2016) was comprised of six chapters: four interior "articles" connected by separate introduction and conclusion chapters, and was just over 67,000 words. The first interior chapter, following the introduction, was a conceptual discussion of supporting literature and analyses of statistical data relevant to his research setting: the internationalization of Canadian higher education. This article was published in 2015, before Tim's oral examination of his dissertation in 2016. The other three interior chapters were organized thematically, revolving around the central findings from his analysis. Three research questions and one major guiding theoretical framework (language socialization) foregrounded the entire dissertation, while individual chapters used different complementary theories germane to the analysis and findings. The central theory was discussed in detail in the introductory chapter of the dissertation and to a smaller degree in each respective interior chapter. Each complementary theory was then addressed in the applicable interior manuscripts. As a result, the different chapters highlighted the experiences of different subsets of the seven research participants depending on what unique, relevant, or otherwise prominent issues were being analyzed (see Figure 1); all informed by the different configurations of theories. The three remaining chapters were submitted for review to T/AL academic journals following the final submission of the dissertation in March 2016. At the time of this present article's completion, all four manuscripts from Tim's dissertation are either published or in-press (Anderson, 2015; Anderson, 2017; Anderson, 2019; Anderson, in-press) in the following journals: *Applied Linguistics*, the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, Linguistics and Education,* and the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*.
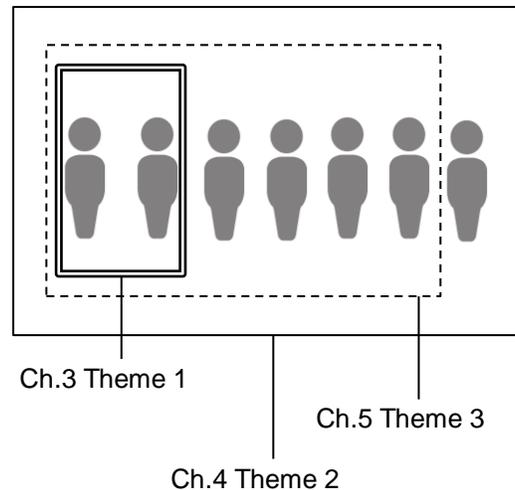
Figure 1. Tim's dissertation structure by themes.

Tomoyo's dissertation structure. Tomoyo's dissertation (Okuda, 2017) was comprised of the same six-chapter structure as Tim (one introduction chapter, four manuscript chapters, and one concluding chapter), and was approximately 86,000 words. Since Tomoyo's dissertation research was a case study with data collected from four distinct groups of participants (administrators, student group 1, student group 2, and student group 3), each of the four interior chapters stood alone as independent research studies focusing on the salient research themes derived from the data analysis (see Figure 2). Each chapter had both distinct theoretical frameworks and one overarching framework that synthesized and informed the findings of the independent research studies in the conclusion chapter. In consultation with her dissertation committee, she organized her research questions (for the entire dissertation) in a way that one question (RQ1) addressed the findings from the administrator group, and one question (RQ2) addressed the findings from the three student groups. The latter question (for the student groups) was further divided into three sub-questions (RQ2-1, RQ2-2, RQ2-3) for each respective chapter focusing on the specific research themes of each student group. Hence, there were four questions ultimately addressed in the four interior chapters. At the time of this present manuscript's completion, all four of these manuscripts have been published or accepted for publication (Okuda, 2018a; Okuda, 2018b; Okuda, 2019a, Okuda, in press) in the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *Current Issues in Language Planning,* and *Global Perspectives on Educational Language Policies* (book chapter), and *Higher Education Research & Development*.
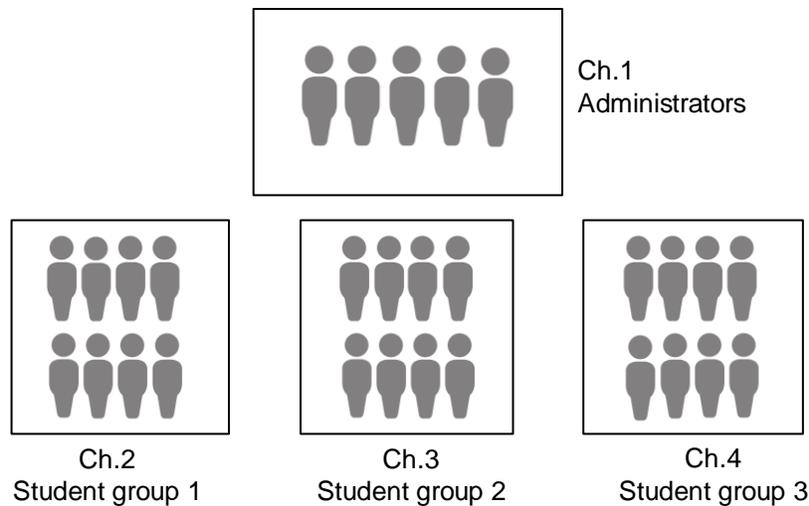
Figure 2. Tomoyo's dissertation structure by participant groups.

Writing a Manuscript-Style Dissertation in TESOL/Applied Linguistics

The following sections now outline some of the central considerations around planning for, composing, defending, and publishing from a manuscript-style dissertation. This is informed by our experiences both during and following our programs, and aided with the benefit of reflection and introspection now that we have both completed our PhDs and have successfully published our respective manuscript chapters, including in several leading high-impact academic journals in our disciplines. We begin the following sections by first noting the importance of the introductory and concluding chapters within this macrostructure and potential deviations from more traditional monograph dissertation styles. Following this, we focus on the interior manuscript-chapters and address concerns related to organization, coherence, and repetition; issues that are important in traditional dissertation models as well but which become particularly relevant when seeking cohesion across separate "stand-alone" manuscripts (or studies) within the dissertation. We then discuss the structuring of our oral examinations at the end our doctoral programs and how we endeavored to create a unified "event" within the confines of a 20–30 minute presentation while addressing four unique "manuscripts" embedded within our respective dissertations, each involving different groups of participants, theories, literature, and outcomes. Finally, we discuss the transitioning of these dissertation chapters to published articles or book chapters, the importance of committee and examiner structures, and additional considerations to be cognizant of during the manuscript-style dissertation process.

The Introductory and Concluding Chapters

As noted, we both had separate introductory and concluding chapters that served as bookends for our dissertations. These chapters played vital roles in establishing the general context for the research and creating coherence across the interior chapters. For Tim, the introductory chapter (approximately 9,500 words) established the overarching context and rationale for his study, presented the three guiding research questions and key definitions and concepts, and contained detailed sections discussing the central theoretical framework, methods and methodologies, analytical approach, sampling techniques, researcher positionality, literature review, and

participant profiles. The chapter then concluded with a description of the forthcoming chapters. The concluding chapter was a concise 9-page summary and reconnecting of the major findings, research contributions, challenges and limitations, and recommendations. Screenshots from the Table of Contents for these two chapters follow (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Tim's introduction chapter.

Figure 4. Tim's conclusion chapter.

Similar to Tim, Tomoyo's introduction chapter (just over 9,000 words) presented the rationales, overall conceptual framework of the study, research questions, methodology (research site, methods, participant profiles), analytical methods, researcher positionality, and the organization of the dissertation. The 4,500 word concluding chapter included a summary of the key findings in relation to the research questions, a discussion of theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the study, and ended with future directions for research. The key findings gained from the four interior chapters were discussed employing the overarching conceptual framework, which was key in producing a coherent dissertation.

Figure 5. Tomoyo's introduction chapter.

Figure 6. Tomoyo's conclusion chapter.

The Interior Manuscripts: Organization, Coherence, Repetition

A considerable amount has been written about general writing strategies and constituent genre features of individual dissertation chapters and journal articles in T/AL. In this section, we focus instead on some unique considerations for organizing the individual interior chapters, creating coherence within and across these chapters, and limiting potential repetition that can occur by having multiple stand-alone manuscript-chapters contained within a single dissertation. We draw on personal examples from our respective dissertations to underscore the discussion.

A major consideration of this dissertation genre involves the organization of the individual manuscript-chapters themselves. One approach is to plan and tailor these chapters for specific journals from the beginning of the writing process. To accomplish this, students will want to investigate the target journals thoroughly and determine, first, if the content aligns with the vision and direction of the journal and, second, organize the article appropriately and draw on relevant literature. Some journals, for example, will want a separate section that explicitly lists the research question(s), while others allow these to be borne out in less explicit ways, or at least embedded in different sections. How to structure and title the sections and subsections of these manuscript-chapters also requires consideration. Certain journals might have more rigid expectations of a traditionally empirical (IMRD) structure. Other journals, by contrast, will allow or even expect alternative and more "creative" headings and organization. Both of us organized our interior manuscript-chapters reporting on the empirical findings following an IMRD pattern (or slightly modified version). We felt that organizing chapters in this way helped create a coherent predictability across the distinct manuscript-chapters. For Tim, the first manuscript chapter of his dissertation was tailored specifically for the journal he published in. This in turn shaped several aspects of the chapter, including word length and aspects of the supporting literature that he drew upon.

Alternatively, instead of having pre-determined journals in mind before writing the chapters, students can adopt a "write first" and then, depending on the outcomes, find a suitable journal later. The benefits of this approach include a more flexible, and possibly more organic, analysis and writing process unconstrained by pre-determined and journal-specific criteria. The challenges of this approach might include difficulty finding a journal that fits the tone and outcomes of an article and having to make considerable edits following completion of the dissertation to meet word length, formatting, and other requirements specific to individual journals. Tim followed this approach for three of his four interior manuscript chapters and found that it allowed the analysis and findings to be unconstrained by the either conscious or subconscious influence of trying to fit into the confines of a specific journal. The transitions of these chapters to publications, however, required some maneuvering, re-tailoring, and in the case of one article, rather substantial word-count edits (approximately 4,000 words), to fit into the expectations and requirements of the targeted journals. Tomoyo did not tailor her manuscript chapters to specific journals when she was writing her dissertation, but later did so to meet journal requirements. This included editing the word count, re-labeling sections, and following formatting expectations.

Creating coherence and interconnectedness across the stand-alone manuscript chapters is also worth attention. Bunton's (1999) investigation into the metatextual moves in PhD

dissertations demonstrates the ways and importance of student-authors signposting their discussions through the use of lower and higher level metatextual references; i.e., text(s) used within the dissertation to refer to other smaller or larger internal and external texts. How these are used specifically in manuscript-style dissertations remains unaddressed in the literature, but several issues based on our experiences are of note. Similar to more traditional dissertations, referring to content discussed in other chapters of the dissertation, or making mention of the general findings of chapters themselves, were presented as variations of: "as noted in Chapter x." These metatextual references not only helped orient the reader, but created a general sense of coherence and cohesion across our long dissertations with several stand-alone manuscript chapters. In our dissertations, metatextual practices were also frequently (and importantly) employed to limit repetition of our research contexts, the participants, the methods and methodologies, the central theoretical framework(s), and our positonality and reflexivity; all of which were written about in detail in the introductory chapters. Instead of presenting very similar types of information in each respective interior chapter (as is typically expected in most stand-alone journal articles), we used frequent metatextual resources to connect to our prior discussions (in previous manuscript-chapters or the introductory chapter; see Figures 7 and 8 for examples from our dissertations).

The following example, from Tim's dissertation, directs the reader to "see also Chapters 1 and 2" for more thorough and nuanced discussions of graduate student internationalization trends in Canada, where this issue was addressed in substantial detail (Figure 7). While this glossing over of detail is insufficient for a stand-alone article, in order to limit repetition in his dissertation, these types of metatextual references were employed frequently. Similarly, Tomoyo's example (Figure 8), "see Chapters 1 for more information," indicates that the topic has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and readers could refer back to this chapter to gain more information. This issue is especially relevant for student-authors who, after completion of their dissertations, endeavour to transition the chapters to stand-alone journal articles, a topic explored in more detail below.

Metatext 1

2009). It is evident, therefore, that despite best intentions, doctoral writing mentorship does not always progress smoothly or successfully from "expert" to "novice" with the desired outcomes and group membership (Cotterall, 2011b; Duff, 2007b). At the university level, despite the ongoing increases of international graduate students in Canada (Anderson, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2013a, 2013b; see also Chapters 1 and 2), departments, faculties, and universities may still lack the required programs and infrastructure to attend to the specific and diverse needs of L2 graduate students who require academic language and literacy help (AUCC, 2007), especially when this help might be lacking from their supervisors.
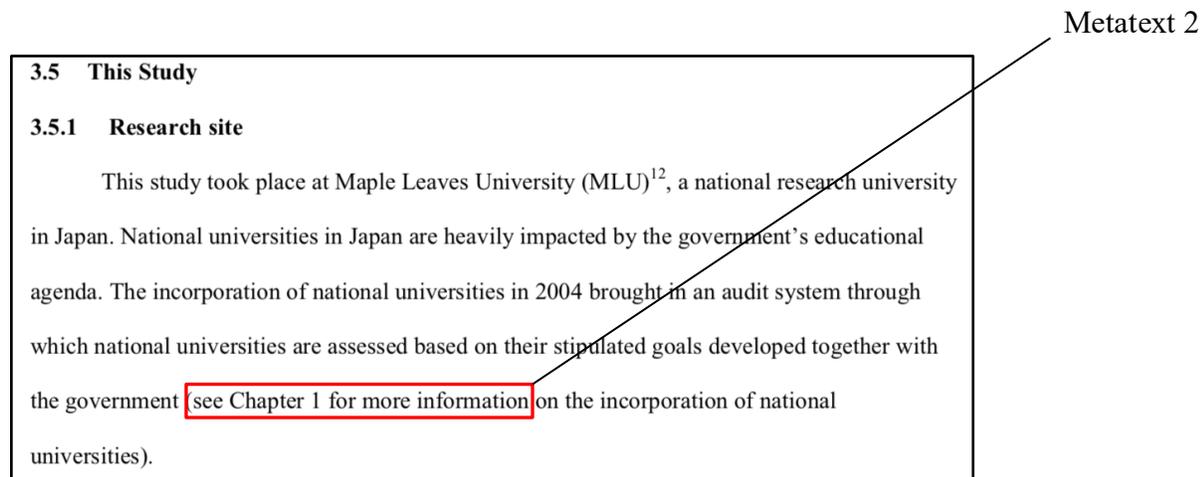
Figure 7. Metatext example (Tim).

Metatext 2

> **3.5　This Study**
>
> **3.5.1　Research site**
>
> 　　This study took place at Maple Leaves University (MLU)[12], a national research university in Japan. National universities in Japan are heavily impacted by the government's educational agenda. The incorporation of national universities in 2004 brought in an audit system through which national universities are assessed based on their stipulated goals developed together with the government (see Chapter 1 for more information on the incorporation of national universities).

Figure 8. Metatext example (Tomoyo).

Structuring the Oral Examination: Making Separate Manuscripts a Cohesive "Event"

How to structure the oral examination from a manuscript-style dissertation can likewise be a challenge. Both authors found it difficult to synthesize and seamlessly connect multiple different stand-alone "manuscripts" into a coherent and logical 20–30 minute presentation, especially when the separate chapters drew upon different bodies of literature, methodologies, theoretical and conceptual frames, and participants. For Tim, he addressed this by focusing on the one overarching theory that guided his research (language socialization) and used this to ground his oral defence presentation. Within this guiding frame, he then highlighted what he felt were the central and most unique findings across all the manuscript chapters, and connected the presentation together during the implications and conclusion portion of his talk. Tim recalls that his oral defence went well and his committee reacted positively. He felt that he managed to create a unified talk out of the four "separate" papers and present the most salient findings from his dissertation project. Organizing the oral defence presentation also posed challenges for Tomoyo, who had to present four independent studies within the 30-minute maximum time frame. Despite these challenges, her committee also reacted positively to her talk. Tomoyo particularly felt that frequently reviewing the research questions was important in signaling which research study she was talking about. She also found having a central conceptual framework was crucial in synthesizing her findings and making her dissertation study (and oral defence) coherent.

Publishing

Following completion of the dissertation and oral defence, if applicable, the manuscript chapters can now be prepared for submission to journals. Students will need to investigate on their own the specific requirements for individual journals, including word count limits, formatting requirements, preferred spelling, and so forth. Ensuring the structure of the article fits the requirements or preferences of the journal and drawing on appropriate literature should also be considered. In many cases, the long process of writing the dissertation and having it vetted by supervisors, committee members, and university and external examiners can result in chapters that have exceeded the word limits for many journals and have, additionally, drawn on a more

diverse set of literature to accommodate the committee and examiners' requests. The focus should now shift towards accommodating and aligning the chapter towards the intended journal and its audience, and as a result certain changes will inevitably occur.

The use of metatextual resources will also need attention during the transition of dissertation chapters to stand-alone articles. Since the readers of the individual articles do not have previous dissertation chapters to immediately draw upon, changes to the metatext that signpost other inter-dissertation texts will have to be addressed. Most obviously, references to previous chapters (i.e., "as noted in Chapter 1…") will need to be modified to refer back to the dissertation itself or, if applicable, to other published or in-press articles stemming from the dissertation. In many cases, additional levels of detail (which, in our cases, were written about in the introduction chapters) will also need to be added to the respective manuscript-chapters in preparation for submission to journals, including the addition of considerably more detail about participant profiles, the research context, researcher positionality, sampling, methods and methodologies, and the theoretical and conceptual frames. When Tim, for example, submitted the three empirical chapters of his dissertation for review in academic journals, he added in additional detail about the overarching guiding theory that grounded his entire dissertation (language socialization) and more information regarding the specific context of his research (the internationalization of Canadian higher education). Additions were also made to enhance the discussion of each participant profile and the methods and methodologies; again, information that was addressed in detail in the introductory chapter of his dissertation, but which was limited (to prevent repetition) in the interior manuscript chapters. Tomoyo also needed to add more details about participants, the research site, methods, and data analysis, which were all mentioned in Chapter 1 and abbreviated in each manuscript chapter. She also made sure to include relevant articles published in her targeted journals to build on (and align herself with) the scholarly discussions within her discourse communities.

Committee and Examiner Structure

Another important consideration of using (or not using) this dissertation structure revolves around the students' committee members and the university and external examiners. Since this dissertation format appears to be more rarely used in TESOL and Applied Linguistics settings in Canadian contexts, there could be resistance or misunderstanding of this dissertation macrostructure from those who have mostly experienced more traditional dissertation formats. While it is of utmost importance for students and their committee members to be in agreement when using this type of dissertation, finding university and external examiners who are accepting is also of prime importance, since the consequences of sending a dissertation out for examination and having an examiner disagree with the basic format could have negative consequences. A supervisor, in particular, who is supportive and understanding will also be invaluable in guiding selection of other committee members and examiners who have experience with, understand, or at the very least, are accepting of this type of dissertation structure. As mentioned previously, we shared the same three-person doctoral committee team with different lead supervisors. After consultation with our supervisors and committee members, we felt encouraged to use a manuscript-style format, which in turn allowed us to proceed optimistically knowing we were supported. Similar conversations continued during the discussions around internal and external

examiners, with both of us being fortunate to have world-leading scholars serve as our internal and external examiners who were familiar with this dissertation macrostructure.

Additional Considerations

In addition to the previously discussed benefits and challenges of this dissertation format, there are other potential issues to consider. First and foremost, students must consult university guidelines regarding the permitted dissertation structures, especially the rules regarding co-authorship (of individual chapters, if applicable) and using previously published manuscripts (as opposed to including *publishable* manuscripts) in the final version of the dissertation. In the case of using previously published (or accepted/in-press) articles, this might well impact the type or amount of feedback given by the examining committee during the feedback process and oral defence. If, for example, an external examiner makes it a condition that a (previously published) chapter in the dissertation needs substantial edits before passing the dissertation as a whole, this might cause considerable tensions or challenges, including the possible existence of two similar manuscripts written by the same author—one as a published article and one as a dissertation chapter—with major or even contradictory differences. Because of this potentiality, we waited until after our oral defences to submit the core chapters reporting on empirical findings for review at journals. More positively related to the issue of feedback, we also felt that receiving detailed guidance and insights on drafts of our chapters from several well-established scholars considerably enhanced the quality of our manuscript chapters and socialized us into certain academic discourse practices (and identities) that benefitted our growth as writers, emerging scholars, and ultimately published authors. As a result, we ended up collaborating on a co-written journal article (Okuda & Anderson, 2018) shortly after Tim had graduated (and when Tomoyo was writing her dissertation) that was published in one of the leading journals in our field, *TESOL Quarterly*. The skills we acquired from our dissertation experiences were directly applied in the planning, structuring, and writing of this paper.

Conclusion

We hope this paper makes a useful contribution in highlighting the diversity in dissertation options available for PhD students and can subsequently serve as an introductory framework for students and other stakeholders interested in writing a manuscript-style dissertation. We have endeavoured to address some key characteristics of this dissertation macrostructure that were encountered during our preparation, writing, and defending stages, as well as the ensuing transitions to publish these manuscripts as journal articles and book chapters. In today's academic job market, leaving the doctorate with multiple published or publishable articles can be strategically crucial, and we believe that a manuscript-style dissertation can serve as one important pillar in that process.

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