No soy de aqui me soy de na/ I Am Not From Here, I Am Not From There: Emergence of Third Space in Shaping and Conceptualizing Academic Literacies

Debalina Maitra, The Learning Partnership

Abstract: this qualitative case study explored the praxis of "third space" in relation to shaping and conceptualizing academic literacies of an undergraduate culturally diverse student, Juan. The research questions asked in this study are: How did Juan, a Latino-American student, experience the connection between the academic writing process and cultural identity? How did Juan engage in academic literacies in the third space? Juan was interviewed three times during the study and the interviews were audio-recorded. Juan was asked to share a writing assignment with the researcher that he liked writing and another assignment that he did not enjoy writing. His interviews were transcribed and analyzed by using the principles of grounded theory. The overarching themes that emerged from Juan's data were cultural identity, influence of culture, identity conflict, and academic writing. The data analysis examined the space that emerged from his data, a space showing the hybrid practices of his culture and his academic literacies. This article argued that as educators, we need to recognize this third space in order to scaffold our students to become successful in classroom literacies.

KEYWORDS: culture, "third space," literacy development, academic writing development, cultural identity.

Introduction

 Navigating and extracting source materials effectively into academic writing requires students not only to be familiar with disciplinary literacy, but also to be able to represent themselves through their writing composition (Thomson, Morton and Storch 2013). English monolingualism promoted a homogeneous standard in the context of academic writing. This issue was documented in the research: "Dominant institutions promote the notion of an overarching, homogenous standard language which is primarily white, upper-middle-class, and midwestern" (Lippi-Green 1997, 65). Standard academic writing promotes the idea that academic writing belongs to no one, it's that being writers we will have to follow the discipline-specific conventions, at least in my experience while writing my previous works. Some scholars have also documented that: for example, Canagarajah (2006) noted, "throughout my life, I have been so disciplined about censoring even the slightest traces of Sri-Lankan English in my own academic writing that it is difficult to bring them into the text now" (599). Researchers further explored the importance of being more inclusive of diverse language writers and drawing on their skills of other languages to support linguistically diverse writers in their disciplines (Cox 2011). Therefore, it's clear from the existing literature that writing is not just a discipline-specific cognitive act, it's an extension of our ethnic and linguistic self. In this research, I wanted to unpack the perception and experience of the academic writing of an Hispanic-American student, Juan, who identified himself as more Mexican than American. He grew up as bilingual and he

said his considered Spanish as his first language, even though his English proficiency is at native level. The research questions asked in this study are: how did Juan, a Latino-American undergraduate chemistry major, experience the connection between the academic writing process and cultural identity? How did Juan engage in academic literacies in the third space?

Locating the Problem Space
Previous researches documented the difficulties of academic writing among diverse students. Fluent and norms-based writing is valued as an essential component of academic achievement in K-12 schools and in college. Putting thoughts down on paper can be demanding for the first language speakers as well and for students who use a second language or speak multiple languages that differ from mainstream classroom settings: this academic demand is heightened because of mismatches between their own linguistic and cultural norms and those of the school culture, teachers, instructional practices, and textbooks they encounter during the formal schooling processes (Baugh 2002).Writing is also a social activity involving an implicit or explicit dialogue between writer(s) and reader(s), which is further shaped by audience, purpose, culture, society, and history (Schultz & Fecho 2000). The contextual view of writing is captured by Schultz and Fecho (2000), who indicate that writing development: (a) reflects and contributes to the social, historical, political, and institutional contexts in which it occurs; (b) varies across school, home, and work contexts in which it occurs; (c) is shaped by the curriculum and pedagogical decisions made by teachers and schools; (d) is tied to the social and cultural identity of the writer(s), and (e) is greatly influenced by the social interactions surrounding writing. Therefore, it's clear from their argument that writing, identity, and culture and interactive and writing is influenced by those. Schultz and Fecho (2000) also suggested that a particular text, and the writer's composition of that text, must be understood in light of the writer's own understanding of the task in concert with conventional knowledge and that held by the teachers or persons assigning the writing task itself.

Some of the researches also focused on writing practices, in the context of literacy research, of culturally diverse students and their ways of negotiating their classroom literacy with their identities and languages (Chisholm and Godley 2011; Skerrett & Bomer 2013). There is also lots of work done on students' culture and classroom literacy framed as "funds of knowledge" (Maitra 2017; Moll 1992; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In the field of literacy, Gutierrez (2008) studied literacy practices in third space. His research studied the matrix of language and embodied practices that helped to create a social situation.

> The process of building a new shared vision of education and of the social circumstances of migrant communities, while acknowledging the significantly diverse trajectories of participants, partially shared objects, and the interplay of multiple activity systems at work, is difficult and complex, and there are many ongoing contradictions that need continual re-mediation. Yet, despite the tensions and contradictions—or perhaps as a result of the curriculum and pedagogy's attention to them—participants persist in a conscious struggle for intersubjectivity, a shared vision of a new educational and social future achieved in a range of ways and degrees.

However, there is lack of research found on addressing the contrasting expectations of a student's cultural background and academic need at college, and writing development at the

merging space. There is little research conducted on capturing the experiences of the students living in those emerging spaces and ways to connect that with conventional literacy practices.

Theory of Third Space

Bhabha (1994) first used the term "third space" from a cultural aspect and stated that it refers to the hybridity between intersecting cultures. He explained the third space as a space that helps to create something different, something new and unrecognizable, and that is formed through different kinds of negotiation and representations. People form and shape new cultural identities in this space. Gutierrez (2008) explained the concept of a hybrid third space. His idea of third space was embedded in Vygotsky's (1978) conception of zone of proximal development. My interpretation of Vygotsky's ZPD is the gap between what students can do with mediation and in absence of mediation. Gutierrez (2008)'s work could be interpreted as saying third space has the potential to play the role of scaffolding to advance literacy. He proposed that the individual and their socio-cultural environment is transient. His research focused on how students developed their linguistic skills in the zone of third space, their third space was a combination of Spanish language and English language. They learned to build and extend new repertoire and support the previous ones to develop their skills. Gutierrez, Lopez, and Tejeda (1999) mentioned that students learn in the third space through experiences of conflict, diversity, and disconnect. They stated that, "We have examined these tensions by studying the competing discourses and practices, the official scripts and counter scripts, of the various social spaces of learning communities" (287). Gutierrez et al (1999) also focused on "the social, political, material, cognitive, and linguistic aspects of conflict: "we also have documented these tensions as potential sites of rupture, innovation, and change that lead to learning" (287). The findings from this study are also tied up with the negotiation of Juan's identities and school expectations and the conflicts that have shaped his academic literacies. My application of third space theory is focused on the literacy practices that take place between conflicting cultural identities and dominant academic expectations. In this study Juan developed a third space where he learned to combine both of his identities, in first space his background, ethnic and linguistic identities, and in second space the academic expectations and norms. For example, his decision to be a chemistry major or music major, his decision to advocate for diverse and undocumented students through multicultural council, and his effort to raise funds for a nonprofit after he took a grant writing class are all great instances of hybrid practices.

Research Methodology and Research Design

A case study, according to Yin (2003), is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (13). To clarify, Yin goes on to state that "you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions, believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (13). He views case study methodology as a research strategy involving comprehensive methods, not solely a data collection tactic or merely a design feature. Case studies are a suitable methodology for explanatory research because they answer the 'how' and 'why' questions and they are useful for analyzing contemporary events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin 1994). Yin (2009) also states that case study research is a study of a bounded system. Case study methods are important for my research as I conducted an in-depth analysis of the connection

between participants' academic writing and their culture, and participants' perceptions and experiences with academic writing. Therefore, I used explanatory case study methods that were embedded in a multiple case study, which required framing and transforming cases into meaningful clusters of data. This is a single case study design.

Interview as Data collection Methods
I conducted semi-structured interviews three times, which were audio-recorded. This study is a part of broader dissertation research project. The initial interview served to get to know the participant and his background experiences. The second interview explored the connection between responses to the initial interview, his cultural experiences, and academic writing. Follow-up interview questions focused on the meaning of Juan's experiences in relation to academic writing and cultural identity, as Seidman (2007) described. Participants were asked to submit their academic writing samples to discuss after the second interview. They were asked to bring class assignments: one that they liked writing and another that they did not enjoy writing. Then, based on their academic writing samples, third interview questions were formed. For example, I asked them questions about any difficulties that they encountered during the writing process, what they felt was easy about an assignment, their overall approach to writing their assignment, and the connection between their cultural experience and the writing assignment. The first audio with Juan continued for 50 minutes, the second audio was for 90 minutes and the third audio was for 118 minutes. Juan also submitted two of his writing samples like other participants.

Other Methods
Interview was the primary method for data collection. I took field notes during observation and collected academic writing from the participant. Juan was asked to share one academic writing that he liked writing and another piece that he did not enjoy writing. Initially he shared a review of an article, *Present and Future Challenges in Food Analysis: Foodomics* (as one he liked) and another assignment, *I'm Not Racist* (as one he did not like). During the third interview he had a chance to reflect back while describing the assignments: he explained that the first article was not difficult for him to write; for the second article it was difficult to construct the writing and it was lengthy, so he mentioned disliking for the paper. However, he liked the topic for the second assignment more because it made him reflect on himself and his identity. During the course of interview, he mentioned that, being a science major, the first article was easier for him to write.

Participant Details
Juan was 22 years old at the time of this study. He started his undergraduate work as a music major, but changed his major to chemistry. Juan was in his senior year at the time of the study. He was recruited for my study based on convenience. I knew him because he was actively involved with several on-campus Registered Students Organizations (RSO's), including the Multi-Cultural Resource Center and the Hispanic Student Group. He was born and brought up in the United States. He identified himself as more Mexican than American. His parents moved to the United States as illegal immigrants. Unlike other participants, he was not from an affluent family and was supporting himself in his undergraduate work single handedly. His first language was Spanish. He was taught Spanish by his parents in the beginning years of his life. Later he continued to read books in Spanish. His English proficiency was like a native speaker because he was born and raised in United States. Therefore, his primary language of

communication remained English.   During the interviews, he expressed dissatisfaction for not being able to cultivate Spanish language and culture on an everyday basis. He said that still he preferred to talk to people in Spanish if they know it. He mentioned discrimination that he had faced at middle school by his teachers for being Latino. He also mentioned that the experiences that he had earlier in his life made him a strong advocate for diversity and social justice. He told me stories of how he was called a "wetback" and "Yankee" at school.

Data Analysis
I used open coding, axial coding, and selective coding as part of my data analysis. Those processes are borrowed from grounded theory. Open coding is concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the transcribed data. Axial coding is about establishing the relationships between codes, identifying the codes that fall under broader codes, and reduction of extra codes. Finally selective coding is focused on identifying the main themes of the data. Essentially, each line, sentence, and paragraph are read and reread to code and organize the data. This process is dependent on the properties or dimensions that come from the data itself, or on the perspectives of the researcher, depending on the goals of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, 78).

Findings
The participant was a current undergraduate studying at a state university in the western United States who identified himself as culturally diverse at the time of the study. He was given a pseudonym to protect anonymity. Juan was a twenty-two-year-old Mexican-American student. His major was chemistry. He was born and brought up in the United States. The themes that emerged from Juan's data are cultural identity, influence of culture, identity conflict, and academic writing.

Cultural Identity
Juan mentioned that his whole family is from Mexico. "We are from the state Chihuahua. That's the biggest state in Mexico. It's just me, my little brother and sister, my mom and my uncle and aunt, my cousins, it's really my whole family." He mentioned how his family migrated to the US for work. His father migrated to the US first: "My father found a coyote. They cost a lot of money to bring someone to United States." "Coyotes" are the agents who help them in crossing the borders. Juan told me that potential immigrants depend on the coyotes because they know the routes and ways to survive in desert. His parents came to Tuscan, Arizona first and then moved to Douglas, Arizona. His mother crossed the border when she was eight months pregnant with Juan: "My mom was very lucky because she knew someone who had a vehicle very close to the border." He also talked about his experience of visiting Douglas in recent times. He was able to talk to his cousin from Mexico through the border bars and fence.

He explained that his home culture as "more Mexican. My mom is a lot darker and my dad is lighter. People from Chihuahua are lighter. Everyone is Chihuahua is really tall. The tallest person, my dad, is six feet, four inches." Then he stated, "I don't see myself being in America." He stated that he wanted to live in a Latin American country. He did not want to live in America his whole life. He also said that Chihuahua is a cowboy state. Therefore, they were more like Mexican cowboys. Culturally, they were loud and tough. Juan stated that culturally Mexicans

liked fixing things, they had very objective approach towards everything. He said, "so for a mechanic just a simple job costs more than hundred dollars, where as if we just buy parts, it's just dollar twenty and do it ourselves maybe by an hour and get it done."

He learned to speak Spanish during his childhood, and he was taught Spanish before English. Juan learned English at school. He explained how he learned English:

> I went to kindergarten when I was five. My mom made me translate everything. I was like, "Mom you can do it by yourself." But today I really thank her, because of her I can speak fluent Spanish. I don't know if it happens to you when I start talking all of a sudden I start speaking in Spanish and then I am like oh my gosh! Sometimes I will say something in Spanish and people are like what's that?

Juan's mom made him read Spanish at early childhood. Juan thought that his mother's language barrier helped him to learn Spanish better: "it's also because I had to translate lot of things for my mom in Spanish. For writing I think I have learned it my own because she never sat me down and taught how to write."

Influence of Culture

Juan's worldview was influenced by his cultural background. He had curiosity about how things worked, and he thought that was influenced by his culture. When talking about the difference between objectivity and subjectivity, he mentioned that "I do live my life skeptically. I don't say 'it's definitely a chair.' I say 'they're parts.' I think of lots of stuff. Chemistry has fallen that part of my objectivity. But my subjectivity is just from my culture really, like we are very vocal. We like to dance. That aspect comes from my culture." It was clear from his statement that his decision to study chemistry was due to Latin culture's objectivity. In fact, he thought his studying music was also dominated by his Latin cultural background. Juan thought that because of his bilingual and cultural background he understood lot of perspectives better than other people.

Juan learned French and Portuguese because they are similar to Spanish, and they are all Romance languages. He expressed that because he had less exposure to formal Spanish writing, he did not have the same sort of Spanish writing style that someone with Spanish writing training would have: "I think you could tell from my writing, if I know much Spanish. Not by the content but by the way I structure my sentences. Definitely very Americanized style my Spanish. Instead of saying the adjective first we say it last. For example, instead of 'red house' we say the 'house' first."

Juan reported his research interest is in figuring out how food interacts with genes without molecular processes. He talked enthusiastically about a paper on "foodomics" that he wrote for one of his classes. He thought it interested him because of his cultural background. He stated,

> Yeah, we eat a lot of high fat food, high carbs, high proteins cause we eat lot of beans, chicken, beef, salsa everything is very high in protein. So while growing up, I mean I have eaten that type of food, and while growing up I was never a thin person. I was always overweight and so I always thought about how the food, how our culture has what we eat has affected the way that we are because the majority of Mexican population I know is little bit overweight.

Their diet influence has made him think "in terms of being a food analyst or just educating people on what they eat and things like that. Yeah I hope to be able to help my community."

Because of his life struggles, such as financial hardship and racial discrimination, Juan was known on campus as an advocate for social justice. He mentioned that he was involved in advocating for social issues like social justice, multicultural education, and diversity. He cared about these because he had seen a lot of people struggling in this country. His mother sacrificed a lot, and she was still working on an hourly wage basis to help the family. Juan thought that even though people talked about social justice and racism openly at the university, he still had to hear discriminatory phrases like "you know I bought you a burrito because you are Mexican," "wetback," and "beaner." He expressed lot of times that he recognized and had to figure out if people's comments were made out of playfulness or out of hatred. He explained the term "wetback" this way:

> So there is a river between Mexico and the US, and immigrants cross the border. So they have to go swim in the water using flotation devices. The current can take people away so they have to use flotation devices, people would try to swim and push those people that help get people over, they would be on the water and the immigrants want to get to other side would be on a tube or some flotation device they would be pushed through other side. So when you come out of the water you have a wet back. That's what the wet back comes from and beaner because we eat lot of beans, so beaner.

Because of background and influences, Juan was an active member of different Registered Student Organizations (RSO's) and tried to help students through educating them about their basic rights as undocumented immigrants. He also explained that he interacted with freshmen and new students, hoping to teach them to be more open-minded. He also confessed that the ideas of social justice and microaggression developed for him once he came to college. He always felt that people treated him different and sometimes they even teased him because of his race and language, but he was not able to recognize and label them until he came to college. According to him, "until I came to college and finally was able to be like oh this is an actual concept and idea or conversation people have at this age."

Juan's life had not been easy; he did not come from a privileged population. He mentioned the long process through which his family got citizenship. His mother learned English when he started going to school. His mother had to work for several odd jobs to support the family. He described the financial status of his family: "we started really low, then high and then we are really low. But culturally like we want to be there for each other. Sometimes financially it's not very possible you know. We want to be there for each other, but we don't have that much money. Sometimes it's hard to be here because I have to fund my own studies. My education is on me. Out of my pocket and scholarship." Juan also mentioned "there have been hardships in learning in my academic life because I started understanding that education is very much of a privilege. If you have motivation you will learn a lot but if you don't have money you can't reach the potential that you want to."

Identity Conflict

Juan experienced identity conflict on several levels. His family is from Chihuahua, and they were more like Mexican cowboys. He lived in Idaho where Latino people were very different: "It definitely messes with my identity. They are very different from what I observed. People could say from our accent that we are from Idaho." Since he was born and brought up in the United States, he was more American than Chicano. He faced a constant dilemma in identity, as he knew he was neither an American nor a Latino.

He also expressed frustration because when he spoke to people on campus in Spanish, they answered him in English. He expressed disappointment as he thought Spanish-speaking people were not very comfortable to speak in Spanish:

> If I run into someone in X place (name of the University town) who is Mexican and I speak to them in Spanish, they will reply in English. I am like I hear English every day I want to hear Spanish. I meet many Mexicans when I go to Denver or Cheyenne or when I go to Walmart after 6 pm when all the workers or laborers have come out. You know I have seen the majority of them Walmart. I see a group of them and it makes me happy. I don't know what it is, but we acknowledge each other.

Also when people made offensive comments towards him, his identity was shaken: "People will assume things, people will [say] like 'oh you illegal, you should go back to your country'. I was born here, I don't really know what they talking about or like I have papers or I have documents."

People from his home culture were often hostile to the fact that he was getting a college education. People from his community often asked him if he thought he was "better" than the rest of them. Juan mentioned his approach to deal with it, "I am just being honest. Unfortunately you are seeing me as a threat. I am in college and doing things for myself. I am not better than you, I never thought I am better than you." Talking about identity conflict he also stated a proverb "No soy deaqui, me soy de na," which means "I am not from here, I am not from there."

Academic Writing

Juan was a great story teller. He paid careful attention to every single detail. He was very descriptive throughout the interview. Other than science classes, he liked classes where was able to relate to the materials being taught. He talked about a grant writing classes that he liked a lot because he got to write about a nonprofit that provided education for Latinas. He wrote a grant application for that nonprofit, and he thoroughly enjoyed the process: "I wanted to help out with something that is culturally more appropriate."

He also liked literature classes. He stated, "I do enjoy writing in general. I keep a journal. It really depends on what class I am taking, what subject. If it's just certain objective I can't seem to understand why I have to do this?" He mentioned he preferred to engage in writing that has some practical impact in life. He did not see any value in writing if it was just based on what they read. He enjoyed writing where his critical thinking was challenged. In his words, "I am pretty confident about my writing. If it's writing for a grade only I am just like I would say I am overly confident about my writing." He also said, "I don't like the assignments that repeat what we read."

Juan also recognized that he had the power to negotiate with his professors. He thought in general professors did not take the initiative to allow students to learn something culturally or personally appropriate. But whenever he approached his professors, they were flexible and understanding about his preferred writing topics and approach.

Talking about getting help, he said, "I generally don't seek help for writing from professors unless they offer it. If I do ask for help I will go here to the writing center. Unless professors say you can send me your rough draft you know, I will proofread. Majority of the professors are like 'there are writing center ask them'. When they say it, it discourages me from going to them." Juan stated that he enjoyed writing science, and at the same time he also loved writing about connections in arts and humanities: "I like to know how things work. And socially I enjoy how people work. I like making connection. If my knowledge can help somebody I will do that." Talking about writing instruction in his major, chemistry, he thought that assignments for chemistry are very specific. For English and other classes he received only minimal instruction: "For example, in English classes they provide some instructions , oh this is how you write a memo, this is how you write an email, this is how you write a grant, they definitely have provided instructions for those."

He addressed the impact of Spanish on his current academic writing. He mentioned that sometimes knowing another language helped him to add new phrases or new perspective in his writing:

> Whenever I try to think of certain phrases when I translate that in English, I feel it loses meaning to it. But the way I expressed it helped me with my writing because if I try to explain it to somebody else it sounds very different, it sounds very unique because I feel I can provide that when somebody reads my paper may be able to see a new perspective in it because either I am loosely translating or directly translating it from Spanish to English. The example I can provide is the difference between saying *te quero* or *te amo*. *Te quero* can be translated to 'I like you' or 'I love you'. *Te amo* is such an intense word though. It is directly translated 'I love you'. Spanish has provided me two different definitions of what I write.

The data revealed that Juan (according to him) had native level of fluency in English since he spoke English from very early age but at the same time Spanish had profound influence on his writing as well. He also explained his writing approach: first, he read the material, then he put it away and tried to remember what he had learned. If necessary, he reread the material several times and then started writing. He thought writing with flow was a strong aspect of his writing. On the other hand, he felt that sometimes he wrote way too much and it veered off the main point.

He said he did not see his school encouraging students engaging with their cultural backgrounds. He thought in school the discussion was limited to social justice and how people of color are being perceived, but there was a lack of practice to support people of color. He thought that there was not enough institutional awareness. In his words, "it's like you did not grow up? This way, you should not think you are capable of higher education."

Extending the Understanding of his Identity

This case study revealed several identities that Juan enacted in the data. Even though he was born and grew up in America, he always thought about the Latino community and tried to help them because of their collective culture. His cultural identity also affected his approach to academia. The objective part of his culture made him to take up chemistry major. At the same time, the collectivist approach in his culture made him curious about people. Collectivist culture, with strong family values, made him responsible towards his younger siblings. He regretted that even if he wanted to visit his family he would not be able to do so, due to financial hardship. He perceived himself as a good writer because his professors always appreciated his writing. He mentioned that because experience and expressions were valued in Latino culture, he was able to write in an eloquent manner. Then he also explained how his academic decision or campus involvements were shaped by his cultural identity. Also his presence was questioned in the United States, even though he was born here and looked "pretty much" white. He had to struggle with offensive comments due to his ethnic identity. On the contrary, he also did not feel that he belonged totally to his Hispanic community in Idaho as he was going to college and was planning for future education. He was never well-accepted by his community either. His visit to home and his community were perceived as a threat and often people perceived him as an outsider.

Authenticity of The Research

The four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985)— credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability— formed the framework for determining the rigor of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined the member check method as a tool to establish credibility in qualitative research. They mentioned that "the investigator who has received the agreement of the respondent groups on the credibility of his or her work has established a strong beachhead toward convincing readers and critics of the authenticity of the work" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 315). After transcribing the interview data, I met all five participants and shared the axial and selective coding that emerged from each case. I explained to them the way I generated the code so that they had an overview understanding. I asked them if their interview data were related and made sense to them. I also asked them to let me know if they saw any discrepancies in the data. During the interviews, if I had to fill in the gap in any data from the previous interview, I asked them for further clarification. That way I ensured credibility and dependability of the research. Also all the data collection methods and analysis process followed the norms of qualitative research.

There are no straightforward ways to ensure validity in qualitative research. I reflected on Cho and Trent (2006) to ensure transactional (member check) and transformational validity (self-reflexivity). I expanded the data based on thick description, truth seeking (representing different perspectives and keeping an open mind), praxis or social (by incorporating students' voice to emphasize the importance of this research for educators), and personal interpretation (researcher's understanding) strategies (Cho and Trent 2006). I made sure to provide a "thick" description of data and then expanded the data, so that the essence of Juan's experience gets reflected to ensure transferability.

A Space of Hybridity for Diverse Students
The data explained that Juan created a space where his cultural identities and school expectations merged and he accepted that new space to construct further learning. Gutierrez, Lopez, and Tejeda (1999) mentioned that students learn in the third space through experiences of conflict, diversity, and disconnect. They stated that, "We have examined these tensions by studying the competing discourses and practices, the official scripts and counter scripts, of the various social spaces of learning communities" (287). The findings suggested that the participant in this study has gone through an identity conflict and disconnect. With time, he embraced his new identity and became more involved with in-school practices. Bhabha (1994) explained the third space as a space that helps to create something different, something new and unrecognizable, and that is formed through different kinds of negotiation and representations. People form and shape new cultural identities in this space. My argument from this study is people not only develop new identities in third space, they also learn to engage in new practices to strengthen their newly formed space. For example, Juan accepted the academic norms and academic writing expectations, however he negotiated his academic decisions and practices with his ethnic and linguistic identities. Therefore, it becomes crucial for educators to learn to work in this zone to scaffold students by using the tools that they bring inside the classroom.

Researcher's Lens
I think it's crucial in context to this research that I declare my positionality for the readers. I was born and raised in a small town in India. Today's life in higher academia is different from my experience of life there, before, in India. During my whole life I kept changing places to attain my professional goals. Every time I moved to a new place or entered a new discourse of practices, I felt a change and conflict in my identity. The biggest ones have been changes in practices in my gendered identity after I moved to United States seven years ago and my identity as an emerging researcher since then. Coming from a patriarchal society to a more liberal setting caused a lot of conflicts and tensions. I learned to nurture my previously learned values along with a newly acquired, more independent identity. I was hesitant to do a lot of things, but moving to United States gave me that freedom and made me believe I am not about my gender only, there are more layers to "self." Also, my journey to be an academic was quite confusing, attending the basic steps to be a professional academic stirred a lot of tensions between previously learned topics and newly acquired knowledge. Finally, I learned to embrace my two recently developed identities and learned to deal with previous ones. The proverb told by Juan, "I am not from here; I am not from there," captured the essence of my own experience as a female qualitative diverse multilingual researcher of color in United States. The line he said, stayed with me always and became my source of inspiration to narrate his stories as I learned to preserve both the values.

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