

# Making my sourdough identity - Understanding Taiwanese international students' and my identities as English users across contexts

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# Outline

- A baker from rice culture
- Introduction of my research
- Struggles as a novice ethnographer in education
- Multivocality: de-know and re-know myself
- Conclusion: Sourdough and identities?

# A baker from rice culture; an ethnographer from statistics

review: what worked



Digital scale AUD 50



Mixer AUD 150



Oven AUD 500

4-5 days to make starter

1 day to feed the starter and let it rise

Much physical strength to make soft and stretchy dough

## Introduction of my research

- Chinglish users V.S. Native English users
- Ex: *You see I no see, you no see, I see*
- *(The thing you understand might confuse me, but the thing I understand might trouble you as well)*
- Ex: *People mountain, people sea*
- *(It's crowded)*
- EX: *Long time no see (Is it Chinglish entirely?)*

# [新加坡式咖啡店英语]

## SINGAPORE COFFEESHOP SINGLISH

“新加坡式英语”是从英语基础演变出来的本土化英语。虽然英语是主要的语言，但新加坡式英语有独特的俚语和语法，这是在非正式的谈话中更加明显。

|                                    |                       |                              |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Kopitiam = Coffeeshop              | Kopi = Coffee         | Teh = Tea                    |
| Kopi Tau Chiew = Coffee Barista    | Roti = Bread          | Kaya = Local Coconut Egg Jam |
| Hosei bo? = How are you doing?     | Kilat = Excellent     | Makan = To Eat               |
| Ta Pau = Take Away                 | Gu Ning = Milk        | Chope = Reserving a Seat     |
| Belanja = To Give Someone A Treat  | Suay = Unlucky        | Tok Gong = Special, Unique   |
| Pai Say = Shy, embarrassing        | Hao Lian = Boastful   | Alamak = OMG                 |
| Jia Lat = Being in Trouble         | Kaypoh = Busy Body    | Kiasu = Be Afraid of Losing  |
| Wah Lao = Exclamation of Shock     | Heng = Good Luck      | Obiang = Out of Fashion      |
| Shiok = Expression of Satisfaction | Chee Ko Pek = Pervert | Eeyer = Express of Disgust   |

| "Can" SINGLISH MEANINGS    |                           |                      |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Can Lah = Yes.             | Can Har = Are You Sure?   | Can Can = Confirmed! |
| Can Leh = Yes, Of Course.  | Can Meh = Are You Certain | Can Bo = Can or Not? |
| Can Lor = Yes, I think so. | Can Gua = Maybe           | Can Liao = Done!     |



Who gives English varieties a bad name?

Can I become native in English?  
or Should I?

# Introduction of my research



Before

Jan.~Feb., 2014



During

July ~Aug., 2014



After

Oct.~Dec., 2014



1. Three sets of audio-recorded interviews  $(1.5 \times 27) = 40.5$  hours
2. Observation (from January 2014 to December 2014, 50 weeks  $\times$  3 hrs/week = 150 hours)
3. Triangulation of time, location and methods

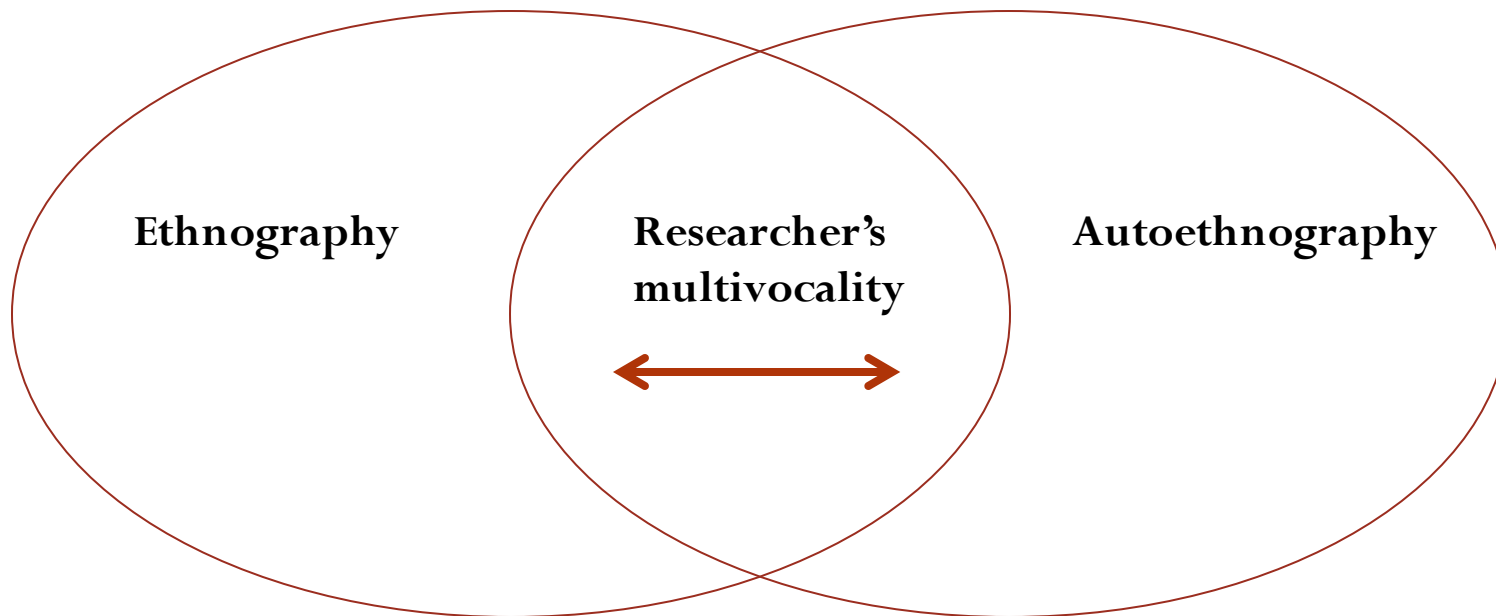
# Struggles as a novice ethnographer in education

- Co-construct researcher's and subject's relational positions by acknowledging my specific positions in the relation (Maher, 1993: p. 118)
- Unsettling the hierarchies through high level of self-reflexivity (Nencel, 2014:p.76)
- Predefining the power relationship between researcher and researched is problematic (Nencel, 2014: p.76)

HOW ?

# Multivocality: de-know and re-know myself

- *...providing representational space in the autoethnography for the plural and sometimes contradictory narrative voices located within the researcher* (Mizzi, 2010: p.2)
- Personal vignettes from 1 year of observation
- Line between ethnography and autoethnography?





*I am shocked about teachers respect everyone's opinions. So, teachers are not necessary always be right.*

*You have to find a way to narrow your own topic down to the feasible scope for you.[...]*

*I feel tired. Why should learning be so tiring here? [...] I don't like here. I cannot adapt to the culture here. It's boring here, people are distant. You know, they are pretty hard to make friends with. (I chose Australia) simply because the study duration only lasts for one year.[...] I think most of Taiwanese people I know in Australia are here for getting the degrees only. **No one is interested in their culture or English.***

*(Denise, interview, 10/05/14)*

*\*I feel sorry for her bad experiences, but I notice she didn't tell me anything about her motive to come to Australia is to get her master degree with the shortest period of time. Instead, she mentioned about it was her wish to experience living in an English-speaking country when we firstly met. Now I see a more instrumentally motivated Denise, and she generalises her negativity as all Taiwanese students based in Sydney have exactly the same feeling. Denise's opinions on how teachers should teach reveal my deep concern regarding "Taiwan's educational service industry."*

*Let's face it, if you have money, what famous universities won't let you in and out? I am saying that education is just a ticket to the society. What is more important is direct working experience. I still think that **the degrees from even the best university in Australia are for sale**. Regardless of your insufficient English or maybe lower intelligence, as long as you stay at that university and do not get kicked out, all you need to do is to spend extra money for perhaps making up the failed credits. **What I am saying is that you will be graduated eventually if you have money.***

*(Denny, interview, 01/10/14)*

*\*As a former university lecturer in Taiwan, I resonate what Denny tells me to what I experienced in Taiwan. This might be unethical and seemingly unsympathetic to say that many Taiwanese universities are spoiling or in another sense, "customerising" students. Are Australian universities customerising / commercialising too hard so that Denny thinks that Australian credentials are for sale?*

1. ~~The inability of blending  
into Australian socio-  
cultural life.~~

2. ~~High level of  
commercialisation of  
Australian Go8~~

**1. The exchangeability  
from financial capital  
into more forms of  
capital**

**2. Problematising subjects'  
educational paradigm**



*Now a more instrumentally motivated Daisy, ... she generalises her negativit...arousing my deep concern regarding "Taiwan's educational service industry." ...many Taiwanese universities are ... "customerising" students. Are Australian universities customerising / commercialising too hard so that David thinks that Australian credentials are for sale?*



*I feel tired. Why should learning be so tiring here? ... I don't like here. I cannot adapt to the culture here. It's boring here, people are distant ... No one is interested in their culture or English ... if you have money, what famous universities won't let you in and out? ... the degrees ... in Australia are for sale. you will be graduated eventually if you have money.*

# Conclusion: Sourdough and identities?

- Multivocality functions as natural yeast ...
  - enhances the mobility for researcher's multiple identities

high mobility leads the researcher to de-know selves

- • helps novice ethnographers in education with knowing their positionality and multiple selves by compiling vignettes at the end of research

Chronologically compiling personal vignettes leads the researcher to re-know selves