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POSITIONING RESEARCH AND NEW KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

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Debates into the positioning of research and aligning them with new knowledge systems has received mixed reactions. Many argue that research needs to follow discrete silos of disciplinary knowledge where knowledge needs to remain within a particular and defined construct. However, in the global world that we now embrace, there is a burgeoning of new knowledge systems that have disrupted 'traditional' processes of carrying out research and foregrounded the encompassing of new knowledge systems that follow research pathways and methodologies that are all encompassing of the multifaceted educational and social systems that embrace specific postcolonial and indigenous societies. Much of this corollary has stemmed from historical and political factors that have seen the rise of some disciplines of knowledge and the non-awareness's and non-recognition of others. This paper articulates from an auto-ethnographic perspective the discussion surrounding the positioning of research, new knowledge systems and interdisciplinary learning in the areas of International and Aboriginal students. Focusing on postcolonial theory and Aboriginal approaches to research, the author foregrounds the tensions of historiography, hybridity, subjectivities, collaborative sharing and voice through what she terms a 'strands of knowledge' approach in these two areas. In the process, the author conceptualises two definitions. These are: *intra-paradigm shifts* and the *irreducibility of the ethics of research* and discusses how they are integral concepts when researching in or around particular cultural communities and groups.

Keywords: New knowledge systems, Postcolonial, Indigenous societies, Auto-ethnographical, Intra paradigm shifts, Irreducibility of the ethics of research.

Introduction

Debates into the positioning of research and aligning them with new knowledge systems have received mixed reactions. Many argue that research needs to follow discrete silos of disciplinary knowledge where the scholarship of learning needs to remain within a particular and defined construct. However, in the global world that we now embrace, there is a burgeoning of new knowledge systems that have disrupted 'traditional' processes of carrying out research and foregrounded the encompassing of new pathways and methodologies that are all encompassing of the multifaceted educational and social systems that embrace specific postcolonial and indigenous societies. Much of this corollary has stemmed from historical and political factors that have seen the rise of some disciplines of knowledge and the non-awareness's and non-recognition of others.

This paper articulates from an auto-ethnographic perspective the discussion surrounding the positioning of research and new knowledge systems in the areas of learning for International and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research students. I, first of all, discuss the importance of

how to position oneself when conducting research in and with particular communities. This has been carried out through adopting and adapting various theoretical standpoints to be able to carry out an auto-ethnographic study, one which incorporates the standpoints that are discussed. Using a 'Strands of Knowledge' approach from an earlier study, the author then provides a summative, reflexivity of the study on these students through the strands of historiography, hybridity, subjectivities, collaborative sharing, and voice. In the exploration and discussion that follows, the author foregrounds a definition of *intra paradigm shifts* and *the irreducibility of the ethics of research* as being integral concepts when researching in or around particular cultural communities and groups.

Positioning

The positioning that I take in this paper builds upon two spaces. These are the personal and the academic. In a personal positioning - I am an academic teaching at Deakin University, Australia, as a Lecturer in Education, Research and Research Support in the Institute of Koorie Education. It is an educational institution that caters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The focus of my work is working with education and research students, teaching research methods and skills in a generic sense and then aligning or melding it to the requirements of particular groups and communities who are the focus of the study undertaken. Two years prior to this, I worked as a specialist Language and Learning Advisor to higher degree by research students and an academic Skills Advisor to undergraduate students at a couple of Universities. I have also worked as a Lecturer in Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and also in Applied Linguistics. I was brought up in a society that was 'multi' in every sense of the word. This was through a postcolonial, decolonising political and social system where I have been taught in varying educational and cultural systems. This has reflected on my academic positioning in this study.

In an academic positioning, I would like to state that debates into the positioning of research and aligning them with new knowledge systems has received mixed reactions. Many argue that research needs to follow discrete silos of disciplinary knowledge where the scholarship of learning needs to remain within a particular and defined construct (Clough and Nutbrown 2012; Dowling and Brown 2010). However, in the global world that we now embrace, there is a burgeoning of new knowledge systems that have disrupted 'traditional' processes of carrying out research and foregrounded the encompassing of new pathways and methodologies that are all encompassing of the multifaceted educational and social systems that embrace specific postcolonial and indigenous societies. Much of this corollary has stemmed from historical and political factors that have seen the rise of some disciplines of knowledge and the non-awareness and non-recognition of others.

My intent in both these spaces is not to dichotomise systems of learning or disciplines of knowledge but to speak purely from an educator and practitioner point of view. In this, I am following Dirlik (1996, pp. 296-7) in exploring a discourse that is 'informed by an epistemological orientation. I use this approach to provide a perspective of *teaching for and learning of* experiences for the two groups of students who inherit what I term a wholistic complexity in their 'being'.

In discussing how I have positioned myself, I have looked at three assessments in the way that I provide guidance for my students. These are a formative assessment *for* learning (Irons 2008), a summative assessment *of* learning (Dewey 1997; Shiro 2012) and a reflective (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung 2007,) process for further development as to how I approach and extend the research capacity building my students. In beginning this paper, I would like to narrate an incident that occurred when I started my research in doctoral studies. When I was interviewed for entry into the PhD, the first question put to me was: why do you want to research?

My answer to that question was a poem that I would like to share with you.

I am the sea
Amorphous in all its might and glory.

Ripples, waves and swells I toss about in my arms,

Life, death and immortality,

I hold within me.

I am the wind

In all its fume and fury.

Thoughts like elements course through my head.

Trembling, pleading, panting I ignore its birth.

I hold on as it forges ahead.

I am the universe

Might and power I hold in the palm of my hand.

Restless in my womb are the beings of the future,

Resentful, running, they rupture the walls of my conformity.

I hold on to a straining leash.

I am the Earth

Steadfast in my determination,

Anger builds in my belly,

Fires breathe in my heart.

I gasp for air wanting a respite.

Ignoring me, the tsunami breaks its banks.

I AM THE MAKER,

I MUST 'SPEAK'!

After I wrote the poem, I realised that there was some knowledge within me that needed to be said, that needed to be imparted in the best way possible. I felt that the research systems that I was confronted with did not fulfil my chance to speak, it did not give me a chance to foreground my 'being'. In essence, it was not accommodating of the multiple subject positions that I had and would still be undergoing in the course of carrying out a major research study. It would not accomplish what I needed or wanted to say as a researcher if I followed the 'diehard' 'what is' and 'what is not' objectified traditional constructs of solving a problem or an hypothesis. It would not be a true indication of the contribution I wanted to make to scholarship and knowledge systems that I felt needed to be projected. Presently and more importantly, in my role as an educator, the students that I was working with were facing the same dilemmas. All these factors led me to develop particular theoretical standpoints.

Theoretical Standpoints

My first standpoint was to develop an understanding of postcolonial theory. That understanding was brought about through the background that I had experienced. Through Edward Said and his discussion of Orientalism (1978a; 1978b), I became aware of language being subject to location, interpretation, context and an infinite play with meaning. Through Gayatri Spivak's writings (1993; 1996; 1999) I became aware of epistemic exclusion, minority groups, the denial of subjectivity and the politicising of identity. Through Homi Bhabha's work (1994) I became aware of the element of the Third Space. What interested me most about the Third Space was that instead of just talking or writing about marginalised groups, I could through 'dialogic processes' (Bhabha 1994) facilitate a moving *on* and *beyond* into a space that continued a negotiating process.

The second theoretical standpoint was to deconstruct what I understood by Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Important to this system was transformation. To bring about this transformation, there were certain principles that must be adhered to if ethical research is to be carried out. Cited in Kumar and Patanayak (2015) a representative list foregrounds the work of Martin 2003; Porsanger 2004; Rigney, 2006; Moreton-Robinson 2006; Banda 2008; Botha 2011; Mao et al. 2012; Mohammed et al. 2012; Simonds and Christopher 2013; Kildae & Kumar 2015. A summary of several authors' studies brings out several particularistic features. These are that closely connected to Knowledge Systems is the connection to the Land and the Spirit (Kildae & Kumar 2015). Another is the importance of protocol when undertaking research, in particular, communities. An important feature of the protocol is the issue of shared knowledge. According to Porsanger 2004; Rigney, 2006; Banda 2008, the issue of shared knowledge involves an ethical consideration of sovereignty and the sharing of data. Leading from this is the fact that the value of how to interview in Aboriginal communities often leads to incongruences between Western and Indigenous methodologies especially when differing methods are used (Botha 2011; Mao et al. 2012; Mohammed et al. 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2006; Martin 2003; Simonds and Christopher 2013). A consequent of this is that compliance with Western ethics in Aboriginal cultural frameworks can lead to tensions and conflict within one's own culture (Roth 2009; Bainbridge et al. 2013; Saratt 2014). In these cases, forms of miscommunication result which often misconstrue the true findings of a study.

The third theoretical standpoint that I explored was through auto-ethnography. My turning to this theoretical standpoint came about as a result of various teaching experiences that involved both a formative and summative interaction in an educative capacity. Integral to this was the reflexivity that determined how else to improve the imparting of knowledge to students. I use the auto-ethnographical focus provided by Roth (2009, p.1) in positioning myself as a participant in the teaching role that I have with students. A feature of this positioning is that the student as the Other may be negatively affected as much as the Self. As I discussed in an earlier paper, (Kumar, 2015) in choosing this standpoint, I am also, again in following Roth, am part of the group comprising the Self and the Other where both of us are modelling each other forecasting a productive outcome for both groups. Here the '"auto" in auto/ethnography is a method and a product, in which the Self has a hand in play in the productive process' (Roth 2009, p.4). It becomes important therefore to specifically position myself in the research and teaching space and the interactions that I have in the teaching of and learning for our students. Using these approaches leads to the study that I now outline. This study is part of a more detailed study to be carried out at a later date.

The Study

The study involved two groups of students. These were international under and postgraduate students and Australian Aboriginal research students. Some empirical data has been used from studies carried out on international and postgraduate students. Data on Australian Aboriginal research students have been historical and from teacher perceptions. Using an auto-ethnographical approach, I provide a summative narrative that is formative in its origins with the intent of enhancing the reflexivity and exploratory nature

of teaching research students whose research projects require a backgrounding of deep historical and cultural ties that call for particular shifts in the research design before one can effectively contribute to scholarship.

Research Design

In articulating the discussion surrounding the positioning of research and new knowledge systems in the areas of learning for International and Aboriginal students, I put forward the argument that traditionally, research design and paradigms of learning have been positioned through definite silos of learning. These have followed a positivist approach that relies on deductive reasoning where outcomes are determined by a measuring of 'what is' and 'what is not' (Clough and Nutbrown 2012; Dowling and Brown 2010). There is no 'in-between'. Increasingly, however, through interdisciplinary forms of research, studies have moved away from discrete bodies of learning to conjoin two or more disciplines of knowledge, albeit sometimes in separate and definite constructs to extend the field of research to encompass differing areas for study. A further trajectory as to how research paradigms should be viewed is through the work of Thomas Kuhn in his ground-breaking treatise, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Kuhn explains through the rabbit-duck illusion the concept of a paradigm shift where the same content can be viewed in two different ways. Kuhn further explains that the two versions are incommensurable in that one cannot be the other. Nor can it compared as 'better than another'. What is of significance in Kuhn's discussion to my exploration is a conceptualisation of what is the hidden information in exemplars of learning. He refers to the information presented in the exemplars as being opaque in that it whilst it foregrounds what is the case, it 'silences' the possibility of other ways of looking at things. Another point of significance resulting from Kuhn's discussion is that apart from looking at the possibilities of hard science per se, his discussion of a paradigm shift has also been applied to the social sciences.

I extend this by putting forward the view that within the framework of positioning research in new knowledge systems carried out in decolonising nations, there are *intra paradigm shifts* in the conducting of research design. I also put forward the argument that the process of researching, in particular, cultural communities foregrounds *the irreducibility of the ethics of research* in the obligations that one has to fulfil as a researcher. These arguments have called for an unlayering of the standardised definitions in *intra paradigm shifts* and *the irreducibility of the ethics of research.* I illustrate this through a 'strands of knowledge' approach.

Strands of Knowledge

A detailed analysis of this is provided in Kumar (2003; 2005). Suffice to say that the methodology uses the metaphor of a tapestry to introduce the framework of a postcolonial theory incorporating an auto-ethnographical focus and an Indigenous knowledge systems approach upon which this study is based. The 'strands of knowledge' methodology use the metaphor of strands that are carefully woven on a spatial backing of tapestry to produce a visual space of continuous perceptions and insights. An important characteristic of this metaphor of the tapestry is that strands can be added, substituted or replaced. Hence, the application of this methodology to this analysis is appropriate. I have applied the strands of historiography, hybridity, subjectivities, collaborative sharing and voice. In the following section, I provide an exploration and discussion of the strands in relation to my reflexive teaching and the ensuing findings.

Exploration and Discussion of Reflexive Teaching and Findings

Historiography

From a pedagogical perspective, it is relevant to provide a backdrop to the two groups of students in this study. The first are international undergraduate and postgraduate students from what was referred to as

the African and Indian continent, South East Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific. The second are postgraduate Australian Aboriginal students. The historicity of both these groups lies in colonialism and subsequent decolonisation practices.

International students were brought to Australia under the auspices of aid under the Colombo Plan in 1951 (Information Department of the Colombo Plan Bureau 1979). The Colombo Plan was said to be 'no Plan as such, but a collective concept of national efforts supplemented by external assistance' (Information Department of the Colombo Plan Bureau 1979, pp. 2-3). It was a Commonwealth initiative intended as a program for the South and South-East Asia region 'in the conviction that the poverty of one depresses all' (Information Department of the Colombo Plan Bureau, 1979 pp. 2-3). The discussion leading up to and after the creation of the Colombo Plan called for objectives where Asia would work with Australia. An evaluation of this Plan (Kumar 2004) showed that it was a response to Australia's nation-building and of creating a niche in the Pacific through colonial and postcolonial practices. Further evaluation showed the ambivalence of this Plan when a number of policies ensued. These evidenced the issues of providing and not providing aid, charging and not charging an overseas fee, cutbacks on educational funding, looking for student markets overseas and having full fee paying students to enhance the economy of Australia.

The historical discourse to the pedagogy of learning for present day Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is also attributed to a colonialist historicity. I quote Karen Martin's 2003 article (p. 1) where she points out that "the myth of terra nullius country implied that [Australia] was uninhabited and terra nullius policy supported by research enabled for the dispossession of knowledges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples". Thus, any research that resulted was either oblivious to or ignorant of important and integral obligations to the carrying out of research in Aboriginal communities.

In their learning and academic writing all the students use their historiographical space. They do this by reinserting aspects of their history, their nation, culture and languages into the decolonised postcolonial space of their 'being'. The reinsertion of these aspects of history, nation, culture and languages are what I term, 'a melding process'. A particularistic feature that demands recognition in the writing of the research students is what I term the feature of 'positioning the writer and reader' in what is being said. An important element of this is 'backgrounding'. I put forward the view that 'backgrounding' is a necessary component of understanding the writing of research students from postcolonial and decolonising nations. It involves a melding process. This melding process is either a merging or a blending of what is referred to as 'eastern and western cultures' (Said 1978a). I further argue that this melding process contributes to the students' hybridity.

Hybridity

The definition of hybridity that I am referring to here is from a decolonising perspective where Dirlik (1996, pp. 296-7) emphasises an epistemological perspective and Bhabha (1990) provides a link with the Third Space. Bhabha sees the Third Space and hybridity as one. He explains that hybridity is 'not being able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges but … the third space which enables other positions to emerge' (1990, p. 211). According to Bhabha, the importance of hybridity is that 'it puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses. Thus hybridity does not give the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: [it is] prior only in the sense of being anterior' (Bhabha 1990, p. 211). In this way, Bhabha (1990, p. 216) describes cultural hybridity as a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. Bhabha (1983) and Ahmad (1996) broadly define cultural hybridity as being able to encompass values, customs and characteristics of several cultures into one's lifestyle so that they become part of one's daily living.

I wish to emphasise here again that the aspect of hybridity that I am referring to is the orientation of language and how it influences an individual's being. Here I quote empirical evidence in the way International students portray themselves. This element of 'being' relates to the component of their being where they feel that it is important to outline the range of nations that form a part of who they are as

encapsulated in the following representative samples: '…origins are Malaysian but parents shifted to Singapore'; 'second generation Singaporean but am also a Tamil, grandparents are from Sri Lanka'. Another feature noticed in the description of who they are and where they are from is that, for some students, it is also important to point out different phases of where they have lived. A few representative samples show that this linked also to their education, for example, 'came to Singapore when I was nine years old to study but am now going back to Indonesia because that is my birthplace'; am Indian but have studied in different places like a convent' (Kumar 2004).

From an autoethnographic perspective, Australian Aboriginal students show the same element of their hybridity though a differing pathway is followed. Here it is important that I provide a background. The uniqueness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are defined by the fact that clans and cultural communities are referred to as a NATION (my use of capitals for emphasis). Welch (2015) discusses the fact that "'Tribes or 'nations' in Australia, are really 'language groups', made up of people sharing the same language, customs, and general laws. The people of a tribe share a common bond in their own language". Similarly, as acknowledged on the Map of Aboriginal Australia, an attempt is made "to represent all language groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. However, it indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people, which may include smaller groups, such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group" (Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet 2013). In a Western sense of definition, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are part of a single entity: Australia. Again this causes confusion for students. Relevant in this instance is the argument put forward by Ian Paradies (2006, p.357) who identifies himself as an "Aboriginal-Anglo-Asian Australian, [whose] personal history compels him to identify as more than just Indigenous and as other than exclusively White while moving beyond this dichotomy in [his] Asian heritage … is both coloniser and colonised". Cascading from this is the view put forward by Shohat (1996) who contends that foregrounding hybridity calls attention to one's multiplicity and subject positioning. I detail this under subjectivities.

Subjectivities

Through Spivak's (1996) writing as cited in Kumar, (2005), I realise that subjectivity can neither be unified nor be fixed. Subjectivity is constructed through the society one lives in; through its social organisations, as influenced and evidenced in its discursive practices. In relation to this the concept of agency and how it related to the student became significant. Spivak provides for me a summative reflexivity in that through her exploration of the interconnectedness between the 'agent' and the 'subject' (Spivak 1993, p. 231) the concept of 'being' is unravelled. Spivak says that 'agent and subject are different codings of what is called "being" ' (Spivak 1993, p. 231). Particularly relevant to my reflection of how to address research studies and projects for students whose daily lives are operationalised within an array of social and educational systems is the fact that Spivak locates agency as being the principle of accountability where if 'one acts with responsibility one has to assume the possibility of intention and one has to assume the freedom of subjectivity to be responsible' (Spivak 1996, p. 294). This resonates with Bhabha's (1994) definition of the Third Space. I see that having productive outcomes for both an autoethnographic researcher and reflective educator, such as myself, and the students that I mentor, I would be moving into a dialogic space that would facilitate a moving on and beyond into a space that would encourage and facilitate subjectivity. I would be moving into a space that would enable an interaction with students in all their diversity.

In my reflexivity of subjectivities, both groups of students showed composite educational, cultural and social systems that the students encompass within their daily lives. These attributes occur with both groups because of their historicity. In the majority of cases, this has enabled the students to move from one system to another quite comfortably and with ease. A number of international students refer to this as 'interchanging'. They elaborate this by saying that the exposure to the cultures that they are exposed to 'back home' enables them move into another culture 'quite comfortably'. However, they also emphasise that they do not live or position themselves totally in that culture but 'go back' into   their own systems

when they need to. They say that the exposure of being used to several cultures 'back home' has enabled them to do this. A significant feature is that a number of students see the movement between cultural and social systems as being natural for them. A student explained this by saying that a typical day in his country would begin by greeting someone in Malay, English or Chinese. This would be a followed by a hand gesture: shaking hands or folding palms or not doing anything.

In a similar vein to my international students, a significant degree of interchanging occurs among the Australian Aboriginal students. The interchanging would occur between the occupants of a Nation and also with occupants of different Nations. Uniquely significant is that the social and cultural interchanging occurs on differing levels of protocol. This is because of the entity of a Nation which is an important feature of social relationships. A differing set of social relationships is followed when the students move into a Western milieu of interaction. Closely linked to subjectivities is collaborative sharing.

Collaborative Sharing

Collaborative sharing is a strand that is especial to new knowledge systems. In this instance, I discuss this in relation to my Australian Aboriginal students who are undertaking research projects. A requirement of any student wanting to do research with individuals or communities there is certain documents that need to be adhered to before any study is undertaken. These are firstly a National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) (National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2014) which follows a Western mode of academic writing, processes and procedures. An important feature is that the researcher is deemed to be the sole owner of that study. However, the majority of my students carry out research in Aboriginal communities. In this instance, the student must adhere also to the guidelines for ethical research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2012). A discussion of the anomalies that result shows how difficult this becomes for students.

For example, according to the NEAF guidelines which are constructed in a Western mode of academic writing, when conducting any research study, a researcher is deemed to be the sole owner of the knowledge that she or he researches and through which, produces findings. This is a requirement for any student wishing to do research. For an Aboriginal researcher and in this case, my Australian Aboriginal students, of utmost importance is the issue of collaboratively sharing your research study with the members of the Nations where the research is being conducted. This occurs in the following ways. A researcher needs to acknowledge that ownership of the research belongs to a group of people because the community is in equal partnership. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (2012) AIATSIS (2012, p. 4-5) Ethical Guidelines states that a researcher must acknowledge, respect, protect and maintain rights in the traditional knowledge and traditional cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples and that are passed on by them in expressing their cultural identity. These may be in the form of Indigenous traditional knowledge, ownership of intellectual property; protection of Indigenous communal rights in cultural expression, designs and knowledge. Another aspect to this is the maintaining of the secrecy of Indigenous knowledge and practices. One can show and distribute restricted material only with permission from those who provided or are responsible for it. Sometimes the impact of how much disclosure can only be decided through shared recognition of knowledge.

Moreover, collaborative sharing also involves a Pre-Ethics Approval involving, negotiation, consultation, agreement and a mutual understanding. Here the participants are equal partners with the researcher. Leading from this, a further anomaly of decolonising practice is the anomaly of Identifying, De- identifying and Coercion. This can result from the fact that participants are known to each other through the conceptualisations of 'Nation' and 'Country' as explained above under 'Historiography'. Very often this is taken as coercion by the assessors when the objective behind this is very different. For the research student, this has meant meeting the requirements of two documents: that of meeting requirements from a Western discourse and trying to meld this with the obligations of an Australian

Aboriginal guideline. Apart from the fact, that it takes considerable time and that students are not able to meet deadlines for Ethics Committee meetings, the fact that the student is contributing new knowledge by trying to explain historically and socioculturally to a particular study, that is, saying basically how they know their subjects and then finding a way to de-identify them to adhere to Western constructs of carrying out a research study. An anecdotal comment from one such research students encapsulate the tensions of the student is facing through the use of the 'I' and the 'we'. The student says that the way he/she write this application is not the way the community thinks. The element of Voice further illustrates the anomalies that occur. Here, the collective use of 'we' becomes especially significant.

Voice

The conceptualisation of Voice is embedded in how language is perceived for both groups of students. Relevant to this is Bhabha's (1994, p. 67) discussion of Orientalism as a mechanism that draws attention to both the recognition and the denial of racial, cultural and historical differences, thus leading to a hierarchy. One of the ways this is done is through the production of knowledge. Authorisation for the dissemination of this knowledge is strategically placed so that it advantages the dominant culture, as the knowledge that is constructed comes from its perspective. This leads to two sets of discourse: a discourse of the coloniser and a discourse of the colonised. However, both have been structured from the viewpoint of the coloniser. Bhabha maintains that this leads to information about the coloniser and the colonised being antithetical because it is constructed only from the dominant culture's point of view. Since the Voice of the colonised is absent, the information that is produced is only of advantage to the dominant culture.

Further to this, evident in the way the students approached the foregrounding of knowledge systems was that it became a method of expressing their worldview. I borrow from (Chambers 1996, p. 50) when I say that the students used voice as depicted in a narrative style of writing to show how they 'inhabit the multiplicity of cultural borders, historical temporalities and hybrid identities… calls for a state of knowledge, an ethics of the intellect that is prepared to suffer modification and interrogation by what it neither possesses nor can claim as its own. There were significant differences in the way the narratives were told and the use of the 'I' and the 'we'.

For international students, the use of 'I' was to show individual progression and how the Self is important as the Centre. For example, 'I speak Chinese', 'I was taught in English', 'I speak Tamil'. The international students will stratify the importance of language and its place in their social and educational milieu as seen in, 'I speak Tamil to my grandmother'. 'English is used only for educational purposes'. This is in contrast to the way 'I' is used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The use of the 'I' is used as a collective to show the link with 'we'. Moreover, the use of the 'I' is used to show their 'being'. This 'being' evidence aspects of their identity and the link they have with their backgrounds. This becomes evident from the speech patterns which show place and location. Also evident is the fact that Australia had at one time Australia had approx. 500 different clan groups or 'nations' around the continent (Australian Government 2015), each with distinctive cultures, beliefs and languages.

For Australian Aboriginal students, as a result of colonial history involving a process of assimilation (Martin 2003), all the students follow a western form of education academic education. An inherent part of this is the aligning of this form of education with the cultural systems of Nations and People as outlined earlier. In the majority of instances, this involves a double mode of writing and speaking. This becomes apparent in every aspect of written work. Aboriginal protocol usually links the right to tell a story with a declaration of involvement or connection to the story (Anderson 1997, p.4). Hence the collective and the use of the 'we'. Culturally, as outlined earlier, the Australian Aboriginal societies are dichotomous groups amongst the many 'Nations' of Australia. The 'Nations' in a Western discourse are referred to as a single continent of Australia. A student has to manoeuvre and negotiate a pathway to bring their knowledge system of 'Nations' to the Academy as a single entity of 'Nation' in a Western

context. The anomaly that results becomes significantly evident when an Aboriginal student sets out to research in their own or another Aboriginal community.

Conceptualising Intra-Paradigm Shifts and the Irreducibility of the Ethics of Research

In conceptualising intra-paradigm shifts and the irreducibility of the ethics of research, in a summative reflection, there are several factors that demand a rethinking and reconfiguring of the knowledge that we consider true and steadfast to conducting a research study. These are outlined as follows. Historiographically, as outlined above through the Columbo Plan, the conceptualisation of *terra nullius*, and the policy of assimilation and from empirical and autoethnographic perspectives, there is a historicity that needs to be brought to the fore. I follow (Spivak's 1988, p. 13) argument that if the strategy of historiography is to be applied correctly, it must take into account the voices of those who are suppressed. Spivak further says that the only way to undo the metalepsis, therefore, is to read whatever has been said or written about subaltern history 'against the grain' (Spivak 1988, pp. 1-30). In applying this to positioning research and new knowledge systems for my students, this can only be done if the positioning of research design is re-codified to allow for, a 'demystification of ideology and method' (Spivak's 1988, p. 13). For this to happen, a new discourse needs to be unlayered, one that critiques the issue of the existing history and also highlights reading 'against the grain' what has been codified.

Further, evident in the students' hybridity and the multiple positions that they have used is to quote Bhabha (1994, p. 22) an 'ambivalence' in the way that their research study unfolds. This becomes relevant as a process of emergence. For example, their historicity shows the stratification of power and knowledge. Thus, there are counter-knowledges. Moreover, I further quote Bhabha (1994, p.22) in saying that the ambivalence of the students is as a result of the fact that cultures and communities that hitherto had been classified as distinct and complete entities can no longer be called such because of a merging of boundaries that has been brought about by postcolonialism, globalisation and transnationalism. As a result of these factors, the world has become a 'global village' in that the traffic of knowledge has led to the internalisation of the characteristics of several knowledge systems to form new ones. The systems formed may not necessarily be a conscious effort but one that has led to a merging of thought processes where there is a crossing of disciplines, borders and inevitably knowledge systems. So in essence, when students are presented with methodologies and research design that are definite, finite and exclusionary of other disciplines and knowledge that are traditional in the sense of not being brought to the fore because that knowledge is considered 'old', the students are virtually 'stumped' from making a contribution to scholarship.

This is because, in actual fact, the knowledge that the students are presenting have an important currency in their contemporary worldview and 'being'. It is also because the system that they are being educated under does not have the facility to incorporate the new knowledge system that the student is bringing to the academy and which they would like to incorporate into their research study. There is an anomaly between the Academy's perception of how a research study should be conducted and the students' perception of how this should be carried out. This is because the students constitute hybrid and multiple subjectivities. I quote Ashcroft (2013, p.2) in pointing out that "in-between space…make the notion of hybridity important in that it is a concept that is not so much valuable in itself as it is useful for unsettling *all* static and inflexible notions of identity and authenticity". I also quote Bhabha (1994, p.36) in saying that in the dialogic space there is a 'third space of enunciation' where the dominant discourse has been reconfigured as there is now a hybrid discourse that is occupying that space through appropriation.

Noticed in the way the students positioned themselves in their research was a dilemma on whether it was a subject position or one that identified them. To illustrate this further, their writing indicated a sense of displacement. Evident in their writing was a subtle difference between subjectivity and identity. Of pertinent reference as cited in Kumar (2004) is Ling's (2002, p. 21) reference that 'identity reflects society's monological impositions of what one is. Subjectivity in contrast refers to the internally

absorbed, personally felt mixed selves that derive from contending ways of thinking, doing and being'. Other writers (cited in Kumar 2004) have provided a differentiation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Nyamnjoh 2002; Werbner 2002). In this case, following Werbner (2002, p. 2) the 'subjective and the intersubjective are an intertwined pair'. Evident in dialogic interactions with the students, the intertwining results in writing that can be labelled 'incoherent and convoluted' by examiners who may not be familiar with the multiple subjectivities they encompass. In viewing students' writing, in this study, as a result of the many systems that students adhere to when carrying out research, they are in a dilemma. I quote Werbner and Ranger (1996, pp. 1-2) in pointing out that they are mobilising 'many identities in the politics of everyday life which has led to imagined perceptions'. The imposition of multiple identities and resistance to this process involves various strategies of everyday life. It is only through a form of decoding and putting in place other steps particular to differentiating knowledge systems that a student can bring in an original contribution.

In furthering the irreducibility of the ethics of research in the work of students, I draw attention to Spivak's (1993) concept of essentialism. Spivak argues that everyone is an essentialist to some degree and the critique of essentialism is predicated upon that fact. She discusses the conflicting tensions of this concept and argues that in order to think differently one needs to take the 'risk of essence'. Spivak (1993, p. 3) contends that some essentialist positions may be taken without it being irreducible, without it becoming constricting and without it having negative effects. I put forward the case that evident in the research writing of students from postcolonial and decolonising nations there are certain essentialist positions. Part of this essentialism requires an acceptance of procedures, processes and practices that are especial to differing cultural communities and which are irreducible components in the ethics of research. These positions are as a result of their historiography, the hybridity of thought and culture, their multiple subject positions and the use of the personal narrative. Evident in the counter-narrative which is resulting are two constructs of the 'real' and the 'imagined' in the being of the students. I borrow from Ashcroft (2013, p.1) when I say that there is 'affinity with the transformative energy of postcolonial production'. This has resulted in a practice of decolonisation as evident in the way the students discursively represent themselves. Evident in the 'strands of knowledge' there is a complexity of what constitutes the 'being' of international students and Australian Aboriginal students. One can say that there are two constructs of the 'real' and the 'imagined' in the 'being' of each individual student.

As evident from the 'strands of knowledge' there is a complexity that requires an acknowledgement of past history, cultural knowledge and protocol. Hence, both the conceptualisations of *intra paradigm shifts* and *the irreducibility of the ethics of research* foreground tensions of definition that focus on particularistic worldviews which adhere to the participants' worldviews. These have come about as a result of historical, cultural, educational and social systems that influences the participants' research practices. The practices that the participants engage in makes a contribution to new knowledge systems. To conclude, I go back to my term of a wholistic complexity that I noted earlier on in this paper. The students in their worldview and approach to research show an awareness, understanding and recognition of interchanging in several 'worlds' and 'nations'. This happens whilst they are engaged in creating a space for themselves; one that is resulting in a contribution to knowledge that is opening up new boundaries for scholarship in what I assert is a groundbreaking research mapping landscape.

Conclusion

This paper has articulated from an auto-ethnographic perspective the discussion surrounding the positioning of research and new knowledge systems in the areas of learning for International and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research students. The author has firstly discussed the importance of positioning in conducting research in and with particular communities. This resulted in adopting and adapting various theoretical standpoints to be able to carry out an auto-ethnographic study. Using a 'Strands of Knowledge' approach from an earlier study, the author provided a summative, reflexivity of the study through the strands of historiography, hybridity, subjectivities, collaborative

sharing, and voice. In the exploration and discussion that followed, the author has foregrounded a definition of *intra paradigm shifts* and *the irreducibility of the ethics of research* when researching in or around particular cultural communities and groups. In this way, the paper has provided another perspective in positioning research and new knowledge systems.

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