



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**“Discussion-writing as Argumentative Work Under Scarcity:
Challenges, Strategies, and Affective Factors in Mexican Doctoral
Students’ English Writing for High-Impact Journals”**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree
of**

MAESTRO EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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This thesis has been read by the members of the committee of

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And it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

In the contemporary academic world, English is often regarded as a key language for international research and scholarly communication (Crystal, 2003). Although it is not the only lingua franca (Tardy, 2004), its prevalence in academic publishing and conferences, as well as in internationalization and mobility, demonstrates that English plays an important role in global academic communication (Kamadjeu, 2019). The dominance of English in top journals and other important spaces for research reflects a political and institutional bias that matters to scholarly careers and how knowledge is created (Jenkins 2013). This phenomenon has been explored by Curry and Lillis (2010) who examine how the global status of English affects academic writing practices worldwide, especially the challenges faced by non-native speakers. Demeter (2020) also explores how scholars from the global south are underrepresented in global research, pointing out that systemic biases limit their opportunities and restrict the spread of new ideas. Kuteeva and Mauranen (2014) also explore the complexities of multilingualism in academic writing, emphasizing the need to resist an English-only ideology in global academic knowledge production. In general, these studies explore how the language itself has been somehow imposed as a standard to be met by researchers who desire full participation in the global academic community, despite continuous debates on both linguistic diversity and inclusion in scholarly communication (Navarro, 2022).

In Mexico, for example, Universities incorporated into the Secretariat of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (SECIHTI, formerly known as CONAHCYT) program, demand strong requirements from doctoral students to obtain their degree. For instance, they reportedly must have published two articles in a scientific journal before graduation (CONAHCYT, 2018). This policy does not only serve as a formality, but it also allegedly serves to create the preference for publishing high-quality research papers, generally in English. This only

creates an additional burden on students to improve their academic writing. The lack of support can be detrimental as it may hinder their ability to meet publishing requirements, which may negatively impact their academic progress and future careers, especially for those who may have challenges using English (Corcoran 2015; Hanauer, 2019). Instead, the pressure for many comes not just from meeting academic goals but also in figuring out how to fit into an academic culture that values language confidence in English. This creates a double disadvantage, where mastering research skills is inseparable from the struggle to write competently in a second language.

To address these challenges, English Language Teaching (ELT) has evolved to provide more support for academic writing. ELT programs now focus more on helping students develop writing skills for academic purposes, aiming to give them the tools they need to write research that can be published (Pandey, 2019). Studies suggest that this kind of support is good at increasing more general academic writing abilities, especially for undergraduate and master's levels (Hyland, 2016; Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). This pressure is also present with Doctoral-level students. Research highlights that these students often struggle with expressing complex academic ideas and developing a convincing academic voice in English (Ma, 2020).

However, such improvements do not negate the need for over and above discipline-specific interventions that are geared especially for research students living under publish-or-perish conditions (Powell, 2009). General academic writing courses, while useful to provide basic writing skills, do not provide the specialized training required in producing high-caliber research papers for high-impact journals (Caplan & Johns, 2022). This indicates that graduate writing may benefit from more sophisticated practices and authorial structures that will aid doctoral students in attaining their publishing objectives.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a useful framework for enhancing academic writing. The SFL framework sees language as a social semiotic system, in which the focus of study is on how language works to make meaning in various contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

SFL, as suggested by Halliday (2014), provides a theory to describe and create texts based on dimensions of their functional language use. Researchers may utilize these principles for information regarding the nature of the genre and communication functions of texts, to understand what is expected amid publication and how they would express findings efficiently.

In this context, this thesis uses ideas from SFL and genre theory to examine how two Mexican doctoral students, one in ecology and one in chemical engineering, experience writing the Discussion section in English for high-impact journals. Instead of applying an SFL teaching intervention or analysing a large corpus of published articles, the study presents a small qualitative case study based on thematic analysis of two semi-structured interviews. It focuses on three connected aspects of Discussion writing:

- the linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges the participants perceive;
- the strategies they use to cope with and adapt to these demands; and
- the affective factors that influence when and how they write.

The thematic analysis is supported by occasional reference to the participants' own Discussion drafts and to key features of the Discussion genre in their disciplines. The findings are then used to discuss how SFL- and genre-based ideas can help design more realistic and aware ERPP support for doctoral students in similar contexts. The next section presents the specific problem, research questions, and gaps addressed in this study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Neff (2017), in Mexico, the requirement for doctoral students to publish academic articles in English has turned into a determining factor for their success, mainly owing to the requisites imposed by institutions under SECIHTI. Indeed, as already stated, for graduation, in many programs students are expected to publish one or two articles (CONAHCYT, 2018). But for a lot of students whose mother tongue is not English, it is quite difficult to

understand these complexities of writing a research paper than actually doing the research. This is a complex task, which demands advanced command of language, knowledge of rhetorical strategies, and disciplinary conventions (Swales, 1994). These kinds of challenges contribute to a high rejection rate from journals for academic reasons (Shamsi, 2022).

The same applies to many PhD students who are at the forefront of their disciplines but have trouble following the conventions of academic text suitable for high-impact journals (Cargill & O'Connor, 2021; Hanauer, 2011). This is not just a language issue but also that students find it difficult to structure or understand the discourse pattern used in academic literature: how the argument is put forth and how the evidence is utilized. They may find it especially troubling to be able to navigate the discussion section, considering the rhetoric, structure, and argument stance challenges it implies. Flowerdew (2019) also found that 63% of non-native English-speaking doctoral students rated academic writing as the most problematic part of their studies, and while content often tended to be good, it did not meet standards for publication.

Although traditional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs assist students in academic writing, they often not fully address the focus on the deeper, functional aspects of language that are crucial for producing quality research articles (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). Graduate students need more than the surface-level grammatical changes that are easy to make; they need a deep knowledge of how language works in an academic environment that enables them to craft arguments, manage voice, and present results. This issue of support is particularly pertinent for doctoral students, whose studies depend on being able to navigate the new, complex language of their new fields (Paltridge, 2021).

In light of these issues, it seems clear that academic writing pedagogy needs to address both the form and the function of language. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which understands language as a system of social meaning, offers a useful way to describe how grammar, vocabulary, and text organization work together to build arguments in research articles (Halliday

& Matthiessen, 2014). From this point of view, sections such as the Discussion can be seen as places where writers must explain and justify their findings, position themselves in relation to other studies, and manage their stance towards readers.

However, there is still limited research on how doctoral students themselves experience these demands in contexts such as Mexican doctoral programs with strict publication requirements. Many studies focus on the final written products or on general recommendations for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), but they do not always capture how students perceive their own challenges, how they try to cope with them in everyday writing, or how institutional pressures and emotions influence their choices in specific sections like the Discussion.

For this reason, the present study focuses on two Mexican doctoral students, one in ecology and one in chemical engineering, who are required to publish in high-impact journals in English. Using thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, interpreted with support from SFL and genre theory, the study explores three connected aspects of their Discussion writing: (a) the linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges they perceive, (b) the strategies they use to cope with and adapt to these challenges, and (c) the affective factors that shape when and how they write. By describing these experiences, the study aims to inform more realistic and supportive ERPP practices for doctoral students in similar contexts.

1.3 Aim of the study

This thesis aims to explore how two Mexican doctoral students, one in ecology and one in chemical engineering, experience writing the Discussion section of research articles in English for high-impact journals. The study focuses on a context where doctoral students are expected to publish in English in order to graduate, but where explicit, sustained support for Discussion writing is often limited.

More specifically, the research seeks to bridge the gap between what we know in theory about academic writing and what doctoral students actually report in practice in a Mexican context. It examines three connected aspects of their Discussion writing: (a) the linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges they perceive, (b) the strategies they use to cope with and adapt to these challenges, and (c) the affective factors that influence when and how they write.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides a useful background for this aim because it views language as a resource for making meaning in social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). From an SFL and genre perspective, the Discussion is not only a place to repeat results, but a section where writers must explain and justify their findings, position themselves in relation to other studies, and manage their stance towards readers. In this study, SFL and genre ideas are used to interpret how the participants talk about their own writing, rather than to evaluate a specific SFL course or to measure discrete language features.

By using thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, this small-scale qualitative study aims to describe how these two doctoral writers understand and handle Discussion writing under English-medium publication requirements. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) by offering grounded insights that can inform more realistic and supportive academic writing practices in Mexican doctoral programs.

1.4 Justification

This investigation presents both theoretical and practical implications. It responds to a context in which Mexican doctoral students are required to publish articles in English, but often receive limited explicit support. While much ERPP research has described general challenges faced by scholars who write in an additional language, there is still little detailed work on how individual doctoral students in Mexico themselves describe their experience of Discussion writing under these conditions.

At a theoretical level, the study contributes to the broader field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) by bringing together three dimensions that are often treated separately: (a) perceived linguistic and structural challenges, (b) coping strategies, and (c) affective factors. By focusing specifically on Discussion sections and on the accounts of two doctoral students in ecology and chemical engineering, the research offers a fine-grained view of how high publication demands, limited access to support, and the norms of English-medium science interact in a concrete Mexican context. Ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory are used to interpret these accounts, but the focus remains on the students' own perceptions rather than on evaluating a particular teaching intervention.

From a practical perspective, the study provides insights that can inform supervisors, writing instructors, and program designers in Mexican doctoral education. The findings highlight how students already assemble their own coping repertoires and where these repertoires are limited by institutional and linguistic constraints. Understanding these lived strategies and tensions can help institutions design more realistic, genre-aware, and affect-sensitive forms of support for Discussion-writing in English. In this way, the study aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to make publication requirements more attainable and to support doctoral students not only in meeting formal graduation criteria, but also in participating more fully in their research communities.

The next section outlines the specific research context and participants, including their academic and linguistic profiles.

1.5 Research context and participants

This study was carried out in the context of Mexican doctoral programs that are linked to the national SECIHTI system and require students to publish articles in English in order to graduate. Within this context, the research focuses on two doctoral students who are writing or revising research articles in English for submission to high-impact journals. One participant is enrolled in an ecology doctoral program, and the other in a chemical engineering program. Both cases are

treated as anonymized case studies (P1 and P2). More detailed profiles are presented in Chapter 3.

The study adopts a small-scale, exploratory approach rather than a large, representative sample. The aim is to obtain a detailed view of how these two doctoral writers describe their experience of Discussion writing in English, including the challenges they perceive, the strategies they use, and the role of affect in their process. This design allows the analysis to follow each participant's account in depth, instead of comparing many cases at a more superficial level.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was first drafted by the researcher and revised with the thesis supervisor. It was then piloted with the second participant, who was initially invited only for piloting purposes. However, because his insights were highly relevant to the research questions, his interview was included in the final data set, and he became one of the two full participants in the study. All participants gave informed consent before taking part in the research.

The next section presents the research questions and the methodological approach adopted in this thesis.

1.6 Research questions

As previously noted, this thesis focuses on how two doctoral students experience writing the Discussion section of research articles in English for publication. The study takes place in a context where publication in English is required for graduation, but explicit support is often limited. The overall aim is to describe how these writers perceive and handle the demands of Discussion writing, and how these experiences can inform more realistic ERPP support in similar programs.

Guided by this aim, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges do the two doctoral students report when writing Discussion sections in English for publication?

RQ2: What strategies do they use to cope with and adapt to these challenges in their Discussion writing?

RQ3: What affective factors shape their experience of Discussion writing in English?

1.7 Overview of methodology

To answer the research questions and gain a deeper understanding of how two Mexican doctoral students experience Discussion writing in English for high-impact journals, this thesis adopts a small-scale qualitative design. The study is based on semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, with ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory used to support the interpretation of the themes.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two doctoral students: one in ecology and one in chemical engineering. The interview guide was designed by the researcher and revised with the thesis supervisor. It was first piloted with the second participant, whose interview was later included as part of the main data set because of its relevance to the research questions. Both interviews were conducted in Spanish, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed and anonymized. The two participants are referred to as P1 and P2 throughout the thesis.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six phases proposed by Nowell et al. (2017): familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Coding was guided both by the three research questions (challenges, strategies, and affective factors) and by patterns that emerged directly from the data. Ideas from SFL and genre theory were used to make sense of how the participants talked about language, structure, and stance in their Discussion writing, but the main focus remained on their own accounts.

This qualitative approach allows for a detailed description of each participant's experience, rather than broad generalization. A fuller description of the research design, participants, and analytic procedures is provided in Chapter 3.

1.8 Thesis summary

This chapter has introduced the study by outlining the broader context of English-medium publishing in Mexican doctoral programs, the pressures created by SECIHTI publication requirements, and the specific focus on Discussion writing in English. It presented the aim of the thesis, the three research questions on perceived challenges, coping strategies, and affective factors, as well as a brief description of the research context, participants, and qualitative methodology.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), with particular attention to research on Discussion sections, doctoral writing, affective factors, and key ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory that inform the analysis.

Chapter 3 describes the research design in detail, including the context, participants, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and the thematic analysis approach.

Chapter 4 presents the findings organized around the three research questions, illustrating how the two doctoral students describe their linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges, the strategies they use to cope with them, and the affective dimensions of their Discussion-writing processes.

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses these findings in relation to the literature, outlines theoretical and pedagogical implications for ERPP support in Mexican doctoral programs, acknowledges limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that frames this thesis. It focuses on how academic writing in English, especially for research publication, is shaped by global and local conditions, and how these conditions are experienced by doctoral students in contexts like Mexico. In particular, it looks at research on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), the specific pressures of Mexican doctoral programmes that require publication in English, and key insights from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and genre theory for understanding Discussion writing.

The review first outlines general conventions, expectations, and recent trends in academic and doctoral writing in English, and the implications these have for writers who use English as an additional language. It then discusses the challenges faced in Mexican higher education regarding academic writing and publishing, including institutional demands and unequal access to support. After that, it examines how EAP and ERPP have responded to these challenges and what they suggest about writing for high-impact journals.

The chapter then turns more specifically to the Discussion section as a key research article genre, summarizing work on its typical rhetorical and linguistic features. It also introduces SFL and genre theory as analytic lenses that help to explain how meanings such as stance, evaluation, and information flow are realized in Discussion writing. Finally, it considers studies that highlight the affective and identity dimensions of L2 academic writing, which are central to understanding the emotional experiences reported by the two doctoral students in this thesis. The chapter closes by linking these strands of literature to the research questions and methodological choices that guide the present study.

2.2 Academic and Doctoral Writing in English: Implications and Recent Practices

Academic writing in English pursues a genre of conventions that needs to be fulfilled. Such conventions cover aspects such as structuring arguments and formality in writing argumentation (Hyland, 2016). In order for learners to be able to navigate and develop academically, these agreements need to be fulfilled. Academic writing is more than just linguistic conventions; it is a social negotiation; it is a discourse community. Academic writing, that is, is socially situated. As Hyland (2004) contended, students must navigate not just disciplinary expectations, but the expectations of academic discourse. Hence, academic writing is more than the use of the right language (Fadhly, 2022); students have to learn to be certain kinds of members of certain kinds of communities (Curry, 2024). According to Johns (1997), students will need to be able both to recognize and make use of the compound of expectations in varying academic literacies. Undoubtedly, this recognition is essential as students, in the process of finding their voice, must learn how it comes into connection with the writing and practices of the communities they wish to belong to (Gee, 1989). But the nuances of these expectations can prove difficult for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to navigate.

A substantial body of literature has been dedicated to writing issues through the lens of EFL learners. For example, Chen et al. (2016) state that many students are struggling to be formal and express their thoughts using the structural patterns of academic writing. They also found that, in their study of English education students in Indonesia, even high-level EFL students have difficulties with idea development, transitions, and the impressive and coherent use of academic writing conventions (Asnas et al., 2022). Such reasons provide why writing performance might only be improved by employing many strategies like self-regulation and feedback systems. By means of so doing, these learners fashion relevant coping strategies specific to the features of academic writing, which means that their potential to act in line with the expectations of their academic environments improves (Asnas et al., 2022).

Recently, teaching and learning methodologies have begun to be researched in order to overcome this challenge, and this has also been applied in academic writing improvement. As Tyas (2020) shows, writing portfolios used in teaching enable students to engage with their writing processes more meaningfully and to consider their strengths and weaknesses more reflectively. Although these methods look promising, there is still a need for continued evaluation. Thus, the adoption of a critical stance on writing (through arranging peer review meetings) is beneficial in improving written composition in higher education (Wu and Schunn, 2021). But this also creates a demand for positive skepticism, constantly scrutinizing the empirical evidence and effectiveness of these practices over the long term and their alignment with longer-term sustainable development.

The positive impact of peer assessment on students' writing quality is widely acknowledged, especially for writing portfolios. In the context of Mexican higher education, the cultural values of power distance and teacher authority may nullify some of the advantages of peer review activities; however, novelties are needed, and the need to learn from evidence supports the implementation of new methods and, with them, new perspectives on learning. Students might feel reluctant to deliver constructive criticism to fellow students, seeing it as combative. And institutional constraints, such as having many students in one class or the severe shortage of trained writing-teaching professionals, could affect the long-term viability of portfolio-based assessment.

All these changes within the field of pedagogy regarding the instruction of academic writing have implications for how EFL learners' concerns are addressed. But although global trends are informative, they cannot be applied without consideration of local conditions. However, in the peculiarities of Mexican Higher Education, a matter of concern is language and academic writing, but not only because of the mastery of the linguistic skill, but because of the cultural and institutional realities in which the learners of the twenty-first century immerse. This

section will discuss the quintessence of academic writing as a unique genus within the Mexican context.

2.2.1 Academic Writing Challenges in Mexican Higher Education

Academic writing in English is still a fundamental competence for scholars worldwide, particularly those from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Corcoran, 2015). The significance of excellent academic writing in English, however, extends beyond the effective dissemination of research; it is also crucial for the global visibility of academic work (Almarwani, 2020; Ortiz Lefort et al., 2012). The literature available reinforces that, although used correctly, linguistics and structure are an eternal hurdle, and that true proficiency in the English language alone does not suffice to publish academic manuscripts. Instead, Ortiz Lefort et al. (2012), which speaks to inadvertent and structural failures in Mexican academia. Their research demonstrates how less-than-ideal rigid institutional structures and little support for English training limit the global competitiveness of Mexican researchers, making high-impact publishing more challenging. These structural constraints are a significant shortcoming of the support on offer, meaning that there must be both structural adjustments as well as specific writing aid programs that prepare scholars for the challenges involved in English academic writing. Likewise, it further indicates that, apart from language, interventions need to be designed to navigate both academic and culturally embedded practices, especially in English language-sensitive publication systems.

Adjusting to Academic Writing Conventions (AWC) is one of the main issues non-native writers need to deal with. As demonstrated by Arizmendi González et al. (2023) with their study, this is a very common challenge Mexican scholars face when they start navigating AWC under the influence of international reviewers. Ask not for whom they are applying, of course, but in other, literate ways, this data do not treat AWC as a “travelling concept” (i.e., context is everything with AWC, and AWC as a related body of law traverses context and is reconstituted via feedback against which continued iterations of rhetorical structure and lexicon have to be adjusted) (Carlson,

Davidson, and Kilman, 2013). To give one example, the trajectory of participant Paz's revision demonstrates the grammatics of time, clarity, and organization to establish proper standpoints given diverse disciplines and academic cultures (see R1). While this adaptability cumulatively improves the writer's work, it also takes a considerable cognitive and emotional toll, underlining one of the allowing efforts Mexican scholars must do to match their real academic practices to those imposed on them by English-language publications.

A limitation that is also another deterrent for Mexican researchers who attempt academic writing, in addition to the linguistic challenge, is the resource-based constraint. Corcoran (2015) explores some writing-for-publication classes in Mexico and Canada that were intended to cultivate increased familiarity in both developing and seasoned scholars with genre-specific conventions and how they could potentially satisfy the demands of editorial boards. Whereas these programs inspire confidence and ability in publishing in English, Corcoran points out, non-discursive barriers are more influential: a lack of academic supplies and mentorship, and geographies inaccessible even in a non-COVID world. Even in the context of formal programs, without the continual provision of mentoring and institutional support, publication outcomes for scholars further down the line will be seriously limited; this suggests that course-based solutions are helpful, but are not, in and of themselves, enough. Such need was evidenced by Corcoran's research demonstrating a need for ongoing institutional support that can be retained in the transition beyond more narrowly focused, short-term interventions. On top of that, Almarwani (2020) concludes that tools such as Google Classroom can act as a feedback-seeking milestone for students with regard to pre-defined skills once integrated and implemented alongside instructor feedback. But tools alone are not enough without clear direction and guidance. This highlights the importance of integrated methods that combine technological artifacts with contextualized mentorship in order to provide a comprehensive support structure for improving academic writing.

It appears that in this field a lot of effort has been made to provide resources to scholars in Mexican academia, but some clear differences are still present. In their study of open-access academic journals in Mexico, López-Ornelas et al. (2017) highlight the importance of these journals because, unlike other countries, there are several Mexican open-access academic journals that help raise awareness of research work done in Mexico. However, they remain non-indexed and do not make use of basic tools such as anti-plagiarism software, which undermines their relevance beyond the Mexican borders, the authors point out. As a result, many of these journals appear to be more centered on developing ideas rather than wider dissemination, and the risk of Mexican scholars being visible beyond the local context becomes minimal. The qualitative gaps between domestic and foreign publications evidence a chronic ailment of the Mexican higher education system; visibility by itself is insufficient, publication efforts must yield high-level output that is competitive globally. To address this issue, we need a framework that accounts for both the technical and rhetorical demands of academic writing in a multilingual and multicultural climate.

2.3 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

There has been a growing interest in a specialized branch that, by tuning into the educational setting, is known as English for Academic Purposes: EAP (Hamp-Lyons, 2001), a particular part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in general. The latter may find a way to train for English-specific contexts, while the former aims to land non-native speakers with the skills to smoothly take part in interaction in academic settings (Charles, 2012; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Sarkar, 2019). Initially developed to facilitate the arrival of international students in English-speaking universities in the mid-20th century, it was meant to cater to the growing numbers of foreign students flooding into English-speaking universities. Since then, EAP has evolved to incorporate wider principles and approaches to address need assessment, genre studies, genre-based instruction, and materials design for teaching and supporting genres across a range of academic tasks (Hamp-Lyons, 2001). In this light, linguists have evolved away from their propensity to design assessment rubrics to the recognition that there is a need for language support for students

in which the rationale for learning a language extends beyond knowledge and comprehension of the subjects and content, to the ability to communicate and use the language balances of the discipline (Flowerdew, 2013).

A foundation of EAP is the attention to specialized language skills and study habits that are prevalent in the academic world. Hamp-Lyons (2001) states that the praxis of EAP is deliberately much broader than language proficiency alone, as it is predicated on familiarity with academic conventions, discourse communities, and socio-political contexts of use. It thus requires needs analysis-based curriculum in which instructors determine the linguistic and academic needs of students. Such a course would give the instructor a chance to generate instruction that included not only the trans-disciplinary abilities to read, write, listen, and speak in the common sense, but the discipline-specific language and genre conventions used to gain access to and participate in discursive communities. Sarkar (2019) also adds that strong EAP courses equip students with critical academic skills—including test-taking, note-taking, methods to increase research efficiency, etc.—in a way that signals the field’s aspiration to facilitate students’ academic success in different dimensions.

Despite their clear advances, EAP curriculums remain fundamentally inadequate in relation to the responsiveness they offer to the complex and varied needs presented to them by learners whose cultural and institutional contexts differ widely from those of native speakers. Traditional EAP praxis is often quite reductive, disregarding the rich cultural and rhetorical histories that non-native English speakers entering higher education bring with them, something Flowerdew (2013) notes as problematic. He calls to make EAP approaches (the ones that contest hegemonic standards in academia) as a way to create academic environments that can reshape social exclusions. Such approaches challenge the prescriptive nature of traditional EAP pedagogy through the fostering of intercultural awareness, if not tolerance, of different rhetorical styles, a comforting message for students whose academic backgrounds differ from the Western canon.

On the other hand, more inclusive pedagogies and expansive linguistic diversity invite institutions to cultivate spaces of intellectual rigor.

To accomplish this purpose EAP has also integrated corpus-based studies, genre analysis, and discourse analysis in order to improve teaching materials and better fit them with academic expectations. According to Charles (2012), corpus-based studies have influenced the understanding of spoken and written academic discourse, allowing researchers to identify where linguistic patterns commonly occur and where learners face the most lexical challenges. Researchers have analyzed large corpora such as BAWE to explore the ways that languages are used across disciplines in order to develop inductive data-driven resources to support learning. Corpus-based approaches are widely seen as very beneficial, but also criticized for inevitably fragmenting it—potentially making it hard for learners to understand a wider linguistic and sociological context. In addition, genre analysis is a significant part of EAP, as Charles (2012) specifies: unless students already know what frames and communicative purposes constitute everything from a research article to a grant proposal, they must be taught these constructs. This is an approach related to discourse communities suggested by Swales and an SFL genre-based framework.

With the evolution of EAP, there is also a development of new theoretical and methodological debates, especially in relation to the implications of the global dominance of English for multilingual academics. Bocanegra-Valle (2014) notes a growing pressure on non-native speakers to publish in English when solving issues challenging linguistic accuracy and bias in the same way a peer review would. This has led to a point of view that with such a dominance of English in academic publishing, the other languages are being pushed to the margins and that anything not published in English comes with the perception of being less scholarly worthy in the world of international academia. It is this “linguistic imperialism” effect at play that produces a snowball effect in the field of ERPP with the subfield tackling the unique challenges multilingual scholars face when making it to print. The idea is to fill those gaps, where possible, through

multilingual and multimodal support systems. That said, there is some debate about how well ERPP neutralizes intrinsic biases in favor of English.

Although EAP has established itself as integral to preparing learners for the demands of English-medium academic contexts, several researchers reiterate that there still remains a considerable amount of work to be done with respect to addressing outstanding issues. Particularly regarding EAP, Pandey (2019) highlights the significant gap between needs analysis—the gap between emerging demands within specific academic subject matters and the way EAP courses should be designed to keep up with the specific demands of that discipline. Pandey (2019) also emphasizes that interdisciplinary may receive more attention through Content-Based Instruction (CBI), which is the concentration on disciplinary knowledge in teaching academic contents and language skills. For such an approach, however, to work, there needs to be a delicate balance between academic skills to impart across the general curriculum and domain-specific language—an implication difficult to put into practice in very diverse classrooms.

In conclusion, EAP is a vibrant area of applied linguistics adapting to the challenges of a globalized academic context. A broadening of focus in EAP, from the research of corpora and pace, is presenting a challenge to traditional norms and practices in language use and language teaching; as applied linguistics and critical pedagogy emerge, greater pedagogical support is available for multilingual scholars navigating English-medium academic settings. Yet, as English becomes increasingly established as the global academic lingua franca, there is a fundamental need for EAP frameworks that are built upon a foundation of linguistic diversity and respect for differing rhetorical traditions. In making EAP more inclusive, we may at the same time open the doors to a more egalitarian academic culture, one that allows non-native speakers to play a meaningful role in the production of global knowledge.

2.3.1 English for Research and Publication Purposes: Relevance, Challenges and the EFL Mexican Context

The English for Research and Publication Purposes (ERPP) is a subfield in the umbrella area of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which focuses on the specific operations of writing for publication in journals (Flowerdew, 2013). The other integrates some skills needed in educational situations, but the ERPP concentrates just on those sections that the genre entails: submission of writings to print, especially with respect to eutaxy, logic, and technicality in description for the sciences. Additionally, ERPP encompasses the learning of the specific discourse associated with the dissemination of scientific work, like, but not limited to, research papers, abstracts, and presentations (Flowerdew, 2013). Such ability to seamlessly navigate such a process makes ERPP a useful tool for researchers who wish to participate in global scientific dialogue.

The evolution of the domain of ERPP practice is indicative of a growing priority for the publication in the English language for academic recognition internationally. Since English is the language of science, most researchers need to publish their work in English to gain visibility (Flowerdew & Wang, 2017). In this sense, ERPP intends to provide non-native speakers of English (NNES) academics with a repertoire of tactics and strategies that can open up high-impact journals and allow them to participate in important scientific conversations, thus developing their creativity and visibility (Canagarajah, 2018).

This hegemony of English in scholarly publishing creates both opportunities and challenges, particularly for NNES researchers. English, on the one hand, represents a common ground for scholarly communication. Yet this linguistic hegemony also reinforces extra burdens for NNES scholars who experience linguistic and structural barriers when trying to publish in English. These barriers favor native English speakers (Bocanegra-Valle, 2014). Many NNES

doctoral students, particularly those from English as a foreign language (EFL) backgrounds, face specific hurdles in publishing their texts in English, including meeting the level of precision and academic formality that high-impact journals expect (Curry & Lillis, 2013; Salager-Meyer, 2014).

It is important to note that these issues are not limited to language challenges but include socio-cultural factors affecting the publication itself. Researchers who do not have English as their first language and choose to publish papers in international journals often need additional resources such as tutoring and/or editing so that they meet high standards of such periodicals. Other studies have also highlighted a type of editorial bias, as NNES authors' submissions are less frequently accepted than native speakers' submissions (Flowerdew, 2013). It is clear that programs for ERPP were developed for operative linguistic training, in terms of using the linguistic capabilities but also considering the social factors of having the publications.

This type of training belongs to the realm of ERPP and is one of the main concerns for Mexican doctoral programs: as doctoral students are expected to publish in international journals, with most programs not offering formal courses nor assistance capable of developing the academic writing competencies for better-positioned Anglo-Saxon journals (Salas & Garza, 2020). In most cases there is a lack of institutional support which turns out to be a disadvantage for Mexican students when they are not prepared to face the challenges of academic publishing in English, which reduces the reach of their impact in global research. Structured ERPP instruction is scarce in Mexico, a trend prevalent across much of Latin America where studies and training programs specific to ERPP continue to be lacking.

At some point, in the context of the Mexican setting, there has been almost no ERPP research, and thus there exist gaps in the programs meant to support EFL researchers. While some works have touched on the issues confronted by NNES scholars high and low in Asia and Europe, few have addressed that in Latin America, a region whose socio-linguistic and educational

infrastructural provision is considerably uneven. In an attempt to address such a gap, this study employs the experiences of Mexican doctoral students as a case in point, so as to yield information contributing to assisting the establishment of ERPP programs for the Latin American EFL research workforce.

2.4 The Discussion Section as a Genre in Research Articles

Research articles are not neutral containers of information, but highly conventionalized genres that follow recognizable patterns of rhetorical organization (Swales, 2004). Within this genre family, the Discussion section is a key site where writers interpret their findings, compare them with previous work, acknowledge limitations, and project implications. It is here that authors are expected to justify why their results matter and how they should be read by the disciplinary community. For doctoral students writing in English as an additional language, this makes the Discussion a particularly demanding space, because they must combine complex disciplinary content with subtle rhetorical and linguistic choices. This focus is central to the present study, which explores how two Mexican doctoral students experience and talk about Discussion writing under publication pressure.

Swales (2004) refines his earlier genre analysis work by examining research genres, genre chains, and move structures across different sections of the research article. He shows that sections such as Introductions, Results, and Discussions follow relatively stable but flexible patterns of “moves” and “steps” that each fulfil specific communicative functions, for example, establishing niche, reporting results, or evaluating contributions. In the case of the Discussion, Swales highlights its role in consolidating argumentation, integrating earlier parts of the article, and positioning the writer’s claims within an ongoing conversation. This perspective is relevant for the current thesis because it frames the Discussion not simply as “the place to comment on results”, but as a genre segment where novice writers, like the participants in this study, must demonstrate their ability to perform discipline-specific rhetorical work in English.

Building on Swales' framework, Kanoksilapatham (2005) applies move analysis to the full IMRD structure in biochemistry articles and shows that each section, including the Discussion, has a characteristic sequence and cyclic pattern of moves and steps. Her study reveals that Discussion moves, such as reporting results, commenting on their significance, comparing with previous studies, and drawing conclusions, tend to recur in cycles rather than in a fixed linear order, and that these patterns are discipline-specific. This work is important for the present study because it suggests that doctoral writers in experimental fields such as ecology and chemical engineering are implicitly expected to reproduce such cyclic, discipline-bound patterns in their own Discussions. When the participants in this thesis describe difficulties with organization, tense, or evaluation in their Discussion sections, they are in part struggling with these hidden move-step expectations.

Yang and Allison (2003) propose a detailed move-step model for the Results, Discussion, and Conclusion sections in applied linguistics research articles. They identify a set of core moves in Discussions, including presenting background information, reporting results, summarizing, commenting on results, and drawing implications or recommendations. Their analysis shows that writers do not simply report results once and then move on; instead, they cycle through these moves to build a layered argument and to construct credibility. Although their study is situated in applied linguistics, the functions they describe are broadly relevant across disciplines: Discussion sections are where writers make evaluative and interpretive decisions, not just where they repeat findings. This is directly related to the focus of this thesis, as the two Mexican doctoral students also have to decide how to summarise, evaluate, and project their findings in English when writing for high-impact journals.

These genre analyses have also highlighted the importance of lexical-grammatical resources in realising Discussion moves. Features such as hedging, boosters, attitude markers, and reporting verbs contribute to how writers express certainty, caution, and evaluation, while cohesive devices, thematic progression, and clause structure help manage information flow

(Swales, 2004). In experimental fields, nominalizations, technical nomenclature, and complex noun phrases are used to condense processes and entities into compact academic formulations, which are then deployed within the move structure described above (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). For the present study, these insights provide a useful backdrop for interpreting the “linguistic frictions” reported by the participants, such as tension around passive voice, tense choice, technical naming, and clause-level organization, which are not random errors but points where local linguistic resources and global genre expectations collide.

At the same time, most of this genre-analytic work has focused on published articles written by experienced researchers in well-resourced contexts, rather than on the lived experiences of doctoral students in peripheral settings. While studies like Swales (2004), Kanoksilapatham (2005), and Yang and Allison (2003) describe what expert Discussions typically look like, they say little about how novice writers perceive these expectations, what they find most difficult to reproduce, or how they emotionally experience the task of aligning their texts with such norms. This creates a gap that is particularly relevant for doctoral students in Mexico, who must internalise and enact these rhetorical patterns in English while facing institutional publication requirements and limited explicit support. The current thesis addresses this gap by examining how two doctoral students describe their challenges, coping strategies, and affective responses around Discussion writing, using genre-based insights as a reference point rather than as a prescriptive template.

2.5 Systemic Functional Linguistic as a Theoretical Lens

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Halliday and colleagues, understands language not only as a set of rules but as a resource for making meaning in context (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). From this perspective, writers choose particular grammatical and lexical options to do things such as represent experience, interact with readers, and organize their message. This view is especially relevant for academic writing, where small linguistic decisions

(for example, the use of passive voice, tense, or technical noun phrases) can have important effects on how arguments are interpreted.

In this study, SFL does not function as a detailed text-analytic method (for example, theme–rheme mapping or clause-by-clause coding). Instead, it is used as a sensitizing framework to think about the kinds of linguistic work that Discussion sections typically do and about the tensions that writers report when they try to meet those expectations in English. For instance, when participants describe difficulties with passive voice, tense, acronyms, or clause structure, these are interpreted not as isolated grammar problems but as issues of register and genre, that is, problems in aligning their linguistic resources with the conventions of research article Discussions.

SFL also offers useful concepts for understanding the Discussion section as a genre: a staged, goal-oriented way of using language within a discipline. Discussions commonly integrate moves such as summarizing results, comparing with previous studies, proposing explanations, and drawing implications. Each move tends to activate different linguistic resources (e.g. tense, modality, stance expressions, citation patterns). The present study draws on this broader SFL–genre view to frame both (a) the analysis of high-impact ecology articles and (b) the interpretation of how the doctoral student and her advisor talk about “doing the Discussion” and the type of linguistic work they find most demanding.

Finally, SFL informs the pedagogical orientation of this thesis. Previous research has shown that making genre expectations and key linguistic resources explicit can help writers move beyond surface correction and engage more consciously with how arguments are built in their disciplines. In this thesis, SFL underpins the way I discuss the participants’ challenges and coping strategies and the way I formulate the pedagogical implications in Chapter 5, rather than serving as a separate, highly technical layer of analysis.

2.5.1 SFL and Research on Academic Texts

SFL has been widely used to describe how academic texts are structured and how they achieve their communicative purposes. Studies have shown that features such as nominalization, dense noun phrases, cohesive devices, and specific patterns of clause organization are central to expert research writing. These resources allow writers to condense information, link ideas across sentences, and project an appropriate stance for their discipline.

Although this thesis does not conduct a full SFL move or theme analysis of a large corpus, it draws on those insights in two ways. First, when reading high-impact ecology Discussions, I pay attention to how expert writers use resources such as passive voice, tense, technical naming, and stance to build arguments and connect their findings with the literature. Second, when analyzing the interviews, I use SFL-inspired categories (for example, register and clause-level choices) to interpret what participants describe as “friction points” in their writing, such as combining tenses, managing acronyms, or expressing complex ideas in English.

In this sense, SFL helps to name and situate the linguistic challenges that emerge in the thematic analysis, without claiming that the study provides a full structural description of the genre. The focus remains on how writers experience and talk about these demands, not on producing an exhaustive SFL map of the texts themselves.

2.5.2 SFL in Academic Writing Pedagogy

A second area where SFL is relevant to this study is academic writing pedagogy. SFL-based approaches have argued that writers benefit from explicit work with genres and with the linguistic resources that realize them, especially in EFL and ERPP contexts. Instead of limiting support to general grammar correction, SFL-informed teaching tends to:

- model target texts (for example, published articles),
- make typical moves and patterns visible, and
- guide students in experimenting with specific linguistic choices (such as tense, voice, clause structure, or cohesive devices) in their own drafts.

The present research does not report on an SFL course or an intervention. However, the participants' accounts strongly echo the types of issues that SFL pedagogy usually tries to address: uncertainty about how much "discussion" is enough, confusion about journal expectations, and difficulties aligning their English with disciplinary norms.

By combining these accounts with previous SFL-based studies, this thesis argues that doctoral students in Mexico would likely benefit from explicit, genre-focused support that integrates language, genre, and affect, rather than leaving them to a trial-and-error process. SFL, in this context, provides the conceptual tools for designing such support and for interpreting the pedagogical implications that emerge from the thematic analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.6 Affective and identity dimensions of L2 academic writing

Research on academic writing identity shows that writing is not only about grammar or structure. It is also about how writers see themselves and how they want others to see them in their academic communities. Ivanič (1998), for example, explains that writers bring their life history, their available language resources, and their sense of authority to the text. She calls these aspects the autobiographical self, the discoursal self, and the authorial self. This is relevant for my study because the two Mexican doctoral students are not just "doing a Discussion section". They are trying to sound like legitimate researchers in ecology and chemical engineering while they still doubt their English, their knowledge, and their right to speak in high-impact journals.

Other researchers focus on how global inequalities affect L2 academic writing. Lillis and Curry (2010) describe how multilingual scholars, especially in peripheral contexts, face unequal access to journals, reviewers, and support. They show that this situation often produces feelings of frustration, dependence, and exclusion. More recently, Shamsaee et al. (2024) report how Iranian medical doctors feel inferior, angry, or like impostors when they try to publish in English and meet unclear or unfair standards. These studies help me understand that the worries and

fears of the Mexican doctoral writers in my study are not only personal problems. They are also reactions to a system where English and journal norms are powerful filters.

Doctoral writing research has also connected emotions with feedback and supervision. Inouye and McAlpine (2019) review studies showing that feedback does more than improve texts: it shapes how doctoral students see themselves as writers, for example as more or less competent or independent. Wang and Liardét (2024) study co-authored papers between doctoral students and supervisors and show how collaboration can help students move to a “higher novice level” by gaining confidence and rhetorical awareness. At the same time, they also show power imbalances and dependence on supervisors. My study does not analyse co-authored texts or supervisors directly, but these findings are useful to interpret how my participants talk about reviewers, advisors, and their own “readiness” to write Discussions in English.

Overall, this body of research suggests that L2 academic writing for publication is strongly connected to affect and identity, especially for doctoral students in non-Anglophone contexts. However, most of these studies look at publication in general or at whole trajectories, not at the specific task of writing the Discussion section in experimental fields. There is still little qualitative work on how doctoral writers in Mexico talk about their emotions, fears, and sense of self when they write Discussions, and how this links to concrete linguistic issues such as tense choice, stance, or technical naming. My thesis addresses this gap by examining how two doctoral students describe the affective pressures and identity questions around Discussion writing, and by connecting these accounts to their perceived linguistic challenges (RQ1), coping strategies (RQ2), and emerging sense of agency (RQ3).

2.7 Summary and link to the present study

This chapter has reviewed research on three main areas that are directly relevant to this thesis: (a) the role of English and ERPP in shaping doctoral writing, especially in peripheral

contexts such as Mexico; (b) the research article and its Discussion section as structured genres with specific rhetorical and linguistic demands; and (c) the affective and identity dimensions of L2 academic writing. Together, these strands show that writing for high-impact journals is not only a matter of “good English”, but a complex activity where writers must align their texts with disciplinary norms, institutional requirements, and their own sense of legitimacy as scholars.

Studies on ERPP and academic publishing have highlighted how English dominates high-impact outlets and how this creates extra pressure for scholars in non-Anglophone settings. Work on genre and move analysis has shown that Discussion sections follow recognizable rhetorical patterns which rely on specific linguistic resources, such as tense, voice, stance, and technical naming. At the same time, research on identity and affect has made visible the emotional and ethical side of L2 academic writing: writers often report anxiety, self-doubt, and feelings of injustice while trying to meet unclear or shifting expectations. Systemic Functional Linguistics offers a useful lens to connect these levels because it links linguistic choices with meaning, genre, and context, and it has informed several pedagogical proposals for academic writing.

However, there are still important gaps. Much of the previous work looks at larger groups of writers, broad publication trajectories, or general academic writing, rather than at the specific task of crafting Discussion sections in experimental fields. There is also little qualitative research focusing on how Mexican doctoral students describe their own challenges, coping strategies, and emotional responses when writing Discussions for high-impact journals. This thesis addresses these gaps by combining a small genre-informed reading of ecology Discussions with a thematic analysis of interviews with two Mexican doctoral students. In line with the three research questions, the study examines (RQ1) how they perceive linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges in Discussion writing, (RQ2) which strategies they develop to cope with these demands, and (RQ3) how affective factors and identity concerns shape their writing process. The next chapter explains in detail how the study was designed and conducted.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological decisions that informed the study. It first restates the research questions, then outlines the qualitative case study design, describes the participant and research context, presents the data collection instruments and procedures, details the analytical approach, and finally discusses ethical considerations and strategies for ensuring trustworthiness.

3.1 Research Questions

This study was guided by three research questions that focus on how two Mexican doctoral students experience writing the Discussion section in English for publication in high-impact journals. Together, they address (a) perceived linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges, (b) coping strategies, and (c) affective factors.

RQ1. What linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges do two Mexican doctoral students perceive when writing Discussion sections in English for publication?

RQ2. What strategies do they report using to cope with or adapt to these challenges?

RQ3. What affective factors do they perceive as shaping their Discussion-writing process in English?

3.2 Research approach

This study follows a small-scale qualitative, interpretivist approach, treating academic writing as a socially situated practice rather than a neutral transmission of information (Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hyland, 2004). Language choices are understood as ways of making meaning, positioning oneself in a discipline, and negotiating access to English-medium publication.

A qualitative design is appropriate here because the goal is not to count errors, but to explore how two Mexican doctoral students experience writing Discussion sections in English for high-impact journals. The study focuses on how they describe their linguistic and structural challenges (e.g., tense, passive voice, technical naming), the strategies they develop to cope with them, and the affective tensions that shape their writing process.

Within this interpretivist stance, participants' accounts are treated as legitimate evidence of their lived experience, while acknowledging that themes are constructed by the researcher. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a meaning-oriented lens, the analysis pays attention to how the participants talk about key resources for scientific register (such as voice, tense, and terminology) and how these perceived frictions connect to the broader genre expectations documented in ERPP and genre-based research. This approach is well suited to address the three research questions, which sit at the intersection of language use, institutional demands, and the emotional labor of writing for publication in English. This perspective aligns with the interpretivist belief that language and writing experiences must be examined within their specific social and academic contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Thus, this study's qualitative approach is well-suited to addressing the complex interplay between language use, disciplinary expectations, and NNES scholars' writing challenges in high-impact journal publication.

3.3 Research design

This study adopts a small-scale qualitative case study design to explore how two Mexican doctoral students experience writing Discussion sections in English for publication. The "cases" are two NNES writers enrolled in ecology and engineering doctoral programs at different public universities, both required to publish in English-medium journals in order to graduate. A case

study design is suitable here because it allows an in-depth examination of writing challenges and coping strategies in their natural institutional context (Yin, 2018).

The design combines in-depth semi-structured interviewing with thematic analysis. Each participant took part in an online, audio-recorded interview focused on their experience of preparing Discussion sections for high-impact journals: perceived linguistic and structural difficulties, strategies for coping, and affective responses to journal and program demands. This generated rich narrative data closely aligned with the three research questions.

Analysis followed a reflexive thematic approach, treating each participant as a separate case and then comparing patterns across cases. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and ERPP/genre research were used as frameworks to interpret how participants talked about resources such as passive voice, tense, technical terminology, stance, and argument structure, rather than as a full formal SFL or move analysis of texts. This design is therefore well suited to address the research questions.

3.4 Participants and research context

This study was conducted in the context of two publicly funded doctoral programs in Mexico, both operating under SECIHTI-style requirements that ask students to publish in indexed journals in order to graduate. In both programs, English-medium publication was treated not only as an academic goal but also as a condition for degree completion and future academic employment.

The participants were two Mexican doctoral students, anonymized as P1 and P2. P1 was enrolled in an ecology-related doctoral program and worked on plant–community level questions using field data and biodiversity indices. P2 was enrolled in a chemical engineering doctoral program and focused on water treatment using nanomaterials. Both participants were native

speakers of Spanish and were required to prepare at least one article in English for submission to an international journal with impact-factor indexing.

Participants were selected through convenience sampling, as they were students I had already been tutoring online in English. This relationship introduced a clear insider position and potential bias, which I addressed through ongoing reflexive notes and by checking my interpretations with the participants. Following Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016), the goal here was not statistical generalization but depth: each case was treated as an opportunity to generate rich, contextualized insight into Discussion-writing under publication pressure.

Both P1 and P2 had several years of prior English study (including standardized test preparation such as TOEFL ITP), but neither had received systematic support in English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). Their interest in academic English intensified once publication became an explicit doctoral requirement. For both, writing in English was seen as a necessary step to enter the international research community and to gain visibility through articles in high-impact journals, rather than as an optional skill.

3.4.1 Academic Environment and Institutional Context

This study is situated in two Mexican public universities: the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero (UAGro) and the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). Both institutions are state-funded, autonomous universities that combine teaching, research, and social outreach, and they operate within national policy frameworks that link doctoral graduation to research productivity and publication in indexed journals.

Participant 1 (P1) is enrolled in a *Doctorado en Ciencias con especialidad en Ecología* at UAGro. According to her questionnaire (see Appendix C), her program requires doctoral candidates to publish at least one article in a high-impact journal as a formal graduation

requirement. Despite this, she reports that there are no structured English academic writing courses, no discipline-specific writing workshops, and no institutional incentives directly tied to publishing in English-medium journals. Her training in English has been largely informal and self-directed, and English is mainly present through the need to read research articles, rather than as a regular medium for seminars, supervision, or writing support.

Participant 2 (P2) is a *Doctorado en Ingeniería Química* student at UADY, working on the use of nanomaterials for water treatment. He similarly indicates that his doctoral program requires at least one high-impact journal article to obtain the degree, yet he also reports no systematic ERPP support: no formal courses on writing research articles in English, no institutional writing center oriented to doctoral students, and no explicit mentoring scheme for publishing in indexed journals. As in P1's case, English is central for reading the literature but not embedded as a regular working language in departmental activities such as meetings, courses, or thesis supervision.

At the institutional level, both universities publicly emphasize research and social impact as core missions. UAGro frames its development plans around quality, social inclusion, and the strengthening of research and graduate programs, highlighting its commitment to responding to regional needs through scientific work and extension activities. UADY positions itself as a leading public university in southeast Mexico, with a strong focus on scientific research, professional training, and links to the productive and social sectors.

Taken together, this context creates a tension that is central to the present case study: both institutions demand indexed publication in English from doctoral students, yet the participants report very limited formal support for English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). The universities' research-oriented missions and publication requirements form the backdrop against which P1 and P2 must navigate the linguistic, rhetorical, and affective challenges of writing

Discussion sections for high-impact journals, making their experiences particularly relevant for the research questions in this thesis.

3.4.2 Researcher's Role and Observation Context

My role in this case study is primarily that of an English language teacher, focused on providing general conversational English instruction. I am not directly involved in the participants' academic writing process. The insights related to their academic writing challenges will emerge from the semi-structured interview, which will assess their perceived difficulties and requirements for writing high-impact journal articles. Since I have not observed their writing in real-time or provided feedback on their academic texts, the interview will serve as the primary tool for understanding their writing context and challenges.

3.4.3 Broader learning environment

In both cases, the broader learning environment exposed the participants to English mainly through reading, rather than through sustained participation in English-speaking academic networks. They regularly read research articles in English as part of their doctoral work, since the key journals in their corresponding fields are predominantly published in English.

Beyond reading, neither participant reported being embedded in stable English-medium communities of practice like regular international collaborations, co-authorship networks, or English-medium supervision. Occasional uses of English such as preparing slides, following conference talks, or exchanging isolated emails were present but not systematic. As a result, their main contact with English for Research Publication Purposes came from decoding published articles rather than practicing academic writing in supported, interactive environments.

This broader environment is important for the present study because it helps explain a central tension in the findings: P1 and P2 are continually required to consume complex English

academic texts, yet have limited structured opportunities to rehearse the same kinds of discourse as writers. This imbalance between high reading demands and low writing support forms part of the backdrop to the linguistic, strategic, and affective challenges examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.5 Instruments

Given the qualitative and exploratory nature of this study, the instruments were selected to capture participants' lived experience of Discussion-writing.

Two main instruments were used:

1. Semi-structured interviews with doctoral students

The core data set consists of two semi-structured interviews with both participants.

2. The interview guide was designed around three dimensions that later became the research questions:

- (a) perceived linguistic/structural/institutional challenges in Discussion-writing,
- (b) strategies for coping with those challenges, and
- (c) affective factors (e.g. anxiety, confidence, perceived legitimacy) shaping the writing process.

Interviews were conducted online via videoconference, audio-recorded with consent, and then fully transcribed and anonymized. The flexible format of semi-structured interviewing allowed participants to expand on issues they perceived as most salient, while still ensuring coverage of the three dimensions of interest.

3. Interview transcripts and analytic codebook

The verbatim transcripts of both interviews functioned as the primary textual data for analysis. A codebook was developed iteratively, combining codes grounded in the data (e.g. "argumentative work under scarcity", "L1→L2 pipeline", "imagined picky audience") with sensitizing concepts drawn from ERPP and genre/SFL literature (e.g.

stance, register demands, institutional constraints).

Although SFL was not applied as a full clause-by-clause grammatical analysis, its view of language as a resource for meaning-making informed how linguistic difficulties were interpreted. The codebook therefore acts as a bridge between participants' descriptions and the theoretical constructs used later in Chapters 4 and 5.

Taken together, the semi-structured interviews and the resulting coded transcripts provide the empirical basis for the thematic analysis reported in Chapter 4, directly addressing the three research questions on challenges, coping strategies, and affective factors in Discussion-writing for publication.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

To address the three research questions, the main instrument in this study was a set of semi-structured interviews with two Mexican doctoral students who write research articles in English for publication. These interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they balance a clear focus with flexibility, allowing participants to introduce issues they consider important (Adams, 2015; Mashuri et al., 2022).

The interview guide was organized around three clusters that later became the analytic dimensions of the study:

- Perceived challenges in Discussion-writing
- Strategies for coping with these challenges, and
- Affective factors

Interviews were conducted online in Spanish via videoconference, recorded with participants' informed consent, and then transcribed verbatim and anonymized. The flexible

format allowed me to follow up on concrete examples while ensuring that all core topics linked to the research questions were covered.

The interview protocol was first reviewed by my thesis supervisor to check clarity and relevance. The initial interview with P2 also functioned as an informal pilot: his responses confirmed that the questions elicited rich accounts of Discussion-writing and revealed no major problems with wording, so only minor adjustments were made before interviewing P1.

3.6 Procedure

The following sections of the current chapter describe the procedures that were followed to collect and analyze the data for this investigation that are later presented in chapter 4 of the current thesis.

3.6.1 Data Collection

The data set for this study consists of two semi-structured interviews with Mexican doctoral students who are required to publish in English as part of their doctoral programs. Participant 1 (P1) is a doctoral student in ecology at UAGro, and Participant 2 (P2) is a doctoral student in chemical engineering at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). Both were recruited through convenience sampling, as they were students I had previously tutored in English. This existing pedagogical relationship made it possible to explore their writing processes in depth and to situate their remarks within their broader trajectories as novice researchers.

Each participant took part in one extended online interview via Zoom. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, which is the participants' first language, to allow them to describe their experiences, doubts, and challenges in as much detail as possible. The interview guide (see Appendix A) covered three broad areas aligned with the research questions: (a) perceived linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges in writing Discussion sections for publication;

(b) strategies and resources they use to cope with these demands; and (c) affective and identity-related factors that shape their willingness and confidence to write in English.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and transcribed verbatim. Identifying information (names of people, specific laboratories, journal titles, etc.) was removed or replaced with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality; the two participants are referred to as P1 (Ecology) and P2 (Chemical Engineering) throughout the thesis. Coding and analysis were carried out on the Spanish transcripts in order to preserve nuance; English translations are provided in the findings chapter solely for reporting purposes. After a preliminary round of analysis, both participants were contacted again to confirm that the emerging interpretations reasonably reflected their experience, which also contributed to the transparency and trustworthiness of the study.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a qualitative thematic approach. The two interview transcripts were examined using the six phases outlined by Nowell et al. (2017): familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. The analytic stance was broadly realist: participants' accounts were treated as indicative of their lived experience, while acknowledging that themes are constructed through the researcher's interpretive work.

In the familiarization phase, I read each transcript several times and wrote analytic notes focusing on moments where participants talked about (a) linguistic or structural difficulties, (b) strategies or resources, and (c) emotions, identity, or institutional pressure. During initial coding, I highlighted segments line-by-line and assigned concise codes (e.g., "argument under scarcity," "L1→L2 pipeline," "fear of picky reviewers," "time pressure/loneliness"). These codes were then

grouped under the three research questions to form candidate themes: challenges (RQ1), coping strategies (RQ2), and affective factors (RQ3).

Then, I compared and refined these candidate themes across the two participants, merging overlapping categories, splitting those that were too broad, and checking that each theme was consistently supported by the data. This iterative process led to four overarching themes that organise Chapter 4: *Writing as justification-work*, *Linguistic frictions & registering science in L2*, *Coping by scaffolding*, and *Affect and institutional climate*. A codebook documenting the final codes and themes is provided in Appendix B. Themes themselves were grounded in their own words rather than imposed categories.

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

To address the research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the doctoral student. The interviews explored:

- Perceived challenges in writing the Discussion section.
- Strategies currently employed to meet high-impact journal standards.
- Perceptions of the linguistic features that distinguish successful publications.
- Affective factors in the Discussion-writing process.

Interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a widely used qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns (themes) within textual data. This approach follows a six-step process:

1. Familiarization with the Data: Transcribing, reading, and re-reading the interview responses.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Identifying recurring patterns and coding relevant data extracts.

3. Searching for Themes: Grouping codes into broader themes related to writing challenges and strategies.
4. Reviewing Themes: Refining themes to ensure coherence and relevance.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Establishing clear theme definitions for reporting.
6. Producing the Report: Synthesizing themes into a structured analysis of perceived writing difficulties.

Thematic analysis is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perceptions of the doctoral student and advisor, providing valuable context to complement the textual analysis of the Discussion sections (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

3.8 Ethics

This study was carried out following basic ethical principles of research in education and Applied Linguistics: informed consent, confidentiality, and volunteer participation.

Before data collection, both participants received and signed an informed consent format (Appendix D) in which: the purpose of the study, the data utilized (interviews, transcriptions) and how it would be used (thesis, academic presentations, publications) and the voluntary nature of their participation and voluntary withdraw.

To protect participants' confidentiality, names were removed as well as identifiable details, and names were replaced with pseudonyms (P1 and P2). Audios, transcripts, and file were stored safely and accessible to only the researcher and their supervisor.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis used to answer the research questions of this study. It focuses on two semi-structured interviews with Mexican doctoral students (P1: Ecology; P2: Chemical Engineering) about writing research articles in English for publication, with particular emphasis on the Discussion section.

The chapter first describes the data set and analytic approach, then offers a thematic overview, and finally examines in detail the perceived challenges, coping strategies, and affective factors that shape the participants' Discussion-writing processes.

4.1. Data set and analytic approach

The data set consists of two semi-structured interviews, both of which were fully transcribed and anonymized. Analysis followed Nowell et al. (2017)'s six-phase approach to ensure trustworthiness (familiarisation, initial coding, theme searching, review, definition, and write-up), with interpretive enrichment from Vaismoradi et al (2016) to prioritize conceptual patterns over mere topic listing. The stance is broadly realist, i.e. participants' accounts are treated as indicative of their lived experience, while acknowledging the researcher's role in theme construction. It is worth mentioning that the investigator played a dual role of teacher/researcher during the investigation. The teacher/researcher always maintained awareness of his dual positionality in order to preserve objective and ethical practices during data collection and analysis. Both participants were able to confirm interpretive stances in order to maintain transparency and preserve their voice.

Coded segments were grouped around the study questions:

- RQ1: perceived linguistic/structural/institutional challenges,
- RQ2: strategies for coping/adapting,
- RQ3: affective factors shaping the writing process.

A full codebook is provided in Appendix B.

4.2. Thematic overview

Four main themes along with subthemes covering the three sub-questions were identified:

1. Writing as Justification-Work (genre/argument complexity; literature work under scarcity)
2. Linguistic Frictions & Registering Science in L2 (passive voice, tenses, discipline-specific lexicon, acronyms)
3. Coping by Scaffolding (L1→L2 pipeline, modeling articles, tools, incremental polishing, peer/advisor feedback)
4. Affect and Institutional Climate (time anxiety, imagined demanding audience, institutional loneliness; emergent needs)

Table 1 – Preliminary Prevalence of Themes by Interview (Number of Coded Segments)

Theme	P1	P2	Total
Writing as Justification-Work	7	10	17
Linguistic Frictions & Register	4	12	16
Coping by Scaffolding	8	9	17
Affect & Institutional Climate	1	8	19

4.3. RQ1 – Perceived challenges

This section presents the challenges that participants reported when writing in English. It focuses on two themes: (a) Writing as Justification-Work and (b) Linguistic Frictions (passive voice, tense control, acronyms, and technical naming).

4.3.1. Writing as Justification Work

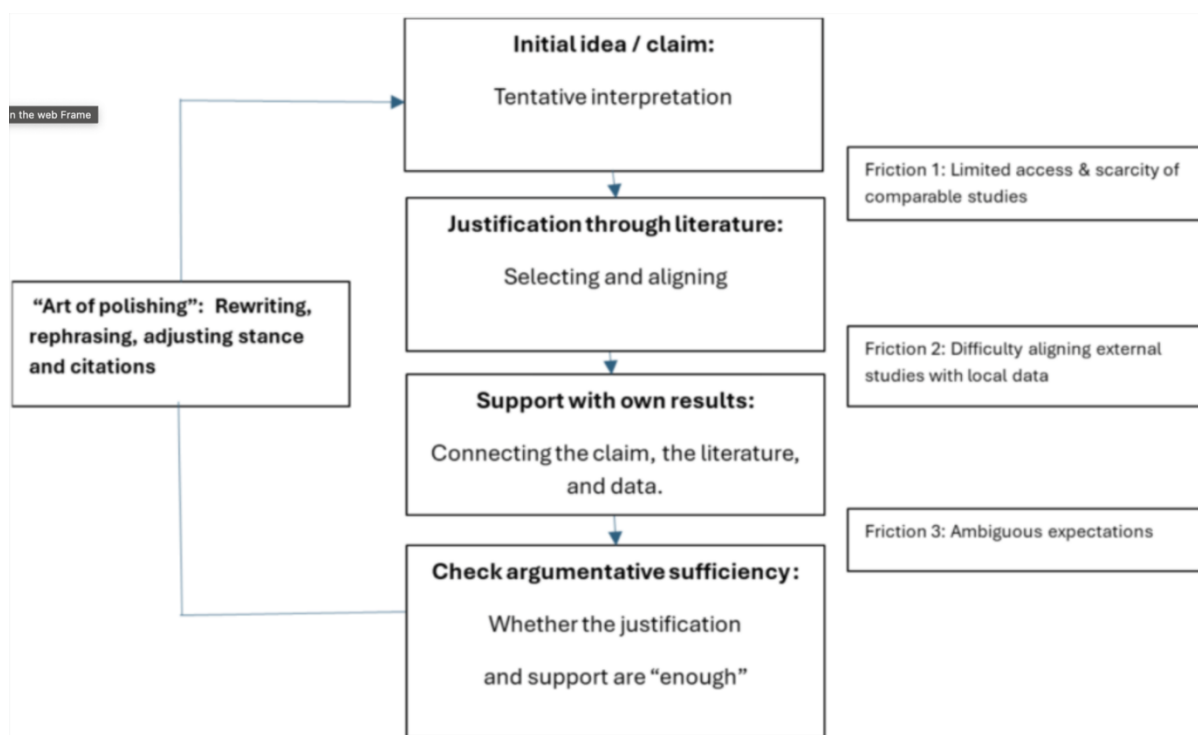
For both participants of this study ‘discussion-writing’ is perceived not merely as “reporting results” but as demanding argumentative work with scarcity and occasional inconsistency of academic literature as resources to warrant their claims under variable journal norms. This is not merely a stylistic situation, but one that deals with a variety of issues surrounding the writing process. P2 seems to perceive such labor as a craft process to create meaning in a second language. He explicitly describes it as a form of “craftwork”. “Yo lo relaciono mucho con un arte, el arte de pulir...” [“I relate it quite a bit to an art, the art of polishing...”]. The metaphor of refining indicates a repetitive process: develop an idea, find relevant literature, reinforce and uphold the assertion with one’s own findings, in a language that is not their own. Scarcity intensifies workload: “lo más complicado es aprender a debatir con poco” [“the hardest part is learning to build an argument in the discussion with very little”] and the cost/availability of sources, culminating in reliance on “puro Sci-Hub” [“I rely entirely on Sci-Hub”]

P1 outlines the same fundamental issue, but from the perspective of a writer who possesses unexpected patterns and now needs to defend them. For her, the main challenge is locating something to reference that truly reflects what she witnessed. “Yo creo que el reto más difícil es encontrar literatura que puedas citar para poder escribir tu discusión.” [“I think the hardest challenge is finding literature you can cite in order to write your discussion.”]. When she finds counter-intuitive results (e.g. increased diversity in the dry season, or dominance of a tiny species), the initial response is to suspect a mistake, and the ongoing process involves seeking and integrating explanations from related or partial sources (different plant groups, wider ecological contexts) to clarify the observed pattern. She summarizes it as “necesitar buscar la literatura para referenciar lo que otra persona ha dicho” [“having to find literature so you can cite what someone else has said”] and explicitly names it as “the most difficult part” of Discussion writing.

This challenge is heightened by contradictory journal demands: she describes being urged to reference recent materials, yet instructed to use the “original” studies, which in her field

frequently originate from the 1970s–80s. “Te solicitan que cites lo más reciente, pero... te indican que debes referenciar la fuente original” [“They request that you cite the most recent, but... they instruct you to reference the original source”], a contradiction that results frustrating for her.

Figure 1 *Flow of Discussion-writing as “The Art of Polishing” Under Resource and Norm Constraints.*



This pattern indicates that this is not a process that merely constrains grammatical issues, but rather intertextual positioning under external limitations. Both participants are trying to:

- Align their findings with inconsistent or scarce publications.
- Manage ambiguous norms about recency, originality or sufficiency of support.
- Draft in L2 in which hedging, stance and cohesion are more costly to adjust.

This “polishing” metaphor aligns with Hyland & Jiang’s (2019) description of how global publishing has intensified the persuasive expectations imposed on academic writers. Their longitudinal analysis demonstrates a consistent increase in citation density, stance work, and intertextual alignment, all of which enhance the rhetorical burden carried by Discussion sections.

For writers facing restricted access to literature and unequal material circumstances, like P2, these challenges manifest as recurring cycles of micro-editing “polishing” to satisfy changing reviewer demands. What seems like stylistic enhancement is indeed a structural occurrence: a compensatory reaction to the growing demand for disciplinary influence in a context where resources, access, and linguistic assets are unevenly allocated.

In summary, I define a major perceived challenge as “argumentative work under scarcity”, as both doctoral students/writers must build a justified claim with less literature than they would like and less guidance than they need. Their descriptions imply that what appears as “textual weakness” (e.g., repetition, uncertain stance) frequently indicates a deeper support gap and journal uncertainty, rather than a purely linguistic deficit.

4.3.2. Linguistic Frictions: Passive Voice, Tense Control, Acronyms, and Technical Naming

In the upcoming subsections, it is argued that both participants encounter “linguistic frictions” between form and function in the Discussion-writing process. Errors in passive voice, tense usage, chemical nomenclature, acronyms, and clause organization reflect not just local issues; they highlight instances where disciplinary standards and existing L2 skills do not align.

4.3.2.1 Passive voice and tense as form–function frictions

P2 comments on passive voice, a common linguistic device in academic papers, as “the most challenging” to use for discussion-writing. He explains:

“Creo que el uso de la voz pasiva en inglés. Esa parte me resulta difícil, que todo esté correctamente redactado en ese estilo, y además traducir bien la idea. A veces tengo la idea en español, la traduzco, pero no suena igual en inglés.”

[“I think using the passive voice in English. That part is difficult for me; it is hard to make sure everything is written correctly in that style, and also to translate the idea properly. Sometimes I have the idea in Spanish, I translate it, but it does not sound the same in English.”]

He directly links it to tense control when reporting other authors' work and numerical results:

“También me cuesta el uso del pasado, presente y futuro. Por ejemplo, cuando escribo: ‘Los autores determinaron ciertas concentraciones de capacidad de adsorción...’, tengo que traducir eso y no siempre sé cómo combinar los tiempos verbales correctamente.”
[“I also find it hard to use past, present, and future tenses. For example, when I write: ‘The authors determined certain concentrations of adsorption capacity...’, I have to translate that and I do not always know how to combine the verb tenses correctly.”]

This evidence indicates that his primary issue is not “understanding the rule” for passive constructions or tenses on their own. The friction arises when he must align form and rhetorical purpose: although he has a clear idea of meaning, he is uncertain about how to express it in the required scientific style. From an SFL standpoint, the challenge lies in choosing the appropriate register: in research Discussions, passive voice and tense are consistently employed (e.g., past tense for methods and specific results, present for general knowledge, passive voice to foreground phenomena and background human agents).

P2 also states this as a feeling of not being ready to write directly in English:

“Porque, en mi caso, todavía no me siento preparado para escribir directamente en inglés.”
[“Because, in my case, I still do not feel ready to write directly in English.”]

I believe that this presents a dual challenge for RQ1a:

- a grammatical-discoursal challenge (choosing the right tense–voice combination for each rhetorical move), and
- a challenge of the disciplinary register (learning implicit rules about what counts as appropriate stance and reporting in his field).

Simultaneously, the phrase “todavía no me siento preparado” uncovers a RQ3 emotional aspect: a sense of helplessness regarding tense and voice contributes to a story of “not being ready”

for L2 Discussion writing, which subsequently reinforces his dependence on translation and external reviewers (later identified as coping strategies for RQ2).

4.3.2.2 Technical naming and acronyms as “double translation”

The friction intensifies when grammatical choices interact with technical naming in chemistry. P2 highlights the effort of managing chemical names as a point-by-point search task: “Y en mi campo trabajo mucho con ecuaciones químicas y nombres químicos, lo que también lo hace más difícil, porque tengo que buscar los nombres uno por uno. Cometo bastantes errores ahí.”

[“And in my field I work with chemical equations and chemical names, which also makes it harder, because I have to search the names one by one. I make quite a few mistakes there.”

He then extends this difficulty to acronyms and abbreviations:

“A veces es una dificultad porque los compuestos se llaman diferente en español y en inglés. Entonces hay que traducirlos, buscarlos... También están las siglas. A veces las siglas se escriben en un orden en español y en otro en inglés. Yo creo que esa es otra complicación muy fuerte, porque en un artículo se usan muchas siglas y tienes que traducirlas o escribirlas todas completas la primera vez. Y luego están las abreviaturas, que también hay que definir. Tener todas las siglas y abreviaturas bien descritas es una dificultad más.”]

[“Sometimes it is difficult because the compounds have one name in Spanish and another in English. So you have to translate them, look them up... There are also the acronyms. Sometimes the acronyms are written in one order in Spanish and in another order in English. I think that is another complication, because in an article many acronyms are used and you have to translate them or write them out in full the first time. And then there are the abbreviations, which you also have to define. Having all the acronyms and abbreviations properly described is another difficulty.”]

He finally marks the consequences for readers:

“Además, cada revista tiene su estilo. Hay revistas que te piden una lista de siglas, y otras que solo te dicen que las describas una vez en el texto y ya no las repitas completas. El uso de tantas siglas también puede confundir al lector: como lector te tienes que regresar al principio a ver qué significaba cada una, y a veces ya ni recuerdas en qué parte estaban. Yo creo que esa es una complicación más, junto con los nombres químicos, los pulsos, los valores como tal...”

[“In addition, each journal has its own style. Some journals ask you for a list of acronyms, and others only tell you to describe them once in the text and not repeat them in full. The use of so many acronyms can also confuse the reader: as a reader you have to go back to the beginning to see what each one meant, and sometimes you no longer remember where they were. I think that is one more complication, together with chemical names, pulses, and the values themselves...”]

This represents a “lexical–terminological challenge” (finding exact equivalents) and a “textual clarity challenge” (deciding when to spell out terms, how to define acronyms, and how to avoid confusing readers). This is efficient for expert readers but expensive for an L2 writer who is still building a technical lexicon.

Notice that P2 explicitly mentions the reader’s experience (“puede confundir al lector”), which reveals an interpersonal concern and connects directly with RQ1c: he is worried not only about “being correct” but also about being clear and credible. This concern adds emotional weight to what might look, from outside, like a purely linguistic problem.

4.3.2.3 P1’s clause-level friction when expressing complex ideas

Although P1 comes from ecology, not chemistry, she reports a similar form-function friction when trying to express complex ideas in English. Reflecting on a translated abstract, she explains:

“Creo que expresar ideas complejas es lo que más me costó trabajo. Las oraciones con estructura más simple: sujeto, predicado y complemento, no son tan complicadas, pero cuando hablo de algo más complejo siento que incluso la estructura sujeto-verbo-predicado se vuelve

difícil, porque el orden de las palabras en inglés no es como en español.”
[“I think expressing complex ideas was what I found hardest. Sentences with a simpler structure—subject, predicate, complement—are not so complicated, but when I talk about something more complex, even the subject–verb–object structure becomes difficult, because the word order in English is not like in Spanish.”]

This quote suggests that, for P1, the issue extends beyond vocabulary or “insufficient grammar knowledge.” The tension arises when she attempts to convey intricate ecological concepts using English sentence structures that deviate from Spanish syntax or informational sequence. She has difficulty figuring out how to arrange topics, methods, and situations in English when the concept is complex.

From an SFL perspective, this points to difficulties with clause elaboration and thematization (deciding the order of elements in the clause, handling lengthy subjects, and multiple processes). For RQ1, this suggests that significant challenges exist in advanced resources that relate grammar to information structure, instead of in fundamental tense or agreement. For RQ3, her remark that “even the subject–verb–predicate structure is challenging” indicates a deep insecurity that may hinder her ability to attempt more advanced L2 drafting.

4.3.2.4 Relationship to RQs

I argue that these linguistic tensions demonstrate how participants' "grammar frictions" lie precisely at the intersection of grammar and genre. The aspects they mention (passive voice, tense selection, chemical nomenclature, acronyms, intricate clause composition) are not arbitrary. They are the primary assets that Discussions utilize to:

- hide or show agents or processes (passive vs active voice),
- position findings in time (tense),
- condense technical meaning into compact labels (nominal groups, acronyms), and
- control information flow in arguments (clause structure, theme–rheme).

For RQ1, these results indicate that the primary linguistic/structural difficulties are linked to register requirements and disciplinary conventions, rather than solely to overall English proficiency. Regarding RQ3, they additionally illustrate that these frictions promote narratives of “not being prepared” or “unable to write directly in English,” which consequently drive a significant reliance on translation, templates, and external editors, essential coping strategies examined in subsequent subsections (RQ2).

In Chapter 5, this subsection emphasizes the necessity for teaching strategies that concentrate on micro-rewriting tasks within actual Discussion paragraphs: such as exercises where doctoral students deliberately practice altering tense and voice across sections, unpacking and repacking abbreviations, or reorganizing clauses to enhance clarity. This shifts instruction from detached grammar exercises to a cohesive understanding of how tense, voice, and technical terminology operate in Discussion writing for publication.

4.4. RQ2: Strategies for Coping

In this section, we observe that P1 and P2 are not passive “victims” of English and journal standards in Discussion writing. Rather, they create a coping set of strategies that merges L1-focused drafting, model-text analysis, and multifaceted feedback (both digital and human). These strategies are evidently directed towards RQ2: they serve as tangible answers to the linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges outlined in RQ1, while also engaging with the emotional tensions in RQ3 by reducing anxiety and redistributing responsibilities.

4.4.1. L1→L2 pipeline and incremental polishing

A first, almost default strategy consists of writing the Discussion in Spanish and then moving it into English through a sequence of polishing cycles. P2 summarizes his usual pathway as follows:

“Primero redacto en español y luego traduzco; ya en inglés voy puliendo la idea hasta que quede como quiero.”

["I first write in Spanish and then translate it; once it is in English, I keep polishing the idea until it looks the way I want."]

It can be argued that this L1→L2 process is a logical method to safeguard content and voice under pressure. P2 initially secures the conceptual content in the language where he thinks more quickly and with greater nuance before addressing the more delicate L2 surface. The “polishing” phase in English turns into a managed process of refining language, tense, and passive voice instead of creating content and structure simultaneously.

Nonetheless, this pathway also presents side effects. It may strengthen the belief that “true thinking” takes place in Spanish and that English is merely a surface to be polished, reflecting his remark that he still does not feel prepared to write directly in English (see 4.3.2). Regarding RQ3, the L1→L2 pipeline briefly reduces anxiety, but it does so by fostering a significant reliance on translation and subsequent refinement, rather than encouraging experimentation with direct L2 writing for certain sections or moves.

4.4.2. Modeling published articles and journal mapping

A second strategy is reverse engineering target articles. Both participants describe actively looking at similar studies and using their Discussions as informal templates. P2 explains:

“Busco trabajos parecidos y me guío por su discusión: veo cómo estructuran los párrafos, qué comparan, cómo integran las citas, y trato de seguir algo parecido.”

["I look for similar papers and follow their Discussion: I see how they structure the paragraphs, what they compare, how they integrate citations, and I try to follow something similar."] (P2, L45–51)

P1 adds a more systematic dimension by suggesting journal-focused reading and collective spaces such as journal clubs, where Discussions from a given outlet are read and “mapped” in terms of structure and style. She frames this as a deliberate teaching idea for her group, not only as a private survival tactic.

This modeling and journal mapping approach serves as a genre framework. Rather than starting “from scratch,” they synchronize their Discussions with familiar structures: paragraphing, common strategies (summarizing findings, comparing with existing literature, clarifying mechanisms), and even the stylistic preferences of individual journals. This directly pertains to RQ2: they manage structural uncertainty (RQ1) by grounding their texts in authentic, successful examples.

Regarding pedagogy, this approach aligns closely with genre-based and task-based methodologies: the actions of P1 and P2 informally reflect the “modelling/deconstruction” segment of genre pedagogy, where teaching is explicitly anchored in the types of texts that students must create (Hyland, 2007). Instead of considering Discussions as unbiased holders of “results,” they are interpreting them as genres “socially acknowledged methods of employing language within a discipline” (Hyland, 2007) and identifying patterns of staging, comparison, and evaluation that can be reused in their own writing.

From a genre standpoint, P1’s concept of journal clubs and “maps” essentially represents a simpler variant of the cycles described by Hyland (2007): progressing from the analysis of target texts, to the clear articulation of generic characteristics, and only subsequently to independent writing, with the models serving as scaffolding rather than prescriptive scripts.

4.4.3. Tools and interactional feedback

A third element in their coping repertoire is the use of digital tools and human feedback. P2 reports using Grammarly and, occasionally, AI-based tools, but he is explicit about the limits he wants to maintain:

“Sí uso Grammarly o herramientas así, pero más bien para que me marquen errores o me sugieran mejoras; no quiero que escriban el texto por mí, trato de hacerlo a mi manera.”
[“Yes, I use Grammarly or similar tools, but mainly so they mark errors or suggest improvements; I do not want them to write the text for me, I try to do it my way.”]

This quote indicates that he views tools as diagnostic reflections instead of ghostwriters. They emphasize recurring issues: absent articles, clumsy collocations, punctuation problems, that he subsequently chooses to accept or dismiss. Regarding RQ2, this represents a distinct coping strategy: it shifts some of the proofreading responsibility externally while attempting to maintain authorship.

In addition to digital tools, both participants depend on feedback from peers and advisors. Drafts are shared with colleagues and supervisors, who provide feedback on clarity, structure, and language. Significantly, the students characterize this as helpful rather than replacing: feedback serves to revise, yet the text remains regarded as theirs. This mix of automated and human input forms a complex support network that addresses the institutional and linguistic challenges noted in RQ1, while simultaneously offering an emotional safety net for RQ3 (others assist in identifying potential issues prior to submission).

Simultaneously, a constraint can be recognized: since tools and feedback primarily come into play late in the process, they frequently reinforce the idea that language is something to be “corrected at the end,” rather than a resource to plan and shape arguments from the beginning. This again implies a setting where pedagogy could be implemented, such as the use of tools and peer-feedback on partial drafts or specific moves, rather than only on almost finished Discussions.

4.4.4. Mini-synthesis: coping repertoires under constraint

In summary, P1 and P2 build coping strategies that combine:

- **Linguistic scaffolds:** an L1→L2 drafting pipeline, incremental polishing, and digital tools that surface patterns;
- **Genre scaffolds:** informal modeling of published Discussions, journal mapping, and interactional feedback from peers and advisors.

For RQ2, these strategies indicate that doctoral writers are not just defeated by RQ1-type challenges; they intentionally create methods to handle them. At the same time, these procedures

are constrained by the same inequalities they try to solve; restricted time, unequal access to training, and the prevalence of English in their fields.

This carries two direct implications for pedagogical discussion in Chapter 5. First, many of the practices they have invented on their own: L1 drafting, model-text analysis, journal mapping, and critical use of tools, could be legitimized and systematized as part of explicit ERPP support. Second, there is room to move from a “fix-it-at-the-end” mentality towards process-oriented scaffolding, where genre awareness, strategic L1 use, and tool-mediated feedback are integrated from early drafting stages, not only at the polishing phase.

4.5. RQ3 — Affective factors in Discussion writing

Based on both participants’ experience, we can argue that affect is not merely an addition to Discussion writing but a fundamental organizing force within it. Both participants are influenced by emotions like fear, insecurity, and anxiety related to time, which affect their writing timing, language choice, and the extent to which they are willing to assert their claims. Three interconnected themes surfaced: (a) a perceived “discerning” audience that fuels doubts about legitimacy, (b) time pressure paired with institutional loneliness, and (c) a delicate but emerging sense of agency reliant on emotional state and external validation.

4.5.1. Imagined “discerning” audience and legitimacy doubts

P1’s Discussion-writing is governed by an imagined hyper-critical reader, which turns every sentence into a high-stakes test of legitimacy. She describes academic readers as “picky people” and explicitly imagines the prototypical reviewer as a harsh foodcritic:

“Entonces, cuando escribo un paper, sí me imagino que estoy escribiendo para el señor de Ratatouille... Y por eso me da mucho miedo. Escribir me da como... ay, es que no puedo, es que no sé, no. Es que no sé lo suficiente. Porque te enfrentas a que escribes para esta gente, ¿no? Y que si te equivocaste... ya, se acabó.”

[“So, when I write a paper, I imagine I am writing for the Ratatouille food critic... And that is why

it scares me. Writing makes me feel like... ah, I just can't, I don't know. I don't know enough. Because you are writing for these people, and if you make a mistake... that's it, it's over.”]

This imagined “critic” condenses several affective factors: fear of being judged by distant, powerful reviewers; doubt about “knowing enough”; and the sense that one mistake could end her legitimacy as a researcher. P1’s language is saturated with negative Affect (“miedo”, “no puedo”), low Judgement of self (“no sé lo suficiente”), and extreme Graduation (“ya, se acabó”), which amplify the perceived risks of committing to a stance in English.

P2 complements this picture, but he frames it less as a single terrifying critic and more as a diffuse, unpredictable gatekeeping system. His fear is not only about sounding “incorrect”, but about being judged as unethical or incompetent if small technical details are wrong. When he explains the difficulty of managing numerical data and abbreviations across articles, he explicitly imagines the reviewer checking the original sources:

“Eso puede contarse como plagio o como un error grave: si el revisor se va directo al artículo original y ve que no coincide el número, puede pensar que estás mintiendo, cuando en realidad fue un error involuntario.”

[“That can be counted as plagiarism or as a serious error: if the reviewer goes straight to the original paper and sees that the number does not match, they may think you are lying, when in reality it was an unintentional mistake.”]

He also links this fear to the normative ambiguity of reviews, where the rules seem to depend on the individual reviewer:

“Además, los estilos de escritura varían mucho entre autores... No hay una guía clara. Depende del revisor que te toque, uno te lo puede señalar y otro no.”

[“Also, writing styles vary a lot between authors... There is no clear guide. It depends on which reviewer you get; one may point it out and another may not.”]

This extends P1’s “critic” into a system-level version of the same fear: in both cases, the imagined audience is highly demanding and morally evaluative. For P1, the risk is “not knowing

enough” in front of global experts; for P2, the risk is that a minor discrepancy or stylistic mismatch will be read as plagiarism or dishonesty. Both descriptions are charged with negative Affect and high-stakes Judgement of the self, but P2’s account adds a layer of unpredictability (“depende del revisor”) that makes the criteria for being a “legitimate” writer in English feel unstable. This instability matters for RQ3 because it feeds a constant sense of vulnerability, and for RQ1 because it helps explain why P2 is so cautious with translation, data wording, and journal choice in his Discussion writing.

For RQ3, this pattern shows that writing in English does not only trigger linguistic insecurity, but an identity threat: P1 equates “academic English” with being evaluated by people “in power”, not by local peers. For RQ1, this has practical consequences: if every Discussion move is imagined in front of a critical audience, it becomes safer to stay close to source sentences, depend largely and mostly on quotations, not their own voice, and avoid bolder interpretive claims. In other words, affective fear indirectly constrains the linguistic and rhetorical resources they are willing to use.

4.5.2. Time pressure and institutional loneliness

Both participants experience Discussion-writing as a race against time in a context where “you are on your own”, which produces anxiety and discourages experimentation in L2. P2 explicitly names time as an affective pressure that pushes him away from drafting directly in English:

“En el doctorado siempre tenemos el tiempo en contra, y traducir todo uno mismo toma mucho tiempo... Entonces, más que perderlo, es que tenemos que entregar y revisar constantemente... por eso a veces prefiero pedir ayuda para traducir.”

[“In the doctorate we always have time against us, and translating everything by myself takes a lot of time... So it is not exactly ‘wasted’ time, but we constantly have to submit and revise... that is why I sometimes prefer to ask for help with translation.”]

The same participant links this temporal pressure to a lack of explicit guidance:

“En mi posgrado, jamás me han dado una introducción sobre cómo escribir artículos. Ha sido totalmente a prueba y error.”

[“In my graduate program, I have never been given any introduction on how to write articles. It has been completely trial and error.”]

P1 voices the same gap even more directly, framing English article writing as a task she is expected to handle essentially alone. She explains that, although her advisor gives some general tips, the underlying message is that the actual L2 writing work is hers to solve: “yo pienso que lo tengo que hacer yo sola... nunca fue como de ‘yo te ayudo a escribirlo en inglés’... fue ‘ya después lo escribes en inglés para que tú hagas ese ejercicio, para que tú lo realices’” [“I think I have to do it on my own... it was never ‘I will help you write it in English’... it was ‘later you write it in English so that you can do that exercise yourself’”]

She then names the emotional cost of this stance in explicit terms: “yo siento que sí estoy como sola en esto... en la parte de resolver cómo lo voy a poner en el idioma que no es mío. Sí es como algo que yo tengo que resolver” [“I feel I am basically alone in this... in the part of deciding how to put it into a language that is not mine. It is something I have to figure out myself”]

This evidence shows that what might be framed institutionally as “developing independence” is experienced by the student as solitude and full personal responsibility for any failure. For RQ1c, the feeling of being “sola en esto” amplifies anxiety and self-blame under tight timelines; for RQ1a, it reinforces that the program’s support for L2 academic writing remains partial and informal, leaving the heavy work of drafting and revising to individual trial-and-error rather than structured pedagogical guidance.

Taken together, these statements construct a scenario of institutional loneliness: the doctorate demands indexed publications, but there is no structured course, no explicit criteria for “enough discussion”, and limited feedback beyond cryptic comments such as “falta más discusión” [“you need more discussion”].

For RQ3, this shows that affective stress is not only internal; it is produced by structural conditions (RQ1a). Time scarcity and lack of guidance push both writers to minimize risk: outsourcing translation, sticking to L1→L2 pipelines, and avoiding slower, exploratory drafting directly in English. Writing becomes a survival task rather than a space for developing voice. This resonates with ERPP studies that document a mismatch between high-stakes publication requirements and limited pedagogical support in many non-Anglophone graduate programmes (Corcoran, Matsuda, & Lillis, 2019). In that sense, the emotional narrative of “time against me” is not merely personal; it signals systemic design problems in doctoral curricula.

4.5.3. Emerging agency, mood, and external validation

Despite these constraints, we can agree that both participants display a fragile but emerging sense of agency, which is strongly conditioned by mood and external validation. P1 explicitly links her emotional state to her ability to write and engage with literature:

“Yo creo que cuando me siento bien conmigo misma, o cuando tengo un buen día, me fluyen muchísimo más las palabras: el encontrar literatura, o tan solo el poder escribir, es mucho más fácil.”

[“I think that when I feel good about myself, or when I am having a good day, the words flow much more: finding literature, or simply being able to write, becomes much easier.”]

She also recognizes a pattern of writing “under the gun”, where deadlines temporarily override perfectionism:

“Cuando ya tengo la presión encima, es así de: ‘escribe, escribe, escribe’... Y sí, me equivoco un chorro, obviamente... Súper procrastinadora. Y ya que tengo el tiempo encima, ahora sí: escribir, escribir, escribir.”

[“When the pressure is already on me, it becomes ‘write, write, write’... And yes, I make loads of mistakes, obviously... I’m super procrastinating. And once time is against me, then I finally go: write, write, write.”]

At the same time, moments of success are clearly tied to external recognition. P1 recalls the only occasion where she genuinely liked a text she had written (an English abstract), explicitly crediting her advisor's praise:

“Fue el único que dije: ‘Órale, me gustó cómo lo escribí’... Y bueno, también influyó que mi asesora me dijo: ‘Ay, ya ves que puedes hacer las cosas bien.’”
[“It was the only one where I said: ‘Wow, I like how I wrote it’... And it also mattered that my supervisor told me: ‘See, you *can* do things well.’”]

However, this emerging agency coexists with strong self-deprecating labels when writing in English:

“Cuando escribo en inglés me siento muy insegura. Me siento... sí, me siento muy ‘burra’. Y además tengo el bloqueo de decir: ‘No, yo no sé inglés. Yo no sé cómo se hace, yo nunca lo he hecho’.”

[“When I write in English, I feel very insecure. I feel... yes, I feel very ‘stupid’. And I also have this block, saying: ‘No, I don’t know English. I don’t know how it is done, I have never done it.’”]

For RQ3, these extracts show that agency is highly contingent: P1 and P2 can act as competent writers when mood is positive, when there is a clear, attractive goal (e.g., presenting at a conference), or when someone in authority confirms that they “can do things well”. Yet, in the absence of such triggers, they default to impostor narratives (“no sé lo suficiente”, “no sé inglés”), perfectionistic blocking, and deadline-driven bursts. This also feeds back into RQ2: strategies like writing only close to submission dates, over-relying on L1 drafts, or avoiding direct L2 experimentation are not only rational time-management decisions; they are affective protection mechanisms.

From an identity lens, this oscillation between “I don’t know enough” and “sí, sí puedo” suggests that English academic writing operates as a test of worth, not just of skill. ERPP research has repeatedly shown how novice scholars’ self-perception as writers is shaped by external evaluation and by their position in global knowledge hierarchies (Hyland, 2005). In this case, the

participants' agency is real but precarious; it depends on institutional feedback and "good days", instead of being supported by sustained pedagogical work on voice and confidence.

Across these themes, affective factors are central to how these doctoral writers approach Discussion writing. An imagined "picky" audience amplifies legitimacy doubts; time pressure and institutional loneliness make writing feel like risky trial-and-error; and agency appears in short bursts tied to mood and external validation. For RQ3, this means that any pedagogical response must address not only linguistic and genre knowledge, but also fear of judgement, temporal anxiety, and identity work. For RQ1 and RQ2, these affective patterns help explain why certain linguistic resources (e.g., hedging, passive voice, more interpretive claims) remain underused and why risk-reducing strategies (L1 drafting, outsourcing translation, deadline bursts) persist. Chapter 5 can therefore treat affect not as a side note but as a design axis for genre-based writing support.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the implications of the study's findings for comprehending how two Mexican doctoral candidates: one studying ecology and the other focused on chemical engineering/nanomaterials. navigate the writing of Discussion sections in English for high-impact journals. The research focused on three main questions:

- RQ1: What linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges do these doctoral students perceive when writing the Discussion section in English?
- RQ2: What strategies do they use to cope with these challenges?
- RQ3: What affective factors shape their experience of Discussion writing in English?

In the studied context, academic writing for publication, under conditions such: a mismatch between external circumstances (institutional lack of support, navigating and escalating the ladder of academia, unclear purpose and application of research in a country where

students see research impact as disregarded) and internal pressure to publish as institutional request, we can argue that the process of discussion-writing is best described as “argumentative work under scarcity”. It is required from both participants to achieve the writing of complex, well-structured arguments, in a language they do not perceive as their own, regardless of the time studied and contact with it. Additionally, the encounter limitations of time, access to literature and even support for English for Research and Publication Purposes (ERPP), while dealing with a demanding register in scientific English. I also argue that, in response to these conditions, they construct an informal and unequal apprenticeship of English-medium science. Finally, several affective factors are involved laterally in the process of discussion-writing. Moreover, they serve as gatekeepers to the complex process: interiorized strong narratives, such as an imagined strict audience, constant time pressure, the idea of not knowing or being good enough to thrive in the field, strongly influence when writing happens, which strategies are chosen, and how much interpretative risk the writers are willing to take.

These three aspects do not operate in isolation, and are interconnected. The results indicate a process in which structural and linguistic demands trigger affective responses, and these emotional and identity-related responses then drive particular coping mechanisms. Scarcity of time and explicit instruction, together with the complex genre demands of the Discussion section, trigger feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and lack of companionship. Such feelings, in turn, make it more likely that the writers rely on L1→L2 pipelines, last-minute drafting, and heavy use of model articles and tools. Some of these strategies reduce anxiety and allow the writers to complete their texts, but others may reinforce their dependence on translation and their perception of English as a surface to “fix” rather than a resource to plan with.

The rest of this chapter is organised as follows. Section **5.1** offers an overview of the main findings, organised around the three central messages outlined above and a process view that connects RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Section **5.2** discusses the theoretical and pedagogical implications

of these findings for ERPP and doctoral supervision in the local context. Section **5.3** presents the limitations of the study, and **5.4** suggests directions for further research. Finally, **5.5** offers some closing remarks on what this case study reveals about Discussion writing under unequal conditions in English.

5.1 Overview of Main Findings

This section focuses on summarizing the results of the study through the three research questions. In summary, we can claim that the Discussion-writing process can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: argumentative work under scarcity (RQ1), informal and unequal apprenticeship into English-language publishing (RQ2), and affective gatekeeping with fragile agency (RQ3). These dimensions form a process rather than three separate lists of themes.

5.1.1 Discussion writing as argumentative work under scarcity

The primary finding is that both participants perceive Discussion writing in English as a form of argumentative work constrained by limitations. To publish, they need to construct a persuasive argument that clarifies and supports their findings, interact with literature that can be limited or inconsistent, and meet journal standards that are frequently not clearly articulated.

At the linguistic level, P2 highlights difficulties with passive voice, tense control, and disciplinary naming practices (chemical names and acronyms), while P1 struggles with putting together complex ideas in English clause structure, and word order. These difficulties become more visible in the Discussion section because it is where they must compare findings, propose explanations, and claim relevance.

- At the structural level, both participants mention limited time, expensive or restricted access to literature, and a lack of systematic guidance on writing Discussions or research articles. They must publish in English; however, they lack a clear example of what constitutes “sufficient Discussion,” and feedback tends to be

ambiguous. In these circumstances, Discussion-writing transforms into a type of argumentative task where learners are required to accomplish more with limited means: develop a persuasive argument using incomplete resources, in a foreign language, and under considerable time constraints.

5.1.2 Informal ERPP repertoires and unequal apprenticeship

The second finding is that, in reaction to these limitations, the participants develop their own informal set of strategies for writing in Discussion format. Rather than adhering to a structured ERPP program, they create what can be described as a “shadow curriculum.”

For P2, a key approach is an L1→L2 pipeline: composing the Discussion in Spanish, followed by translating and gradually refining the English version. Each participant heavily relies on model articles, searching for papers on related topics and mirroring the structure and wording of their Discussion sections. P1 and P2 additionally discuss journal mapping, which involves analyzing the preferences and conventions of particular journals by reviewing multiple examples. Moreover, P2 employs resources like Grammarly or AI driven checkers to spot frequent mistakes and enhance phrasing, and both individuals depend on feedback from peers and supervisors when accessible.

Collectively, these strategies create an informal mentorship in English-language scientific publishing. Nevertheless, this apprenticeship is unequal it relies on their individual initiative, the availability of supportive mentors, and the extent of time and energy they can devote, alongside their other doctoral responsibilities.

5.1.3 Affective gatekeeping and precarious agency

The third finding is that affective factors work as access filters which determine when and how discussion-writing occurs. Emotional factors are not considered background noise, they directly affect the process directly.

P1 bares an extremely demanding “picky” audience in mind, almost hostile, when writing in English, a hypercritical figure reader. Such imagined audience feeds the narrative of “not knowing enough” and makes each sentence into a legitimacy trial, not only as an English user but as a person. Both participants report on feeling “time against them” and that writing for research and publication purposes is a solitary task which “no one teaches how to do” and you “get better at it by trial and error”. Insecurity, pressure, and the feeling of loneliness are recurring.

At the same time, the results show moments of real but fragile agency. When P1 feels good about herself, or receives positive feedback from her advisor, she reports that words and ideas “flow” and can perceive herself as someone capable of writing in English. Both of them design and adjust strategies (such as L1 as a starting point, model texts, and digital tools) to protect their ideas and move their texts forward. However, such agency is unstable. It depends on emotional state, external validation, and how close deadlines are. Under high stress, they tend to regress to procrastination, last-minute writing or the avoidance of more ambitious texts in L2.

In summary, all of the above factors strongly condition the variety of strategies that feel available and safe. This implies that RQ3 is not isolated from RQ1 and RQ2: emotions and identity preoccupations mediate how structural challenges are perceived and which repertoire of challenges they imply.

5.1.4 A process overview of Discussion-writing

Finally, the findings allow us to propose a process view connecting all three research questions. Instead of treating challenges, strategies and affective factors as independent categories data points to a dynamic cycle:

- Structural and linguistic conditions (RQ1) such as time scarcity, limited literature access, not formal ERPP training, and demanding expectations, trigger

- specific affective responses (RQ3), including fear of a highly critical audience, feelings of not knowing enough, deadline anxiety, a sense of institutional loneliness, which in turn
- shape coping strategies (RQ2), for example, relying on L1, imitating model articles, use of tools for diagnostic support, seeking selective feedback, or writing only when pressure is high.

These strategies partly reduce anxiety and allow producing Discussions that require with minimal publishing requirements. At the same time, some of these strategies reproduce the same conditions which originated difficulties, for example when keeping English at the level of late-stage correction or by reinforcing the idea that Discussion-writing is something that one must “figure out alone”. In this sense, Discussion writing in the cases of P1 and P2 can be seen as an ongoing negotiation between scarcity, affect, and agency, rather than as a simple matter of “improving English” or “trying harder”.

5.2 Research Implications

This section discusses what the study contributes to beyond the cases of P1 and P2. Focusing on two levels:

First, theoretical implications, the findings may help in refining how ERPP and genre-based pedagogy can understand Discussion writing as argumentative work under scarcity, supported by informal and unequal apprenticeship and shaped by affective factors. Such results debate with academic writing on the periphery, genre learning without explicit instruction, and the roles of emotions and identity in L2 research writing.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to ERPP and genre-based pedagogy approaches to rethink the discussion-writing process as argumentative work under scarcity conditions. Rather than treating tense

choices, passive voice, and limited interpretations as L2 “errors” the findings show how these surface feature may emerge from a configuration of constraints: scarcity of time, partial access to literature, vague journal expectations, and the high rhetorical load of Discussion sections. This supports a view of linguistic “problems” as symptoms of structure and genre conditions, rather than individual proficiency gaps (Ortiz Lefort et al. 2012; Corcoran, 2015).

Second, the study illustrates how two doctoral writes developed an informal and unequal apprenticeship into academic publishing in English language. Participants 1 and 2 are familiar with practices genre-based pedagogy recommends, such as model texts, mapping journals, editing for stance. However, they do so without shared metalanguage, explicit move/step guidance, or institutional time. Theoretically, this suggests that the key question is not whether students learn genres, but under what conditions (most likely “in the wild”), with which resources, and at what cost (Ortiz Lefort et al., 2012).

Thirdly, the findings foreground “affective factors” as a central mediator for writing, not as add-on. Fear, anxiety, and narratives of “not knowing enough” shape when, and how, strategies from RQ2 are being used. This supports approaches that integrate identity and emotion into models of L2 academic writing, suggesting that any account of Discussion discourse which ignores affect is incomplete (Cameron et al., 2009; Ivanič, 1998; Lee & Boud, 2003).

Together, these implications invite ERPP and SFL research to view Discussion sections not just as areas of rhetorical structure and stance, but as nodes where scarcity, genre learning, and emotion converge unevenly for authors in marginal contexts.

5.2.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings also have implications for how doctoral programmes and supervisors ought to support Discussion-writing in English. First, if this process is considered as “argumentative work under scarcity” from the beginning, ERPP support should be designed baring that reality in mind.

This would mean teaching students how to argue under limited literature and time. For example, tasking practicing building warranted claiming with a limited set of sources, learning to acknowledge gaps, uncertainty, and partial evidence in English. It may as well imply integrating work on tense, voice and acronyms into this argumentative frame, rather than treating them as isolated grammar exercises.

Second, the existence of a “shadow curriculum” suggests the need to formalize and redistribute the repertoires the student is already building. This may include structured journal clubs focused on Discussion sections, collaborative analyses of moves/steps of academic papers, y shared repositories of annotated model discussions. Supervisor training, if it were to happen, could incorporate genre-based feedback strategies, to move beyond “you need more discussion” type of comments to more precise argument structure, stance, and reader expectations.

Third, due to the fact that affect works as gatekeeper, support in ERPP needs to be sensitive to affect. This does not imply turning academic advice into therapy, but naming and addressing common fears (critical and demanding readers, not knowing enough, being an incompetent English user), working with realistic timelines to avoid last-minute writing, and designing low-stake tasks where students can rehearse Discussion writing without immediate publication pressure. It is also useful to encourage reflection on the L1-L2 writing process, acknowledge what it enables as well as what it limits. This can help students to see these strategies as resources to be managed, not as a secret sign of deficiency.

Overall, the pedagogical implication is that supporting Discussion writing for doctoral students in contexts like this one requires integrated work on genre, language, and affect, instead of focusing only on surface correctness or assuming that students will “pick up” the genre on their own.

5.3 Limitations

This study has several limitations that shape what its findings can and cannot claim. They do not cancel the value of the analysis, but they define its scope.

- **Small, context-specific sample**

The study is based on two doctoral students from one national context, in only two disciplines (ecology and chemical engineering). This limits the transferability of the findings to other fields, or countries, and the patterns described should be read as *illustrative*, not representative of “Mexican science” as a whole.

- **Convenience and self-selected participation**

Both participants were recruited through convenience and accepted voluntarily. It is likely that they are relatively reflective and motivated writers, which means the study may under-represent voices of students who are more disengaged, more blocked, or who have already dropped out because of writing demands.

- **Absence of advisors’ and other stakeholders’ perspectives**

The analysis focuses on doctoral students’ accounts and texts; supervisors, reviewers, and programme coordinators were not interviewed. As a result, the thesis captures how requirements and feedback are *experienced* by students, but not how they are *intended* or justified by those who design and enforce them.

- **Time-bounded, non-longitudinal design**

The study offers a snapshot of the Discussion-writing process at a particular stage of each doctorate. It does not follow participants across several years or across multiple publications, so it cannot fully trace how their strategies, affect, and genre control evolve over time.

- **Reliance on self-report and retrospective accounts**

Data on affect, time pressure, and strategies come mainly from interviews and not

from direct observation of writing sessions or process logs. This means the descriptions are filtered by memory and by how comfortable participants feel sharing difficulties, which may obscure more chaotic, contradictory, or less “orderly” aspects of their practice.

- **Analytical focus and researcher positioning**

The analysis is guided by an SFL/genre and ERPP lens, and by the researcher’s own experience as an EFL/ERPP practitioner in the same national context. This brings depth to the interpretation of moves, stance, and affect, but it also narrows attention to certain phenomena and may downplay others that different theoretical or positional perspectives would highlight.

Taken together, these limitations mean the thesis offers a situated, theory-rich case study rather than a general model. The value of the work lies in how it illuminates Discussion writing under conditions of scarcity and unequal support, while pointing to the need for broader, comparative and longitudinal research.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study opens several paths for further work on Discussion-writing in English Mexican doctoral programs. Rather than using a different methodology, further research can deepen and expand what was started here. Here, a couple of suggestions can be found:

1. **Multi-site, multi-discipline studies**

Include more doctoral students from additional disciplines and universities to examine how far “argumentative work under scarcity” and unequal apprenticeship travel across fields, and where local practices diverge.

2. **Including supervisors and programme stakeholders**

Interview supervisors, course coordinators, and, where possible, reviewers to

trace how expectations about the Discussion are formulated, communicated, and negotiated, and to compare these accounts with students' experiences.

3. Longitudinal trajectories of Discussion writing

Follow doctoral writers over time (several semesters or publications), collecting successive Discussion drafts, feedback, and interviews, to see how strategies, affect, and genre control evolve, stabilise, or break down.

4. Process-focused studies of writing episodes

Combine tools such as writing diaries, stimulated recall interviews to observe Discussion writing "in action", capturing real-time decision-making, switching between L1 and L2, and moment-to-moment affective shifts.

5. Design and evaluation of ERPP interventions

Develop and test ERPP or writing modules explicitly shaped by these findings (work on argument under scarcity, explicit Discussion moves, affect-sensitive tasks, journal mapping), evaluating both textual outcomes and changes in students' perceptions and confidence.

Together, these lines of inquiry could move from a single-case, theory-rich portrait toward a more comprehensive understanding of how Discussion writing in English is learned, supported, and constrained in Mexican doctoral education.

5.5 Final Remarks

This thesis has argued that, for the two participants of this study, writing the Discussion section is not simply a matter of needing to improve their English writing process, but rather one that takes place in the middle of both internal and external scarcity factors affecting it.

What emerged most saliently during the study was how much of this work takes place invisibly. Both the detractors and the small, fragile moments of confidence rarely appear in the final publishing text, perpetuating the cycle for novice academic writers. Yet these hidden efforts

are precisely what allows the text to exist at all. This should encourage us to shift the question: instead of asking why students “cannot write”, we need to ask why programs assume that they will learn to write for high-impact journals on their own and under pressure.

If there is a final message is that responsibility for writing demands of publication cannot rest only on individual doctoral writers and their advisors. They are already improvising complex, creative solutions to structural problems they did not design. The real question is whether institutions, coordinators and ERPP practitioners are willing to treat this improvisation as shared work: making genre expectations explicit, designing realistic, context-based support under scarcity, and taking seriously the affective cost of writing in an unequal publishing system. Without that shift, “weak discussions” will continue to be treated as personal failure, when they are, in fact, a mirror of how we have organized, and accepted being part of doctoral education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Interview Guide

Semi-structured Interview

Thank for her participation. State purpose and that interview will be recorded.

Background

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your current research and your experience writing in English?
2. Have you written any academic papers in English before this one? If so, what kind? ->
3. {Introduce, have you got to that section} How would you describe your writing process when working on the discussion section?

Perceptions of "Challenge"

What challenges have you faced...?

What has been your biggest challenge when writing the discussion section?

How do you know something is a challenge for you? What happens?

Can you describe a specific moment when you felt stuck or frustrated while writing this section?

What does the word "*challenge*" mean to you when it comes to academic writing in English?

Cultural, Institutional, and Genre-Based Challenges

Is it clear for you how the discussion section should be written — for example, what to include and how formal or confident it should sound?

Do you feel the expectations are different in English compared to academic writing in Spanish?

Has any feedback from supervisors or reviewers confused you or made you feel uncertain about how to proceed? When you get feedback do you get challenges understanding it and trying to integrating it into the work? How do you cope with them?

How clear do you think your audience is to you when you write? characteristics as readers, expectations. Who do you imagine the audience you are writing is for? what do you assume about what they want, how are you thinking about them? conventions? - prompt follow up, not answers. What are some of the characteristics of the audience you are writing for, what do they want from you?

Linguistic, Lexico-Grammatical, and Stylistic Challenges

What types of language-related difficulties do you experience most often?*

Is it hard for you to express critical-(complex, sophisticated) or interpretive ideas/concepts?

Do you struggle with choosing the right words to show your opinion or attitude about your results, or to avoid repeating the same expressions?

(move?) How confident do you feel in your ability to make your writing sound academic in English?

Affective and Identity-Based Challenges - concerns?

How do you feel when writing in English compared to your first language?

Do you ever feel self-conscious or worried about how your writing will be perceived?

Has writing the discussion section affected how you see yourself as a researcher? - explain why, im worried about this section

Do you feel you've found a way to express yourself clearly and confidently in academic English, like a researcher?

Coping Strategies and Support Systems

What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?

Have you used writing models, peer feedback, digital tools, AI, or consulted supervisors?

Which of these strategies do you find most effective, and why?

What would you recommend to other students in a similar situation?

Wrap-Up

Is there anything about your experience writing the discussion section that you think is important but we haven't talked about?

If you could go back in time, what would you do differently when preparing to write this section?

Appendix B – Codebook

Codebook —Thematic Analysis of Doctoral Students' Academic Writing for Publication (Two Interviews)

This codebook compiles initial codes derived from the thematic analysis of two semi-structured interviews with Mexican doctoral students discussing their experiences writing scientific articles in English. The codes are aligned with the research questions addressing perceived challenges, coping strategies, and affective factors influencing their writing processes.

RQ1a: What linguistic, structural, and institutional challenges do they perceive?

Code	Definition	Participant(s)	Example Quote	Type
L1 & L2 Initiation Difficulty	Struggle to start writing, both in Spanish and	P1	“No sé ni por dónde empezar...”	Cognitive/Structural Challenge

	English, due to cognitive overload and uncertainty.			
Linguistic Frictions in English	Difficulties with passive voice, tenses, terminology, and accurate translation.	P2, P1	“A veces tengo la idea en español, la traduzco, pero no suena igual en inglés.”	Linguistic Challenge
Technical Lexicon and Register	Challenges with discipline-specific terminology, hedging, nominalizations, and formal scientific register.	Both	“No me sé la palabra exacta”	Linguistic Challenge
Cohesion & Coherence (Micro)	Linking ideas at sentence level; avoiding repetition;	P1		Linguistic Challenge

	thematic progression and reference.			
Genre & Discussion- Section Complexity	Perception that the discussion is harder due to its argumentative and justificatory nature.	Both	“Es el arte de pulir... justificar, sostener lo que uno dice.”	Genre/Structural Challenge
Argument Flow & Paragraphing	Difficulties reordering ideas, avoiding redundancy, paragraph structure.	P1	“Qué va primero”	
Mismatch Between Requirements and Support	Perceived gap between publication demands and institutional help.	Both	“Nos piden publicar, pero nadie enseña cómo.”	Structural/Institutional
Forced Autonomy	Self-teaching and strategy- building driven by institutional	Both	“Es algo que haces por tu cuenta.”	Institutional

	gaps rather than preference.			
Difficulty Accessing and Selecting Literature	Limited or costly access to updated or relevant literature, reliance on Sci-Hub.	Both	“Si no hubiera Sci-Hub, muchos científicos no existirían en México.”	Institutional/Material Challenge
Normative Ambiguity of Journals	Uncertainty about journal expectations, rules for justification, or structure.	Both	“Depende del revisor que te toque...”	Structural/Institutional Challenge
Plagiarism & Paraphrase Anxiety	Fear of plagiarizing when rephrasing scientific ideas.	P1	“A veces siento que no sé cómo decirlo diferente sin cambiar el sentido.”	Linguistic/Ethical Challenge

RQ1b: What strategies do they employ to cope with these challenges?

Code	Definition	Participant(s)	Example Quote	Type
L1→L2 Translation Pipeline	Drafting in Spanish and translating into English using tools or peer help.	Both	“Primero lo hago en español y luego lo traduzco.”	Writing/Linguistic Strategy
Modeling Published Articles	Using similar papers as templates to imitate structure and argumentation.	Both	“Busco trabajos parecidos y me guío por su discusión.”	Genre Strategy
Prediction–Result Contrast	Organizing discussion based on comparing expected vs actual results.	P1	“Empiezo revisando si los resultados concuerdan con lo que predije.”	Analytical Strategy
Technological Tools	Using Grammarly, AI, or databases to	P2, P1	“Uso Grammarly para detectar mis errores.”	Support Strategy

	improve grammar or identify conventions.			
Incremental Polishing	Refining drafts iteratively for clarity and cohesion.	P2	“Voy puliendo la idea principal hasta que queda clara.”	Micro-level Writing Strategy
Advisor Feedback Utilization	Using advisor feedback to improve clarity but maintaining authorship.	Both	“Me dicen falta discusión, pero no me explican cómo... trato de hacerlo a mi manera.”	Interactional Strategy

RQ1c: What affective factors influence their writing process?

Code	Definition	Participant(s)	Example Quote	Type
Temporal Anxiety & “Time Against Me”	Feeling of time scarcity and stress limiting experimentation and autonomy.	Both	“Tenemos el tiempo en contra...”	Affective/Temporal

Institutional Loneliness in Writing	Perception of lack of guidance or institutional support in writing in English.	Both	“Jamás me han enseñado cómo escribir un artículo.”	Affective/Institutional
Fear of “Picky” / demanding Audience	Fear of critical reviewers and imagined academic scrutiny.	Both	“Siento que el lector es como el señor de Ratatouille.”	Affective/Identity
Emotional State as Writing Trigger/Block	Mood directly affects productivity and fluency.	P1, P2	“Cuando estoy bien anímicamente , escribo más fácil.”	Affective
Writing Under Pressure	Productivity rises near deadlines but increases stress and procrastination.	P1	“Solo escribo bien cuando tengo entrega.”	Affective/Behavioural
Identity / Legitimacy in	Academic writing in English	Both	“No sé lo suficiente”	Affective/Behavioural

Academic English	associated to “incompetent” self-perception.			
Self-perception as writer shaped by external validation	Dependence of external validation as emotional trigger.	P1	“influyó mi asesora que dijo que podía hacer las cosas bien”.	
Need for Templates & Outlines	Perceived need of pre-made outlines for writing scaffolding.	Both	“Tener un puntero o guía, para que puedas tener un machote, un modelo base.”	Needs & Pedagogic Strategies
Need for a course focused on Academic Writing	Need of a course specialized on guiding them in the conventions of academic writing in English.	Both		

Appendix C – Participant Background Questionnaire

PARTICIPANT 1

CUESTIONARIO DE INFORMACIÓN DE ANTECEDENTES

(Por favor, responde con la mayor precisión posible. Si hay información que no sabes, indícalo y menciona si puedes conseguirla más adelante.)

I. Información Personal y Académica

1. Nombre completo: Arelee Estefanía Muñoz Hernández
2. Nombre con el que prefieres ser referida en la investigación: P1
3. Universidad donde realizas tu doctorado: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero
4. Año en el que te encuentras dentro del doctorado: 2, semestre 4
5. Área de especialización dentro de la ecología: ecología evolutiva
6. ¿Cuáles son los temas principales de tu investigación actual? Integración floral y síndromes de polinización.
7. ¿Has trabajado en algún proyecto de investigación que quieras mencionar?
8. ¿Has presentado tu trabajo en congresos o conferencias? Si es así, ¿cuáles?
En el doctorado no me he presentado en ningún congreso aún.
9. ¿Cuál fue tu puntaje en el TOEFL ITP (o cualquier otra certificación de inglés que tengas)? 452
10. ¿Desde hace cuánto tiempo estudias inglés? desde el 2021
11. ¿Cómo utilizas el inglés en tu vida académica y profesional? (Ejemplo: leer artículos, asistir a conferencias, escribir papers, etc.):
leer artículos, asistir a conferencias, no he escrito papers; sin embargo lo requiero. Exponer en eventos internacionales

II. Información sobre tu Universidad y Entorno Académico

12. ¿Cuáles son los requisitos de publicación para los estudiantes de doctorado en tu universidad? ○ ¿Es obligatorio publicar en revistas de alto impacto para graduarse? es

obligatorio publicar un artículo en alguna revista de alto impacto

13. ¿Tu universidad ofrece algún tipo de apoyo o asesoría para mejorar la escritura académica en inglés? Sí, pero no es algo que puedas tomar con frecuencia, es muy extraordinario y no he tomado alguno.

14. ¿Existen programas o cursos internos sobre escritura académica en inglés?
ninguno

15. ¿La universidad tiene algún incentivo o financiamiento para la publicación de artículos en revistas científicas? ninguno

16. ¿Participas en actividades académicas en inglés? (Ejemplo: seminarios, colaboración con investigadores extranjeros, proyectos internacionales, etc.)
no, ningunaABRAHAM (P2)

CUESTIONARIO DE INFORMACIÓN DE ANTECEDENTES

(Por favor, responde con la mayor precisión posible. Si hay información que no sabes, indícalo y menciona si puedes conseguirla más adelante.)

I. Información Personal y Académica

12. Nombre completo: Abraham Arzola

13. Nombre con el que prefieres ser referida en la investigación: P2

14. Universidad donde realizas tu doctorado: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán

15. Año en el que te encuentras dentro del doctorado: 2

16. Área de especialización dentro de la ingeniería química: ciencias agropecuarios y manejo de recursos naturales

17. ¿Cuáles son los temas principales de tu investigación actual? utilización de nanomateriales para el tratamiento de agua

18. ¿Has trabajado en algún proyecto de investigación que quieras mencionar?

19. ¿Has presentado tu trabajo en congresos o conferencias? Si es así, ¿cuáles?
Si he presentado

20. ¿Cuál fue tu puntaje en el TOEFL ITP (o cualquier otra certificación de inglés que tengas)? 541

21. ¿Desde hace cuánto tiempo estudias inglés? desde el 2022

22. ¿Cómo utilizar el inglés en tu vida académica y profesional? (Ejemplo: leer artículos, asistir a conferencias, escribir papers, etc.):

leer artículos, asistir a conferencias, no he escrito papers; sin embargo lo requiero. Exponer en eventos

II. Información sobre tu Universidad y Entorno Académico

17. ¿Cuáles son los requisitos de publicación para los estudiantes de doctorado en tu universidad?

○

¿Es obligatorio publicar en revistas de alto impacto para graduarse? es obligatorio publicar un artículo en alguna revista de alto impacto

18. ¿Tu universidad ofrece algún tipo de apoyo o asesoría para mejorar la escritura académica en inglés? no

19. ¿Existen programas o cursos internos sobre escritura académica en inglés? ninguno

20. ¿La universidad tiene algún incentivo o financiamiento para la publicación de artículos en revistas científicas? ninguno

21. ¿Participas en actividades académicas en inglés? (Ejemplo: seminarios, colaboración con investigadores extranjeros, proyectos internacionales, etc.) no, ninguna

Appendix D – Informed Consent Forms

FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPANTES

Estudio: Escritura de la sección Discusión para publicación en inglés (ERPP)

Investigador: Aldo Falú Gutiérrez Koyoc | **Programa/Institución:** Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés, Facultad de Lenguas, BUAP

Contacto: 223462015@viep.com.mx 222 709 9162

Se le invita a participar en una investigación académica. Antes de decidir, por favor lea cuidadosamente

la información siguiente. Si algo no es claro, puede preguntar en cualquier momento.

Propósito del estudio

El propósito de este estudio es explorar los desafíos, estrategias y factores afectivos que experimenta un(a) estudiante de doctorado al escribir la sección Discusión de un artículo académico en inglés para su posible publicación en una revista indexada y/o de alto impacto. Asimismo, se busca describir cómo se toman decisiones de escritura durante ese proceso (por ejemplo, organización de ideas, uso de evidencia, postura/voz, y manejo de comentarios de asesoría).

¿Qué se le pedirá hacer si acepta participar?

Si acepta participar, se le solicitará lo siguiente (según su disponibilidad):

- Participar en una entrevista semiestructurada (aprox. 45-90 minutos), de preferencia por videollamada (Zoom).

- Autorizar la grabación de audio (y opcionalmente video) de la entrevista para su posterior transcripción y análisis.
- Compartir de forma voluntaria uno o más documentos relacionados con su proceso de escritura (por ejemplo, borradores de la sección Discusión, fragmentos, notas personales o comentarios/retroalimentación recibida), eliminando o marcando cualquier dato que usted no desee compartir.
- Aceptar que se usen extractos breves y anonimizados de la entrevista y/o de los documentos en la tesis y posibles presentaciones académicas.

Confidencialidad y manejo de datos

Toda la información recolectada se utilizará únicamente con fines académicos. Su nombre y cualquier dato que pueda identificarle (por ejemplo, institución, lugares, personas o proyectos) serán sustituidos por seudónimos o eliminados en las transcripciones y en los reportes. Los archivos (grabaciones, transcripciones y documentos) se almacenarán de forma.

Riesgos y molestias

Los riesgos son mínimos. Es posible que algunas preguntas le resulten incómodas (por ejemplo, hablar de presión, estrés, inseguridad, o experiencias difíciles al escribir). Usted puede omitir cualquier pregunta, pausar la entrevista o terminar su participación en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia.

Beneficios

No hay beneficios directos garantizados. Sin embargo, su participación puede contribuir a comprender mejor los retos de la escritura académica para publicación en contextos de habla no inglesa y puede generar insumos para mejorar la asesoría y enseñanza de escritura académica.

Participación voluntaria y retiro

Su participación es completamente voluntaria. Puede negarse a participar o retirarse en cualquier momento, sin penalización ni repercusiones. Si decide retirarse, puede solicitar que no se use su información (en la medida en que sea posible hacerlo sin afectar análisis ya integrados).

Dudas y contacto

Si tiene preguntas sobre este estudio, puede contactar al la investigador en los datos de contacto indicados al inicio de este documento.

Declaración de consentimiento

Al firmar, declaro que he leído y comprendido la información anterior, que he tenido oportunidad de hacer preguntas y que acepto participar en este estudio en los términos descritos.

- Acepto que la entrevista sea grabada en AUDIO.
- Acepto que la entrevista sea grabada en VIDEO (opcional).
- Acepto que se utilicen extractos anonimizados (citas breves) en la tesis y/o presentaciones académicas.

Nombre del/de la participante: Abraham Arzola Cruz

Firma: 

Firma del/de la investigador:

Esta carta de consentimiento le pertenece y puede conservarla como referencia.



Appendix E – Sample Transcribed Interview Initial Coding

Participante:

Dos. Sí. Bueno, creo que ambos se enfocan como en cosas muy generales, no como que no se están enfocando en cómo escribo, sino en decir: “ah, bueno, esta frase no se entiende” ¿no? O “esta frase es muy repetitiva”. “En esta frase estás repitiendo la idea de arriba” ¿cómo que esta retroalimentación, me ayuda?, claro que sí me ayuda muchísimo porque a veces soy como, mi cabeza es muy caótica y sí, me ayudas, ah y en decirme, “tienes que ser mucho, muy concreta, no, no te vayas tanto por las ramas, se concreta”. Mi asesor principal, que es el de Tecpan, él, por ejemplo, no es como mi asesora anterior, que si no le gustaba como sonaba, ella lo reescribía. Él no. Él me dice: “Aquí quisiste decir esto, pero dilo de otra forma” No lo resuelve, sino como que me dice: “Tú piénsale, porque es tu chamba, y escríbelo diferente”. En esta última revisión que me hizo pequeña fue “A ver. Esto quisiste decir, completa la frase, porque lo que borré no es que esté mal, pero no es el punto, entonces completa esto”. Pero como que lo acomodó, o se acomodó mis palabras ¿no? Pero no reescribió, no.

Entrevistador:

¿Te es más funcional así?

Participante:

Ehrm, pues sí, para mi aprendizaje. Pero como me envié con la otra asesora, entonces yo espero como que él, o sea, yo mandarle el texto, y ya que él diga “no esto, si no, esto sí, esto no, y ya yo lo escribo, lo que no me gusta”, y yo me acostumbré mucho a eso, pero siento que es un muy buen ejercicio, porque te obliga como que a ir moldeando tu propio estilo.

Entrevistador:

Ahora que comentas sobre el estilo y la retroalimentación, y antes me mencionabas tus estrategias, también quisiera ver como la otra parte, porque es como el el meollo de mi investigación, los retos. Cuando has escrito, no sé si has escrito, No, no. Sí, me comentaste que publicaste ya una un artículo, y me imagino que con sección de discusión ¿no? Pero, sobre todo en esta parte ¿qué encontraste más difícil de hacer, qué retos ves al escribir esta sección?

Participante:

Sí. Que cuando descubres, cuando contrastas tus resultados con lo que se sabe y encuentras que que descubriste una cosa totalmente distinta, como tratar de decir ¡chin! me equivoqué, algo hice mal porque no salió lo que yo esperaba, pero porque es como algo bien, difícil, que muchos asesores, incluso hasta cambian los datos, para que te dicen “está mal porque no salió lo que queríamos, entonces algo estuvo mal, hay que volver a hacerlo” Pero no, tengo la fortuna de haberme encontrado con asesores que me dicen: “Bueno, o sea así se comportó la naturaleza, la que tiene que explicarlo eres tú, la naturaleza no se va a comportar como tú quieres”. Y creo que el reto más difícil es encontrar literatura que puedas citar para poder escribir tu discusión. Porque yo, al escribir ese artículo encontré que había una especie que era mucho, muy dominante con respecto a las demás, y entonces me decía la pregunta era, bueno, ¿por qué? O sea, por qué hay dominancia de esa especie con respecto a las demás. O sea, qué es lo que explica la dominancia, y bueno, dentro de ya pensar y pensar y pensar, yo

Comentado [DG23]: STRAT_PEER_ADVISOR_FEEDBACK
NEED_MENTORSHIP_STYLE

Comentado [DG24]: CHAL_ARGUMENT_FLOW

Comentado [DG25]: STRAT_PEER_ADVISOR_FEEDBACK

Comentado [DG26]: AFFE_IDENTITY_INSECURITY
STRAT_PEER_ADVISOR_FEEDBACK

Comentado [DG27]: STRAT_POLISHING
NEED_MENTORSHIP_STYLE

Comentado [DG28]: AFFE_AUDIENCE_FEAR
CHAL_JOURNAL_AMBIGUITY

Comentado [DG29]: STRAT_PRED_RESULT
STRAT_PEER_ADVISOR_FEEDBACK

Comentado [DG30]: CHAL_LITERATURE_ACCESS