

**EXPERIENCES OF PUBLISHING IN ENGLISH: VIETNAMESE
DOCTORAL STUDENTS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES**

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ABSTRACT

Publishing research articles in English-medium refereed journals is a challenging task for non-native English speaking (NNES) doctoral students. Limited research, however, has been conducted in the Australian context to explore publishing experiences of NNES doctoral students. Adopting a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews to collect data, this research investigates language-related challenges encountered by seven Vietnamese students studying doctoral programs in Australian universities and their strategies to successfully publish their research articles in English. Content analysis was adopted for data analysis and an inductive approach was used to identify themes that emerged from the data.

The results show that as non-native English speakers, these Vietnamese doctoral students had difficulties in using their discipline-specific terminology, expressing ideas in English and developing ideas logically. They also had to handle paper rejection and negative comments on their language issues given by journal gatekeepers. As novice scholarly writers, they encountered additional challenges because of their insufficient knowledge of and practice in writing research articles. To get their papers published, they have developed necessary strategies such as co-authoring with supervisors, seeking linguistic assistance from native speakers, self-proofreading, and developing genre knowledge of research articles.

This research project has important implications for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs and supportive writing programs that aim to help increase the publication outputs of NNES doctoral students in Australian universities. Future research may examine the publishing experiences of NNES doctoral students on a larger scale that allows comparisons between different linguistic groups as well as generalisation of the results to a wider population.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

The thesis does not contain any previously published works of others, except where the references are made.

An approval for the research has been obtained from the Macquarie University Ethics Committee with the reference number is 5201600288.

Signature of the candidate: _____

Date: _____

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

NES: Native English Speaking

NESs: Native English Speakers

NNES: Non-native English Speaking

NNESs: Non-native English Speakers

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Writing for publication has become a significant activity for doctoral students, which may bring great benefits for them. As doctoral research is a source of new knowledge production (Kamler, 2008), disseminating doctoral research results in peer-reviewed publication helps contribute new knowledge to various disciplines and enables doctoral students' disciplinary enculturation (Y. Li, 2005). In addition, evidence of successful publications has a positive impact on their employment prospects upon graduation. For those students who intend to pursue academic careers, doctoral publication will help them achieve 'professional visibility' necessary for future career development (Dinham & Scott, 2001, p. 45). Given the importance of doctoral publication, many universities worldwide require doctoral students to publish research articles in English-medium refereed journals as a pre-requisite for graduation (Cheung, 2010; D. Cho, 2009; Gosden, 1996; Y. Li, 2015).

However, writing for publication is a challenging task for many doctoral students, who are usually novice scholarly writers (Dinham & Scott, 2001). It requires doctoral candidates to be familiar with disciplinary writing conventions as well as the issues under discussion (Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1988; Gosden, 1996). However, the fact remains that most students enter their doctoral programs unprepared to be engaged in authentic disciplinary writing, and have problems with writing due to their lack of familiarity with the specific writing conventions of their disciplines (Maher, Feldon, Timmerman, & Chao, 2014). In addition, doctoral students also need to develop an appropriate voice/identity and adopt an authoritative stance in their writing (Cotterall, 2011). Nevertheless, their current status as doctoral writers often places them under great pressure because they have to 'wrestle with issues of their own identity as novices writing to and in a community of experts' (Tardy, 2005, p. 325). The act of adopting an authoritative stance is also 'anything but natural for a graduate student' (X. Li, 2008, p. 48), who often see themselves as relative newcomers in

their field, and who are afraid of establishing their authority to construct new knowledge. Therefore, the absence of voice/identity or authorial stance is often seen as one of the common characteristics of novice writers (Flowerdew, 2001). Moreover, publishing during PhD study is often a high-stakes and stressful activity for students who have to manage both thesis completion within a certain time frame and publishing from the thesis (Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007).

With the dominance of English as the international language of scholarly publication (Flowerdew, 1999b), there is an increasing pressure for scholars to publish in English-medium refereed journals because it is considered an effective way to disseminate research results to global academic communities (Uzun, 2008). This, however, presents additional challenges for non-native English speaking (NNES) doctoral students¹ because they have to meet the English language standards required by journals in addition to strictly following disciplinary writing conventions. Empirical evidence has revealed that a failure to meet the required English language standards decreases the publication outputs of NNES doctoral students because of editorial rejections (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; Y. Li, 2005).

1.2. Statement of research problems

Considering the importance and complexities of publishing in English-medium refereed journals, it is worth investigating how NNES doctoral students publish their research articles in these journals. To date, most of the research on this topic has been conducted in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries such as China (e.g., Cheung, 2010; Y. Li 2005, 2006, 2007), Taiwan (e.g., Huang, 2010), Japan (e.g., Gosden, 1996), and Korea (e.g., D. Cho, 2009) where doctoral students are required to publish as a condition for graduation.

¹ Non-native English speaking (NNES) doctoral students refer to those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The term is problematic because the prefix 'non' conveys a sense of deficiency. As it is a widely used term in the literature, it will be used in this thesis but with no intention of conveying a derogative sense.

Little, however, has been researched into this practice among NNES doctoral students in the Australian context. Although writing for publication is not a graduation requirement for many PhD programs in Australia, there is a growing pressure on doctoral students to publish during candidature as publication output significantly influences institutions' access to research funding as well as students' professional development opportunities upon graduation (Kamler, 2008). However, low publication output has been reported as a common feature of doctoral programs in Australia (e.g., Catterall & Ross, 2011; Kamler, 2008; Lee & Kamler, 2008; McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006). Therefore, it is worth investigating this practice among doctoral students in the Australian context in order to provide additional support for needy students, which may help increase their publication output. In addition, although NNES doctoral students make up a large proportion of the Australian doctoral student population, there is a surprising dearth of research into their scholarly publishing attempts. In 2013, about 36 per cent (19,917 out of 54,218) of doctoral students enrolled in Australian universities were international students (Australian Education International, 2014) and the top five sending countries included China, India, Vietnam, Brazil and Thailand (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014). This gap in the literature has inspired the author of this thesis to conduct the present study.

A review of literature has shown that NNES doctoral students in EFL countries encounter several challenges when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals (e.g., D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007). Empirical evidence reveals that having language problems is the main reason for multiple revisions before acceptance by academic journals (Cheung, 2010; D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007), which make many NNES doctoral students feel that they are at a disadvantage, when compared to their native peers (D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010). They also receive negative comments from journal editors and reviewers on their language use, which caused them to think that the journal "gate-keepers" had a prejudice toward their non-native

status (D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010). However, a conflicting finding was presented in other studies (e.g., Cheung, 2010; S. Cho, 2004) where NNES doctoral students reported that these gate-keepers were very supportive and sympathetic despite their language problems. The literature also shows that challenges NNES doctoral students meet are not only limited to surface language errors but are also associated with rhetorical factors (e.g., Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Tardy, 2005). While some authors (e.g., Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966) attribute the rhetorical weakness among NNES doctoral students to rhetorical differences between languages, others (e.g., Flowerdew, 2001; Gosden, 1996, Tardy, 2005) suggest that it is due to cultural traits of these students. More research, therefore, is needed to help address the inconsistency in results that have been found in the literature. Although much attention has been given to identifying strategies used by NNES doctoral students, these studies were conducted mostly outside Australia. As different contexts may affect the strategies NNES doctoral students adopt, the present study, therefore, aims to address this gap in the literature by investigating strategies adopted by NNES doctoral students in the Australian context.

While the literature has paid particular attention to the publishing experiences of doctoral students who come from China (e.g., Cheung, 2010; Y. Li, 2005, 2006, 2007), Korea (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; D. Cho, 2009), Japan (e.g., Gosden, 1996), Taiwan (e.g., Huang, 2010), Thailand (e.g., Tardy, 2005), and Indonesia (e.g., Cotterall, 2011), Vietnamese students' experiences have never been investigated. To date, several studies have explored the writing experiences of Vietnamese students in the Australian context: however, these studies focused only on undergraduate or postgraduate students (e.g. Phan, 2001, 2011; L. T. Tran, 2011, 2013). Scant research, therefore, can be found examining the writing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students in the Australian context. The present study, therefore, hopes to make contributions to the existing body of knowledge by incorporating voices from Vietnamese doctoral students studying in Australian universities. It sets out to investigate the challenges Vietnamese doctoral students encounter and the strategies they adopt through the process of writing and

publishing research articles in English-medium refereed journals. Furthermore, all of Vietnamese doctoral students in this study have been working as university lecturers before being granted scholarships by Vietnamese or Australian government to conduct their studies in Australia. As university lecturers, they are expected to publish research articles in English-medium refereed journals (Nguyen & Klopper, 2014). However, the publication output of Vietnamese lecturers was very low compared to their counterparts in some Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand (Nguyen, n.d). Hence, it is worth investigating the practice of writing for publication among Vietnamese university lecturers. The understanding of their scholarly publishing process may assist universities in Vietnam in providing adequate support for their academic staff and thus increasing their research output. To date, limited research has been undertaken on this topic, apart from Pho and Tran (2016), which was conducted in the Vietnamese context among university lecturers working only in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Being a Vietnamese student currently studying in a higher research degree program in Australia, the researcher of this study is interested in learning about the publishing practice of her fellow students. The researcher seeks to hear about their voices from an insider's perspective, and hopes that having a similar linguistic and educational background as the participants will help her in understanding and interpretations of the results of this study.

1.3. Significance of the study

The present study aims to make contributions to the theoretical understanding of the issues regarding doctoral academic writing and publishing, as well as to examine the practical implications for the Australian context where the study was conducted. It intends to enrich the current literature about the publishing experiences of NNES doctoral students. It will add to the body of knowledge by incorporating voices from Vietnamese doctoral students. As this is an under-researched area in Australia, the findings of this study contribute to understanding of

the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students within this context. In addition, with a large number of 767 Vietnamese students currently studying in doctoral programs in Australian universities (Australian Education International, 2016), the study may offer valuable insights into their learning experiences in Australia. This study also has practical implications. Through investigating the linguistic challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals, the findings of this study suggest implications for English for Academic Programs (EAP), as well as supportive writing programs for Vietnamese doctoral students in particular and NNES doctoral students in general.

1.4. Organization of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. This chapter presents a brief introduction to the research topic, the rationale and significance of the study, and the structure of the whole thesis. Chapter 2 presents background information about NNES doctoral students in Australia and a review of the literature on the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students. It also shows how the present study helps to fill gaps in the literature and makes contributions to the existing body of knowledge. Justifications for the research method adopted and a detailed description of research procedures are given in Chapter 3. Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of data analysis, together with a detailed discussion of the findings in light of the literature and existing knowledge about the research topic. The thesis completes with Chapter 6, which summarizes the main findings and contributions of the present study, discusses limitations and implications, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Overview

This chapter presents background information about NNES doctoral students in Australia and a review of relevant studies about the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students, in order to identify the gaps in the literature addressed by the research presented in this thesis. It aims to show how this study makes contributions to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the publishing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students studying in Australian universities.

This chapter is divided into four subsections. The first section gives a brief introduction of international students in Australia and the importance of writing in doctoral study. This is followed in the next section by a discussion of the writing practices of NNES doctoral students in Australia. The third section offers a comprehensive review of the literature about the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students. The last section identifies the writing issues of Vietnamese students studying in Australian universities, and presents the research questions of this study.

2.1. Researching international doctoral students in Australia

The internationalization of higher education has been one of the most successful national strategies in Australia, with 258,369 international students studying in higher education in 2015, and this sector generated \$12.5 billion in Australian export income in 2014-2015 (Australian Education International, 2015). At the higher research degree level, international students also make up a large proportion of the student population in Australia. In 2013, about 36 per cent of doctoral students enrolled in Australian universities were international students (Australian Department of Education and Training, 2014). Given the economic and sociocultural contributions that international students bring to the host country (Andrade,

2006), greater attention should be paid to improving international students' learning experiences in Australia.

In doctoral study, writing plays a central role because it serves as a basis for the assessment of doctoral performance (Tran, 2013) and contributes to the construction of scholarly identity (Parker, 2009). Writing is not simply a task to be completed once the research has been conducted; it is an integral part of research through which the researcher explores various aspects of a research topic. Richardson (1998) describes the importance of writing in research as follows:

Although we usually think about writing as a mode of 'telling' about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it (p. 345).

Doctoral writing, however, is a high stakes activity and a great source of anxiety for doctoral students (Wellington, 2010). In order to become effective scholarly writers, Cotterall (2011) suggests that doctoral students need to familiarize themselves with institutional and disciplinary writing conventions, adopt an authoritative stance, and develop their own voice. Doctoral writing, therefore, is even more challenging for students who come from NNES backgrounds (Cotterall, 2011; Paltridge, 2013). This is because NNES doctoral students are often in lack of English language proficiency and are unfamiliar with their disciplinary linguistic and rhetorical conventions (Maher, Feldon, Timmerman, & Chao, 2014). They also need more time for writing than their native English speaking (NES) counterparts, as they need to attend to both communicating ideas and addressing language issues. In addition, X. Li (2008) points out that the act of adopting an authoritative stance in academic writing is 'anything but natural for a graduate student' (p. 48), because doctoral students often see themselves as relative newcomers to their field and are afraid of establishing the authority to

make their own knowledge claims, particularly if they are non-native writers of the language. She describes how, as a NNES doctoral student, she had to ‘pretend to be master when she is, in reality, an apprentice’ (p. 50) of disciplinary writing practices, as follows:

in order to write a good academic paper in English, the student has to exercise a privilege that she does not possess; perceive herself as an insider when she is on the periphery ... and adopt the attitude that “I know what I am talking about” when she does not know nearly enough to say anything with true authority (p. 49)

Regarding the authorial voice, some journal editors argue that the lack of voice is one of the common characteristics of novice writers, whether they are native English speakers (NESs) or non-native English speakers (NNESs) (Flowerdew, 2001). A number of studies, however, have shown that NNES doctoral students, who come from other linguistic and educational backgrounds, fail to display and contribute their own voice, although they are expected to do so in disciplinary conversations through writing (Ingleton & Cadman, 2002).

2.2. Researching NNES doctoral students’ writing in Australia

Considering the key role of doctoral writing and the additional burden that it places on NNES doctoral students, it is important to explore the practice of writing among NNES doctoral students in order to provide them with better writing support throughout their study. In response to this need, much attention has been given to the practice of thesis writing among NNES doctoral students in the Australian context (e.g., Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Cotterall, 2011; Phan, 2009; Soong, Tran, & Pham, 2015; Viete & Phan, 2007; Wang & L. Li, 2008, 2011). Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) investigated NNES doctoral students’ difficulties when writing the Discussion section of their thesis. Their results are consistent with previous findings about the difficulties that NNES doctoral students experience in thesis writing. In addition to difficulties at the sentence level (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, spelling) and paragraph level (coherence, argument development), NNES doctoral students experienced

difficulty in understanding and meeting the linguistic and rhetorical requirements of the Discussion section of the thesis. An important finding of this study was the mismatch between supervisors' and students' perceptions of the causes of these difficulties. While NNES doctoral students tended to attribute their difficulties to limited English language proficiency, supervisors, in contrast, identified the lack of genre knowledge as the underlying cause.

Other authors (i.e., Phan, 2009; Soong, Tran, & Pham, 2015; Viete & Phan, 2007) examined NNES doctoral students' process of representing their self/identity when writing in English. These students have to struggle to maintain their identity established in their mother tongue and the identity of a doctoral student in an Australian university, in which they are expected to follow their institutional and disciplinary writing conventions. Cotterall (2011) and Wang and L. Li (2008, 2011) investigated the writing pedagogies for NNES doctoral students in the Australian context. Through examining the writing experiences of NNES doctoral students, these authors argue that, in order to assist NNES doctoral students in overcoming the challenges in thesis writing, supervisors have to understand these students' pedagogical needs and develop necessary pedagogical practices in doctoral supervision. Although the practice of disseminating doctoral research results through peer-reviewed journal articles plays a significant role in Australian doctoral education (Kamler, 2008), very little, however, has been researched into its practice among NNES doctoral students in Australia to date.

2.3. Writing for publication among NNES doctoral students

2.3.1. Benefits of writing for publication among doctoral students

Writing for publication has now become an important activity not only for experienced academics but also for doctoral students, who are usually novice scholarly writers. It is believed that it can benefit doctoral students in several ways. Firstly, as doctoral research is 'a major source of new knowledge production' (Kamler, 2008, p. 283), disseminating results of doctoral research in peer-reviewed journals will help contribute new knowledge to the

disciplines as well as enable doctoral students' disciplinary enculturation (Y. Li, 2005). Secondly, it enhances their employment prospects after graduation, as emphasized by Morris (1998, as cited in Jalongo *et al.*, 2014):

...your prospects later in life may depend on having a convincing number of refereed publications on your CV... sooner or later the moment will come when a selection committee will start counting your refereed articles and comparing them to those of other candidates (p. 501).

Thirdly, empirical evidence also reveals that doctoral publication is the most important predictor of future academic productivity, as those who have published during doctoral study will continue to publish later (Dinham & Scott, 2001; Green, Hutchinson, & Sar, 1992). This is especially important for those students who intend to pursue academic careers in the future, as it helps them achieve 'the professional visibility necessary for the development of their academic careers' (Dinham & Scott, 2001, p. 45). For these reasons, students of many doctoral programs in the world (e.g., in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Japan) are required to publish their research results in international peer-reviewed journals as a condition for their graduation (e.g., Badley, 2009; Gosden, 1995; Huang, 2010; Y. Li, 2005, 2006, 2015). However, being able to publish in such journals is really a 'high stakes game' (Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007, p. 102) or a 'highly complex process' (Cheung, 2010, p. 135) for NNES doctoral students, as it requires their gaining entry into their "discourse communities" (Swales, 1990) and getting involved in "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

A "discourse community" is defined as a group of people who share a set of discourses that are directed toward some purpose (Swales, 1990). There are six criteria that identify a discourse community: (1) common goals, (2) participatory mechanisms, (3) information exchange, (4) community-specific genres, (5) highly specialized terminologies, and (6) a high

level of expertise (Swale, 1990). It has been suggested that anyone who wishes to acquire membership in a discourse community has to learn the conventions that underpin these six criteria (Flowerdew, 2001). For doctoral students, writing for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals is one way to gain acceptance into their discourse community by learning about the appropriate linguistic and rhetorical conventions of their discourse communities (Berkenkotter *et al.*, 1988; Flowerdew, 2000). This learning process is referred as “legitimate peripheral participation” by Lave and Wenger (1991), which is a concept based on the assumption that learning only occurs when doctoral students are involved in numerous activities through a form of apprenticeship with expert members of their discourse communities, for example, their supervisors, journal editors/reviewers or more experienced peers. While their learning is completely “legitimate”, their “peripheral participation” places them under great pressure as they have to ‘wrestle with issues of their own identity as novices writing to and in a community of experts’ (Tardy, 2005, p. 325). For NNES doctoral students, this is an even more challenging task because they have to follow the strict conventions of their discourse communities and to write in a foreign language. The process of publishing in English-medium peer-reviewed journals, therefore, may present NNES doctoral students with greater challenges than their NES counterparts (S. Cho, 2004).

2.3.2. Researching NNES doctoral students’ writing issues

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students in regard to the challenges encountered by these students and their strategies to publish research articles in English-medium peer-reviewed journals. These studies, however, are mostly conducted outside the Australian context. They focus on identifying these students’ difficulties throughout their publishing process as well as strategies that they adopt.

2.3.2.1. Challenges encountered by NNES doctoral students

Huang (2010) reported that NNES doctoral students face a number of linguistic challenges when writing and publishing research articles in English. These challenges are perceived by NNES doctoral students themselves (Casanave, 1998; S. Cho, 2004; Flowerdew, 2000; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Y. Li, 2006a, 2007; Tardy, 2005), as well as by journal editors/reviewers (Flowerdew, 2001; Gosden, 1992). Empirical evidence also reveals that language problems are the main reason for multiple revisions before acceptance by academic journals (Cheung, 2010; D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007). Y. Li and Flowerdew (2007) found that even when the manuscripts had been revised several times based on peer or reviewers' comments prior to submission, they did not achieve a native-like standard. This makes many NNES doctoral students feel that they were at a disadvantage, when compared to their NES peers (D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010). Another disadvantage of being a NNES is that it took the NNES doctoral students a longer time to prepare manuscripts, and this put them under greater pressure throughout the whole process of publishing (D. Cho, 2009; Huang, 2010). This negative perception comes from an awareness of their non-native speaker status and the negative comments from the journal reviewers and editors. Moreover, the negative comments from journal editors and reviewers regarding their language use, such as, 'poorly written', 'far below acceptable minimum level' (Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007, p. 106), 'poor English' (Huang, 2010, p. 37), or 'a paper with such poor English would harm the reputation of their journal' (D. Cho, 2009, p. 235) made the students feel that the journal gate-keepers had a prejudice toward their writing (Huang, 2010, p. 38).

Regarding the attitudes of these journal gate-keepers, a contrasting finding has been reported in Cheung (2010) and S. Cho (2004). While S. Cho (2004) reported that NNES doctoral students found that reviewers and editors were not 'discriminated' toward their NNES status (S. Cho, 2004, p. 64), NNES doctoral students in Cheung (2010) reported that editors were very 'supportive' and 'sympathetic' despite students' language problems (Cheung, 2010, p.

140). The findings in Cheung (2010) are in agreement with the claim provided by most of the journal editors in Flowerdew (2001) that they had an equal treatment for NES and NNES contributors, and in fact, tried to find ways to assist NNES scholars. As these studies report inconsistent findings, further research on the same topic should be undertaken to extend our knowledge in this topic area.

However, the challenges that NNES doctoral students encounter when publishing in English go beyond 'surface language errors' (Flowerdew, 2001, p. 134). They face additional challenges that are caused by rhetorical differences between their first languages and English language. According to Connor (1996), each language has its own rhetorical conventions and first language conventions may impact on second language writing in English. For example, Kaplan (1966) indicated one salient feature between English writing and Oriental writing: while English writers start by making the point, following an essential linear pattern, Oriental writers tend to use an indirect approach and only come to the point at the end. This may make the papers written by Asian doctoral students be considered 'difficult to follow', or be given the feedback that 'the clarity of the presentation is poor' (Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007, p. 106).

However, other researchers (e.g., Flowerdew, 2001; Gosden, 1996, Tardy, 2005) attribute this rhetorical weakness among NNES doctoral students to their cultural traits. For example, NNES doctoral students often fail to persuade the readers of the importance of their work as they feel uncomfortable with making 'overt attempts to boast' about their credibility (Tardy, 2005, p. 334). In addition, NNES doctoral students have difficulty presenting an authorial voice (i.e., representing their perspectives on a topic while engaging in assessing research already reported in a research area). The absence of authorial voice has been noted as 'a common cultural trait of southeast Asian writers', which is related to the 'deferential discourse system operating in that area' (Flowerdew, 2001, p. 138). These writers, whether experienced or novice, are afraid of expressing a precise authorial stance, and are 'conscious

that they don't say anything loudly' and will 'sort of defer to authority' (Flowerdew, 2001, p. 138). The rhetorical acts of stating the contributions of one's work as well as developing an authorial voice are mostly expected in the main sections of articles such as the Introduction, Literature Review, and Discussion. However, these sections are the most challenging parts for NNES novice scholars to write, as indicated by empirical evidence (S. Cho, 2004; Flowerdew, 1999a, 2001; Y. Li, 2005, 2007; Shaw, 1991).

The review of the literature presented thus far has reported a number of language-related challenges encountered by NNES doctoral students when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals. Their challenges are not only limited to surface language errors but are also associated with rhetorical factors. Given the numerous challenges posed for NNES doctoral students in English-medium academic publishing, as well as inconsistent findings remaining in the current literature, further research should be undertaken to enhance our understanding of the challenges NNES doctoral students encounter as the basis for providing them with further language support.

2.3.2.2. Strategies adopted by NNES doctoral students

In order to publish research articles in English-medium refereed journals, NNES doctoral students have adopted strategies such as co-authoring (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; Cotterall, 2011; Huang, 2010), seeking editorial assistance (e.g., Cheung, 2010; S. Cho, 2004; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007), translating from their first language into English (e.g., Gosden, 1996; Y. Li, 2005, 2007), or getting textual mentorship from published articles (e.g., Cheung, 2010; Y. Li, 2005, 2007).

One of the strategies that NNES doctoral students often adopt is co-authoring with their supervisors, peers or colleagues (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; Cotterall, 2011; Huang, 2010). Although co-authoring brings many advantages, such as sharing workload, exchanging ideas, and linguistic assistance, problems may occur when NNES doctoral students work with their NES

supervisors. S. Cho (2004) suggests that the difference in their language status may lead to unequal work distribution between them. In S. Cho's study, a Korean graduate student collaborated with his NES professor; however, his participation was limited to administering a survey and analysing the raw data, while the professors were in charge of writing the Introduction, Literature Review and Conclusion sections. This unequal work distribution, according to Cho, can be due to the NNES doctoral student's limited linguistic skills. In addition, the difference in their language status may also 'enforce NES author's position of power over the NNES author, regardless of the original source of the ideas in the research' (S. Cho, 2004, p. 50). A Japanese scholar in Casanave's (1998) study revealed that co-authoring with her former U.S supervisor sometimes led to an uncomfortable position in which she had to decide 'who would be listed as first author, who would draft and revise, and generally how to balance the work of preparing an article for publication' (p. 191). However, a contrasting finding is reported in Cotterall's (2011) study, in which an Indonesian doctoral student enjoyed a 'collegial relationship' when co-authoring a paper with his NES supervisor (p. 419). He was given the authority to decide what would be best for his papers and, went through a collaborative revision process with his supervisor. As inconsistent findings have been reported in previous studies, the present study aims to further explore the power relationship between NNES doctoral students and their NES supervisors.

Another strategy adopted by NNES doctoral students is to seek editorial assistance for their manuscripts (e.g., Cheung, 2010; S. Cho, 2004; Y. Li & Flowerdew, 2007). S. Cho (2004) reported that a graduate student requested to have his papers proofread by academic writing advisers in his university writing centre. However, the advisers lacked the time as well as disciplinary knowledge in the student's particular field of study, and therefore could only help correct surface grammatical and lexical errors. However, for NNES doctoral students who reside in non-English speaking environments, they have a very limited access to professional editorial services as well as assistance from native English speakers. Their three main sources

of editorial assistance come from their supervisors, peers, and language professionals. Y. Li and Flowerdew (2007) identified the strengths and weaknesses of each of these sources, and therefore recommended that language professionals, subject experts, and academic journals collaborate and help NNES doctoral students overcome language problems to secure English-medium academic publication.

Empirical evidence also shows that translating from the first language into English and getting textual mentorship from published articles in English are two other common strategies adopted by NNES doctoral students studying in a non-English speaking environment (e.g., Cheung, 2007; Gosden, 1996; Y. Li, 2005, 2007; Okamura, 2006). For example, half of the Japanese PhD students interviewed by Gosden (1996) reported translating their research articles into English despite the time-consuming nature of such a process. A similar observation was made among Chinese doctoral students in Y. Li (2005, 2007). In addition, published articles in English were also used as a source of linguistic and rhetorical assistance for NNES doctoral students in Y. Li (2007), Cheung (2010) and Okamura (2006). Extensive reading of research articles in English helps them maintain a collection of useful linguistic forms and then internalize these forms for later use in their own articles; therefore, it can be a coping strategy to overcome linguistic difficulties.

Overall, previous studies have identified a number of strategies that NNES doctoral students develop during their publishing process. However, to date, previous research has mostly focused on strategies adopted by NNES doctoral students outside the Australian context. As different contexts may affect the way NNES doctoral students decide on their strategies, the present study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the strategies that NNES doctoral students in Australia adopt to successfully publish their research articles in English. This gap in the literature deserves great attention as it can help

facilitate NNES doctoral students' publication outputs by raising their awareness of effective strategies.

In Australia, although publishing research articles in English-medium peer-reviewed journals is not a requirement for PhD graduation, there is an increasing demand for doctoral students to publish during their course of study and preparing doctoral graduates to become prolific scholars in international publication is considered to be 'a crucial outcome of doctoral education' in Australia (Kamler, 2008, p. 292). However, low publication output has been mentioned as a common feature of doctoral programs in Australia (Aitchison, Catterall, Ross, & Burgin, 2012; Kamler, 2008; Lee & Kamler, 2008; McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006). Although NNES doctoral students make up a large proportion of the Australian doctoral student population, their practice of writing for publication is under-researched. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the challenges encountered by NNES doctoral students enrolled in Australian universities when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals and the strategies they adopt to handle these challenges. While the literature has reported on cases of doctoral students from different linguistic backgrounds such as Chinese (e.g., Cheung, 2010; Y. Li, 2005, 2006a, 2007), Korean (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; D. Cho, 2009), Japanese (e.g., Gosden, 1996), Taiwanese (e.g., Huang, 2010), Thai (e.g., Tardy, 2005), and Indonesian (e.g., Cotterall, 2011), Vietnamese doctoral students, however, have never been examined. This study, therefore, aims to fill the gap by incorporating the voices of Vietnamese students.

2.4. Writing issues of Vietnamese students studying in Australia

This section reviews previous studies on writing problems of Vietnamese students enrolled in Australian universities. According to Liddicoat (1997, p. 13), a number of cross-cultural issues may arise when 'the non-native speaker has to learn to communicate in a specialist community in another language'. Therefore, when an increasing number of Asian students

comes to study in Australian universities, their cross-cultural issues have attracted the attention of scholars (e.g., Ata & Kostogriz, 2015; Green, 2007; Soong *et al.*, 2015; Tran, 2013; Yates & Nguyen, 2012), who have noticed that Asian students' cross-cultural issues lie mostly in their academic performance, and their English academic writing seems to be the key issue. This is also true in the case of Vietnamese students studying in Australia. Their writing experiences in Australian universities have been studied by Vietnamese scholars such as Phan (2001, 2011), L. T. Tran (2011, 2013), Luong and Nguyen (2008), Soong, Tran and Pham (2015), and Viete and Phan (2007). While Asian students are often stereotyped into a homogeneous group whose writing is crucially determined by their Asian culture (e.g., Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Kaplan, 1996; Sowden, 2005), Phan Le Ha (2001, 2011) has argued that academic writing experiences of Vietnamese students enrolled in Australian universities are shaped not only by the social and cultural valued practices in their first language but also by their prior education backgrounds and their individual writing preferences.

Phan (2001) explored how **the** Vietnamese culturally situated notion of “polite” influenced the way four Vietnamese postgraduate students wrote academic English in an Australian university. The study found that when these students wrote in English, their writing was not very critical and was slightly influenced by an indirect approach in Vietnamese writing. This may be due to the cultural traits of Vietnamese people, who tend to maintain respect and harmony by avoiding a direct debate or criticism. It is also possibly due to the fact that these students are not explicitly taught how to write academic essays in Vietnam and are not required to be critical in their writing (Phan, 2001). Phan's study suggests that it is advisable for Vietnamese students to be introduced to English academic writing before studying in Australian universities, and Australian academics also need to be aware of the impact of sociocultural and educational factors on Vietnamese students' writing in order to help them overcome their writing issues.

Another study by Phan (2011) on Vietnamese students' writing practices in the Australian context again demonstrates that culture is not the only or ultimate factor governing these students' writing. Rather, the study found that their writing was shaped by their individual preferences. Although these students were aware of the differences between Vietnamese and English academic writing as well as the causes of these differences, they reported that their writing in English was somehow affected by their individual styles. While rhetorical organization patterns in English academic writing is 'going directly to the point' or being 'linear in its development', writing in Vietnamese has an indirect or circular approach and the points made are not necessarily connected to the central idea (Phan, 2011, p. 31). This can be explained by the 'tactful' and 'indirect' personal traits of Oriental people, who often 'say things around one topic' (Phan, 2011, p. 30). English is a writer-responsible language (Hinds, 1987) in which the writer has the responsibility to explicitly indicate arguments and guide the readers through the arguments with clear signposts or signals; and therefore, clarity and explicitness are noticeable features of English writing. In Vietnamese writing, this responsibility, however, is assumed to belong to the readers and the readers will have to read between the lines to understand the writer's arguments (Phan, 2011). Therefore, Vietnamese writers tend to create a "flow" in their writing, using complicated, figurative, and sometimes irrelevant words rather than making everything explicit to the readers. However, students in Phan's (2011) study reported that they adopted a simple and straightforward writing style and avoided using complicated words in order to make everything clear to the readers when writing in English. They also confirmed the use of key words or repetition of key words to make writing coherent and cohesive.

Although several attempts have been made to study Vietnamese students' writing experiences in the Australian context to date, the above studies mostly collected data from Vietnamese students at undergraduate or postgraduate coursework levels. Very little, however, is known about Vietnamese students' writing at the higher degree research level. The present study,

therefore, contributes to existing knowledge by investigating the writing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students through the publishing process. It aims to seek answers to the following two research questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia when writing and publishing research articles in English?
2. What are the strategies adopted by Vietnamese doctoral students to handle their challenges?

Summary

This chapter presents background information needed to understand this study, including information about international students in Australia, writing practices of NNES doctoral students in Australia, and the benefits of writing for publication among doctoral students. The review of relevant literature focused on two issues: (1) the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students, which has been mostly researched outside the Australian context; and (2) the writing issues of Vietnamese students in the Australian context. Since the writing practices of Vietnamese PhD students in Australia is under-researched, this suggests a gap in the literature and the need to study how these students encounter challenges and employ strategies to publish research articles in English-medium peer-reviewed journals. Thus, this chapter gives an overview of the relevant literature and justifications for undertaking this study. The following chapter presents the research method adopted in this study and provides a detailed description of the research procedures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

The previous chapter has provided the background information needed to understand this study, an overview of the relevant literature about the practice of writing for publication among NNES doctoral students, and justifications for the research questions of this study. This chapter presents a discussion of the research methodology adopted. It starts with a rationale for the choice of research method approach. This is followed by a detailed description of how to recruit participants and their profiles. Then, data collection method and steps of data analysis are discussed.

3.1. Research method approach

There are three common research designs in applied linguistics research: quantitative research, qualitative research, and mixed methods research. In order to answer the research questions given in the previous chapter, this study employs a qualitative research approach and semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection because of the following reasons:

Firstly, as Dörnyei (2007) states, ‘qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals’ (p. 38); thus, it is appropriate to use this research paradigm to achieve the aim of this research which investigates Vietnamese doctoral students’ experiences of publishing in English. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) also notes that ‘qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’ (p. 2). Since the present study investigates publishing experiences from the perspectives of the ‘insiders’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38) by listening to the individual voices of Vietnamese students who are enrolled in doctoral programs in Australia, their voices can be heard and be analysed for the first time.

Secondly, an interview, which was described as a ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984, p. 102, as cited in Richards, 2009), is selected as the data collection method because it offers ‘different ways of exploring people’s experiences and views’ (Richards, 2009, p. 183). Being described as the core method in qualitative research, an interview not only involves the use of questions and answers to elicit information from the participants, but also allows the researcher to explore hidden meanings behind the information shared by the participants, and to try to see things from the participants’ perspectives (Richards, 2009). Among three types of interviews, namely, structured interview, unstructured interview, and semi-structured interview, a semi-structured interview was selected for the study, because it ‘offers a compromise between the two extremes’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). It is semi-structured because there is always an interview guide with pre-prepared questions and prompts, so that the content focuses on the key issues of the study. However, with an open-ended format, a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to ‘follow up interesting developments’ and interviewees to ‘elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136); that is, the ‘semi-’ part of its name. Thus, using this type of interview will help increase both the depth and the richness of the participants’ responses while maintaining a focus on the key issues of the research.

Other data collection methods (e.g., questionnaire) may not be appropriate for this study because this study does not aim to test any theories but to explore an unknown area, that is, the practice of writing for publication among Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia. Hence, the adoption of an inductive approach using the qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interview will help the researcher gain a deep insight into the phenomenon. In addition, conducting interviews gives the author the opportunity to probe by asking follow-up questions, which is not possible when using questionnaires.

3.2. Participants

3.2.1. Participant recruitment

The recruitment of the participants was conducted through a public advertisement posted in the Facebook group of Vietnamese doctoral students enrolled in Australian universities (see Appendix 2 for the Advertisement). This Facebook group, of which the researcher is a member, is a platform where Vietnamese doctoral students share their learning and living experiences in Australia. The advertisement, which is written in both English and Vietnamese, provided a general description of the purpose of the study, the research activity involved, the eligibility criteria as well as the rights of the participants. The participants must have had experience of publishing in an English-medium refereed academic journal and they were informed that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to explain the reasons and without consequences. The researcher's mobile number and email address were provided so that potential participants could make initial contact to arrange for the interviews. After three weeks, seven students showed their interest in participating in this study. Further exchange of information between the researcher and the participants was conducted through emails, mobile text messages, or Facebook messages.

3.2.2. Participant profiles

The participants were Vietnamese students who are enrolled in full time doctoral programs at Australian universities. Their ages ranged between 27 and 39. Six of them were male while only one was female. Ideally, there should have been a balance in the gender of the participants. However, as the study was based on voluntary participation of Vietnamese doctoral students, the researcher had no control of their gender. Most participants were in the third or fourth year of their candidature and one of them had just finished his PhD program. Despite the researcher's initial hope to recruit participants from various disciplines, the participants of this study actually came from two branches of science: Social Sciences

(Criminology, Laws, and Education) and Applied Sciences (Environmental Engineering, Telecommunication, Information Technology, and Biomedical Engineering). All of them studied bachelor degrees in Vietnam. Four of them completed Master studies in Vietnam; the three others obtained their Master's degrees in Australia, Thailand, and the US. Their IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores were between 6.0 and 7.0 when they enrolled in doctoral programs in Australian universities. Three of them did not have to take the IELTS test as their Master's programs were undertaken in English. See Table 1 for the profiles of the participants in the present study.

Table 1: Profiles of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Discipline	Length of PhD study	Bachelor degree	Master degree	IELTS test score
S1	Male	33	Criminology	3 rd year	Vietnam	Australia	Not required
S2	Male	27	Biomedical Engineering	Just completed	Vietnam	Vietnam	6.5
S3	Male	27	Tele-communication	2 nd year	Vietnam	Vietnam	6.0
S4	Male	32	Information Technology	3 rd year	Vietnam	Thailand	Not required
S5	Male	29	Environmental Engineering	3 rd year	Vietnam	Vietnam	6.5
S6	Male	33	Laws	4 th year	Vietnam	Vietnam	7.0
S7	Female	39	Education	3 rd year	Vietnam	US	Not required

Table 2 below shows the publishing experiences of these participants. All of them have had experiences of submitting papers to English-medium peer-reviewed academic journals and receiving the journal editors'/reviewers' comments. Five of them had their paper rejected, then resubmitted, or went through major revisions before being accepted by the journals. Only two had their papers accepted after first submission, with minor revisions suggested. At the

time of interviews, six of them had had their papers officially published, while one had just had her paper accepted by a journal. All of them are first author of their papers which are sole-authored or co-authored. Among all the participants, S1 appears to be the most prolific scholar with 4 papers published (and two more in the pipeline) during his PhD study in Australia.

Table 2: Publishing experiences of participants

Participants	Number of publications	State of papers	Authorship	Rejection experiences
S1	4	Officially published	First author/Sole-authored	Yes
S2	3	Officially published	First author/Co-authored	Yes
S3	2	Officially published	First author/Co-authored	Yes
S4	1	Officially published	First author/Co-authored	No
S5	1	Officially published	First author/Co-authored	Yes
S6	2	Officially published	First author/Sole-authored	Yes
S7	1	Just accepted	First author/Co-authored	No

3.3. Data collection

Data were collected from the end of April to the beginning of June. Six interviews were conducted face-to-face and in public places such as cafés or libraries. One interview was carried out by mobile phone using Facetime. All the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and lasted about 35 minutes. The use of Vietnamese throughout the conversations made the interviewees feel comfortable, and therefore they were able to express their ideas freely and easily. Moreover, it enabled the interviewer, who shares the same linguistic and cultural background with the interviewees, to easily catch the nuances of their words and

explore the implied meanings. The interviews were audio-recorded, as note-taking during the interviews might disrupt the process and the interviewer might not be able to catch all the details of the conversations. Before the interviews, all the participants were informed of the recording, and they all agreed to be recorded.

At the beginning of the interviews, some background questions were asked to obtain general information about the participants' age, disciplines, educational background, and English language proficiency. Then, the content questions focusing on their publishing experiences were asked. These questions were about the challenges interviewees faced and the strategies they adopted to attempt to publish their papers in English-medium refereed academic journals. These questions were developed based on the findings of previous studies (e.g. S. Cho, 2004; Flowerdew, 1999; Huang, 2010) and key topics that needed to be covered during the interview (See Appendix 3 for the list of interview questions). During the interviews, probes were also used to ask the participants to elaborate on what they had just said, in order to increase the richness and depth of their responses. At the end of the interviews, the interviewees were encouraged to add or share more information in addition to what they had been asked, through final closing questions. Using such questions is considered to help the interviewer to obtain more insights into the participants' experiences and thus, to increase the richness of the data (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition, this enables the participants to take the initiative to share their further experiences, rather than simply responding to the questions that the researcher had prepared beforehand.

3.4. Data analysis

As this study involved the analysis of interview transcripts, qualitative content analysis was adopted because it is 'one of numerous research methods used to analyse text data' (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Qualitative data analysis is defined as a 'research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification

process of coding and identifying themes or patterns' (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278) or 'a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material' (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). Qualitative content analysis is commonly employed 'to answer questions such as what, why and how' (Heikkilä & Ekman, 2003, p. 138). This method, therefore, could help the researcher in the present study search for answers to the two research questions. As the goal of qualitative content analysis is 'to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study' (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314), it was considered suitable for the aim of the present study, which is, to gain an insight into the publishing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia.

As prior knowledge regarding publishing practices of Vietnamese doctoral students is very limited, an inductive approach to qualitative content analysis was adopted, with codes, categories, or themes directly drawn from the data, rather than being predetermined (Cho & Lee, 2014). The process of data analysis comprised four steps: (a) transcribing and translating the interviews; (b) pre-coding and coding; (c) growing ideas; and (d) interpreting the data and drawing conclusions (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 246).

The first step was transcribing and translating the interview data. This was a time-consuming process, as the recordings also needed to be translated into English. In order to save time, the transcription and translation were done simultaneously. This process took around 4-5 hours for each interview and was done solely by the researcher. However, to ensure the accuracy of the translation, a professional translator was hired to check ten per cent of the translation (around 5 pages). Although the content of the interviews is the focus of the data analysis, some paralinguistic features such as the body language of the respondents (e.g., gestures, facial expressions), tone and pitch of respondents' voice, and background noises were also included in the transcription.

The second step was pre-coding and coding. After transcribing the data, the researcher read the transcripts many times to become completely familiar with the data. In addition, all the initial thoughts that came to the researcher's mind while reading were also written down in a notebook. This step, called pre-coding, which helps 'shape our thinking about the data and influence the way we will go about coding it' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 250), took place before the actual coding of the data. Then, the data went through a formal and structured coding process. The written transcriptions were printed out in hard copy, and the extracts of the transcriptions that were relevant to the research topic were marked with multi-coloured highlighting and labelled in such a way that they could be 'easily identified, retrieved, and grouped' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 250). The process of coding took place several times, and the initial 'descriptive and low-inference codes were gradually being replaced and supplemented by higher-order pattern codes' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 251). For example, an original code '*lack of terminology*' might be replaced later as '*a linguistic challenge*'.

After the coding process, the third step was growing ideas which led to the conceptualization of some of the main themes of the study. Any thoughts or ideas that came to the researcher's mind during the coding process were written in a notebook. These notes were as long as a sentence or even a paragraph. According to Dörnyei (2007, p. 254), these notes are also called 'analytic memos', and are 'invaluable in facilitating second-level coding and are also likely to contain the embryos of some of the main conclusions to be drawn from the study'.

The final step of the analysis was interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. This step involved the selection of core themes to elaborate on, and then writing up the report. This selection was done based on the 'salience of the particular concept and its relationship with other categories' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 257). Then, the conclusions were drawn out based on selected themes and the interpretations that the researcher had developed in the memos.

As the quality of data analysis relies on the repetitive and systematized examination of the data (Hammersley, 1981, cited in Hewitt-Taylor, 2001), the present study aimed to achieve this quality by performing repeated coding. Constant comparative method was also employed in this study to make sure that the data was regularly revisited until no new themes were emerging (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). After the first interview transcript had been coded, the codes and their definitions were recorded in a separate file, to ensure that the use of each code remained consistent during the whole process. Then, any subsequent coding of this transcript and other transcripts was carried out with this list of codes in mind. New codes were also added when necessary. In addition, in order to ensure the reliability of the coding, a second coder was employed to code 10% of the interview transcripts independently, using the lists of codes developed by the researcher. Then, any discrepancies between the coded items were discussed by the two coders and the inter-coder reliability rate was 85.72%.

Summary

This chapter has provided justifications for the adoption of a qualitative research approach in the present study and a detailed description of the research procedures, including participant recruitment and data collection. This is followed by the information about the educational background and publishing experiences of participants. The process of analysing the interview data, using qualitative content analysis is also reported. The results of data analysis and discussion of the results will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students

Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the challenges encountered by the participants in this study when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals. The results generally indicate that these Vietnamese doctoral students encountered a number of difficulties throughout their writing and publishing processes due to their status as non-native English speakers and novice scholarly writers. This chapter is divided into two sections. In Section 1, their difficulties caused by their non-native status, such as adequate use of discipline-specific terminology, expression of ideas in English, logical development of ideas, and handling paper rejection and negative feedback from editors/reviewers are reported. Section 2 describes their additional challenges caused by their lack of sufficient knowledge and experience in writing research articles as novice scholarly writers. The whole chapter aims to present the findings that provide answers to the first research question of this study and it is followed by a discussion of the main findings.

4.1. Challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students as NNESS

4.1.1. Use of discipline-specific terminology

When asked about the difficulties participants encountered when preparing manuscripts for journals, all the participants reported that they had met quite a number of difficulties. Three (S1 [Student 1] , S2, and S4) out of seven participants said that they lacked the terminology of their disciplines. Even S1, who had studied his Master's degree in Australia, also faced this problem. He reported that he did not have sufficient vocabulary to express exactly what he wanted to say in English:

S1: My discipline is criminology so it has its own terminology. [...]. For the same phenomenon, Vietnamese people may use some sentences to express but the reviewers may suggest using only one word instead.

Another participant, S2, who encountered the same difficulty, explained the necessity of using the exact terms of each discipline in order to be perceived as a member of the academic discourse community who is engaged in scholarly conversations:

S2: Each discipline has its own terminology; one word in this discipline may have different meanings in other disciplines. Therefore, we need to use the exact terminology to show the reviewers that we are in this discipline, not others.

4.1.2. Expression of ideas in English

Three (S2, S3, and S5) out of seven participants admitted that their limited English language proficiency has adversely affected the quality of their writing in terms of the ability to express their ideas. S4, who studied his Master's degree in Thailand and never took any IELTS test, revealed that it was difficult for him to express his ideas using complex language. Even for S5, who achieved a 6.5 IELTS test score, encountered a similar problem:

S5: For the same sentence, I find it difficult to express what I wanted to say. But after my supervisor has corrected it, I find it much better. [...] This may be due to my limited English proficiency.

Two other participants (S2 & S3) also expressed difficulty in translating their ideas into English. As they could not think in English, they had to rely on translation. However, the habit of translating from Vietnamese into English made their writing difficult to understand and their expressions sound unnatural:

S3: The biggest challenge is that we often think in Vietnamese first and then try to translate our thoughts into English. This makes the readers feel it hard to understand.

S2: In Vietnam, we mostly learn the words through translation rather than practise using them in sentences. Therefore, our expressions are often awkward and do not sound right to an English native speaker.

In addition, three participants (S4, S6, & S7) experienced difficulty in presenting their ideas clearly so that reviewers could understand their message:

S7: They (reviewers) made comments on one of my ideas which had not been discussed clearly, so they suggested that I should either take it out or develop it again right from the beginning.

S4: They (reviewers) just mentioned some sentences that they did not understand and required me to make them clear. [...] In addition, I did not give enough explanation. When I mentioned something, I did not make it clear enough so they (reviewers) asked me to justify it.

S6: I remembered one reviewer saying that I wrote that paragraph just like 'Alice in Wonderland' [an American fantasy film by Tim Burton, based on Lewis Carroll's fantasy novels, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*]. [...] It means I wrote that paragraph just like a sleepwalker so he could not understand what I really meant.

Moreover, three participants (S3, S4, S5) admitted that their limited language ability made it hard for them to express exactly what they wanted such as highlighting the contributions or significance of their research, or giving a critique of others' works. The following three extracts illustrate this:

S3: Even when our issue is a significant one and distinctive from others, our language use is not good enough to highlight it. So the readers may think that it is just a normal one or similar to other issues.

S5: When we do our research, we understand our contribution, but when we express it in English, our use of language may reduce the contribution of our research, make readers misunderstood or not fully understand.

S4: I want to express my criticism and I want to soften it by using appropriate language. Yet, due to my limited vocabulary and sentence structures, I cannot express my criticism in the way I wanted.

As revealed from the extracts, participants in this study had difficulty with expressions of ideas such as using complex structures, translating their ideas into English, expressing their ideas clearly, highlighting the significance/contribution of their research, or giving their own critique in an appropriate way.

4.1.3. Logical development of ideas

In addition to communicating ideas clearly, participants also had trouble displaying logical thinking in their writing. S6, who obtained the highest IELTS overall band score (7.0) among all the participants, stated that the biggest challenge facing him as well as other non-native English speakers is how to organize ideas in the paper in such a way that it is understandable to the readers:

S6: Scholarly writing requires critical thinking, logical thinking and argument organization. These criteria go beyond the language problems.

Similarly, S2 emphasized the necessity of showing logical thinking in his paper:

S2: As we, the authors, have disciplinary knowledge, so it's easy for us to understand our paper, whether we start from 1 to 2 or 2 to 1. But for outsiders, they expect that our paper will follow the logic. Therefore, our articles should be constructed clearly enough for one to get an overall understanding without reading it word-for-word.

He continued by saying that a failure to display logic would make the reviewers confused and pick on spelling mistakes. Therefore, it may have a negative impact on the outcome of papers:

S2: As reviewing is just a voluntary job, the reviewer may also be busy and under the pressure of publishing. He may have only half an hour to read our paper, so if our paper is just a mess and does not follow any logic, he may get confused. And when the reviewer feels unhappy reading our paper, he will turn his attention to our spelling mistakes.

Despite their awareness, these participants revealed that developing their ideas in a logical and systematic order was really a struggle as they tended to follow the way of logical thinking of Vietnamese when composing in English:

S4: As I said, Vietnamese people do not follow a central idea when writing a paragraph, we write with our own logic. Whenever we think of any new idea, we just put it in. Therefore, it does not stick to the main idea of the paragraph.

S4: As I am not accustomed to writing English essay which requires a specific topic in each paragraph, I just write following my own logic. Even when we have great vocabulary and correct grammar, if we don't follow the logic of a paragraph, it's very difficult to present our ideas.

S3:It's our logical thinking. Sometimes, we write based on our own logic, which may be difficult for the others.

In short, participants in this study had difficulty with their development of ideas as they tended to follow their Vietnamese patterns of thinking when writing in English.

4.1.4. Paper rejection and feedback from journal editors/reviewers

When discussing paper rejection and feedback from journal editors or reviewers, all of the participants were willing to share their experiences. Among the seven participants, only two (S4 and S7) had their papers accepted immediately after their first submission. The other five participants had their papers rejected initially and resubmitted at least once before being accepted by journals. Student 6's first paper was even rejected six or seven times by different journals before it was finally accepted. The most common reasons for paper rejections were mainly about the content of paper and the quality of writing. Regarding the content of paper, some of the comments they received from the journals were 'your paper does not have novelty, nothing new', 'your paper is not interesting/significant enough' or 'the topic was not suitable for the journal'. With these types of comments, they often received a quick rejection response from the editors:

S5: I received the result within one day so I knew that it was sad news. They answered that my paper was 'out of scope'. The journal is a science one while my discipline is engineering, so maybe it is really 'out of scope'.

S6: My paper was not suitable for the aims and scope of the journal, as they said, even though I studied the journal and found that my paper was suitable.

Regarding the quality of writing, their papers were considered to have too many language errors, were poorly-organized, or did not meet the required standards of English language of the journals:

S5: They criticized my language, my English was not good.[...]. They also criticized the structure of my paper.

S6: For the first paper, the reviewers said they were not convinced of my writing. They thought that my writing was not really good enough.

Some participants pointed out the issues of editors'/reviewers' potential bias against NNES scholars in their interviews but contrasting viewpoints were found. Four (S1, S4, S6, and S7) participants thought that the editors and reviewers did a good job, providing supportive and fair reviews and also offering concrete suggestions for improving their writing:

S1: I personally think that their feedback is not too negative; there are even people sharing their linguistic knowledge with me [...] When the reviewers sent me my papers back, they had comments and gave support to help me make necessary changes.

S4: Three out of four reviewers gave constructive and corrective feedback and I agreed with them. [...]. When I looked back at my writing, I found that the reviewers' comments were accurate.

S6: The journal which refused my paper even suggested how I could revise my paper. They also showed their belief that I totally could revise my paper based on their suggestions.

The other three participants (S2, S3, and S5), however, had different opinions. Student 3 thought that the editors and reviewers sometimes did not do a really good job, giving unfavourable comments:

S3: Many reviewers are also crazy. [...]. Their English is not very good but they give us so many comments on our language use in order to put us down. It's quite common.

Interestingly, S2 found that non-native referees seemed to be more critical of grammatical and vocabulary mistakes than native referees:

S2: A 'ridiculous' thing is that the native speaker does not 'criticize' much about our language, so if our language use is criticized a lot, then our paper must have been reviewed by a non-native speaker. [...]. Yes, it's a bit funny and stupid but it actually happened.

S5 even thought that the editors had a bias against his non-native English speaking status:

S5: My supervisor said that when they (editors) saw my name which is not an English one, they would be picky about my language use. They would know that I am a non-English speaker.

4.2. Challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students as novice scholarly writers

As novice scholarly writers, Vietnamese doctoral students in this study met additional challenges when writing and publishing their research articles in English. These challenges were caused by their lack of sufficient knowledge and experience in writing research articles. Although the participants in this study had previously worked in academic positions in Vietnam, they had no experience in writing research articles in English. In the interviews, all the participants revealed that they had never written research articles in English before they started their PhD programs in Australia. Therefore, when they had to write an article, they found it very different from the writing tasks required for IELTS or TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) that they had previously encountered:

S5: In IELTS writing, the topics are more general, although it is still academic writing. But research writing requires a higher level of logical thinking and synthesis of information. [...]. It requires us to write concisely and avoid plagiarism.

S6: Even when we learnt IELTS or TOEFL writing, we were not aware of those things (critical thinking, logical thinking and argumentation).

In addition, some of the sections in the articles such as the Abstract, Introduction/Literature Review, and Discussion proved to cause them difficulties. Two participants (S1 & S5) found it hard to write the Abstract of their articles:

S1: For me, the most difficult section to write is the Abstract. Although many of my colleagues think that it is not too difficult because it is only 150-250 in length. But from my own experience, telling the whole content of the paper in such limited number of words is not easy.

S5: He (his supervisor) said my words are not interesting enough to attract the readers to read my papers. It's very important for them to consider whether they need my full papers.

For four participants (S3, S4, S6, and S7), the Introduction/Literature Review was the most challenging to write. S3 explained his difficulty in writing this section as follows:

S3: That's the 'Introduction', because we have to 'review' all related materials. The most difficult thing when writing literature review is to emphasize our research. If we cannot make it different from others, the reviewers may think that oh, it's quite the same with others.

As can be seen from the extract, S3's difficulty in writing the Introduction section was that he was unable to create a research space for his own research and promote its significance through reviewing the relevant literature.

Another difficulty encountered by S3 when writing the Introduction/Literature Review section was that he could not provide a comprehensive literature review to show that he really knew the literature. This reason led to the rejection of his recent paper:

S3: My latest paper was rejected because of my Introduction in which the Literature Review was too general so there might be misunderstanding between what I was doing with what I was reviewing. The others had their own research directions which were different from mine. Yet, as I might not have reviewed closely; they (editors/reviewers) might think that all the directions were the same.

S3 also revealed that in two papers where he co-authored with his supervisor, the Introduction section was often written by his supervisor. Similarly, S1 admitted that his supervisor would be in charge of the Literature Review section in their co-authored papers as he had limited background knowledge as well as linguistic ability:

S3: My supervisor was in charge of the Introduction and I wrote the other sections. If I write the Introduction, everything might be destroyed.

S1: My supervisor will make a great contribution to the Literature Review section as it requires deep background knowledge. Also, English is not my native language, so my reading and writing skills are certainly limited.

For S4, the Introduction of a research article was challenging for him as he had to be very careful about not committing plagiarism:

S4: It's very difficult, even when we write the Literature Review in Vietnamese. In English, it's more difficult as we have to use our own words to avoid plagiarism.

S5, however, found that Discussion is the most difficult section to write. This is because he needed to restate his findings and compare the results with findings from other studies before discussing implications. More importantly, he had to emphasize the value of his own research.

S5: For an empirical paper, we need to have good data. But even when we have good data, we still need to highlight in the Discussion why our data is better than others, what it helps to solve and whether it opens a new research direction.

As shown from the above extracts, the participants in this study appeared to have almost no experience in writing research articles in English. In addition, some sections of a research article such as the Abstract, Introduction/Literature Review, and Discussion were challenging for them to write in English because they require 'a strong epistemic presentation in prose form' (Uzun, 2008, p. 256) as well as experiences and skills of the writers.

4.3. Discussion of findings

The present study found that participants met a number of difficulties when writing and publishing their English peer-reviewed research articles and that these challenges were caused by their status as non-native English speakers (NNESs). For instance, the participants reported that they had difficulty in using the exact terms of their disciplines and this finding supports

Dong's (1998), Flowerdew's (2001), and Okamura's (2006) studies which show that the lack of vocabulary is a common problem among NNES scholars due to their lack of familiarity with the English language. This result may also be explained by the fact that the Vietnamese doctoral students in the present study had worked as university lecturers before obtaining scholarships from either the Vietnamese Government or Australian Government for their PhD programs in Australian universities, and therefore they had very limited access to academic resources in English before they started their PhD programs. This severely restricted access to English information resources is believed to be a serious obstacle for Vietnamese scholars wishing to publish internationally, as they are not updated with new scientific developments in their disciplines as well as not having the opportunity for further English language development (Nguyen, n.d.; Pho & Tran, 2016).

In addition, the difficulties in expressing ideas in English, as reported by the participants in this study, are in line with the findings obtained in Flowerdew (1999), Cotterall (2011), Jiang, E. Borg, and M. Borg (2015), and Pho and Tran (2016) in which NNES scholars expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to express themselves in English due to their lack of grammar and vocabulary. Beside this, as participants were from the same linguistic and educational background in Vietnam, it appears that the English language teaching practices in Vietnam have had an impact on most of them. The overemphasis on grammar-translation and the common use of the first language in English language classrooms in Vietnam (Le & Barnard, 2009) might have formed their habit of thinking in Vietnam and negatively impacted on their ability to communicate in English. Moreover, differences between English and Vietnamese written language in terms of the writer/reader responsibility could possibly affect their ability to express themselves clearly. Phan (2011) suggests that English is a "writer-responsible" language, which means that it is the writer who is primarily responsible for effective communication by making everything clear to readers; whereas in Vietnamese writing, the responsibility falls on the readers. This difference may explain why there seems to be a lack

of clarity in the participants' writing in which some ideas were not properly discussed, and therefore more explanations are necessary to make ideas clear enough to the readers.

Regarding participants' difficulty in displaying logical thinking, the result of the present study support Kaplan's (1966) and Connor's (1996) ideas that different patterns of thinking between English and other languages create difficulties for NNEs when writing in English. Phan (2001, p. 24) suggests that the way of presenting ideas in English language is 'going directly to the point' or being 'linear' in development; in contrast, Vietnamese writing has an 'indirect' or 'circular' approach, which is influenced by the way Vietnamese people construct knowledge, not critically and directly but circularly and indirectly, to show respect and tactfulness. The results of the present study also provide further evidence for Phan's (2001) claim that 'writing across culture is much influenced by a particular culture of a writer's first language' (Phan, 2001, p. 24). Although Vietnamese doctoral students in the present study did try to follow the logic of English thinking patterns in their academic writing, they tended to maintain some characteristics of their native language style in their writing.

Concerning paper rejection, the results of the present study once again confirm the association between the quality of writing and rejection rates among NNEs authors, as reported by journal editors in Gosden (1992). This result is also in accordance with that of other research (e.g., S. Cho, 2004; Flowerdew 1999; Y. Li, 2005), which show that a failure to meet the standards of English language required by journals decreases the publication outputs of NNEs scholars caused by editorial rejections.

One interesting finding in the present study is that NNEs reviewers appear to be more critical of language errors than their NES counterparts. Although there appears to have been no empirical evidence as well as explanation for this finding to date, Adrian Wallwork (2011), in his book *English for Writing Research Paper*, has provided his personal experience that

NNES reviewers appear to pay more attention to grammar and vocabulary mistakes while NES reviewers are more concerned with the flow and readability of the papers.

The results of the present study also indicate that participants encountered additional challenges throughout their publishing process that were caused by their lack of knowledge and experience in writing research articles. This finding provides further evidence for the claim made by supervisors in Maher *et. al.*, (2014) that most students enter their doctoral programs unprepared to engage in authentic disciplinary writing and they have problems in writing research articles due to their lack of familiarity with their specific disciplinary writing conventions. Therefore, difficulties in writing research articles are not restricted to NNES doctoral students but also met by NES doctoral students. The results of the present study also show that these NNES doctoral students gained their experience in academic writing only through IELTS or TOEFL writing tests preparation. However, these tests appear to be insufficient to prepare these PhD students for their writing needs as the writing tasks required in these tests are very different from scholarly writing, and the students also lack the basic skills of research writing. Although these tests do not aim to prepare NNES doctoral students for their writing needs, this finding demonstrates that NNES doctoral students need additional English language support for writing research articles.

In addition, their difficulties in writing the Abstract, Introduction/Literature Review, and Discussion sections of research articles matches those observed in earlier studies. Flowerdew (1999), Flowerdew (2001), and Y. Li (2007) noticed that the Introduction/Literature Review and Discussion are the most problematic for both NNES and NES novice scholarly writers as they appear to lack experience in writing these sections. Sections such as the Introduction, Literature Review, and Discussion are the main parts where the writers are expected to ‘carve out a research niche’ (i.e., the writers situate their work in the existing literature, create a research space for their own work, and promote its significance and value) (Uzun, 2008;

Flowerdew, 2001). While experienced scholars appear to know how to do it and they have done it, the inexperienced ones, both NESs and NNEs, are often in the process of learning (Flowerdew, 2001). The ability to carve out a research niche, therefore, is not solely determined by the English language background of scholarly writers but also by their writing skills and experience. This offers an explanation for some of difficulties encountered by the participants in the present study.

Finally, the finding that S1's and S3's supervisors were in charge of writing the Introduction and Literature Review sections of their co-authored papers is consistent with those obtained in earlier studies. Leki (2001) and S. Cho (2004) found that limited linguistic ability and lack of disciplinary practice could inhibit NNEs doctoral students from engaging in complex disciplinary writing tasks. However, Leki and Cho also suggest that less demanding tasks (e.g., doing experiments/survey, carrying out data analysis, or writing less difficult sections of research articles) may be beneficial for NNEs doctoral students when they are in the initial phase of learning their disciplinary writing practices.

Summary

This chapter details the major findings obtained from the interviews with participants regarding their linguistic challenges when writing and publishing research articles in English-medium peer-reviewed journals. Overall, the participants encountered a number of linguistic difficulties throughout their publishing process, and these difficulties were caused by their status as non-native English speakers and as novice scholarly writers. As NNEs, participants had difficulties in using their discipline-specific terminology, expressing ideas in English and developing ideas logically. They also had to handle paper rejection and negative comments on their language issues given by journal gatekeepers. As novice scholarly writers, they encountered additional challenges because of their insufficient knowledge of and practice in writing research articles. This chapter also offers an interpretation and discussion of findings

in the context of the literature and existing knowledge about the publishing practice among NNES scholars. The following chapter presents the findings on the strategies that participants adopted to successfully publish their research articles.

Chapter 5: Strategies adopted by Vietnamese doctoral students

Overview

This chapter presents the findings on the strategies employed by the participants in this study to successfully publish their research articles in English-medium refereed journals. Their common strategies include co-authoring with their supervisors, seeking linguistic assistance from native speakers, self-proofreading, and developing genre knowledge of research articles. This chapter aims to give answers to the second research question of the study through presenting the findings, and it is followed by an interpretation and discussion of these results.

5.1. Co-authoring with supervisors

The most common strategy employed by the participants was collaborating with their supervisors. Five out of seven participants had their papers co-authored and they received benefits from working with their supervisors. Among these participants, S5 appeared to receive the fullest support from his supervisor, which led to the success of his paper. Although he designed the research, did the experiments and wrote the article all by himself, he reported that he always got comments and feedback from his supervisor at every step of the entire publishing process and this assistance was essential:

S5: I don't think I could have published my paper without help from my supervisor, especially the first time as I didn't have any experience then.

In addition to specialized knowledge, supervisors were also a good source of motivation and encouragement for participants. Although S1 and S6 did not co-author with their supervisors in their papers, they admitted that they were motivated to publish by their supervisors and also received substantial support from their supervisors during their publishing process:

S6: My supervisor said that my writing had met the requirements of a thesis but not a journal. So it is a motivation for me to reach a higher standard. [...]. When we submit our papers to journals, it is a very

good way to get free feedback from reviewers. It can be said that the reviewers give the most critical feedback and they also set the highest standard in academia.

S1: From my own experience, we should be active in seeking help from supervisors as I think they are always willing to do so, they always encourage us to publish.

Supervisors also provided participants with significant internal reviewing before they submitted their manuscripts to journals. Acting as a pre-submission reviewer, S3's supervisor helped to point out any ambiguities and explanatory gaps in his papers:

S3: My supervisors acted as the first reviewer. With his publishing and reviewing experience, he would give me comments in the same way as the journal editors or reviewers. He would show me any problematic paragraphs or tell me what reviewers might react to in a specific part.

Furthermore, supervisors showed participants how to be robust when facing paper rejections or to develop the necessary skills to negotiate with journal gate-keepers. For example, S2 shared his previous experience in dealing with reviewers' negative comments, which were seen as 'unfair' by him and his supervisor. His first paper received two major revisions and as a rule of that journal, his paper should have been rejected. The reviewer commented on S2's writing, and yet he made language errors himself in his comments. Therefore, S2 and his supervisor used this as evidence to persuade the editor to let him resubmit the paper and reconsider his paper. After a total of four submissions, his paper was finally accepted by that journal. He considered this to be a valuable experience in his first attempt to publish his paper.

S2: It is also a tip for us, that is, if we feel that our paper is ok but the comments of the reviewers are problematic, we have to look at the comments to see which details in the comments are not appropriate. We can use that, not to 'confront' but to make the editors 'sympathize' with us and show them whether the reviewer did 'a good job'. Although we appreciate the work of the reviewers, as it is voluntary, but we need to negotiate with the editors, it will be helpful for us when we want to resubmit our papers.

Regarding the feedback that participants received from their supervisors, it was revealed that supervisors provided different types of feedback on their writing. Apart from focusing on grammar and vocabulary mistakes, supervisors also gave participants practical tips on writing such as avoiding the use of too complex sentence structure, or writing with the target audience in mind:

S2: A good thing that I learnt from him (his supervisor) is that: always write short sentences. As non-native speakers, we should avoid writing long and complicated sentences as we can easily make grammatical mistakes. It's best for us to keep our language simple.

S4: He (his supervisor) said that I needed to learn about the readers and the reviewers of the journals and follow their styles when writing my papers.

A participant (S7) shared that the useful feedback that she received from her supervisor helped to improve the overall quality of her writing:

S7: With his (her supervisor) help, I saw that my writing is more concise, accurate and focused on the standard English language level required of journals.

For S3 and S5, they even learnt how to write research articles directly from using the papers written by their supervisors as exemplars. S3 learnt how his supervisor had organized ideas in a paragraph; meanwhile, S5 learnt how his supervisor had used language in the Abstract to impress the readers:

S3: For some papers where my supervisor was first author, I did most of the research work such as mathematics or modelling, and my supervisor wrote them up. After he finished writing, I read those papers to learn how to write. This may be done after the papers had been submitted. And when I had free time, I asked my supervisor why he wrote a particular paragraph in this way or that way.

S5: At first I had difficulty writing the Abstract of the paper, my supervisor said my words are not interesting enough to attract the readers to read my papers, so he sent me some of his papers to see how he wrote the Abstract.

In short, supervisors played a significant role in the success of participants' papers, even when their names did not appear in those papers. They motivated participants to publish, and provided them with substantial guidance and support throughout the whole process. With their research and writing expertise in their field, their supervisors' support was not only limited to specialized knowledge but also included skills and strategies to help participants successfully publish their articles.

5.2. Seeking linguistic assistance from native speakers

Another strategy adopted by the participants was seeking linguistic assistance from NESs who were usually their PhD colleagues or friends. S1 reported that he needed help from native speakers because of his non-native status and insufficient training in English academic writing:

S1: Due to my non-linguistic background and unsystematic training in English, I asked my colleagues to help me with my English. [...] I asked my colleagues who study Fashion Design or Economics to edit my papers.

However, S1, S2, and S6 held in common the idea that there were disadvantages of seeking linguistic assistance from native speakers. S2 asked his supervisor's wife, who was a native speaker, to proofread one of his papers. However, she could only provide him with limited help due to her lack of specialized knowledge in his discipline:

S2: She only helps to make my language more 'natural', as she does not have any disciplinary knowledge. She may say a particular word is 'incorrect' but we actually use it in our discipline.

Even when S2 asked NES doctoral students from his discipline for help, they could not help him as much as he had expected:

S2: The disadvantage of seeking help from NES peers is that they are also PhD students who don't have much experience of writing papers so they only can help to correct our language use. They cannot help with the structure or coherence of the papers.

Similarly, S6's NES friends helped him to correct his language errors. However, he also mentioned that their corrections just focused on surface language errors as they did not have similar background knowledge of his area of study:

S6: As they don't have disciplinary knowledge, they don't comment on the content or structure of my paper, they just focus on grammar and vocabulary.

5.3. Self-proofreading manuscripts

When asked whether they had ever used any professional editorial or proofreading services, all participants said that these services seemed to be a "luxury" for PhD students due to lack of funding. In addition, as not every supervisor could provide detailed manuscript editing, participants had to develop helpful tips for proofreading their own manuscripts. S2 and S4 reported that they often wrote draft versions first and then put them aside for two or three days to do other tasks of their research. After this, they would come back to read their writings again. This activity, they said, allowed them to see their writings again with "fresh eyes" and made it more likely for them to spot their own grammatical errors:

S2: I usually wrote the draft first, using only short and simple sentences and then printed it out and read, but I did not read it straightaway, I just left it until the next day. Then, it would look like a new page for me and I could easily find out my mistakes. Writing research papers was very tiring. We cannot do it all the time.

S4: I could not write continuously so I had to combine activities. For example, I wrote on Monday and Tuesday, did an experiment on Wednesday, and then came back with my writing on Thursday. You know, continuous reading and writing cannot help us find out mistakes, therefore, we need to have breaks between those activities.

Moreover, they also used online editing tools such as 'Grammarly' (<https://app.grammarly.com/>) or 'Polishmywriting' (<http://www.polishmywriting.com/>) to ensure that their papers were free of grammar and spelling errors. Dictionaries were also used

by the participants. For example, S2 often used a dictionary to check the use of prepositions in English:

S2: I never invent the language; I am really a “copycat”. For example, prepositions are very important in English. I never translate from Vietnamese into English as I may not use correct prepositions; therefore, if I am not sure of using prepositions of a word, I always use a dictionary to check it.

5.4. Developing genre knowledge of research articles

When talking about the process of learning how to write research articles in English, five out of seven participants said that they had participated in training courses, workshops, and seminars on academic writing and research writing held at their universities. Surprisingly, four participants found these courses/workshops ineffective. The first reason was that these courses were organized at the beginning of their PhDs programs when they had not had any ideas about scholarly writing:

S4: They (writing courses) were not effective. [...]because at that time, we hadn't had our research direction. They gave us the theory and required us to write but we did not know how to write as we did not have anything to write at that time.

In addition, the content of these courses were quite general. Therefore, the participants did not appear to obtain much from these courses:

S5: They (writing courses) are still good, but they are quite general. The only thing I learnt from these courses is that they always said ‘read, read, and read’. So my only impression is that we always have to read.

Even when these courses/workshops were organized by their faculties, they were not really discipline-specific:

S7: They (workshops and seminars) were held by School of Education with many sub- disciplines, my discipline is just a small part in it. And the instructor came from Maths discipline so his example was not relevant to me so I found it not really effective.

Another important finding is that all of the participants in this study reported that they learnt how to write journal articles through reading journal articles published in prestigious journals or targeted journals:

S7: My supervisor said, the most useful thing was that we just looked at the published articles at the journal to which we wanted to send our paper. We read and saw how they had been written and then we started our writing. It is more effective than attending the workshops.

S5: In order to learn how to write research articles, I think it's better to learn from our peers or published papers.

As can be seen, participants in this study relied on journal articles as a main source of learning how to write journal articles where they can pick up vocabulary, useful expressions, and writing style, especially from articles written by NESs. However, one participant also admitted that his poor reading ability influenced his comprehension of the text and his later writing:

S3: Sometimes we read a paper, due to our limited reading ability; we don't understand exactly what the writer means. Thus, when we cite that paper in our paper, it is not closely relevant to our research.

5.5. Discussion of findings

It is interesting to note that all seven participants of this study received substantial support from their supervisors when writing for publication, whether they co-authored with their supervisors or not. This result further supports the idea of S. Cho (2004) and Cotterall (2011) that supervisors, with their disciplinary knowledge and writing expertise, can be a great source of support and guidance for doctoral students throughout publishing process. They also acted as initiators facilitating their students' entrance into discourse communities by encouraging students to write for publication. The case of S3 is a good example of how doctoral students became involved in disciplinary writing practices through the guidance and support of their supervisors. S3 started his publishing process through co-authoring with his

supervisor, who acted as the first author. Although his supervisor was in charge of writing the papers and S3 only did non-writing tasks such as data collection and analysis, he had opportunities to learn about disciplinary writing by reading these papers, once his supervisor had finished writing. Not only did he read these papers but he also asked his supervisor why the papers had been written in this way or that way. Soon after this, he was able to write his own paper and submitted it for publication under less guidance from his supervisor.

This evidence further supports Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" that newcomers can become members of their community of practice by participating in a variety of learning activities through a form of apprenticeship with more experienced or expert members in their community. By engaging in such activities, they can directly observe the practices of experts and become acquainted with writing tasks as well as writing conventions of their community.

Looking into the concept of "Discourse Community" (Swale, 1990), the results of the present study has showed that all participants gained their acceptance into their discourse communities through successfully publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals. Although it is a long and complex process as they described, they had opportunities to learn disciplinary writing conventions by interacting with their supervisors, communicating with journal editors/reviewers, or self-mentoring from published research articles, as Flowerdew (2001) has described. Writing for publication, therefore, should be encouraged among doctoral students in general and NNES doctoral students in particular, to enable their 'disciplinary enculturation' (Y. Li, 2005, p. 153).

In terms of the relationship between co-authors, this study did not detect any evidence for imbalanced power relations caused by the language status of co-authors (one is a native English speaker while the other is not), as mentioned in S. Cho (2004). Among the seven participants in the present study, only one (S1) had a native speaker supervisor; however, he

did not report any unequal power relations when working with his supervisor. He shared that when co-authoring, their responsibilities were nearly the same and it was always clear between him and his supervisor about work distribution. This differs from the finding presented in Casanave (1998), in which a Japanese scholar expressed her uncomfortable feeling when co-authoring with her former NES supervisor, because she had to decide “who would be listed as first author, who would draft and revise, and generally how to balance the work of preparing an article for publication” (p. 191).

Although journal editors/reviewers often suggest that NNEs authors have their papers thoroughly checked by NESs prior to submission, the present study found that only three out of seven participants used linguistic assistance from native speakers. However, this assistance was somewhat limited, as native speakers whom they asked for help often lacked the background knowledge and expertise in their disciplines. This result is consistent with the data obtained in early studies by S. Cho (2004) and Carter (2009). As Dong (1998) states that NNEs doctoral students, could be ‘reluctant to participate in a conversation with native speakers’, or ‘reluctant to negotiate or dialogue with native speakers’ ‘in order to save face’ or they could fear ‘self-disclosure’ (p. 384), lack of interaction of participants with native speakers in the present study may be due to their language status. This is further supported by L. N. Tran (2009) on “acculturation dilemma” of Vietnamese international students in Australia. In this study, she found that although 49 out of 51 Vietnamese students expressed a desire to integrate into the Australian society, they did not socialise much with the locals (local friends were the least frequent acquaintances they interacted with) or attend local social events/activities because of their self-perceived limited English competence:

“I still feel awkward and nervous when I have to communicate with the locals. I feel terribly downgraded, maybe less confident even than an Aussie kid. I always feel like

they are laughing at me because of my terrible English, and my very clumsy manner.

(L.N. Tran, 2009, p. 5)

It is possible that the lack of interaction with native speakers may therefore limit students' opportunities to seek linguistic assistance.

It is also noteworthy that participants in the present study did not use any professional editorial services or other resources (e.g., writing groups, peer writing assistants, individual consultations) to help with their writing. Many of them worked in isolation, using their own tips to improve the quality of their writing. On the one hand, this could be due to their lack of funding, which made them unable to hire professional editing services. On the other hand, it may be attributable to the fact that the participants might be unaware of the availability of supportive writing resources in their universities. This evidence further supports Dong's (1998) finding that NNES doctoral students do not make good use of available resources to help with their doctoral writing and tend to work more in isolation, while their NES counterparts use more help from others (e.g., specialists in their fields, manuscript reviewers, or informal review groups) besides their supervisors. Thus, there is a definite need for NNES doctoral students to take advantage of these resources to help improve the quality of their writing

Importantly, the present study found that all of the participants rely on reading published articles as a main source of learning about writing research articles. This result is in line with the data obtained in Okamura (2006), where novice scholars tended to employ a 'subject knowledge-oriented strategy' (i.e., to learn to write a scientific research article through reading and closely working with published research articles) (p. 74). This strategy, however, only equips novice scholars with 'the minimal but essential linguistic forms to survive in the discourse community' (p. 74). In order to be successful scholars, they need to develop

language-oriented strategies (e.g., collaborating with native scholars), as suggested by Okamura (2006).

Finally, contrary to earlier findings reported in Gosden (1996), Flowerdew (1999), and Y. Li (2005, 2007), none of the participants in the present study translated their papers from Vietnamese into English as they said it was a waste of time and not good for the development of their writing skills. However, many of their colleagues in Vietnam are still relying on translation as a preferred writing tool (Pho & Tran, 2016). It may be that the participants' advantage of living and studying in an English speaking environment has enabled them to switch to English for writing. Meanwhile, translation appears to be a strategy among many NNS novice scholars residing in Vietnam due to their limited exposure to English language as well as the lack of participation in disciplinary writing activities.

Summary

This chapter presents the detailed findings on the strategies developed by the participants in this study throughout their publishing process. The results of this study indicate that these students benefit from their doctoral studies in an English speaking country where they can have relatively direct access to disciplinary knowledge as well as to English language resources. They can co-author with their supervisors, who are experts in their disciplines, seek linguistic assistance from native speakers, or easily access to academic resources in English. However, it appears that they have not made the best use of available academic writing support services and resources (e.g., writing groups, peer writing assistants, individual consultations), which might be beneficial for their doctoral publishing practices. In the previous two chapters, the findings of the linguistic challenges and strategies employed by the participants were reported, and these will serve as a basis for the discussion of practical implications for EAP supportive programs in Australian universities and English language teaching in Vietnam. The next chapter presents the outcomes and contributions of the study,

implications and recommendations for practice and policy, and limitations and recommendations for future work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Summary of findings

The increasing demand for doctoral publications and the dearth of research into publishing practices of Vietnamese doctoral students in the Australian context have inspired the present study. Using a qualitative approach with semi-structure interviews as a data collection tool, this study aims to investigate the challenges encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students and the strategies they employed when writing and publishing their peer-reviewed research articles in English. It is not surprising that these Vietnamese doctoral students experienced a number of difficulties throughout their publishing process due to their status both as non-native English speakers and as novice scholarly writers. It is, however, interesting to note that they gain opportunities to develop their own strategies from being enrolled as doctoral students in an English speaking country.

6.2. Contributions of study

To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study to explore issues and writing strategies of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing and publishing their research articles in English. Before this study, little has been known about publishing practices of Vietnamese students enrolled in doctoral programs in Australian universities. Therefore, it is believed that the present study offers an initial understanding of the publishing experiences of these students.

A key strength of the present study lies in its data collection tool (semi-structured interviews), which allows the exploration of Vietnamese doctoral students' challenges to a greater depth. The evidence from this study suggests that Vietnamese doctoral students' difficulties are caused not only by their non-native status but also by their lack of sufficient knowledge and experience of writing research articles, as novice scholarly writers. It is noteworthy to learn

that none of the Vietnamese students in this study had written any research articles in English before they commenced their doctoral studies in Australian universities.

The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that most students entering their doctoral programs lack the necessary preparation for their disciplinary writing, and that their problems in writing are likely to be caused by their lack of familiarity with specific disciplinary writing conventions. The present study found that previous writing experiences (e.g., IELTS writing) did not appear to provide Vietnamese doctoral students with sufficient preparation for their disciplinary writing although it is understood that the purpose of IELTS is not to prepare test-takers for their PhD studies. Moreover, generic writing courses that they attended at the beginning of their study were not discipline specific, and therefore were not sufficient to familiarize these students with the appropriate linguistic and rhetorical conventions of their disciplines.

Additionally, this is the first study to report the advantages gained by Vietnamese students who enrolled in doctoral programs in an English speaking country, in that they have made use of their direct access to available linguistic and specialized knowledge through collaborating with their supervisors, seeking linguistic assistance from native speakers, and obtaining access to English material resources. These resources appear to have provided them with various opportunities to successfully publish their research articles during their doctoral studies.

6.3. Implications and recommendations for practice and policy

Since this study was conducted within the Australian higher education context, it has several practical implications for doctoral writing practices in Australian universities. As the findings of this study show that Vietnamese students did not have sufficient preparation for their disciplinary writing before commencing their doctoral studies in Australian universities, it implies that further language support is needed to help these students and other NNES

doctoral students during their courses of study. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that introductory and generic writing courses/workshops should continue to be available to familiarize NNES doctoral students with disciplinary writing conventions, as such courses are considered to be significant for the development of doctoral genre knowledge (Bruce, 2008). These courses should emphasize specific skills that NNES doctoral students are expected to develop in English academic writing such as logical thinking, critical thinking, and argument development. In addition, as specialized terminology and academic writing conventions vary substantially according to disciplines, it is recommended that EAP specialists and disciplinary experts collaborate in designing and delivering such courses/workshops, as Dong (1998) considers that 'it is only through exchanging information and sharing expertise that such writing courses can provide rich and authentic instruction to meet the demands of writing practices in the disciplines' (p. 388).

Based on the findings, it is also recommended that regular academic writing support throughout the candidature is necessary for successful publishing outcomes of NNES doctoral students. This language support can take the form of formal academic writing groups which are believed to be of a great venue for developing research potential and fostering publication of doctoral students (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008). As some NNES doctoral students really need assistance with their writing, organising writing groups between NNES doctoral students and NES experienced peers or faculty staff in their disciplines can help improve the quality of their writing as well as develop necessary strategies in writing and publishing. Moreover, informal manuscript reviewing sessions that are held regularly such as once or twice a month can also be helpful for NNES doctoral students who wish to obtain feedback and have their papers polished before submission. These sessions provide great opportunities for NNES doctoral students to have their manuscripts read and discussed by their peers, writing specialists, or disciplinary experts. In addition, they can also have opportunities to read and learn from their peers' manuscripts, and therefore develop their skills as reviewers in the

future. This kind of support can be really useful, as Carter (2009) suggests that ‘specific help on actual writing also seemed more effective than a session that looked at principles of writing with examples that were not the students’ own (writing)’ (p. 16).

Regarding journal gatekeepers’ potential bias toward NNES scholars, the present study’s data highlights the importance of raising critical awareness among NNES doctoral students of all possible causes that may lead to their paper rejection rather than their non-native status only. This can be done through workshops or seminars organized by universities in which journal editors/reviewers are invited to share their experiences with and attitude toward NNES contributors. This will be a great opportunity for NNES doctoral students to interact with expert members of their disciplines, listen to insiders’ voices, and settle their doubts about journal editors’/reviewers’ potential bias against NNES scholars.

As this study was conducted among Vietnamese students, it may have implications for teaching and learning academic English writing in Vietnam. Although Vietnamese doctoral students in this study worked previously as university lecturers in Vietnam, they lacked knowledge and experience in writing research articles in English. This may recognise the necessity of training university lecturers in Vietnam in writing English research articles. For instance, workshops or short writing programs can be organized for academic staff so that they have adequate knowledge and writing skills for preparing research article manuscripts. These courses can be taught by senior staff who have extensive experience in international publication or by internationally-renowned scholars working as editors or reviewers in prestigious international journals. Furthermore, in order to encourage international publication among university lecturers in Vietnam, it is essential to improve their accessibility to English material resources (e.g., international databases such as Science Direct or ProQuest), so that they can obtain new and updated scientific knowledge as well as develop their English language abilities.

6.4. Limitations of study and recommendations for future research

Beside its contributions, this research also has some limitations which open up various possibilities for future research. Firstly, the time constraint of completing this thesis in nine months did not allow for the use of a large sample size or mixed methods research. As findings are only based on the information obtained from semi-structured interviews with a small number of participants coming from two disciplines, the capacity for generalisation to a wider population and other contexts is limited. Further investigation into the same topic with a larger sample size from various disciplines is strongly recommended, as this would enable comparisons of Vietnamese doctoral students from different disciplines (e.g., humanities, social sciences, versus natural sciences). In addition, as the present study is based on a group of seven Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia, such a small sample size of one single linguistic group makes its findings less generalizable to other linguistic groups of NNES doctoral students. Further research that recruits participants from different linguistic backgrounds is, therefore, necessary to obtain a comprehensive understanding of NNES doctoral students' publishing practices in the Australian context. Further research should also use a mixed methods approach to enable data triangulation so as to enhance the reliability of the findings.

The third limitation is concerned with the scope of this study, which focused mainly on the linguistic challenges of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing and publishing their research articles in English-medium refereed journals. In other words, this study was unable to show all the challenges facing Vietnamese doctoral students throughout their publishing process although their challenges are assumed to be not limited to language-related difficulties only. Thus, it would be worth investigating other challenges (e.g., time, confidence/motivation, and support for writing research articles) encountered by Vietnamese doctoral students in their attempts to publish research articles.

In addition, only one out of the seven Vietnamese doctoral students in this study undertook a PhD by publication while the others chose to write a traditional thesis. This finding is reminiscent of Dong's (1998) study finding that NNES doctoral students, due to their language and cultural status, may be less likely to select the article compilation thesis format and therefore may have less opportunity to advance in their career through international publication. The relationship between thesis format selection and NNES doctoral students' publication outputs is an important issue that is worth investigating. Finally, as 6 out of 7 participants received writing support from their NNES supervisors throughout their publishing process, there are still many unanswered questions about how Vietnamese doctoral students perceive the power relationship when working with NNES supervisors. Thus, future research into this area would also be worth pursuing.

6.5. Thesis conclusion

This study set out to explore the publishing experiences of seven Vietnamese students studying doctoral programs in Australian universities. It aimed to answer two important research questions about the language-related challenges they encountered and the strategies they developed to publish their research articles successfully in English-medium refereed journals. This study has showed that Vietnamese doctoral students encountered a number of difficulties throughout their publishing processes due to their status both as non-native English speakers and as novice scholarly writers. They also lacked sufficient knowledge and experiences in writing research articles in English. However, taking advantage of studying in an English speaking country, they were able to develop various strategies for scholarly publication. This study provides an initial understanding of the publishing practices of Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia, and has a number of important implications for doctoral writing support in Australian universities as well as teaching and learning academic English writing in Vietnam.

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APPENDIX 1: Ethics approval

Faculty of Arts Research Office <artsro@mq.edu.au>

Ethics Application Ref: (5201600288) - Final Approval

Dear Dr Ma,

Re: ('Experiences of publishing in English: Vietnamese doctoral students' challenges and strategies')

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Arts Human Research Ethics Committee, please see condition below. Approval of the above application has been granted, effective (10/05/2016). This email constitutes ethical approval only.

Approval is dependent on the following condition:

Replace 'anonymous' research in the facebook post (i.e. 'de-identified' instead)

If you intend to conduct research out of Australia you may require extra insurance and/or local ethics approval. Please contact Maggie Feng, Tax and Insurance Officer from OFS Business Services, on x1683 to advise further.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf>.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Florence Ma
Mrs Thi Van Yen Hoang

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 10th May 2017
Progress Report 2 Due: 10th May 2018
Progress Report 3 Due: 10th May 2019
Progress Report 4 Due: 10th May 2020
Final Report Due: 10th May 2021

NB: If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/resources

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Faculty of Arts Research Office at ArtsRO@mq.edu.au

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mianna Lotz
Chair, Faculty of Arts Human Research Ethics Committee
Level 7, W6A Building
Macquarie University
Balaclava Rd
NSW 2109 Australia
Mianna.Lotz@mq.edu.au

APPENDIX 2: Participant Recruitment Advertisement

Dear all,

If you are Vietnamese students who are enrolled in doctoral programs in Australian universities and have had experiences of publishing in one or more English-medium peer-reviewed academic journals during your candidature, you are warmly invited to participate in my research project which examines the publishing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students in Australia. The purpose of this research is to investigate the challenges you faced and the strategies you adopted in an attempt to get your papers published. The research is being conducted by Yen Hoang (yen.hoang@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirements of the Master of Research (MRes) Year 2 in the Department of International Studies under the supervision of Dr. Florence Ma (florence.lai.ma@mq.edu.au) in the Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview which may last 40 minutes and this is an opportunity for you to share your experiences gained through publishing your research results.

No information required from you is sensitive and the information collected from you is completely anonymous (i.e. you will not be identified in any part of the data or publications). Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any times without having to explain the reasons and without consequences.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please contact me at yen.hoang@students.mq.edu.au or text me at 0406752066.

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX 3: List of interview questions

<p>General background information questions (At the beginning of the interview)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you get your Bachelor degree and Master degree? • What is the IELTS requirement of the PhD programs in your university? • What are your research interests? • How many publications in English-medium peer-reviewed academic journals have you had? • What are the names of these journals?
<p>Challenges when writing and publishing in English-medium refereed journals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are your own problems when writing and publishing research articles in English-medium refereed journals? • What do you think are the typical problems of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing and publishing research articles in English? • Why do you think that Vietnamese doctoral students encounter challenges when writing and publishing in English? • Which sections of the research articles are the most challenging for you to write? Why? • Have your papers been rejected by the journals? What are the reasons for their rejections? • When your papers are accepted, which sections of the paper do reviewers ask you to revise? What are their comments on these sections? How did you deal with the reviewers' negative feedback?
<p>Strategies to deal with the challenges</p>	<p>Co-authoring with supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you co-author with your supervisor (s)? • What are the roles of your supervisors in your process of publishing your work? • What are the benefits of co-authoring with your supervisor(s)? • Are there any problems of co-authoring with your supervisor(s)? If yes, what are they?
	<p>Co-authoring with native English speakers (NES)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you co-author with any native English speakers (e.g., colleagues, peers)? • What are the work divisions between you and your NES co-author(s)? • What are the benefits of co-authoring with NESs?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any problems of co-authoring with NESs ? If yes, what are they?
	<p>Seeking linguistic help from University writing centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you seek linguistic assistance from your university writing centre? • What do university writing centres help you with your manuscripts? • Do you find the writing centres useful to you? Why/why not?
	<p>Translating from L1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever used Vietnamese to write the paper first and then translate into English? If yes, can you clarify why you do so?
	<p>Learning how to write research articles in English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you learned to write research articles in English?

APPENDIX 4: Participants' Consent Form

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Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr Lai Ping Florence Ma

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Experiences of publishing in English: Vietnamese doctoral students' challenges and strategies

You are invited to participate in a study which aims to investigate the writing experiences of Vietnamese doctoral students enrolled in Australian universities. The purpose of the study is to investigate the challenges they encounter when writing for publications in English-medium peer-reviewed academic journals and the strategies they adopt to deal with these challenges.

The study is being conducted by Ms. Thi Van Yen Hoang (yen.hoang@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirements of the Master of Research in International Studies under the supervision of Dr Lai Ping Florence Ma, a lecturer in English as a Foreign Language, the Department of International Studies (Email: florence.lai.ma@mq.edu.au; Tel: 61 (2) 9850 7285).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview which collects data about the challenges you encounter when writing for publication in English and the strategies you employ to deal with these challenges. The interview will last about 40 minutes and will be recorded using a voice recorder.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher (Ms Yen Hoang) and her supervisor (Dr Lai Ping Florence Ma) can have access to the data. If you wish to have a summary of findings, please contact Yen Hoang at the email address given above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, (participant's name) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

APPENDIX 5: Interview transcripts

Participant 1: S1

Y: *Before the interview, can I ask you some questions for background information?*

S1: Yes, sure

Y: What is your major in English?

S1: 'Global Urban & Social Studies' but you can say 'Criminology' for sub-major.

Y: *Thank you. Where did you get your Bachelor and Master degrees?*

S1: I got Bachelor of Laws in Vietnam and Master of Transnational Crime in University of Wollongong, NSW

Y: *What is the language requirement of your PhD program?*

S1: I think, In spite of a common language requirement for PhD programs in Australia, there will be specific language requirement for each discipline. My PhD program requires 7.0 IELTS or Master Degree in an English speaking country. As I studied M.A in Wollongong so I did not have to take IELTS test.

Y: *What are your research interests?*

S1: I have 3 research interests: Transnational Crime, Criminology, and Criminal Justice

Y: *How many publications have you had so far?*

S1: I have had 4 journal articles and 3 papers in ISSN conference proceedings. Not all of my papers are in journals ranked A, B, C but they all meet your requirement of English-medium peer-reviewed journals.

Y: *Can you tell me something about the journals that you have submitted your papers to?*

S1: As I answered in the last question, I have 3 research interests so my papers are in those areas and they are all related to Vietnam and Southeast Asian region.

Y: *Thank you. Now I would like to ask you some questions about the challenges that you face when writing for publication in English. What are your challenges?*

S1: In order to make it easier to understand, I will divide them into two main challenges. The first challenge is related to academic writing. I think my own problem as well as of many Vietnamese PhD students in foreign higher education institutions is choosing the 'expensive words', I mean, the exact academic words which are suitable for academic peer-reviewed journals. Even I had my Master degree in Australia; it's not sufficient for me to use the exact words. For example, when the reviewers sent me my papers back, they had comments and had support to help me have necessary changes and many of these changes are language-related.

Y: *You have said that you had difficulty choosing the 'expensive words', do you mean 'terminology'?*

S1: Yes, exactly. My discipline is criminology so it has its own terminology. We often think in Vietnamese first and then try to translate into English. For the same phenomenon, Vietnamese people may use some sentences to express but the reviewers may suggest using only one word instead.

Y: *You mean using only one terminology?*

S1: Yes, exactly. Only one word.

Y: *Do you have any other challenges?*

S1: Yes, I do, that is how to arrange and structure academic writing. It depends on the journals we would like to submit our papers to. Each journal has its own structure. For example, one journal may require structuring our paper into: *Introduction-Body-Conclusion*, the other may require us to give the event first, and then give our discussion and conclusion. So, the requirement, I mean, varies from journals to journals. So, how to present and structure our papers in different ways is one of the difficulties of Vietnamese people when writing papers in English in order to meet the requirements of each journal.

Y: *So, which sections in a paper are most challenging for you to write? And why?*

S1: For me, the most difficult section to write is the Abstract. Although many of my colleagues think that it is not too difficult because it is only 150-250 in length, from my own experience, telling the whole content of the paper in such limited number of words is not easy. As far as I know, as well as what my supervisor shared with me, people often read the abstract first, as you know, not all papers are free, open-access. After reading the abstract, if the readers are interested and feel that it is suitable with their research, they will buy the papers or require the library to download the papers for them. This demonstrates the importance of the abstract. For me, it is one of the most challenging. I usually write the paper first and then write the abstract.

Y: *Have your papers ever been rejected by the journals?*

S1: (laugh), most of them were rejected.

Y: *What are the reasons for your paper rejections?*

S1: Among the reasons for my papers be rejected, I think 30%-40% are language-related. As I mentioned before, there are journals in American English, British English and Australian English. As I was not systematically trained in English from the outset, I may write in Australian English but our supervisors may use British English or American English. So it depends on the extent of support from our supervisors, many of them may correct language problems. So when I received the feedback from the reviewers, for example, they said paragraph 1 was written in BE, paragraph 2 in AE.

Y: *You mean there is no agreement in the dialects of English you use?*

S1: Yes. And it is one of the reasons they refused my papers.

Y: *How long does it often take you to revise your papers?*

S1: It depends on journals. They may require 2 weeks, 4 weeks or 6 weeks. Or there may be no specific requirement, they only suggest 'as soon as possible'. And the authors are always so eager that they try to revise as soon as possible to send their papers back.

Y: *Which sections in your papers do they often require you to revise in order for your papers to be accepted?*

S1: This is such a difficult question. It depends on the knowledge we have put in our papers. It is difficult to make division here. But I just give one example, in the discussion, they may require us to put our more knowledge to make comparison and contrast between our 'literature review' which may be in Australian or American contexts with the research results in Vietnam to see whether the results demonstrate any 'gap', whether the results are good or not, so that we can give 'recommendations'.

Y: *Have you ever received negative feedback from journal editors/ reviewers regarding your language use? And if yes, how did you deal with it?*

S1: In fact, since I enter the playground scholar writing, I think it is not a problem of 'win or lose' when getting feedback from the reviewers, even when the feedback may seem harsh. I personally think that their feedback is not too negative; there are even people sharing their linguistic knowledge with me. And in order to deal with language problem, I asked my English native colleagues, may be in Australia or England, to help me with language issues.

Y: *As you just said you seek linguistic help from your native colleagues, now I would like to move to the strategies you have used. Are your papers co-authored?*

S1: Until now, all of my four papers are single authored. But it does not mean that I 'ignore' those who have helped me, especially my supervisor. One of my strategies is seeking support and encouragement from my supervisor who share disciplinary and linguistic knowledge with me.

Y: *Is he native speaker?*

S1: He's Australian but originated from England.

Y: *You just seek for his advice only after you have finished writing, he did not directly take part in the writing process?*

S1: Yes. Until now, all of my papers are single-authored. But for the last two papers which are still in the pipeline, I co-authored with my supervisor in two papers. It is a sensitive matter for PhD candidates here. Not every paper is co-authored with supervisors. From my point of view, it may be due to their high rankings that they do not always want to co-author with us. For journals of average level, they may not want to appear. Take my supervisor as an example, I also suggested co-authoring with him, but he said I should be independent. But for the last two papers which I would like to publish in level A journals, I co-author with my

supervisor and put him as 'first author'. It is a bit sensitive as it is related to knowledge distribution.

Y: *So you are the person to write and your supervisor just contributes ideas?*

S1: Yes.

Y: *What do you think are the benefits of co-authoring?*

S1: So many, I learn many things from him. In addition, in order to publish our papers in prestigious journals, our papers should be co-authored in order to ensure the objectivity. There should be at least two people co-authoring in writing a paper, even though it is not a fixed criterion. But I think with our current level as a PhD candidate and non-native English speaker, it is difficult to do so, so I think we should co-author with our supervisors.

Y: *Are there any problems between you and your co-author?*

S1: Now I haven't met any problem like that because it is always clear between I and my supervisor about work distribution. For many famous journals, they have forms in which we clearly state the 'distribution' of each author.

Y: *What kind of work were you in charge of in your last two papers?*

S1: The ideas and the basic content are mine but my supervisor made a large contribution in the Literature Review as it requires large background knowledge. As English is not my native language, my reading ability is certainly limited. He also made contribution in the Methodology section as well.

Y: *You also mentioned that you seek linguistic help from your native colleagues? What did they do to help you?*

S1: Due to my non-linguistic background and unsystematic training in English, I asked my colleagues who study Fashion Design or Economics to edit my papers. As they are not of my disciplines, I suggested they help me with language areas such as grammar and vocabulary.

Y: *Have you ever used professional editorial services?*

S1: I think we should do that later. But now, it depends on our funding. If we have no funding, such services are such a luxury. So I mostly ask my colleagues for help.

Y: *Have you ever written your papers in Vietnamese first and then try to translate into English?*

S1: No.

Y: *How have you learnt how to write research articles in English?*

S1: It is quite a long process. I learn from conferences, 'workshops', as in Australia, nearly all universities have 'workshops' for 'graduate research'. I also learn from my colleagues. Especially I learnt from papers published in high ranking journals. For example, I read one

paper in a level A journal about drug crimes in Thailand, Australia or the US to see its structure and then I apply that structure in my paper. I think it is not 'plagiarism'.

Y: Do you learn from your supervisor?

S1: Actually, it is rare to find a supervisor who can instruct you both with your thesis writing and articles paper writing due to his heavy workload. From my own experience, we should be active in seeking help from supervisors as I think they are always willing to do so, they always encourage us to publish. Yet, we need to be active and autonomous. We need to suggest our ideas as well as structures for our own papers, or at least we have to write a draft version before sending it to the supervisors. If they are interested in our papers, they will be the co-authors. Otherwise, we may act as the single author, as our supervisors already have had quite a lot of work to do.

Y: Do you wish to add anything beside the points I have raised above?

S1: I would like to say that, for some of our papers which may be interdisciplinary, we can collaborate with our colleagues through social networks such as 'Research gate', 'LinkedIn'. It may be a strategy for us to increase our opportunity for publishing. Besides, for Vietnamese people, it will be more convenient for us to write about something in Vietnam rather than in Australia or the US, so we should keep contact with our colleagues in Vietnam. They have great source of data toll which may help us generate ideas for the papers. Although there may be a gap in academic writing level, I usually contact with my colleagues in Vietnam as another strategy.

Y: How can you describe your publishing process until now?

S1: Yeah, it is a long process which requires a lot of efforts. It may take me 2 or 3 months to write a draft version for each paper, let alone seeking advice from supervisors. But when I am motivated, it may be only one week. But I personally think that, for a PhD candidate whose native language is not English, one or two paper in one year is good enough.

Y: Thank you very much for your participation in my research.

S1: My pleasure!

Participant 2: S2

Y: *Before the interview, can I ask you some questions for background information?*

S2: Yes, you can.

Y: *What is your major?*

S2: That is Biomedical Engineering

Y: *Thank you. Where did you get your Bachelor and Master degrees?*

S2: In Vietnam

Y: *What is your English language level when applying for your PhD program?*

S2: That's 6.5 IELTS test score

Y: *What are your research interests?*

S2: I am especially interested in researching Terahertz Imaging System for cancer detection

Y: *How many publications have you had so far?*

S2: Three

Y: *Can you tell me something about the journals that you have submitted your papers to?*

S2: They are all published in IEEE, the greatest journal in engineering. I have two papers in IEEE transaction on Biomedical Engineering and one on IEEE transaction on Terahertz Science and Technology

Y: *What are your challenges when writing and publishing your research articles in English?*

S2: The first thing I pay attention to how to present ideas to create a 'flow' and 'logic' in my paper. Sometimes the readers do not have to read the whole paragraph to understand what we mean. Therefore, the first one or two sentences of the paragraph must tell the readers the main idea of the paragraph; we cannot freely add the ideas in the paragraph. This will be very frustrating. The second challenge is using the language; we have to use the exact vocabulary in our discipline.

Y: *Do you mean 'terminology'?*

S2: Exactly. Each discipline has its own terminology; one word in this discipline may have different meanings in other disciplines. Therefore, we need to use the exact terminology to show the reviewers that we are in this discipline, not others. The next challenge is writing sentences, non-native speakers like us can easily make grammatical mistakes when writing long sentences. Therefore, we should prioritize using simple, correct, and understandable sentences. Beautiful words and complex structures are just the second priority.

Y: *Are there any other challenges?*

Another challenge is connecting sentences. As we write short sentences, ideas are often separated. Therefore, we must have connections between sentences. However, using too many connectors seems a bit strange, so we can use either connectors or linking sentences

Y: From your point of view, what are the common problems of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing research articles in English?

S2: I think the first problem is incorrect grammatical sentences as we always try to write long sentences. And the second problem is that we often think in Vietnamese first and then try to translate into English. However, when we translate, we must follow the rules in English in terms of language use and culture. I found that many Vietnamese students often write English sentences but use the structures in Vietnamese. We also combine words in our own ways. This makes our writing unnatural and a bit confusing for the readers.

Y: What are the reasons for these problems, as you think?

S2: I think it's due to English language teaching in Vietnam which puts too much emphasis on grammar, and the practice of vocabulary is just through 'gap filling' exercises. We just know the words but we do not know how to use them. On the other hand, we mostly learn the words through translation rather than practise using them in sentences. Therefore, our expressions are often awkward and do not sound right to an English native speaker.

Y: What are the other reasons?

S2: Another reason is that we don't put ourselves in the place of the readers.

Y: What do you mean by that?

S2: It means when we write a research article, we must have had good knowledge of that area, but the reviewers do not always have the same knowledge, hence they will not understand.

Y: Why do you think they do not understand?

S2: Because we, as the authors, have disciplinary knowledge, so it's easy for us to understand our paper, whether we start from 1 to 2 or 2 to 1. But for outsiders, they expect that our paper will follow the logic. Therefore, our articles should be constructed clearly enough for one to get an overall understanding without reading it word-for-word. Reviewing is just a voluntary job, so the reviewer may be busy and also under the pressure of publishing. He may have only half an hour to read our paper, so if our paper is just a mess and does not follow any logic, he may get confused. And when the reviewer feels unhappy reading your paper, he will turn his attention to our spelling mistakes.

Y: You mean in the case when the reviewer is a native speaker.

S2: No, even for a non-native reviewer, he also seeks for grammatical mistakes. You see, sometimes, we cannot find our mistakes by ourselves, but for other readers, it is very easy to do so. If we write in a messy way, he is not going to focus on our ideas but grammatical mistakes.

Y: Which section of a research paper is the most challenging for you to write? And why?

S2: It's the Literature Review as it requires us to have wide background knowledge and a large vocabulary, and we have to organize your ideas. From a wide vision, we have to narrow to a smaller one, and more importantly, we have to justify why we are interested in doing this research. This is the most important thing, that's called the motivation of the research, why this research is worth considering. If we can say it clearly and be confident about it, it will be very easy later.

Y: Have your papers ever been rejected by journals?

S2: Yes, they have. My first paper had two major revisions and according to the journal policy, my paper would be rejected. But they recommended me to revise and resubmit. So, I revised and submitted it again, and it then had a minor revision, so the first paper required me a total of 4 submissions. The second paper was rejected straightaway as they said my data was not reliable.

Y: Are there any other reasons?

S2: Yeah, it was partly due to my language use. They said I had many grammatical errors. Also, the results were not interesting and analysed carefully enough, which meant I needed more calculation to support the results and demonstrate why the results were 'valuable'. My third paper got minor revision. This is because I collaborated with 2 native speakers in my team and I had had more experience.

Y: Do you think that the feedback from the reviewers is too negative regarding your language use?

S2: A 'ridiculous' thing is that the native speaker does not 'criticize' much about our language, so if our language use is criticized a lot, then our paper must have been reviewed by a non-native speaker.

Y: Really? (laugh)

S2: Yes, it's a bit funny and stupid but it actually happened.

Y: Ok, so now I'd like to know about your strategies?

S2: I often wrote the draft first, using only short and simple sentences and then printed it out and read, but I did not read it straightaway, I just left it until the next day. Then it would look like a new page for me and I could easily find out my mistakes. Writing research papers is very tiring; we cannot do it continuously. We just do once or twice, and then we will give it to a native speaker or our collaborators or my friends.

Y: You mean you seek linguistic help from native speakers? How about their help?

S2: There's a professor in our lab whose wife is a British and she has linguistic background, so she helps the students with language use. However, she only makes corrections when our language use is not natural. As she does not have any disciplinary knowledge, She may say a particular word is 'incorrect' but we actually use it in our discipline.

Y: Are your papers co-authored?

S2: Yes, I do. Mostly I do, but they help me with language use or presentation of ideas to make them more understandable and more logical.

Y: And you do most of other things?

S2: Yes, from A and Z. After finishing writing, I would give them the papers, they would revise them.

Y: You also seek help from native speakers peer, so what are their corrections?

S2: The disadvantage of seeking help from NES peers is that they are also 'PhD students' who don't have much experience of writing papers so they only can help to correct our language use. They cannot help with the 'structure' or 'coherence' of the papers.

Y: Have you ever written your paper in Vietnamese first and then translate it into English?

S2: No, I never do that.

Y: Why?

S2: This is because my writing in Vietnamese is also like that in English. I also have topic sentence, followed by supporting sentences. And I have got accustomed to writing in English as well.

Y: So how have you learnt how to write research articles in English?

S2: I mostly learn from the papers that I have read. These papers are written by English native speakers.

Y: How about other resources? Do you attend any courses?

S2: No, I don't.

Y: How about your supervisor? Does he teach you how to write research articles?

S2: A good thing that I learnt from my supervisor is that: always write short sentences. As non-native speakers, we should avoid writing long and complicated sentences because we can easily make grammatical mistakes. It's best for us to keep our language simple. In addition, I never invent the language; I am really a "copycat". For example, prepositions are very important in English. I never translate from Vietnamese into English as I may not use correct prepositions; therefore, if I am not sure of using prepositions of a word, I always use a dictionary to check it.

Y: Do you want to add anything, in addition to what I have asked you?

S2: Yeah. I have one funny experience. When my first paper was rejected, in the second 'major revision', the reviewer criticized my writing, but he made explicit language errors right in his comments, so we used that to persuade the editors to let me submit again.

Y: Did you email the editor?

S2: No, my supervisor did. He required the editors to reconsider the reviewer's comments. It is also a tip for us, that is, if we feel that our paper is ok but the comments of the reviewers are problematic, we have to look at the comments to see which details in the comments are not appropriate. We can use that, not to confront but to make the editors sympathize with us and show them whether the reviewer did a good job. Although we appreciate the work of the reviewers, as it is voluntary, we still need to negotiate with the editors.

Y: What can you tell about the whole process of publishing?

S2: I think the most important thing is that we must build a habit of writing in English, not in Vietnamese; we must follow English writing style and culture. In addition, we must ensure that our paper is original; we cannot copy any exact sentence from other papers.

Y: You mean 'plagiarism'?

S2: Exactly. So every sentence must be paraphrased, we must change the words. I see many people have their papers rejected due to that mistake, so we cannot be lazy. It is a popular problem of Vietnamese people.

Y: Thank you very much for your sharing.

S2: You're welcomed.

Participant 3: S3

Y: Before the interview, can I ask you some questions for background information?

S3: Yes, you can.

Y: What is your major in English?

S3: Telecommunications

Y: Thank you. Where did you get your Bachelor and Master degrees?

S3: Both in Vietnam

Y: What was your English language proficiency level when you started your PhD?

S3: I got 6.0 in IELTS

Y: How many publications have you had so far?

S3: Two

Y: Can you tell me something about the journals that you have submitted your papers to?

S1: Yes, they are all journals listed in ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia)

Y: Have you got any challenges when writing your research article?

S3: My language use in research articles is not too complicate, just simple words and sentences. The biggest challenge is that we often think in Vietnamese first and then try to translate our thoughts into English. This makes the readers feel it hard to understand. In addition, sometimes, we write based on our own logic, which may be difficult for the others. Besides, as our language proficiency is not high enough, our language is too simple. Even when our issue is a significant one and distinctive from others, our language use is not good enough to highlight it, so the readers think that the issue is just normal.

Y: Do you mean you don't use the exact terminology?

S3: Yes, it is right, but I also mean our vocabulary is not large enough to help us emphasize our ideas.

Y: How about grammar?

S3: Grammar is not a big problem.

Y: What do you think are the most common problems of VN students when writing research articles?

S3: The first problem starts from reading others' papers. We have to use their ideas to develop our papers. Sometimes we finish doing our research; we look back and think that our ideas are the same with others. This is because we don't understand correctly what we read. Also, when we write, our language is often repeated, especially in the Abstract, Introduction and

Conclusion sections. The ideas are the same but we must restate them. Yet, it's often difficult for us to do so.

Y: You mean 'paraphrase' yourself is also difficult?

S3: Yes, exactly.

Y: What are the main reasons for these problems?

S3: I think because our English language use in Vietnam is not correct. When I was in Vietnam, I knew many technical terms through reading but I could not put them into sentences.

Y: Anything else?

S3: Yes, English teachers do not have specialized knowledge while our subject matter teachers do not have good English command so they cannot provide much help.

Y: Which section of a research article is the most challenging for you to write?

S3: That's the 'Introduction', because we have to 'review' all related materials. The most difficult thing when writing literature review is to emphasize our research. If we cannot make it different from others, the reviewers may think that oh, it's quite the same with others.

Y: So you mean it's due to your language that you cannot highlight the significance of your research

S3: Yes, we cannot make it distinctive from others.

Y: Have your papers ever been rejected?

C: Yes, they have.

Y: Are there any language-related reasons?

S3: My latest paper was rejected because of my introduction in which the literature review was too general, so there might be misunderstanding between what I was doing with what I was 'reviewing'. The others had their own research directions which were different from mine. Yet, as I might not have 'reviewed' closely; the editors and reviewers might think that all the directions were the same

Y: You mean it's because of your writing?

S3: Yes, it is. I could not make my research distinctive from others my writing.

Y: So, the most difficult section is introduction, right?

S3: Yes, exactly. As I co-author with my supervisor, he was in charge of the Introduction and I wrote the other sections. If I write the Introduction, everything might be destroyed.

Y: How many revisions have you gone through and how long do they take you?

S3: Normally 3 months. For the first round, the editors just give general comments, for example, ideas or grammar. Then, for the second and the third rounds, they will focus on the discipline knowledge.

Y: Which sections are often required revising?

S3: It's the Introduction.

Y: Have you got any negative feedback from reviewers/editors regarding your language use?

S3: Yes, I have.

Y: So what did they say?

S3: It's difficult to say. But their most common saying is 'there are many errors'. The writer may understand but for a native speaker, they will find out the errors. And these errors may lead to misunderstanding. The readers may understand differently from what you really mean.

Y: Are reviewers native speakers or non-native speakers?

S3: They may be non-native speakers but they have experience, so they can easily notice these errors.

Y: What are your strategies? Do you co-author with anyone?

S3: Yes, I do. After finishing writing, I will send the papers to the supervisor so that he would revise them for me.

Y: Is he native speaker?

S3: No, he isn't.

Y: What is he going to revise?

S3: The language, as he has experience reviewing, when he reads, he may know which part of the article is problematic.

Y: Does he give any other comments?

S3: He may contribute ideas regarding the content. But he will do that right before I write the paper. Now some journals provide editorial services on language errors but we have to pay money.

Y: Have you ever used that service?

S3: No, I have not. I don't have money.

Y: What are the benefits of co-authoring with the supervisor?

S3: My supervisors acted as the first reviewer. With his publishing and reviewing experience, he would give me comments in the same way as the journal editors or reviewers. He would show me any problematic paragraphs or tell me what reviewers might react to in a specific

part. When there is something problematic, he would ask me to come and explain to him, he would rewrite that sentence for me.

Y: Are there any problems when you co-author with your supervisor?

S3: No, I don't. But if we meet strict or demanding supervisors, they may require us to submit to high ranking journals or do many other things. Maybe students just need papers to graduate but he may require too demanding things.

Y: Do you co-author with your peers?

S3: It's quite difficult as we are in different disciplines. And as our papers have not been published, we want to keep our own ideas. So co-authoring is quite difficult.

Y: Have you seek linguistic help from native speakers?

S3: No, I haven't.

Y: Did reviewers comment negatively on your language use?

S3: Sometimes, many reviewers are crazy, their English is not very good but they give us so many comments on our language use in order to put us down.

Y: Have you ever translate your papers from Vietnamese into English?

S3: No, I haven't. This is because translation is not always correct and time-consuming. In addition, translating from Vietnamese into English will lose its original meaning.

Y: How have you learnt to write research articles in English?

S3: I learnt from my supervisor. For some papers where my supervisor was first author, I did most of the research work such as mathematics or modelling, and my supervisor wrote them up. After he finished writing, I read those papers to learn how to write. This may be done after the papers had been submitted. And when I had free time, I asked my supervisor why he wrote a particular paragraph in this way or that way.

Y: Do you attend any workshop on research writing?

S3: No, I don't.

Y: Do you want to add anything else, apart from what I have asked you?

S3: From my own experience, if we don't have high English language proficiency, we should write simple sentences because we can control the meaning. If we try to use complicate words, the meaning may be different.

Y: So being simple is a good choice, right?

S3: Yes, it is.

Y: So how long does it often take you to write a research article?

S3: If there is only writing, it might take 2-3 weeks.

Y: How about the whole process?

S3: About three months. The first paper may take us quite a lot of time but for the next papers, it's quicker.

Y: Do you have any experience in writing research articles?

S3: I think we should write the results first. Next, we look back and see what we have achieved. Then, we will change the method and the introduction. Then the introduction will be the most relevant one.

Y: Anything else?

S3: Sometimes we read a paper, due to our limited reading ability; we don't understand exactly what the writer means. Thus, when we cite that paper in our paper, it is not closely relevant to our research.

Y: You mean reading ability might affect our writing?

S3: Yes, it is.

Y: This is the end of our interview. Thank you very much.

S3: No problem.

Participant 4: S4

Y: Before the interview, I would like to ask you some questions for background information?

S4: Yeap.

Y: What is your major in English?

S4: Information Technology and I am doing a research on data visualization.

Y: Thank you. Where did you get your Bachelor and Master degrees?

S4: I studied Bachelor in Vietnam and got Master Degree in Thailand.

Y: What was your English language proficiency level when you started your PhD?

S4: As my Master program was instructed in English, I did not have to take IELTS test when I applied for my PhD in Australia.

Y: How many publications have you had so far?

S3: Only one.

Y: Can you tell me something about the journals that you have submitted your papers to?

S1: Yes, it is a journal ranked B in ERA list.

Y: So did you have challenges when writing research articles in English?

S4: So many. The first is vocabulary; I have limited vocabulary of my discipline. The second is grammar and sentence structure, I cannot use too complicate sentences. So the sentence structures are not varied, just simple sentences or very simple compound sentences. It makes the paper less effective to the readers. The next is the writing style. As I am not accustomed to writing English essay which requires a specific topic in each paragraph, I just write following my own logic. Even when we have great vocabulary and correct grammar, if we don't follow the logic of a paragraph, it's very difficult to present our ideas.

Y: Is there any other challenges?

S4: Yes, it is the readership. If we want to submit our paper to a journal, we have to learn the readers of that journal because this may affect our writing.

Y: So why is it a challenge?

S4: Yes, for example, in a conference, there is a committee of reviewers; we have to see whether they come from US, Europe or Asia. So we have to write following their style in order to get the sympathy from the reviewers

Y: How about journals?

S4: It's the same. They also have a committee, even though we don't know who our reviewers are, but we can look at the list of reviewers and see whether most of them come from US,

Europe or Asia. For example, if we submit our paper to a journal in the US, the reviewers will certainly be in the US. So we will read the papers written by American authors in order to learn their writing style.

Y: Can you clarify challenge related to the writing style?

S4: Ah, different authors have different styles in giving their evaluation. For example, the European express their criticism with their strong words, they also show their critical thinking in their writing, but the Asian give a moderate criticism. The US also make direct criticism but with justifications.

Y: So why do you find it difficult?

S4: Due to my limited vocabulary and sentence structures, I cannot express exactly what I mean. For example, I want to express my criticism but I want to soften it by using appropriate language.

Y: So is it language-related?

S4: Yes, it is. But it is also culturally bound. It might be differences between the style of the US, European and the Asia. We prefer implicit and indirect criticism.

Y: Is there any other reasons?

S4: Yeah, it is also related to our disciplinary knowledge. Due to our limited knowledge, we have to choose the words to show that we might lack of 'reviewing', rather than lack of knowledge in giving critique of others' works.

Y: What do you think are the common problems of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing research articles in English?

S4: I think language may be a problem but our contribution to the journal is also very important.

Y: Do you think that language is a reason that inhabits us from highlighting our contribution?

S4: Yes, certainly. When we do our research, we understand our contribution, but when we express it in English, our use of language may reduce the contribution of our research or make readers misunderstood or not fully understand.

Y: Which section is the most challenging for you to write and why?

S4: It is the 'Related work' (Literature Review) section. If we want to make it interesting, we must have deep disciplinary knowledge to synthesize it. It's very difficult, even when we write the Literature Review in Vietnamese. In English, it's more difficult as we have to use our own words to avoid plagiarism. We have to tell what the others have done, but not listing. We have to connect it in a systematic way, in chronological order or based on scientific development.

Y: Was your paper rejected?

S4: No.

Y: But did they send you any feedback?

S4: Yes, they did. They also mentioned that 'my writing is not very well, just good'. They have many ranking, 'fair, good, very good, and excellent'. My writing was ranked 'good'.

Y: Did they give more specific comments.

S4: The reviewers just mentioned some sentences that they did not understand and required me to make them clear.

Y: Which sections do these sentences belong to?

S4: They are in the Methodology section. Even though they did not mention any sentences in Related Work section but they said this section did not have rich meaning, they did not find it interesting.

Y: Why are these sentences not very clear?

S4: Ah, as I said, Vietnamese people do not follow a central idea when writing a paragraph, we write with our own logic. Whenever we think of any new idea, we just put it in. Therefore, it does not stick to the main idea of the paragraph. In addition, I did not give enough explanation. When I mentioned something, I did not make it clear enough so they asked me to justify it.

Y: Do you think their comments are too negative regarding your non-native status? Is there any prejudice here?

S4: No, I don't think so. Three out of four reviewers gave constructive and corrective feedback and I agreed with them. When I looked back at my writing, I found that the reviewers' comments were accurate.

Y: Do you co-author with anyone else?

S4: Only my supervisor.

Y: Is he native speaker?

S4: No, he is not.

Y: What is the work distribution between you?

S4: I wrote the paper then the supervisor reviewed it. But as he was quite busy, he just gave general comments rather than focusing on grammar and vocabulary. For example, he may circle a few sentences and commented that I need to make them clearer. He did not go into details.

Y: What are the benefits of co-authoring with the supervisor?

S4: I learnt a few things from him. For example, he said that I needed to learn about the readers and the reviewers of the journals and follow their styles when writing my papers.

Y: Are there any problems between you and your supervisor?

S4: No, there are not.

Y: *Do you seek linguistic help from any native speaker?*

S4: No, I don't.

Y: *Do you write in Vietnamese first and then translate it into English*

S4: No

Y: *Why?*

S4: It is time-consuming, and I think it will slow down our language reaction. It will worsen our writing,

Y: *How have you learnt how to write research article in English?*

S4: I learnt by reading papers from prestigious journals.

Y: *What did you learn from these articles?*

S4: I learnt their writing style, the sentence structures, how they connect sentences and vocabulary. Yet, vocabulary is quite large so I just noted down the technical terms related to my research. And I also learn their methodology.

Y: *Do you attend any workshop on research writing for PhD students?*

S4: Yes, I did. When I just commenced my enrolment here, there were also courses on academic writing, critical thinking organized by graduate school. But they were not effective.

Y: *Why?*

S4: Because at that time, we hadn't had our research direction. They gave us the theory and required us to write but we did not know how to write as we did not have anything to write at that time.

Y: *Do you want to add anything in addition to my questions?*

S4: In general, for a non-native speaker, it's challenging to write research article in English. Language is a part but the success of a paper also depends on the reviewers. If the language is good but the reviewers are not satisfied, the paper will be a failure.

Y: *Can you justify it?*

S4: I mean the same paper get different comments from different journals.

Y: *Can you describe your whole writing process? How long does it take?*

S4: It's about 6-7 months for the whole and about 2 months to write. It required a lot of efforts, from reviewing to doing research and writing. The writing process was quite difficult as I had to write and do experiments at the same time. I could not wait until I had finished my experiment to write because it would be quite long. So when I felt that I had reached a particular stage, I started writing. On the other hand, I could not write continuously so I had to combine activities. For example, I wrote on Monday and Tuesday, did an experiment on Wednesday, and then came back with my writing on Thursday. You know, continuous reading and writing cannot help us find out mistakes, therefore, we need to have breaks between those activities.

Y: This is the end of our interview. Thank you very much for your contribution.

S4: Not at all.

Participant 5: S5

Y: Good afternoon, could you please tell me what you major is?

S5: Yes, my major is Environmental engineering.

Y: Where did you study Bachelor's and Master's Degrees?

S5: In Vietnam

Y: What is your English language proficiency when you started your PhD program here?

S5: It's a 6.5 IELTS test score.

Y: How many publications have you had so far?

S5: One but I have just submitted another one.

Y: Can you tell me something about the journal where you submitted your paper to?

S5: It's an international journal named *Bioresource Technology*, ranked A, and its impact factor is 5.330.

Y: What are your challenges when writing your research article in English?

S5: So many (laugh). I find it different from IELTS writing.

Y: Why is it different?

S5: In IELTS writing, the topics are more general, although it is still academic writing. But research writing requires a higher level of logical thinking and synthesis of information.

Y: So what are your difficulties?

S5: At first, I was quite discouraged. I submitted my first paper after one and a half year of study. I got rejection first and then got accepted.

Y: How long does it take you to write the paper?

S5: It took me 6 months to determine my ideas, then do experiment, and write.

Y: So what are your difficulties?

S5: For the same sentence, I find it difficult to express what I wanted to say. But after my supervisor has corrected it, I find it much better.

Y: Why can't you express exactly what you want to say?

S5: It might be due to my limited English proficiency.

Y: Can you elaborate it?

S5: Research writing requires us to write concisely and avoid plagiarism. So we have to write every sentence by ourselves and my supervisor also requires that every sentence must be 'informative'.

Y: How about using terminology?

S5: I don't have many difficulties with vocabulary as I have learnt quite a lot of vocabulary through reading published papers. I think the difficult is that we need to write in a way that make the readers see the novelty of our research in order to be accepted.

Y: What do you think are the common problems of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing research articles in English?

S5: I think most of Vietnamese students have problem with their writing. For those who study Bachelor and Master Degrees in Vietnam, their writing ability is always worse than those who studied in foreign countries. Therefore, they need time to get used to writing here, not only language use but also writing style.

Y: Are there any other reasons?

S5: I think we need logical thinking in order to write well. However, most of Vietnamese students lack this one. We not only show our language ability but also aim at the readership in our papers.

Y: How can you make the readers understand your papers?

S5: (laugh). I read others' papers and learn how they write. I see that they write very well but I cannot do that.

Y: Do you have your own strategy here?

S5: Ah, I have to revise so many times, more than 10 times, certainly.

Y: Which section of a research article is the most challenging for you to write and why?

S5: I think they are 'Discussion' and 'Abstract'. There are two types of papers: Empirical and Review. For an empirical paper, we need to have good data. But even when we have good data, we still need to highlight in the Discussion why our data is better than others, what it helps to solve and whether it opens a new research direction. In order to do so, we have to read that section in many other papers to see what has been discussed, what has remained unsolved, what we have done and we need to suggest for further studies. For a review paper, we must have better language skills and greater ability of synthesizing ideas.

Y: Why do you find 'Abstract' difficult?

S5: It's because people read the abstract first in order to decide whether they are going to review our papers or not. This is the section that my supervisor always corrects first and foremost; he focuses a lot on this section.

Y: How about language use in the 'Abstract'?

S5: This section of my paper always gets a lot of corrections. My supervisor often changes my words.

Y: Why?

S5: He said my words are not interesting enough to attract the readers to read my papers. It's very important for them to consider whether they need my full papers.

Y: Has your paper been rejected?

S5: Yes, it has.

Y: And then you submitted it to another journal?

S5: Yes.

Y: What are the reasons for its rejection?

S5: There are 3 reviewers. One agreed and others did not. They criticized my language, my English was not good. My supervisor said that when they saw my name which is not an English one, they would be picky about my language use. They also criticize the structure of my paper. But I think the major reason for their rejection is that they criticized the content which is not significant, as this is the most important part.

Y: How about the paper that you have just submitted? Did you receive the feedback?

S5: I received the result within one day so I knew that it was sad news. They answered that my paper was 'out of scope'. The journal is a science one while my discipline is engineering, so maybe it is really 'out of scope'.

Y: When you submitted your 1st paper to another journal, did they require you to revise your paper before being accepted?

S5: Sure, they always do so.

Y: How long did it take you to revise your paper? And where did your revision focus on?

S5: Luckily I got only 'minor revision' for this time. I revised it during two weeks and then I and my supervisor together revised in another one week.

Y: What did your revision focus on?

S5: I did revise my paper a lot before I submitted it to this journal, so they just required me to correct a little bit language, symbols and references and I did also make minor mistakes.

Y: Do you co-author with your supervisor?

S5: Yes, I did.

Y: Is he native speaker?

S5: He is Vietnamese but he moved here 40 years ago.

Y: What is the work distribution between you and your supervisor?

S5: I did most of the things but I always discussed with my supervisor. I made a proposal and a framework first; he would make comments on the content so that I could do all the things. Then I would start doing experiments. I met quite a lot of difficulties, but we often discussed together. After I finished writing the draft, he corrected it for me.

Y: What did he correct?

S5: As I said, since I made the proposal, he made correction on the structure of my paper so that it could ensure both the quality and the quantity of the research. If he found there was not enough, he might ask me to do more experiments.

Y: How about the language such as vocabulary, grammar, structure or arrangement of ideas?

S5: All.

Y: What do you think are the benefits of co-authoring with supervisor?

S5: So many. I don't think I could have published my paper without help from my supervisor, especially the first time as I didn't have any experience then.

Y: Are there any problems between you and your supervisor?

S5: I think the advantages outweigh the problems. But there is also a problem; that is when I and my supervisor did not agree on one matter, we discussed. If I could support my argument, I could keep it. If not, I had to follow him. We are always at a disadvantage.

Y: Do you co-author with your peers in your same lab?

S5: Yes. I have to do experiments in the lab where there is much equipment I don't know how to use, so I had to ask them to teach me.

Y: Have you ever seek linguistic help from editor services?

S5: No, I just used the 'Grammarly' to check grammatical errors.

Y: Have you ever written your papers in Vietnamese and then translate into English?

S5: No, it is very time-consuming because our ways of thinking and the use of words are different.

Y: Can you tell me how you have learnt to write research articles?

S5: At first I learnt from the others' papers that have the same research direction with mine. I learnt their writing and their use of words. There are many words having the same meaning, if we know how to use them, we can make our writing more interesting or more effective.

Y: How about your supervisor?

S5: At first I had difficulty writing the Abstract of the paper, my supervisor said my words are not interesting enough to attract the readers, so he sent me some of his papers to see how he wrote the abstract.

Y: Do you attend any writing course for graduate research students?

S5: Yes, I do. When we just started our study here, they offered some courses in writing skills. But I find them not really useful.

Y: Why?

S5: They are still good, but they are quite general. The only thing I learnt from these courses is that they always said 'read, read, and read'. So my only impression is that we always have to read.

Y: Do you want to add anything besides what I have asked you?

S5: I just see new comers, especially those who have never studied abroad, should learn from the seniors who are dedicated and really want to disseminate their knowledge and experience in academic writing. It will be faster. I had to learn it by myself so it took quite a lot of time.

Y: How can you describe your publishing experiences?

S5: It took quite a lot of efforts and was a hard-working task. But it is not too difficult if you spend your time and efforts on it.

Y: Our interview ends here today. Thank you very much for your time.

S5: You are welcomed.

Participant 6: S6

Y: Good afternoon. Can I ask you some questions about your educational background?

S6: Sure

Y: What are you studying now?

S6: I am studying Laws.

Y: Are you a third or fourth year student?

S6: I am in my 4rd year.

Y: How many publications have you had so far?

S6: Two

Y: How about the journals where you submitted your papers to?

S6: One journal is ranked C in ERA list and the other is ranked A.

Y: Do you have any challenges when writing for publication in English?

S6: Generally speaking, as non-native English speakers, we have common language problems, even for those with linguistic background. I myself think that language is not a major problem as I met language requirement of my PhD program. My writing is not too bad, I think. I also used 'Grammarly' to check grammatical errors by myself or asked my friends to do it for me. In fact, there is a bigger challenge facing not only non-native English speakers but also native speakers when writing for publication.

Y: What's it, as you think?

S6: Scholarly writing requires critical thinking, logical thinking and argument organization. These criteria go beyond the language problems. We were not aware of those things even when we learnt IELTS or TOEFL writing. In addition, writing approach must be deductive, which means we have to give our argument first and then use evidence to support it.

Y: So do you have difficulty with terminology in your discipline?

S6: Uhm, let me think. I don't think I have this difficulty.

Y: Maybe it's because you have read a lot of papers in your discipline?

S6: I think we don't need a large vocabulary in order to write well. We don't need to show off our vocabulary. We just need to write in a way that readers can understand easily. We don't need to write in too complicated way. Just keep it simple.

Y: What do you think are the common problems of Vietnamese doctoral students when writing for publication in English?

S6: I think Vietnamese students can overcome language problems. But they may face other challenges when writing for publication. These challenges are related to methodology, critical thinking, and argument development.

Y: What sections do your papers consist of?

S6: In my laws discipline, papers always have the Introduction and Conclusion sections. Literature review can be integrated into the Introduction and the Methodology is not necessarily stated.

Y: Which section is the most challenging for you to write and why?

S6: The section we need to put most of our effort in is the Introduction. This is because the reviewers and editors always read the Abstract and the Introduction first. These sections must cover the main content of the papers so that the reviewers and editors can nearly fully understand what we want to say in our papers. If they feel it is interesting and persuasive enough, they will read the rest of our paper. So if we don't write this section well, our paper may be refused.

Y: So how can you write this section well enough?

S6: I often write the draft Introduction first and then other sections of the paper. When I have finished our writing, I will go back to the Introduction to revise, my argument will be clear enough then.

Y: Have your papers ever been rejected?

S6: Both of them were rejected. I have never had my papers accepted right after first submission. I even had my paper rejected several times before being accepted.

Y: What are the reasons for their rejections?

S6: My paper was not suitable for the aims and scope of the journal, as they said, even though I studied the journal beforehand. This is normal because prestigious journals may refuse about 90 per cent of the submitted papers. In fact, they have to refuse even good papers. So sometimes we need a little bit luck to be accepted.

Y: So what can we do so that they like our papers?

S6: Some journals may require a cover letter, just about one A4 page in which we persuade them why our papers are suitable for the journal. However, many papers do not require that letter. They just read the Abstract and Introduction to see whether our papers are suitable or not. So if we overcome the first step, it is already our initial success.

Y: Are there any language-related reasons for your paper rejections?

S6: Yes, they are. For the first paper, the reviewers said they were not convinced of my writing. They thought that my writing was not really good enough.

Y: Can you elaborate this?

S6: They said my paper had too many complicated ideas, which made it difficult for them to follow. So I draw out my own experience is that complicated writing is not always good. We always want to read something that is easy to understand, even for native speakers. Therefore, keeping our paper clear and easy to understand is very important.

Y: And then you submitted the papers to other journals?

S6: Yes, I don't remember exactly but for my first paper, I submitted it 6 or 7 times to different journals.

Y: Could you please tell me more about the comments of the reviewers on your papers.

S6: Yes. They said there were sentences in my papers that were not clear enough. I remembered one reviewer saying that I wrote one paragraph just like 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Y: What did he mean by that?

S6: It means I wrote that paragraph just like a sleepwalker so he could not understand what I really meant.

Y: So are the reviewers native speakers or non-native speakers?

S6: I don't know because it is double blind. They don't know me and I don't know them either.

Y: Do you think that the reviewers are too negative to non-native speakers like us?

S6: In fact, I am not sure whether reviewers know we are non-native speakers or not, but maybe they realize that when they read our paper. However, there was only reviewer who gave negative comments on my writing. Most of them did not comment too much on my writing. Some even gave positive comments on my writing such as persuasive writing or effective writing. The journal which refused my paper even suggested how I could revise my paper. They also showed their belief that I totally could revise my paper based on their suggestions.

Y: So now I move to 'strategies', do you co-author with your supervisor in these papers.

S6: No, I am single author. We don't necessarily co-author with our supervisors.

Y: But do you seek for your supervisors' advice on your papers

S6: Each of my paper is a chapter of my thesis, which is in the article compilation format. So right from the beginning, my supervisor and I shaped the ideas and structured for each chapter. He also gave his comments and contributed ideas for these chapters.

Y: Does he help you with language areas?

S6: My supervisor is a non-native speaker so he does not comment on language use.

Y: Do you seek help from proofreading or editor services?

S6: No, I just asked my friends to do that for me.

Y: Are they native speakers?

S6: They are both native speakers and non-native speakers.

Y: What areas do they comment on?

S6: As they did not have disciplinary knowledge, they just focused on grammar and vocabulary.

Y: Do you translate from Vietnamese into English?

S6: No, I don't because it is very time-consuming and not necessary.

Y: How did you learn to write research articles in English?

S6: As I decided to choose thesis by publication, I actively found some books on writing journal articles or how to publish from thesis. They are quite effective. I also attended two writing courses in my university. One of which was directly aimed at writing journal articles and I think that course was very useful to me. The other course, named 'Writing in social sciences' was not as effective as the previous one.

Y: Why do you think the former course is effective? What was its main content?

S6: It was not really about the language. It was about just simple things, such as how we give the title to our paper, how we structure our paper, how we give our argument after the introduction. They were all tips or concrete things.

Y: When was it held?

S6: It was two years ago when I was in my 2nd year.

Y: How about your supervisor? Did he instruct you on how to write journal articles?

S6: He also gave me instruction, but not much because the instructors in general are mostly concerned about the quality of our PhDs. Due to time constraints, they cannot give us instruction like in formal courses but they did instruct us. For example, my supervisor gave me a comment like, 'this paragraph does not have any emphasis and does not have anything to get the readers interested', which is very important to have a successful article.

Y: What do you think are the benefits of writing a thesis by publication on your article writing?

S6: When I attended the orientation, people talked about advantages of this thesis and I agreed with what they said. For example, this type of thesis encourages us to write. We will have motivation to finish a chapter so that we can submit it to a journal. Another advantage is that when we submit our papers to the journals, it is a very good way to get external reviewing. My supervisor said that my writing had met the requirements of a thesis but not a journal. So it is also a motivation for me to publish it in journals. However, my university does not

require us to publish before submitting our thesis; we just need to structure our thesis into 'publishable articles'.

Y: Do you think this type of thesis is more difficult than the traditional one?

S6: It might be because it requires us to have more logical thinking, better ideas presentation and greater creativity as well.

Y: Do you want to add anything else besides what I have asked you?

When we write a thesis by publication, we learn to suffer from a lot of pressure. This is because we will have to submit papers to journals get comments and then revise them. Other people may be afraid of those things. If they write the traditional thesis, it is between students and their supervisors only. If the supervisors say 'ok', then it is 'ok'. So many students don't want to choose this type of thesis because they don't want to have additional pressure.

Y: Alright. This is the end of our interview. Thank you very much for your participation in my research.

S6: My pleasure.

Participant 7: S7

Y: Good morning. It's nice to meet you. Can I ask you some questions for background information?

S7: Certainly.

Y: What are you studying now?

S7: Education and I am doing a thesis on language policies in Vietnam.

Y: Where did you study your Bachelor and Master Degrees?

S7: I studied Bachelor in Vietnam and Master in the U.S, but it is 10 years already since I got my Master Degree.

Y: So do you need to take IELTS test to apply for your PhD program here?

S7: No, I don't.

Y: How many research articles have you published so far?

S7: Only one.

Y: Can you tell me something about the journal where you submitted your paper to?

S7: Yeap. It is the journal entitled "Current issues in language planning", it is in ISSI and according to my university ranking, it is level A.

Y: Do you have any difficulties when writing your research articles? If yes, what are they?

S7: I think the most difficulty when publishing our research articles is the ideas. In other words, what we want to write or contribute through our papers rather than the language difficulties. My paper comes from the research that I am doing on language policies in Vietnam. At first, I found it difficult to 'target the journal' as different journals have differing opinions on how articles ought to be written. Once we have decided what we want to write or contribute, everything will be clearer then. Besides, my advantage is that I have linguistic background. Also, I have been working with my supervisor for two years and have got a lot of corrections from him. However, as I studied my MA ten years ago and most of my papers have been written in Vietnamese, it took me time to get used to writing research articles in English.

Y: What do you think are the common challenges of Vietnamese students when publishing in English?

S7: I often discuss with my friends about how we can target our journals and how we can shape our papers from 'draft ideas'. For those studying in different disciplines such as agriculture or technology, they may have more language problems.

Y: What are their language problems, in your opinion?

S7: They may have problems with vocabulary and grammar.

Y: What are the reasons for these problems?

S7: It's mainly because of their language background, they don't have much practice. As English is used as a foreign language in Vietnam, so academics, except for those with linguistic background, they don't often use English in their work. So I think the most reason is that they don't have much practice using English.

Y: Which sections of the paper are the most challenging for you to write? And why?

S7: I have just written one paper so I don't know whether my ideas are really objective. But I myself see that the most difficult section is the Introduction.

Y: Why?

S7: This is because we have to tell the readers the main content of the paper in the introduction; it must also be linked to other studies and discussed the main issues of that topic so I find it very difficult.

Y: Has your paper ever rejected by another journal?

S7: No, it hasn't. But it must go through revision in order to be accepted.

Y: What did they require you to revise?

S7: They made comments on one of my ideas which had not been discussed clearly, so they suggested me either take it out or develop it again right from the beginning. So I just took it out. Another comment was that my extracts from interviews must be revised following English language rules. They said maybe my translation was relied too much on the original meaning so there were some grammatical errors.

Y: Do they have any other comments on your language use?

S7: As I said before, my advantage is that this paper comes from my research which I have received a lot of comments and corrections from my supervisor in the last two years, so the two reviewers commented that my writing was generally 'good'. And I am also lucky.

Y: Do you co-author with your supervisor?

S7: He is the second author. As he has corrected my writing a lot during the last two years so when wrote this paper, I just made a little revision to meet with the requirements of the journal. He just had a quick look at it and gave some comments. With his help, I saw that my writing is more concise, accurate and focused on the standard English language level required of journals.

Y: Does he comment on your language?

S7: He just did that at the beginning of my study. At this stage, he just commented on the ideas that need to be clarified or sections that need more supporting evidence, such as the Discussion and Introduction.

Y: Do you seek linguistic help from editorial services?

S7: No, I don't.

Y: How long did it take you to write that paper?

S7: Two months in total. But in those two months, I did not write paper only, I had to spend time for my research as well. I just remember that I started in February and finished in April. I think it depends on each person; one may spend only two or three weeks to write even though they don't have any ideas before that.

Y: How did you learn to write research articles in English?

S7: I attended some workshops held at university to instruct us how to write research articles. But I see that these workshops are very general, they are not really useful. My supervisor said the most useful thing was that we just looked at the published articles at the journal to which we wanted to send our paper. We read and saw how they had been written and then we started our writing. It is more effective than attending the workshops. I attended two workshops but it seemed that they did not meet my needs.

Y: When were they held?

S7: They are more like seminars. During one semester, the lecturers will take turns organize seminars; one of them focused on writing research articles.

Y: Why did you say that these seminars do not focus on what you want?

S7: Yes, because they just gave a guideline on which journal which we want to aim at, how to write the abstract. But they are very general. They were held by School of Education with many sub- disciplines, my discipline is just a small part in it. And the instructor came from maths discipline; his example was not relevant to mine, so I found it not really effective.

Y: How about other resources, such as books?

S7: No.

Y: Do you want to add anything else apart from what I have asked you?

S7; One tip I have learnt is that when we want to write something, we must nurture it a long time before we write. Then the writing will be much faster. We cannot write when we have nothing. I find it quite right and effective. My ideas for my paper have been shaped long ago, I have thought about it one year ago and hatched it quite long so when I started writing, it was quite fast. Then we also have many ideas to develop.

Y: Anything else?

S7: As I don't have much experience about this so I don't have much to share. I also write papers in Vietnam but they are not for international publication, so when this paper was accepted, I was really happy. I was also prepared that my paper might be rejected, but luckily

it was not. It is one of the motivations for me to try, even though the same thing may not happen next time.

Y: Can you describe your writing process in general?

S7: We must be patient even in the worst situation. We may get negative comments from journal editors and reviewers for our papers, we also have to spend a lot of time revising and resubmitting to other journals. But we should not throw them away; they are just like our children. That's my experience. Do not be too pessimistic when we are rejected.

Y: This is the end of our interview here and thank you very much for your sharing.

S7: My pleasure!