

**From Deficiency to Legitimacy: An Autoethnographic Nexus Analysis of Multilingual  
Academic Discourse Socialization in English-Medium Instruction Higher Education**

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in

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## Ethical Approval



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Date: 17 of October, 2025

Dear Aiym Zhumabayeva,

This letter now confirms that your research project titled “Multilingual Student Socialization Through Writing Feedback: An Autoethnographic Nexus Analysis in EMI Higher Education” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,

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## **Abstract**

### **From Deficiency to Legitimacy: An Autoethnographic Nexus Analysis of Multilingual Academic Discourse Socialization Through Feedback in EMI Higher Education**

Feedback in undergraduate English academic writing courses plays a crucial role in academic discourse socialization (ADS), shaping how students navigate academic norms and expectations. In Kazakhstan, English-medium instruction (EMI) is promoted through internationalization policies, yet it operates within a multilingual context where Kazakh and Russian are dominant. While feedback is widely studied, existing research has focused on graduate students and on surface-level aspects of written comments, overlooking how students interpret and respond to feedback. This autoethnographic study addresses this gap by examining my experiences as a multilingual undergraduate student in an EMI institution. Drawing on nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), I analyze institutional discourses, instructor feedback, and reflective memos documenting two formative feedback encounters, offering insider insights into how feedback mediates positioning in EMI. Across institutional, interactional, and personal levels, the study shows how internationalization policies position English as the primary medium of participation. Although instructor feedback often invited dialogue, my engagement was shaped by internalized native-speakerist ideologies, leading me to position myself as a deficient non-native English writer. Through interactions with faculty, I gradually reinterpreted these experiences and came to view my multilingual repertoire as a legitimate resource for meaning-making. These findings show that feedback is not inherently formative, summative, dialogic, or monologic; rather, its meaning emerges through the interaction of historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place. Methodologically, combining nexus analysis with autoethnography enables tracing feedback across levels. The study calls for feedback practices that move beyond correction to create

space for negotiation through low-stakes, iterative tasks. Institutionally, this requires moving beyond standardized models of success, recognizing multilingualism as a resource, and supporting instructors in understanding feedback as a socializing practice that shapes students' positioning and engagement through interaction and ideologies.

*Keywords:* academic discourse socialization, feedback, English-medium instruction, autoethnography, nexus analysis, multilingualism

## **Андатпа**

### **Дефициттен легитимдікке: Ағылшын Тілінде Жоғары Білім Беру Жағдайында Кері Байланыс Арқылы Көптілді Академиялық Дискурс Әлеуметтенуіне Автоэтнографиялық Нексус-Талдау**

Ағылшын тілінде академиялық жазу курстарындағы кері байланыс академиялық дискурс әлеуметтенуінде (АДӘ) маңызды рөл атқарады, өйткені ол студенттердің академиялық нормалар мен талаптарды қалай меңгеретінін қалыптастырады. Қазақстанда ағылшын тілінде оқыту интернационалдандыру саясаты арқылы ілгерілетілсе де, ол қазақ және орыс тілдері басым көптілді контексте жүзеге асады. Кері байланыс кеңінен зерттелгенімен, қолданыстағы зерттеулер көбіне магистратура студенттеріне және жазбаша пікірлердің беткі деңгейіне назар аударады, ал студенттердің кері байланысты қалай түсіндіріп, оған қалай жауап беретіні жеткілікті зерттелмеген. Бұл автоэтнографиялық зерттеу осы олқылықты толтыру мақсатында ағылшын тілде оқыту жағдайындағы көптілді бакалавриат студенті ретіндегі менің тәжірибемді талдайды. Нексус-талдауға сүйене отырып, мен институционалдық дискурстарды, оқытушылардың кері байланысын және екі қалыптастырушы кері байланыс тәжірибесін сипаттайтын рефлексивті жазбаларды талдаймын. Бұл зерттеу кері байланыстың ағылшын тілде оқыту контекстінде позициялануды қалай медиалейтіні туралы инсайдерлік түсінік береді. Институционалдық, өзара әрекеттестік және жеке деңгейлерді қарастыра отырып, зерттеу интернационалдандыру саясаты ағылшын тілін академиялық қатысудың негізгі тілі ретінде қалай позициялайтынын көрсетеді. Оқытушылардың кері байланысы жиі диалогқа шақырғанымен, менің оған қатысуым интернализацияланған «ана тілінде сөйлеуші» идеологияларымен қалыптасты, нәтижесінде мен өзімді ағылшын тілін екінші тіл ретінде қолданатын әлсіз жазушы ретінде позицияладым. Оқытушылармен өзара әрекеттесу арқылы мен

бұл тәжірибелерді қайта пайымдап, өзімнің көптілді репертуарымды (орыс және қазақ тілдері) академиялық мағына жасаудың заңды ресурсы ретінде қабылдай бастадым.

Бұл нәтижелер кері байланыс өздігінен қалыптастырушы, жиынтық, диалогтық немесе монологтық емес екенін көрсетеді; оның мәні «тарихи дене», өзара әрекеттесу тәртібі және дискурстардың өзара әрекеттесуінде қалыптасады. Әдіснамалық тұрғыдан нексус-талдау мен автоэтнографияны біріктіру кері байланысты әртүрлі деңгейлерде қарастыруға мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеу кері байланыс тәжірибесін тек түзетуден гөрі келіссөзге мүмкіндік беретін, төмен тәуекелді және қайталамалы тапсырмалар арқылы кеңейтудің қажеттілігін көрсетеді. Институционалдық деңгейде бұл табыстың стандартталған модельдерінен бас тартуды, көптілділікті ресурс ретінде тануды және оқытушыларға кері байланысты студенттердің позициялануы мен қатысуын өзара әрекеттестік пен идеология арқылы қалыптастыратын әлеуметтену тәжірибесі ретінде түсінуге қолдау көрсетуді талап етеді.

## **Аннотация**

### **От Дефицита к Легитимности: Автоэтнографический Нексус-Анализ Многоязычной Академической Дискурс-Социализации Через Обратную Связь в Высшем Образовании с Обучением на Английском Языке**

Обратная связь на курсах академического письма на английском языке играет важную роль в академической дискурс-социализации (АДС), формируя то, как студенты осваивают академические нормы и требования. В Казахстане обучение на английском языке продвигается через политику интернационализации, однако оно функционирует в многоязычном контексте, где доминируют казахский и русский языки. Несмотря на то что обратная связь широко исследуется, существующие работы в основном сосредоточены на магистрантах и поверхностных аспектах письменных комментариев, оставляя без внимания то, как студенты интерпретируют и реагируют на обратную связь. Данное автоэтнографическое исследование направлено на восполнение этого пробела путем анализа моего опыта как многоязычного студента бакалавриата в условиях англоязычного образования. Опираясь на нексус-анализ, я анализирую институциональные дискурсы, обратную связь преподавателей и рефлексивные заметки, документирующие два ключевых эпизода обратной связи, предлагая инсайдерский взгляд на то, как обратная связь медирует позиционирование в англоязычном образовании. На институциональном, взаимодействиином и личностном уровнях исследование показывает, как политика интернационализации позиционирует английский язык как основной язык академического участия. Хотя обратная связь преподавателей часто предполагала диалог вокруг выбора в письме, мое восприятие этих комментариев было обусловлено интернализированными идеологиями «носителя языка», что привело к позиционированию себя как дефицитного неносителя английского языка. В ходе взаимодействия с

преподавателями я постепенно переосмыслил эти опыты и начал рассматривать свой многоязычный репертуар (русский и казахский) как легитимный ресурс для академического смыслопроизводства. Полученные результаты показывают, что обратная связь не является по своей сути формативной, суммативной, диалогической или монологической; ее значение возникает во взаимодействии «исторического тела», порядка взаимодействия и дискурсов в контексте. Методологически сочетание нексус-анализа и автоэтнографии позволяет проследить обратную связь на институциональном, взаимодействиином и личностном уровнях. Исследование подчеркивает необходимость практик обратной связи, выходящих за рамки исправления ошибок и создающих пространство для переговоров через низкорисковые и итеративные задания. На институциональном уровне это требует отхода от стандартизированных моделей успеха, признания многоязычия как ресурса и поддержки преподавателей в понимании обратной связи как практики социализации, формирующей позиционирование и вовлеченность студентов через взаимодействие и идеологии.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Where This Story Began

The seeds of this thesis were planted during my internship in the Writing Center where I worked as an undergraduate writing tutor. One afternoon, a senior engineering student handed me their graduate school application and said, “I can’t write properly in English.” It was as if they had already surrendered, coming to the Writing Center as a final attempt at rescue. But when I looked over their application, it was not the disaster they imagined. It was organized and much better than they gave themselves credit for.

That moment stayed with me because I recognized their fear in myself. I remembered questioning whether my own writing sounded “English enough,” whether my sentences betrayed my background, whether I truly belonged in academic spaces where English was the standard at the beginning of my undergraduate studies. I loved writing, but writing in English once felt out of reach, like a door I was not sure I could open due to my origin.

I grew up in a Kazakh-Russian speaking family and community where English is a foreign language. At home, English was a symbol of success, treated as a form of capital (Bourdieu, 1991), a key that could unlock opportunities at prestigious universities and beyond Kazakhstan. Even though I passed English proficiency exams with high scores and was admitted to an English-medium university, I did not feel like I truly “held” that key. I carried it like something borrowed, afraid it might be taken away if I did not act like it belonged to me.

This uncertainty reflects my early experiences of academic discourse socialization (ADS) (Duff, 2010). Beneath the engineering student’s “I can’t write properly in English” was a deeper, unspoken question: *Do I write properly enough to belong here?* It was the same question I carried throughout my own undergraduate studies, wondering whether my

native speaker professors considered my writing good enough or if anyone who read my essays could spot that I did not belong to the English academic community. For several years, writing for me was mostly about negotiating legitimacy and claiming membership in an academic community.

The only viable way I could try to claim membership was through receiving approval from my professors, who I considered as gatekeepers of the English academic community. This made feedback central to my process of ADS. As a result, each comment on my papers carried enormous weight: a praise could feel like validation that I belonged, while criticism, although constructive, could feel like proof that I did not.

This study traces my journey of ADS: how I learned to navigate the rules, expectations, and unwritten norms of English-medium academia through feedback. Using autoethnography, I turn my own experiences into a lens for understanding how multilingual students negotiate their belonging in academic spaces, and how feedback shapes their growth as writers and participants in scholarly communities. Through this study, I argue that feedback does not function solely as it is designed by a feedback giver, but through how it is experienced, interpreted, and negotiated by a feedback receiver.

### **Background Information**

My story is just one of many. It is the product of a larger system where language, power, and language socialization intersect. To understand experiences like mine, we need to look beyond that and trace the historical and institutional forces that have made English a gatekeeper in education.

When a multilingual student at an EMI receives feedback on their writing, they are engaging in more than a simple exchange of comments and corrections. These interactions are sites where challenges with writing intersect with processes of language socialization and the negotiation of ideologies about what counts as legitimate academic discourse (Li &

Han, 2023). Over time, repeated participation in such interactions forms what Scollon and Scollon (2004) describe as a “nexus of practice,” a space where multiple social, cultural, and historical forces intersect.

The student’s experiences are shaped by their *historical body* which according to Scollon and Scollon (2004) is the accumulated knowledge, skills, and prior educational experiences that they bring to the interaction. These experiences are deeply connected to the *discourses in place*, which establish the rules, expectations, and norms of academic writing. The *interaction order*, which refers to the socially organized patterns of interaction in the classroom or academic setting, identifies how communication occurs, who has authority, which voices are prioritized, and how participation is structured. In feedback sessions, the interaction order shapes the moment-to-moment negotiation of knowledge, authority, and legitimacy, determining both what feedback is delivered and how.

These three elements (historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order) operate together and influence one another. By examining feedback interactions through the lens of ADS and nexus analysis, this autoethnographic study highlights how multilingual students’ writing development is both shaped by and contributes to broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

Building on this theoretical framework, it is important to situate these feedback interactions within the wider global and local context of English-medium higher education. Since 1960, English has progressively taken on the role of the primary language of instruction in universities worldwide, including in countries where it is not an official language, which has reinforced English’s position as the dominant language in academic fields (Crystal, 2003). Kazakhstan is no exception, as the government has undertaken several initiatives to integrate English-medium of instruction (EMI). These include

participation in the Bologna Process, the launch of the “Trinity of Languages” cultural program, and the implementation of the “Trilingual Education” reform, aimed at increasing the number of universities with EMI (Yessenbekova, 2023). Given Kazakhstan’s unique linguistic landscape, where Russian is widely spoken due to the country’s Soviet legacy and Kazakh serves as the national language, English is often a foreign language for students entering higher education. Therefore, with English now the language of instruction in many Kazakhstani universities, students must undergo a process of academic discourse socialization. They are expected not only to learn how to write academically in English, but also how to engage with the norms, expectations, and values of English-medium academic communities.

### **Problem Statement**

Students whose first language is Kazakh or Russian often enter English-medium universities as newcomers to English academic discourse, navigating norms and practices that may feel foreign or inaccessible. From an ADS perspective, this transition involves learning to participate in the oral and written practices of the university in ways that align with institutional expectations while also drawing on prior linguistic and cultural experiences (Duff, 2010; Wette & Furneaux, 2018).

Writing is especially significant in this process, as it is the primary medium through which students are assessed and recognized in higher education. Written feedback, in particular, plays a crucial role in ADS because it also conveys implicit messages about competence and participation in academic communities (Anderson, 2021; Kim, 2018; Li & Han, 2023; Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Sung, 2023; Yang, 2021). Despite extensive research on feedback, much of it has focused on graduate students and has not fully examined how undergraduate multilingual writers navigate feedback in EMI settings (Anderson, 2021; Kim, 2018; Li & Han, 2023; Okuda & Anderson, 2018). In addition,

much of the existing literature tended to focus more on the comments themselves or on how students revise their texts afterwards. What often gets overlooked is how students' choices, ideologies, and positioning within institutional discourses mediate the entire process. This creates a gap in our understanding of feedback.

As Duff (2010) points out, ADS is not a straightforward or uniform process but rather one that is socially situated, affectively charged, and shaped by unequal access to discourse practices. Therefore, to fully understand the role of feedback in ADS, we need to look beyond surface-level revisions and see how feedback is negotiated, interpreted, and sometimes even resisted taking into account wider ideological contexts.

To address this gap, I treat each feedback encounter as part of a “nexus of practice” shaped by the historical body, the interaction order, and the discourses in place, which are further elaborated in the following sections. Such an approach is made possible through autoethnography, which allows me to document and analyze these dimensions from an insider perspective and to reveal the complex ways feedback contributes to ADS.

By centering my experiences as a multilingual student, this research provides rich, insider insights into how feedback mediates positioning negotiation in EMI, offering a depth of perspective that traditional approaches often miss.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to trace my journey as a multilingual student navigating English-medium discourse, focusing on how written feedback became a pivotal force in shaping my positioning as a writer. Through autoethnography, I examine the moments of vulnerability, resistance, and growth that marked my encounters with feedback. Using these stories, I will try to uncover how language ideologies and institutional expectations influence a student's sense of legitimacy. Guided by nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), this research views each feedback exchange as a

“nexus of practice,” shaped by my historical body (linguistic and cultural background), the interaction order (power dynamics in teacher-student relationships), and the discourses in place (ideologies surrounding English and academic writing). By reflecting on these intersections, this study aims to demonstrate how multilingual students negotiate their identities in English-dominant academic spaces through feedback. It also looks at how gaps between how feedback is intended and how it is experienced influence students’ sense of identity.

### **Research Questions**

The aim of this study is to understand what role feedback played in shaping my academic discourse socialization as a multilingual writer in EMI settings. In particular, it attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How did my historical body, especially my embodied experiences of multilingualism, change over time?
2. How did the interaction order, particularly the positioning between me and my instructors during feedback interactions, change over time?
3. How did the discourses in place, such as language ideologies about correctness, change over time?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study offers important insights into how written academic feedback shapes the identity formation of multilingual undergraduate students within EMI contexts. By examining my evolving identity as a multilingual writer through the lens of nexus analysis, focusing on the historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place, it reveals how feedback can serve as a site of identity negotiation.

While much of the existing literature on feedback and academic writing focuses on postgraduate students, this study addresses a gap by centering the undergraduate

experience, particularly within the context of Kazakhstan. It highlights how institutional discourses and language ideologies surrounding correctness, legitimacy, and multilingualism shape students' trajectories, and how feedback interactions mediate their positioning as either legitimate or novice participants in academic communities.

Furthermore, the study provides practical implications for writing instructors, EMI curriculum designers, and policy makers seeking to foster more inclusive and equitable feedback practices. It may also be helpful for future scholars interested in combining autoethnography with nexus analysis, which has the potential to offer deeper insights into how academic practices are experienced and negotiated.

### **Thesis Outline**

This thesis is organized into six chapters, each designed to explore how written feedback mediates ADS within EMI in Kazakhstan. The first chapter introduces the study and situates it within the context of Kazakhstan. It presents the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance. The second chapter reviews existing scholarship on English academic writing, ADS, written feedback in second language writing, and studies that combine ADS with feedback.

The third chapter explains how the study was conducted. It introduces autoethnography as a method that allows for an in-depth, insider perspective as well as nexus analysis as a framework for tracing how past experiences, interactions, and ideologies come together. The fourth chapter presents the findings, organized through three key nexuses of practice across my educational journey. By tracing my early experiences with English and evaluation across three nexuses—a the pre-nexus of my learning experiences prior to university, a pivotal moment of ADS during the undergraduate tutor preparation course in the nexus 1, and the aftermath of that moment during the graduate studies in nexus 2—this chapter shows how my historical body,

discourses in place, and interaction order evolved over time helping me socialize into academic discourse. The fifth chapter will analyze the findings in relation to the existing literature on ADS and feedback. It will also conclude the study and offer implications for educators. The final chapter summarizes the key conclusions, highlights the study's strengths and limitations, and offers final reflections.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

As outlined in the previous chapter, this autoethnographic study aims to explore how feedback shaped the way I engaged with dominant language ideologies as a multilingual undergraduate student in the EMI university and how feedback played an important role in my academic discourse socialization unfolded as a result of that. This chapter situates my experience within the existing scholarship while also identifying a key gap: although feedback is widely researched, it is often examined at the level of interaction, with limited attention to broader factors such as language ideologies, and studies focus more on how feedback is delivered than on how it is interpreted by students. Therefore, this chapter is organized into three sections. First, it examines multilingual academic writing in EMI settings. Second, it explores feedback as a key mechanism for academic discourse socialization, highlighting limitations in current approaches. Finally, it presents nexus analysis as a framework that connects personal experiences of feedback to broader ideological and institutional processes.

### Revisiting Foundations of Academic Writing

In its broadest sense, academic writing refers to all writing produced in an academic setting for educational or scholarly purposes (Chauhan, 2022; Chin et al., 2012). Particularly, Chin et al. (2012) outline five features that distinguish academic writing from other forms of writing: purpose, audience, evidence, style, and process.

These features of academic writing influence what you, the reader, can expect from this thesis. This study has a *purpose*: to analyse written feedback as a social practice and examine its impact on academic discourse socialization in EMI undergraduate contexts. It is the backbone of the thesis because it guides each section as I try to find answers to my research questions. I also keep in mind my *audience*. It is not my parents, who do not speak English, or my friends, who have never heard of nexus analysis, but my supervisor,

examiners, and other researchers who will stumble across this study, and this awareness shapes the way I write and choose my words. *Evidence* is another defining feature of this thesis as every claim I make must be backed by credible sources. This means I cannot simply rely on my own impressions; I need to demonstrate how my analysis connects to established scholarship, which sets academic writing apart from, say, fiction. Because my *audience* includes the academic community, the *style* of this thesis needs to reflect academic standards: formal tone, clear organization, and careful word choice. That means you will not come across words from my mother tongues - Kazakh and Russian - such as *paxmem* or *npuvem*. Finally, there is the *process* of writing, which in my case has been inseparable from feedback. I draft a section, get comments, rethink my approach, rewrite, and sometimes completely revise it. This cycle of writing, reflecting, and revising gradually turns ideas into a complete thesis.

While such features are widely recognized, much of the literature, particularly in academic writing guidebooks, approaches them as relatively stable and transferable across contexts. For example, books such as *Becoming an Academic Writer* (Goodson, 2013), *The Elements of Academic Style* (Hayot, 2014), and *The Handbook for Academic Writers* (Luey, 2009) offer detailed guidance on structure, style, and process, often focusing on how to meet established expectations. Hayot (2014) emphasizes large-scale organization and stylistic choices, while Goodson (2013) highlights writing as a process supported by feedback and linguistic accuracy. However, these approaches tend to present academic writing as a set of practices that can be learned and applied, with less attention to how such practices are shaped by context, language ideologies, and students' lived experiences.

Other authors approach academic writing from an interactive perspective. In *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Graff and Birkenstein (2010)

define academic writing as an ongoing conversation with others rather than a solitary act. My study is no exception because I position my work within the claims, assumptions, and debates of those who came before me, sometimes building on their ideas, other times challenging them, but always engaging in dialogue with the field. Schimel (2012), in *Writing Science*, shares a similar belief. Although he does not define it, he argues that writing matters only when others can understand it and use it in their own work.

In other words, both perspectives highlight that academic writing is not only about producing text but about producing text that *works*. Strongman's (2013) definition is particularly fitting here as he describes academic writing as the careful selection of words to communicate complex ideas clearly to a range of readers. This raises an important question: what, then, makes academic writing effective?

There is no universal explicit answer, as scholars approach the question from different perspectives. One is a structural approach, as seen in *The Good Paper*, where Rienecker et al. (2013) define a good academic paper as one that follows a clear structure, uses sources effectively, employs precise academic language, and builds strong reasoning. Johnson's (2016) checklist for academic writing in *Academic Writing: Process and Product* aligns with that idea, but it also highlights the importance of originality of ideas, clarity and conciseness of sentences, logical paragraphing, strategic word choice, clear headings, correct referencing, overall fluency, and polished form. Combined together, they show that effective academic writing is both a matter of structure and substance.

But for multilingual writers like me, producing such writing involves an extra layer of complexity. While writing in English, I am not simply making choices about structure, clarity, or word precision. I am doing so in a language that is not my first, while carrying with me the habits, and rhetorical preferences of my other languages. In my early rhetoric and composition classes, my drafts often came back covered in comments saying that I

was overusing *ing*-clauses and adding too many commas, which made it more difficult to understand. Like Canagarajah (2002), who found that his Sri Lankan rhetorical training clashed with North American expectations for explicit signposting and concise prose, I had to relearn how to shape my arguments for a new audience - one that valued conciseness, transparency, and an explicit guiding writing over syntactic complexity.

Drawing on Bakhtin, Hall (2008) argues that all acts of writing are inherently dialogic, situated within an ongoing web of prior texts, cultural norms, and anticipated responses. From this perspective, my English academic writing is not a solitary act of self-expression but the outcome of continuous negotiation between the traditions of my first languages and those of English academic discourse. Bakhtin's concept of the contact zone defines this space of negotiation - a place where languages, voices, and cultural logics intersect, sometimes clash, and often blend into hybrid forms (Hall, 2008).

However, as Canagarajah (1999) notes, such negotiation often brings with it the pressure to adapt to dominant academic norms in order to be recognized as legitimate participants in scholarly discourse. This adaptation is rarely seamless; multilingual writers may experience uncertainty about stylistic choices, difficulty with aligning their rhetorical preferences with disciplinary expectations, and moments of identity tension when their own voice feels constrained or reshaped to fit established standards (Canagarajah, 2004; Cheng et al., 2025; Curry & Lillis, 2022). This is particularly true in the Kazakhstani context, where a study of graduate students in the EMI university revealed that writing in English is one of the biggest challenges for them (Tajik et al., 2024). Moreover, postgraduate students' prior writing experiences in Russian and Kazakh can hinder their writing as they have to adapt to academic English conventions, which aligns with Canagarajah's findings (2004). This struggle is not simply about language proficiency but about positioning oneself within and sometimes against the hierarchical power structures

of academic publishing, where the norms of good writing are often implicitly defined by Anglophone traditions (Canagarajah, 2004).

Thus, writing by multilinguals in EMI contexts is a complex process of adapting and negotiating. And feedback acts as a bridge in this process, connecting writers' current practices to the expectations of their academic communities.

### **Making Sense of Feedback in L2 Writing**

In academic settings, feedback is commonly understood as information provided to learners about their performance with the aim of improving future work (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Scott, 2014). In hindsight, what I had known as feedback from school was exactly what Boud and Molloy (2013) call “telling”: a one-way delivery of corrections with the assumption that acting on them would inevitably lead to improvement. It relied on the belief that the change was a simple matter of compliance. From a feedback literacy perspective, Carless and Boud (2018) expand the definition to include not only the information given but also the learner's ability to understand, process, and use feedback productively. In this view, feedback is less about a one-way transmission of comments and more about equipping students with the capacity to engage critically with those comments and apply them to future tasks. However, this remains a largely skill-oriented perspective that focuses primarily on instructor's intention and design of feedback, with less attention to how it is experienced and taken up by students.

Scholars agree that feedback in L2 academic writing is most effective when approached as a socially mediated and dialogic process, where teachers and students collaboratively negotiate meaning to develop disciplinary understandings, and refine writing strategies (Cheng et al., 2025; Shin et al., 2018; Turner, 2023; Xu et al., 2024; Zhang, 2025).

Cheng et al.'s (2025) mixed-method investigation of L2 postgraduate students in central China reveals that feedback engagement is an active, self-directed process rather than a passive reception of supervisor comments. Students approached feedback as a tool to “diagnose their gaps in knowledge, bridge known gaps, and enrich their preexisting knowledge of academic writing” (Cheng et al., 2025, p. 20). Feedback framed in directive or referential ways was usually acted upon fully, reflecting the influence of Confucian traditions that place high value on teacher authority. In contrast, advisory feedback was often treated as open to negotiation, suggesting that the autonomy, critical thinking, and self-regulatory skills fostered in postgraduate study sometimes outweighed cultural expectations, which lead students to selectively incorporate suggestions in line with their own academic perspectives.

Similarly, Turner's (2023) study of L2 learners in an introductory literature course at a Swedish university shows that feedback operates as a socially mediated, dialogic process shaped by multiple intersecting factors, including prior educational experience, personality, and institutional context. While students who valued disciplinary knowledge were more receptive to related feedback, many still prioritised grammar, mechanics, and generic academic writing elements despite teachers' greater emphasis on higher-order concerns. Turner (2023) also identified a difference in how students perceived peer and teacher feedback: peer comments were valued for offering alternative viewpoints, whereas teacher feedback was sometimes filtered through perceptions of authority or assessment stakes, subtly altering the depth of engagement.

The studies also indicate that feedback does not need to originate solely from teachers to be dialogic or to enable negotiation of meaning. Xu et al. (2024) explored three interconnected feedback types, such as self-evaluation, peer feedback provision, and peer discussion, in an postgraduate L2 academic writing course in China. Their findings show

that self-evaluation encourages learners to critically analyse their own work, diagnose weaknesses, and plan targeted follow-up actions, while providing peer feedback fostered comparative reflection, enabling students to draw on others' strengths to address their own gaps. Peer discussions further extended this dialogic engagement, allowing negotiation of interpretations, co-construction of solutions, and mutual scaffolding. Together, these practices created an iterative, socially mediated feedback cycle that integrated cognitive, behavioural, and affective engagement, showing that feedback processes can be collaborative and multidirectional rather than unidirectional transmissions from expert to novice.

Shin et al.'s (2018) study of English major students at a university in Northern Taiwan links feedback engagement to motivational and affective factors. They found that intrinsic motivation (IM), not extrinsic motivation (EM), was a significant predictor of students' self-evaluative judgments of both teacher and peer feedback, with stronger effects for teacher feedback. Students high in IM viewed feedback, especially from authoritative sources, as an opportunity to enhance their skills and fulfil academic goals, whereas those driven by EM were less inclined to engage deeply once external rewards or grades were secured. Writing anxiety also shaped feedback use: students with test anxiety or fear of making mistakes valued teacher feedback for its perceived credibility but often hesitated to seek it proactively in high-stakes contexts, turning instead to peers who offered empathetic and less judgmental support.

However, not all types of feedback are equally likely to foster productive engagement. Zhang's (2025) doctoral research, which examined L2 students in a U.S. university writing course and their interactions with feedback from two professors, demonstrates that learners' language proficiency plays a decisive role in how feedback is negotiated and applied. In this study, both instructors primarily used coded feedback,

marking students' errors with symbols and indicating the need for correction without offering direct fixes. They intentionally avoided giving full corrections or detailed explanations, aiming to push students toward deeper reflection and independent problem-solving rather than simple error correction. As a result, higher-proficiency students were more likely to engage critically with the feedback by questioning, reinterpreting, or selectively incorporating suggestions. In contrast, lower-proficiency learners tended to accept feedback more unquestioningly, focusing on surface-level fixes rather than rhetorical or structural improvements. This suggests that productive engagement depends on learner language proficiency level and on the feedback's alignment with students' needs.

These studies show that while feedback in L2 academic writing can function as a socially mediated, dialogic process, its ability to foster meaningful engagement depends on how it is framed, the learner's proficiency level, and the match between feedback type and students' needs.

### **Academic Discourse Socialization**

Guo, one of the main participants in Zhang's (2025) study, was a lower-proficiency L2 student in a U.S. university first-year writing course. At the beginning of the semester, she often avoided engaging with coded feedback from her professors, because its volume felt overwhelming for her and she treated it as a personal critique. Over time, however, as she became more familiar with academic writing norms and expectations, she began to see feedback as guidance and approach feedback more actively. This transformation illustrates how feedback can serve as a bridge into the discourse practices of higher education.

This process aligns closely with what many scholars describe as Academic Discourse Socialization (ADS). According to Duff (2010), ADS is the gradual induction of learners into the language, practices, and epistemologies of their academic communities

through sustained interaction and guidance. Just as with learning academic writing, integration into academic discourse for those whose first language is not English, is not as easy. Phyo et al. (2025) investigated the experiences of 255 international doctoral students in Hungary, representing 49 countries, 48 first languages, and 65 academic programs. Through interviews with 18 doctoral students, their findings reveal that during the early stages of academic socialization, L2 students often encountered a mismatch between their expectations and the demands of academic writing and research methodology. These mismatches created doubts about their preparedness for graduate study, particularly in navigating the transition from general English proficiency to the more specialized demands of English for Academic Writing and discipline-specific research practices. Despite these challenges, the study documented students' successful ADS. A key factor contributing to this success was their consistent commitment to writing practice and their deliberate efforts to align their texts with disciplinary norms. Rather than remaining on the periphery, students actively worked to integrate into their academic communities by internalizing and enacting field-specific discourse practices.

ADS also involves internalizing the values and norms of the academic community. Godfrey (2015), in her doctoral dissertation, examined the ADS of nonnative English students in an introductory writing course, focusing on both student experiences and instructor practices. Her analysis revealed how classroom activities simultaneously targeted micro-level writing skills and embedded macro-level societal norms. In this way, students not only learned to produce academically valued texts but were also socialized into the broader roles and expectations of being good students and legitimate members of higher education communities.

But ADS is not only limited to higher education. Alexander (2025) explored ADS in the context of Chinese students attending British Columbia offshore schools (BCOS) in

China and found that ADS is deeply connected to how students construct and negotiate their identities. For example, Bai, one of the participants, frequently used plural pronouns (“we,” “us”) to signal her sense of belonging within an academic community, positioning herself as part of the academic discourse. Both Bai and another participant, Chan internalized practices such as academic referencing and project-based assessments, treating them as symbolic markers of legitimate educational identity that differentiated them from peers in the local Chinese system.

To conclude, these studies show that ADS is not a one-time achievement but an evolving process. Students start by feeling like outsiders, who are overwhelmed, uncertain, or even resistant. Through sustained practice and interaction, however, they gradually inhabit new identities, adopting the values and discourses that mark full participation in academic communities. ADS, then, is best understood as an ongoing negotiation between texts, people, and selves.

### **Feedback as a Tool for ADS**

Across different contexts, research has shown that feedback plays a pivotal role in ADS, shaping how students not only improve their writing but also internalize disciplinary language, values, and ways of thinking (Anderson, 2021; Kim, 2018; Li & Han, 2023; Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Sung, 2023; Yang, 2021).

For a particular group of students, specifically doctoral and graduate students, feedback is central to their academic and professional socialization (Anderson, 2021; Kim, 2018; Li & Han, 2023; Okuda & Anderson, 2018). As Anderson’s (2021) 16-month longitudinal case study of seven Chinese PhD students in an Australian university demonstrates, the stakes of feedback are heightened in doctoral programs, where writing is deeply connected to research productivity and future career prospects. For most of Anderson’s (2021) participants, detailed and even critical feedback from supervisors was

interpreted as a sign of investment and care, positioning them as legitimate emerging scholars in their disciplines. Supervisors, whose reputations are often tied to their students' work, acted not only as instructors but also as de-facto co-authors or copy editors, ensuring that students' texts met publishable standards. However, the case of Sissy, one of the participants, revealed how negative appraisals, when internalized as personal criticism rather than developmental guidance, could hinder both academic and social integration. Feeling misunderstood and marginalized because of her perceived remedial English skills, Sissy withdrew from departmental social life. This case demonstrates how the effects of feedback extend beyond academic writing, shaping students' sense of belonging and participation in the wider academic community.

Li and Han's (2023) study further highlights the identity-mediating role of feedback by examining how Chinese international postgraduate students in the UK interpreted their tutors' comments. Their findings show that feedback not only guided textual revision but also positioned students into particular roles: sometimes as illegitimate writers, sometimes as peripheral members, and at other times as legitimate, emerging contributors. For instance, feedback that focused narrowly on linguistic errors tended to marginalize students, reinforcing deficit views of L2 writers. By contrast, comments that engaged with content and intellectual contribution enabled students to imagine themselves as part of their disciplinary community. It is important to note that students did not always accept feedback passively; they negotiated, resisted, and sometimes re-aligned tutor comments with their own goals. Sue, one of the participants, used her agency to navigate contradictory voices and assert ownership over her writing, whereas Chloe's resistance left her with a fragmented sense of identity, balancing knowledge contribution with reliance on external proofreading. This tension underscores how the effectiveness of feedback lies less

in its form (oral or written) than in its perceived relevance, fairness, and alignment with disciplinary expectations.

While supervisors often serve as the primary gatekeepers of feedback in graduate education, research also highlights that students encounter feedback in other institutional spaces such as writing centers. Okuda and Anderson's (2018) study of three Chinese graduate students at a Canadian university shows how writing centers function as alternative but contested sites of ADS. The study illustrates that the feedback (even when misaligned with students' needs) shaped students' socialization and identities. Blenda, for instance, managed to redirect her tutor's approach and co-construct new practices that better addressed her writing concerns, positioning herself as an active agent in the feedback process. By contrast, Lily and Sissy's experiences showed how inadequate feedback could amplify feelings of marginalization and self-doubt. These cases highlight that writing centers, while not always designed with L2 graduate students in mind, nevertheless become important feedback sites that can either enable or hinder academic identity formation.

Sung's (2023) qualitative study of L2 postgraduate students at an English-medium university in Hong Kong adds an important perspective by focusing on agency in feedback-seeking. Drawing from two contrastive case studies, Sung identifies two forms of agency in feedback practices: proactive (actively seeking and mobilizing resources) and reactive (responding passively to feedback received). These forms of agency are not static but shift depending on students' academic goals, their perceptions of feedback affordances, and their ability to recognize potential socializing agents in their environment. Sung's (2023) study is also one of the few that explicitly highlights the role of language ideologies. Drawing on Bourdieu (1991), the author argues that students' language ideologies, particularly beliefs about native-speaker norms, mediate how they interpret

feedback and from whom they consider it valuable. These ideologies directly influence not only their academic writing goals but also their willingness to approach certain socializing agents for feedback. Thus, feedback-seeking is not just a matter of individual motivation, but also of how students' habitus (shaped by past academic experiences), forms of capital (social, cultural, linguistic), and ideological orientations interact with contextual affordances and constraints.

Yang's (2021) case study of a Chinese doctoral student at a U.S. university further demonstrates that feedback only becomes transformative when accompanied by reflective engagement. Adopting a longitudinal lens, Yang (2021) traced how PhD students interacted with feedback across different stages of their academic journey. The study shows that they digested supervisor comments through three stages: reflection-on-feedback, reflection-in-feedback, and reflection-for-feedback at different points in the writing process. Yang's work highlights that reflective practice is not an optional add-on but an indispensable mechanism through which feedback translates into sustained development in both writing and academic socialization.

When it comes to Kazakhstani context, similar findings appear in Goodman and Montgomery's (2020) study, which highlights the role of instructor and peer interaction in students' socialization to genre knowledge. The appropriate mediation and scaffolding or metadiscursive support (Duff, 2010) provided through feedback and rubrics was so valuable that students not only came to expect such guidance but also actively requested it. Over time, they applied the strategies of explicit communication developed through these exchanges. This process fostered an awareness of differing writing conventions and a capacity to make deliberate rhetorical choices across languages, genres, and contexts.

Overall, it is evident that feedback's impact depends on context, delivery, interpretation, and the identities at stake. Constructive, dialogic, and reflective feedback

can act as a powerful tool of academic socialization, while narrow or deficit-oriented feedback risks marginalizing students and undermining their confidence.

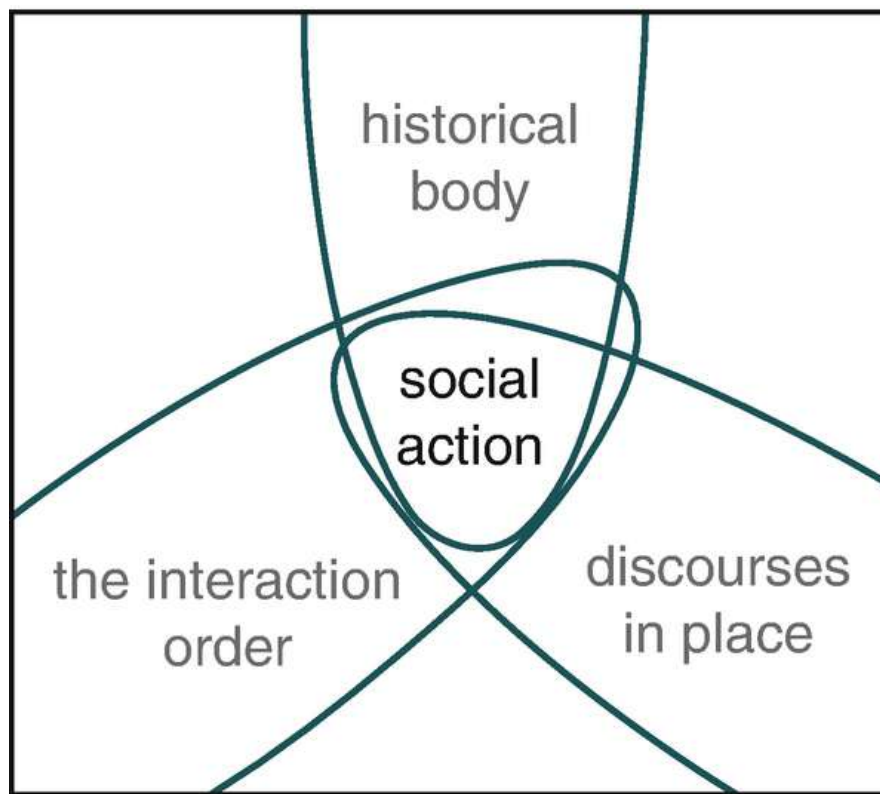
### **Integrating Discourse, Positioning, and Ideology**

While writing, students also engage in ongoing processes of identity negotiation and learn who they can be as writers within the academic community (Ivanič, 1998). In this study, identity is understood in terms of positioning, drawing on positioning theory, as a dynamic and interactional process that emerges through discourse and social interaction (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Positioning theory emphasizes that identities are continuously constructed through discursive acts within specific social contexts, where participants take up, resist, or negotiate positions shaped by underlying norms, rights, and expectations (Felix & Ali, 2023). By understanding identity as positioning, it becomes possible to analyze how feedback shapes how students see themselves as legitimate (or illegitimate) participants in academic discourse. This is especially relevant in EMI contexts, where language ideologies, moral orders, and power relations influence how these positions are transformed over time, because discursive interactions continuously construct and constrain participants' roles and identities (Kayi-Aydar & Steadman, 2021).

Nexus analysis, developed by Scollon and Scollon (2004), is a useful framework for studying feedback and ADS, because it studies how actions are shaped by the intersection of discourses, social practices, and histories. As Hult (2019) argues, such an approach is necessary for understanding complex language phenomena, as it allows researchers to move beyond isolated levels of analysis and trace the dynamic relationships between them. It emphasizes that any single communicative act, in this case, receiving or responding to feedback, is not isolated, but situated at the nexus of practice, where multiple social, cultural, and ideological forces intersect (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Nexus Analysis by Scollon and Scollon (2004)*



The first is *discourses in place*, which refers to the circulating beliefs, ideologies, and norms that shape the meaning of any act (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). For instance, in academic writing contexts, institutional discourses, such as English-only policies or the valorization of native-speaker expertise, frame how students perceive feedback and whose authority they consider legitimate. The second component, the *interaction order*, focuses on the immediate social relationships and roles enacted in interaction. Feedback exchanges are never neutral; they involve hierarchies between professors and students, the positioning of the student as either a novice or a competent participant. Finally, the *historical body* emphasizes that each participant brings with them a unique set of past experiences, embodied habits, and language histories (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). A student's prior schooling, cultural identity, or previous encounters with authority figures all shape how

feedback is interpreted. Together, these three components provide a powerful lens for examining feedback as a socially mediated and ideologically charged process.

Providing and receiving feedback might seem like a straightforward academic practice, but in reality, it is deeply embedded in larger contexts. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has tended to focus more on the comments themselves or on how students revise their texts afterwards (Cheng et al., 2025; Shin et al., 2018; Turner, 2023; Xu et al., 2024; Zhang, 2025). What often gets overlooked is how students' choices, ideologies, and positioning within institutional discourses mediate the entire process. This creates a gap in our understanding of feedback. To fully understand the role of feedback in academic discourse socialization, we need to look beyond surface-level revisions and see how feedback is negotiated, interpreted, and sometimes even resisted taking into account wider ideological contexts.

No research has yet combined ADS with nexus analysis to investigate feedback practices. Bringing these perspectives together makes it possible to see how feedback operates as a site of language socialization and ideological negotiation. Autoethnography further complements these frameworks by situating me, the researcher, as both participant and observer, allowing an insider view of how feedback is experienced, interpreted, and enacted over time.

These approaches will help move beyond one-dimensional views of feedback to reveal how it functions as a negotiated process. This framework not only fills the conceptual gaps identified in this chapter but also provides a methodological way for examining how multilingual writers negotiate feedback in English-medium contexts.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This autoethnographic study aims to explore how feedback shaped the way I engaged with dominant language ideologies as a multilingual undergraduate student in an EMI university and how my academic discourse socialization unfolded as a result of that. This chapter outlines the methodological choices that guided the study. In particular, I explain the rationale behind choosing autoethnography and nexus analysis as research design, discuss my positionality as a researcher-participant, and provide information about data collection and analysis procedures that were taken to examine my experiences. This chapter also addresses ethical considerations and the strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

#### Research Design

##### *Autoethnography as Method*

This study employed a qualitative design, as it focuses on people's lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to the events in their lives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In particular, the study traced my own lived experiences as I navigated academic discourse socialization, using an autoethnographic approach that aims to “translate the personal into the social science research realm” (Marx et al., 2017, p. 2).

Canagarajah (2012) provides a helpful way to define autoethnography through three components that constitute the term: auto, ethno, and graphy. First of all, autoethnography centers the self as a site of inquiry (Marx et al., 2017) to share stories that “have been shrouded in secrecy—hidden or silenced stories that may shame others into acknowledging truths we haven't dared to tell” (Bochner, 2017, p. 71). This makes it a powerful tool for bringing forward stories of hardship, inequity, and marginalization that typically remain unspoken. Additionally, by allowing researchers to narrate their own experiences, autoethnography opens access to rich, firsthand data (Canagarajah, 2012).

Traditional methods often position the researcher as an outsider who observes, questions, and analyzes participants in order to make conclusions about what is happening. In contrast, autoethnography allows the researcher to speak from within the experience itself. By revisiting my own journey, I can offer deeper and more vulnerable reflections that would be difficult to obtain if I were studying others from a distance. To illustrate that, here is an excerpt from my literacy biography that was written during my undergraduate studies:

Our topics for essays (although I was introduced to the word "essay" only in the seventh grade for the first time) were repeated each year, and we usually wrote compositions like "How I spent my summer," "Why I love my Motherland" and so on. As a result, I couldn't master writing skills in Kazakh no matter how much time I dedicated to memorization. My grandmother, who was fluent in Kazakh, would wonder how come her granddaughter was so bad in Kazakh. It was one of the few problematic subjects I had as I frequently failed the dictations due to not knowing where to put a proper comma even though I knew the rules. It was the end of the world for a ten-year-old me because my teachers shamed me for failing in my native language. As a result, I concluded that I wasn't good at writing because my works were highly criticized in terms of grammar.

This depth of emotional detail proves the value of positioning myself as a research site and allows me to provide vulnerable and critical insight that a conversation could never achieve.

Secondly, the *ethno* places personal experiences within a broader cultural framework (Canagarajah, 2012). It is important to note that autoethnography is not just telling a personal story of a researcher. It works to “reposition and resituate unheard voices” so that lived experiences can be understood within their sociocultural contexts

(Marx et al., 2017, p. 2). By situating the experiences of socially marginalized people within academic discourse, autoethnography becomes a valuable tool for examining how power and privilege operate in socio-personal lives (Marx et al., 2017). Following this vein, my study analyzed the ways my own experiences with feedback and academic discourse socialization were shaped by broader language ideologies and institutional expectations. In particular, analyzing the strategic plans that demonstrates the university's determination to "compete internationally" and "achieve global recognition" provided context for my decision to, for example, choose a native speaker for a writing-intensive course. That helped frame pressure to master English is not just personal, but an institutional desire.

Finally, the *graphy* refers to the act of writing and representing experience (Canagarajah, 2012). This involves writing a narrative that is both evocative and analytical, balancing storytelling with theoretical knowledge. As Bochner (2017) describes, autoethnographic writing is an ongoing dialogue with the self: the researcher listens closely to their own words, comments on what they hear, and continues the conversation by interpreting, reinterpreting, and discovering aspects of the self that were previously hidden. This process involves being one's "own worst critic—picking at scabs, exposing warts, vacillating between angst and anger, striving for an acute self-consciousness and a shameless subjectivity" (Bochner, 2017, p. 72).

These three elements position autoethnography as a methodological approach that foregrounds lived experience while interrogating the cultural forces that shape it (Canagarajah, 2012). This study drew on that approach to explore how feedback shaped my engagement with dominant language ideologies and how my academic discourse socialization took place in the EMI university context.

### *Nexus Analysis*

As introduced earlier, nexus analysis framework was used to help situate my personal experience within broader contexts. Even though nexus analysis has not been used extensively in autoethnographical studies, it could be particularly useful in directing attention not only to individual experiences but also to the discourse, power, and practice that give those experiences meaning.

Drawing on three key components of nexus analysis (historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place) as well as its focus on social action as the unit of analysis, this study aims to understand how my experiences with feedback and academic discourse socialization unfolded over time.

The historical body was examined through my prior experiences with language learning and earlier encounters with feedback. Particular attention was given how these embodied experiences shaped my responses to feedback, my positioning as a writer and student, and, as a result, my sense of legitimacy. As mentioned before, discourses in place refer to ideological and institutional norms that define what is considered as acceptable academic writing. In this particular study, it explored dominant ideologies such as monolingual ideology and ideology of correctness. The interaction order was examined through how feedback positioned me within instructor-student relationships over time. Positioning, defined as the discursive assignment of roles and expectations in interaction (Felix & Ali, 2023), initially positioned me as a passive recipient of evaluation, but later enabled a shift toward a more agentive role where I could interpret and negotiate feedback. By bringing these dimensions into relation, the study traced how feedback operates as a nexus of practice, where identity, positioning, and meaning are continuously transformed.

### *Applying Nexus Analysis*

According to Scollon and Scollon (2004), there are three theoretical stages of a nexus analysis. The first, *engaging the nexus of practice*, requires the researcher to identify key moments of mediated action and to locate themselves within a particular zone of identification in relation to those practices. Second, *navigating the nexus of practice* involves identifying the key patterns of meaning that move through the practice. These patterns emerged inductively through repeated engagement with my reflections, feedback comments, and drafts. Initial coding focused on identifying recurring themes in how feedback was experienced, such as feelings of evaluation, uncertainty, or agency. These patterns were then refined by relating them to the three dimensions of nexus analysis (Table 1). At last, these patterns were traced across multiple moments and data sources to examine how they evolved over time and across different contexts.

**Table 1**

#### *Examples of Data Analysis*

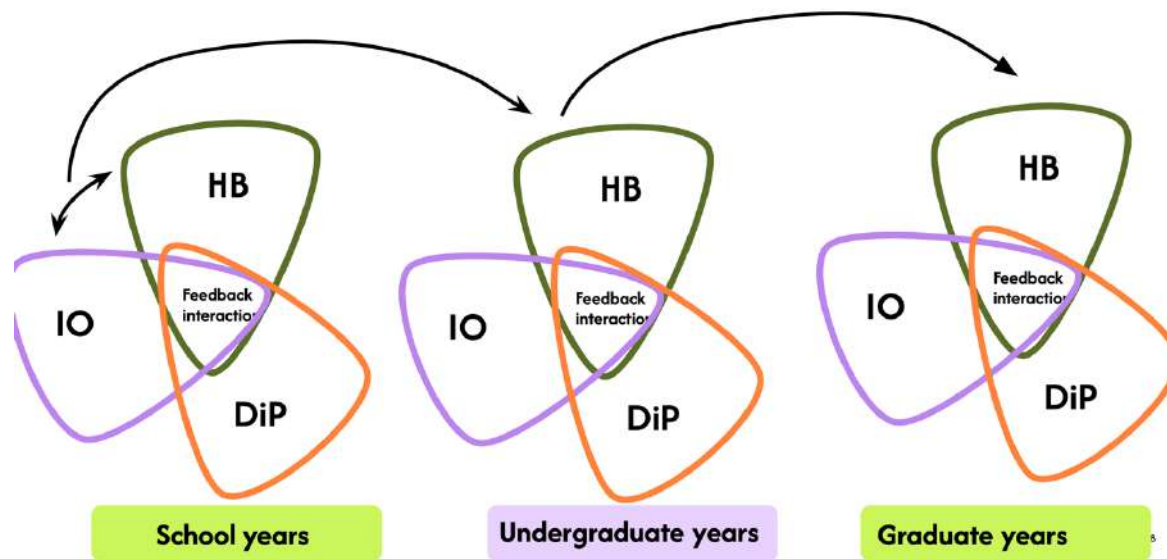
| Initial coding                          | NA lens                         | Data Source                                    | Quote from the document                                                    | Interpretation                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feedback = judgement tied to grades     | Pre-nexus<br>Historical<br>body | Reflections<br>about school<br>years           | “I fixated on what had gone wrong... numbers had always measured my worth” | Positioning as a passive recipient                                                         |
| Full compliance with feedback           | Interaction<br>order            | Reflections<br>about<br>undergraduate<br>years | “I accepted all suggestions because instructor knows best”                 | Hierarchical positioning between instructor and I                                          |
| Education linked to a national progress | Discourses in<br>place          | Development<br>Strategy 2030                   | “School as a means to enter top 30 most developed countries”               | Academic success framed as contributing to national competitiveness and global positioning |

Third, in the stage of *changing the nexus of practice*, the analysis moves to proposing new ways of understanding the feedback practice. Further, I elaborate on each stage and outline how it guided the analytical process in this study.

### **Engaging the Nexus of Practice**

**Research Site.** In this study, the research site was an EMI university in Kazakhstan, where I completed both my undergraduate and graduate studies. The university places a strong emphasis on internationalization, which is reflected in its predominantly international faculty and the use of English as the primary language of instruction and communication. All undergraduate students are required to complete a sequence of academic writing courses, such as a first-year English rhetoric and composition course and a second-year English writing and composition course. In addition, the university offers support through the Writing Center, where students can seek guidance on their writing and receive feedback outside the classroom. My experience is grounded in my participation in a writing tutor preparation course, designed to train students to support peers' writing.

**Three Nexuses.** In this study, I focused on three nexuses of practice that shaped my academic journey (Figure 2).

**Figure 2***Timeline of Three Nexuses*

The first nexus, which I refer to as the *pre-nexus*, was situated in my early high school years. This stage demonstrates my initial experiences with English, evaluation, and authority, where my early beliefs about correctness, legitimacy, and “good writing” began to form. These experiences became part of my historical body, shaping how I later interpreted feedback and positioned myself as a learner.

The second nexus was situated in my undergraduate years (2020-2024), specifically in the writing tutor preparation course during spring semester in my sophomore year. By looking closely at the kinds of feedback I received, how those interactions took place, and what kinds of discourses about language and writing were circulating in the program at the time, I can better understand how these early encounters with feedback shaped my ADS, influenced how I engaged with academic writing, and positioned myself within the academic discourse. It was a space where I began forming ideas about what “good writing” was supposed to look like and where I first experienced the tensions of being a multilingual writer in an EMI context.

The third nexus came from my graduate studies (2024-2025). Returning to familiar practices, such as receiving feedback, positioning myself in academic communities, and navigating language expectations, allowed me to recognize how much my earlier experiences continued to shape me. By examining this second nexus, I could see more clearly what carried over from my undergraduate years, what changed, and how my historical body as a multilingual student evolved over time.

**Navigating the Nexus of Practice.** Once the key nexuses were identified, the next step was to navigate them by tracing the patterns. To do this, I collected different types of data for each element of nexus analysis, which I summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Data Sources*

| Nexus                    | Element                | Documents                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-Nexus<br>(2007-2020) | Historical<br>Body     | Personal reflections about my background                                                                                            |
|                          | Interaction<br>Order   | Personal reflections of feedback encounters                                                                                         |
|                          | Discourses in<br>Place | School's Development Strategy 2030                                                                                                  |
| Nexus 1 (2020-<br>2024)  | Historical<br>Body     | Personal reflections about my experiences<br>Essay assignments from first year writing class<br>and writing tutor preparation class |
|                          | Interaction<br>Order   | Personal reflections about feedback encounters<br>Comments received during writing tutor<br>preparation class                       |
|                          | Discourses in<br>Place | University's Strategic Plan<br>Writing Tutor Preparation Handbook                                                                   |
| Nexus 2 (2024-<br>2025)  | Historical<br>Body     | Personal reflections about my experiences<br>Essay assignments from EAP class                                                       |
|                          | Interaction<br>Order   | Personal reflections about feedback encounters                                                                                      |

Comments received during writing tutor  
preparation class

Discourses in  
Place

Program webpage  
Course syllabus

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Afterwards, I traced how these nexuses shifted over time and what changes occurred between them. To understand my historical body, I analyzed my earlier writing drafts, reflective journals, and feedback encounters across different stages of my education. In particular, I focused on moments where my positioning as a writer became visible. For instance, in early undergraduate drafts where I relied heavily on formal, impersonal language and avoided making strong claims, reflecting an internalized belief that academic writing required distance and correctness. Likewise, reflective journals revealed how I often interpreted feedback primarily as correction, rather than as an invitation for dialogue, which further reinforced a sense of myself as a deficient language user. By identifying such recurring patterns across data sources, I traced how these experiences become part of my historical body and continued to influence my engagement with feedback in later contexts.

To analyze the discourses in place, I examined institutional documents, course materials, and feedback comments to identify the dominant ideologies shaping expectations of academic writing. For example, in my undergraduate courses, feedback often emphasized the use of formal vocabulary and avoidance of “informal” expressions, reflecting a broader ideology of correctness and alignment with standardized academic English. In addition, institutional materials promoting EMI and internationalization highlighted the implicit privileging of English as the primary language of academic legitimacy. By tracing these patterns across data sources, I explored how monolingual ideologies and expectations of native-like proficiency shaped my understanding of what counted as “good” writing and legitimate participation in academic discourse.

To analyze the interaction order, I drew on Duff's (2010) discussion of how students learn to participate in academic communities by negotiating roles, power relations, and expectations through interaction. For example, in my undergraduate experience, feedback comments such as "You do a nice job addressing the topic... the conclusion could be stronger" position the instructor as an authority who evaluates and directs improvement, while positioning me as a learner expected to revise accordingly. Despite the supportive tone, the interaction order remained largely hierarchical, limiting opportunities for dialogue.

In contrast, in my graduate studies, the interaction order shifted. For instance, when I included metacommentary in my drafts (e.g., "I am not sure if this paragraph is relevant"), I actively invited feedback and positioned myself as a participant in the interaction rather than simply a recipient. These examples showed how interaction order can change over time, shaping my positioning and sense of legitimacy.

***Changing the Nexus.*** By pinpointing the tensions that appeared between them, I further proposed suggestions for enhancing feedback practices and better supporting multilingual students' academic socialization. Engaging with these tensions allowed me to reconsider feedback in a different way, which will further be elaborate more in the fifth chapter. What is more, the process of changing the nexus of practice also occurs through delivering these insights, publishing the work, and sharing it with educators and researchers, where these new understandings can begin to influence practice.

### **Positionality**

As the researcher and the primary participant in this autoethnographic study, my positionality is at the center of the research process. I approach this work as a multilingual writer who has navigated an English-medium university both as an undergraduate and later

as a graduate student. These experiences shape the way I interpret feedback, understand language ideologies, and make sense of academic discourse socialization.

While some might suggest that this insider perspective could introduce subjectivity, I draw on the view that qualitative researchers are inherently part of the material—discursive apparatus that produces knowledge (Riedler & Eryaman, 2025). From this perspective, subjectivity is not a limitation to be eliminated but a productive resource that shapes the insights I am able to generate. Hence, I understand my positionality plays an important role in uncovering multilingual writers' experiences. Nevertheless, instead of striving for traditional neutrality, I embrace reflexivity and transparency, and acknowledge that my interpretations emerge from a complex relationship between personal experience, institutional discourses, and methodological frameworks.

This insider perspective allows me to access memories, emotions, and ways of making meaning that might remain hidden to an outside observer. At the same time, I am aware that my interpretations are shaped by my current identity of an experienced academic writer. Because of this, I try to reflect continuously on how my background, assumptions, and goals influence both the stories I tell and the ways I analyze them. In this process, I see myself not as a detached observer but as an active participant in creating knowledge.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Although this research focuses on my own experiences, I took all measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of others who appear in my story. I do not use the real names of institutions, courses, or assignments, and I refer to professors and instructors using pseudonyms, describing them only in general terms such as whether English is their first or additional language. While I work with the original feedback materials during my analysis, these are securely stored and anonymized before any reporting. All identifying

details, like names, signatures, or references to specific practices, are removed. In sharing my journey, I focus only on the parts of feedback and experience that are relevant to my research questions, aiming to tell my story honestly while respecting the privacy and dignity of those around me.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter focuses on feedback as a key process of ADS. Through feedback interactions, students learn what counts as good writing, how knowledge should be presented, and how they are expected to position themselves as academic writers. Therefore, in this chapter, I present the analysis of how feedback interactions shaped my positioning within dominant language ideologies as a multilingual student and how my academic discourse socialization unfolded across time. In doing so, it will address the following research questions:

1. How did my historical body, especially my embodied experiences of multilingualism, change over time?
2. How did the interaction order, particularly the positioning between me and my instructors during feedback interactions, change over time?
3. How did the discourses in place, such as language ideologies about correctness change over time?

Drawing on nexus analysis, I examine three key nexuses in my educational trajectory: my high school, undergraduate and my graduate studies. Within each nexus, I analyze how my historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place intersect in feedback interactions. Tracing the changes across these three dimensions will show how feedback moments functioned as sites of academic discourse socialization and how my positioning as a multilingual writer was negotiated over time.

### **Opening Space for Possibility**

To illustrate how feedback interactions operate as sites of ADS, I begin with a key moment from my undergraduate experience during a writing tutor preparation course that I took in my later years at an EMI university. As part of this course, I was required to produce a literature review, which was one of the first extended academic genres I had to

engage with at this level and to discuss my writing with the instructor during office hours. I fully trusted the instructor not only due to their teaching expertise and educational background, but also because they were from North America and a native speaker of English, which I associated with greater authority in academic writing. That was because I approached academic writing with a lot of uncertainty, particularly regarding whether my language and style were “academic enough.”

During one of these consultations, I suggested an idea that felt risky to me: opening my literature review and all subsections with quotes from literary works to reflect my identity as a literature student and to make the text feel more meaningful to me, even though I knew it might not fully fit traditional academic expectations. While I was voicing this idea, I anticipated rejection. I expected the instructor to correct me, to explain why such an approach would be inappropriate, or to redirect me toward a more conventional structure that was common in social science. In my understanding at the time, academic writing required adherence to established norms, and creativity, particularly literary or stylistic experimentation, seemed out of place within research writing.

Instead, the instructor responded with a simple question: “Why not?”

This response was unexpected. It did not provide correction, nor did it impose a rule. Instead, it shifted the interaction from evaluation to possibility. The question positioned me not as a student seeking approval, but as a writer capable of making informed choices about my text. The instructor further emphasized that, as this was the first draft, experimentation was acceptable, which reduced the perceived risk of deviating from convention and created space for me to reconsider my assumptions about academic writing.

Following this interaction, my approach to writing began to change. I allowed myself to move away from the “safe” strategies I had previously relied on, such as

overusing formal vocabulary or strictly adhering to rigid structures. I experimented with tone, incorporated literary elements such as epigraphs, and drew more freely on my multilingual and literary background. When these choices were later met with generally positive feedback and were not rejected as inappropriate, it challenged my earlier beliefs about academic writing and helped me see it as a flexible, context-dependent practice that can include voice and creativity.

This moment serves as an entry point for the chapter. In what follows, I trace how my historical body, discourses in place, and interaction orders before and after this pivotal moment shaped both my expectations of feedback and my ADS.

### **Pre-Nexus: Where It All Began**

To explain the significance of this feedback moment, I first trace the pre-nexus conditions that shaped my expectations. Focusing on my childhood and high school experiences (2007-2020), I examine how dominant language ideologies were internalized and became part of my historical body, influencing how I later engaged with feedback.

### ***Historical Body: How I Learned to be “Good” at English***

To understand how my historical body, as a set of discursive experiences, shaped my engagement with writing and feedback, I trace my development through journal entries about my experiences in high school. Given that my formal education took place in English-medium contexts, particular attention is paid to how my experiences of learning and using English shaped my ideologies about writing, legitimacy, and academic success, as well as how these experiences continued to influence my writing practices.

**Performative Legitimacy.** Across my journal entries, English was constructed not just as a medium of communication but as a resource through which I produced, performed, and negotiated legitimacy as a non-native English speaker. However, this

legitimacy was fragile, shifting across contexts and dependent on who had the authority to evaluate it.

My earliest understanding of English was shaped by family beliefs about education and success. In my journal, I described how my grandmother, who dedicated her life to education, passed on to my mother the conviction that speaking English fluently was essential for achieving success. As a result, I grew up constantly hearing the phrase, “if you know English, you will always find ways to succeed.” Even before I encountered English as a language, I had already internalized what it symbolized. As I reflected, “I could even say that I knew the word ‘английский’ (English) long before I actually heard the language itself.”

In this early stage, English was treated as a pathway to mobility and was, therefore, positioned as symbolic capital within my family’s value system. This was reinforced by the material sacrifices linked to language learning. I reflected that “I clearly remember how much it cost my parents” as English tutoring required financial commitment from my family. As a result, the language was treated as a long-term investment that would eventually justify the resources devoted to it.

Moreover, within my non-English-speaking family context, English also operated symbolically. When relatives would ask me to “tell [them] something in English,” the request was not about assessing linguistic competence because even a simple sentence such as “I want to go to school” was met with praise. What mattered here was the visible demonstration of English. Legitimacy in this space depended less on proficiency and more on the *performance*. English, thus, functioned as proof of upward mobility in an environment where it could not be critically evaluated.

In more formal school settings, this sense of legitimacy was reinforced in a different way. During my early school years, English was closely tied to Russian, as

classroom instruction relied heavily on translation-based methods. We learned English primarily through translating words and sentences between the two languages, rather than through communicative use. Because I already had a strong command of Russian, these tasks felt relatively easy for me. As a result, I was often positioned as a successful English learner, not necessarily because of my proficiency in English itself, but because of my ability to navigate translation tasks effectively. This further reinforced a form of performative legitimacy, where success in English was linked to demonstrating competence in a familiar linguistic system rather than developing new communicative skills.

This experience was further shaped by the teaching style I was exposed to. My English teacher followed a strongly Soviet-influenced pedagogical approach, where feedback was primarily focused on identifying mistakes rather than offering praise. Positive reinforcement was nonexistent, while the emphasis was on correction and pointing out what was wrong. This reflected a broader educational culture in which teachers were expected to highlight deficiencies rather than acknowledge strengths.

**Evaluative Legitimacy.** As my educational journey progressed, English became increasingly quantified. Entrance examinations, selective school admissions, and IELTS scores reframed English proficiency as measurable competence. In middle school, I described how being accepted into a selective school was followed by the disappointing realization that “my weakest results were in the English section, despite all my parents’ ‘investment’ in English lessons. Furthermore, I recalled receiving a 7.5 on IELTS and “feeling disappointed because I had expected a higher score.” And only when I later achieved an 8.0, it “helped restore my confidence and made me trust my abilities more.” These reflections show how feedback reinforced a discourse of English as something that can and should be objectively measured and evaluated.

During my high school, English was no longer just something to perform well on exams. Instead, it became the medium through which all knowledge was accessed because the examinations and most subjects were conducted in this language. As I wrote, “without it, I simply wouldn’t have been able to understand the content.” English played an important role in whether I could participate fully in academic life or not, making English a necessity for me.

What is more, writing, especially, became the space where legitimacy felt most needed. I describe how I “worried about every word, every sentence, and every citation, especially when working on high-stakes papers.” Writing eventually became a certain test of whether I truly belonged in that academic space.

Consequently, feedback became crucial in this process. I remember feeling that “there was always something to improve, something I had overlooked.” Even when my grades were strong, “I never felt fully satisfied after receiving my grades.” Each new assignment made me question whether my English was truly good enough.

These experiences became part of my historical body, shaping my understanding of English legitimacy as something that must be constantly demonstrated and validated as it depended on grades, scores, teachers’ approval, and adherence to academic conventions.

### ***Discourses in Place: The Rules I was Taught to Follow***

My historical body was also shaped by the educational environment in which I was learning. To examine the discourses in place that shaped my educational journey during high school, I analyze policy documents, particularly, my high school’s Development Strategy 2030. Before engaging with the document itself, it is important to situate the context of the school I was part of. The school was highly selective, merit-based, and incorporated elements of EMI, where science subjects were primarily taught in English and assessment followed the UK education system. In its Development Strategy 2030

document, education, therefore, was defined as a key mechanism for achieving broader national goals, such as entering the “top 30 most developed countries.” This reflects a discourse where education is positioned as a strategic tool for economic growth, global competitiveness, and national advancement. Moreover, within this document, educational programs were consistently described in relation to internationally recognized systems such as A-levels, IB, and other global standards. This reflects a discourse of international benchmarking, where the quality and legitimacy of education are defined through alignment with globally established models. Additionally, the emphasis on international collaboration with global organizations further strengthens this discourse, implying that legitimacy is achieved through alignment with globally recognized institutions.

Language is also central to this discourse. While multilingual education is emphasized, the structure of the program suggests a functional differentiation of languages, where English is implicitly linked to access to global knowledge, academic success, and professional opportunities. This reflects a language discourse of English as global capital, positioning English proficiency as a key condition for full participation in academic and professional domains. At the same time, there is a strong emphasis on selection, monitoring, and assessment. Competitive entry processes, continuous tracking of student progress, and alignment with international examination systems construct a discourse of measurability and meritocracy, where student ability is understood as something that can be objectively quantified.

These discourses in place construct an educational environment where legitimacy is defined through measurable achievement, alignment with global standards, and proficiency in English. Within such a system, I was positioned as a student who needed to continuously perform and demonstrate my competence. Over time, these institutional discourses became part of my historical body, shaping my beliefs about English as a key

resource, academic success as measurable, and feedback as a form of evaluation tied to standardized expectations, which impacted my interaction order with other members of the community.

***Interaction Order: Learning to Follow***

During my high school years, the interaction order of classroom communication was shaped by local and international teachers, as well as by the institutional expectation that the majority subjects be taught in English. In practice, however, this expectation was unevenly implemented. While international teachers conducted their classes fully in English, some local teachers shifted between Russian and Kazakh, often relying on our native languages to explain complex concepts due to their unpreparedness to conduct classes in English.

This created a noticeable difference in how authority was perceived. Since final exams and assessments were conducted in English, the ability to teach and operate fully in English became closely associated with academic legitimacy. As a result, I began to view international teachers as more authoritative, not necessarily because of their pedagogical skills, but because they aligned more closely with the language of assessment and institutional expectations. In contrast, local teachers, despite their expertise, were positioned as less authoritative within this system due to their use of other languages.

Feedback practices further reinforced this distinction. Feedback from international teachers was typically polite, supportive, and often framed as suggestions. In contrast, feedback from local teachers was more direct and correction-focused, often highlighting mistakes without emphasizing strengths. This reflected a more traditional approach, where the goal was to eliminate errors rather than engage in dialogue.

Through these experiences, a particular understanding of feedback and authority became part of my historical body. I began to associate authority with English proficiency,

and to interpret feedback primarily as the identification of what is wrong. These assumptions shaped the interaction order in later academic settings, where I positioned myself as a learner expected to accept corrections from those seen as more legitimate language users.

## **Nexus 1: Learning the “Right” Way to Write**

### ***Historical Body: Trying to Get it Right***

Upon graduating from high school, I was admitted to a selective EMI university, which, similar to many international institutions, admitted students based on standardized tests such as IELTS and SAT. I was admitted directly into the first-year program, without needing to complete the foundation year designed for students who required additional language support. At the time, this felt like confirmation of my readiness. However, it also meant that I entered the university carrying forward the same assumptions embedded in my historical body that legitimacy in English had to be continuously demonstrated.

**Fragile Legitimacy.** Those beliefs materialized in the way I actually wrote. My first-year argumentative essays from English Academic Writing class included considerable efforts to sound legitimate. One noticeable feature is the overuse of passive constructions. Sentences such as “Technology implementation has been claimed to be a preeminent step...” or “it has become clear that neither using secure browsers nor quitting..” allowed me to remove my own voice from the claim, making the text sound formal and objective. Rather than asserting ideas directly, I heavily relied on structures that implied authority without clearly claiming it.

Another pattern was my *deliberate pursuit* of complex vocabulary. I actively searched for more “academic-sounding” synonyms in a thesaurus, replacing simpler words with more abstract or elevated ones such as *preeminent*, *exacerbates*, or *ample*. At the time, I believed that lexical sophistication meant intellectual credibility. So, for instance,

instead of writing “students cannot access the Internet,” I would produce longer constructions like “students experience limited access.” These choices created a formal tone, but they also sometimes made the sentences heavier than necessary.

In addition, traces of Russian syntactic structure occasionally slipped into my English writing. For example, long relative constructions such as “using which a person can...” mirrored common formal patterns in Russian writing. These extended clauses reflected a rhetorical style I was already familiar with and learned in my early educational journey through translation. So, even though I was striving to align with English academic conventions, my prior linguistic background remained present in subtle ways.

This sense of legitimacy was also shaped by my positioning as a multilingual speaker. While I had access to multiple linguistic resources, English was consistently positioned as the most valuable and authoritative language within academic contexts. As a result, my other languages, particularly Russian and Kazakh, were not seen as assets in writing, but rather as potential sources of deficiency. I became aware of my multilingualism as something that needed to be minimized to meet academic expectations. This influenced how I approached writing tasks and feedback interactions, as I often felt that I needed to distance myself from my linguistic background to sound “academic,” which made my legitimacy incredibly fragile.

### ***Discourses in Place: Writing the “Right” Way***

To understand the role of place in shaping my academic socialization during my undergraduate studies, I looked at the institutional environment I entered when I first joined the university. In particular, I draw on institutional policy documents, such as the Learning and Teaching Strategy (2015–2020), program-level materials like the Writing Tutor Preparation Course Handbook (2020–2021), as well as data from feedback practices, including margin comments and grading. Rather than analyzing these sources separately, I

focus on the dominant ideologies that come across them and shape expectations about writing and learning.

**Monolingual Ideology.** A dominant ideology across institutional texts is the positioning of English as the primary and legitimate medium of academic knowledge. The Learning and Teaching Strategy emphasizes that students operate in an English-medium environment that enables them to communicate their ideas to a “sophisticated audience” and access global knowledge. English is thus constructed as a gateway for intellectual participation and future success.

At the same time, although the strategy references a “multicultural environment,” other languages remain largely invisible. This absence reflects a broader monolingual ideology, where legitimacy is tied to English, and multilingual resources are not recognized as contributing to academic success.

A similar pattern appears in the Writing Tutor Preparation Course Handbook, where there is no acknowledgement of the multilingual nature of the student body, despite its emphasis on communication and learning. The absence of multilingualism in both institutional and pedagogical texts strengthens the idea that academic writing operates within a monolingual English norm.

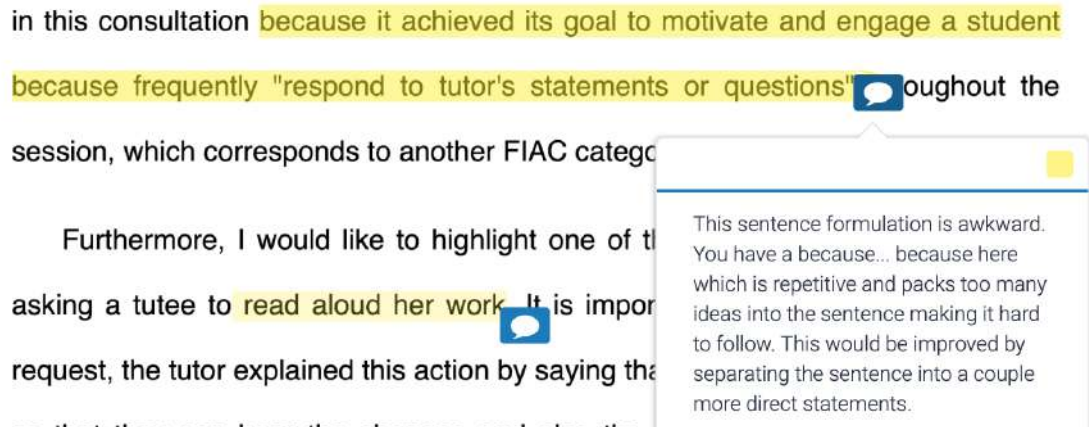
**Standard Language Ideology.** Alongside monolingualism, a strong standard language ideology shapes what counts as good academic writing. Institutional and pedagogical discourses consistently construct writing as something that must conform to established standards, both structurally and technically.

This is evident in feedback practices, where clarity, structure, and explicitness are repeatedly emphasized. Comments such as “The connection should be crystal clear,” “this sentence formulation is awkward,” and “topic sentences would improve organization” (Figure 3) position writing as something that must guide the reader through clearly

structured argumentation. Clarity, in this sense, is not simply about understanding, but about aligning with expected forms of academic expression.

### Figure 3

*Feedback Example: This is Awkward*



In addition, adherence to formal conventions is treated as essential for legitimacy. Instructions such as “be sure you are following APA standards,” “include signal phrases” and “follow formatting rules,” as shown in the Figure 4Figure 4, reinforce an ideology where correctness is inseparable from credibility. Even local issues, such as phrasing, are elevated to higher-order concerns, as seen in comments like “Here, LOCs become HOCs,” further reinforcing the importance of precision.

**Figure 4***Feedback Example: To the Letter*

|                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>-----</p> <p>Be sure you are following APA standards to the letter. This will be a big part of the course, especially as we move into research writing.</p> | <p>There are also a number of mechanical issues that impact the overall clarity of the work. This is when LOCs become HOCs. There is some awkward sentence structure and confusing word choices. I don't</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The handbook also contributes to this discourse through its emphasis on “raising our standards of quality academic writing,” positioning writing as measurable against institutional benchmarks. These practices construct the discourse that academic writing is a standardized system where legitimacy depends on conformity to predefined norms.

**Writing as a Process.** At the same time, institutional discourses promote writing as a developmental and reflective process. The handbook states that “all writers, no matter how accomplished, can improve their writing,” framing writing as an ongoing process rather than fixed product. Similarly, writing is described as a cognitive process, where “the thinking process is the driving force behind writing clearly,” emphasizing reflection and intellectual engagement.

Collaboration is also positioned as central to learning. The idea that “collaboration among student peers is an effective mode of learning” and the description of tutors as “bridges between faculty and students” show a dialogic and participatory model of knowledge construction.

However, this discourse exists in tension with the ideology of correctness. While students are encouraged to be “active agents” in their learning, their writing must still conform to specific conventions and standards. As a result, agency is present but constrained. Or in other words, students are expected to think independently, but within clearly defined boundaries.

These implicit definitions of “good writing” and academic success influenced my historical body, shaping how I interpreted feedback and my role within it. Consequently, I was positioned as a learner expected to align with these norms, which will be further analyzed through the interaction order.

### ***Interaction Order: The Instructor Knows Best***

To further examine how feedback shaped my positioning as a writer, I analyze the interaction order of feedback encounters through Duff’s (2010) ADS framework, which she defines as the process through which students learn not only the linguistic features of academic writing but also the epistemological norms, evaluative criteria, and positioning valued within academic communities. Using this framework, I examined my journal entries, recollections of interactions with professors, and written margin comments on my reflective assignments written during the writing tutor preparation course.

It is important to note that even before these interactions unfolded, my historical body had already shaped how I positioned myself within them. When given the option to choose my writing instructor, I deliberately selected native English-speaking faculty. This decision was influenced by my earlier experiences with English as symbolic capital and performative legitimacy. I associated native speakers with correctness, authority, and the “ideal” form of academic English. As a result, I entered feedback interactions already positioning the instructor as the ultimate authority and myself as a learner seeking validation, which reinforced an hierarchical interaction order from the outset.

**Feedback as Authority.** Now looking at the essence of comments, what stood out first was how often the comments began with praise. As demonstrated in the Figure 5, many margin notes are short and affirmative: “Nice intro,” “An engaging introduction,” “Fantastic analytical consideration,” “Very nice work,” “This is a great moment of reflection.” Some comments consisted only of “Good.” It is worth mentioning that the praise frequently targeted higher-order concerns, such as introductions, analysis, reflection, rather than grammar alone. Through these comments, the instructor positioned me as someone who could think analytically and engage meaningfully with course concepts.

### Figure 5

*Feedback Example: You Are Doing Well*

An engaging introduction that sets up reflective concerns and goals. A nice start to establishing tone as well.

What a great introductory sentence to an evaluation movement!

Good activation of the conclusion stage of the reflective cycle here.

However, more often, the praise was followed by suggestions. For example: “You do nice job of addressing... The concluding statement could have gone further,” “A really successful clarification of the connections.... More engagement with course texts ... would have strengthened this movement,” or “A nice reference to course materials. Contextualizing this further would be useful” (Figure 6). In addition, a notable feature of the feedback is the consistent use of hedging. Phrases such as “I think there is a better

phrase,” “I’m not 100% on this,” “It might be useful to,” and “Perhaps more clear topic sentences would have improved...” soften the directive tone of the comments. Through hedging, authority appeared dialogic and supportive, positioning me as a capable writer and inviting me to revise rather than correct.

### Figure 6

#### *Feedback Example: Praise, Then Push*

You do nice job of addressing potential strengths and weaknesses of an approach in this paragraph. The concluding statement could have gone further. Clarify the connections you make by addressing some significance in your observations.

A really successful clarification of the connections made in your analysis and their significance to writing center practices. More engagement with course texts that address directive v. nondirective approaches would have strengthened this movement.

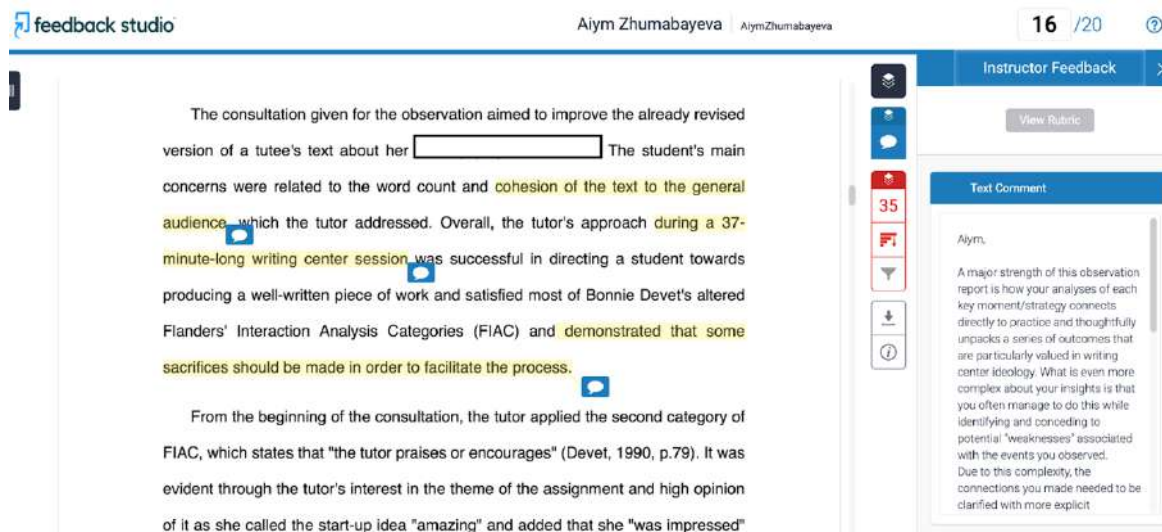
What is more, many comments were structured as questions: “Is this about motivation or engagement?” “How so?” “Could this be a more practical scaffolding strategy?” “How does this benefit you today?” These questions functioned as scaffolding devices. Instead of telling me what was missing, the instructor invited me to think further. I was given the agency to accept or reject these comments, even though the questions themselves signaled where development was necessary.

In contrast to hedged suggestions, certain comments were directive: “Provide page numbers for direct quotes in APA,” “Avoid speculating about feelings in an observation report,” and “Be sure you are following APA standards to the letter.” These statements pointed at non-negotiable disciplinary expectations, increasing the instructor’s authority.

Finally, grading practices (e.g., 16/20, 17/20, 19/20, Figure 7) strengthened the hierarchical structure of interaction. No matter how supportive the tone of the comments was, the number at the top of the page quantified my performance and marked where I stood within institutional expectations.

**Figure 7**

*Feedback Studio: Numbers at the Top*



At the same time, the elaborated general feedback that followed those grades softened its hierarchical impact. Even when I received a 16/20, the feedback began with affirmation: “A major strength of this observation report is how your analyses... connect directly to practice,” and “It is clear that you have a developed understanding of writing center practice.” Similarly, a 17/20 was accompanied by, “Overall, a well considered reflection that develops nicely throughout the piece,” and recognition that “the strongest part of the reflection” was my ability to situate both benefits and challenges. Even with a 19/20, the praise “very astute analysis,” “nuanced and valuable critical analysis” was paired with suggestions such as “could have been better contextualized” or reminders about APA conventions.

**Emotional Responses to Feedback Interactions.** My emotional reactions to the comments drastically differed from their intended purposes. Throughout the course, grades

functioned as emotional triggers. In my journal, I describe opening the learning platform with a “racing heartbeat,” anticipating the percentage that would appear first on the screen. Even though my grades consistently fell between 80 and 90, which is an objectively strong performance, I treated them as insufficient because they were “uncomfortably far from the 100 I secretly aimed for.” I interpreted numerical feedback as measurements of self-worth: higher grades meant a better writer; lower grades meant personal deficiency. In nexus analytical terms, this shows how institutional grading practices intersected with my historical body, as numerical scores were resemiotized from simple feedback into judgments about my abilities and worth as a writer.

My immediate response to seeing scores such as 16/20 or 17/20 was a disappointment. I focused not on what I had achieved, but on the missing points. This pattern reflects a long-standing internalization of quantifiable performance, consisting of SAT scores, IELTS bands, GPA, where numbers had consistently functioned as markers of value. In this sense, feedback interactions directly interacted with my historical body shaped by high-stakes assessment.

Interestingly, praise did not provide emotional reassurance. When overall comments began with statements such as “A major strength...” or “Overall, a well considered reflection...,” I struggled to accept them as genuine. A 16/20 did not align with the idea of “many strengths” in my mind. I assumed that praise was an obligatory Western politeness strategy rather than a genuine recognition. As a result, I skimmed positive comments and focused almost exclusively on critique.

As a result, margin comments consisting solely of praise felt “almost useless” to me. Looking back, I think it is related to the post-Soviet educational mindset I internalized, where positive feedback was almost never used and hence, praise was not considered pedagogically necessary. Therefore, emotionally, I did not know how to receive it.

Comments framed as questions like “How so?” “Could this be...?” also resulted in a mixed emotional response. Instead of treating them as invitations to dialogue, I interpreted them as indirect instructions and I never thought to disagree. Even hedged or open-ended suggestions felt authoritative. My emotional reaction was to comply because “the instructor knows best, so I must revise accordingly.” Finally, the comments I felt most comfortable with were direct corrections about grammar, word choice, or citation as they were direct and easily fixable.

Apart from receiving written feedback, I regularly attended office hours to discuss my progress and ask questions. I particularly sought help when I was assigned to write a literature review, a genre I had never encountered before. These face-to-face meetings (even though they were held online during the COVID-19) felt different from margin comments. They created a more dialogic space, where I could joke or explain rationale behind my decisions in writing.

At that point, I was deeply insecure about whether my language sounded “academic” or “smart” enough. As I mentioned earlier, I thought academic writing required a certain elevated vocabulary that did not come naturally to me. Because of this belief, I approached office hours expecting correction and direction just like I did with written feedback. I assumed the professor would tell me what to fix and how to fix it.

So, when I suddenly suggested beginning my literature review with a quote from *Pride and Prejudice* to showcase my identity as a literature student, I was bracing myself for rejection. I expected to be told that this was inappropriate, not serious enough, or incompatible with academic conventions. In my mind, academic writing was rigid and rule-bound while creativity belonged to the literature field, not research writing.

Instead, the professor’s response was “Why not?” which changed the interaction order. This simple question positioned me not as a novice seeking approval but as a

developing writer capable of making informed choices. The professor's reassurance that experimentation was acceptable "since it was only the first draft" further reduced evaluative pressure. For the first time, instead of worrying to sound "correct," I was prone to experimentation and trying something new. I describe it reflecting that perhaps writing was "not just a rigid structure I had to fit into."

This moment highlights an important distinction between summative and formative feedback. Earlier in my educational journey, feedback was predominantly summative, tied to grades and evaluation, which I had come to interpret as judgments of my competence and self-worth. In contrast, the feedback on this draft functioned formatively: it created space for experimentation, reduced evaluative pressure, and positioned writing as a process rather than a product.

However, rather than treating this distinction as purely procedural, this moment shows its embodied and discursive dimensions. Having multiple drafts and rounds of feedback allowed me to temporarily suspend the ideology of correctness and engage with writing as a space of exploration.

From a nexus analytical perspective, this shift emerges through the interaction of the historical body, discourses in place, and interaction order. My historical body, which predisposed me to expect evaluation and correctness, started to shift when the emphasis on drafting and revision (discourses in place) reframed writing as a process, changing the way I positioned myself in interaction from someone seeking approval to someone willing to explore and take risks.

**Agentive Legitimacy.** In most of my undergraduate experience, I tended to accept feedback without hesitation. The discourses in place about correct language and the elevated position of the instructor over the students had transformed into an assumption in my historical body that the instructor "knew best," and my task was to adjust accordingly.

In my literature review, while the instructor generally supported my stylistic choice, there were suggestions to reconsider the relevance and integration of certain textual examples. This time, however, I found the agency to negotiate and resist some suggestions while making revisions I agreed with. For instance, I refined and replaced some of the epigraph quotes to ensure they aligned more clearly with the thematic focus of each section.

What makes this moment significant is not whether I was “right” or the instructor was “right.” Rather, it is the fact that I treated feedback as dialogic and used my legitimacy to make informed decisions about my writing. In this sense, my identity as a writer moved from one who seeks approval to one who participates in meaning-making alongside instructors.

Drawing on a nexus analytical perspective, this case suggests that distinctions between formative and summative feedback or dialogic and monological feedback are experienced differently depending on how discourses in place, historical body, and interaction order intersect. Feedback that is designed as formative may still be interpreted as summative if a student’s historical body is shaped by evaluative, score-driven experiences. Similarly, feedback that appears dialogic at the level of language (e.g., questions, hedging) may still function monologically if the interaction order positions the instructor as unquestionable authority. Therefore, the nature of feedback is not fixed in its form as it emerges through how it is taken up by the learner. My experience shows that feedback becomes truly dialogic and formative particularly through a shift in how it is interpreted within interaction.

This particular shift influenced my future historical body. Over time, I became more willing to experiment and negotiate feedback, not only in writing but also in peer support roles. Previously, as a non-native English speaker, which was a salient discourse in place, I had questioned my legitimacy to write well, positioning myself as less

authoritative within such interactions. However, as my historical body began to shift, I started to see my multilingual background as a resource rather than a limitation. As a result, the interaction order also changed: I no longer positioned myself solely as someone being evaluated, but as someone capable of contributing, guiding, and participating in knowledge construction. This gradual shift reshaped how I understood my place within the academic community.

### ***Intersection of Historical Body, Discourses in Place, and Interaction Order***

Although the discourses in place strongly promoted dialogic learning, collaboration, and student agency, they simultaneously reinforced English as a standardized form of academic expression. This tension shaped the interaction order of feedback encounters. On the surface, feedback was structured to be dialogic through hedging, questions, and invitations to reflect, positioning me as an active participant in meaning-making. However, my historical body, shaped by earlier experiences of evaluative legitimacy and authority-driven education, did not allow me to fully engage in this dialogue. Instead, I interpreted even open-ended and supportive feedback as directive and authoritative, positioning myself as someone who needed to comply rather than negotiate. As a result, the intended dialogic interaction order was not fully realized in practice. It was only during a critical moment, when the instructor responded with “why not?” that this pattern was disrupted. This moment changed the interaction order, allowing me to move from passive alignment toward active participation, and marked the beginning of my shift toward agentive legitimacy.

### **Nexus 2: Rethinking Feedback**

My second nexus focuses on my experience in graduate studies, which took place after I had completed my bachelor’s degree and gained experience working in the Writing Center as an undergraduate tutor. Entering this stage, I was no longer approaching

academic writing as a novice. Instead, I brought with me prior experiences of both being evaluated as a student and supporting others as a tutor. I then enrolled in a master's program, where I took an Academic English writing course and worked on extended assignments such as a literature review. Across my graduate journal entries, a clear shift occurs in how I perceive English academic writing.

***Historical Body: Old Habits Die Easy***

**Agentive Legitimacy.** In earlier journal entries from my undergraduate years, English was constructed as something I constantly had to prove myself in. In contrast, my graduate studies reflections reveal a noticeable shift. As I wrote, "I did not feel as intimidated in my Academic English class as I had felt years earlier," my graduate self is positioned as confident and competent. English is no longer a symbolic capital I must continuously earn.

This transformation is particularly visible in how I positioned grades. Previously, legitimacy was measured through IELTS bands, GPA, or the difference between 16/20 and 19/20. However, in my graduate reflection, I stated that "this time, however, grades did not define my confidence in writing." The sentence, "I was ready to accept the 'punishment' of lower grades if necessary" revealed that I was willing to accept lower marks as long as my writing felt authentic and intellectually honest.

As a result, English academic writing turns into a space of choice and experimentation. I wrote, "I had finally realized that I could make my own writing choices," and "I felt freer to disagree, to voice my opinions, and to experiment." Academic writing is no longer about rigid adherence to standards. Instead, it becomes a site of agency.

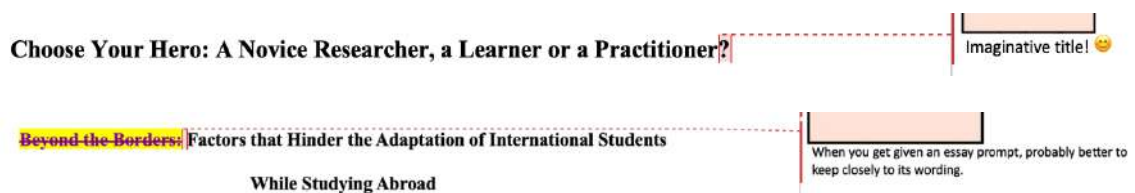
Unlike my earlier undergraduate essays, assignments, including literature reviews, and reflections, that I wrote during my graduate studies in an EAP course did not rely

heavily on excessively “fancy” vocabulary. The language was relatively simple. Terms used in my graduate assignments belonged to an academic register, but they were not overly ornamental. This demonstrated a change from my earlier belief that sophistication equals complexity. Instead of searching for rare synonyms to sound intellectual, the vocabulary here leaned toward clarity and disciplinary relevance.

In addition, a more unconventional approach to titling assignments also reflects my attempts to negotiate my position within academic discourse rather than simply conform to it. For instance, in a reflective assignment, I titled my work (Figure 8) “Choose Your Hero: A Novice Researcher, a Learner or a Practitioner?” while in a literature review I used the title (Figure 8) “Beyond the Borders: Factors that Hinder the Adaptation of International Students While Studying Abroad.” These titles attempt to incorporate elements of voice, stance, and audience engagement, signaling a shift toward a more agentic and self-positioned academic identity.

### Figure 8

*Title Examples: More Than Just Titles*



One particularly distinctive feature of my graduate assignments’ first drafts is my addition of metacommentary, for example: “To be honest, I am not sure if this paragraph is relevant at all...” Unlike earlier stages, I now felt legitimate enough, as a writer, to openly express uncertainty and initiate conversation with the instructor. This reflects a shift from seeking approval to engaging in dialogue. The draft, therefore, becomes a site of negotiation rather than a product awaiting judgment.

### *Discourses in Place: Some Things Never Change*

To understand the role of place in shaping my academic socialization during my graduate studies, I looked at the institutional environment I entered when I joined the master's program. Particularly, I examined key institutional texts, including programme webpages and course syllabi.

**Global Competitiveness and Internationalization.** One of the most dominant discourses was the positioning of education within the international academic community. Institutional texts repeatedly emphasize terms such as “world-class,” “highest international standard,” “cutting-edge research,” and “internationally recognised universities.” These lexical choices construct academic legitimacy as something achieved through alignment with global standards rather than local contexts. The institution was presented as “aspir[ing] to become,” “aim[ing] to,” and “seek[ing] to” position itself within an international hierarchy. Within this discourse, students were imagined as “visionary leaders,” “catalysts for change,” and “influential policy makers.” Education is thus framed not only as knowledge acquisition but as participation in global influence and transformation. It is also important to note that English remained implicit but central to global participation. The absence of explicit references to multilingualism further reinforces the idea that legitimate academic participation is tied to operating within a global (and English-dominant) space.

Moreover, English is positioned as the primary medium through which academic legitimacy is achieved. The syllabus frames the course as a “structured opportunity to improve oral and written English in professional and academic settings.” Here, English is positioned as a prerequisite for participation. The ability to function in English, therefore, became a condition for accessing, producing, and demonstrating knowledge. This demonstrates that legitimacy is tied to linguistic performance in English.

**Standard Language Ideology.** Another strong discourse focuses on standards and adherence to institutional norms. The syllabus emphasizes “academic and ethical conventions” and the use of sources “in ethical and responsible ways, including through the APA citation and writing format system.” This constructs legitimacy as compliance with standardized practices. Academic writing is positioned as something that must align with established formats, conventions, and expectations.

However, compared to earlier educational experiences, this ideology is slightly reframed. Rather than presenting correctness as rigid rule-following, it is positioned as part of responsible participation in academic communities. Still, the underlying assumption remains: to be legitimate is to write in ways that are recognizable and acceptable within institutional norms.

**Collaboration.** Another discourse is related to the positioning of learning as collaborative and dialogic. Students are expected to “work effectively with peers in collaborative learning activities” and engage in both speaking and listening. This reframes academic work as socially constructed rather than individually performed. Writing and learning are presented as interactive processes involving negotiation, discussion, and shared meaning-making. Such discourse supports a more dialogic model of academic participation, where authority is less centralized and knowledge is co-constructed.

### ***Interaction Order: Joining the Conversation***

**Negotiation in the Feedback Interactions.** Although the authority enacted in feedback interactions within my graduate EAP course was present in the way feedback was present, I still treated it as dialogic. First, directive language was present, but it was often softened through hedging or suggestion rather than imposed as command. For example, comments such as “I would suggest use over utilize” or “You’ll need to adjust the way you introduce studies” maintain instructor authority. The modal verbs (would

suggest, you'll need to) signal expectation. Similarly, evaluative labels were also used. Praise was explicit and often enthusiastic: "Very clear and strong writing," "Your summary is detailed and well organized," or "Imaginative title!" These comments positioned me as an already competent writer.

Another important feature of authority enactment was the relatively limited use of open-ended, scaffolding questions. While there were occasional prompts such as "What other modal verbs are possible?" these moments were rare. Most comments did not function as invitations to negotiate meaning but as guided corrections or efficiency-oriented suggestions. As in the nexus 1, comments about citations and references were mostly directive, guiding me through academic conventions.

During my master's, my emotional responses shifted noticeably too. I became more open to critical feedback. Instead of interpreting comments as confirmation of wrongness or correctness, I began to see them as part of an ongoing developmental process. When I write, "I am a human and I am just developing as a writer," I position myself as someone engaged in continuous growth instead of focused on validation. Comments such as "your writing is mostly very accurate" no longer triggered anxiety. I also acknowledge that my repeated challenges such as "details and APA citations" stem from inattentiveness rather than incapacity. This reframing reduces the emotional weight of critique.

However, the journals also reveal sites of tension. When the instructor commented, "If I read this aloud, I don't think I would pass = no need for the commas. APA allows this kind of choice," I describe the insight as "important," but I also admit that I would "still prefer to keep my commas in the way I prefer to read them." Unlike my undergraduate self, who would have immediately conformed, my graduate self tries to stick to her own stylistic preferences.

Similarly, when discouraged from using certain lexical choices, my reaction is not automatic compliance but questioning: “why can’t I use the word I think is appropriate?” I am only willing to follow the advice when there are clear justifications provided. Finally, perhaps the most important emotional transformation is my statement that I “started treating feedback as really feedback, not just checking if I am correct or wrong.”

Overall, these journal entries demonstrated how I became legitimate enough to negotiate, question, and make more informed decisions.

**Product of Negotiation.** Following the written feedback, my revision process became more selective and reflective. Following the written feedback, my revision process became more selective and reflective. One of the important parts of revisions was related to punctuation, particularly my use of commas influenced by Russian syntactic conventions. In some cases, I retained commas in places where they reflected how I preferred to structure sentences rhythmically. However, there were moments when punctuation affected meaning. For example, the instructor commented on my final draft: “A comma means that ALL such students ONLY go to this context = non-defining clause.” At the same time, other comma usages were not addressed in the final draft and remained unchanged. In other areas, such as lexical choice, citation structure, or rhetorical framing, I followed suggestions when I agreed with the reasoning behind them. Here, I was no longer revising to secure a perfect score. I revised because I found the argument convincing.

The changes were also reflected in my emotional response to the final grade. I received 27.3 out of 30.0 (91/100). In earlier stages of my academic journey, anything below a near-perfect score would have unsettled me. In this instance, however, it did not. The grade felt proportional to the work and aligned with my developmental stage. It neither affected my confidence nor undermined my sense of belonging.

Thus, my academic discourse socialization during graduate studies reflects a shift in the interaction order from compliance with perceived authority to negotiated participation. Feedback was no longer taken up as a summative judgment to be accepted uncritically, but as a dialogic resource that I could interpret, question, and selectively incorporate. In nexus analytical terms, this shift became possible because my historical body, previously shaped by evaluative and correctness-oriented feedback, began to engage differently with the discourses in place that framed writing as developmental and reflective. As a result, I was repositioned not simply as a student correcting errors, but as a writer participating in meaning-making.

Overall, the chapter shows a transition from fragile, performance-based legitimacy to a more stable and agentive sense of legitimacy. While institutional discourses continued to emphasize English as the standard, my relationship with those expectations changed. I moved from trying to fit into academic norms to actively participating in them, negotiating meaning in collaboration with instructors, and shaping my own voice as a writer.

In the next chapter, I synthesize these nexuses by directly addressing the research questions and situating my findings within broader scholarship on academic discourse socialization, multilingual writer identity, and language ideology.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter brings together the findings of this study to examine the role of feedback in academic discourse socialization in EMI higher education. By tracing how my historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place changed over time, I argue that feedback's impact depends less on its design and more on how it is interpreted by a feedback receiver, which depends on students' prior experiences, dominant language ideologies, and interaction order. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the findings within existing scholarship. Finally, this study provides pedagogical, institutional, and methodological recommendations based on the findings.

### **Feedback-as-Designed vs. Feedback-as-Practiced**

Across both nexuses, and in contrast to the pre-nexus, my undergraduate and my graduate studies, it became evident that the nature of feedback itself remained relatively consistent. In both settings, instructor comments included similar features such as praise, hedging, suggestions, and occasional directive corrections. Likewise, the discourses in place, particularly ideologies of correctness and expectations of academic writing, remained largely stable across these contexts.

However, what changed significantly over time, and across levels of study, was how I interpreted and responded to the feedback. As I moved from undergraduate to graduate-level work, my engagement with feedback became more selective and reflective. In other words, while the observable interaction order initially appeared stable, my historical body, shaped by accumulated experiences with feedback and academic writing, underwent a transformation.

This shift in my historical body, in turn, reshaped the interaction order, as I began to reposition myself within feedback encounters as an active participant in meaning-making. From a nexus analytical perspective, this repositioning can be understood as a

form of social action that emerges through the intersection of historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place, rather than belonging to any single dimension in isolation.

This observation suggests that feedback is not inherently formative, summative, dialogic, or monologic. Rather, its meaning emerges through the interaction of the historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place. What may be designed as dialogic or formative at the level of instruction can still be experienced as evaluative or authoritative, depending on how it is taken up by the learner.

This was evident in my undergraduate experience, where even relatively neutral or positively framed comments such as “Nice intro” or “Good” were interpreted as unimportant because of my historical body shaped by strong ideologies of correctness and evaluation. Despite their encouraging tone, these comments reinforced my positioning as a learner whose role was to meet the standards. Similarly, hedged suggestions or questions, which are features typically associated with dialogic feedback, were still perceived as implicit corrections because the interaction order positioned the instructor as the unquestioned authority.

In contrast, in my graduate EAP context, similar types of feedback began to function differently. For instance, when I received comments that did not explicitly correct my stylistic choices such as the use of unconventional titles, metacommentary, or epigraphs, I interpreted this absence of correction as permission to experiment. In this case, feedback became more dialogic not because its linguistic form had changed significantly, but because my historical body had shifted, allowing me to interpret feedback as open to negotiation rather than as a fixed standard to follow. This was further reflected in my selective approach to revision, where I engaged with some comments critically rather than accepting all of them unconditionally.

These examples illustrate that the same or similar forms of feedback can be experienced in fundamentally different ways due to prior experiences, power relations, and dominant ideologies. As a result, whether feedback is experienced as formative or summative, dialogic or monologic, depends less on how it is designed and more on how it is interpreted and enacted within a particular nexus of practice.

Therefore, it is important to draw a distinction in the way feedback was taken up and experienced, rather than assuming its function based solely on its design, which I label as *feedback-as-designed* and *feedback-as-practiced*.

Feedback-as-designed can be understood as a social action produced through the intersection of the feedback giver's historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place. This means that the way feedback is formulated, for example, whether it appears supportive, dialogic, or directive, reflects the instructor's prior experiences, their positioning within the interaction, and the institutional and disciplinary expectations they operate within.

For example, during Nexus 1, I received a comment such as: "You do a nice job of addressing the topic... The concluding statement could have gone further." This comment can be understood as the outcome of the instructor's historical body, shaped by their own academic training, which impacted the way they perceived what good academic writing should look like. At the same time, it reflects an interaction order, in which the instructor positions themselves as both supportive evaluator and authority, combining praise with an implicit directive for improvement. Finally, it draws on broader discourses in place.

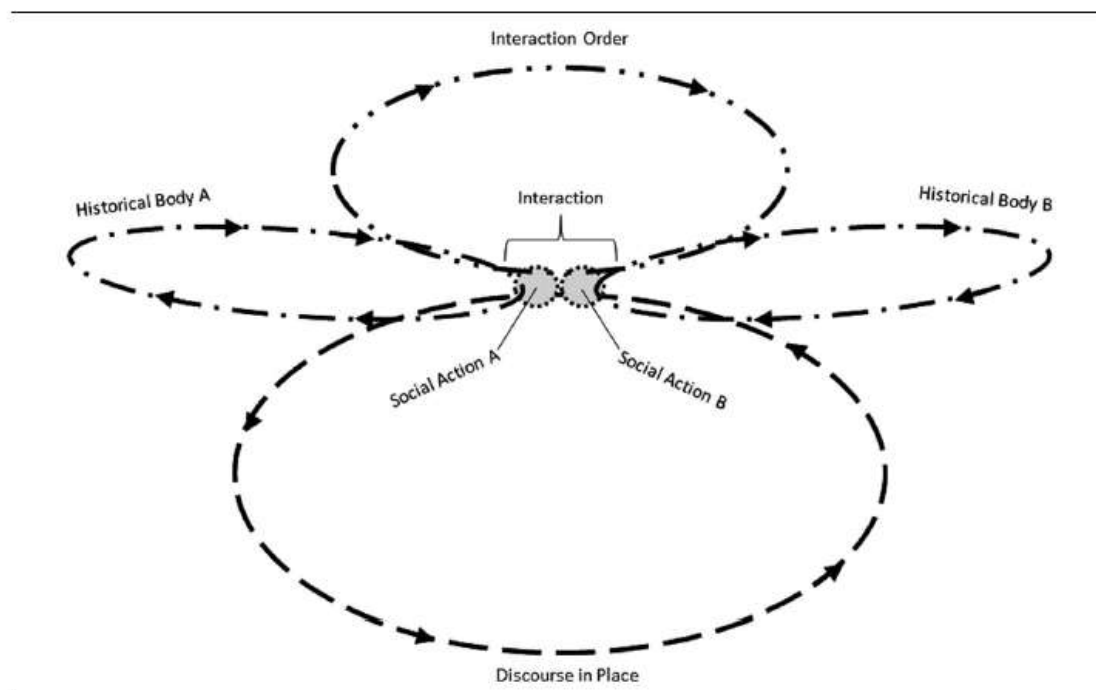
However, feedback-as-practiced depends on a different intersection, particularly, that of the feedback receiver. The same comment is interpreted through the learner's historical body, their understanding of authority within the interaction order, and the broader discourses that shape their expectations of writing and evaluation. As a result,

whether feedback achieves its intended purpose does not depend solely on how it is designed, but on how it is taken up in practice. When there is alignment between these intersections, feedback may function as intended; when there is a mismatch, even dialogic or formative feedback can be experienced as authoritative or evaluative.

In Hult's (2019) extension of nexus analysis (Figure 9), educational interactions are typically understood as unfolding within a common set of discourses in place, while participants jointly produce a shared interaction order in the moment of interaction. However, my experience shows that these dimensions are not always fully shared, given that participants enter the interaction with different historical bodies, occupy unequal positions within the interaction order, and draw on overlapping but not identical discourses in place.

**Figure 9**

*Hult's (2019) Conceptualization of Educational Interaction in Nexus Analysis*

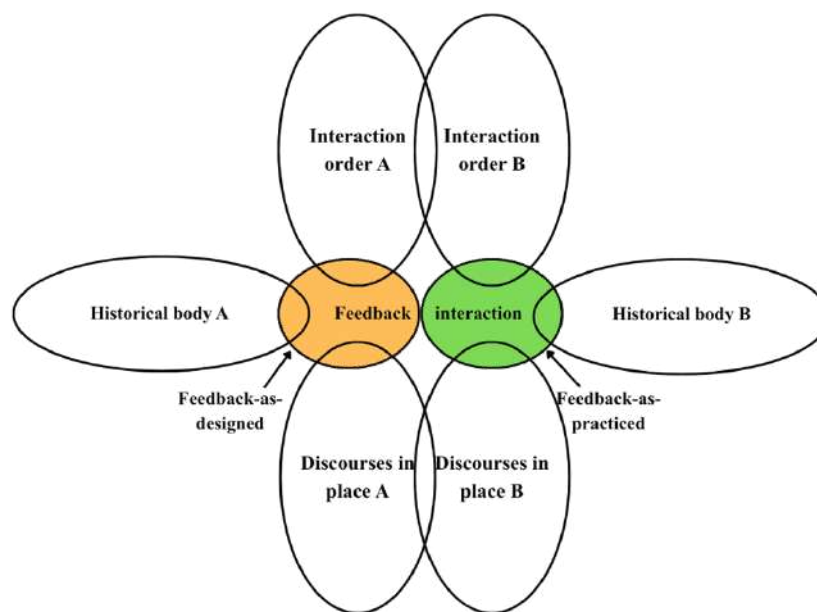


For example, as a student, I often experienced the interaction order as inherently hierarchical, shaped by a historical body formed through prior educational contexts where

authority was closely tied to correctness and evaluation. This led me to position the instructor as the unquestioned authority and myself as a recipient of judgment. In contrast, the instructor may have perceived the same interaction as more collaborative or supportive, viewing their role as guiding rather than evaluating. Likewise, while we both operated within the same broader discourses in place, these discourses may be taken up differently depending on one's position. For the instructor, such discourses may function as pedagogical tools for development, whereas for the student, they may be experienced as standards to be met or enforced. As a result, even when participants appear to share the same interactional context, the meaning of the interaction can differ significantly. Therefore, I argue that educational interactions are not fully shared, but are shaped by overlapping and distinct participant interaction orders and discourses in place (Figure 10).

**Figure 10**

*Adaptation of Hult's (2019) Conceptualization of Feedback Interaction in Nexus Analysis*



This difference in how interaction is experienced helps explain why feedback can lead to such varied outcomes in educational contexts. A growing body of research has examined the conditions under which students find formative feedback useful and effective. In her literature review, Shute (2008) found that feedback is widely recognized as central to learning, but its impact is complex and often inconsistent with earlier meta-analyses showing that about one third of studies reported harmful effects on performance.

One explanation for this variability lies in how feedback is interpreted and taken up by students. Hounsell et al. (2008) argue that the effectiveness of feedback depends not only on how it is designed, but also on how it is understood by learners. Similarly, more recent research also defines feedback as a process rather than a one-way transmission, emphasizing the active role of students in making sense of comments (Carless, 2015; Olsen & Hunnes, 2024, Mujtaba et al., 2025).

In addition, studies highlight the importance of social factors in shaping feedback (Cramp, 2011). For instance, developing positive relationships with instructors can affect how feedback is received, particularly at moments when students may feel vulnerable (Cramp, 2011), which can be understood as part of the interaction order, where relationships between students and instructors influence how feedback is experienced. Likewise, perceptions of feedback are affected by the identity of the feedback provider, with students responding differently depending on who gives the feedback (Winstone & Carless, 2020), which reflects how students' historical body, including prior experiences of evaluation, shapes their reactions to feedback.

Therefore, by looking at the differences between feedback design and practice emerge through the interaction of historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place, the differences in students' responses to feedback can be better understood more systematically. This approach aligns with recent developments in language policy

research, which argue that policy should not be understood only as something prescribed in texts or articulated through ideology, but also as something enacted in practice (Bonacina-Pugh, 2011).

### **It is Not What Feedback Says, But How You Respond**

As it was already established earlier, the impact of feedback is shaped less by what is written in comments and more by how those comments are interpreted and responded to. While the form of feedback remained relatively consistent across contexts, my responses to it changed over time, reflecting a shift in how I engaged with feedback. From an ADS perspective, this suggests that socialization is not only about understanding feedback, but also about learning how to interpret and respond to it. Developing this ability enables students to reposition themselves within feedback interactions, transforming feedback from a site of evaluation into a space for meaning-making. This aligns closely with Duff's (2010) description of academic discourse socialization as a dynamic, socially situated process characterized by interaction, feedback, and variable uptake. As Duff (2010) argues, socialization involves not only exposure to feedback but also learners' agency, interpretation, and negotiation of power and identity within academic contexts.

In contrast, while much of the existing literature examines feedback in terms of students' ability to interpret and use it effectively, my findings suggest that this perspective may be somewhat limited. For instance, Carless and Boud (2018) emphasize feedback literacy as an individual capacity, focusing on students' skills in making sense of comments and acting on them. However, my experience shows that engagement with feedback is a relational accomplishment that emerges through the interaction between both participants. As shown in my undergraduate experience, even when feedback was designed to be supportive or dialogic, I interpreted it as authoritative due to my historical body and the hierarchical interaction order I perceived. In this sense, the "problem" was not a lack

of ability, but a mismatch between how feedback was constructed and how it was experienced.

This aligns with and also extends findings from studies such as Li and Han (2023), which demonstrate that feedback plays a key role in shaping students' sense of legitimacy within academic communities. Similar to their participants, I self-positioned myself some times as a deficient writer and at other times as an emerging contributor.

Finally, my findings align with Sung's (2023) conclusion that students' language ideologies mediate how they interpret feedback and from whom they consider it valuable. My strong trust in native-speaker instructors, for instance, shaped how I positioned myself in relation to the feedback, which in turn influenced the way I perceived the feedback. This suggests that feedback engagement cannot be understood simply as a matter of motivation or skill, but must be situated within broader contexts.

## **Changing the Nexus**

### ***Implications for Educators***

Building on these findings, this study suggests that improving feedback practices in EMI contexts requires a change toward understanding feedback as a socially situated process shaped by students' historical bodies, interaction orders, and discourses in place. If feedback is interpreted through students' prior experiences, linguistic trajectories, and internalized beliefs about legitimacy, then instructors need to actively create conditions that allow these dimensions to surface and be negotiated.

That could be done by attending to students' historical bodies when giving feedback. Students interpret it through their past experiences with language learning and evaluation. Hence, feedback should not begin with correction but with an effort to understand student intention. For instance, instead of immediately labeling a passage as unclear, an instructor might ask, "Can you tell me what you wanted to communicate

here?” Such moves shift the focus from error to meaning and position the student as a knowledgeable agent. In my undergraduate experience, moments where instructors did not immediately correct my stylistic choices, particularly my use of epigraphs, created space for me to reflect on my intentions and develop them further. Such moves shift the focus from error to meaning and position the student as a knowledgeable agent.

At the level of interaction order, the study shows that even supportive or “nice” feedback does not automatically produce dialogue if classroom norms position students as passive recipients. Instructors therefore need to deliberately restructure feedback interactions to redistribute participation. As it was evident in the findings chapter, low-stakes assignments played a crucial role in making such dialogic engagement possible by enabling me to safely experiment with my style. When writing is heavily graded, students are more likely to focus on compliance rather than exploration. By contrast, low-stakes tasks can be designed to prioritize experimentation and negotiation. For instance, early drafts can receive only non-evaluative feedback, encouraging students to focus on developing ideas rather than correcting errors. Instructors might ask students to try multiple ways of structuring a paragraph, to rewrite a section in different styles, or to revise only one part of a text in response to feedback and explain their choices. Framing these tasks explicitly as spaces for experimentation can reduce anxiety and support more active engagement with feedback.

Finally, these practices depend on students being able to participate in feedback processes, which means that feedback literacy must be explicitly taught. Students benefit from guidance on how to interpret comments, how to decide which suggestions to take up, and how to articulate their own reasoning. Structured activities such as feedback response sheets, where students explain which comments they found useful or why they chose not to

follow certain suggestions, can help develop these skills. This helps reduce the gap between feedback-as-designed and feedback-as-practiced.

### ***Implications for Institutional Administrators and Policymakers***

At the institutional level, EMI universities located in multilingual contexts, where English is not the dominant societal language, should actively take into account the diversity of students' historical bodies, influenced by prior experiences with different languages, educational systems, and ideologies. They can do so by first acknowledging the multilingual nature of the student body in important institutional documents, which can shift discourses in place away from narrow, native-speakerist and monolingual standards toward more inclusive and multilingual ideologies. This can be further supported through establishing institutional structures that encourage more dialogic interaction orders, such as writing centers, peer feedback programs, and feedback literacy workshops. These initiatives help reposition students not as deficient language users, but as active participants in meaning-making, whose linguistic repertoires are valuable resources rather than limitations.

### ***Methodological Contributions***

By examining feedback through the intersection of the historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place, this study offers a methodological contribution to feedback research. Nexus analysis was particularly valuable in tracing how feedback operates across interconnected scales. As Hult (2019) argues, complex phenomena such as language learning cannot be understood by isolating individual elements; rather, they emerge through the interaction of multiple dimensions across micro, meso, and macro levels. In this sense, feedback can be seen as a moment of "layered simultaneity," where past experiences, institutional norms, and circulating ideologies intersect in real time (Blommaert, 2005, as cited in Hult, 2019, p. 137). This perspective allows feedback to be

understood not as a simple transmission from instructor to student, but as a socially situated site of negotiation shaped by broader sociocultural forces.

More specifically, nexus analysis enabled a systematic mapping of how my historical body, including prior experiences with English, internalized deficit positioning, and expectations of academic writing, influenced how feedback was interpreted and taken up. At the same time, the interaction order structured power relations within feedback encounters, often positioning me initially as a passive recipient. Meanwhile, discourses in place, such as native-speakerism and monolingual ideologies in EMI contexts, shaped what counted as legitimate language use and “good” writing. As nexus-oriented research shows, these dimensions converge in moments of social action, forming a nexus of practice through which meaning is constructed (Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

It is important to note that this perspective also aligns with recent autoethnographic work in raciolinguistics, which emphasizes that language, identity, and power are always interconnected and must be examined through lived experience rather than abstract categories (Zhang-Wu & Goodman, 2025). As highlighted in this book, language practices are never neutral but are shaped by broader histories of race, power, and inequality, and individuals’ experiences must be understood in relation to these structures. Thus, feedback can also be seen as part of these raciolinguistic processes, where judgments about “correctness” are not purely linguistic, but tied to broader ideologies about legitimacy and competence.

While nexus analysis provided the analytical framework to map these relationships, autoethnography was essential in generating the depth and richness of data needed to access them. The use of personal documents such as written feedback, drafts, and reflective memos enabled insight into the often-invisible processes of interpretation, affect, and identity negotiation that accompany feedback. As Zhang-Wu and Goodman (2025)

argue, autoethnography allows researchers to “look inward” at lived experiences while also connecting them to broader sociocultural structures, making it particularly valuable for examining processes of marginalization and resistance.

Therefore, this study demonstrates that nexus analysis and autoethnography function as complementary methodological approaches. Nexus analysis provides a multi-scalar, relational framework for understanding how feedback is embedded within broader sociocultural systems, while autoethnography offers insider and longitudinal access to how these systems are experienced and negotiated in practice. This study demonstrates how combining these approaches makes it possible to capture both structural influences and lived experience, particularly in contexts shaped by language ideologies and power relations.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is to trace my journey as a multilingual student in EMI university to explore how feedback functions as a key site of ADS, where their positioning is negotiated within English-dominant academic spaces. By combining autoethnography and nexus analysis, the study explored the feedback interactions through the intersection of my historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place. This chapter outlines the main findings, strengths and limitations of the study, as well as proposes areas for future research.

### **Bringing It All Together**

This study shows that feedback is a dynamic social practice that is shaped by participants' prior experiences, positioning, and ideologies. My journey across different undergraduate and graduate studies demonstrates that my interpretations of feedback, shaped by my prior experiences, played a key role in my ADS. Therefore, this study argues that it is important to consider feedback as feedback-as-designed and feedback-as-practiced, because the intended function of feedback does not always align with how it is experienced in practice due to differences in historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place.

Furthermore, the study suggests that the ability to interpret, negotiate, and respond to feedback plays an important role in ADS. In earlier stages of my academic journey, feedback was primarily interpreted as correction, reinforcing a passive and evaluative positioning. Over time, however, I developed a more agentic approach, engaging with feedback selectively and using it as a resource for meaning-making. This shift shows that feedback becomes meaningful through the learner's capacity to actively engage with it, positioning themselves within academic discourse.

Finally, by combining ADS with nexus analysis and autoethnography, this study offers a deeper understanding of feedback as a social action. The multi-layered analytical nature of nexus analysis makes it possible to capture the complexity of feedback interaction. In addition, by positioning the researcher as a participant, autoethnography offers access to insider and longitudinal perspective on feedback interactions, complementing the nexus analysis.

### **Strengths of the Study**

This study moves beyond traditional approaches to feedback research that often focus on feedback as a set of comments or evaluate it based on whether students find it useful. Nexus analysis enables to examine feedback through multiple layers, enabling us to trace how students' positioning is negotiated and how ADS unfolds over time.

This research is also strengthened by the use of autoethnography, which provides rich data on personal experiences related to emotional responses and internal struggles. Such data are often difficult to access through traditional methods, but they are essential for capturing the less visible dimensions of feedback, especially emotions and moments of vulnerability.

Finally, these insights have implications for a range of stakeholders. For instructors, they highlight the need to design feedback taking into consideration students' historical bodies and teach students feedback literacy to ensure the alignment between feedback design and practice. For institutions, this study urges EMI universities in multilingual settings to recognize the diversity of students' linguistic repertoire and move beyond native-speakerist ideologies. For researchers, this study shows that combining nexus analysis with autoethnography provides a more comprehensive understanding of feedback.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this study offers valuable insights into feedback interactions, it is important to acknowledge some limitations. As an autoethnographic study that focuses on a researchers' experiences only, its findings cannot and does not intend to be generalizable. Moreover, much of the analysis draws on retrospective reflections, most of which were written long after the events have taken place. This means that my interpretations may have been shaped by later experiences, potentially leading to partial reinterpretation of past events. Even though it is an inherent feature of autoethnography (Canagarajah, 2012), it creates a challenge for capturing experiences as they were originally lived. Additionally, the study focuses only on my own experiences and does not provide any data on instructors' historical bodies and interaction orders, which limits the analysis of feedback as a socially situated process.

### **Future Directions and Final Reflections**

To address these limitations, future research could further incorporate a wider range of perspectives and data sources. In particular, future studies could adopt multi-participant ethnographic nexus analysis to examine how multilingual students with different linguistic and educational backgrounds experience and interpret feedback in EMI institutions. This can help confirm whether the findings identified in this study extends beyond a single case.

Future studies could also incorporate the perspectives of instructors along with students in order to better understand the feedback interactions. By examining instructors' historical bodies, interaction orders, and discourses in place, it will be possible researchers and educators to get a more complete picture of how feedback contributes to ADS.

Finally, researchers who plan to work on nexus analysis and autoethnography should be prepared to navigate the challenges that I personally went through while

working on this study. Maintaining distance and objectivity while analyzing one's own experiences can be difficult, especially when the researcher is both the participant and analyst. Nevertheless, rather than viewing subjectivity as a limitation, future researchers can treat this as a valuable analytical resource that can offer inaccessible and unexpected insights. This way, the challenge of subjectivity can become an opportunity to open up space for deeper insights into complex social processes. In this way, the challenge of subjectivity becomes not something to overcome, but something to work with.

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## Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Thesis Title: From Deficiency to Legitimacy: An Autoethnographic Nexus Analysis of Multilingual Academic Discourse Socialization in English-Medium Instruction Higher Education

### Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- ☒ with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or  
☐ without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

*(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)*

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Grammarly to proofread the text.

I also declare that I

- ☒ am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),  
☒ have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,  
☒ am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,  
☒ have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and  
☒ acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Aiym Zhumabayeva

Signature:

Date: 20.04.2026

## **Appendix B: Consent Letters**

### **Consent Form**

**Introduction.** You are invited to participate in an autoethnographic research study entitled “Multilingual Student Socialization Through Writing Feedback: An Autoethnographic Nexus Analysis in EMI Higher Education”. The purpose of this research is to examine how feedback I received on my academic writing shaped my development as a multilingual writer in English-medium instruction (EMI) settings. Your feedback on my assignments from past courses is part of the material I will be analyzing.

This study carries no more than minimal risk and will be conducted with strict respect for confidentiality and anonymity.

#### **Procedures**

You are asked to provide consent for me to use written and/or oral feedback you gave on my coursework assignments during my undergraduate or graduate studies. No new participation or time commitment is required. All relevant materials already exist in the form of coursework and feedback previously provided. Only the content of your feedback relevant to my research questions will be included in the study.

#### **Risks**

This study carries no more than minimal risk and will be conducted with strict respect for confidentiality and anonymity. The potential risk is reputational harm if feedback excerpts were to identify you or the institution. To minimize this:

- Your name and identifying details (including course titles and institutional references) will be removed.
- You will be referred to by a pseudonym.
- You will be described only in broad terms according to your linguistic background, specifically whether English is your first language or an additional language.
- All unanonymized materials will be securely stored on a password-protected computer, accessible only to me.

#### **Benefits**

Although you may not benefit directly, this study may:

- Contribute to understanding how feedback influences multilingual students’ academic discourse socialization.
- Provide insights for educators into how feedback practices shape students’ confidence and identity as academic writers.
- Contribute to scholarship on feedback and academic discourse socialization in EMI contexts.

#### **Confidentiality**

All data will be anonymized and stored securely. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Results will be presented in a way that prevents identification of individual participants or the institution.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation is voluntary. By signing this form, you agree to allow me to use your past feedback for research purposes. You may withdraw consent at any time before the analysis is completed.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact:

- Researcher: Aiym Zhumabayeva – aiym.zhumabayeva@nu.edu.kz
- Advisor: Dr. Philip Montgomery – philip.montgomery@nu.edu.kz
- Nazarbayev University's Graduate School of Education Institutional Research Ethics Committee: gse.irec@nu.edu.kz

### **Statement of Consent.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_,

Give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

The researchers clearly explained to me the background information and objectives of the study and what my participation in this study involves.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I can at any time and without giving any reasons withdraw my consent, and this will not have any negative consequences for myself .

I understand that the information collected during this study will be treated confidentially.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Recruitment Emails

**Subject:** Request for Consent to Use Feedback Materials in Research

Dear [Professor's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Aiym Zhumabayeva, and I was your student in [Course name] during [semester/year]. I am writing to request your consent to use some of the feedback you provided on my assignments as part of my current master's research project on feedback and academic discourse socialization. The study analyzes how written and oral feedback contributed to my development as a writer during my [undergraduate/graduate] studies. For example, your comments on [Assignment A] played an important role in shaping my understanding of academic voice.

Your involvement would only require reviewing and signing a consent form. No additional participation is expected, as I already have access to the relevant materials from my coursework. To ensure confidentiality, all identifying details—such as your name, the institution, and course titles—will be removed. Only general descriptors will be used, and your origin (local or international faculty) may be mentioned as contextual information. This research carries no more than minimal risk. All materials will be anonymized, securely stored, and reported in ways that prevent identification of individuals or the institution. Nevertheless, I understand if you have questions or concerns, which I would be more than happy to address.

I would be very grateful if you are comfortable with this and allow me to send you the consent form for review. Your time and support as an instructor have profoundly shaped both my writing and my sense of self as an academic writer. Allowing me to include your feedback in this project would extend that impact to a broader audience by showing how meaningful instructor feedback contributes to students' academic and personal development.

Thank you once again for your past guidance and for considering this request.

Warm regards,  
Aiym Zhumabayeva.