

**ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE POSTGRADUATE
THESIS WRITING: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND A
TRANSITION FROM GRADUATE STUDENT WRITERS
TO THESIS WRITERS IN A UNIVERSITY
IN THAILAND**



**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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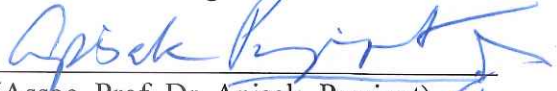


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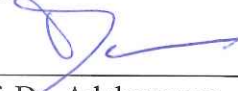
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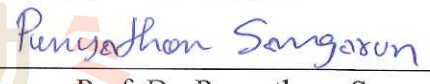
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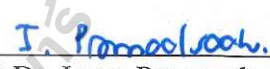
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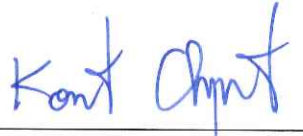
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ดร.อัจฉราวรรณ บุรีภักดี, 298 หน้า

การทบทวนวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเขียนภาษาที่สอง ได้ชี้ให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของการสร้างอัตลักษณ์ในการพัฒนาการเขียนเชิงวิชาการ งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการสร้างอัตลักษณ์ของนักเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับสูงกว่าปริญญาตรีซึ่งเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศในมหาวิทยาลัยในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย วิถีวิทยาในการวิจัยใช้การออกแบบการวิจัยแบบผสมเพื่อรวบรวมข้อมูลทั้งเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพ นักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาลี้สิบสามคนเข้าร่วมในการทำแบบสำรวจอัตลักษณ์นักเขียนภาษาที่สอง ผู้เข้าร่วมมาจากแปดประเทศในเอเชีย ได้แก่ เวียดนาม ปากีสถาน ไทย ลาว เมียนมาร์ อินโดนีเซีย จีน และกัมพูชา ในบรรดาผู้เข้าร่วมทั้งหมดสิบห้าคนได้รับการคัดเลือกโดยเจตนาให้เข้าร่วมการเขียนเรื่องเล่าและการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างอีกชุดหนึ่งคือการสัมภาษณ์อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ 5 คน ทั้งนี้เพื่อให้ข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับสูงกว่าปริญญาตรีซึ่งเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ เพื่อช่วยให้ได้มุมมองเพิ่มเติมจากจากอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา

การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลพบว่า ประการแรกการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์เป็นพื้นที่สำหรับนักศึกษาในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาในการเสี่ยงเพื่อแสดงออกทางเอกลักษณ์ งานวิจัยพบว่านักเขียนเหล่านี้ประสบปัญหาต่างๆและพัฒนากลยุทธ์ที่สอดคล้องกัน ประการที่สองผู้เขียนวิทยานิพนธ์แสดงอัตลักษณ์ที่หลากหลายและมีพลวัต อัตชีวประวัติของพวกเขาถูกสร้างขึ้นจากการสังสมประสบการณ์การเขียนเชิงวิชาการและการกำหนดแนวความคิดในการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ ส่วนการสร้างตัวตนในเชิงวาทกรรมนั้นเป็นวิธีปฏิบัติที่หลอมรวมเข้ากับวัฒนธรรมทางวิชาการที่มุ่งหวัง ซึ่งได้รับอิทธิพลและถูกประกอบสร้างโดยความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจเชิงสถาบัน ข้อค้นพบงานวิจัยคือผู้เขียน

วิทยานิพนธ์ส่วนใหญ่มีความระมัดระวังและละเอียดด้านการกล่าวถึงตนเองในการเขียน มีผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยเพียงส่วนน้อยเลือกที่จะทำทฤษฎีเกณฑ์ระเบียบการเขียนกระแสหลัก ประการที่สามการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับสูงกว่าปริญญาตรีและเรียนเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศช่วยส่งเสริมและพัฒนานักเขียนผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยได้รับความรู้เกี่ยวกับศาสตร์และศิลป์ของการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยได้พัฒนาความสามารถในการเขียนเชิงวิชาการด้วยความมั่นใจในตนเอง ประการสุดท้ายตลอดการเรียนรู้บนเส้นทางการเป็นนักเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยรับรู้ความช่วยเหลือจากแหล่งต่าง ๆ และในรูปแบบต่างๆ การสนับสนุนทางสังคมช่วยอำนวยความสะดวกในการพัฒนาอัตลักษณ์นักเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ผ่านการปรับปรุงโครงการจัดปัญหาด้านภาษากระตุ้นความมั่นใจและแสดงความคิดเห็น

ความสำคัญของงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ประการหนึ่งคือได้เพิ่มเติมมุมมองงานวิจัยด้านการสร้างอัตลักษณ์ของนักเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ในบริบทที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา ซึ่งอาจจะช่วยเป็นแนวทางสำหรับสถาบันการศึกษาในการสนับสนุนการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับสูงกว่าปริญญาตรีต่อผู้เขียนที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีสุรนารี

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DAPING WU : ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE POSTGRADUATE
THESIS WRITING: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND A TRANSITION
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EFL POSTGRADUATE/ THESIS WRITING/ IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION/
WRITING SUPPORT/ THAILAND

The literature on Second Language Writing (L2 writing) has highlighted the significance of identity construction in academic writing development. The present study aimed to explore the identity construction of EFL postgraduate thesis writers in a university in Northeastern Thailand. It adopted a mixed-method research design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Forty-three postgraduate students participated in the L2 Writer Identity Survey. The participants were from eight Asian countries, Vietnam, Pakistan, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, China, and Cambodia. Among the participants, fifteen were purposively selected to take part in the written narrative and semi-structured interview. Another semi-structured interview was administered with five thesis supervisors, to provide supplementary information on EFL postgraduate thesis writing from the supervisors' perspectives.

The data analysis revealed that first, writing a thesis was a site for the postgraduate students to exercise the agency. They encountered various problems and developed corresponding strategies. Second, the postgraduate thesis writers displayed multiple and dynamic identities. Their autobiographical self was constructed through accumulating experience of academic writing and conceptualizing the thesis writing.

Discoursal construction of self was an assimilating practice to the aiming academic culture, which was defined by the institutional power relations. Most of the postgraduate thesis writers played safe and resisted self-mention. Few of them chose to challenge the disciplinary conventions. Third, EFL postgraduate thesis writing promoted the writer's development. Knowledge about the disciplinary subjects and the thesis genre was gained. The postgraduate thesis writers developed academic writing abilities with self-confidence. Finally, along the trajectories of learning to become thesis writers, EFL postgraduate students perceived assistance from different sources and in various forms. The social support facilitated thesis writer identity development through improving the project, eliminating language problems, encouraging confidence, and showing empathy.

The present study adds to the literature of thesis writer identity construction in a non-native English speaking context. It is expected to provide suggestions for the institution to best support EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

School of Foreign Languages

Academic Year 2019

Student's Signature Daping Wu

Advisor's Signature [Signature]

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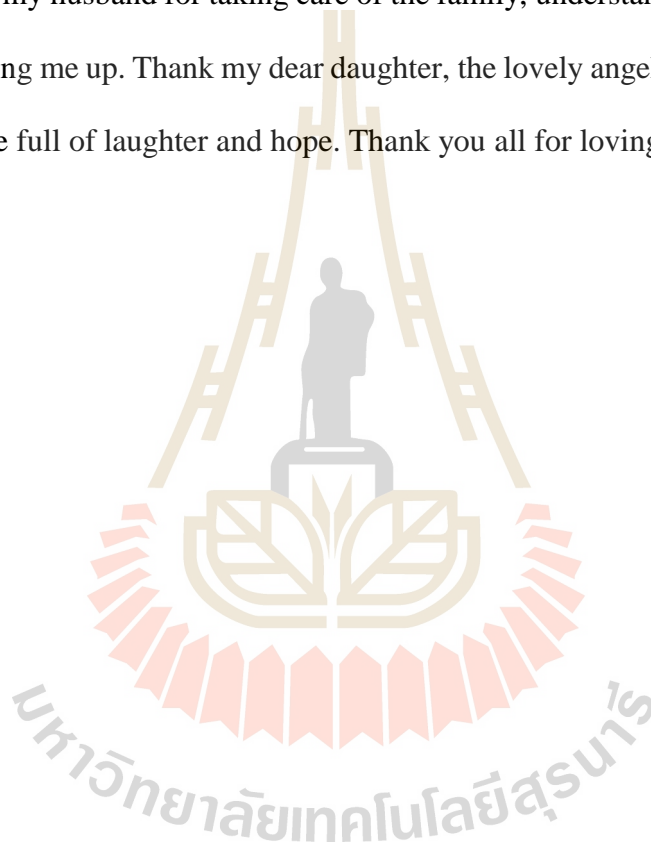


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
NNS	Non-native Speakers
UK	The United Kingdom
L2	Second Langue
L2 writing	Second Language Writing
NLS	New Literacy Studies



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Writing the introduction, the first chapter of a thesis and usually the last one to be written, is a major task in identity construction. As a first chapter, it is a first impression to my writing, a way of presenting myself, the writer, to you, my reader. Hence, I am aiming for an introduction that explains who I am, what I am doing and why I am doing it.” (Olmos Lopez, 2015, p. 2)

The quotation above clearly displays the connection between writing a thesis and identity construction and the importance of a well-written introductory chapter. It also shows how such an identity tells the story of the person behind the scenes. Writing is not only about the action of writing words, but also about “making meaning.” Like an actor in a TV drama, the writer constructs his own identity through words. Similarly, a thesis writer reveals his/her image discursively, which allows the readers to form an impression of the writer’s identity. Thus, this exemplifies the issues of writing and identity that I explore in this thesis.

This introductory chapter consists of eight sections. The first section provides the research background and lays the foundation of my “building” of a Ph.D. thesis. Section 1.2 states the problems. Section 1.3 addresses the rationales. Sections 1.4 and 1.5 are about the research objectives and research questions in parallel. Section 1.6 discusses the methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical significance of the research. Then, the

key terms are clarified. Finally, this chapter is briefly summarized.

1.1 Background of the Research

This research follows the trends in Second Language Writing (L2 writing). In the 1950s, L2 writing was limited to teaching the immigrants a set of literacy skills (Leki, 1992; Matsuda 1999, 2003; Silva, 1990) which were developed by several researchers (Hedgcock, 2005; Matsuda, 1998, 1999, 2003; Silva, 1990; Silva & Leki, 2004). L2 writing has now become the subject of on-going research (e.g., Hedgcock & Ferris, 2005; Leki, 1992; Maliborska, 2015; Manchón, 2011; Matsuda, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2015; Ortega & Carson, 2010; Polio, 2012; Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1990; Silva & Leki, 2004). Inevitably, the rapid growth of the field has led to field fragmentation and separation, but also provides the potential for field development and new research areas (Collins, 1998; Maliborska, 2015).

Studies in graduates' L2 writing started about thirty years ago. They gradually attracted the attention of researchers (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008) which previously focussed on L2 young learners (Matsuda & De Pew, 2002), high school learners (Locke & Johnston, 2016), or university students (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). This development was not only confined to the United States as stated by Leki et al. (2008), but led to research in postgraduate-level L2 writing that has recently spread to other parts of the world.

These studies were based on several different but connected perspectives. During the 1980s and early 1990s, most research in this area studied graduate students' acknowledgments of disciplinary communities and attempted to define writing conventions within these disciplines (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Gosden, 1996; Jenkins, Jordan, & Weiland, 1993; McKenna, 1987; Samraj, 1994). Discourse analysis of L2 graduate students' writing was carried out in accordance with different genre requirements (Jacobs, 1982; James, 1984; Swales, 1990). Teaching L2 writing to graduate students focused on exploring and testing the ways of teaching genres (Swales & Lindemann, 2002; Swales & Luebs, 2002).

Shen (1989) self-reported his difficulties with English rhetorical style when writing as a graduate student in English Literature. This reflected a move away from documentary evidence alone and from pedagogical issues toward qualitatively driven case studies, interviews, and observation of L2 graduate students. Researchers discussed the kinds of resources students needed for their disciplinary requirements (Riazi, 1997), students' reliance on their first language educational and disciplinary experiences (Connor & Kramer, 1995; Connor & Mayberry, 1996), and the types and degrees of difficulty faced in writing (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Belcher, 1989; Casanave, 2005; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Leki, 2006; Raymond & Parks, 2002). Some studies revealed that postgraduate students did not know how to position themselves in their writing in relation to the received knowledge

of the discipline (Belcher, 1995; Cadman, 1997). There was an enormous disparity between L2 students' disciplinary knowledge and sophistication and their English writing ability (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001). During this period, research mainly focused on disciplinary expectations and requirements of teaching English as a second language (ESL) to graduate students.

At the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, studies examined how graduate students made choices given local factors at play in writing. These factors included students' interactions with each other, with their linguistic compatriots (Gentil, 2005) and with faculty, together with the students' understanding of various courses and disciplinary requirements from their own past experiences. Past experience with disciplinary activities appeared to be a significant advantage, particularly to Masters' students in their L2 studies (Casanave, 2005). Research attention was also to graduate students' social interaction with the outside world and their internal interaction with their own past experiences in L2 writing.

Research also reported L2 graduate students' struggles in writing discipline-specific texts, including theses, with the help of only elementary and generally focused L2 writing courses whose practices were not always supportive and at times even conflicted with disciplinary practices (Hansen, 2000). Besides, task objectives in graduate writing courses remained implicit (Casanave, 2005; Yang & Shi, 2003). Later work investigated graduate students' frustrations with the expectations and assumptions

of the target community (Fox, 1994). Critical thinking about graduate course design and different stakeholders' expectations provided a different landscape: graduate students' writing can be probed with deep and individually-centred questions.

In summary, these developments in research on graduate students' L2 writing included the writers' acknowledgment of their disciplinary communities and its writing requirements (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Gosden, 1996; Jenkins, Jordan, & Weiland, 1993; McKenna, 1987; Samraj, 1994), criticism of graduate course designs (Casanave, 2005; Hansen, 2000; Yang & Shi, 2003), the local factors in graduate students' writing (Casanave, 2005; Gentil, 2005), and so on. Previous approaches to graduate students' second language writing contributed to a greater understanding of the scholarly practice and its pedagogical implementations. However, in general terms, the area has been under-investigated and mainly constrained to genre-based (e.g., James, 1984; Swales, 1990; Swales & Lindemann, 2002) and pedagogy-oriented approaches (Belcher, 1995; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001). Further research and more attention are needed to explore graduate students' L2 writing in more depth.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Graduates' L2 writing has become a popular research topic with an awareness that writing is integral to graduate schools in any discipline (Ruggles, 2012). This increasing scholarly attention can be seen from the amount of publications and symposiums or conferences reported on the topic; however, the area is not thoroughly explored yet. I state the problems from four aspects.

The first problem concerns the research gap in graduate-level English learners' thesis writing in non-native English speaking countries. Academic writing, especially thesis writing, plays a vital role in the obstacle course to graduation -- "the stakes are high and pressure great to learn to display, critique, and even construct knowledge in writing as quickly as possible" (Belcher, 2013, p. 438). Postgraduate writers suffer from a lack of writing skills development (Mullen, 2001) and have problems in English academic writing (Belcher, 1989; Casanave, 2005; Leki, 2006; Imani & Habil, 2012).

Previous research on graduate writing by native or non-native English speakers, either product or process, has been conducted in an English-dominant educational environment (Singh, 2015). L2 writing is even regarded to some extent exclusively as "writing that is done in contexts where the target language is the dominant language outside the classroom" (Matsuda, 2013, p. 450). Graduate students have reported problems with EFL academic writing, particularly in thesis writing, when they study in English-speaking countries (Aitchison & Lee, 2006), whereas the experience of non-

native English-speaking students in non-English speaking contexts still needs further exploration.

The second problem is that writers in non-English-dominant settings are not well represented in the L2 writing literature (Belcher, 2013). L2 writer identity is the subject of many studies. Stewart (1972) suggests that authorial voice is the factor that distinguishes individuals in their writing. However, the available literature reveals that initial studies of learner identity, conducted in countries where English represents the dominant means of communication, focused predominantly on immigrant learners' experiences of studying an L2 in the host countries or other similar locations (Belz, 2002; Gu, 2010; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 1995, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko, 2001, 2003). For EFL postgraduate thesis writing in Thailand, to date, there does not seem to be any related research. When reflecting on my own growth in writing in English, I feel a lack of representation and understanding of the actor of writing: in particular, how a person chooses words from his personal repertoire which is socially enabled by the conventions of a certain genre, how a person constructs the image that he wants to reveal to an audience bit by bit through reading, and how a person feels toward his own writing.

The third problem is that the impact of identity on EFL writing is a relatively neglected area (Malik, 2016). Due to the nature of identity being complex and multifaceted (Matsuda, 2015), academic writing studies cannot explore all these

possibilities. Although Ivanič (1998) has proposed four aspects to a writer's identity, most of the research has been conducted on the discursal self (Ivanič, 1998; Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014) and authorial identity (Hyland, 2002, 2008, 2012, 2015; Olmos Lopez, 2015). There is a need to consider writer identity construction both in a localized setting and in a broader social context.

Identity construction has seldom been situated in the social practice of thesis writing. Postgraduate students are likely to experience certain identity threats as they transition to the unfamiliar ways of writing demanded by their disciplines (Mullen, 2001). Thus, there is a need to explore such writers' experiences as they negotiate writers identities and the power relationships that take place during thesis writing. The current study will explore the identity shift of postgraduate student writers during the thesis writing process. In this process, EFL postgraduate writers attempt to transform themselves from student writers to professional writers.

The university chosen for this research study offers various graduate-level English programs and attracts international students of whom most use English as a second or foreign language. The majority of the thesis supervisors are Thai and EFL users, although some have experience of studying in English speaking countries. This unique context seems contradictory to the reality that graduate students are required to publish research articles related to their thesis research in international journals. This results in the influence of native norms in academia on thesis writing.

The fourth problem concerns a lack of discussion about how the teaching programs or faculty prepare EFL postgraduate students for thesis writing. It has been pointed out that many graduate students do not receive any formal instruction in writing (Mullen, 2006). In Haas (2011), postgraduate students had not received any formal writing instruction. They were left to do their writing more or less on their own. People assumed that after working their way through many years of formal education to the present level, it was assumed that by postgraduate-level the students had already developed themselves into “fairly sophisticated writers” (Morss & Murray, 2001, p. 36) with a knowledge of how to write academically without the need for any further assistance (Lee & Boud, 2003; Mullen, 2001). Writing is essentially a solitary activity (Aitchison, 2003). Such an assumption may seem reasonable, but is not on solid ground (Haas, 2011). As Matsuda (2016) has pointed out, “graduate students are still expected to figure out the rules of the game mostly by trial and error (p. 103).” This figuring-out process is especially inaccessible for those marginalized from EFL backgrounds.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Three reasons motivated this research. First, thesis writing is essential to graduate education. It is the process by which students contribute to a new body of knowledge in the disciplines. Thesis writing has been widely recognised as demanding in nature. It is one of the most challenging academic tasks for graduates to fulfil (Imani & Habil,

2012; Kwok, 2016; Swales, 2004). It is especially difficult for EFL students because of their limited language proficiency for critical thinking, and a lack of genre and social knowledge (Paltridge, 2002). EFL theses are generally low in quality compared with native speaker theses (Hinkel, 2011).

Researchers have paid increasing attention to EFL postgraduate thesis writing, attempting to provide books on guidance (Paltridge, 2002; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). The linguistic problems students encounter, for example, vocabulary and grammar errors and immature citation practices (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Gurel, 2010; James, 1984), may continue throughout the thesis writing stage. They also indicate a greater need to understand the micro-level textual features in EFL postgraduate theses, for example, intertextual references and structure of chapters (Bunton, 2005; Thompson, 2012).

Topics related to graduate thesis writing have been generally confined to genre-based, pedagogy-oriented circles, but this approach does not represent a complete picture. In particular, the process of thesis writing per se attracts little attention. Thus, the current study will provide some first-hand accounts of EFL international graduate students' experiences in writing a thesis in a non-native English-speaking context.

Second, second language graduate writing should be studied critically in a localized context. Not all L2 writers experience the same difficulties or perceive the process in the same way. Attention needs to be directed to EFL students' experiences

of high-level English academic writing in a context where English is not the local language. Compared with writers in America (Shang-Butler, 2015) or in Britain, graduate thesis writers in non-English-dominant (EFL) settings like Thailand have different experiences. Thailand is in the expanding circle of countries (Kachru, 1985) where English is learned and taught as a foreign language. But in some English graduate programs, English is the medium of instruction, thus students can only obtain the degrees if they can meet the high standards of writing a thesis in English.

Third, recently, South East Asian countries, such as Thailand, are increasingly attracting students from different backgrounds (Reinties, Beusaert, Grohnert, Niemantsverdriet, & Kommers, 2012). 19,052 international students from 124 countries were studying in 103 Thai higher education institutions (Songsathaphorn, Chen, & Ruangkanjanases, 2014). However, there is a wide gap in research pertaining to the academic literacy practices in South East Asian countries (Reinties et al., 2012; Singh, 2015).

1.4 Research Objectives

The current study aims to explore EFL postgraduate students' experience in thesis writing and the construction of an academic writer identity in a university in northeast Thailand. There are four specific objectives:

1. To explore EFL postgraduate thesis writing experience in a non-native English-speaking context

2. To investigate EFL postgraduate thesis writer identity
3. To examine identity transition in EFL postgraduate thesis writing
4. To discuss how to support EFL postgraduate thesis writers' development

1.5 Research Questions

There are four research questions in line with the research objectives mentioned above:

1. What do EFL postgraduate students experience in the course of writing a thesis?
2. What aspects of academic writer identity do EFL postgraduate thesis writers display?
3. How does EFL postgraduate thesis writing promote writer identity development?
4. How does the perceived support foster EFL postgraduate thesis writer's identity construction?

Table 1.1 summarizes the relationship of the problems stated, the research purposes, and the corresponding research questions.

Table 1.1 The Problems Stated, the Research Aims, and the Research Questions

Problems Stated	Research Aims	Research questions
Research gap in EFL graduate thesis writing in EFL contexts	To explore EFL postgraduate thesis writing experience in a non-native English-speaking context	1. What do EFL postgraduate students experience over the course of writing a thesis?
EFL writers are not well represented	To investigate EFL postgraduate thesis writer identity	2. What aspects of academic writer identity do EFL postgraduate thesis writers display?
A need to study identity issues in the social practice of thesis writing	To examine identity transition in EFL postgraduate thesis writing	3. How does EFL postgraduate thesis writing promote writer identity development?
A lack of discussion about support for EFL graduate thesis writers	To discuss how to support EFL postgraduate thesis writers' development	4. How does the perceived support foster EFL postgraduate thesis writer's identity construction?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current exploratory study of graduate students' experiences in building a new body of knowledge and transiting to academic writers is significant theoretically, practically and methodologically.

Theoretically, the research is significant in the development of second language writing, issues of writing and identity, and thesis writing as well. First, the current study will contribute to a better understanding of EFL writing in non-native speaker contexts. In line with the shift of research focus from undergraduate to postgraduate students, the research will further discuss and investigate in-depth certain issues related to graduate

studies in second language writing. The experience of writing a thesis in Thailand will be examined to see whether EFL students have similar or different challenges and problems to their counterparts in an English-speaking country by referring to previous studies in graduate thesis writing, or whether their situation is even more challenging. Using the experiences of EFL students in Thailand, the research may add more evidence to advanced second language writing in a non-English speaking academic situation.

Second, with its specific locus on the EFL postgraduate students' experience as academic writers, more attention to academic literacy development and issues of writing and identity will be recommended. The development of writer identity has been demonstrated to have an impact on a student's academic achievement (Berzonsky, 1989). "Learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity" (Lave & Wenger, 1998, p. 215). The international graduate students' experience of writing a thesis in English can provide some hints on how novice writers seek to reconcile the discursive identities of their linguistic, cultural and disciplinary backgrounds.

Third, the current study will help explore the process of thesis writing in a critical way. By identifying common issues faced in thesis writing, this research will offer insights into the process of thesis writing from a more writer- and reader- focused perspective. The research will go further than previous studies by looking beyond a text-only analysis and its pedagogic implications. The ways in which students develop

an understanding of the conventions of academic writing in various disciplines will also be discussed. The process of thesis writing will be presented as a means of negotiating oneself into knowledge making and identity transformation.

The practical significance of the study lies in its investigation into the concerns and expectations of academic support provided to students at university level. The research will also offer some perspectives on how EFL graduate students in Thailand (a non-English speaking country) struggle to gain access to the practices of the academic community and will include the ways in which students negotiate discourse power with their advisors and other faculty members. The support provided by the university and by the students' advisors to enable them to become academically literate will be identified, so as to provide some practical and helpful suggestions for future graduate programs.

Methodologically, the current study will provide some different perspectives on graduate studies of second language writing. Previous product-based studies state the genre requirements for different disciplines and then teaching materials have been designed on the basis of their relevant linguistic features. However, the present study will not discuss how to write up a thesis, but will look at thesis writing in a second language from the students' perspectives by exploring the writers' experiences and placing a greater emphasis on the conceptualization of the process and their transformation during this process. The research is also different from the existing

literature in that it is not restricted to a classroom setting. In recent decades, a body of research has developed which is confined to classroom contexts. But this research refers to a broader context of social and cultural conditions, which will allow it to use more out-of-classroom data in the field together with a mixed approach.

1.7 Key Terms in the Study

In this section, the key terms used in the study will be defined according to the specific research purposes and the local research setting.

Second Language Writing

Matsuda (2013) regarded the term of Second Language Writing as either functioning as “a catchall term” encompassing writing in any language other than the writer’s mother tongue, or writing “done in contexts where the target language is the dominant language outside the classroom, especially when it is contrasted with ‘foreign’ language writing” (p. 450). In the current study, the term is taken as a catchall term and thus refers specifically to writing in English in a non-native speaking context by those whose native language is not English.

Thesis Writing

Thesis writing refers to the activity of writing the research reports of Masters’ or doctoral graduates in their pursuit of degrees as required by a university program (Creswell, 2012).

Writer Identity Construction

Writer identity construction in this research is building a sense of self which is socially defined and negotiated through individual's self alignment in the shared discourse community. It specifically refers to developing a sense of being an academic writer in English which can be reflected in four aspects: the autobiographical self, the discursial self, the authorial self, and the possibilities of self-hood.

Community of Practice

A community of practice is “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464). This framework is under the assumption that learning is situated “in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world and is a fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing” (Wenger, 1998, p. 3).

1.8 Summary

This chapter introduces the research generally, presenting its background, problems, objectives of the research, and the questions to be answered. The research is confined to the area of graduate studies of second language writing with thesis writing as the focus, with international EFL students as participants, and with a large Thai university as the research setting. The research will contribute to the field of second language writing theoretically, practically and methodologically.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future. Individuals are shaped by their sociohistories but they also shape their sociohistories as life goes on. (Block, 2007, p. 27)

This chapter reviews the literature informing the current exploratory research. As defined by Block (2007, p. 27) above, identity is negotiating a position for oneself in the different trajectories of life. Positioning myself as an insider, I write this chapter as part of constructing an academic writer identity. Firstly, I orient myself towards a comprehensive overview about the research area and the reason for my research focus. Then I present the theoretical framework that underpins my research design and I explain the central philosophy behind my decision to focus on the issues of thesis writing and identity construction. The third section is concerned with previous research on identity construction in L2 academic writing, which shows how identity issues affect the social practice of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Next, I focus on the need for academic support for graduate level EFL writing. Finally, a summary of the chapter is included.

2.1 EFL Graduate Thesis Writing

This section reviews research on EFL postgraduate thesis writing. I begin with disciplinary critical thinking about L2 writing, to provide the general academic background of the current study.

2.1.1 Disciplinary Discussion over L2 Writing

The relatively recent emergence of L2 Writing can be traced back to the 1960s when writing instruction was introduced into the curricula of tertiary level second language classes (Leki, 1992; Maliborska, 2015; Matsuda, 1999). Researchers have ascertained its coming of age (Leki et al., 2008; Zhang, 2008) and legitimatization as a field of academic and pedagogical inquiry (Zhang, 2013). Some researchers (Canagarajah, 2013; Hyland, 2002a) have established certain aspects, such as form, writer, content, and the reader as dominant approaches in the teaching and writing of English as a second language. However, with its rapid development and alignment with other disciplines (e.g., second language acquisition and literacy), the field needs to be clearly more clearly defined by L2 writing scholars.

Hyland (2013) argues that L2 writing is “the study of writing performed by non-native speakers” (p. 426). He proposes the privileged role of English as “the academic lingua franca (p. 427).” He further claims that L2 writing is “to a greater extent, aligned with EAP to generate a wave of research into the impact of academic discipline and professional community on writing” (p. 427) which provides direction

for future research: L2 writing is studied mainly in academic, disciplinary and professional contexts.

Matsuda (2013) refers to L2 writing as “writing in any language other than the writer’s ‘native’ language” (p. 448). L2 writers vary in terms of age and proficiency level, performing writing practice in a variety of languages in different geographic, educational, and sociolinguistic contexts. The field has been expanding to “issues related to the productive literacy development and practices of anyone but monolingual native language users” (p. 448), which broadens our conceptualization of L2 writers. He asks for recognition of second language writers in institutional and national settings.

The diversity and multiplicity revealed from the disciplinary discussions above leads to my critical thinking about the field of L2 Writing. First, the use of “second” in the term shows an awareness of multilingualism among writers. L2 writing is not the previously legitimized assumption of L2 writing in a second language context. It can be applied into studying the writing in a foreign, or additional, or other language. This idea highlights multilingualism in writers’ production activity and advocates questioning about the monolingual norms in academic writing. The future development of the field will go to multilingualism in differentiated situations.

Second, linguistic diversity brings about increasing practice of code-switching or translanguaging. The internationalization of higher education has promoted English as the medium of instruction in universities around the world

(Kubota, 2013). International students have to adjust to the target culture and to assimilate to English-dominant academic writing contexts. As a result, studying writing in English has become a major focus of inquiry in this field.

Third, studying “writing” does not necessarily reduce the writing activities taken for granted in academic writing, which include setting out the norms for novice writers to approximate to in their writings. Related to the current study is the question of how non-native writers in English can approach their work and their subsequent struggles (Kubota, 2013). Issues related to non-native English speakers’ experience of academic writing are under-explored. In calling for a wider lens to explore the field, Belcher (2013) points out that “writers in non-English-dominant (EFL) settings” are not well represented (p. 439).

The field of L2 writing has developed very rapidly with a large increase of people involved in it and its alignment with other disciplines. A summary of research on L2 graduates’ writing will be given below.

2.1.2 Research on EFL Postgraduate Academic Writing

L2 writing has shifted “research attention...from L2 undergraduates toward the L2 graduate student population” (Leki et al., 2008, p. 37). Graduate studies of L2 writing thus have attracted attention from specialists and become an important issue. Academic writing is challenging for EFL advanced learners pursuing their graduate degrees (Arkoudis & Tran, 2007). The scholarly attention on this topic has been

increasing from different perspectives. The first aspect is researchers' efforts in improving graduate students' EFL academic writing ability.

2.1.2.1 Pedagogical Practice in EFL Postgraduate Writing

Writing is integral to graduate school in any disciplines (Ruggles, 2012) and pivotal for graduate students' success (Singh, 2015, 2016). The widely spread assumption is that EFL graduate students have developed, through long years of practice into "fairly sophisticated writers who know how to 'do' academic writing" at postgraduate level (Morss & Murray, 2001, p. 36) and can be left to cope on their own (Haas, 2011; Lee & Boud, 2003). However, in reality, postgraduates' writing ability is "at a beginners' graduate level, not at a polished scholarly writing quality" (Harris, 2006, p. 136). This lack of proficiency in academic writing (Alter & Adkins, 2001; Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Harris, 2006) does not meet the faculty's expectations that undergraduate students have mastered the basic writing skills (Collier & Morgan, 2008) and transferred these capabilities to their graduate level performances (Buck & Hatter, 2005; Harris, 2006).

EFL graduate students in a Malaysian university reported having difficulties with their academic writing, particularly when English is the medium of instruction (Singh, 2015, 2016). Singh (2015) distributed an *Academic Literacies Questionnaire* distributed to 131 international graduate students. Some challenges were explained by the fact that English is used as the medium of instruction, although

Malaysia is a non-native English context. Singh (2016) found that there were challenges for students with post-graduate level academic writing assignments which resulted from a mismatch between the students' academic literacy acquired from their home cultures and their current academic writing tasks in Malaysia. A focus group interview was used with 70 international master-level graduates to provide an academic perspective on how the students negotiated academic writing.

Similarly, Harris (2006) attributed a failure in translating basic writing skills into academic writing to the differences between different styles: a scholarly writing style at graduate level and a term paper style at undergraduate level. Nelson, Range, and Ross (2012) identified three factors affecting graduate students' production of high quality writing, namely, the increased demands of academic writing, serious time constraints, and lack of adequate direct writing instruction.

Loewy and Vogt (2000) identified a pervasive language problem in writing among EFL graduate students. They pointed out that language errors represent greatest challenge in writing. Critiquing Belcher's claim of a blurred distinction between L1 and L2 writing as ill-founded, Qu (2017) argued there is a mismatch between L2 writer's cognitive abilities and linguistic competence. Proficiency in the target language has an impact not only on academic interaction but also on academic knowledge construction. He suggested L2 writing instruction should adhere to its "irreplaceable role of cultivating fundamental linguistic skills" (Qu, 2017, p. 93)

Yeh (2010) carried out a case study which aimed to examine new graduate students' perceptions of research writing. She interviewed 4 first-year EFL Taiwanese Master students in Applied Linguistics in a university in Taiwan. The results showed that students encountered difficulties with selecting a research topic and reviewing the previous literature the most. Yeh's participants had a rather casual attitude toward their language problems which has been considered as a "pervasive concern for many English L2 research writers" (p. A2). The research indicated a perceived need of more guidance and instruction in research writing and suggested formative feedback and personal guidance to solve the problem.

To solve the problems encountered by the EFL graduate students, ample research has been conducted. Based on her premise that specific instruction on abstract and critique writing can improve students' scholarly writing, Harris (2006) proposed three steps to teach abstract writing: "Laying the Foundation", "Communicating Expectations and Evaluation Criteria", and "Scaffolding for Success" (p. 144). The instructional model was claimed as helpful for students to understand EFL postgraduate writing more fully and to acquire the strategies.

2.1.2.2 Approaches to EFL Postgraduate Academic Writing

Leki et al. (2008) provided a summary of research on L2 graduate students' writing. They surveyed research on L2 English graduate writing during the 1980s and the early 1990s focussing on how writers meet the disciplinary discourse

communities' writing requirements. Students reported emotions like frustration and struggles in writing discipline specific texts. Research in the later 1990s and 2000s examined graduate students' choices in dealing with local disciplinary and broader social factors. Their research provides a thorough and detailed account of what has been done in this research area and sheds light on what should be explored in future research.

Another approach to L2 academic writing at graduate level is self-study. Self-study is self-initiated, self-focused, interactive, improvement-aimed and rich in data according to a variety of sources (LaBoskey, 2004). Bair and Mader (2013) described a collaboration with eight other faculty members which aimed to identify sources of difficulties encountered by graduates in their academic writing. After analyzing the data from faculty and student surveys, course documents, course assessments, and course assignments, the researchers found a lack of academic attention in 6 out of the 7 Masters' degree programs and a discrepancy between the intended and the actual curriculum. The research pointed out that self-study was often successful in diagnosing and addressing gaps in curricula and instruction.

To conclude, research on EFL graduate academic writing, regardless of the approaches, aims at identifying the writers' problems in accomplishing particular writing assignments and it has proposed corresponding solutions, and also examined the effectiveness of the interventions.

2.1.3 Research on EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

As one of the academic writing tasks, thesis writing is a process for the students to construct the new body of knowledge in the disciplines and head forward graduation (Belcher, 2013; Geng & Wharton, 2019). Thesis writing is widely acknowledged about its essential role in the obstacle course to graduation. Postgraduate thesis writing has been researched with different focuses, on certain section(s) (e.g., Akindele, 2008; Geng & Wharton, 2019; Shen, Carter, & Zhang, 2019), or the whole thesis. In addition, various approaches are employed in analyzing various aspects of thesis writing.

Studies on EFL postgraduate thesis writing can be categorized into two different research orientations. First, literature proposed the demanding nature of EFL thesis writing and claimed it one of the most important but challenging graduates' academic writing tasks to fulfill (Imani & Habil, 2012; Paltridge, 2002). The difficulties have been examined both from the supervisors' perspective (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997) and the student writers' perspective (Imani & Habil, 2012). Casanave and Hubbard (1992) examined the supervisors' perspectives on EFL graduate students' problems in their thesis writing. They surveyed 85 supervisors from 28 departments at Stanford University and reported that EFL doctoral students have more problems at the sentence than at the paragraph level. A further study by Cooley and Lewkowicz (1997) involved 105 supervisors from 9 schools at the University of

Hong Kong and identified students' difficulties with lexical choice in appropriateness and formality.

Dong (1998) surveyed perceptions of thesis writing from 106 EFL postgraduate students in Science and 32 supervisors at two universities in the United States. The students reported more writing difficulties with “discipline specific, genre specific, and audience specific knowledge” (p. 372). The research findings indicated EFL postgraduate students were disadvantaged with a limited social network. Illustrating the impact of disciplinary culture on thesis writing, Dong (1998) suggested improving thesis writing supervision and teaching transformation skills in English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Paltridge (2002) discussed the problem of EFL postgraduate thesis writing with 30 sampled theses by Masters' and doctoral students in a major Australian university. The effectiveness of published advice on thesis writing in actual practice was examined, and then a need for EFL materials on thesis writing was pointed out, in order for the students to be aware of the range of thesis options. EFL graduate thesis writers had not acquired “the necessary text knowledge, genre knowledge, and social knowledge” (Paltridge, 2002, p. 137).

Imani and Habil's (2012) survey revealed the problems in EFL postgraduate thesis writing from the student writers' perspective. 82 out of 100 international Masters' students in a Malaysian state university reported difficulties with L2 structure and

grammar. The researchers further examined what strategies the EFL Masters' students used to solve their problems. 60 students from 3 different disciplines were distributed a Lickert-scale questionnaire which aimed to explore the strategies they used to solve grammatical problems. The results showed a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful writers in the strategies used. Then nine Master-level theses were randomly selected and subjected to a grammatical analysis. The findings showed that grammatical accuracy, appropriate grammatical complexity, and structural variety were important in EFL academic writing.

Second, researchers have investigated to what extent EFL postgraduate students struggle to conceptualize and then meet genre requirements. Hyland (2004b) discussed the important role of acknowledgments in thesis writing and offered a generic structure for this genre. The corpus consisted of 120 doctoral and 120 Masters' theses from six disciplines at five Hong Kong universities. He argued that the acknowledgment section might be the most expressly interpersonal academic genre, yet the students obtained little instruction and then had problems in demonstrating "an appropriate degree of competence and intellectual autonomy" (p. 323).

Akindele (2008) analyzed the literature review section of 30 Masters' theses sampled from the University of Botswana. He then interviewed six students and six supervisors from three faculties from which the theses were selected. He found most of the students were uncritical in reviewing and unable to express themselves

appropriately. He suggested that supervisors should help students develop critical thinking skills and their faculties should organize seminars and workshops on writing to assist the students to solve their problems.

Fitt (2011) in her doctoral thesis touched upon the literature review section in thesis writing. In contrast to Akindele's (2008) research, she found that students were well prepared to write a good literature review. Using a *Literature Review Scoring Rubric* as a framework, she analyzed the content of seven textbooks to see how well literature review skills were presented to the students. Then the rubric was replicated to assess the quality of literature reviews from 30 randomly samples of doctoral theses in the field of Instructional Technology. She concluded that the textbooks were not adequate to meet the broad requirements of students in writing a thesis review. Generally low scores showed a common low quality in the samples of the literature reviews in the theses. Her research criticized the program for falling short in preparing doctoral students for their future scholarly roles.

Using in-depth interviews, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) studied students' difficulties in writing the discussion section of their results (DRS) for their postgraduate theses. Four supervisor–student pairs from two universities in Auckland, New Zealand participated in the research. The student participants were from Mainland China, Korea, and Eastern Europe. The findings showed that students were not sure about the functions and content parameters of the DRS and that there was only a limited

shared understanding between the supervisors and the students about the features and causes of the students' difficulties.

Third, research on EFL postgraduate thesis writing has drawn attention to various pedagogical concerns. Hyland (2004a) examined the purposes and distribution of meta-discourse in 240 graduate-level theses written by Hong Kong students. The analysis indicated a close relationship between students' linguistic and rhetorical abilities and the community's conventions and expectations. He argued the importance of raising students' awareness of meta-discourse and suggested teachers employ meta-discourse to practice writing for a discourse community.

Gomez (2014) used a mixed approach with in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups, online surveys, and document analysis to explore students' development in general writing skills and academic writing skills through completing a Master's thesis in seven Colombian universities. The findings showed that the academic writing skills developed on the basis of the initial general writing skills. This development occurred as result of personal, supervision, and program level factors and through the appropriation of the thesis genre. The researcher urged the need for a new approach in academic literacy.

Kakh, Mansor, and Zakaria (2014) investigated the effect of writing tasks on audience awareness. The researchers purposefully recruited six EFL graduate students in Civil Engineering from five Malaysian universities for a focus group interview and

piloted several audience-focused tasks among the participants. The usefulness of the designed tasks was investigated through analyzing students' journals and their primary and final thesis manuscripts. The results showed that this task-based instruction helped develop a sense of audience over time.

There has been an expansion and improvement of graduate education. However, the increased attention does not always guarantee an improved response: the type and level of support available depends largely on how writing is conceived by the graduate schools, which in turn is shaped by institutional discourses about writing. Percy (2011) pointed out that inherited and normalized institutional discourses shaped how researchers and teachers of writing and language are located in that space and what they are expected to provide. Moreover, institutional definitions of writing necessarily shape opportunities, limitations, and consequences for doctoral writers, supervisors, and others.

Among graduate academic writing tasks, some genres like candidacy examinations and thesis grant proposals have drawn little attention. To fill the gap, Cheng (2013) used a multiple case study approach to understand how Chinese-speaking doctoral students interpret their experience of transiting from coursework to the thesis stage. She involved 29 Chinese-speaking students at the Ohio State University in a retrospective interview and 7 students in her following multiple text-based interviews as case studies. The research found that graduate students wrote two types of

assignments, candidacy examinations and thesis grant proposals, when making transitions from coursework to independent research. This project also sheds some light on my interest in students' challenges and difficulties when negotiating the hidden rules in EFL thesis writing.

To sum up, the aforementioned studies identified EFL graduate students' difficulties either in the overall organization or certain sections of thesis writing. Most research investigated genre and examined the student writers' and/or supervisors' perceptions of thesis writing. Some researchers suggested developing writing skills and raising the awareness of academic writing appropriate to the disciplines. The studies on EFL graduate thesis writing involved different focuses and different perspectives, however, most of them were text-based. The main data source was sample theses. There is a need for further discussion on issues beyond the text level. Giving voice to EFL graduate writers can provide us first-hand accounts of the actual and individual experiences of thesis writing.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Social practice, learning, literacy, and negotiation are the major factors of identity construction in a situated context. The current study is based on the theories of Social Constructivism, Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Writer Identity (Ivanič, 1998).

2.2.1 Social Constructivist View: L2 Writing as a Social Practice

Social Constructivist theory has evolved from the idea that human developments take place through dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). Social Constructivism sees learning as inherently interactive: people learn in a social cultural environment. Learners are “active constructors of their own learning environment” (Mitchell & Myles, 1988).

Social Constructivism is capable of allowing insights into how people interact with the world around them (Creswell, 2009). People understand the world and so they develop varied and multiple subjective meanings of their lived experience. Thus, I intend to interpret the meanings EFL graduates make of their lived experience in thesis writing and to address how such individuals interact with others in social and historic settings.

Social Constructivism is a useful lens through which to view EFL writing (McKinley, 2015). First, under the umbrella of Social Constructivism, Santos (1992) compared the ideological views of L1 composition and L2 writing. L1 composition education was ideological as students were encouraged to think critically and challenge the power relationships in American society; whereas, L2 writing education was more pragmatic in that its primary aims were to meet students’ imminent needs, in this case, to accomplish their academic tasks (Costino & Hyon, 2011).

Second, the social constructivist approach advocates teachers’ recognizing

student writers' positions. Social constructivism theory critiques the original appearance of written voice which was considered to express an individual's uniqueness (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Such critiques brought about alternative notions of written voice, such as Ede's "situational voice" (1989). Social constructivism offered "more modern or sophisticated versions of the voice concept" that go substantially beyond an individualistic notion of voice (Atkinson, 2001).

Third, a social constructivist approach can provide the teaching of EFL writing with different perspectives. By means of scaffolding, social interaction enables students to develop skills through social interaction with more experienced or more knowledgeable persons, such as teachers, faculty members, and so on (Donato, 1994; Hyland, 2003). The greatest contribution of social constructivism to the education field could be that it led to seeing knowledge-building as co-constructed by learners through interaction in a social context (McKinley, 2015). Thus, knowledge is not a product, but a part of the process of knowledge transforming or knowledge telling.

In conclusion, Social Constructivism can be utilized in viewing EFL postgraduate thesis writing. From this perspective, interaction is important in learning, and writing is situated as a social practice. On the one hand, this interaction is internal that a thesis writer communicates with himself through the past, present and future. On the other hand, students are involved in social and cultural interactions of sharing ideas, beliefs, values, and conventions in an established learning community. To be more

specific, social interaction is realized in an institutional context and within a broader disciplinary community.

2.2.2 A New Literacy Studies Perspective on EFL Postraduate Writing

This section discusses the issues of academic literacy related to EFL graduate students' writing. Literacy has been historically defined as the ability to read and write, which can only be achieved through long-term formal education and proved through successfully accomplishing educational tasks (Gere, 1987). New Literacy Studies (NLS) redefined literacy as “the ability to make meaning with written language in a particular group or community that prizes that ability” (Fox, 1999, p. 25) and literacy practice as “embedded within specific social practices” (Gee, 2003, p. 159).

The NLS perspective views literacy differently in specific contexts (Ruggles, 2012). Literacy is a social activity situated in particular communities. Hyland (2000) referred to literacy as “different strategies conceptualizing, organizing and producing texts; it implies variation in the contexts and communities in which they are written, and the roles of readers and writer that they invoke” (p.146). Street (2003) considered literacy as social practice(s), comprising such constructs as practices, events, and texts. This idea focuses “not so much on acquisition of skills, as in dominant approaches, but rather on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice” (Street, 2003, p. 77). Literacy thus involves writing practice, strategies, and the relationships between writers and readers in a specific writing context.

L2 writing is one type of academic literacy practice, thus, students have to acquire the rules of this practice and obtain access to particular discourse communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They have to “write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs, and attitudes” (Gee, 1989, p. 526). Leki et al. (2008) called for research into L2 writing beyond the analysis of texts and by focusing on certain issues such as:

how disciplines may be inimical to graduate students from certain backgrounds and may function to exclude the students’ experiences; what the effect was of social relations with faculty and others involved in a graduate program; how other (oral) genres, such as seminar presentations, impacted L2 writers. (p. 37)

On this basis, I posit EFL graduate thesis writers as novice who must practice writing the discourses and learn to gain the legitimacy within a particular community. It is crucial for such novice writers to understand thesis writing and employ literacy practices appropriately within the target community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; White & Lowenthal, 2011).

The NLS perspective has been applied in EFL postgraduate writing research (Braine, 2002; Kaufhold, 2015; Shang-Butler, 2015; Zhang, 2011). Braine (2002) examined how EFL postgraduate students acquire academic literacy with English as the medium. He summarized the related studies and pointed out their “fundamental shortcomings” in focusing on writing tasks alone (p.63). He then argued the need for an authentic voice from EFL graduates, to obtain first-hand information in developing

academic literacy. He suggested a collaborative relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee and recommended explicit instruction in academic literacy. His research has helped me to define EFL postgraduates as the target research subjects. Thesis writing will be the medium through which to explore students' academic literacy development. Furthermore, power relationships will be discussed due to their essential role in acquiring academic literacy in a discipline.

The Academic Literacy approaches emphasize the significance of “literacy histories” for academic writing (Barton, Appleby, Hodge, Ivanič, & Tusting, 2007). Zhang (2011) adopted Lea & Street's (1998) academic literacy approach and explored the impact of a different epistemology on 10 Chinese graduate students' perceptions of differing literacy practices in a number of disciplines at a university in Canada. The research recommended a nested model of writing support. In this model academic socialization, study skills, and academic literacies are mutually inclusive and transformative.

Kaufhold (2015) ethnographically investigated how Continental European students negotiated their prior academic writing experiences in writing Masters' theses at a British university. The analysis revealed that students related their prior experience to their thesis topics, increasing their disciplinary knowledge, and immediate and long-term aims.

Shang-Butler (2015) examined 8 Chinese-speaking graduate students'

experience of understanding and navigating the expectations of academic writing in the United States. The researcher collected data from two rounds of semi-structured interviews, students' writing samples with their teachers' feedback, and a focus-group with 3 faculty members who were experienced in tutoring Chinese graduates. The research found a mismatch between the students' understanding and the faculty members' expectations, which required them to understand and negotiate the effects of academic cultural shock and social relationships in order to transit into accepted graduate-level academic writers.

The previous studies consider EFL graduate academic writing as a socially constructed activity in the process of students' developing academic literacy in a discipline.

2.2.3 Conceptualization of Writer Identity

This section provides an overview of identity issues in writing. Notions of identity, definitions, and the three orientations for identity study are reviewed. Traditionally researchers use the term “writer voice” interchangeably with “writer identity” (Malik, 2016). In this study the term will be used in its original sense, thus the two terms “identity” and “voice” are used synonymously.

2.2.3.1 Notions of Identity

Different terms like subjectivity, persona, self, positioning, identity, identities, and voices are used interchangeably in studying writing to address the

concept of identity, carrying differently nuanced connotations (Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014). I make reference to four notions in particular which are *Subjectivity*, *Self*, *Positioning*, and *Voice* in dealing with *Identity*.

Subjectivity. Weedon (1997) defined the term '*subjectivity*' as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world" (p. 32). This notion points out that identity involves a sense of being and an interpretation of relations with others. Self-consciousness is vital in understanding individual development. This view regards identity in terms of one's relation to the world, whilst accepting the precarious and contradictory status of subjectivity. Subjectivity is the in-process understanding of self, constantly changing and "reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). The term "discourse" refers "both to the production of knowledge through language and representation and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play (Du Gay, 1996, p. 43). " This discursively constructed process is ongoing, which can lead to conflicts when there may be a gap between the subjective positions offered by the discourse and the writer's individual interest (Weedon, 1997). In such a case, resistance to the subjective position may occur. Both compliant and resistant discursive construction of subjectivity are "part of a wider social play for power".

Self. Other researchers approach identity with reference to the term

Self. A person can have many possible social roles and play these roles self-consciously in different social contexts (Goffman, 1959). Goffman further introduced the notion of “footing” to refer to the “changes in alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (1981, p. 128). Three aspects, “animator”, “author”, and “principal” are used to distinguish the alignments of a speaker (p. 144). A speaker aligns himself by speaking using others’ words, or speaking his own words, and or speaking from an institutional position. Goffman’s work on identity has played an influential role in social sciences; however, not all researchers have found it useful (Block, 2007).

Referring to “*performativity*”, the notion of self is expanded from gendered self to refer to identity in general and seeing identities as performances (Butler, 1990). This is to some extent associated with my conceptualization of the academic self of EFL graduate thesis writers. Identity here is seen as an individual performing bodily and linguistically in discourses at certain times and in certain places. In this view, identity is not fixed, but dynamic in different contexts.

Positioning. Davies and Harré (1999) criticized Goffman’s approach which “takes (as) for granted that alignments exist prior to speaking and shaping it” (p.45). They introduced positioning theory to understand subject positions as actual relations produced in conversing. This theory is capable of capturing the emerging and ongoing nature of multiple subject positions in communication (Block, 2007).

“Positioning is the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p.37). Individuals engage with others when being involved in day-to-day discursive activities. People situate themselves and are situated through conversations. This follows the individuals’ conceptualization of what constitutes a story of the activity coherently in regard to a particular time and place.

Positioning has been applied in describing the process in which socially available discourse produces certain identities. Issues of community and identity are discussed to explore the relationship between the speaker and what is being said in the conversation (Hyland, 2002a; 2015). How writers appropriate the shared social conventions in discourse to claim uniqueness is emphasized. Individuals can position themselves from the socially valued options with their personal stance. This perspective sees genre as interaction between the individual and the community.

Positioning does not occur in a vacuum. The individual positions himself along the time development: his present story is based on his personal history, and may be influenced by his prediction of what will be accepted and valued in the community. In a word, identity work comprises ‘push and pull’, and it is inherently conflictive and ongoing. An individual’s positioning and re-positioning in discourses, thus defines and refines who they are (Block, 2007).

Voice. Voice can be applied in written communication and this term

describes how texts are actual responses to former utterances. Voice is “a devilishly difficult concept to define” (Atkinson, 2001, p.110). Stewart (1972) referred to authorial voice as the quality that differentiates individuals. Elbow (1998) defined voice in writing as that “captures the sound of in individual on the page” (p. 287). In Matsuda (2001), voice is “the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from a socially available yet ever-changing repertoire” (p. 40). In recent studies, voice is related to the terms “authorial presence” (Hyland, 2001) and “authorial identity” (Hievela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Olmos Lopez, 2015), in order to identify the linguistic features representing individualism in written discourse.

These terms are used interchangeably when discussing identity with different emphases (Ivanič, 1998). The term *self* is more concerned with private aspects like personal feelings or affects. Whereas terms *subjectivity* and *positioning* are more focused on socially constrained roles. Social theorists emphasize the way social practice affects people’s identities. The current study adopts the catchall term *identity*, because it is the word most frequently used by people when talking about who they are in daily conversations. Social media also gives priority to this term when referring to gendered identity, national identity, cultural identity, or ethnic identity.

2.2.3.2 Definitions of Identity in Writing

The definition of writer identity, or *writerly identity/self* (Starfield &

Ravelli, 2006), is based on the work of Ivanič (1998), Hyland (2002a, 2010) and Matsuda (2015). Ivanič (1998) proposes four aspects of writer identity: “autobiographical self”, “discoursal self”, “self as author”, and “possibilities for self-hood”. First, *autobiographical self* is shaped by “the prior social and discoursal history” (Ivanič, 1998, p. 24). It is the writer’s sense of self, closely associated with his roots. A writer brings to the act of writing an existing identity which is “socially constructed and constantly changing as a consequence of a/their developing life-history (p.24). For EFL postgraduate students, their writer identities are not fixed, but constantly affected by past events and changes in representing themselves in writing a thesis. Ivanič (1998) describes it as “the self which produces a self-portrait, rather than the ‘self’ which is portrayed” (p.24).

Second, *discoursal self*, also referred to as voice (Matsuda, 2015), is the impression a writer conveys of himself in what he writes. It is “constructed through the discourse characteristics of a text” (Ivanič, 1998, p. 25). This is related to values, beliefs and power relations in the particular social context in which the text is written. Discoursal self is closely tied to a particular text, thus an individual can have different discoursal selves in various writings. It is the writer’s voice that portrays how he would like to appear in his text by using both discursive and non-discursive features.

Third, *Self as author/authorial self* is the same as authorial identity. It is about “the writer's ‘voice’ in the sense of the writer’s position, opinions and beliefs”

(Ivanič, 1998, p.26). A writer perceives himself as an author in varying degrees and develops this sense of authoritativeness in his writing. This means that the self as author depends on one's level of confidence in writing the text. Some authors may claim a strong authorial stance in their writing, while others may attribute the arguments to other authors who are perceived as more authoritative. It is worth noting that readers may perceive and value this authority differently.

Last, the three aspects of writer identity mentioned above are considered as “actual people writing actual texts” (Ivanič, 1998, p.26). These are similar to identity portraits which can be connected with different individuals. However, the last aspect, *possibilities for self-hood* does not belong to any individual. They are possible social identities in the social context of writing. These socially available options allow people to construct a sense of being appropriate for the situation.

Ivanič (1998) claims a two-way relationship between the socially enabled possibilities for self-hood and the individual's actual identity in writing (see Figure 2.1). On the one hand, the societal, cultural, and institutional possibilities for self-hood constrains the shape of other three aspects of writer identity. A writer develops an autobiographical self according to his membership of social groups and constructs a discursal self out of a specific socio-cultural and institutional context. On the other hand, attempts of constructing discursal self from less privileged possibilities for self-hood may contribute to changes in the possibilities for self-hood.

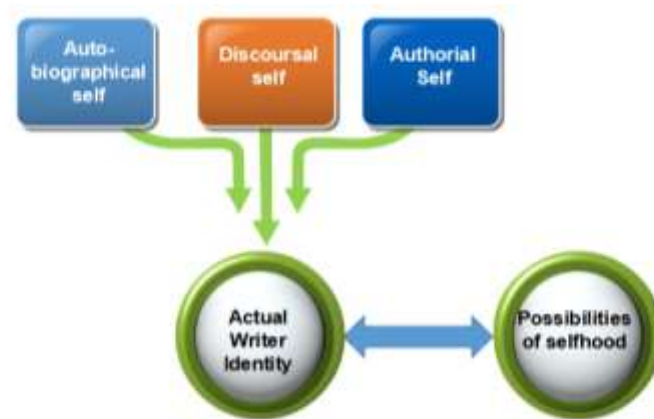


Figure 2.1 Ivanič's (1998) Four Aspects of Writer Identity

Hyland defines *Identity* as “a person’s relationship to his or her social world, a joint, two-way production” (Hyland, 2010, p. 160). Thus, identity is a social endeavor instead of an isolated achievement. One builds up his sense of who he is through participation in social groups. This sense is related to settings, relations, and the rhetorical strategies and positions adopted in social engagement (Hyland, 2010; 2011a). Through community discourses one claims or resists social membership to define who he is.

A writer’s discursal choice aligns himself with the ways of seeing and interpreting the world (Hyland, 2002a). Writers are not free to simply choose any identity from the rhetorical and linguistic resources available to them. When writing certain discourses, an individual is pressed to take on a suitable identity in an associated community. To do this, the individual has to acquire disciplinary knowledge and negotiate with the dominant literacy in the community. However, much of one’s sense

of self comes from one's roots which originate from the home culture and discourse. This gap poses great challenges for L2 learners.

Matsuda (2001) defines identity, or *voice* in his preference, as “the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from a socially available yet ever-changing repertoire” (p. 40). Identity is manifested through various features in texts and finally be by the readers. His definition is mainly from the perspective of the reader as “the reader's impression (is) derived from the particular combination of the ways in which both discursive and non-discursive features are used” (p. 239). Identity is navigated in the writer's interaction with the readers through the mediation of texts.

To sum up, Ivanič approaches writer identity from four different but interrelated aspects. Hyland's definition is more text-oriented, thus useful in describing how identity is exhibited through discursive features. His situating the individual writer in the associated discourse community will be adopted in the current study, to explore how a writer acquires disciplinary knowledge and becomes academically literate. Matsuda (2001) integrates the writer's choices and the reader's perceptions by considering both discursive and non-discursive characteristics.

The three scholars' definitions of identity converge. On the one hand, identity is the sense of who one is and who one might be. It is multiple and dynamic. On the other hand, identity is essentially social rather than individual. One's identity is

built up through interaction with others. In this research, the writer constitutes his sense of being through negotiating a place with socially shared and enabled resources in the target academic community. This interpersonal meaning makes thesis writing a place where identity is constituted and reconstituted.

2.2.3.3 Orientations of Identity Study

This section reviews the three orientations of studying identity in writing. There has been a debate over the tension between individual and social perspectives of studying identity: the subjective position emphasizes individuality, while the objective position denies an individual's agency.

2.2.3.3.1 Individualistic subjectivism

Individualistic subjectivism, the extreme personal orientation, sees identity as expressing a unique individuality (Voloshinov, 1973). This orientation aims to liberate the individual from conventional social relationships and enhance self-examination (Bowden, 1999). Individualists see identity as a personal stamp, a uniqueness differentiating individuals. Stewart (1972) proposed that authorial voice differentiates a writer from others despite the shared experiences. Identity carries implications of “an authentic and unitary self” (Bowden, 1999, p. 109).

This view values the creative and meaningful speech acts of the individual. Writing is authentic individual expression which is better acquired than explicitly learned (Matsuda, 2015). Being expected to learn in writing, a writer emerges

voice from within, from the sense of self. Everyone has a unique self, but the only one person who knows this self is himself. This extreme position advocates individual expression, which may lead to the writer's resistance to the social conventions.

However, this belief in the existence of a coherent and autonomous identity held by the individual has been critiqued as excluding non-dominant social and cultural practices. Bowden (1999) advocates more suitable alternatives for discussing the rhetoric of various cultures which in her opinion is often “devalued by the American mainstream” (p. 140). Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) argue that the individualist view of identity is in conflict with non-dominant models and norms in the United States. They point out that expressing a unique coherent self is problematic for non-native English speakers due to the mismatch between their home culture and American culture. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) critiqued the individualist view of identity too romantic when considering the identity issue in a social setting.

2.2.3.3.2 Social-constructionist Orientation

The social-constructionist orientation, “abstract objectivism” (Voloshinov, 1973), focuses more on socially accepted and frequently used features. Identity thus is a social product, entailing an individual’s understanding of himself in relation to others. His self-awareness is also influenced by social groups (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). The image the individual displays is developed by himself, but also in a social group in which he is willingly or unwillingly. The fact that a person belongs to

diverse social groups at the same time implies that different social identities are exhibited according to his various social roles.

Social constructionists see selves as construct generated and semiotic entities maintained by communities (Ivanič, 1998). Entities such as reality, knowledge, and selves “are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers”, while social understanding of these constructs are “community generated and community maintained linguistic entities” (Bruffee, 1986, p. 774). Any kind of identity is the consequence of affiliating individual to socially shared beliefs and values. In this position, identity is understood as “how people appear to each other, and how different kinds of identities are produced in [discourse]” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 6).

Social constructionism describes how socially shared conventions are developed by individuals. This is highly compatible with studies on the identification of discourse patterns. It is useful in providing language resources for novice writers and guiding the appropriate use of language. However, it overlooks individual variations with little attention on how individual writers appropriate, resist, or negotiate the conventions (Matsuda, 2015). Its pedagogical implication is “teaching only the dominant practices within a single genre” (Matsuda, 2015, p. 148).

This orientation overemphasizes the social characteristics of identity, insisting that the only possible way of participating in certain social groups is accepting its conventions. The similarities among the group members are taken

seriously, while the differences are not focussed on. In fact, the concept of identity is open to controversy and change rather than being fixed and stationary. In order to avoid an uncritical understanding of identity as fixed and stable, Parker (1989) suggested we ask “how the self is implicated moment by moment, through the medium of discourse, in power” (p.68). A third orientation thus emerges from scholarly critical thinking about the extremes of personal and social constructionist views on identity.

2.2.3.3.3 Social-Constructivist Orientation

Social constructivist orientation bridges the gap between the individual and social characteristics of identity. Social constructivism is significant in exploring EFL writer identity construction (McKinley, 2017). Social constructivism accounts for how individual uniqueness and social conventions coexist and are mutually constituted (Ivanič, 1998; Matsuda, 2001, 2015; Prior, 2001; Voloshinov, 1973). Norton (1997) used *identity* to refer to “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p. 410). The relationship between the individual and the community is constructed in the interactions between the individual and other community members.

Ivanič (1998) considers writing itself as an act of identity which is socially constructed rather than socially determined. She argues that individuals develop their sense of selves in terms of their group membership and their

differences from others. She values the claim of “the reflexive project of the self” by Giddens (1991) in locating identity in events and experience, and further points out that self is “doubly socially constructed” both by socially constrained life experiences and the social rules of interpreting these experiences (p.16). It is claimed that the act of writing makes a tangible contribution to self by developing a connection between the writer’s autobiographical narrative and his writing. The writer’s life experience, his identity, and “the reality that he is building through writing” interplay with each other (P. 16). Individual writers’ struggle for alternative ways to enter a privileged social group and they have the potential of causing change.

Matsuda (2001, 2005) critiques notions of identity from both individualist and social constructionist perspectives. On the one hand, the assumption that the unified self can be objectively represented in discourses is questioned by Matsuda (2001) as he explores the possibilities of divergence in texts and argues that the objection to associating voice with Western individualism is of great importance. He questions the individualist understanding of an consistent and autonomous identity. In his opinion, the notions of voice guided by individualism are “in opposition to discourse practices in other cultural and rhetorical traditions” (p.38). On the other hand, the social constructionist view encourages language users to follow socially shared conventions and discourages any deviations (Matsuda, 2015). The social constructivist view considers not only how the convention or norms are

developed and stabilized by an individual, but also how individuals make their writings appropriate to “the particular rhetorical situation” (Matsuda, 2015, p.149). I follow his lead in studying identity issues by counting how the individual posits himself in a socially ruled group and struggles for his uniqueness at the same time. My research will examine how L2 thesis writers build their own authorial identities in making their writings appropriate to a strictly disciplined academic community.

Based on the sociohistoric view that discourse is “historical, situated, and indexical” (p. 55), Prior (2001) questioned “the sharp binary of individual and social” notions of identity expressed from a writer’s within or outside (p. 55). He pointed out that collective identity exists in everyday expression directly or indirectly. He put identity in association with the typified subject rather than a specific activity, stating that it was “reducible to genres” (p. 61).

In summary, the personal orientation of identity in writing emphasizes the writer, the social-constructionist view locates identity in the text, and the social constructivist perspective seeks identity in the writer’s interaction with the reader which is mediated through texts. In the current study, a social constructivist approach will be adopted— so that identity can be discovered not only in texts but also in the interactions between a writer and his readers.

2.2.4 Summary

Social constructivism views learning as an essential and inseparable part of social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and writing as one learning activity. Thesis writing, a typical element of academic writing, is the final required task of one's learning to obtain an educational degree. For EFL postgraduate students, writing a thesis is the way to learn how to write as scholars.

Learning should be considered in a broad social context which influences the student and the learning process. This concept has led me to treating thesis writing as a writer's journey. The lived experience in writing does not always happen when a student sits at a desk in a comfortable classroom. The student must reach out to the outside by understanding school routines, acquiring the disciplinary knowledge for academic study, going to seminars, asking for help from experts, negotiating with a supervisor and committee members, and adjusting his own ideas accordingly.

2.3 Previous Research on Identity Construction in L2 Writing

The study of identity in writing has been of great interest and become of importance in L2 academic writing research (Matsuda, 2015).

2.3.1 Identity and Discourse

This section reviews the literature on discourse perspectives on identity. Writers are situated in a particular discourse community. "Each individual takes on an

identity in relation to the communities they come into contact with (Ivanič, 1998, p. 83).” Bartholomae (1985) pointed out that power relationships existed within writing and argued that the novice writers must position themselves in the “privileged discourse” (p. 515). For EFL graduate thesis writers to accomplish their thesis writing, they must learn to write for a specific genre.

The concept of discourse used in the current study is “a form of social practice which implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 25). Discourse is the interpersonal interaction, spoken or written, in specific social context(s). Discourse can only be acquired (Gee, 1990). This means that discourse cannot be overtly instructed, but only mastered by acculturating students through social practices and interactions with those who have already acquired the necessary experience. Lave and Wenger (1991) developed situated theories of learning. They put forward that intellectual growth is a social engagement. They highlighted apprenticeship in academic discourse and characterized learning as “legitimate peripheral participation” (p. 35).

Wenger (1998) conceptualized identity construction in association with disciplinary communities of practice. In his opinion, learning is a practice of enrolling a community of practice and development of a new identity happens along with individuals acquiring the central disciplinary skills of the community. The past

experiences, the present, an imagined future, as well as the connections between these dimensions all affect the identity development processes.

A discourse community is the use of discourse by members within a particular social group (Swales, 1990). In the current study, whether EFL postgraduate students can be successful in completing thesis writing is linked to their abilities to master the discourse that is acceptable to the university and the disciplines. The relationship between thesis writers and the discourse community is co-constructive in that the individual writer identity is expressed in a discourse type, but his identity construction is formed by the provided discourse type. The thesis writer identity exhibits how he positions himself and is positioned in the disciplines.

2.3.2 Identity and Academic Writing

Identity is not optional but essential in writing (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2015; Sancho Guinda, 2012); writing “implicates every fibre of the writer’s multifaceted being” (Ivanič, 1998, p. 181). In recent decades, literature on L2 writing has highlighted the significance of identity construction in academic writing development (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hyland, 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2012, 2015; Hyland & Tse, 2012; Ivanič, 1998; Lillis, 1997; Matsuda, 2010, 2015; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Mora, 2017; Xu & Zhang, 2019). Hyland (2000) indicated that interpersonal meaning was significant in promoting interfaces in academic writing genres, which stimulated the development of studies of social identity in academic

writing (Matsuda, 2015). Individuals learn to join the academic discourse community. A crucial part of this socialization is to perform one's writer identity (Olmos Lopez, 2015). In acting out one's academic identity, the individual works with disciplinary conventions of academic writing discourse. As a social practice, academic discourse reflects the "ideologically loaded epistemological beliefs and behavioral norms privileged by particular disciplinary groups" (Tang, 2004, p. 39).

Researchers argue the significance of studying the identity of writers. The writer identity is a valuable tool contributing to the quality of writing for writers from different cultures (Javdan, 2014; Matsuda, 2001; Mora, 2017). It has been recognized as significant in teaching and research writing by scholars in the fields of composition studies and applied linguistics. It is also a theoretical guide for L2 writing studies. Matsuda and Tardy (2007) examined how authorial identity is constructed discursively through a blind review process. Two peer reviewers were provided with a manuscript and asked to compose a review including a recommendation regarding publication. The research found readers constituted images of the author by both discursive and non-discursive features.

The findings revealed that voice was integral in academic writing and needed to be further discovered from the writers and readers' perspectives. How the writers represent the self, through their linguistic and discursive choices, were discussed. Research into social features of writing has identifies the writer as the focus (Ivanič,

1998). Lexical, semantic, syntactic, optical and material resources are taken into writer identity construction (Gee, 1990; Ivanič, 1998; Starfield, 2007).

Scholarly attention has also been on the function of identity in teaching writing (Hyland, 2002a, 2002b; Matsuda, 2001; Stapleton, 2001). Researchers in this area agree that identity, voice and critical thinking are integral parts of academic writing. Voice should be considered as “an essential component of second language writing pedagogy” (Stapleton, 2001, p. 177). However, there is also disagreement on the idea that identity is the sole element which determines good writing (Akindele, 2008).

Tardy (2009) claimed the fundamental role of the notion of genre for L2 writers. Based on her investigation on how multilingual students learned genre knowledge in English as a lingua franca context, she proposed a model of genre knowledge. This model consisted of four proportions, “formal knowledge”, “process knowledge”, “rhetorical knowledge”, and “subject-matter knowledge” (p. 20-22).

Stevens et al. (2008) used an ethnographical approach to explore how undergraduate engineers developed disciplinary identities. He proposed three dimensions through which engineering students developed disciplinarily: gaining disciplinary knowledge, self-identifying and navigating to become officially recognized as engineers.

Based on social constructionism and discourse theory, Burke (2010) examined how 6 Korean students at an American university built academic writer

identities ideationally, interpersonally, and textually. The research discussed how the participants used their first language discourse and other discourses in EFL writing. The findings showed that Korean students constructed EFL academic writer identity with various approaches. He indicated a need to discuss the prevailing discourse in the academy suggested raising the students' awareness of the relationship between language, identity, and the epistemology behind the available discourses.

Ruggles (2012) conducted action research to explore academic identity development in Master's level graduate student writing. His study included fourteen students who were enrolled in an in-class peer-led writing group course and he collected data from different sources (e.g., blog responses, group meetings, interviews, perspective papers, and so on). The research found that previous experiences impacted on the graduate students' success in writing. Graduate students struggled to achieve quality in their academic writing and they learnt to take into account faculty and program expectations. The graduate students acknowledged a recognition of self as writers.

Olmos Lopez (2015) analyzed how undergraduate students in Mexico expressed authorial identity across thesis chapters. Based on Ivanič (1998) and Hyland (2010, 2012), she proposed a framework for authorial self and communicative functions and applied this to a corpus consisting of 30 undergraduate theses. She concluded that the corpus approach was useful to analyze authorial identity in the

sampled theses and the framework could guide teachers in preparing other undergraduate students for thesis writing in other institutions.

Previous studies have approached identity construction in EFL writing with different themes. First, social aspects are considered when exploring identity in written texts. Social factors influenced student writer identity construction and writing ability development. Personal background, especially in relation to home cultural background, exposure to the notions of authorial identity, and English language proficiency, could have an impact on construction of identity in L2 writing. Asian students have difficulties in reasoning in their encounter with Western epistemological assumptions (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Influenced by their first language literacy experience, EFL students are not confident to claim authoritativeness (Hyland, 2002b). Intensive instruction on the conventions of academic writing should be provided for EFL students (Scollon, 1999). English language proficiency hinders students' confidence as self-identifying as writers (Yang, 2006).

Second, lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical choices represent EFL students' academic writer constructions (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). EFL students are reported to struggle in creating a new identity to fit into English writing discourse. Shen (1989) narrated his experience in acculturating to the ideological values of Anglo-American ideology and positioning himself appropriately in English writing.

Third, strategies are developed by EFL students to create their new writer

identities in the text(s): avoidance, accommodation, opposition/resistance, transposition, and appropriation (Canagarajah, 2003). Finally, certain linguistic features are proposed signals of authorial presence, reflecting writers' discursive construction of authoritativeness. Self-mention is found playing an important role in writer identity development (Kuo, 1999; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Some scholars suggest novice writers use first person pronouns and active voice to display academic writer identity obviously and powerfully, and thus gain readers' acceptance of their ideas (Hyland, 2002a). The use of third person and passive voice is critiqued potentially pocketing the writer's agency and consequently leading to an unequal power relationship between the writers and readers (Fairclough, 2003; Janks, 1997). Other resources, such as evaluating the existing literature (John, 2012) and strongly asserting or arguing (Roux, Mora, & Trejo, 2011), can also display authorial identity in written texts.

Writers in EFL settings have not been well represented in the L2 writing literature (Belcher, 2013). Studies of learner identity were initially conducted in English-dominant countries. These studies focused mainly on immigrant learners' experiences of studying a second language in their host countries or other alike contexts (Belz, 2002; Gu, 2010; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko, 2003). Particularly concerning EFL graduate thesis writers in a Non-Native English-speaking country, Thailand, there has been pretty few related research as far as our

information goes. Besides, although writer identity has been proposed as consisting of four aspects (Ivanič, 1998), most of the research adopted a corpus approach discussing discorsal self (Ivanič, 1998; Rahimivand & Kuhl, 2014) or authorial identity (Hyland, 2002a, 2015; Olmos Lopez, 2015). As the research gap reveals, there is an urgent need to critically address and examine how the multiple aspects of writer identity are developed and interact with each other. This research will perpetuate voices to writers and explore how multiple identities of writers are shaped and developed through the practice of EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

2.3.3 Narrative Inquiry Approach in Identity Study

A narrative is an individual telling a story about something significant (Chase, 2005). It is argued as a perfect way for inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interactions with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20)

Narrative is an amalgam of the physical and psychological dimensions of knowing (Bruner, 1986). It is helpful in "understanding the deepest and most universal of human experiences" and ensuring our work "to be faithful to the lived experiences of people" (Richardson & Vaithyanathan, 1995, p. 219). By narrating, we humans can understand and interpret our actions and events surrounding us and shape our everyday experience.

Narrative has been claimed to be a powerful way of conceptualizing identity in a coherent, yet continuously changing manner over time (Giddens, 1991). As an influential research methodology in the field of education (Kim, 2016), narrative inquiry has gained popularity in discussing the issues of identity (Fang, 2018). The researchers are interested in “the narrative practices by which storytellers make use of available resources to construct recognizable selves” (Chase, 2005, p. 658). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) argue that narrative inquiry can “give the dimensions of realism, authenticity, humanity, personality, emotions, views, and values in a situation” (p. 553). Therefore, the participants can construct, negotiate, reconstruct, and renegotiate their identities through telling their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Adopting a narrative approach makes it possible to explore how people perceive themselves and the events in their lives, and how they build their identities (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry can be both written and oral (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Adopting this view, Fang (2018) asked four English language teachers in a Chinese university to answer a questionnaire with open-ended questions. Afterwards, an interview was carried out about their learning and teaching experiences. A narrative inquiry approach, including written narratives and interviews, is drawn on in this study to investigate and to make meaning out of the lived experiences of EFL postgraduates writing a thesis. The participants will be asked to describe their experiences and express their perspectives in a relaxed environment.

2.4 Writing Support

Specialists have discussed the activities or programs to support postgraduate students in their EFL academic writing. Writing support can be extended to students in the form of writing centers, Writing Across the Curriculum, Writing in the Disciplines, and Academic Literacies Initiatives (Haas, 2011). This kind of support is becoming popular at the postgraduate level in English speaking countries like America, UK and Australia, but it is not yet common in non-English speaking contexts (Girgensohn, 2005; Haas, 2011; Mullen, 2001).

A writing center or formalized instruction on English academic writing is not commonly provided to graduate students in universities. Writing is generally left to students and their thesis supervisors alone. Postgraduate level students are already assumed to be developed academic writers (Morss & Murray, 2001) without any problems in writing academic papers (Lee & Boud, 2003; Mullen, 2001). These assumptions have frequently been questioned and the need for explicit writing instruction has been pointed out widely. Writing groups is thus an acceptable approach advocated by researchers to solve the problems which result from a lack of writing support or explicit EFL instruction for postgraduate students (Girgensohn, 2005; Mullen, 2001).

Mullen (2001) argued that postgraduate programs are responsible for the lack of writing skills development for Master's degree writers in her study. She called for the

need to include research-based academic writing models to promote academic and professional development. Morss and Murray (2001) demonstrated that structured writing support could help graduate writers develop into academic writers. In response to this need, activities and programs have been trialled and studies are carried out to evaluate their effectiveness in developing students' academic writing. Some of these research studies show the success of specialized writers' groups in producing academic writers (Haas, 2001; Lee & Boud 2003; Morss & Murray, 2001).

Haas (2011) indicated a need for explicit writing support as perceived by both students and instructors. Haas's (2011) research described and evaluated the activities in Writer Development Workshops in a UK university. A weekly writer development workshop was piloted for a small group of six international graduate academic writers in a UK university. The Writer Development group consisted of six international Masters' students. An open-ended questionnaire, follow-up interviews, group discussions, participants' journals, and audio-recordings of Writer Development workshops were used to collect data. Analysis of the data displayed a generally positive perception of the workshop as successful. The goal of making academic writing pleasant was met and the activities helped students develop into academic writers. The results indicate some social, affective, and academic benefits as perceived by the participants involved in the group. The activities were helpful for students' development as writers and in the improvement of their written products.

The approach to mentoring doctoral students is often the result of a supervisor's own experiences as a graduate student (Matsuda, 2016). The passing down of "tacit assumptions and practices" from one generation to the next may be the major obstacles for newcomers to academia, as "graduate students are still expected to figure out the rules of the game mostly by trial and error" as Matsuda has pointed out (Matsuda, 2016, p. 103). This figuring-out process is hard for all students, and especially inaccessible for those marginalized from "non-dominant linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds" (Matsuda, 2016, p. 103).

Realizing the lack of formal teaching of academic writing to EFL graduate students, more and more researchers have experimented with more explicit support in graduate programs. After pointing out the lack of "any formal support structure at the program level to help graduate students develop as academic writers" (p.4), an action research writing group was established for graduate students (Ruggles, 2012). Doctoral writing in Australia was criticized as lacking systematic support for both native and non-native English speakers with the result that a range of activities was introduced and tested for doctoral students (Starfield, 2016). However, much more research needs to be done in different aspects and in various settings.

2.5 Summary

This chapter reviews the literature related to the issues of identity and EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Under the social constructivist theory and New Literacy Studies perspectives, writing is situated as a social practice and one type of literacy activity. As one important yet challenging academic writing genre, thesis writing has attracted scholarly attention from different aspects both at the Master's and doctoral level. Previous research has been mainly discourse-based and the need for discussion beyond texts has been established. Identity has been connected with academic literacy development, especially with academic writing literacy by researchers with different orientations and approaches. This current study adopts a social constructivist stance and considers writer identity as the negotiation of individual writers with the discourse community through interactions. Writers construct their academic identities by practicing disciplinary activities and developing knowledge of the shared discourse conventions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods. It consists of five parts, demonstrating the research design, development of research instruments, data collection, data analysis, and pilot study.

3.1 A Concurrent Mixed-Methods Research Design

Research design is the “plan or proposal to conduct research” (Creswell, 2009, p. 5), involving “a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied among what populations with what research methods for what purpose” (Babbie, 2004, p. 112). Research is a “situated act of knowledge construction” instead of simply applying methodological principles (Matsuda & Silva, 2005, p. xiii). Thus, a researcher should have freedom to choose the research methods, techniques, and procedures of research (Creswell, 2014). The selected research design should be able to address the research purpose and answer the research questions (Griffie, 2012).

Grounded on a mixed-methods research design, this research adopts a problem-centered approach (see Figure 3.1), collecting, analyzing and combining both quantitative and qualitative components in a single research, and thus resulted in a more

comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon under research (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Leavy, 2017). The assumption of a mixed methods design is that combining the two methods can better understand the problem researched than either type alone (Creswell, 2012). Several reasons were often cited for combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Among the reasons, this research considered the benefit of complementary advantages of achieving greater precision and consistency with strengths from different approaches.

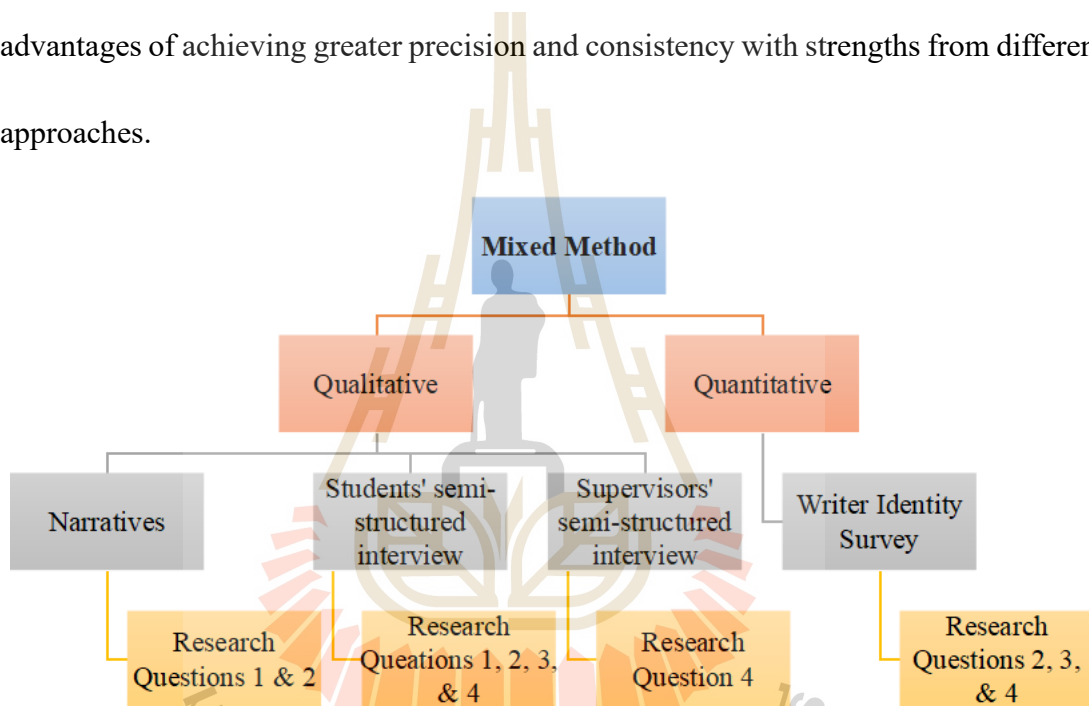


Figure 3.1 Research Design

The two forms of data were collected simultaneously and analyzed separately. The two sets of analysis were integrated to compare or cross-validate the findings (Creswell, 2015; Leavy, 2017). The design and collection of two sets of data were determined in advance, not sequentially. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis were compared to see whether the two sets of data produced similar or different information.

Triangulating is often utilized to confirm the findings from different approaches and provides complementary information. Researchers triangulate their research at the level of data, investigator, theory, and methodology (Yin, 2003). Both data triangulation and method triangulation were used in this study so that consistency of the results was ensured and risk of data being falsely interpreted was reduced.

The current research mainly aimed to reveal the EFL graduate students' experience of constructing academic writer identities in thesis writing. This purpose determined that the research would be exploratory and descriptive in nature. The research combined quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide maximum information from different angles. The quantitative identity survey was conducted and analyzed so as to obtain a general understanding of EFL graduate students' efforts to negotiate with the academic community and to interact with the power relations. Qualitative inquiry was embedded in all the phases of the study to describe the students' experiences and to probe deeply into the issues of identity.

3.1.1 Conceptual Framework

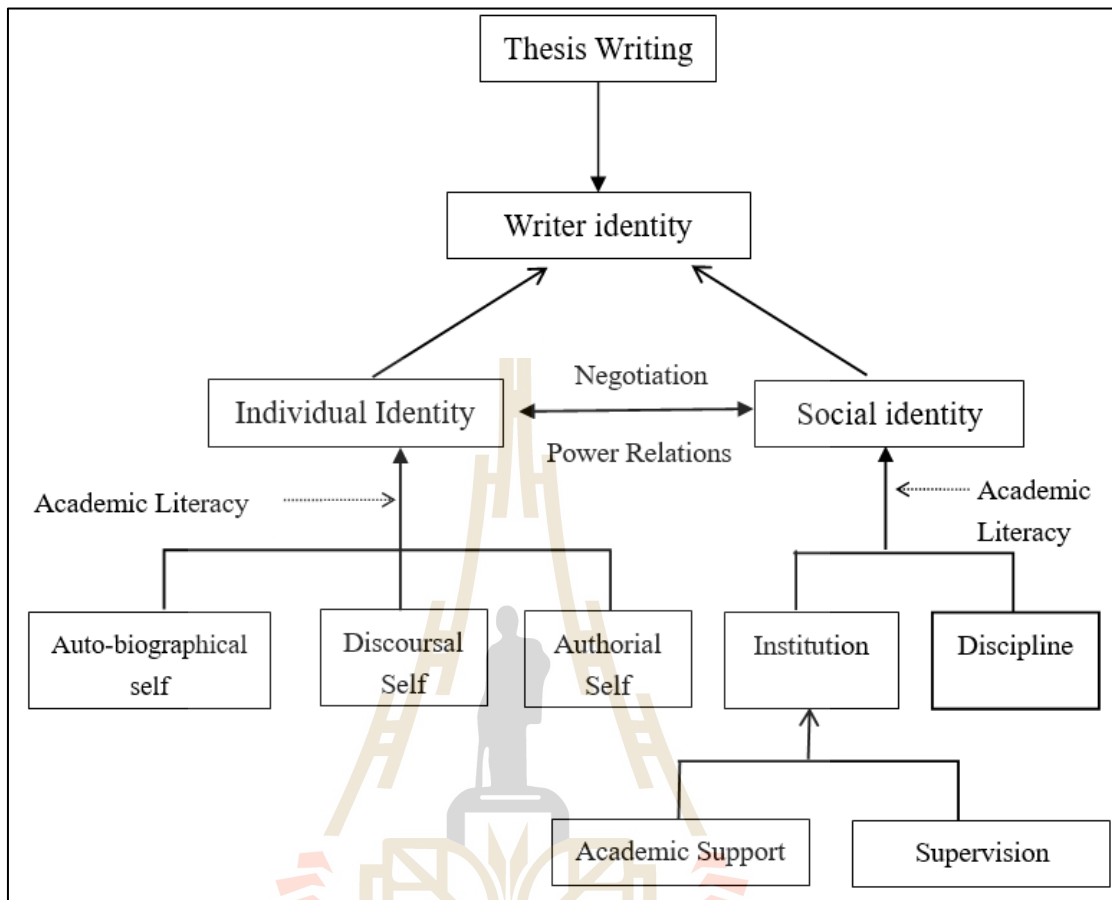


Figure 3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 3.2. Thesis writing is a complicated process involving many activities both from inside and outside of the writer. In order to write a thesis, he constructs and reconstructs identities related to academic writing through negotiation between the individual and society (Hawkins, 2005). Thus, identity is a sense of self which is a general concept based on perspectives on human learning which should not be constrained by an institutional context. Also, factors from the broader social world need to be taken into account.

Studying identity in language education draws attention to operant cultural and power relations. Based on this, I conceptualize thesis writing as a process of identity construction which occurs when the individual negotiates himself with society. In this study, the social world entails both the narrowly defined situated context and the broader world outside. The situated social world is the institutionalized setting where thesis writing takes place. The student writer constructs his academic identity by negotiating relationships with stakeholders such as the supervisor, the committee members, the school, and so on. Thus, the research probes into the process of constructing an academic writer's identity by exploring what actions EFL graduate students take and what strategies they use to handle their thesis writing.

3.1.2 Researcher's Position

As reviewed in Chapter Two, there are three orientations of Identity study -- personal, social-constructionist, and social-constructivist views (Matsuda, 2015). This research adopts the social-constructivist orientation. Social constructionists conceive writing as a social practice and examine identity from people's understanding of the self in relation to others and the purpose of the social group (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Such a philosophical position influenced my decisions in selecting research methods. Research methods should not necessarily be constrained by a certain research design, but can be mixed and fixed at certain moments of the research process (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). I encourage the participants to use their own voices in describing

their perceptions of the issues, rather than to only let them respond to an established agenda. I am an advocator of the situated learning theory and as a result I treat writing in a foreign language as a situated learning activity in a social context.

Positioning myself as an insider together with other similar participants. I may undergo the same process as others but will remain unique according to my own background and research interests. My auto-ethnographical accounts relate to my own negotiation of identity during the issues discussed. Self-reflecting and interpreting my own identity shift and emotional feelings can be helpful for a better understanding of how I constructed my own identity and that of other L2 writers.

3.1.3 Research Setting

This section provides information about the research setting and its requirements for thesis writing. This research collected data at Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Thailand. Selection of this research setting was due to the objective conditions and the exploratory nature of the study. First, SUT provides a non-native English-speaking context for EFL thesis writing. It is a large university located in the northeast part of Thailand which is grouped in the Expanding Circle where English is learned as a foreign language (Kachru, 1985). According to the regulations on graduate thesis writing, all graduate students are required to complete a thesis. The language used in writing a thesis may be Thai or a foreign language but in practice it is usually English.

Second, SUT is information-rich concerning EFL graduate thesis writing. On the one hand, this university provides 39 graduate-level programs in English at four institutes, 19 for Masters' level and 20 for Ph.D. level programs (See Appendix C). On the other hand, SUT attracts overseas graduate students. As one of the top research universities in Thailand, SUT advocates wide international communication and collaboration with institutions inside and outside of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Its active involvement in various international educational programs ensures a high degree of recognition among foreign students. The statistics offered by the university show that by December 13, 2018, from the years 2014 to 2018, a total of 184 Masters' level and Ph.D. level graduate students were involved in SUT English programs. Figure 3.3 reveals an almost consistent increase in the enrolment of international graduate students in four institutes in the last five years. In conclusion, the richness of the programs and the large numbers of graduate students ensured access to a sufficient number of participants.

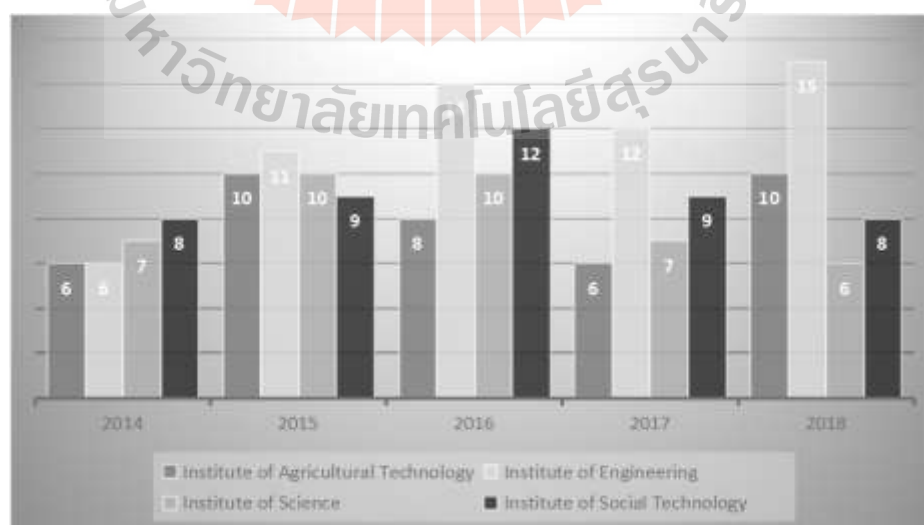


Figure 3.3 Enrollment of international graduates from 2014 to 2018

Third, SUT's multicultural and multilingual environment triggers individuals' adjusting to new cultures. Table 3.1 provides the statistics of current international graduate students: 146 students from 25 countries are studying for their graduate degrees in SUT. These students leave their home cultures behind and try to make sense of Thai culture. They have to handle with the differences between people from different cultures and different educational backgrounds in this community.

Last, SUT was selected for practical reasons as it is the university where I am studying for a doctoral degree. Accessibility is taken into consideration before selection. Data collection is time-consuming and requires great flexibility and adaptability to any changes or challenges. Since the research explores the complex and dynamic phenomenon of identity construction, stories in different trajectories of thesis writing are collected and analyzed. It is important for me to engage with the participants and listen to their successes and difficulties in writing a thesis. My understanding and sharing of their experiences are helpful in encouraging them to be open about their expectations and concerns. Thus, convenience was an important factor in being able to reach out to the research participants.

Table 3.1 Current International Graduate Students in SUT

Nationality	Masters'	Ph.D.	Total
American	3	1	4
Australian	0	1	1
British	1	2	3
Myanmar	1	6	7
Cambodian	15	1	16

Table 3.1 Current International Graduate Students in SUT (Conts.)

Nationality	Masters'	Ph.D.	Total
Cameroon	1	0	1
Chinese	10	33	43
Filipino	1	2	3
French	0	1	1
German	0	0	0
Indian	0	2	2
Indonesian	3	17	20
Italian	1	0	1
Japanese	2	0	2
Laotian	3	5	8
Malaysian	0	1	1
Nepalese	1	0	1
Nigerian	0	1	1
Pakistani	0	1	1
Polish	0	1	1
Somali	0	1	1
South African	0	1	1
Sri Lankan	1	1	2
Tanzanian	1	3	4
Vietnamese	3	18	21
Total	47	99	146

Besides, some of the perspectives under discussion are sensitive, such as conceptualizing one's own thesis, negotiating power relations, and commenting on the advisory system. It really requires a deep mutual trust between me and my research subjects. I live in accommodation provided for international students and I also frequently socialize with the target participants in academic and non-academic events hosted by the university.

3.1.4 Participants

This research chose the participants through non-random purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling is appropriate when “most of the random sample may be largely ignorant of particular issues and unable to comment on matters of interest to the researcher” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 115). The primary premise of sampling is that the participants can provide first-hand accounts of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The second criterion is that the respondents are diverse in cultural, linguistic, disciplinary, and education level backgrounds. The richness of participants’ cultural experience, knowledge of linguistics, disciplinary knowledge, and educational levels may have impact on their English academic writing and identity construction.

The main participants were EFL postgraduate thesis writers in SUT, including 1) current postgraduate candidates, and 2) alumni. All are non-native English speakers from the outer or expanding circles (Kachru, 1985). The current candidates have had their thesis proposals approved by the programs. And for the alumni who graduated from the university with a completed thesis in English, their reflections provided more information than the current students. However, to ensure their memory of the practice is still fresh, only those who recently graduated from the university were selected. The period of the data collection (July 10th, 2019), for the four alumni respondents who had just graduated from the university was five months.

My sampling method used self-selection (Olmos Lopez, 2015). The

invitation letters were distributed in person or via email to those who had been confirmed as being involved in the process of writing postgraduate theses in English. A positive response was received from most of the research targets. More potential participants were introduced and approached. The final forty-three individuals were asked to sign participants' consent forms (see Appendix A) and participated in the following data collection of L2 postgraduate thesis writer identity survey.

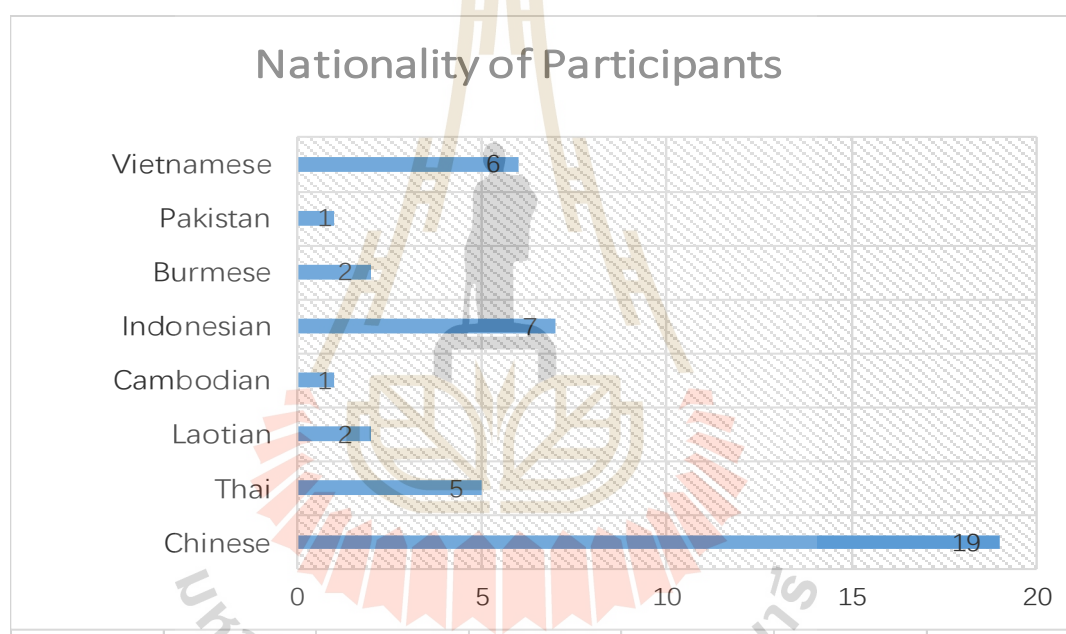


Figure 3.4 Distribution of Participants in Nationalities

The respondents are diverse in their cultural, disciplinary, and educational backgrounds. The EFL respondents consist of a variety of nationalities (see Figure 3.4) with Chinese occupying the highest percentage (N=19, Percent=44%), Indonesian the second (N=7, Percent=16%), Vietnamese the third (N=6, Percent=14%), Thai the fourth (N=5, Percent=12%), Lao and Burmese sharing the same rank of fifth (N=2,

Percent=5%), while Cambodian and Pakistani nationalities were the lowest (N=1, Percent=2%). They are from sixteen different schools (see Figure 3.5) with different education degrees to pursue: twelve are studying for their masters' level degree, while thirty-one are studying for doctoral level.

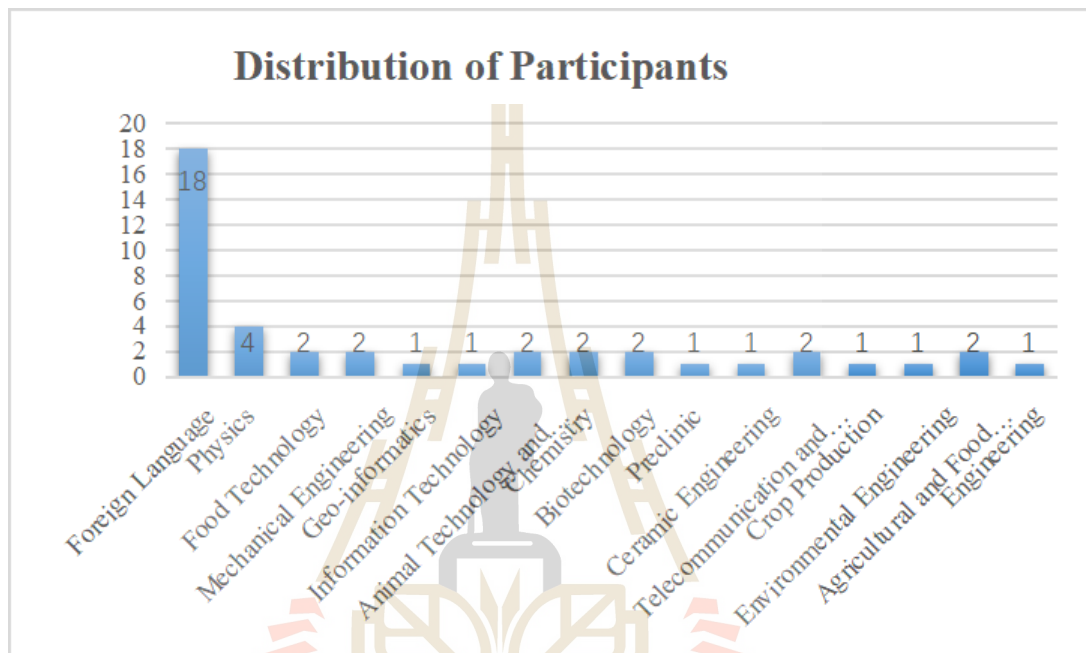


Figure 3.5 Distribution of Participants according to Disciplines

Thirty participants (69.77%) of the survey were willing to participate in the following narrative inquiry. Out of practical concerns, only fifteen volunteers were purposively selected. These participants were in different programs: eight from the School of Foreign Languages, one from Food Technology, one from Physics, one from Preclinical Studies, one from Chemistry, one from Information Technology, one from Biotechnology, and one from Environmental Engineering. Table 3.2 provides a detailed profile of the narrative inquiry phase:

Table 3.2 Profiles of Participants in the Narrative Inquiry

No.	Pseudonym	Nationality	Gender	Educational Level	School
1	Tom	Chinese	Male	Ph.D	Foreign Language
2	Daniel	Chinese	Male	Ph.D	Foreign Language
3	Amy	Chinese	Female	Ph.D	Foreign Language
4	John	Indonesian	Male	Ph.D	Food Technology
5	Tyler	Chinese	Male	Ph.D	Physics
6	Lucy	Chinese	Female	Master	Foreign Language
7	Zoe	Chinese	Female	Master	Foreign Language
8	Emma	Indonesian	Female	Ph.D	Preclinic
9	Anna	Indonesian	Female	Master	Chemistry
10	Nico	Thai	Female	Master	Foreign Language
11	Fanny	Thai	Female	Ph.D	Information Technology
12	Murray	Laotian	Female	Ph.D	Foreign Language
13	Laura	Indonesian	Female	Ph.D	Biotechnology
14	Jack	Myanmar	Male	Ph.D	Environmental Engineering
15	Bess	Vietnamese	Female	Ph.D	Foreign Language

They are randomly arranged in the table above. Then Table 3.3 provides the distribution of the participants in terms of nationality, genre, and education level.

Table 3.3 Distribution of Participants in Narrative Inquiry

Nationality	No. Participants	Gender		Education Level	
		Male	Female	Masters'	Doctorate
Chinese	6	3	3	2	4
Indonesian	4	1	3	1	3
Thai	2	0	2	1	1
Laotian	1	0	1	0	1
Burmese	1	1	0	0	1
Vietnamese	1	0	1	0	1

Five supervisors from different disciplines in SUT provided complementary perspectives on the concerns, expectations, and supervision related to thesis writing.

Also as stakeholders of thesis writing, they can and should have a voice in this exploration of writing and identity. Their experience and ideas on advising postgraduate thesis writing were useful in discussing academic support for EFL postgraduate thesis writers. The five supervisors were selected purposively because some of their supervisees took part in the whole of the research procedures. The five supervisors (see Table 3.4) include both Thai and non-Thai teachers in the university working in four different schools, one from the School of Physics with one doctoral supervisee involved in the research, one from Preclinical Studies with one doctoral supervisee involved, two from the School of Foreign Languages with one supervisee at masters' and one supervisee at doctoral level, and one from Food Technology with her doctoral supervisee also taking part in the research.

Table 3.4 Distribution of Supervisor Participants

Participants	School of				Gender	
	Physics	Preclinic	Foreign Language	Food Technology	Female	Male
Total	1	1	2	1	3	2

The sampling is limited in its size due to practical reasons in terms of time, money, and energy. The findings and discussions based the 43 writers' stories might not apply to the whole group of EFL postgraduate thesis writers in SUT, and it will apply much less to EFL postgraduate thesis writers in general. However, considering the characteristics of the target population, my sample size is commensurate with the exploratory nature of my research and the research objectives.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research objectives and questions determine the selection of data collection methods. Four research instruments were developed. Quantitative data was collected through an L2 Writer Identity Survey. Qualitative data was from a narrative inquiry with written narratives, semi-structured interviews with thesis writers, and semi-structured interviews with thesis supervisors. Table 3.5 provides a summary of the data type and instruments used for the collection of data in line with the research questions. The purpose of using a variety of sources of data is to triangulate and provide a thick description of EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

Table 3.5 Data Informing Research Questions

Research Question	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data		
	L2 Writer Identity Survey	Written narratives	Semi-structured Interviews with thesis writers	Semi-structured Interviews with thesis supervisors
1. What do EFL postgraduate students experience in the course of writing a thesis?		√	√	
2. What aspects of academic writer identity do EFL postgraduate thesis writers display?	√	√	√	
3. How does EFL postgraduate thesis writing promote writer identity development?	√		√	
4. How does the perceived support foster EFL postgraduate thesis writer's identity construction?	√		√	√

3.2.1 Written Narrative

A narrative inquiry approach was used in the present study due to its vital role in telling the individuals' stories and its popularity in identity studies (as reviewed in section 2.3.4), with a similar meaning to autobiographical statements. The changes in identity are emphasized referring to the role of critical periods, critical events, and critical moments (Honess & Yardley, 1987). On this basis, thesis writing is a critical event regarding its indispensability in the pursuit of an educational degree. And this experience foreshadows identity shifts.

To answer the first two research questions, a written narrative (see Appendix D) was adapted from Olmos Lopez (2015). Olmos Lopez (2015) conducted a case study of undergraduate thesis writing in Mexico and employed a writer mini autobiography to explore writer identity development. This written narrative differs from that of Olmos Lopez (2015). First, my narrative inquiry is to reveal experience in EFL postgraduate thesis writing and identity construction, while her research analyzed authorial identity in undergraduate theses. Second, I focus on events related to academic writing, especially thesis writing experience. The participants were required to provide autobiographical statements from the following three aspects: 1) retrospection of personal academic writing practices; 2) current experience of graduate thesis writing in English; 3) transformation to an academic writer.

3.2.2 L2 Writer Identity Survey

Despite most researchers' preferences for a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, I attempted to study writer identity with a survey to obtain more diverse and critical perspectives. A questionnaire offers particular advantages. First, it can encourage honesty in the participants' responses since it is anonymous. Second, it is more economical to carry out than an interview or an observation in terms of time and money (Cohen et al., 2007).

The L2 Writer Identity Survey (see Appendix F) was adapted from Ruggles (2012). Ruggles (2012) developed the Graduate Student Identity Survey under three constructs: Role as Graduate Student, Academic Writing and Identity, and Non-Academic Characteristics and Identity. Following her example of using a survey as one data source, I adopted and designed my L2 Writer Identity Survey with a different focus and made use of different domains. On the one hand, my survey yields information about EFL thesis writer identity construction. Whereas Ruggles (2012) had the participants think about academic and non-academic characteristics that may have impacted on their perceptions of academic identity. On the other hand, my survey is designed in line with a conceptual framework (see Figure 3.1) which integrates the ideas of four aspects of writer identity (Ivanič, 1998), identity formation (Hawkins, 2005), and writing as a social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The survey includes two formats. The first is to obtain background

information from the participants, including their nationalities, disciplines, and educational status. The second is a survey which was expected to provide numerical information about ESL graduate students' negotiation with academia and identity construction. The survey was originally arranged according to the following eight constructs with 65 Likert-like five-point scales (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Design of Writer Identity Survey

Domains	Constructs	Items
Transformation	Identity Transformation	Item 1-8
	Autobiographical Self	Item 9-15
Four aspects of writer identity	Discoursal Self	Item 16-23
	Authorial Self	Item 24-36
	Negotiating Membership	Item 37-44
	Writing Support	Item 45-54
Facilitating System	Educational Recourse	Item 55-59
	Advisory System	Item 60-65

The writer identity survey was checked on its reliability and validity (see Section 3.2.4). Based on the feedback and suggestions from experts and participants in a pilot study, rewording and deletion of some statements were made. Finally, the questionnaire was finalized as a 57 Likert-like five-point scales (see Appendix F).

3.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix H) were conducted to obtain oral data on the experiences of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. An interview is useful for collecting information about human experiences and opinions (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). All the open-ended questions were closely related to the four research questions,

concerning the experience of thesis writing (questions 1-4), transformation to L2 writers (questions 5-8), negotiating sense of self, authorship and power relations (questions 9-17), and the impact of the perceived support on identity construction (questions 18-20). Meanwhile, face-to-face communication provides an opportunity to listen to the interviewees, and to be closely involved with their first-hand accounts. I was able to probe more deeply into the questions and when necessary ask for further clarification. After analyzing the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of these interview questions (see Appendix H), I deleted questions Nos. 4 and 10. The revised 18 interview questions were piloted and modified (see Section 3.5).

Another semi-structured interview (see Appendix J) was carried out to collect supervisors' opinions about advising EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Their perspectives on the advisory system and the students' concerns about thesis writing provided complementary information about thesis writing and identity construction.

Although the interview questions were designed in advance according to the conceptual framework (see Section 3.1), some questions were subsequently improved in line with the information obtained from reading the data from the written narratives and the L2 Writer Identity Survey. Also, the sequence of questions was adjusted in the dialogues with the interviewees. The questions were asked in a roundabout way: before the interview, those who were willing to participate in the interview were asked to provide a small part of their thesis (or draft) from their introduction chapters. Then I

prompted each participant on the basis of their writing and asked them questions related to their actual examples of self-mention, boosters, citations, and so on.

3.2.4 Validity and Reliability Check

Checking the validity and reliability of research instruments is of great importance. In the present study, the four instruments were checked on their content validity and the survey was further checked on its reliability.

3.2.4.1 Validity

Validity is key to the effectiveness of research. It is a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers see validity as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state, thus they strive to “minimize invalidity and maximize validity” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133).

Item-objective Congruence (IOC), developed by Rovinelli and Hambleton (1977), was adopted in the research to make sure each item of each instrument was both relevant in content and clear in statement. One full professor and two associate professors were invited to examine the content validity of the instruments. All the experts are academically qualified and have rich experience in teaching English as a second language. After briefly introducing the research, the evaluation forms were sent to the experts. Each expert rated the items and/or questions independently by giving scores from +1 to -1. A rating of 1 means the item is congruent with the objective; -1 means the item is not congruent with the objective; and 0 means the congruence of

the item is unclear.

The result of the IOC analysis for the narrative inquiry was 100% (see Appendix E). This indicates a high content validity with reference to a minimum acceptable value which should be higher or equal to 0.5 (≥ 0.5) (Booncherd, 1974; Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). The result of the calculation of IOC for the survey was 87.2% (see Appendix G), and that for the students' interview was 86.7% (see Appendix I), and that for the supervisors' interview was 88.9% (see Appendix K). All the statistics show that the instruments were highly validated in terms of their content.

Subsequent revisions and modifications were carried out. Four items in the survey which were indicated as unacceptable by the IOC analysis were deleted. Two questions in the semi-structured interview for students were removed. The finalized instruments were trialled in the pilot study.

3.2.4.2 Reliability

Reliability means the consistency and stability of the instrument. The instrument is reliable when the scores of the same instrument administered at different times are nearly the same. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire is measured mainly on its internal consistency which requires that the scores obtained from an individual should be closely related to the questions and they should be consistent. This means that "an individual's scores are internally consistent across the items on the instrument" (Creswell, 2012, p. 161). The most commonly used measure

of reliability is Cronbach's Alpha (α) Coefficient which is capable of indicating the extent to which particular items in a survey measure a specified construct (Christmann & Van Aelst, 2006). Cut-off rules for Cronbach's alpha are provided by George and Mallery (2003) as “ $\alpha > .9$ –Excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – Good, $\alpha > .7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > .5$ –Poor, and $\alpha < .5$ – Unacceptable” (p. 231).

Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire by analyzing the data from the pilot study. For all 65 items, the result was 0.882, which was higher than the minimum acceptable value 0.70 ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) (DeVellis, 1991; Nunnally, 1978). Thus the questionnaire items were internally consistent.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection of the main study lasted for a period of three months, from April to July, 2019. At the beginning of April, 2019, the potential participants were selected based on the criteria mentioned earlier and approached formally or informally. During this process, snow-balled sampling was used to collect information on the international graduate students who had been involved in thesis writing. A brief introduction about my research purposes and the expected significances were included in the invitation letter. The respondents were clearly informed of the ethical issues: the

data would be used only for the current research purpose and would be confidential, and they had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the procedures.

The procedures of data collection are illustrated in Figure 3.6. After the Participants' Consent Forms (see Appendix A) were signed and returned, the link to the online L2 Writer Identity Survey (see Appendix F) was distributed to the volunteers. The participants were expected to complete the questionnaires individually. Forty-three questionnaires were completed and submitted by April 20th, 2019.

Then the narrative prompts were distributed to the selected fifteen EFL postgraduate thesis writers. Since the participants were from different schools and were busy with their own research and writing, this part of the data was collected individually at different times.

The semi-structured interviews with EFL postgraduate thesis writers were conducted after reading the narratives and analysing their responses to the questionnaires. The interview was conducted on a one-to-one and face-to-face basis, in a quiet and comfortable location (e.g. library, coffee shop, or canteen on campus) as preferred by the respondents. The interviews were audio-tape recorded and lasted from 45 to 90 minutes.

The five purposively selected EFL postgraduate thesis supervisors were contacted and interviewed at different times in different locations. The interviews were audio-tape recorded.

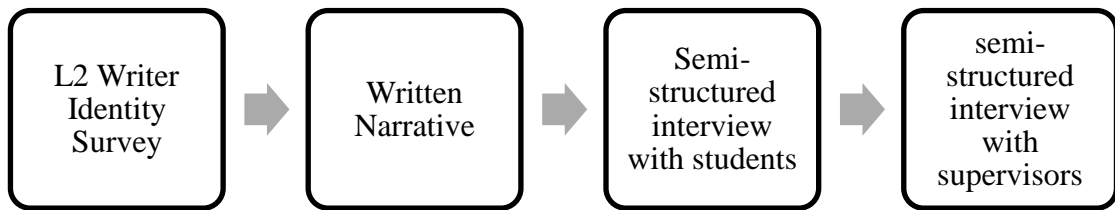


Figure 3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.3.2 Ethical Issues in Data Collection

Before the main research, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the university to be researched, SUT. Required documents with a detailed description of the research purposes, procedures and potential benefits or practical implications of the research were submitted to the university's ethics committees. The research was conducted by collecting data only with the approved research instruments from the potential respondents strictly as stated in the approval form. The participant consent form clearly informed the participants of the research purposes, their expected performances, and their right to choose whether or not to take part. They could withdraw from the research at any time they wanted. The participants' confidentiality was respected and their privacy was protected. The data collected was kept safe and used only for the research purposes mentioned.

3.4 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of ESL graduates' identity construction and postgraduate level thesis writing.

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The data from the L2 Writer Identity Survey was statistically analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS 22. The responses of the five Likert scale points were encoded as numbers: Strongly Agree was recorded as "5", Agree as "4", Undecided as "3", Disagree as "2", and Strongly Disagree as "1". Descriptive statistics were used to indicate the general tendencies in the data (means) and the spread of the scores (standard deviation). A frequency analysis showed how individual writers responded to the items.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

A qualitative data analysis aims to describe and interpret the data to be elicited from a narrative inquiry and semi-structure interviews. Two qualitative data analysis approaches were used in the present study: content analysis (Creswell, 2012; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) and thematic analysis (Buetow, 2010). Content analysis was employed to generally describe and categorize the units of meaning related to ESL graduate students' identity construction through writing their theses. Then thematic analysis was used to discover patterns and interpret the themes that emerged.

The procedures of the qualitative data analysis (see Figure 3.7) included the

following seven steps: 1) organizing and preparing qualitative data; 2) importing the prepared data into a qualitative analysis software Atlas. Ti 8; 3) coding data; 4) categorizing units of meaning; 5) developing themes; 6) refining the themes; and 7) interpreting the relationships between themes. The analysis did not follow the steps sequentially. Some procedures were repeated when necessary.



Figure 3.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

The data from the taped semi-structured interviews were transcribed and then imported together with data from the narrative inquiry in the computer program, ATLAS.TI 8. Key issues were systematically identified with the above mentioned procedures.

To ensure the “qualitative reliability” and avoid my own individual bias,

another coder was invited and the “intercoder agreement” was checked (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). The two coders read and coded independently the same part of the qualitative data. The consistency of coding was checked. The inter-coder agreement was 90% of the codes which was higher than the minimum 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A discussion followed the coding to agree on a final coding system acceptable to both coders.

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a procedure preliminary to the actual, larger, more definitive research in which a researcher evaluates the “feasibility and usefulness of the data collection instruments” and makes “any necessary revisions before they are used with the research participants” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 43). To check the effectiveness of the instruments in serving the research purpose and minimize the potential mistakes, I implemented the pilot study with four EFL postgraduate students in July 2018.

The pilot participants were selected purposively under the same sampling criteria of the future main study. Their detailed background information is presented in Table 3.7. At the time of piloting, three of them had already orally defended their theses and were leaving for their home countries. The last one, Participant 3, had almost finished his thesis writing.

Table 3.7 Profile of Participants in the Pilot Study

No.	Gender	Nationality	Educational Level	Institute	Discipline
1	Male	Chinese	Ph.D.	Agricultural Technology	Animal Production Technology
2	Female	Chinese	Master's	Engineering	Telecommunication
3	Male	Thai	Master's	Social Science	English Language Studies
4	Female	Burmese	Ph.D.	Engineering	Transportation

I met the participants individually and briefly clarified the purpose and nature of the research instruments face to face. The four participants finished the paper-based L2 Writer Identity Survey and the written narratives as expected. Two of them took part in the semi-structured interview with students. After the data collection, they provided some comments and suggestions about the readability and intelligibility of the items and questions. Modifications were made accordingly.

The results of the pilot written narratives showed that four themes emerged related to the participants' perceptions of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. First, three participants thought EFL postgraduate thesis writing full of difficulties and obstacles. They described the process of writing a thesis in English with words “serious”, “difficult”, “painful”, and “boring”. Second, the difficulties were with word choice and grammar. Three participants had problems with the use of articles, which might be caused by the differences between English language and their native languages. Third, the participants acquired EFL postgraduate thesis writing conventions implicitly. There was a lack of writing support, which made the student writers develop their own

strategies in writing. Fourth, EFL postgraduate thesis writing transformed the students into confident writers. Although the participants expressed uncertainty about writing a thesis in English, they were satisfied with their final written products.

The findings of L2 Writer Identity Survey and the semi-structured interview with students indicated an academic writer identity development and a transition into scholarly writer. First, the results of descriptive analysis of items (see Table 3.8) relating to the autobiographical self revealed a poor sense of writer identity. The participants showed a generally low self-efficacy in their English writing ability. Prior academic writing experience, both in their mother tongue and in English, facilitated the current thesis writing. Second, the participants were aware of discursal self, the images conveyed in the written discourse ($M=4$). The thesis writers could hear their own voice ($M=4$) and believed the writings conveyed their own beliefs and values ($M=3.75$). They all considered the interest the readers. Third, there was a low sense of authorship: only one student used self-mention with the proper noun "I"; they all cited frequently support their own arguments ($M=1.75$). However, in some aspects the students displayed awareness of the ownership of their theses ($M=3.75$) and felt comfortable when communicating with their supervisors ($M=4.25$). Fourth, Three participants knew the main elements of a thesis. However, they reported a lack of knowledge about the rules of writing a thesis in their schools. The participants showed an average sense of belonging to the academic community ($M=3.25$). Finally, the participants showed a

positive transformation to L2 writers in academic communities. The practice of thesis writing helped develop academic writing ability and fostered self-efficacy in writing in English.

Table 3.8 Descriptive Analysis of Writer Identity Construction

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
My thesis is making a new meaning to the discipline.	3.50	1.291
I was not confident in writing in English at the beginning of my thesis writing.	2.00	.816
Thesis writing helps me improve my academic writing ability.	4.75	.500
The practice of thesis writing makes me confident in my English writing.	3.75	.957
I put myself as a researcher when writing thesis.	3.50	.577
At times my thesis writing has given me deep personal satisfaction.	3.00	1.414
Writing thesis has little to do with how I feel about myself.	2.50	1.291
I am confident in completing my thesis on time.	4.25	.957
I had experience in writing thesis in English before this.	3.00	1.414
I regard myself as someone who can write well in English.	2.50	1.000
I write my thesis in the way that I used to write.	3.00	1.155
My previous English academic writing experience is helpful in my thesis writing.	3.75	.957
My English proficiency does not affect my progress in thesis writing.	3.25	1.500
I am not a native English speaker, thus I have difficulties in writing thesis in English.	4.00	.816
My previous academic writing in my first language does not help in my current thesis writing.	3.25	1.708
It is important for me to like what I have written.	4.00	.816
I put a lot of myself in my thesis.	3.25	1.258
I can hear my voice as I write and read the sections that I have written.	4.00	.816
My writing rarely expresses what I really think and believe.	3.75	.500
When writing my thesis, I never consider the interest of the readers.	4.00	.816
I try to create an impression of myself as a professional writer in my thesis.	4.25	.957
I use hedges like “may”, “might”, “maybe” in my discussion part.	4.50	.577
When I write my thesis, the choices I make are deliberate and reflect who I am.	3.75	.957
Thesis writing is cold and impersonal.	2.50	1.000

Table 3.8 Descriptive Analysis of Writer Identity Construction (Conts.)

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I never use "I" in my thesis.	1.75	1.500
I cite a lot in order to support my ideas.	1.75	.957
I want to make myself safe. I don't claim my ideas.	3.25	.957
This is my own thesis. I should have my own voice in it.	3.75	.500
I am confident in my ability to express my ideas in thesis writing.	3.50	.577
Thesis writing is disconnected from who I feel that I am.	3.50	.577
My thesis topic was assigned by my supervisor.	2.25	1.258
I won't say no to my supervisor's feedback.	3.00	1.414
Following the supervisor's guide is highly important in thesis writing.	2.25	1.258
I feel nervous whenever I communicate with my supervisor.	4.25	.957
Sometimes I argue with my supervisor and try to convince him.	3.75	.500
I follow all the suggestions from the thesis committee members.	2.50	1.000
I don't know what a good thesis is like in my discipline.	3.25	1.500
I read graduate thesis in my discipline. This helps me master how to write a thesis.	3.50	1.732
I am familiar with the components of a thesis.	4.50	.577
I know the rules of thesis writing in my school.	2.75	1.258
When writing my thesis, I stick to the rules.	2.50	1.000
There is usually one best way to write a thesis.	3.25	1.258
I know who will be my potential readers. I write in a way they can understand me.	3.00	.816
I have a strong sense of belonging to an academic community.	3.25	1.708

In conclusion, the pilot study were carried out smoothly despite some minor problems. Results from the data analysis proved that the research instruments were feasible and effective in measuring what they were designed to measure and thus in answering the research questions. However, I did encounter some difficulties and noticed that some small parts of the instruments needed to be revised.

For the narrative inquiry, I added the requirement of a minimal length (500 words) and emphasized the form should be in paragraphs. Clear directions ensured that the

participants in the main study would write their stories as a narrative and provide as much information as possible. Small changes were made to the Writer Identity Survey. The items reported as unclear by the pilot participants were reworded; complex clauses eliminated or simplified; excessive terminology was avoided; and three unnecessary statements deleted. The final version is presented in Appendix F. Last, the interview questions were rewritten to ensure intelligibility and clarity.

3.6 Summary

This chapter presents a mixed-methods research design for the current study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed for complementary purposes. Four research instruments, namely, a narrative inquiry, a writer identity survey, semi-structured interviews with students and supervisors were developed and piloted. Quantitative data were reported with a descriptive analysis by running SPSS 22 software, while the qualitative data were organized into Atlas. Ti 8 and interpreted by using content and thematic analyses.

CHAPTER 4

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF EFL POSTGRADUATE THESIS WRITING IN A NON-NATIVE ENGLISH- SPEAKING CONTEXT

This chapter aims to answer the first research question, “What do EFL graduate students experience over the course of thesis writing?” The lived experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing in a university in Thailand is explored based on the participants’ narratives, both written and oral. First, results are reported around the experience of EFL postgraduate writing. Second, the results are discussed from exercising agency, challenging experience, and emotional responses. Last, a summary of the chapter is provided.

I extract particular cases to focus on instead of telling every thesis writer’s stories. The experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing in a non-native English-speaking environment will be more effectively illustrated as single and focal. To keep the stories as originally told, only a few modifications were made to ensure the excerpts’ readability.

4.1 Results: EFL postgraduate Thesis Writing

This section presents the data about the experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. By the time of data collection between April 2019 and July 2019, the participants were on their different stages of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. To provide a visually general description, the participants were grouped according to their status of writing (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Stages of the Participants

Status	Participant	Description
At the beginning	Daniel	Preparing for the thesis proposal defense
	Zoe	Preparing for the thesis proposal defense
	Emma	Writing the thesis proposal
	Anna	Writing the literature review part
	Nico	Revising the thesis proposal with feedback from the thesis committee member
	Bess	Revising the thesis proposal with feedback from the thesis committee member
	Murray	Preparing for the thesis proposal defense
In the middle	Tom	Data analysis
	Fanny	Thesis proposal approved; writing the manuscripts
	Laura	Thesis proposal approved; writing for the first experiment
	Amy	Finishing 80% of the thesis; writing the implications, limitations and conclusion parts
At the end	John	Finishing the chapters; preparing for thesis defense
	Tyler	Finishing thesis defense; checking the thesis format
	Lucy	Finishing writing; checking the thesis format
	Jack	Compiling all manuscripts into the thesis

All the participants had been involved in EFL graduate thesis writing for a long time, varying from half a year to three years. At the beginning of the journey, seven of them were writing for the thesis proposal or preparing for the thesis proposal defense or just finished the thesis proposal defenses. Four thesis writers were approved to continue research as planned in the proposal and write for results. The remaining four students almost finished thesis writing.

As the trajectories of EFL graduate thesis writing unfold, 1) practice of writing a thesis, 2) challenges encountered and developed strategies, 3) emotions emerged, and 4) perceptions of thesis writing are displayed. These pictures constitute a journey to EFL graduate thesis.

4.1.1 The Practice of Writing a Thesis

Findings were grounded on a careful reading of the data and examining the codes and themes emerged. Stories were told along with the practice of EFL postgraduate thesis writing, from 1) selecting supervisor, 2) developing research topic, 3) and habitual practice of writing.

Table 4.2 Thematic Analysis of EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing Practice

Codes	Categories	Themes
supervisor's expertise	Selecting the supervisor	The practice of writing a thesis
following feelings		
rejecting professor working in a different research area		
choosing the most productive lab		
supervisor assigned		
hard to choose		
same research interest		
the nature of the study		
idea being rejected	Developing the thesis topic	
topic assigned		
inventing own research topic		
research interest		
develop from teaching practice		
develop from previous project		
develop from previous thesis	Habitual practice of writing	
not like writing in a rush		
organizing ideas in doing physical work		
preparing for writing		
visualizing the writing		

Selecting the supervisor

Since the participants were enrolled in different programs, they had different situations in selecting the supervisor. Schools had some special regulations of choosing a supervisor. In some schools, the two-way choice between graduate students and supervisors was made at the beginning, while in other schools, supervisors were selected after finishing the coursework. Most of the participants expressed that they were allowed to choose their supervisors by themselves. Only those who got a scholarship from the university, supervisors were assigned to them according to the

research proposal submitted to the scholarship committees. And if necessary and helpful for their research progress, the students could ask to change the supervisors. In Daniel's case, he could not move on in writing his research proposal with his former supervisor, thus he required to change the supervisor and was approved by his school. Jack also moved to a new supervisor since he and his former professor did not share the same research interest and beliefs.

All of the participants realized the importance of having a good supervisor. They made their choices with different concerns. Research motivation and supervisor's expertise were the two aspects mostly mentioned when asked about how to select the supervisor. For example, meeting his present supervisor at an international conference, John found that "the research topic she had been working with was similar to my research interest (Written Narrative)" He approached her and "expressed the expectation to work with her in a polite way." All the participants chose the faculties who were experts in the research areas. For instance, Tyler read the online information about the available supervisors and decided to "follow the professor who was very famous in this area in Thailand (from Interview)." Likewise, Fanny chose her present supervisor and impressed with the idea that the professor was able to help her with writing. One more typical example is Laura. She described:

Selecting the supervisor is very hard. First, I did not know which professor to join. Then the head of the school offered me to join her lab. I rejected, because her work was too far from what I want, and I did not have basic experience with her work. Then I read the supervisors' profiles carefully and

try to match with my own experience. Finally, I searched for the paper publication, then I chose the most productive laboratory.

For Bess, rationally thinking is the key to selecting her adviser; however, , her choice was more emotional compared to her counterparts:

I chose my thesis supervisor based on firstly the nature of my study and secondly my feelings. I personally think that to a certain extent my adviser and I have similar vibes and a compatible way of thinking.

Developing the Research Topic

Everyone had the right to choose their research topics except Laura. Laura was disappointed that her initial ideas were rejected; after many times of being rejected, she had to choose one topic from the list provided by her supervisor. Luckily, her compromise was not in vain. She got remarkable preliminary findings on that topic and could see the light of her thesis research.

I designed my own idea, then tell my supervisor the overview and step of my work. But he rejected. After many times of discussions, revisions, and rejections, he gave me one topic to do in selected research. And I have good result on it, he said I should continue with this topic. Apparently, I get the preliminary result, then I start writing my proposal. (Written Narrative)

Overall, the thesis topics reflected EFL postgraduate thesis writers' research interest. Selecting the thesis research topic is not arbitrary. The decision is made within the scope of the discipline. The values and beliefs established in the discourse community have a crucial impact on choice making. Tom got inspirations from his teaching experience and would like to check his hypothesis; Amy's supervisor encouraged her to work on a topic that was expected to serve for her institution.

My advisor expected his PhD advisees to do something that one day when we finish, we can go back to our university to show them this is how we are going to contribute to the teaching practice in the institution. As a teacher, I feel the students might need help in this aspect. As a teacher, I observed that the students are struggling with things like that. (Amy, Interview)

Some topics were developed based on the projects or studies of their former-stage education. For example, Bess “roughly decided to develop one of the research projects in the Master’s program before coming to Thailand (Interview).” After graduating with her master’s degree, Fanny continued her Ph.D. education in this university and followed the same supervisor. Her supervisor suggested her to study further on her Master thesis topic. In the process of topic selection, a struggle of sense of self can be found:

For me, choosing the topic is the easiest one because I know what I really wanted to do. (Nico, Interview)

I told her I do not want to change because I'm not interested in that. I'm a researcher in my country. So, after I graduate, I need to go back to my office and continue the same research like before. If I change my scope, I'm not sure I can go back and do the same research. So, I think it will be useless. (Emma, Interview)

The excerpts displayed an awareness of owning the research topic. It is apparent that Nico was clear about her goal and resolute to research topic she is interested in. One of Emma’s co-advisors suggested another topic, but she refused to change. She negotiated with her main thesis supervisor and insisted to work on the issue which fitted her researcher position in her affiliation. In a word, the research topic represented the participants’ research interests, values, and beliefs. As Fanny

proclaimed, “the topic is my logo.”

Habitual Practices of Writing

Thesis writers showed some individual traits, in writing practices for instance approaches in writing engagement, habitual times and space, comfort zones, and so on. Fanny would prefer to handwrite her drafts first. She enjoyed writing in an environment where “people worked with their own stuff without making much noise.” She thought “writing in the group actually disturbed much and interrupted the writing.” Another aspect that distinguished the writers is habitual textual practices. John, for example, kept a relatively stable rhythm of writing. Once he reached the goal of writing up 200 words in each morning, afternoon, and evening, he would let himself enjoy whatever he was interested in. Also, Daniel transformed in the ways of dividing texts. He used to write “a very long paragraph” cluttered with many ideas. His supervisor pointed out this problem more than once and compelled him to write “one idea in one short paragraph.” He finally picked up this “friendly to readers” method.

In addition to the two aspects, the thesis writers utilized different methods to visualize the writing. Mind mapping and recording one’s thoughts were employed to help the writers straighten out the train of thought. Bess wanted to write at her own speed. She said, “I hate deadlines. The feeling of being pushed to write within the deadline destroyed my enjoyment of writing and sometimes blocked my inspirations.” She explained why she enjoyed writing at her own speed. She expected her own writing

can meet her criteria, trying to write as academic and professional as possible.

If I am not in a rush, I hope that what I write can meet some of my own requirements. Does a specific piece of writing sound sensible, academic, and professional? Is it attractive and friendly enough to read? Have I felt satisfied to let it go or free myself from it? Based on my own criteria, I write, read, rewrite, and reread. The circle of revising only ends when I think the specific piece of writing is all right. (Written Narrative)

Besides, she usually organized her thoughts when she was engaged in physical work. She designed her writing when cooking, having a bath, exercising, or shopping. She could visualize what the writing would be.

If I really am into something, my mind usually pictures or outlines what and sometimes how to write. I usually organize my ideas when doing physical works, eating, staring into spaces, etc. or when I cannot sleep. (Written Narrative)

4.1.2 Challenges & Strategies

This section examines the challenges encountered in EFL postgraduate thesis writing and the strategies developed by the writers. The participants of Narrative Inquiry shared the feeling of writing a thesis in English is challenging or difficult. Numerous problems were exhibited.

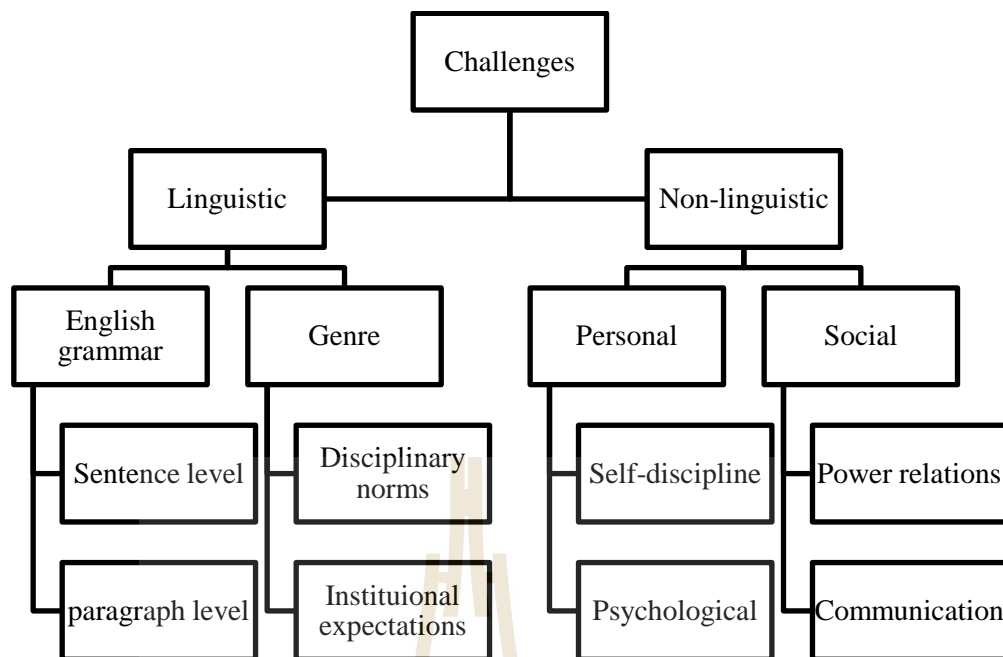


Figure 4.1 Challenges in EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

The participants reported two main kinds of challenges (see Figure 4.1). The first group is the language-related difficulties with two sub-categories. First, an insufficient mastery of English grammar is found. Some writers made mistakes at the sentence level. Irritatingly, they reported problems in punctuating accurately, using prepositions, tenses, relative clauses appropriately, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and so forth. All four Indonesian participants reported their problems with English grammar. John often checked his writing with some grammar-checking tools. Laura was not satisfied with her writing that still had some grammatical mistakes in it. Nico thought her ignoring grammar and punctuation might hinder her from good writing. She wanted to eliminate her bad habit but failed. Emma thought grammatical mistakes revealed her weakness in English writing in front of the lecture. She saw grammar as

her “enemy.” Reading this word, I could sense how annoyed Emma was. Even going to a private tutorial school could not help her.

Ignoring the grammar, punctuation, and many English writing properties is the bad habit that I should get rid of. Most of the time, I am not paying attention to grammar and structure. This is probably one of the reasons hinders me to write well. (Nico, Written Narrative)

Grammar is like my enemy for writing skill. Although I joined private English course, it is still my difficult part. I got some critics from one of my lecturer in my school about my grammar in writing. It so bad. I feel so sad about it. (Emma, Written Narrative)

In addition to these difficulties with surface forms and structures, the students mentioned their hardship in developing coherent and cohesive arguments. All these problems challenged the student writer’s mastered writing skills. Take Daniel as an example. His supervisor pointed out many problems in his writing, incoherence, information missing, lacking transition paragraphs, ...

The paragraph is too long and not good for readers to read. There is no coherence or cohesion among sentences. Some section is missing and much unrelated literature with the thesis topic is included. Many introductory paragraphs after every subtitles are missing. There are so many problems in my writing that I cannot list all here. (Daniel, Written Narrative)

Second, the participants experience difficulties with meeting the genre requirements of a thesis. For example, Murray referred to her situation that her supervisor always commented that her writing was not academic. She wrote whatever she thought was important to describing her research, but her supervisor thought those parts unnecessary and asked her to remove them. She was also confused about what

content should be fitted in certain sections.

I have a lot of problems. First, my writing is not good, especially writing academically. I got confused about statement of the problems and the significance. The literature review is quite difficult, because I don't know what to review. I read a lot, but they were not relate to my topic. (Interview)

Murray's case is typical for having problems in understanding the disciplinary conventions of thesis writing. In line with this, institutional requirements are found hard to figure out. For example, Lucy talked about her experience of following a format that was not rightly

At the proposal, I follow the template. I don't know which school, or engineering. Anyway, it's from our university, but it's not right, it's not the same as our school, about the formatting. (Lucy, Interview)

More than half of the participants complained they knew only a little about the university's thesis format requirements. Putting the content into the required format was very trivial; minor mistakes were always picked out by the supervisors or examiners. Thus, Jack thought students should not be responsible for this. He expected that some staff could help deal with this.

The second group is the non-linguistic challenges that the participants encountered beyond the act of writing the text. Writing a thesis in an extended stretch of time (in this university, usually more than two years for Master students, and three to five years for Ph.D. students) requires self-discipline and commitment from the students. However, the time-management was not easy to do. The graduate students had to balance life and research work and writing. Take Bess as an example. She found

it was tortuous to pause reading her favorite comic books when she had the deadline to meet. During the research process, some of the participants had to go back to their work positions. They struggled to research and write in a limited time. Writer's block was also cutting off the students' moving on. Lucy once could not write for more than one month. At that time, she was anxious and desperate. She knew she had to get herself rid of this gloomy mood, but she could not do anything about it. She said, "no one could help me." Writing anxiety was intensified when the writers lacked the abilities to synthesize the previous studies. Anxiety in writing also came from the frustrating communication with people who had definitely powerful voices. Failing to convince the supervisor(s), hard to combine all the co-supervisors' ideas, and having to change the research direction as suggested by the thesis committee, made the students writers grieved yet helpless.

Some participants thought the native perfection was far away from reach. For example, Tom believed he could never solve his problem with the English language and would be an EFL learner all through his life. Moreover, his supervisor ascribed his language shortcomings to his non-Native-English-speaker identity:

I have problems with English grammar, about the prepositions. Once my supervisor pointed out that you Asian students have problems with English prepositions. (Interview)

For John and Tyler, likewise, eradication of grammatical errors was deemed unnecessary and impractical.

Responding to the difficulties, the participants turned to various strategies (see Table 4.3). The strategies can be categorized according to their functions. To compensate their limited language proficiency, most of the participants used grammar books or some online sources to learn grammar knowledge; before submitting the drafts, the students usually ran spelling and grammar check; they imitated the good sentences and grammatical patterns from the readings; difficult words and complex sentence structures were avoided as possible, trying not to exposing one's own weakness. To develop a better understanding and meeting the specific genre requirements, the participants read both theses and research articles to learn the disciplinarily universal layout of a thesis. The required content and related function of each chapter were followed. To deal with the difficulties more related to cognition than linguistics, such as expressing and linking ideas, some students chose to ask for others' assistance. The supervisors were begged for help; the professional proofreading or editing was paid; courses were taken; the fellow students or friends who had better English background were asked to help check the grammar.

Table 4.3 Strategies Used by EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writers

Description of the Strategy
using a grammar checking tool
referring to grammar books
imitating good sentence or pattern from research articles
avoiding difficult words or complex patterns
paying someone to proofread
asking for the supervisor's help
taking private course
compromising if necessary
planning daily
developing a conceptual framework
reading seniors' thesis
reading articles and learning the patterns

4.1.3 Emotions Emerged

Data analysis of the interviews with student writers discovered an inherently emotional response to EFL postgraduate thesis writing practice. A variety of emotional states were found among the research students. These emotions were fundamentally tied to the development of thesis writing and the sense of self as writers. As shown in Table 4.4, only one participant showed no special feeling toward writing a thesis in English and took it as just one part of the academic journey. The participants responded to the practice with different patterns of feelings.

Table 4.4 Emotional Responses to EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

Emotion	Category
a lot of achievements a sense of security a successful story amazing being trusted certain confident enjoyment excited and happy feeling content with the flow of writing more confident much easier no doubt not challenging obtain invaluable experience OK persistent pleasant progress steadily proud and confident reassurances see my growth smooth undisturbed	Positive emotions
almost crazy desperate difficult discouraged exhausted extremely tough and pretty annoying frustrated hopeless hopeless in finishing the proposal more pressure not confident to show my opinions not like English writing only struggles sad self-doubt stressed out want to quit	Negative emotions
nothing special	Neutral emotions

Generally speaking, the emotional identities of successful thesis writers are positive. Enjoyment, pleasure, sense of security, self-confidence, assurance, the ease at writing, and satisfaction with the written products are the positive emotional experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Take Amy as an example. She was a very confident and fluent writer. In her description, “thesis writing was a smooth and steady process of growing in terms of researching and writing skills.” Her writing was almost undisturbed; much freedom to write the thesis in her own way was given with her supervisor’s trust. Her reflection on the journey was “full of sweet memories” in which her supervisor’s “encouraging notes sustained” her on the road. These positive feelings inspired her and promoted her sense of being a researcher in the field.

On the contrary, negative feelings to the practice increased the thesis writers’ anxiety in writing and decreased their self-efficacy. Perceiving EFL postgraduate thesis writing tough and demanding, a negative emotional identity was found linked with feelings like frustration, desperation, exhaustion, pressure, discouragement, hopelessness, self-doubt, and so on. A general sadness and hopelessness can be observed if the communication between the students and the supervisor are unsatisfactory. This can be illustrated in Daniel’s written narrative. Daniel experienced serious emotional depression at his earlier stages of thesis research and writing:

when I see so many comments or suggestions in my thesis for the first time, I felt so frustrated and discouraged that I began to doubt whether I was suitable for further study of the doctoral degree. Especially my advisor asked me to revise one paragraph so many times. That made me almost crazy and

I could not see any hope in finishing my proposal writing. So, at that time, I could not make any progress. I wanted to quit the program for I cannot see any hope. I felt desperate (Written Narrative).

Daniel was discouraged upon the harsh feedback from his supervisor. A sense of self-doubt with the feelings of irritation, discouragement, and hopelessness affected his writing progress. He turned for the school's help and solved his problem with another supervisor:

Although there are still many problems in my writing, she let me keep writing and encouraged me to write an outline for every chapter. So I keep on writing and keep revising with the suggestions and comments from my new advisor. Finally, the proposal is finished. She gave me hope that keeps me going on even if the journey is long and painful.

The example shows the thesis writers' feelings to a great extent are affected by the supervisors' feedback. The negative emotions can be reconciled when better communication between the students and the supervisors is realized.

4.1.4 Perceptions of the Practice

This section examines how the experience of writing a thesis in this Thailand university is perceived. The participant who holds a neutral feeling toward the experience perceived it as just a part of his academic journey. Others generally take it as a long commitment for academic growth, recognizing the critical role of thesis writing in building scholarly credentials. It was found the writers from the Hard Science fields, Biology, Physics, Engineering, and Preclinics in this study, did not think thesis writing very difficult. They tended to separate thesis writing from thesis research and scholarly publication. The disciplinary conventions of writing made it possible for them

to compile all the manuscripts into one book. Therefore, some parts of their writing had been checked and modified by the journal editors. Tyler also expressed his idea that in his discipline, the ideas counted more than the writing quality. That is, some minor mistakes were acceptable if the meanings could be communicated. In contrast, the student writers from Social Science, especially from the School of Foreign Language, concerned more about their language. They mentioned more about the language deficiency of non-native English speakers.

The participants' perceptions presented a dichotomy. Some reflected the practice very difficult, while others wrote the thesis with passion, excitement, confidence, and a sense of authorship. Interestingly, this dichotomy of perceptions acted in a corporation with that of emotions experienced through thesis writing. The participants who had positive emotional identities were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward thesis writing, while those who experienced negative feelings tended to perceive the practice passively.

Table 4.5 Perceptions of EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

Codes	Categories
just part of academic journey a long journey exciting undisturbed not intervened a long process academic writing skills not important but necessary authorship of the thesis not too difficult proud and confident very difficult much easier thesis writing in different disciplines thesis writing is institutionalized	Perception of EFL graduate thesis writing
staff to take care of formatting and proofreading uniform writing style explicit academic writing instruction writing support	Expectations & concerns

4.2 Discussion: Experience of EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

This section discusses the lived experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing from three perspectives: exercising agency, challenging experience, and emotions in identity formation.

4.2.1 Exercising Agency

The practice of EFL postgraduate thesis writing provides a site for the students to exercise agency. EFL postgraduate thesis writing is not a simple act of identifying oneself with a particular group. The participants made tremendous efforts and committed a lot to identify themselves as researchers, even newly emergent ones.

Their investment can be discussed in the notion of agency, “the capacity of people to act purposefully and reflectively on their world” (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013, p. 63). Acting as profoundly social agents (Lantolf, 2013), the participants develop their individualities from the culturally organized thesis writing activities. The case of Bess shows some “writing-specific aspects of the autobiographical self” (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010, p. 239). She has a strong sense of self, consciously knowing her expectation of writing quality.

As exemplified 4.1.1, decision-making is central to EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The participants were actively engaged in the practice. They made decisions about which supervisors to follow, what research topics to work on, which theories to adopt, which established researchers to cite, how to frame the argument, which results to discuss, and to what extent to claim their ideas. These activities provide the platform for the students to exercise agency. All through the process, the student writers are situated in social networking. They draw on personal research interests associated with the values and beliefs shared by other researchers in the discipline. They do not want to give up the original ideas, but sometimes have to incline to the ones that suit better the institutional expectations. They may get rid of the familiar writing styles and turn to the disciplinarily or institutionally welcomed patterns. Although Laura had her original idea of the research topic, she had to choose the topic provided by her supervisor. Also, Daniel stepped out of his comfort zones and changed the way of

dividing the texts. In a word, the participants' agency is socially and culturally implicated in EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The participants negotiated agency through appropriating, resisting, or following the socially available conventions. Agency exists in "the interaction between writers and readers that is mediated by the text"(Matsuda, 2015, p.153).

4.2.2 Challenging Experience

Thesis writing has been proved to entail significant challenges for research students. It is especially demanding for postgraduate students who use English as a foreign language (Imani & Habil, 2012; Swales, 2004). As discussed in the literature, language is always the main concern for EFL students when referring to academic writing (Costino & Hyon, 2007; Qu, 2017). The findings showed that the participants, both Master and Ph.D. students, generally encountered challenges associated with English language use. Writing difficulties were reported at the sentence and paragraph level (Imani & Habil, 2012), especially in grammatical accuracy, vocabulary appropriateness, and punctuation accuracy (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992). Embarrassedly, most of them admitted being "poor in the English language." According to Bitchner and Basturkmen (2006), the students tended to defend their difficulties with limited language proficiency. Generic discursive skills (Curry & Lillis, 2004), such as cohesion and coherence and logical argumentation are also challenging for EFL postgraduate thesis writers.

Researchers, students, and supervisors seem to have an ambiguous attitude

toward these grammar-based difficulties. On one hand, noticing this deficient grammar and vocabulary mastery, great importance is attached to grammar check as a remedy. From the students' perspective, strategies such as avoiding difficult words and complex sentence structures, and asking for professional help were developed. From the supervisors' perspectives, comments and suggestions were emphatically provided related to English language structure and grammar, in order to make the theses linguistically closer to the native-speaker writing (Hinkel, 2004). On the other hand, there exists a tolerance of this grammatical inaccuracy. The students in the study of Imani and Habil (2012) believed that they were non-native writers of English, thus a small number of grammatical mistakes were acceptable. This "justification" is applied to the participants in the current study.

The postgraduate students suffered from difficulties with the specific genre requirements of thesis writing. Two reasons could account for this finding. First, the student writers may confront insufficient exposure to writing the genre of the thesis. The current practice was the first experience of thesis writing for some graduate students (e.g, Emma, Anna, Fanny, and Laura). In their previous literacy activities related to EFL academic writing, the participants may have received "micro feedback" (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006, p. 13) on ideas and rhetoric. However, for the content and function of the elements, they have to acquire naturally through practice-based participation (Tardy, 2006; Wang, 2017). Second, the students may unintentionally

neglect the organizational requirements of the institution. The writers had to consider many issues when developing their thesis, personal research interest, disciplinary knowledge, writing knowledge, supervisors' suggestions, results from the data. Too many things ought to be put together. Furthermore, since some schools did not provide instructions, the students assumed their seniors' theses were suitable to follow.

Thesis writing brings about challenges beyond the texts to EFL international graduate students. The participants in this study were from different cultures; had various educational trajectories, and; experienced a range of disciplinary academic practices. Once they came to this university and started writing a postgraduate thesis, they were forced to integrate all their antecedent knowledge and adjust to this new culturally loaded social practice. The students' social communication, particularly with the supervisors, played a crucial role in their acquisition and adjustment to the practice. The tension perceived from poor communication may increase anxiety in writing and lead to self-depreciation.

4.2.3 Emotions in Identity Formation

The experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing is pervaded with emotions. Thesis writing is a social practice that puts the research students under pressure to engage in knowledge construction and develop a scholarly identity in the community. Using the lens of lived experience (Vygotsky, 1994), previous studies have suggested the interrelation of cognition, emotions, and the social settings in thesis writers' experiences.

Not only the Ph.D. students experience the “rollercoaster of confidence and emotions” (Christie, Tett, Cree, Hounsell, & McCune, 2008, p. 225); the results presented in 4.2.3 show that both Master and Ph.D. students went through a dimension of positive and negative emotions. Emotions are viewed as learned behaviors, socially constructed through practice (Lupton, 1998). Emotions are “dynamic and relational” (Micciche, 2004, p. 28). Shifts in emotions take place along with the change of historical and social contexts. Daniel’s demonstrated a successful overcoming of the negative feelings of pressure, frustration, and sense of failure through his actively interacting with the school and his supervisor. This indicates the benefit of effective communication and implies the possibility of eliminating the effect of bad feelings on thesis writers.

Emotions are basically caught up in all human performances (Gkonou, 2017), forming perceptions, inspiring thinking, and affecting communication (Lupton, 1998). This positive correlation can explain why the participants who underwent destructive emotions perceived thesis writing negatively as difficult, tough, and exhausting; while those who held optimistic opinions toward the practice experienced constructive feelings. As shown in the participants’ circumstances, the positive emotions contributed to promoting thinking and motivating writing, while negative feelings inhibited thinking. For example, Amy manifested a passion for doing and writing up her research. She was pleasantly encouraged to develop her own writing and was optimistic about

the writing progress. She acknowledged the motivational and psychological effects of good emotions. On the contrary, the emotional states of irritation and desperation delayed Daniel's progress. The examples of Amy and Daniel also evidenced the impact of emotions on the progress of their studies. This finding was consistent with Cotterall (2013)'s claim that "emotions can inspire, guide and enhance research; if ignored or suppressed, they can delay and even derail it" (p. 185).

The role of emotions in educational contexts has been discussed. The beneficial impacts are providing "motivational and physiological energy" (Pekrun, Geotz, Titz, & Perry, 2002, p. 96), motivating persistence (McCormack, 2009), achieving the desired goals (Hopwood, 2010). Conversely, negative emotions, such as anxiety, interfered writing abilities (Castello, Inesta, & Monereo, 2009). The rich data obtained from this Written Narrative uncover a link between the emotional aspects of graduate-level thesis writing and scholarly identity formation. This finding can find empirical support from previous research. In Lemke's (2008) reflection, "traditional notions of identity elide the significant role of fear, desire, anger and other powerful feelings in shaping the forms of action" (p. 23). In the study of Thompson and Walker (2010), emotional aspects and the formation of scholarly identity were profoundly implanted in the characteristics of the successful Ph.D. students. Crawford & Rivas (2015) found emotions were closely related to identity that the participants' emotions influenced their language choices. Teimouri (2017) claimed the cause and effect of

language learners' L2 self on their divergent emotional experiences.

Last, the individual thesis writers vary in their writing practices. Studying the individual characteristics give voices to writers themselves and can probe into the detailed and deep description of auto-biographical self. It is the individuality that fascinates the qualitative research. As the previous researchers claim, through writing a doctoral dissertation the students constantly negotiate their identities (Ma, 2019; Starfield & Paltridge, 2019; Thompson, 2012). Based on the evidence provided, the research students, not only doctoral but also Master students, all experience identity development. Thesis writing is a transactional process of identifying to the scholarly identities.

4.3 Summary

This chapter aims not to identify the universal experiences in EFL postgraduate thesis writing, but rather to take an intensive study on the perspectives of the fifteen participants. The in-depth exploration shows that EFL postgraduate thesis writing is a social practice through which experience in disciplinary writing is constantly accumulated. Despite the linguistic challenges and emotional ups and downs along the journey, research students learn to handle the writing practice and fight for the desired acceptance as newly emergent members in academia. The interaction of experience, emotions, perceptions, and identity can be concluded with a limited size of participation in this specific context.

CHAPTER 5

ACADEMIC WRITER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN EFL POSTGRADUATE THESIS WRITING

This chapter is concerned with findings and discussions of the second research question, “what aspects of academic writer identity do EFL postgraduate thesis writers display?” This chapter presents and interprets the findings with three major sections. The first section is about the four aspects of academic writer identity (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998), 1) auto-biographical self, 2) discursal self, 3) authorial self, and 4) possibilities of self-hood. The second section discusses how academic writer identity is constructed in the interaction of the aspects. The last section is a summary of this chapter.

5.1 Aspects of Academic Writer Identity

This section presents the findings related to the four aspects of writer identity. First, the graduate students’ autobiographical self is examined.

5.1.1 Auto-biographical Self

Auto-biographical self deals with the sense of who one is. It is the existing identity a writer brings with him into the current writing action, cumulated from his

lived experience.

5.1.1.1 Accumulated Experience of EFL Academic Writing

This section explores the participants' accumulated experience in EFL academic writing. When reflecting on one's development of EFL academic writing, the participants varied on the focus of their stories. This is because each student had moments that were considered comparatively important for his/her academic writing literacy development. Being international students who pursue a postgraduate level degree in Thailand, Table 5.1 reveals that the fifteen participants did not come to their current EFL postgraduate thesis writing as a blank paper. They brought to the practice their "roots"; the writing abilities were developed through previous English academic writing tasks.

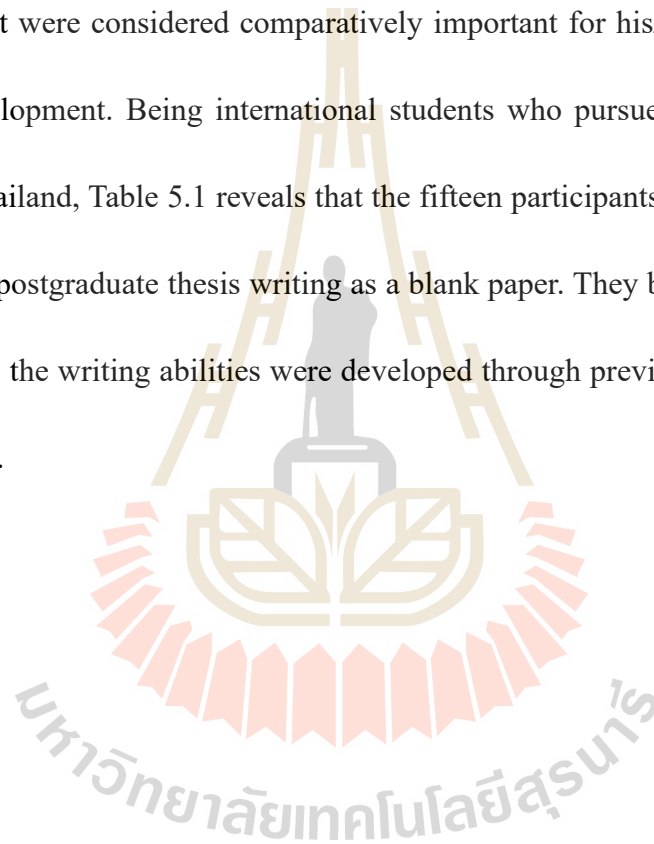


Table 5.1 Previous EFL Academic Writing Experience

Participants	Previous EFL academic writing experience						
	Application for funding	Application for Scholarship	Course paper	Written exam	Research article	Research report	Thesis
Chinese							
Tom			×	×			×
Daniel			×	×			×
Amy			×				×
Tyler					×	×	×
Lucy			×	×			×
Zoe			×				×
Indonesian							
John					×	×	×
Emma		×	×		×	×	
Anna					×		
Laura	×	×		×	×		
Thai							
Nico			×	×			×
Fanny				×	×		
Laotian							
Murray		×	×		×		×
Burmese							
Jack		×	×	×	×		×
Vietnamese							
Bess				×			×

Note: Written exam refers to a high-standard written exam, such as the writing part of IELTS.

Descriptive statistics (see Table 5.2) showed the previous academic writing practices in the first language ($M = 3.63$) were considered as helpful in current thesis writing. A close examination of the response showed that twenty-six participants agreed that previous academic writing in one's first language was contributing to current thesis writing, ten participants (23.26%) held a neutral position to this statement, only seven people (16.28%) thought first language (L1) academic writing had nothing

to do with EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

Table 5.2 Descriptive Analysis of Impact of Prior Academic Writing Activities

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My previous experience of academic writing in my first language is helpful in my current thesis writing.	3.63	.976
My previous English academic writing experience is helpful in my thesis writing.	4.35	.573
I write my thesis in the way that I used to write.	3.40	1.027
Valid N (list wise)	43	

Lucy perceived this positive influence particularly in argumentative strategies and proper choice of words. When she was in high school, to prepare for the college entrance examination, Lucy was trained on how to write “for high scores”:

Patterns were clearly taught and we were asked to follow them strictly. Argumentative was highly recommended because the teacher believed writing argumentative could earn the students high scores. It helped me develop my academic writing ability not just in terms of first language writing but also a second or foreign language writing.
(Written Narrative)

Lucy appreciated this experience that she applied the strategies learned from her mother tongue writing course into her English essay writing. This positive impact extends to her current writing:

I am working on my M.A. thesis and I think the experience in high school helped me somehow. (Written Narrative)

In her Master’s program, she was explicitly instructed about academic writing, however, that course was complained as “not teaching how to write

the genre of thesis, but only generally teaching how to write academically (Written Narrative).”

Against this view, the negative impact of one’s first language was pointed out by two Indonesian participants on EFL thesis writing.

My style, maybe Indonesian style, we tend to explain everything, in too many details. So sometimes we lost the focus, of what the data tell, or what is the main finding of this data. So this is my weakness. This is the nature of our language. This influenced me a lot in the writing style. (John, Interview)

When being asked about the impact of former English academic writing, with no one disagreeing, forty-one participants acknowledged the positive influence of prior academic writing in English on present thesis writing ($M = 4.65$). Over half of the participants were writing their EFL postgraduate thesis in their habitual way, while eleven of them wrote differently from the way they usually wrote. Influences were felt “subconsciously” (Daniel, Interview) on building the knowledge about academic writing, about the discipline, and the genre of the thesis.

The experience of writing the bachelor's and MA thesis gave me broad ideas about how I am going to think and write through the lenses of the discipline. Not only from my personal subjective perspectives, I have to do that through the lenses of the disciplinary knowledge. (Amy, Interview)

Thus, it was found that these prior experiences added to the writers’ repertoire of textual practices, consequently forming their familiar genres and ways of dividing the text, and so on. This could be the reason why the graduate students wrote

the thesis in a way they usually wrote in the English language ($M = 3.40$).

Overall, the participants developed abilities to write in English for academic purposes, more or less, earlier in biographies. First, the qualitative data unclosed that all the participants gradually amassed knowledge about English academic writing. The established conventions related to EFL academic writing were passed on basically through university formal instructions in addition to academic writing activities. Some participants learned what EFL academic writing is. For instance, Tyler traced his development of English academic writing to eight years ago, when he was enrolled in a successive Master and Doctoral program at the university. After spending two months adjusting himself to learning the disciplinary subjects in the English language, he started to actively evolve his academic writing abilities through a series of academic literacy activities provided by the institute. He continuously practiced academic writing in English. Along the road, he received feedback on his writings from teachers or his supervisor. Being experienced and productive in academic writing, he confidently thought that he already prepared enough to write his Ph.D. thesis.

Four seminar classes and one progress report per trimester and two international conferences per year were experienced since the second year. And one project, one proceeding paper, one manuscript were written. I help correct several proposals and manuscripts. After all these, I have gained the necessary English ability to graduate as a Ph. D student. (Written Narrative)

Second, some participants gradually developed a recognition of the written discourse communities. With the drills of academic writing, Amy, John, and

Tyler know the notions of disciplinary writing. Amy noticed the purpose of writing her Master thesis was to discuss the phenomenon through “the disciplinary lenses”. Likewise, Tyler's rich experience in EFL academic writing taught him to discuss the results with his Physics knowledge. He also learned some kinds of sentence structures were “used by all the people who do with Physics”. John’s previous thesis writing for the Master in Science degree at a university in Saudi Arabia was thought helpful:

That experience has helped me, at least, I have confidence, more confidence in how to write, how to present, and how I communicate.

He developed an understanding that “in our Science field, the table and figure should self-explain.”

Third, before writing this thesis required by their programs, ten participants had experienced writing a thesis in English shaped their habitual textual practices in writing theses. For those participants from the School of Foreign Language, the five Ph.D. students Tom, Daniel, Amy, Murray, and Bess, wrote their bachelor and masters’ theses in English; the three master-level students, Lucy, Zoe, and Nico, experienced EFL thesis writing in their undergraduate programs. Out of the School of Foreign Language, John and Jack pursued their masters’ degrees overseas and thus wrote a thesis in English. All the ten participants mentioned the positive sides of their prior experience of EFL thesis writing. They have learned the structure of a thesis. John studied for his master’s degree in another Asian country. At that time, he attended courses on academic writing which were delivered in English. Also, he wrote all the

research reports and published two articles internationally. For writing his master's degree thesis in English, since he “just communicated two-way”, between him and his advisor, he admitted the reliance on his supervisor -- “I depended a lot on my former advisor (Written Narrative).” However, that experience helped him learn the structure of a thesis and constructed his confidence in writing and communicating in English.

From Laos, Murray had rich experiences in writing for academic purposes, both in her first language and in English as her foreign language. She wrote theses for her two master's degrees from universities outside of her home country, one is in Europe, the other is in Asia. she described how her two academic journeys influenced her writing. The first story happened in a country in Europe and started with choosing the research topic. It was easy to choose the topics. The lecturers asked about their research interest and the problems to be solved in their home country and then assigned the students with different advisors. Some courses related to the topics were attended. Then Murray worked closely with her advisor who gave her a lot of freedom to think and design the research:

She never gave the directions for writing; instead, she gave the questions. She asked what did you want to tell readers about your topic? Why do you want to do it? What will happen if you do it? Then what data did you need to collect? What questions would you ask? How would you collect the data? These questions were asked step by step respectively. (Written Narrative)

Murray reported a lot of problems when writing this thesis and blamed her low proficiency in the English language. “There were a lot of mistakes in

using words and grammar.” However, the advisor helped correct them. Instead of providing a fixed structure of the thesis, her supervisor guided her by asking a lot of questions and showed her how to write for a thesis step by step.

Writing a thesis was very difficult. I did not know what parts or topics to put in the writing. But from writing this thesis, I finally knew the structure of a thesis. Advisors from Sweden let us learn from our own writing experiences, not from giving the forms of a thesis. (Written Narrative)

Writing her second Master level thesis in Asia was a different experience. An adviser and a supervisor were appointed to work with the six graduates. The research topic was discussed along with the coursework which introduced methods of doing research and analyzing data.

We worked very closely with the advisor and we presented the processes of conducting research step by step, topic, background, significance, research questions, data collections in the school meetings. Both the graduates and the supervisors attended the meetings and gave comments. We then improved our weak points accordingly. (Written Narrative)

She mentioned her struggles in selecting the research topic. Her advisor provided very long comments but she “could not get all the points. Such problems were quickly solved because she could “go to the supervisors at any time (Written Narrative).” The simple language was encouraged in writing the thesis, since “much importance was attached to the contents or meaning of it, not the language (Written Narrative)” Constructive suggestions from supervisors and fellow graduates help improve the thesis. The frequent supervisory talks helped in “effectively solving

the problems encountered and finishing thesis writing as planned (Written Narrative)”

Murray thought the school meetings for students to present research progress benefited thesis writing:

Many ideas of improvements were from different supervisors and graduates, so the quality of the thesis might be good and complete in time. (Written Narrative)

Last, some participants gradually developed a recognition of the discourse community in which the academic writing activities take place. It was considered important to distinguish the contexts of writings. For instance, Anna noticed her academic writing should be different from her blog writing. She wrote, “writing a scientific article is not the same as I write a blog (Written Narrative)”. This difference in her opinion was embodied in formal or informal writing styles. With the drills of academic writing, Amy, John, and Tyler came to know the notions of disciplinary writing. Amy noticed the purpose of writing her Master thesis was to discuss the phenomenon through “the disciplinary lenses”. Likewise, Tyler learned some kinds of sentence structures were “used by all the people who do with Physics”. John’s previous thesis writing for the Master in Science degree at a university in Saudi Arabia was thought helpful. He developed an understanding that “in our Science field, the table and figure should self-explain.”

Tom developed his worldview along with the academic writing practices. He had written his bachelor’s degree thesis and master’s degree thesis in

English which he “would rather call them ‘self-reflections’, mainly based on self-imagination” (Interview). At that time, he constructed English academic writing through reading the research papers which now he categorized as “not real research papers” with “low quality”. He did not know how to search the good quality research articles. He blamed himself even not having the “consciousness of distinguishing the quality of papers.” Reflecting on that, he did not think he knew what academic writing really was at that time. He was “just pretending to be confident” and “using good words to make the writing nice to read and academical to those readers who don’t know what is real academic.”

5.1.1.2 Conceptualization of Thesis Writing

Thesis writing was generally conceptualized through an understanding of academic writing which was developed through formal instruction or informal academic literacy activities. Generally, the participants defined academic writing as “professional” and “formal” writing “in a third person tone”, discussing the findings “straightforward” with “objective data”, and closely related to “higher level of English proficiency”. Thus, in the participants’ opinions, storytelling, narratives, and “writing with daily language” were not academic writing.

Narrative? No, it’s not academic. Because it’s common language, I use it every day. About a thesis, we cannot use our everyday language. A thesis should be written in formal language. I already learned that from the writing course in my undergraduate university (Emma, Interview)

As shown in the example, Emma did not think the narrative she submitted for this research could be referred to as academic writing, because its language was what she used for everyday communication. Holding a similar opinion, Anna thought a thesis should be written academically with formal language, and the story should be constituted based on scientific data. She developed this knowledge of thesis writing from reading research articles and discussions with her supervisors.

Discursive features, like terminology, passive voice, formal writing style, and citation techniques, were the most emphasized elements of writing a thesis. This kind of conceptualizing thesis writing as writing objectively confined the writers' decisions about the way of presenting. Consciously or unconsciously, a thesis writer conducted writing in a way that he thought would make his thesis more acceptable by the academia. For example, Daniel tried to make his thesis "more academic like" by "using passive voice" and "avoiding using 'I'", while Murray followed her supervisor's suggestions and "went directly to the point". How one understands academic writing became the standard for him to judge his own writing, good or bad, academic or not academic. In his Written Narrative, Tom downplayed his Bachelor's and Master's degree thesis as "not academic writing at all", "just self-reflections". Therefore, in his current thesis writing, he tried to "avoid doing like that" and wrote "as objective as possible" by "listing all the facts and giving examples." Besides, the conceptualization shaped the sense of role as a thesis writer. The interviewees labeled themselves as

“recorder”, “writing machine”, “part of research tool”, or “presenter of information”. A position of “outsider” was taken to objectively describe what happened during the research.

I want to make me in an objective position, to keep myself away from this experiment. I try to write like a third party. I don't want to make myself too subjective. So, I tried to tell the story like an outsider.
(Interview)

5.1.1.3 Writer's Self-worth

Sense of self-worth deals with how assured the thesis writers feel. Table 5.3 showed a high self-efficacy in English writing ($M=3.51$) among the participants. Twenty-two participants (51.16%) thought they could write well in English. Positive emotional response to EFL postgraduate thesis writing was accordingly expressed, through words like “pleasant”, “smooth”, “easy”, “fluent”, “excited”, “happy”, “confident”, and so on. Experience in academic writing, “good” English background, and positive feedback were the sources of this building confidence in writing. However, nineteen participants (44.19%) responded with a neutral answer and two (4.65%) lacked confidence in their abilities of EFL thesis writing.

Table 5.3 Descriptive Analysis of Self-worth

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My English proficiency does not affect my progress in thesis writing.	2.14	1.037
I am not a native English speaker; thus, I have difficulties in writing thesis in English.	2.33	1.128
I can write well in English.	3.51	.668
Valid N (list wise)	43	

Self-worth shaped by external voices.

Thirty-two participants (74.42%) believed their English proficiency had an impact on their current thesis writing. In the following interviews, six participants were satisfied with their English language level, while nine tried to be humble. To be noted, the participants' perception of their English writing abilities were to a great extent influenced by how others judged their writing.

Take Laura as an example, she took a longer time than other participants to write her narrative and revised it twice before submitting; she mentioned her “poor in English writing” in our face-to-face interview several times. When she was in her apprenticeship in a university in America, her performance was recognized by her professor. However, this confidence was destroyed under the negative voices from her spouse and her supervisor. As a professor in her home country, her husband helped check her writing and told her, “no, this is wrong. Go back and check again, write again.” Laura’s supervisor was not satisfied with her writing, which could be sensed from his grading her thesis proposal drafts:

For the first time, he gave me F⁻. Oh my God, what's wrong? I was quite shocked why he gave me F and then still F⁻. Then I wrote my proposal again and submitted to him again. After four times, I still got E. I tried, again and again, he gave me D, until finally OK. This is quite hard. (Interview)

Being shocked, Laura even “did not dare to ask” her supervisor why but privately went to the seniors, and was comforted with words like “that is normal

for first-year students”. These negative and harsh comments increased her uncertainty:

This kind of feeling makes me worry more about the things I write. So, I have to check before I send it to my supervisor. Every time.

On the very opposite, the participants who received positive and encouraging feedback perceived themselves as writers more confidently. In her narrative, Amy reflected her “smooth and pleasant” journey and called herself “a fluent writer”. She explained in the interview that her supervisor’s encouraging notes on the margins of her printed drafts inspired her and boosted her confidence in writing. Her supervisor was never hesitant in showing his satisfaction with Amy’s writing:

Sometimes he will definitely tell me that “you should be proud of this part”, or “this part is very well written. These are very encouraging notes.

Praise won out when it came to promoting writers’ sense of self-worth. Another story was shared by Tyler, a brand-new Ph.D. graduate. Having finished his thesis defense, Tyler was very confident in his English writing ability. He narrated that after all the years’ being involved in academic literacy activities in English, he “already gained the necessary ability of English to graduate as a Ph. D student” in his school.

My supervisor doesn't worry about my language, or the format part, but just care about what my data looks like, or how I present what we found.

From the excerpt above, it could be found that his confidence was consolidated from his supervisor’s trust in the quality of his written texts. Sometimes his supervisor even designated him to help read and check his juniors’ papers. Also,

some of his fellow students, from the School of Foreign Language and the School of Biology, asked for his help in proofreading their manuscripts. All the positive voices around strengthened his assurance:

I know what a good writing is like. One lady from China submitted a paper to an international journal, and I have to check for her everything, from beginning to the end. At first, her supervisor said it is so Chinese and then after I correct, her supervisor said that is okay, very good. So I guess I know the style. I don't know how to explain clearly, but I know what it should look like. (Interview)

Self-worth shaped by a sense of self as an EFL Writer.

As shown in Chapter Four, EFL postgraduate students reported problems in thesis writing at vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph level; how to organize the ideas coherently and logically was concerned most. The writers attributed these difficulties to the social identity they shared. The sense of self as a learner of the English language was blamed permanently causing not being able to write well:

I always found that problem. I'm always thinking about change another way to express, but it's a pity. I just leave the pity there. I cannot change it. The lifelong time we are always a language learner, and we are not native English speakers. So, the problem will always be with us. (Interview)

The above quotation is from Tom, a Ph.D. student from the School of Foreign Languages. Reporting his problems in choosing the appropriate words to “thoroughly and completely” express his ideas, he disappointedly felt he was not “writing the real English”; and as an English learner, he could not change this situation.

The other factor examined was the status of being non-native English

speakers. Twenty-four participants thought the fact that English was used as a foreign language per se caused their difficulties in writing a thesis in English. This opinion was further confirmed in the following interviews. Thesis writers thought being a non-native English speaker limited their proficiency in “playing with the language” (Lucy) and having to think in an English way “constantly caused anxiety” (Daniel). Surprisingly, some EFL postgraduate suffered from low self-esteem, not only to the native-speaker writers but also to those non-native English users who study in native English speaking countries or who major in the English language.

I still feel not really confident. I'm not native English speaker. So I have mistakes in the sentences. And for the people, like you, who study in the foreign language, they can easily find my mistakes. (Laura, Interview)

From the beginning, since I started to learn English at my master study, until now, I feel my English is quite low. Lower than most of my friends who continue study in UK and USA. (Emma)

Most of the participants adopted the researcher role before the graduate student role. Working experience as a researcher provided the confidence of calling oneself a researcher. According to Emma, years of working as a researcher not only brought her the title but also shaped her way of thinking--“the way a researcher thinks”. And it was found the participants from the Hard Science fields were more likely to accept the position of a researcher. Also worthy to be noticed, some participants did not distinguish the two roles. They positioned oneself as a graduate student being required to write the thesis for graduation and meanwhile a novice researcher

attempting to contribute to the knowledge building in the discipline. However, self-effacing could be observed among these two interviewees.

They said they have their own traditional ways of writing thesis. I should follow them. So, I think that I am not a complete researcher. (Tom)

I do not see myself as a researcher. I think researcher is a very respectful identity. It's very far away from my identity. (Daniel)

The two excerpts showed similar instances of “imposter syndrome” proposed by Paltridge and Woodrow (2012, p.96). That is the feeling of self-doubt in their noticed capabilities as researchers.

5.1.1.4 Discussion

As data analysis shows, years of academic writing activities formed the participants' different understanding of academic writing and the habitual repertoire of textual practices. The participants' established autobiographical selves were constituted of conceptualization of thesis writing, the previous academic writing practices, and the writer's self-worth (see Figure 5.1).

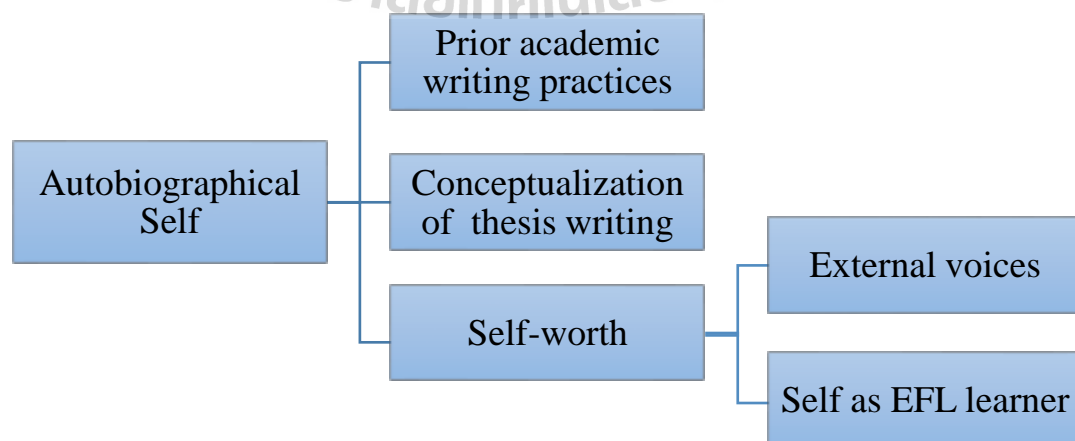


Figure 5.1 Autobiographical Self of EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writers

The autobiographical self of the EFL postgraduate thesis writers in this study is specific. In one sense, the autobiographical self is social, “as salient for a young child as to a retired person” (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010, p.238). The participants’ self-image is somewhat fixed and similar that they are labeled as EFL postgraduate thesis writers in a non-native English speaking context. They share some common beliefs in thesis writing and they develop knowledge about the genre, the discipline, and English academic writing. The disciplinary discourses are predominated by the mainstream in English culture (Zhao, 2019), which puts pressure on the EFL postgraduate thesis writers. It is revealed that some postgraduate thesis writers in this study automatically positioned themselves inferior to the native-speaker counterparts in the discourse community and those non-native English users whose English were assumed better. In the meantime, the institutional concept of thesis writing is a blend of English culture and Thai ideologies. Most of the thesis supervisors and committee members are Thai; the university provides certain guidelines on writing a thesis, however, they are written in the Thai language. Even though the university by all manner of means spreads its vision of globalization, it seems that Thai culture leaves its permanent imprints in the policies of academic activities. These are the social factors that influence the EFL postgraduate thesis writer identity construction.

In the other sense, this self-image is individual. One’s sense of himself is unique as the consequences of his life experience (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010).

With different cultural, social, and educational identities, the participants are various in “the amount and complexity of experience” (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010, p.238). Interestingly, how the participants perceive their writing is largely affected by how others label them, good or bad in English writing. Especially when the comments come from the person who held a higher social status and thus shared a louder voice in the discourse community, graduate students’ self-assurance is affected. This can be referred back to the findings related to the participants’ sense of self-worth. As mentioned in Laura’s case, the negative comments from Laura’s supervisor disappointed her and made her uncertain, while Tyler got inspired and confident in his writing.

5.1.2 Discoursal Self

Discoursal self is the impression a writer conveys in his written text. The findings showed that 1) most of the participants recognized the significance of constructing an image of a professional writer; 2) the perceived readership influenced the writer’s discoursal representation; 3) discursive features to some extent deliberately represented the writer.

5.1.2.1 A Desired Professional Writer Image

The results from descriptive analysis (see Table 5.4) showed a strong awareness of the discoursal construction of identity in EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Most of the participants clearly expressed the intention to portray an image of a professional writer to the readers ($M = 3.74$). Only two participants (4.65%) disagreed with the statement “I try to impress the readers with my thesis that I am a professional

writer.” Twenty-five participants recognized the importance of voice showing and tried to put their real voice in writing ($M = 3.58$). Thirty-five graduate students (81.39%) could hear their voices in the thesis ($M = 3.91$). The participants’ values and beliefs were embedded in writing ($M = 4.09$, Frequency = 38, Percent = 88.38%).

Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics of Self to Be Conveyed

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I try to impress the thesis readers that I am a professional writer.	3.74	.790
I put the “real me” in my thesis.	3.58	.957
I can hear my voice as I write and read my thesis.	3.91	.840
My writing expresses what I really think and believe.	4.09	.648
Valid N (listwise)		43

How is the professional-writer image conveyed to the readers? All the thesis writers insisted their writing should be in a way generally accepted by the mainstream of academia. That is, more or less, the participants were conscious of the discourse community around. They explored through practice or were told the privileged patterns and then tried to identify themselves with those patterns. As mentioned in 5.1.1.2, most of them conceptualized thesis writing as formal and academic writing. In this sense, writing “objectively” was mentioned as a standard of writing up the thesis research, “at least for face validity” (Tom) and “without any human touches” (Amy). And this objective writing was implemented through avoiding self-mention, using discursive features properly, and formatting the thesis as required.

The thesis writers create this professional-writer image in accordance

with their perceived image of a successful thesis writer. The participants shaped their imagination of a successful thesis writer through academic literacy activities, such as having classes, reading theses or research papers, and attending to international conferences or workshops. This image reflects the values and beliefs that a writer holds. They are the positions the writer takes in the discipline. Or, they are the disciplinary lenses through which issues can be discussed and phenomena can be interpreted.

The general finding of the interview data showed that the participants were working on the topics of their interest with the method(s) which served their research purposes. The writers' worldviews, values, and beliefs inscribed in their written thesis did not emerge in a vacuum. They were generated through the students' perception of the outside world. Besides, the imagined thesis writer image was built interpersonally. Interaction played a key impact in this perceived portrait. Admire of and trust in the supervisor's expertise make the writer adhere to the supervisor's suggestions in discursive representation. As Tyler said, the experience taught him his supervisor was usually correct, thus he preferred to following him when disagreement happened. To note, the discursive construction of the imagined successful writer identity does not exclude the individuality. The desire of building a unique discursive self was displayed in developing the ways of writing and organizing the ideas.

Everyone has his own writing style. Someone else in our group, if he has the same experience like me, he may write the thesis with similar content, but in a very different writing style. (Tyler).

5.1.2.2 The Adapted Identity

Both the writer himself/herself and the anticipated readers were the perceived readers. Statistics (see Table 5.5) and thematic analysis showed thesis writers adapted their identities to meet the interest of both themselves and the readers. Writing to self-please was put at a central place ($M = 4.19$). With only four participants carving out a neutral position, thirty-nine participants (90.7%) wrote the theses in a way that they themselves could be pleased as readers. Some interviewees emphasized one's own interest motivated writing and self-satisfaction moved writing on to the next stages.

When readers read they feel like my writing maybe not too interesting, but a little bit interesting, to catch their attention. What I expect as a reader for reading others, and I use that as a common-sense for my own writing.

As shown in the example, Bess treated herself as one of the readers and analogized her expectations in reading to writing. She expected that readers could find her writing was at least slightly attention catching.

Table 5.5 Descriptive Statistics of Readership

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is important for me to like what I have written.	4.19	.588
When writing the thesis, I consider the interest of the readers.	3.79	.804
Valid N (listwise)		43

Twenty-eight participants (65.11%) considered the readers' interest. Decisions of language choices were then made in line with the readers' interest. One

example of this phenomenon is “simple language” was used by some participants (e.g., Lucy) to make the writing easy to read. Consciously, writers adjusted their ways of writing and organizing the text. For example, Daniel learned to write “in short paragraphs”, which according to his supervisor was “more friendly to readers”.

It could be concluded that the participants presumed a pretty narrow readership of their thesis, including supervisors, thesis examiners, and maybe a few fellow graduate students in the discipline. The participants recognized the imbalanced power relationship between themselves and the anticipated readers. It was obvious that readers shared higher social status and thus hold more power in relations. To the participants, supervisors were more knowledgeable and experienced, in terms of both the field and the institutional expectations; while the thesis committee’s decision determined whether the students’ theses could meet the requirement of the institution. Bearing this unequal power relationship in mind, the students accommodated writing in accordance to supervisors’ suggestions and their guessed expectations (in the words of Amy, “their likes and dislikes”) from thesis committee members, changing the way of presentation and dividing the texts.

My advisor is very experienced in the faculty. If he thinks this is the right way to do that, I think why not? Because the final community my thesis is speaking to is the institution, and he knows that better than I do. (Amy)

I wanted to make it as objective as possible and to avoid subjective things. I list all the facts, I used many examples, I quoted to support my ideas. I am very careful about the format, the page number, the

wording, very careful about the little things. Because I want to persuade the committee members it seems good. (Tom)

5.1.2.3 “It’s My Own Thesis”

This section presents the findings from the perspective of a sense of ownership. All the thesis writers claimed they owned their thesis. The participants referred to their thesis intimately by using words like “my product”, “my baby”, or “another me”. For example, Amy said, “the thesis is my own product. That's, I write the way I am.” Every step of the thesis writing, starting from the beginning research topic development, to the final results writing up, marked the characteristics of the writers. Thesis writers believed they could take the whole responsibility for their theses. This sense of ownership was represented through writers’ selection of research topics, ways of developing ideas, and choices of wording.

Table 5.6 Descriptive Statistics of Language Features

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use hedges like “may”, “might”, “maybe”, etc. in my discussion.	2.49	1.121
The language choices I make are deliberate and reflect who I am.	3.72	.766
Valid N (listwise)		43

Discursive features were employed to construct one’s discursal self. Hedges were frequently used by twenty-seven participants (62.79%). Using hedges was simply out of identifying with the practice of thesis writing. As Daniel said, “I just follow what I was taught from the academic writing course.” The more practical concern was to play safe that the writers were not claiming absoluteness of their

findings or rejecting other probable interpretations. This is to give authorization to the readers. Choices of wording revealed the self inscribed in the written discourse (M = 3.72). Most of the participants thought the language choices could reflect themselves.

I write with simple language. It's my style, it's also all I have. My style come from my personality. I want to make things clear so that every normal people who knows English can understand what I write. Also because of my limited language, I couldn't use something complicated. Like, I'm not a native speaker, so I can only use this kind of words. With the limited language, I just make it simple and easy, to avoid making grammatical mistakes. I do not use the very complex words or complex sentences. (Lucy, Interview)

The above excerpt illustrated why Lucy chose to write her thesis with simple language. Her language choice was deliberate. The thesis was a stamp of herself. Her personality, English language proficiency, and carefulness with language determined the way she presented the research.

Meanwhile, the participants admitted other stakeholders' contributions to the thesis. The supervisors' guide and feedback directed and at the same time confined their researching and writing; the thesis committee's comments and suggestions were seriously taken; the school secretary helped check the format of the thesis. They knew the final written products would not appear as what they had expected. The discursal self, the image of the writer conveyed through the words,

might be the product of the writer's compromise: the writer strived for involving his/her self, conveying the values and beliefs he/she holds to the readers. At the same time, the writer negotiated with other stakeholders and sometimes had to make concessions.

5.1.2.4 Discussion

Results show that all the writers try to convey a professional writer's image to the target readers. This imagined impression can be portrayed by carrying out various discursal and rhetorical practices (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camp, 2001; Li & Deng, 2019; Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014). Different perspectives of self-presentations are therefore conducted. To a certain extent, discursal construction of self is an assimilating practice to the aiming academic culture. Deliberately, the writers identify themselves with the acknowledged writing conventions. Since thesis writing is conceptualized as formal writing with objective and concrete data self-explained, in this study, passive voice, academic terms, and citation techniques, and so on are commonly recognized discursive features in EFL postgraduate thesis writing. As the most preferential stance markers (Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014), hedges are utilized by the thesis writers to claim, but with an anticipation of possible objections to their ideas. Employing this feature, a dialogue can be made and the authorization is given to the readers.

Thesis writing is infused with relationships of power (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). And writer identity, as social constructivists propose, "exists in the interaction between writers and readers that is mediated by the text" (Mastuda, 2015, P.

153). In this study, the power relations between the writers and readers have been discussed as unequal. The target readers of the theses are the recognized experts who have disciplinary knowledge and are familiar with the institutional norms and conventions. They hold powerful positions and can have significant influence over the writers. In this case, the discursively constructed writer identity can be seen as the consequence of EFL thesis writers' adapting to the readers' feedback on their works.

5.1.3 Authorial Self

Authorial self is concerned with a writer's sense of authoritativeness in writing. It is about how authoritative an EFL postgraduate thesis writer feels, how he or she establishes the authorship for the content, and to what extent the writer attributes the authorship to himself/herself.

5.1.3.1 Authorial Presence

Descriptive statistics (see Table 5.7) indicated the participants held some conflicting opinions about developing self as an author in theses. The participants took up a strong authorial stance and firmly declared their authorship of the theses ($M=3.95$). About 80% of the participants believed their voices should be passed on to the reader through the media of theses. Excepting eight of them, most of the participants claimed their ideas (Mean=3.56), which showed they strongly asserted their positions. A strong sense of self as an author was revealed from the generally positive self-confidence in expressing one's idea (Mean=3.98). A high mean score of 4.28 showed that over ninety percent of participants (Frequency=40) were researching on the topics

of their interest. In contrast to this strong desire of authorial presence, not much authoritativeness was realized through actual writing. Self-mention was seldom used ($M=1.91$): only four participants used the proper noun “I” to refer to themselves in their theses. To a very low extent, the writers stamped the authorship to their writings ($M=1.81$). Thirty-seven thesis writers cited a lot of previous studies and attributed arguments to the researchers whom they thought more authoritative.

Table 5.7 Descriptive Analysis of Authorial Presence

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use “I” in my thesis.	1.91	.996
I cite the previous researchers a lot to support my ideas.	1.81	.852
I don’t claim my ideas because I want to play safe.	3.56	1.119
I should have my own voice in my own thesis.	3.95	.688
I am confident in expressing my ideas in thesis.	3.98	.740
I am really interested in my research topic.	4.28	.666
Valid N (listwise)		43

Findings from interview data further confirmed this conflict between the desired and actually conveyed authority. On the one hand, the interviewees claimed the authority of what they had researched and written. Some participants mentioned the “uniqueness” or “novelty” of their studies (Emma), some expressed confidence in the contributions their studies were going to make. Their great efforts in the thesis research and writing offered confidence in claiming ideas.

On the other hand, the thesis writers tended to tone down or “hide one’s voice” (Tom). Self-mention was considered inappropriate and thus definitely

unacceptable by participants from the Hard Science disciplines. The interviews with John, Tyler, Emma, and Jack indicated that the idea of “never use ‘I’” was deeply rooted in some participants, being taught explicitly, or being acquired from reading published articles. Writing without referring to the researcher(s) was believed to help avoid subjective bias. The “basic function of writing in scientific research” was to objectively record research procedures and interpret the findings (Tyler). Even for the writers from Social Science disciplines, first-person pronouns were seldom used. Despite once being exposed to research articles in which “I” or “we” were employed, they rejected to apply that in thesis writing. Only two participants used “I” to refer to themselves. However, Amy deleted “I” in her following writing after her supervisor directly showed his “dislike” of such practice, while Bess said she used “I” only when she had no other choice. The findings also showed a general tendency to align one’s studies to established research writers. All the students often cited other researchers, to make the writing more academic like, get the arguments more persuasive, or “play safe” (Tom, Interview). The students were taught that referring to the existing literature was essential in thesis writing. Most of the participants followed the conventions of academic writing.

I provide my idea directly, and then give some citation or reference to support it. That’s what I was taught. Because this is thesis writing, I have to use many citations, references, to show that I have read many research papers, I have done much literature review, that is very objective, not subjective. (Daniel)

I got my own ideas first, then I searched the sources that have the

same ideas. I used their voice to express my voice. This makes me safe. (Tom)

The participants shown in the example considered citation a MUST in thesis writing. Citing was out of merely following what others do in the discipline. As graduate students, they had been used to applying what they learned into practice. Also, being new to the academia reminded them to borrow the authority of the expert writers.

5.1.3.2 Power Relations

To examine the power relations in the practice of EFL postgraduate thesis writing, this study investigated how the graduate students communicated with people with greater power in the local discourse community. As mentioned in 5.8, thesis supervisors and committee members were the perceived thesis readers in the localized educational context. They represented the institutional requirements or expectations of EFL graduate thesis writing.

Table 5.8 Descriptive Statistics of Power Relations in Thesis Writing

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I never say no to my supervisor's feedback on my thesis.	3.28	1.031
I feel comfortable in communicating with my supervisor.	4.23	.751
Sometimes I argue with and try to convince my supervisor.	3.91	.868
I have to follow all the suggestions from the thesis committee members.	2.67	.969
Valid N (listwise)		43

Statistical analysis (see Table 5.8) showed most of the thesis writers (Frequency = 37, Percent = 86.04%) felt comfortable when communicating with the supervisors (Mean = 4.23). In the interviews, Amy described her communication with

words like “smooth” and “pleasant”; John’s supervisor was “professional and helpful”; Tyler, Nico, Lucy, Emma, and Bess had a very good relationship with their “friendly and easy-going” supervisors. Only Daniel reported he felt not comfortable in communicating with his supervisor. In the following interview, he explained and complained that was not communication at all:

That is not communication. Communication means two ways, not one way. when I meet my advisor, when she corrects or revises my thesis, she just keeps talking, from beginning to the end. I just listen. That is not communication, maybe most of the time just, um, give a lecture.

A negative feeling could be sensed from Daniel’s words. His supervisor liked to “get everything under control”. He felt forced to write the thesis as suggested -- “or else, she would ask me to revise again and again”. Zoe, under the same supervisor with Daniel, encountered the same problem. In the tutorials, her supervisor kept pointing out a lot of problems in her drafts without giving her a chance to explain:

My advisor preferred to give you the comments in one time, you just stay over there, listen, from the A then to the Z. You just listen it and then that’s it.

Different from Daniel, Zoe accepted this kind of supervision style. As a Master student without any working experience, she was more comfortable with her student-role and formed a habit of obeying “the teacher”: “I adjust myself to accept the way she tutors me.”

Of course, all the supervisors’ efforts were appreciated and their

feedbacks, both in written and oral forms, was seriously taken into consideration. Most of the participants responded to the feedback positively. Nine participants (20.93%) thought they were obliged to follow the supervisors' feedback 100%, while twenty-four others (55.82%) endeavored to negotiate for an agreement to be reached. Thirty-four students (79.07%) argued with their supervisors, trying to persuade. Here, the case of Nico could illustrate this struggle of negotiation for authority:

My communication with supervisor is quite good. But sometimes when we have different ideas, I go back and then find more information to support my idea and show him that again. If he said yes and I will go on. But if he said no, I just change the issue or the ideas. (Interview)

Nico was prudent and respected her supervisor very much. She held down her impulse of immediately defending for her ideas, but went back to her supervisor with the evidence to show she was right. Most of the time, her so-called evidence was the research articles or theses that could back up her arguments. In this way, she attributed the authority to the established researchers and convinced her supervisor. However, things happened that occasionally she could not win the game. Although to her "disappointment", she had to give up her original thoughts and followed the guide.

In the social relationships of power, thesis committee members were felt superior to the graduate students. Half of the participants (Frequency = 22, Percent = 51.17%) thought all the suggestions from the thesis committee members should be

taken. For the other half, eleven stood in the middle, while ten struggled for independence. Interview data showed that the graduate students acknowledged the authority of the thesis committee. The decision from the committee would determine the students' fate, "pass or fail in the defense", just as Jack said in the interview:

They have the full authority and the full power to grant the title to students. If we don't follow his ideas, suggestions, opinions, our thesis would be rejected. So, no matter what his opinion is, acceptable or not, we students have the obligations to follow them.

Thanks to its recognized superior position, the thesis committee's feedback influenced the practice of thesis researching and writing. In the case of John, one of his sub-topics was criticized as "too obsolete" and thus rejected by the committee in the proposal defense. John took up this "constructive" comment and added a new sub-topic into his research design as suggested. During this time of accepting the thesis committee's comments and modifying research and writing, a struggle of authoritativeness could be found, same as what happened in the story of Bess:

I tried to protect my work. If possible, I tried my best to defend what I did and why I did. But I failed. I lost the game. If it's the way they like, all right, I just accept that. Even though I am not feeling happy. There's no use to go against others, sometimes we need to compromise to help our work accepted.

Bess defended hard her work in the proposal defense, attempting to make it as what she had expected to. Unfortunately, she failed in proving her way of writing reasonable. Although unwillingly, she made the compromise and chose to follow the committee's suggestions.

It could be concluded that the participants made great efforts in negotiating with the more powerful members in the local discourse community. They endeavored to convey the voice that they originally proposed and best represented what they were to the readers. However, the way to authority was full of struggles. Sometimes, they were forced to change.

5.1.3.3 Discussion

At this advanced educational stage, postgraduate students gradually develop a certain degree of sense of being a researcher and therefore desire to claim with authoritativeness. They want to leave some marks in the theses and wish to be heard in the discourse community. However, the findings of the study elucidate that in reality this desired authority might not be realized in their theses as expected. Authorial self is represented by self-mention and who the writer is likely to cite (Hyland, 2002b; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Self-mention, according to Hyland (2002a), is “a significant means of promoting a competent scholarly identity and gaining acceptance for one’s ideas (p.1110).” The authorial pronouns, “I” and “we”, contribute to both the text construction and the development of writer identity. This argument of self-mention as a visible indication of authorial identity has been supported by other researchers (e.g., Harwood, 2005; Li & Deng, 2019; Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014). Interestingly, the data of the current study show a very picturesque phenomenon.

Self-mention is resisted in EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Here are the possible causes. To begin with, the EFL postgraduate thesis writers in this study

have seldom contacted with the notions of authorial identity, which some researchers claim in the relevant with Western individualist ideologies (Zhao, 2019). Asian students have been educated on the importance of English language in this globalized world. They have been passively learning the language under the native-speaker bar. However, due to not being exposed to the authentic English-speaking culture, the individualism ideologies in western have not been passed on through language learning. This may explain why most of the thesis writers in this research tend to shun away from the individual “I”. Besides, the students are repeatedly taught to avoid using the first person pronouns (Hyland, 2004). This may impress the student writers that reducing authorial intervention is a must. Consequently, the authors choose to evacuate from the research by employing the “empirically-oriented persuasion strategies” (Hyland & Jiang, 2017, p. 14). This can explain why the objective and abstract sources are preferred by all the participants in legitimizing the knowledge construction processed through thesis research.

It is also found that the participants are continuously reminded of their roles as students, which position them at the bottom of the rank in terms of power relations. The feeling of inferiority may induce the students to seek support for their arguments from the external authority. The student writers thus choose to cite the previous researchers, especially the established expert writers in the field. They perceive citation as a must in thesis writing. While in the local context, negotiation of

authority is under the pressure of power relations. When conflict is potential, chances are, the student writers yield to the more powerful and authoritative supervisors and thesis committee members. As the discussion goes, the power relations might affect the representation of authorial identity in EFL postgraduate theses.

5.1.4 Possibilities of Selfhood

Possibilities of selfhood are the available options for writers to construct a sense of being appropriate in the sociocultural context. In this study, this context refers to the social environment and the institutionalized educational context in which EFL postgraduate thesis writing takes place.

5.1.4.1 Knowledge about the Thesis Genre

Table 5.9 revealed that for the eight items in this group, the mean scores were higher than three, ranging from 3.02 to 4.19. Positioned in the broad social setting, except only one writer having doubts, almost all the participants learned what kind of thesis was disciplinarily recognized as good. It was also true of knowledge about the thesis genre. Forty participants were familiar with the components of a thesis. Most of the participants (Frequency = 36, Percent = 83.72%) learned thesis writing through reading graduate thesis in the discipline. The institutionally supported subject positions implicated the privileging patterns in the educational context. Thirty-three thesis writers (76.74%) acknowledged that they knew the rules of thesis writing in their schools. The participants stood at opposite poles with their response to the statement “there is usually one best way to write a thesis”. Somewhat extremely binary opinions

were presented by the statistics: fifteen of them (34.88%) agreed with the saying, while sixteen others (37.21%) disagreed. The anticipated readers were considered as important that thirty-six participants (83.72%) thought about readability. Half of the participants showed a strong sense of belonging to the academic community. However, eighteen (41.86%) thesis writers were hesitant in agreeing or disagree with this statement.

Table 5.9 Descriptive Statistics of Possibilities of Selfhood

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know what a good thesis is like in my discipline.	3.93	.593
Reading thesis in the discipline is my way to learn how to write a thesis.	4.14	.833
I am familiar with the components of a thesis.	4.19	.627
I know the rules of thesis writing in my school.	3.91	.750
When writing my thesis, I stick to the rules.	3.91	.684
There is usually one best way to write a thesis.	3.02	1.012
I write in a way my readers can understand me.	3.93	.593
I have a strong sense of belonging to an academic community.	3.56	.796
Valid N (list wise)		43

The acquisition of knowledge about the thesis genre and an awareness of the discourse communities could be summarized. The EFL postgraduate thesis writers knew the possible ways of writing a thesis in the university setting.

5.1.4.2 Possibilities of Selfhood: Options or Constraints

Disciplinary conventions were learned from academic writing courses, reading, or attending to international conferences, and then consolidated in the long-time practice. Lexical choice, syntactic form, and textual structure were justified from aspects of what they thought acceptable in the discipline:

People all over the world who do Physics, I mean the papers or theses, all do the same models, same structure. (Tyler, Interview)

Some writers did not feel much pain in deciding their thesis structure because they had patterns to follow:

I think it's good. It gives us the structure to follow. So it makes the thesis in a way that is clearer. (Lucy, Interview)

In this case, some participants even thought that writing was not difficult. On the whole, the thesis writers mentioned knowing disciplinary conventions as an advantage. This recognized knowledge was taken as options rather than constraints, providing them the possible linguistic features.

Compared to possibilities in disciplines, institutional expectations on thesis writing were acquired relatively implicitly. The participants complained about difficulties in figuring out the thesis format. The university provided the format, but the guideline was written in the Thai language. Most of the participants could not read Thai, thus had no choice but to follow the senior students' format. Daniel commented on this, "even the format of the thesis I just got from the seniors or classmates." Another problem was that different schools had specific requirements for structuring a thesis. One participant was blamed for her wrong format on her proposal defense. She regretted following a format that was not suitable in her school.

Most of my knowledge about conventions of our school, I learned by myself and from the experience, from my mistake, because I didn't do it well in my proposal, and the committee members said that my structure, my format is not right. This is not good. (Lucy)

Besides, some participants mentioned the “invisible game rules” in thesis writing as exemplified by Tom. Through observation and listening to “gossips” from fellow students, some thesis writers found out the unspoken concerns about thesis writing among the faculty members. The thesis was speaking to the localized institutional discourse community. Supervisors and thesis committee members were considered as representatives of this community.

The thesis writers expected explicit guides on disciplinary and institutional options. The participants thought they had better know what and how they should write. Most of the participants chose to follow the conventions out of pressure for graduation. This might be due to concerns of being student researcher and avoiding conflicts with supervisors. However, the existence of conventions was for providing options rather than constraints.

Conventions are formed because people are really doing things in the community. They form this kind of habits, or the most effective ways to contribute their knowledge to the disciplines. And for us, new researchers or new writers to the communities, we have to know the conventions. Only when we have a full understanding of the conventions, we can make full use of that in our own way, then we can give it a full of play. (Amy, Interview)

5.1.4.3 Reactions to the Conventions: Follow or Challenge

This section investigates how EFL postgraduate thesis writers reacted to the privileged patterns in the discourse communities. Thirty-three survey participants (76.74%) followed the rules of writing a thesis in their schools. Eleven out of the fifteen

chose to follow the conventions/formats/patterns that had been established in the discipline or in the school (see Table 5.10). For John, Tyler, and Emma, the three Ph.D. students from Hard Science fields, the fixed conventions were widely recognized in the discipline, thus could not be challenged.

We follow the fixed pattern. Just follow the pattern of academic report. We have chapters to be filled. And each chapter, we have patterns on how they should be written. (John)

All the people who do Physics follow the same style or structure. (Tyler)

In Biomedical Science school, most people write with the same style. Thus, I am OK with the conventions. I just follow them. (Emma)

The excerpts above showed an automatic following the conventions without thinking about other possibilities. The conventions were considered appropriate to copy.

Table 5.10 Participants' Reaction to the Socially Available Conventions

	Follow	Challenge
Participant	Tom, Daniel, John, Tyler, Lucy, Emma, Anna, Nico, Fanny, Murray, Laura	Amy, Zoe, Jack, Bess

Besides, the role of a student also played its influence on the writers' choice of not challenging the conventions. In the cases of Tom, Daniel, Anna, Fanny, Nico, Murray and Laura, following the conventions is the only choice, for the sake of graduation.

I will just follow, because that's like a rule that I have to follow. I can't change it, so I have no option. It's the rule. (Anna, Interview)

Our thesis is for graduate requirement. I have to follow the conventions. Actually, I'm not so confident to challenge them. (Daniel, Interview)

No, I will not challenge. I will just follow the rules. Because if it's not, my advisor will give a lot of revisions to change, which means I have to spend more time.. (Laura, Interview)

Lucy's case was a little different. Provided her lack of experience, she was not confident in writing differently from conventional ways. However, she showed a willingness to challenge the conventions in her future writing.

Because I start from zero, I don't have any academic writing skills at the beginning, so it is good for me to follow the structure. But in the future, if I continue my study and have the chance to do my Ph.D. thesis, I might not need to follow the structure. I can write in my own style.

The other four participants, however, showed their unwillingness of just following the trend. Amy recognized the importance of learning the conventions, that is, they provided the options for playing the game. However, she rejected to be constrained by the resources. She made use of her rhetorical knowledge to negotiate an acceptable individual characteristic of writer.

Academic writing should be objective, scientific, without any human touches. This is what we were told. But sometimes I don't want to follow those restrict objectivity or scientific requirements. I won't mind add some points I think appropriate; I don't mind to add some very personal feelings into my writing. And sometimes I want to make use of my rhetorical knowledge to make my writing not that boring. (Interview)

Zoe learned the components of a thesis, but she only presented the elements she thought vital to her thesis and organized them in her way. She put her

“need” at the central place. Jack’s research had a wide scope and was consisted of several independent experiments. He thought putting all the results and discussions together would make the readers confused. Therefore, he would like to develop his own way of presentation-each chapter displayed findings of one experiment.

My school produces the format, the conventional style, in which there are four chapters. But because I am doing on the Science and the scope is very wide, I could not put all experiment in one basket. That’s why I separate it chapter by chapter, and then link all the ideas in the end. So, I’m not following the conventional style. (Interview)

It could be summarized that the three writers did not resist the conventions, but critically exploited a different manner which was more suitable for their research. However, the last participant, Bess, did not show even the slightest interest in following the traditions. She said directly, “actually, I tried to follow my way of writing. To be honest, I don’t very care about that conventional style of writing a thesis in the school (Interview).” Compared to how others wrote, she cared more about making her voice heard.

5.1.4.4 Discussion

This aspect of writer identity is concerned with the “prototypical possibilities for self-hood which are available to writers in the social context of writing” (Ivanič, 1998, p. 27). In common sense, the disciplinarily established conventions and institutionally privileged patterns are not meant to be prescriptive. They are provided as options, not to limit creative thinking or writing. In academic writing discourse, students write within the socially available resources. To respond to the different social

and educational environment in which writing happens, specific options are prioritized. In other words, the discursal choices are confined with the culturally provided norms and conventions of this particular genre of writing (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001). The real situation is eleven thesis writers in this study inclined to passively follow the socially enabled conventions. They made such a decision because of the following reasons. First, the conventional way of writing might be the only knowledge of thesis writing they possessed. As mentioned in 5.1.4.3, John, Tyler, and Emma insisted on “the only way of writing a thesis in the discipline”. They learned the generally acceptable methods of writing for academic purposes from academic writing courses. They acquired the basic practical knowledge from communication with the supervisors, reading research articles or related theses, attending lectures or conferences. Second, the writers followed the conventional structures, mistakes thus could be avoided. For instance, Laura chose to follow the conventions so that she could finish her writing soon. The same choice was made by Lucy who lacked experience in writing a thesis. Although nothing new, the written works at least maintained their appropriateness. Third, the EFL learners in the study were not exposed enough to other possibilities. Without such awareness, how can they challenge the recognized patterns and try something different? The institution tends to encourage an impersonal rhetorical style. Some considerable misgivings are shared among the students, that resisting or challenging the recognized patterns will risk failing and being rejected in their theses.

5.2 Construction of Multiple Writer Identities

The multifaceted nature of writer identity has been displayed in 5.1. This section further discusses the internal interactions within the multiple aspects.

Following the conceptual framework of “four aspects of writer identity” (Ivanič, 1998), the study confirmed the shifting and multifaceted nature of writer identity (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998; Matsuda, 2015; McKinley, 2017). The desired thesis writer identity was dynamically constructed through great efforts of integrating the multiple aspects of self-presentations (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998; Li & Deng, 2019; Matsuda, 2015). Writer identity is proved not a fixed, unified status, but a continuously shifting process of learning to become. In this process, thesis writing is like a room full of mirrors, reflecting who the writer is from different angles. It should be noted that since both the social and local educational contexts are specific, writer identities shaped in the current study emerge some distinctive features.

In light of the discussions in Section 5.1, I propose the cooperation of aspects of writer identity as follows: first, autobiographical self constraints the writer’s recognition of socially enabled resources, while possibilities of selfhood provide options for autobiographical self to be developed into. According to Burgess & Ivanič (2010), the multiple selves are constructed “by writers' selection of particular discursal characteristics in the design of their texts” (p.235). On one hand, the student writers do not randomly select the language features. The choices are enabled by the possibilities for selfhood (Hyland, 2012; Ivanič, 1998). That is, self-representations are enacted in

the process of thesis writers' selecting appropriate manners of writing. In the case of EFL postgraduate thesis writing, disciplinary norms and conventions confine the writers' actual practice of writing. Also, the institutional resources shape and constrain this lived experience. For example, as present in 5.1.4.2, Lucy encountered some unnecessary problems due to the implicit acquisition of institutional expectations. The thesis writing guideline provided in Thai language and the "invisible game rules" (Tom) increased difficulties in writing the thesis.

On the other hand, thesis writers cannot construct their voice from an infinite repertoire of possibilities. The point to make here is that, the resources are not only culturally available as proposed in the literature (Hyland, 2008; Ivani_c & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001, 2015; Tardy, 2012), but also varied for individual writers. Personal histories, especially academic literacy activities, play a key impact on exposure to the conventions. It is the perceived conventions of thesis writing that provide choices and confine the students' writings within the norms.

Second, although the writer identity consists of four different aspects, autobiographical self and possibilities of self-hood stand out as the most dominant category in constructing writer identity through EFL postgraduate theses. Autobiographical self and possibilities interplay and work together to determine the discursal self conveyed in the written texts and the extent to which authorial voice is shown. The autobiographical self is the accumulated experiences of the writers' being

exposed to the social available options. The type of social possibilities to which the writers have access to is vital. In the current study, the students whose writing quality has been appraised by the supervisors, thesis committee members, or fellow students are more confident to insist on their writing styles. The readers also show greater tolerance to these writers' uniqueness. However, the student writers whose writing abilities are not acknowledged by themselves or others, struggle more for self-presentations with the limited available options. This finding shares some similarities with the claim of Burgess & Ivanič (2010). The two researchers argued that if a writer experiences the possibilities of selfhood in which he/she is treated without an authorial role at all, it is likely for him/her to develop a sense of inferiority into his/ her autobiographical self. Such a feeling may hesitate the writer in engaging in writing and lead to write "in a militant way" (p. 246).

Both disciplinary and institutional possibilities of selfhood are considered providing options instead of constraints on EFL postgraduate thesis writing by the participants. Novice writers welcome an overt instruction of these "game rules". Most writers choose to accommodate rather than resist what they perceive as privileged patterns in the institution. The negative inside of this passive alignment is leading to an actual distancing from discursal construction of writer identity: the thesis writers tend to voice down, which could be observed from their seldom self-mention, using hedges, and frequently citing. Also, they may hesitate in showing their opinions due to the role

of graduate students. Feeling inferior in the disciplinary community, as exemplified in the cases of Emma and Laura, some of the thesis writers dare not claim their own ideas without referring to the recognized expert members. So, it can be inferred that the sense of feeling inferior is the primary reason for erasing one's authorial presence, toning down with hedges, and asserting the authority of other recognized members in the discourse community.

5.3 Summary

This chapter investigated the aspects of academic writer identity displayed in postgraduate thesis writing. Findings of the multiple aspects of writer identity were presented and the interplay within the aspects were discussed. Different from their native speaker counterparts, in this study, EFL postgraduate thesis writers' sense of being EFL users influences their identity construction in terms of self-worth, confidence in their thesis quality, and their response to comments or feedback on their writing. Most of the EFL thesis writers in this research are not exposed to the concept of authorial representation enough. Lacking awareness of authorship is one of the reasons why some thesis writers chose to passively follow the disciplinary conventions and institutional expectations.

CHAPTER 6

LEARNING TO BECOME THESIS WRITERS

This chapter presents analysis and findings concerning research question 3, “How does EFL postgraduate thesis writing promote writer identity development?” The results are drawn from the descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative data.

6.1 Thesis Writer Development

This section presents findings of how EFL postgraduate thesis writing impact on writer identity construction. Data analysis revealed the development of EFL postgraduate thesis writers in the following ways: the increase of knowledge, improvement of academic writing abilities, and self-confidence development.

6.1.1 Increase of Knowledge

Nine (60%) students reported an increase in knowledge: two advanced disciplinary knowledge, five better understood the thesis genre, and five gained more research knowledge. Two participants developed knowledge in more than one aspect. Tom developed his understanding of research and the thesis genre, while Jack gained more research knowledge and disciplinary knowledge.

First, two participants, Tyler and Jack, reported growth in disciplinary knowledge. They gained a better understanding of what they were studying, the research topics of interest.

For the change of myself, maybe a better understanding of what I have done in my physics study could be the answer. (Tyler)

I am more knowledgeable about the research topic I am interested in. (Jack)

Second, five participants better learned the thesis genre. Tom, Lucy, and Anna acquired the citation techniques. Tom learned to cite previous studies to support his argument and kept him safe. Daniel has been systematically trained in writing a thesis. Lucy gained a general understanding of the thesis structure. In addition, Anna got to know the importance of avoiding plagiarism in thesis writing.

I learned to quote others to contribute to my arguments, and I learned the strategies to put myself safe when I was not so confident to show my opinions. (Tom, Written Narrative)

I have been trained in a systematic way, step by step: literature review, idea statement, summing up related studies to support your ideas, focusing on the cohesion and coherence. (Daniel, Written Narrative)

Reading my seniors' thesis can make myself clear about the structure of a thesis, i.e. how many chapters should be included, how many sections in each chapter, what should I put in each section. (Lucy, Written Narrative)

In writing a thesis, some participants developed an awareness of the readers, another aspect of thesis genre knowledge. This awareness helped student writers make language choices. For instance, Daniel began to consider the readers' interest and write

in a reader-friendly way. He tried to connect the ideas logically and coherently.

In the beginning I just thought about myself and just wrote what I wanted to write. But now when I write something I am thinking about the readers. I think more about the topic sentence, the coherence, cohesion. (Interview)

Amy compared and acknowledged the different readerships of thesis writing from manuscript writing. The thesis genre targeted the local discourse community, while research articles to be published were for a wider audience. She said:

The final community my thesis is speaking to should be the institution. Research articles speak to a wider discourse community. We need our voices in these publications because they're going to be published. A lot more people would like to read your article. So, we can be more like us.

For Amy, a thesis was evaluated in a localized context. Being aware of the institutional readers, she wrote based on the local discourse community. She followed some privileged patterns in a localized context; thus, she avoided self-mention in thesis writing.

Although I believe my thesis should be an original product representing my own thoughts and ideas on the research topic, I also see it as conditioned and circumscribed by institutional expectations. (Amy, Written Narrative)

Last, thesis writing practice promoted research knowledge development. Some participants felt the improvement of their competencies to conduct research. For instance, Tom developed his research knowledge and was familiar with the procedures of conducting research. Interestingly, despite a general development reported by other thesis writers, three participants mentioned that they did not see a change. Jack wrote,

“I feel nothing special before and after writing the thesis in English. Just take it as completion on academic journey.” Likewise, Murray narrated, “I do not improve a lot.” Bess said, “compared to now, I still cannot say I can find any differences.” However, all of them asserted the development of research knowledge. Murray was confident in her development of research knowledge and thought she could suggest on doing research. Jack became more skillful in doing experiments and solving the problems in researching than before. Bess believed that reading research articles helped her gain research knowledge. She admitted that she just read the articles of interest.

I learned a lot about what research is.. Now I get an idea about real research, how to do research, how to select the topic, and how to think critically. (Tom, Interview)

I have learned a lot of how to conduct research. I think now I can give suggestions for people who conduct the research. (Murray, Interview)

But only for the experience of working in the lab, and the experience that I have the problems that I encountered during experiments and overcoming. So, I feel this only my new achievement. (Jack, Interview)

I learned a lot. But sometimes I'm not into quantitative research, so sometimes when I read quantitative-oriented research, I don't feel like reading that kind of thing, so, I usually skip that part. (Bess, Interview)

6.1.2 Improvement of Academic Writing abilities

Based on the survey, the students improved their academic writing ability with a very high Mean score of 4.49 as the evidence (see Table 6.1). All the participants firmly claimed the improvement of academic writing abilities resulted in the present

thesis writing practice.

Table 6.1 Descriptive Statistics of Academic Writing Abilities Development

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Thesis writing helps me improve my academic writing ability.	4.49	.506
Valid N (listwise)		43

Findings from qualitative data analysis also indicate a development in academic writing abilities. Thirteen participants informed that they advanced in English academic writing abilities. They mentioned the improvement in writing in general. For instance, Emma wrote, “I feel my English writing skill is much better than before.” In the interview, she further confirmed this, “there is something change, especially about my writing ability, my ability to write in English.” Nico also claimed development in her writing, particularly in her writing speed. Two years ago, it took her two days to finish a 300-words assignment. However, now, she could think and write faster:

Compared to the first work when I was a first-year student, to produce one page, only 300 words, but it took me maybe two days. I could write faster or think faster now. I’m feeling better in terms of writing. (Nico, Interview)

Lucy supported this claim. She said, “I have improved a lot in academic writing skills.” She saw a change in herself, developing from an “immature” writer to someone who could write logically and systematically. She attributed the improvement to self-study, reading the seniors’ thesis, and applying the seniors’ patterns to her writing:

In the beginning, I was very immature. I was very stupid. Before, I didn't write many things that are very logical or systematic in this way. But in writing my thesis, firstly, I need to know the structures. I improve step by

step from self-study, from reading my senior's thesis and try to find the patterns from their thesis. (Interview)

Compared to two months ago, Anna was more familiar with the thesis structure and could put the content in the appropriate section. Her sense of EFL writing changed.

When I found new information I can just know it's supposed to be in this part instead of that part, so I know the location of that information should be. For the sense of self, I feel more comfortable with writing. (Interview)

The case of Amy illustrated in what aspects the writer sensed her/his EFL academic writing abilities developed. Amy thought her writing abilities were improved with the progress of her thesis writing practice. She saw her growth in terms of writing speed and fluency. She could see the weakness of her written products and tried to produce a better version. As the writing proceeded, Amy felt an ease of writing. Especially when writing the results and discussions part, she felt a sense of ownership that she was the controller of her writing.

I could see myself growing along this process. I feel like more fluently in writing than I was in the proposal. I could see myself improve during this process. I feel like things become more of my own. I feel like the control over things in writing increase or rise out. I could see the growth in terms of the ease I feel with writing. (Amy, Interview)

In summary, most of the participants believed they developed better academic writing abilities. This improvement was observed in terms of writing speed, writing fluency, clarity of writing, the way to discuss, and ease of writing.

6.1.3 Self-confidence Development

This section presents the findings related to change in self-confidence. The participants generally reported the development of self-confidence along with thesis writing practice.

Table 6.2 Descriptive Statistics of Self-Confidence Development

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I was not confident in writing in English at the beginning of the thesis writing.	3.30	1.103
Thesis writing increases my self-confidence in English writing.	4.28	.666
I am confident in the quality of my thesis.	3.84	.785
My thesis writing has given me deep personal satisfaction.	3.91	.750
My thesis is building new knowledge for the discipline.	4.00	.724
I think myself as a researcher when writing a thesis.	4.14	.710
Writing a thesis has little to do with how I feel about myself.	3.23	.868
Valid N (listwise)		43

Descriptive statistics (see Table 6.2) of the data from the L2 Writer Identity Survey showed that EFL postgraduate thesis writing boosted the writers' self-confidence. Half of them admitted a lack of self-confidence at the beginning of English thesis writing (Mean = 3.30). The practice of thesis writing increased the students' self-confidence in writing in English (Mean = 4.28). Forty students (93.02%) agreed on the positive impact of the thesis writing on their self-confidence. Thirty-two participants (74.42%) were confident in the quality of their theses. Thesis writing provided the participants personal satisfaction (Frequency = 31, Percent = 72.09, M = 3.91). Most participants believed their thesis would generate new knowledge in the discipline (Mean = 4.00, Frequency = 34, Percent = 79.07%). The "researcher" role was

recognized in thesis writing procedures by thirty-seven participants (Mean = 4.14). Only one participant objected to this statement. Although most of the thesis writers positioned themselves as researchers, less than half of the participants (41.86%) could see the connection between thesis writing and their sense of self with the same amount of participants staying neutral.

Findings from the qualitative data analysis further revealed that thirteen thesis writers became more confident throughout the thesis writing practice. Five participants (Tom, Daniel, Amy, Zoe, Nico, Fanny, and Laura) developed self-confidence in English writing. For example, Zoe wrote, "I feel more confident than ever before on writing." Laura also claimed the change in her self-confidence. She wrote, "I am confident enough now." The following excerpts were from John. He confidently talked about his change. He firmly believed he was building his confidence with the experience gained from conducting and writing up the thesis research.

I obtained many invaluable experiences during my Ph.D. program, starting from preparing research topic and proposal, conducting the experimental works, writing the reports, and summarizing all reports into a dissertation.
(Written Narrative)

The suggestion from his supervisor and colleagues helped him improve. He related thesis writing to confidence-development, and even to identity construction. He saw the impact of thesis writing on his identity development.

I'm building my confidence, because I have experience from writing this thesis, from suggestions from my advisor, and from my colleagues. So, I

think this is like “to construct me.” This is the way how we write an academic report. I think this influenced me a lot. (John, Interview)

Tom went through three stages in self-confidence development. At the first stage, he realized what he wrote was not based on facts, which destroyed his confidence. He pretended to be confident. In the second stage, he gradually learned the rules of writing in the discourse community. He rebuilt his confidence in writing but still tried to stay safe. In the third stage, he became confident to show his opinions because his writing was inspired and supported by the data. He thought his thesis might be as good as, or even better than the thesis or published articles he read:

After I read some thesis and papers, I always came out an idea: I can also reach this kind of level. Maybe my thesis is better than this. (Interview)

Amy provided three reasons for her self-confidence development. First, her supervisor did not intervene in her writing, which made her confident and steadily move on:

My writing on the thesis is, since it has started, undisturbed. My work progressed steadily. If the writing goes well, it's a very effective booster of your own confidence. (Written Narrative)

Second, the positive feedback from the readers boosted confidence in writing. She became more confident when her supervisor and some thesis committee members recognized her writing ability:

In the beginning, I didn't know how my writing would be evaluated by my advisor and by the examiners. I felt that my writing might not be that good.

Then I went through the proposal, some committee members said I wrote well. Sometimes, I could feel my advisor's comments more direct. He told me, "I see some qualities in your writing". For me, these are very encouraging. I could see myself improve during this process. (Interview)

Third, compared to writing the Chapters of Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodologies, she was more confident when writing the Results and Discussions parts. She felt more ownership in writing.

Most of the participants were hesitant when responding to questions related to identity. For instance, Tom told me, "I don't think much about my sense of myself when I'm writing." Tyler was confused, too. He said, "I don't know why you asked me about my sense of myself. Usually, in academic writing, we are asked to stay outside. We cannot put our personal identity inside."

Tom's case is the representative of developing one's worldview along with the academic writing practices. He had written his bachelor's degree thesis and master's degree thesis in English, which he "would rather call them 'self-reflections,' mainly based on self-imagination." At that time, he constructed English academic writing through reading the research papers, which now he categorized as "not real research papers" with "low quality." He did not know how to search for high-quality research articles. He blamed himself even not having the "consciousness of distinguishing the quality of papers." He did not think he knew what academic writing was at that time. He said, "I was just pretending to be confident" and "using good words to make the writing nice to read and academical to those readers who don't know what is real

academic.”

He began to receive formal instructions on scientific research and academic writing after he came to this university for doctoral education. He took multiple literacy activities such as attending courses, reading research papers, and discussing with teachers and friends. He attempted to improve his academic writing ability and gradually sensed the existence of the academic community.

I read lots of papers and get myself familiar with how to write academic papers properly. I carefully learned the basic rules of academic writing and observed the rules strictly and imitated the way others wrote. (Interview)

He knew what he lacked; thus, he decided to keep silent. He tried to hide his voice if he was not sure about that. With a sense of being small in the academic community, he wrote without showing his voice:

I didn't dare to write unless necessary. I also tried to hide my voice, hold my opinions, and hung my identity when writing. One example was that I quoted a lot with little comments or reflections. (Written Narrative)

However, he already saw the growth in himself. He also sensed the complexity of his sense of self. He carefully complied with the writing convention. Meanwhile, he was open to different ideas.

The “me” is growing step by step. He is both conservative (e.g., he refuses to use “I” in thesis writing) and open-minded. He still observes the basic rules carefully but he is trying to be critical about different views and creative to put forward new ideas.

6.2 Discussion

EFL postgraduate thesis writing is a socially situated learning practice. Most of the participants reported a change of themselves before and after EFL postgraduate thesis writing. As individual writers, they saw the change in different aspects. A summary of the data indicates an increase in knowledge, improvement in academic writing abilities, and self-confidence development. These changes contribute to writer identity construction in EFL postgraduate thesis writers. This finding adds more empirical evidence to the argument that identity is dynamic rather than static, as discussed in Chapter 5. EFL postgraduate thesis writers' identities should be considered a process of becoming rather than states with fixed characteristics.

First, EFL postgraduate thesis writing is a process of disciplinary becoming, embedding the writers' learning disciplinary knowledge and negotiating relationships and memberships. Most of the participants gained knowledge about disciplinary topics, thesis genre, and research methods. This increased knowledge adds to the students' repertoire of knowledge and constructs their autobiographical self (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Knowledge has been playing an essential role in disciplinary literacy. The thesis writers actively engaged in domain-specific literacy practices (Moje (2011). They attended courses, seminars, workshops, group meetings, and conferences, which help the participants gain literacy in the discipline. For instance, Tom read research articles and doctoral theses in the field of second language acquisition. He also attended

workshops to inspire his thinking. Tyler developed his disciplinary knowledge through the practice as Tom did. Besides, he presented at the seminars, international conferences, and published research articles. Academic literacy activities refreshed the participants' knowledge repertoire and may cause knowledge production or knowledge transformation (Prior, 1998) within the writers themselves.

Knowing what happens in the disciplinary discourses (Zhao, 2019) fosters this process of disciplinary becoming. Both Tyler and Jack developed a better understanding of the researched topics. The disciplinary knowledge is displayed when the participants choose which works in the discipline to cite. For instance, Lucy said, "I need to cite people who have a good quality of words, or people famous in this field, or people whose work very related to this field." She decided to cite those established researchers in the field. Citation aligns the student writers certain groups of researchers who may believe in the same paradigms, share the same research interest, or work in the related fields.

Researchers have claimed there is an elaborate link between knowledge and disciplinary identities. "It is unlikely that one would be willing to see herself in a new identity about which she knows little (Moje, 2011, p. 51)." Gaining knowledge might be the very first step for the participants to construct disciplinary identities. Learning the disciplinary content (Stevens et al., 2008; Thompson, 2009) helps shape the participants' values and beliefs (Ivanič, 1998). These values and beliefs determine the

positions the students take in the discipline and consequently influence their selection of research topics and linguistic choices.

To some extent, the domain-specific literacy activities determine what positions the students take in the discipline. And then the positions they take reveals a self-identifying with specific values and beliefs inscribed. Take Bess as an example. She said, “I am not into quantitative research, so sometimes when I read quantitative-oriented research, I do not feel like reading that kind of thing, so I usually skip that part.” She gains knowledge about researching through reading articles. However, since she is not interested in quantitative research, her literacy activities focus on developing her qualitative research skills. Thus, it can be inferred that her new knowledge learning activities identify her more to the values of qualitative research. Also, literacy itself identifies the thesis writers to the disciplinary communities. Bess might be more comfortable with the qualitative researchers’ camp. Take Tyler as another example. Tyler mentioned earlier, he presented in international conferences where he communicated to the physicists from other affiliations. From the perspective of situated learning theories, identity construction is a way of becoming a member of a community of practice (Wenger 1998). Therefore, this research argues that EFL postgraduate thesis writers acquired central disciplinary skills, promoting disciplinary identities.

Second, EFL postgraduate thesis writing is a process of genre learning. Researchers have proposed genre knowledge crucial in student writers’ discursive

practice (Swales, 2004; Tardy, 2009). Data analysis in this research revealed that some participants developed thesis genre knowledge through their learning trajectories to become thesis writers. The gained knowledge about the thesis genre shaped the writers' conceptualization of conventions of thesis writing, privileged patterns, expectations, and concerns in the discourse communities. To be specific, "formal knowledge" (Tardy, 2009, p. 20) with the thesis genre was acquired. Tom, Lucy, and Anna increased thesis genre knowledge, including structural elements and discourse conventions. "Process knowledge" (Tardy, 2009, p. 20) was also gained. For instance, Daniel learned the composing processes to proceed with the thesis "in a systematic way, step by step" (Written Narrative). Learning to employ these conventions and transform the knowledge in thesis writing, the participants navigate their membership in the disciplinary communities. This learning process is continuous and changing.

Besides, an awareness of the readers began to emerge. Daniel and Amy gradually noticed the readers of their theses. Amy even could sense the different readers of her thesis and manuscripts to be published. This sensitivity of readers is vital in disciplinary writing (Smagorinsky et al., 2005). It made the writers think about the receptions of their thesis. When writing the thesis, in addition to disciplinary conventions, the students need to consider institutional expectations. This awareness of readers, to some extent, determines how the thesis writers respond to the possible ways of writing a thesis in the discourse communities. They may defer to conventions or expectations, or

they may choose to disrupt them. For example, Amy deleted all the first-person pronouns, as her supervisor suggested. Because in her mind, her supervisor was more familiar with the institutional expectations of thesis writing.

In light of the discussions above, I argue that EFL postgraduate thesis writing promotes identity development in terms of self-adjusting and social acculturation. Writer identity derives from the interaction between the individual and the social aspects of selves. It is “neither controlled solely by writers nor determined by the social worlds within which they write; it is subject to and a result of both writer and social context” (Tardy, 2012, p. 39).

Self-adjusting is the writer’s interaction with oneself. In a processual view (Lemke, 2002), writer identity is shifting. Based on this view, the current research discusses that thesis writing is a continuously changing process of self-identification for the participants (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Autobiographical self is what a writer brings to the act of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. In Chapter Four, differences are identified in writers’ autobiographical histories, particularly in terms of their development of academic writing ability, the conceptualization of thesis writing, and a sense of self-worth. Here, I further discuss the increased knowledge, the gained academic writing experience, and the developed self-confidence reconstruct the thesis writers’ autobiographical selves. Their sense of self might be influenced in certain aspects.

EFL postgraduate thesis writing is building the writers’ experience and

constructing self-confidence. Most of the thesis writers developed better academic writing abilities through long time practice and significant commitments. For instance, Lucy could write better with systematic structure, academic language, and logical development of the ideas. Anna also sensed her change. She said, “I feel more comfortable with writing.” This development might result in the change of the writers’ habitual repertoire of textual practice. Besides, this development might be able to explain the participants’ boost of self-confidence in writing. Amy felt more ease in writing than before. As Amy claimed, “if the writing goes well, it's a very effective booster of your own confidence (Written Narrative).” Therefore, as the participants gained more disciplinary knowledge and became more familiar with the thesis genre, they made progress in the thesis writing, which consequently boosted the self-confidence in making decisions in writing. This finding proves the connection between writing improvement, and confidence development. (DasBender, 2017; Zhu, 2019). This research further proposes the interactions within knowledge increase, writing improvement, and confidence development.

Due to different levels of exposure to disciplinary and thesis genre literacy activities, thesis writers vary in their disciplinary knowledge and empirical experience. Their conceptualization of thesis writing is, to a great extent, based on what thesis genre knowledge they gained. Referring to the genre knowledge they gained, the student writers may define themselves as “good” or “bad” writers. This self-concept somewhat

influences their later writing with a feeling of ease or anxiety. The participants continuously identify thesis writing with their understanding of a “good” thesis. This conceptualization of a good thesis is what the researchers called “ideal forms” (Mochizuki, 2019). The students attempt to adjust and make their writings more thesis like according to these perceived “ideal forms.” However, these forms are not fixed but may change with the students’ continuous increase in knowledge.

The participants’ self-worth is stable in the sense that the non-native English speaker’s identity always worries them about the writing quality. In line with this is positioning oneself as being “deficient compared to speakers of ‘standard’ English” (Norton & De Costa, 2018, p. 101). It is found that the participants generally lacked confidence at the very beginning stage of thesis writing. Half of the participants in the survey admitted that they were not confident at the beginning. The provided evidence cannot show a distinct impact of one’s first language on constructing of an authorial voice. This finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Matsuda, 2001; Zhao, 2019). Meanwhile, self-worth is dynamic in that assurance in writing is changing over the practice of thesis writing. Forty students (93.02%) became more confident than before.

Therefore, the three major points of autobiographical self mentioned in Section 5.1 influence thesis writers’ discursal construction of self and authorial presence. The participants adjusted their discourse choices, such as word choice, sentence structures,

writing styles, and ways of dividing the texts, according to what is accepted as a good thesis in the discipline. For instance, the participants used academic terms and wrote objectively without mentioning to themselves. This adjustment thus determines the image of the writer conveyed in the written text. This finding is consistent with Li & Deng (2019) that aspects of self-representations share different roles. However, the construction of authorial self in EFL postgraduate thesis writing is different from that in personal statement writing. Despite being proposed as a major presentation of authorial self (Hyland 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001), self-mention is seldom accepted and utilized by the thesis writers. This resistance in self-mention can be interpreted as a signal of writers consciously self-adjusting one's writing and trying not to involve autobiographical self into thesis writing.

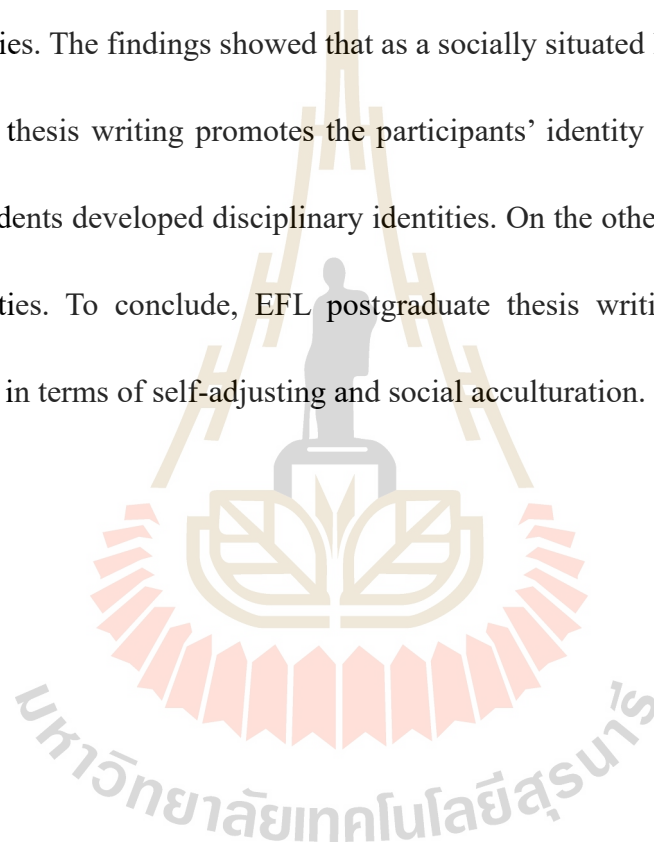
Social acculturation discusses the participation of EFL postgraduate thesis writers in social interactions. Thesis writers struggle to evolve one's voice and develop into the desired identity. The awareness of discourse communities around is found significant in building the identity of successful thesis writers. Like most EFL learners in non-English speaking countries, the participants have rarely been informed of the notion of textual construction of voice (Zhao, 2014). However, the student writers learn through academic literacy practice that a thesis speaks to a particular readership. The desire to develop membership in the academic discourse community motivates the participants to acculturate into the social context. In this process, both disciplinary knowledge and

genre conventions are providing options for EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Either following or resisting the socially available options of writing, the participants acculturate themselves into the discourse communities. The local readers are anticipated as supervisors and thesis committee members. Their expectations and concerns are figured out and followed if possible. Although mostly passive, compliance with conventions should not be believed unconditional. The researcher's role, even novice, should be more promoted because the graduate thesis is expected to uncover new knowledge (Starfield & Paltridge, 2019). Social acculturation can also be found in writers' efforts to form one's own way to develop a thesis, consider the readers' interest, and discuss from a critical perspective. This finding echoes Hyland & Tse's (2012) idea that socially enabled conventions provided writers not only particular ways to represent themselves but also opportunities to "negotiate new positions" (p. 156).

Stevens et al. (2008) proposed three dimensions through which engineer students became engineers: gaining disciplinary knowledge, self-identifying, and trying to become officially recognized as members of the disciplinary communities. For EFL postgraduate students who are learning to become thesis writers, the following dimensions might be more applicable: gaining disciplinary knowledge, learning thesis genre, self-adjusting, and social acculturation into the discourse communities.

6.3 Summary

This chapter investigates how EFL postgraduate thesis writing promotes the writers' development. Most participants believed that they grew throughout the thesis writing practice. The reported increase of knowledge, academic writing abilities, and self-confidence refreshed the participants' repertoire of knowledge and constructed the writer identities. The findings showed that as a socially situated learning practice, EFL postgraduate thesis writing promotes the participants' identity development. On one hand, the students developed disciplinary identities. On the other hand, develop thesis writer identities. To conclude, EFL postgraduate thesis writing promotes identity development in terms of self-adjusting and social acculturation.



CHAPTER 7

Facilitating Thesis Writer Development

This chapter presents findings and discussions in response to research question 4, “How does the perceived support foster EFL graduate thesis writer’s identity construction?” Data are drawn from both quantitative and qualitative inquiry. First, it investigates the graduate students’ perceived social support in their thesis writing. Second, it presents the expectations and concerns with EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Third, it discusses the writing support and advisory system and proposes the implications.

7.1 Perceived Social Support

This part presents the findings related to what social support the student writers perceived. The resources and forms of support are explored.

7.1.1 Sources of Social Support

All the participants acknowledged facilitating experience in their EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The perceived support came from different social resources. First, Some students mentioned the support from their working place. For instance, Murray’s home university guaranteed her enough time to complete her Ph.D. doctoral

study, which freed her from worrying about losing her job if she stayed in Thailand too long. Also, she conducted her research at that university and got help from her colleagues. She could borrow money from the university without the need to pay for the interest.

My school in Laos supports a lot. They give me the time. I can stay until I finish. And I can use the place to conduct the research, free. They prepare a very good place and the facilities. It's also free. And I can borrow about 40000 or 50,000 Baht, free of interest from my school. (Murray, Interview)

The second source of support is the university or the school where EFL postgraduate thesis writers study. Most of the students mentioned the help from the university library. The excellent library service includes providing abundant books and articles related to the students' research areas, organizing training sessions for academic writing, and ensuring a quiet environment for reading and writing.

For learning sources and references, the university provides a lot. We have perhaps the best library in Thailand. (Jack, Interview)

The university is quite a science and technology-oriented, so the library has a lot of books on my research topic. (Fanny, Interview)

School-level support is found in helping the students solve problems with thesis research. In the case of Daniel, he got support from the school when he expressed his problems with his former supervisor. His school negotiated between him and his supervisor and then helped him move to a new supervisor:

I wrote an email to the head of the school and expressed my problems and desperate emotions. She comforted me that there is always light at the end of the tunnel and agreed to change my advisor. (Daniel, Written Narrative)

Besides, the participants mentioned the support from the school secretaries. Both Tyler and Nico got suggestions from the secretaries of their schools on formatting the thesis.

Expect all the documents they provide, I get the suggestion and help from the secretary, from the school. (Tyler, Interview)

I just asked the secretary about what the margin or space should be. She told me, and I follow her. (Nico, Interview)

Third, social support came from the faculties, the seniors, classmates, or friends inside or outside the university. Take Zoe as an example. She felt support from some teachers, seniors, classmates, and friends. Two faculties in her school provided help. One teacher helped her rethink the focus of her study. With the teacher's comments, it was disappointed for her to find that what she wrote could not match her research purposes. She appreciated the teacher's help in adjusting her ideas and writing. The other teacher suggested she develop the research topic from her teaching experience. The help from this teacher instilled calmness in her. She felt more certain about her research with the two teachers' support. Her senior's help was emphasized both in the Written Narrative and in the interview. She thought speaking with her senior in her first language promoted her a better understanding of the research and inspired her writing with confidence. Furthermore, her classmates helped her writing with clarity and organization.

Forth, except those participants who have not proposed their thesis, some

writers acknowledged the support from the thesis committee members. The thesis committee provides comments and suggestions on the students' work from different aspects. For example, John's committee helped him improve the research design. Commenting that some of his research ideas obsolete, the committee members suggested something new. Thus, the current research topic is a combination of ideas from himself and the committee members.

Most of them technically help me, in experimental design. When I present at the proposal defense, they proposed the new idea. I had four ideas, they rejected two of my ideas, and they added some new idea. (John, Interview)

Likewise, Tyler received comments and suggestions from the thesis committee. Each of the committee members asked him questions and then suggested on different aspects of his thesis research. One of them was interested in the method of mathematical calculation. Another professor concerned more about the significance of the study. The external examiner suggested solutions to the problems encountered and more perspectives for future study.

The thesis committee of Nico helped her with the thesis structure, how to organize the content. They suggested she update the literature review and confirmed the significance of her study.

The committee members give feedback and suggestions. Mostly it's about the content. Some of them said, "your work is new to our field" and "it's great to integrate this technology into classroom. (Nico, Interview)

The thesis writers all expressed their gratitude towards the thesis committee

members. The comments and suggestions were mostly considered as constructive and thus helpful for their research and thesis writing. Tom thought he could take up most of the suggestions. He said, “I think 90% is helpful, but for the rest 10%, I make some changes or remove it.” Lucy appreciated the thesis committee members pointing out some serious problems in her thesis. According to the constructive suggestions, Lucy revised her proposal and made her writing more systematic and logical.

The committee members discover my problem, some very serious problems in my thesis. Some comments are very crucial and helpful. My work become more systematic, more logical. Some of their ideas are very good. If I don't have them, I will never have any improvement. (Lucy, Interview)

Last, the most recognized source of social support was thesis supervisors. For the thesis writers, their supervisors played a vital role in conducting and writing the thesis research.

Table 7.1 Descriptive Analysis of Thesis Supervisor’s Support

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor helps me a lot in my thesis.	4.47	.631
I am not clear what my supervisor expects me to revise.	3.44	1.031
What my supervisor said about my thesis does not affect my feeling of myself.	3.23	.947
My supervisor is satisfied with my thesis.	3.84	.721

As Table 7.1 showed, the participants held a positive attitude towards their supervisors’ help in writing a thesis ($M = 4.47$). Forty-two participants (97.67%) perceived much support from their supervisors. Only seven participants (16.28%) reported that they were not clear the supervisors’ revision requirements ($M = 3.44$).

Half of the participants thought their supervisors' feedback impacted on their sense of self ($M = 3.23$). Thirty participants (69.77%) felt their supervisors were satisfied with their writings.

Supervisor's support was perceived in many aspects, including guiding the research, checking the writings, monitoring the progress, caring about the physical and mental wellness, and so on. For example, both Amy and John received help in research design. Before writing the thesis proposal, Amy and her supervisor spent almost half a year discussing some key issues, such as the objectives, significance of the research, problems predicted, and solutions to be.

These discussions turned out to be very useful, as they have helped me gain a full and firm control over my research project. (Written Narrative)

John's supervisor suggested he read extensively and found the research gaps. After John proposed some ideas, his supervisor further suggested he consider the feasibility. Then they reached an agreement to develop the research from two of his ideas. The supervisors' support was considered helpful in developing research topics.

Tom shared stories that his supervisor helped him develop the research and inspired his critical thinking. Tom's supervisor respected his selection of the research topic and asked him to think about the issue from different perspectives.

I talked with my supervisor about this topic, then he gave me some idea about how to implement it, enlightening me about the method. He always asks me to think differently. (Tom, Interview)

Emma's supervisor monitored her progress by asking to report the work

finished in one week and checking the weekly report. When the new term began, Emma met her supervisor and two co-supervisors three supervisors in the meeting room. In the same way, Laura reported her progress in the lab meeting which was held every two weeks.

In summary, the students received generous support in their EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The thesis writers' working university, teachers, seniors, classmates, friends, committee members, and supervisors were the sources of the perceived social support. All the thesis writers thought the social support facilitated their thesis writing.

7.1.2 Forms of Social Support

This section further presents the findings concerning the thesis writers' facilitating experience. The forms of perceived social support are identified. EFL postgraduate thesis writers received support for and beyond their academic development. First, the writers got support concerning their academic development in the aspects of feedback on the thesis project, writing support, and access to educational resources.

Feedback on the thesis project. Teachers and supervisors provided feedback on the thesis project. The example of Zoe provided in Section 6.2.1.1 showed that she got assistance from some teachers in her school. They gave feedback on her research and suggested she rethink the design. Mostly, feedback on the thesis project was given by thesis supervisors. For instance, John's supervisor provided feedback on

the hypothesis, scopes, and the objectives of his study. She also gave feedback on some of his discussions. She suggested the discussions should be based on the data.

My supervisor always say “I don’t like this” and then she highlights the sentence, any of my discussion she does not agree. Then we have discussions. I have comments from my supervisor about hypothesis, scope of study, and then objectives of the study. My advisor said I lost the focus, I got lost. As she said, “we cannot claim anything beyond our data.” (John, Interview)

Lucy had two supervisors. One provided feedback on the content, how to claim with theoretical support. The other gave suggestions on how to conduct the research ethically. She asked Lucy to get consent from the participants.

One supervisor pay more attention on the theoretical things, the idea, the thought in my thesis, how I'm going to explain and what I'm going to claim. The other focus more on the structure. She said I need to include consent form in my appendix, and I need to do this face to face. She just tell me what should I do and what have I done wrong. (Interview)

Emma got feedback on her project. Her supervisors helped her deal with the problems encountered in the experiments. They suggested she modify the methods.

For problems in my lab, they always help me to modify my methods. Just suggest me, “you need to change this one to this.” (Emma)

Writing Support. Statistical analysis (see Table 7.2) shows that the participants generally received writing support from the university or the institutes. Thirty-three participants (76.74%) attended courses/seminars/workshops on academic writing ($M = 3.81$). Twenty-six students (60.46%) attended group meetings and shared their progress in thesis writing ($M = 3.49$). Thirty-two students (74.42%) followed the

guideline of books on how to write a thesis ($M = 3.77$). Thirty-seven students (86.04%) participated in the conferences related to their research ($M = 4.14$). Guidelines and thesis formats were clearly provided by the schools ($M = 3.53$, Frequency = 27, Percent = 72.79). Thirty students (69.77%) reported that the schools organized activities to help thesis writing ($M = 3.72$). However, only eleven students (25.59) joined writing groups and wrote with their peer friends ($M = 2.81$). Despite that, most of the participants thought the university provided enough writing support ($M = 3.72$, Frequency = 28, Percent = 65.12).

Table 7.2 Descriptive Analysis of Writing Support

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I attended courses/seminars/workshops on English academic writing.	3.81	.958
I joined an academic writing group and wrote with peer friends.	2.81	.958
I attended some group meetings where we discussed our thesis writing progress.	3.49	1.077
The writing support from the university is helpful.	3.72	1.008
I read books on how to write a thesis and follow the steps.	3.77	.922
I took part in some conferences related to my thesis topic.	4.14	.833
My school provides clear guidelines and format on writing a thesis.	3.53	1.008
My school organizes some activities to help thesis writing.	3.72	.734
Valid N (list-wise)		43

Findings from the qualitative analysis also show that the students received support in writing a thesis. Academic writing courses were provided for both Master and Ph.D. students at the School of Foreign Languages. All of the students from the school of Foreign Language acknowledged these courses helped improve their academic writing abilities. For instance, Tom learned the model to develop a research

article, and Daniel gained knowledge about conventions of writing a thesis. The two Master students attended a series of courses related to skills in academic reading and writing. From the courses, Lucy learned how to write for academic purposes, while Zoe was more familiar with the components of a thesis.

I received formal instructions on scientific research and academic writing. From the class of academic writing, I know that when we write research papers, we just follow the IMRD method. (Tom, Interview)

From the writing class, we already know this component for the thesis. So we are clear about what we should have in a thesis. (Zoe, Interview)

Some students out of the School of Foreign Language also talked about their experience of attending the academic writing courses. Although not registering, John sat in the academic writing class as suggested by his supervisor. From the course, he learned how to discuss and stay focused. Fanny's school provided a course on academic writing that was delivered in the Thai language. She attended that course and learned the elements of a thesis and how to develop a thesis' main idea. Both Fanny and Tyler mentioned that the School of Foreign Languages provided an academic writing course in English. However, neither of them joined that class. Fanny thought she was not at the stage of writing English academic paper yet, while Tyler was already confident in his academic writing abilities.

They provide academic writing course, both in Thai and English. Ajarn from foreign language school, he has one course for the graduate students to improve the writing skill in English. But since I was working on my model, since my work not go far for the academy paper, so I didn't attend the course

yet. The Thai course helped me to understand that I need to include introduction, the main idea, the hypothesis, the objectives. But for the writing style, I have not got the advantage from the Thai class, because the Thai course teach only the main idea about the thesis. (Fanny, Interview)

All the participants reported that their supervisors assisted them a lot in thesis writing. Abundant examples can be found that their supervisors helped improve the students' writings. Tom's supervisor helped checked his writing and pointed out the grammatical mistakes. Daniel's supervisor was a meticulous reader. She pointed out all the language problems in his writing, including not dividing the texts appropriately, lacking connection between the ideas, and missing some information. She provided very detailed feedback to help him improve writing.

Lack of the topic sentences, the grammar, and even the capitalize, "the first letter you did not capitalize", she mentioned, and the comma. She mentioned too lot. Many feedbacks. (Daniel, Interview)

John's supervisor suggested he develop an outline of the thesis first. She asked him to convert all the data into tables and figures, making the data easy to identify and interpret.

Lucy's supervisor is a native English speaker. He pointed out the language problems in her writing, correcting the grammatical mistakes, suggesting writing academically, and identifying wrong interpretations of previous studies. Lucy appreciated that her supervisor helped solve some problems she could not handle by herself. For example, with his help, Lucy better understood the theories related to her research.

My supervisor is more for some situations that I can't fix on my own. For example, when I had problems related to theoretical framework in my thesis or I misunderstood some of the learning theories, educational models, hypotheses, etc., he was there to help me understand and interpret them. . (Lucy, Written Narrative)

Murray's supervisor also cared about the language Murray used in her writing. She suggested the consistence of the terms used and logical development of the ideas.

My advisor helped me quite a lot about my language. I make mistakes about plural and singular. Ajarn said, "you should use the same word." She wants me to write academically. She said "come to the point," "brief," and "you must state these clearly with first, second, third." (Laura, Interview)

Access to Educational Resources. This part checks whether the participants have access to the educational resources needed for their thesis research and writing. Results of statistical analysis (see Table 7.3) showed that half of the participants thought the university provided abundant educational resources for their thesis research and writing ($M = 3.53$, Frequency = 24, Percent = 55.81%). Among the remaining, fourteen (32.56%) chose not to show their opinions, while five students thought the resources were not enough. Less than half of the students could get access to the books and journals useful their thesis writing ($M = 3.53$, Frequency = 20, Percent = 46.51). Eight students (18.60%) were not satisfied with the library service. Twenty-seven students (62.79%) could search for information from the online databases available in the library ($M = 3.60$). However, ten participants (23.26%) responded neutrally to this item. Six students (13.96%) did not think the library provided enough databases.

Table 7.3 Descriptive Analysis of Educational Resources

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The university provides rich resources for designing and writing my thesis.	3.53	.827
The university library provides all the books and journals that I need.	3.33	.993
The university library provides enough databases where I can search for all the information I need in writing my thesis.	3.60	.955
Valid N (list wise)		43

The students responded to the interview question related to their access to educational resources from the aspect of library service, materials, and facilities. Most of the interviewees were satisfied with the educational resources provided in the university. For example, John commented that educational resources in this university were rich. The internet service was excellent. He could find many books in the library, inspiring his ideas. Moreover, his supervisor supported him with all the materials for his research. Anna was satisfied that her lab provided all the machines and tools she needed.

So far I can access all of the equipment. All the tools I need are provided by my lab, so it is really convenient for me. (Anna, Interview)

Most participants thought the university library service was outstanding. The library provided numerous books and journals for reference and got access to many online databases. Daniel could easily download research articles and theses and find books related to his research topic. Tyler thought the library was especially helpful for those who enjoyed gaining knowledge from reading books. Fanny, Emma, and Laura were also satisfied with the library service. Fanny could find many books closely

related to her research interest. Thanks to the network between universities, she borrowed a book from another university. Laura and Emma succeeded in requesting some books which had been not in stock at the library. Zoe spoke highly of the library that it provided different places for the students to read and write.

The library is pretty helpful, because they provide quite lot of papers, books that you cannot search online. This library imports some new books every year. I think that's good. (Tyler, Interview)

I can request some books and some papers from the library. I can get most of them. Last time I request more than five books and I get one. That is a new book. It's quite good. For my experiment, my lab have this machine. So I can do it in my lab, not need go to other lab. (Emma, Interview)

You can book the single room for learning. You also can study in 24-hours rooms. And you can choose the air-conditioned room. It makes you more comfortable. (Zoe, Interview)

Second, EFL postgraduate thesis writers received more than academic support. Some students perceived that their supervisors mentally supported them.

Mental Support. Amy recalled her journey of writing a thesis with emotions. She shared a lot of affectionate stories. The caring and encouraging notes reminded her of the support from her supervisor. The feeling of being trusted made her confident to insist on her style of writing.

I feel like now being trusted with more freedom to orchestrate 'my writing, my way', with my advisor's supportive hand unfailingly behind my back. I have it paved with affectionate stories, caring and encouraging messages from my advisor, and most appreciatively, his stereotypical blue and red marks left on the white or brown paper. (Amy, Written Narrative)

In our interview, Amy mentioned the support from her supervisor several times, with bright smiles. Once, she went to her supervisor with a problem that she encountered in data collection. She reported the problem and suggested some solutions. Her supervisor agreed with her idea. After the tutorial, her supervisor praised her for being not afraid of the difficulties. Her supervisor thought she worked with the problem as a good researcher would do. These encouraging words urged her to work out the solutions for future problems and motivated her to develop into a researcher.

My supervisor sent me a text message, “you encountered a problem, but you did not treat it as the end of the world kind of predicament. Instead, you came up with a proposed way to tone it down. Good and promising trait for a researcher.” With that encouraging note, I have since then determined not to go up to him with only a nerve-wracking problem, but always with a proposed solution. (Amy, Interview)

Daniel also got mental support from his supervisor. His supervisor asked him not to be worried since she sensed that he was nervous about the upcoming thesis proposal defense. These words instilled Daniel’s calm and relieved him from stress, which might promote good communication between Daniel and the thesis committee members.

She told me, “don't be scared. Don't be afraid. The committee members just want to improve you with many suggestions or comments, so just be confident.” That makes me relieve much pressure. (Daniel, Interview)

Murray and Bess felt friendship with their supervisors. Murray perceived help from her supervisor with academic and personal issues. In the same way, Bess felt

supported in that her supervisors respected her ideas of research and writing.

She is very friendly and talks to me very directly. Ajarn always said something openly to me. I never had anything to hide from her. We are like friends. She helped me a lot with this and that. Even the life, not only in writing or academy. (Murray, Interview)

My advisor has done a good job. She hasn't forced me to do what I don't feel like doing. So most of the time, we can agree with what I had been doing. To me, if possible, supervisor is a guide gives us guidance to do, a friend gives us suggestion on this and that. (Bess, Interview)

Financial Support. John, Emma, Murray, and Jack perceived financial support for their thesis research and writing. All of them had been awarded a scholarship from the university. In addition to the scholarship, John got a full support from his supervisor at the expense of materials in the lab. Thus, he could manage to attend some conferences, buy a computer, and pay for the analysis with his university scholarship. In the same way, Emma's supervisor funded her research, freeing her from worrying about financial issues.

I only get 150,000 Baht, it's not enough for my research. My supervisor has another funding. She mix her funding with my scholarship, so I can handle all my research. (Emma, Interview)

They support most of the experiments. But for some minor experiment, for some chemicals, it is paid by myself. It's OK. I can cover that cost from my own scholarship. (Jack, Interview)

In summary, the participants perceived social support from their working university, their current schools, teachers, seniors, classmates, thesis committee members, and supervisors, in the forms of feedback on the thesis project, writing

support, mental support, and financial support.

7.2 Concerns about EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writing

This section addresses the expectations and concerns about EFL postgraduate thesis writing in this researched university. Findings are presented both from the thesis writers' and thesis supervisors' perspectives.

7.2.1 Thesis Writers' Perspectives

EFL postgraduate thesis writers expressed their concerns in terms of social support. First, although most participants were satisfied with the educational resources, some of them talked about their problems and expected more help from the university. Fanny, Nico, Murray, and Laura showed their concerns about the working space.

Fanny expected some working space for graduate students. The School of Information Technology does not equip a lab for the students; thus, Fanny often sat in the open area of the university library and worked on the project with her laptop. She complained that her thinking was often interrupted by the noises from the undergraduate students around.

If the students want to test application in the bigger server, they can ask the computer center to set, but they don't have the specific lab. Before I attended Ph.D. in IT School, they used to have the lab, but there are no more students, so the lab is terminated. (Fanny, Interview)

Twenty-eight researchers and students had access to Laura's lab. She had to share the few desks with others, which annoyed her much. She expected a more

spacious lab with more worktables. Therefore, she could have a table exclusive for her working, reading, and writing.

We need a bigger lab. We have around 28 members in my lab. I don't have my own desk. That is quite disturbing, because as a graduate student we work in the lab every day. And except the lab work, I want to read the papers and write. It's difficult. (Laura, Interview)

Both from the School of Foreign Language, Nico and Murray expected a room for the graduate students in the school. They thought this room could provide graduate students opportunities to interact with seniors and classmates and promote empathy, friendship, and academic support.

It would be better if we have our own space, for Ph.D. and Master students to be together, to ask, to make a kind of union. We can be together, we can help each other, we can ask, we can make friends, and we can have each other in academic stuff or our daily working. That will be very good. (Murray)

Another aspect of concerns about educational resources is information searching. Daniel and Nico complained that the books in the library had not been updated timely and expressed their expectations of more recently published books. Anna and Fanny had problems accessing some research articles. Some databases listed on the library website were not available. Murray thought the access to information mattered much. She felt uncertain when she could not obtain much information about her research area.

We need more updated books. Some books is very old, maybe 1990s. More updated books is urgently needed. (Danile, Interview)

I'm going to access some article, they said that this university has no access. That's one of the difficulties for me. So, the limitation. (Anna, Interview)

They provide many database, but many database is not available. I only found the abstract in online database, and the university did not subscribe.. (Fanny, Interview)

The resources, if we can get it easily , that is good. But if we don't get, no, that is not good for me. I feel uncertain about it, because I cannot get much information about my topic. (Murray, Interview)

Second, some participants suffered from a shortage of facilities and encountered financial problems. Take Jack as an example. He mentioned his severe problems with the facilities provided in his school. Due to the insufficiency of equipment, he conducted some parts of research in another university located in Bangkok. That means he had to travel frequently between the two universities, which cost his time and money and made things more difficult. He was worried about the research budget, too. His awarded university scholarship could not fully support his research so that he had to look for another funding. In addition to these two problems, he complained the school did not provide a laboratory for students' research, and the limited school budget for students attending conferences caused financial problems.

I am doing my research in another university in Bangkok, because many analyses could not be done in this university. I need travel a lot, putting a lot of time and expenses at bus. It made more difficult to achieve my goal. And for materials and facility, it is zero. The university is supposed to provide a laboratory. In our school, we use our own laptop and pay for the stationary. The research budget is barely enough. I have to find another funding. My scholarship is barely enough, only for my equipment withdraws. What about publications? There's a funding for going to conference, but it's very limited. It's another setback of this university. (Jack, Interview)

Third, all the participants pointed out the insufficient support in EFL thesis writing. The students' excerpts disclosed a widespread feeling of being left alone with their supervisors at the thesis writing stage. The thesis supervisors' were thought as the only source of writing support.

There is not any anyone or any organizations support my thesis writing. I can only get feedback from my supervisor. (Nico, Interview)

I only have my supervisor to improve my writings. I do not have other people to read my work. (Fanny, Interview)

Out of the concern about no other sources of writing support, all the participants suggested the university or the schools organize more academic literacy activities to foster EFL postgraduate thesis writing. The first suggestion was to promote supportive interaction with experienced writers. Amy expected the university to set up a writing center where the students could get comments and suggestions on their written work from some experts. John agreed with Amy that the students needed someone beyond the supervisors to read and check their writings. In his words, "a language clinic" would help pinpoint the students' written products' problems.

Suppose we have a writing center where we bring our writings and get the real feedback and comments. If we have the writing specialists, we can ask help from them, beyond feedback from the supervisor. Now, my supervisor is the only one who gives me feedback on my writing. At the center I can have some second, third or fourth or fifth. (Amy, Interview)

The second suggestion was to urge more writing support from peer students.

Tom thought it was good to have senior students share their experience of writing a

thesis with the juniors. John desired support in the form of a group writing conference. Students could form some small groups and discuss the way of writing and share the experience. He thought discussions could help the student writers develop. Murray also referred to the significance of support from peer friends. She brought up a monthly seminar for all graduate students to present their research and writing so that they could improve with peer friends' feedback.

As I heard, in the United States, they have small groups. In the small group, they discuss about how they write and share the experience. But here, the discussion has not yet established. If we have, we learn from each other. We write and share, so we can develop. (John, Interview)

If the school can provide a seminar to present our topics. I want to listen from others about my research. They can ask questions or give comments. It would be great to help each other to improve the way of working, writing, and doing things. We can work quicker and better. (Murray, Interview)

The third suggestion was for the school to provide more academic literacy activities. Daniel hoped the school could host a series of activities to support his thesis writing. The activities should be able to support the students go through different stages of writing a thesis, providing suggestions on selecting the topic, writing the proposal, and so on. Likewise, Nico expressed her wish to get more training. She wanted the guides on her interpreting the results of statistical analysis.

Maybe at the beginning, with help on how to decide on a topic, how to write the proposal. I want to get help one by one from different stages. (Daniel, Interview)

If the school has a workshop, help me read and explain, interpret the statistics. It would be helpful. (Nico, Interview)

To summarize, the student writers expressed their concerns with EFL postgraduate thesis writing in terms of educational resources, facilities, and writing support. They expected better working space and information searching service and desired more supportive interaction with expert writers and peer students, and more academic literacy activities to improve their writing.

7.2.2 Thesis Supervisors' Perspectives

This section investigates the concerns about EFL postgraduate thesis writing from the supervisors' perspectives, including perceptions of the students' writing, supervisor's support, and suggestions from the supervisors.

Perceptions of the students' writing. Most of the supervisors pinpointed the language problems in the students' thesis writing. Bella found that her students had severe language problems in writing. They were not able to write with cohesion and coherence, clear organization, and logical thinking. In her opinion, good writing started with critically reading and synthesizing the readings. Also, she emphasized the importance of making an outline, which could help develop a clear structure and make logical connections in writing. She complained much that her students did not follow her advice. She sensed some students showed resistance in revising

They can only summarize, they cannot synthesize. If you have good outline, you can know what to say, and under this what to add to support your idea. It's easy to follow from the outline and idea will flow naturally. The reader understand clearly. Right now students don't come up with outline, or they just don't know what to do a good outline. See? It will end up with revising

so many times, because no organization of idea, no cohesion and coherence between ideas. (Bella)

Nancy thought her students' writings were generally deficient. All her supervisees needed to develop the competency of scientific thinking. Besides, students' writing abilities varied. Thai students especially had problems with their English language.

In the case of Thai students, I have two big problems. First, especially Master students, their idea flowing is not logic, not in the scientist way. Second, they cannot communicate in English, either. The international students have the problems with the scientific thinking, too. (Nancy, Interview)

Lee supervised graduate students from Thailand, Myanmar, and China. He also found the language problems in his supervisees' writing. He helped corrected the grammatical mistakes and guided them on how to construct writing in the English language. As Nancy did, Lee noticed that Thai students suffered more in their EFL postgraduate thesis writing. In addition to problems with English grammar, they had difficulties in their paragraph writing.

I have to modify, tell them what is wrong, and then show them how to use English to report the results. Thai students write more like spoken English. So, they may put the sentences not relevant together, or divide one sentence into several sentences. A lot grammar mistakes. (Lee, Interview)

Sue thought her supervisees did not encounter difficulties in organizing the thesis because they could follow some fixed patterns in the area. The students mostly struggled with interpreting and discussing the results.

The students know what they have to write, because they have pattern in the thesis. They know the way to do. But what they are going to struggle is with the results and discussion. It's hard for them to interpret the result. That is the most difficult part of the thesis or manuscript writing. (Sue, Interview)

Supervisor's Support. All the supervisors made great efforts to support their supervisees' thesis research and writing.

The supervisors all claimed that supervising thesis writing was a dynamic co-construction between a supervisor and a supervisee. None of them had a fixed way to follow. They all developed different ways to guide individual students' thesis writing. Sue mentioned that her students working on various topics. She changed the ways of supervision when dealing with different students. The principle of her supervision was to inspire thinking and reasoning through the students' decision-making procedures.

The principle I use to supervise is to give them questions. So I ask them some questions: why we have to do this? Is there any reason behind? Why do you design in this way? Which question do you want to answer? (Sue, Interview)

Lee also realized the importance of developing students' competencies of thinking and learning. He asked the students to organize the thesis by themselves and then reported their reasons for the structure. He guided the students to learn thesis writing by constructing patterns based on the research results.

I never tell students at the beginning how many chapters they should have, and in which chapter what they should put in. I ask them to work out their thesis structure. Then I ask them to tell me why they arrange in that kind of form. Then we discuss what aspects need to modify. We talk with each other to reach certain arrangement, depending on their results. Some result is very beautiful, then we can make a strong argument. (Lee)

Abel saw thesis writing as a dynamic construction. He raised questions, and guided the students to find answers to the questions raise, rather than telling them what to do. He inspired their thinking, leading them to make a convincing argument.

The whole thesis is a dynamic construction, it's not exactly a supervision in the sense that I tell people what to do, but rather than I try to get students to find their way through the problem solving, asking them questions, and letting them argue or give reasons, so that they produce a good story. (Abel)

Nancy closely followed the students' progress. She organized the weekly lab meeting and asked for a weekly progress report. Besides, she responded to the problems reported with individual students.

They got the topic from me. When they struggle with the results or with their method, I guide them case by case. I have some lab meeting every week. And now I have the weekly report. I ask the students to write what they're doing each week and send a report to me every Monday. So that I can follow what they're doing at the moment. And I also ask them to write the problem. When I saw the problem, I may contact with them. (Nancy)

Supervisors provided feedback both on the thesis research project and on writing. Supervisors provided different kinds of feedback on the students' writings. For example, Bella was a careful and detailed reader. She circled out all the problems and commented on them one by one in the face-to-face tutorials. Unlike her, Sue focused more on checking the ideas, whether the idea was appropriate, and whether the idea developed naturally and logically. She suggested her students focus on one main idea in one paragraph.

All kinds of feedback. I am quite detailed, so when I supervise my students, after I finish reading I put questions or something. When I meet the students, I go line by line I can tell, or page by page, point out every detail, about writing and grammar. (Bella)

First I try not to look at the grammar. I look for the idea, or the flow of the idea and the rationale order. I look at the components they construct into the idea. In terms of academic writing, I tell them that “okay, don't put many ideas into one paragraph.” (Sue)

Lee did not worry about the elements his students included in the thesis proposal because they could easily follow the university provided pattern. He was more concerned about their severe problems with English writing. Lee attempted to check the grammatical mistakes and provided suggestions on revision. He usually helped edit some sections and then asked the students to follow his method and modify the remaining part.

The students know the pattern already. I usually find a lot of problems, a lot of mistakes in their writing. Grammar mistakes and the way in Physics to express the meaning of physics is not right. I usually modify their English for one or two sections, then ask them to follow what I did to modify other parts. Even one proposal I have to modify for them several times. (Lee)

Sue did not only support the students for academic issues but also cared about their personal problems. She attempted to understand the problems from the students' perspectives. She maintained a good relationship with them and made sure they knew she respected them.

Sometimes I have to go into their personal problems, to understand why they have that problem, why they didn't submit me the manuscript or the paper on

time. So, we have to have a good relationship to make them sure that we respect each other, for their personal problem or academic problems. (Sue)

Suggestions from the supervisors. Both Lee and Sue thought the graduate students should develop better academic writing abilities. Struggling himself much with correcting the supervisees' grammatical mistakes, Lee suggested the university provide an English writing course regularly. From his aspect, an academic writing course can help the students write better and reduce the supervisors' workload. Sue suggested her supervisees to attend the academic writing course, but some students rejected that.

I strongly suggest the university provide all Ph.D. students and Master students one course on written English. It is not only an elective course, must be the compulsory. That is not only to improve their English, but also help professors a lot. I myself spend a lot of time for correcting my students' English. If the university can provide a course to improve all students' written English, that will save us a lot of time. (Lee)

Nancy and Sue preferred to use their native language, Thai, to communicate with their Thai supervisees. Nancy found that English might hinder Thai students from expressing ideas and responding to her questions. In that case, speaking in their first language promoted better communication between the two sides. She thought at this graduate study, learning English was not the primary concern. It was much more important for graduate students to understand disciplinary knowledge.

Because in our fields sometimes understanding the content is difficult enough. I can explain, but the students may not understand, or they understand, but they cannot respond. The barrier is English language. But after I listened to their explanation in Thai, I realized that they knew it, they just cannot

communicate with me. Now we don't try to study English, because our major is science. So, the thing is that we have to understand science. (Nancy)

Abel suggested the school to develop a better supervisory system. The school should have a supervisory panel. The faculties who had expertise in different research areas co-work to provide better support for the graduate students' thesis writing. Besides, he suggested close supervision to follow the thesis writing progress. Finally, there should be a conversation in the school to set up a standard, which can ensure all the students' theses are at the same level of difficulty.

A better system would be to have a panel of supervisors, having many eyes looking at the thesis and making suggestions. We have to have a multiplicity of supervisors in order to ensure quality of the students' outputs. Even if in the end there is disagreement, at least there is a discussion process which raises issues. We need to have close supervision and we need to have a kind of standard of process thesis. We should have meetings to ensure that the topics are about the same level of difficulty. (Abel)

7.3 Discussion

This section discusses the following two aspects: how the perceived support foster the thesis writer development, and how the university and faculty can best support the learning process of EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

7.3.1 Role of Social Support in Fostering Thesis Writer Development

As the finding revealed, all the participants received assistance from diversified sources, namely, the participants' working place, current school, university library, thesis committee, teachers, seniors, classmates, and supervisors. Social support

was perceived in various forms. For instance, Murray's home university permitted her leave for the doctoral degree and promised her financial support. Daniel's school showed empathy for his situation and helped him change to another supervisor whom he could work with. Zoe's teachers guided her rethink the directions of her research. Amy's supervisor motivated her writing and promoted her confidence with the encouraging words. All the stories showed that social support fostered the students' academic development and helped in their well-being. The critiques from the supervisors, thesis committee members, teachers, and peer students helped in identifying the problems, modifying research scopes, resetting the research hypothesis, rethinking about the research design, and so on. Interpersonal interaction reduced the graduate students' social isolation and provided them with friendship, companionship, a sense of being trusted, and self-confidence. The participants received feedback on their thesis projects and writing the thesis as well.

It can be drawn that social support is essential for EFL postgraduate thesis writer development. The perceived social support might promote the participants' identity development. For example, Amy encountered a problem in her data collection, she went to her supervisor and discussed about her possible solution. Her supervisor gave a positive feedback and pointed out she has some "good and promising trait for a researcher." These words pushed Amy to develop into the researcher identity. To some extent, this finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Caffarella & Barnett, 2000;

Gazza et al., 2013). Caffarella and Barnett (2000) investigated forty-five doctoral students' perceptions of a scholarly writing project. They found the critiquing process most influenced scholarly writing development, in terms of learning the process and the written products. Gazza, Shellenbarger, and Hunker (2013) uncovered that feedback from faculty and peers benefited their participants developing into a scholarly writer.

To be noticed, the finding also indicates some differences from the previous research. The thesis writer's development in the current research is different from the scholarly writer development in Caffarella and Barnett (2000) and Gazza et al. (2013). Their studies defined scholarly writing as writing by doctoral students from the Educational Leadership program (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000) or Nursing School (Gazza et al., 2013). In this research, the participants included both master and Ph.D. students. The social support brings about a change in the participants and contributes to their experience in conducting research, improvement of academic writing abilities, knowledge about the disciplinary subjects and the thesis genre. Compared to Caffarella & Barnett (2000) and Gazza et al. (2013), this research finds that the thesis writer development involves more social aspects of learning to write a graduate thesis. The participants get more support to integrate the thesis genre knowledge, institutional expectations, and disciplinary values and beliefs in their thesis writing practice. The perceived assistance for EFL postgraduate thesis writing is more diversified regarding sources and forms as well. More social resources shape the thesis writers' learning

trajectories and professional identity in that they influence how the students perceive themselves and the world. The

Of all the support sources, the supervisor's help was mostly acknowledged. Forty-two (97.67%) participants got tremendous help from their supervisors. The supervisor's feedback was found influencing how the students sensed themselves. Qualitative data findings further confirmed the influential role of the supervisor's support. The students reported that their supervisors guided the whole thesis research, from the initial research design stage to the final output. A thesis cannot be developed "in a one-shot attempt at dissertation writing (Casanave, 2019, p.58)."

The supervisors provided intellectual support and then ensured the disciplinary knowledge being appropriately understood and applied to the student's thesis research. For example, Lucy's supervisor corrected her interpretation of some learning theories. The supervisors also encouraged critical thinking and stimulated innovation or new perspectives. Tom was suggested look at the issue from different perspectives as suggested. The supervisors helped solve the language problems and then made the students' writing meet the disciplinary expectations. For instance, Daniel got very detailed feedback on his writings, which helped him develop a better understanding of genre writing. The supervisors reinforced self-confidence and stilled calmness in the students. The case of Amy showed how her supervisor's encouragement motivated her thesis research and writing, while the excerpts from Daniel proved her

supervisor's effort to reduce his anxiety with the proposal defense. This claim might concur with the argument that the supervisor's support is particularly significant for ESL students' writing development (Wang & Yang, 2012). Wang and Yang (2012) argued that supervisor's encouragement is significant for ESL students to construct confidence in writing. On the whole, the supervisors invest considerable effort and time in supervising the thesis writing. Based on the discussions above, I argue that a responsive supervisor can be very supportive for the student's academic development and mental wellness.

Supervisors are expected to help the students display an identity as a contributor to the disciplinary knowledge through thesis writing (Casanave, 2019; Paré, 2011). However, supervision is identified as a site of considerable tension between the supervisor and the supervisee (Cotterall, 2013; Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Schutz et al., 2006). This is true in that writing a thesis is a social practice with emotions (Gazza, 2013). In this research, Daniel and Nico complained that their supervisor did not give them chances to explain; Sue and Lee said their supervisees did not follow their suggestions in attending academic writing courses; Bella asked her supervisees to outline before writing, but they did not do that. To reduce the tension in supervision, one opinion is that supervisors who engage in intercultural supervision should reinforce understanding of the students' learning approaches (Manathunga, 2007). Sue shared her experience of easing the tensions with her supervisees. She tried to think from the

students' point of view, making clear why they could not submit the writing as planned. She thought it was important to let the students know that they were respected. Sue's case might put forward the importance of communication, mutual understanding, and mutual respect in supervision. Researchers also discussed the high-quality supervision might bring in the students' high quality scientific products (Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

Thus, there is a need for the faculty to recognize the influential impact of the good supervisory practice on students' learning trajectories of thesis writing. The supervisors all reported that their supervision mainly followed their experience of being supervised when writing their doctoral theses. However, for Lee, Bella, Abel, and Sue, the experience was gained many years ago. Without training or interacting with other supervisors, the supervisors are exploring alone how to help the students construct knowledge in the discipline. Also, the supervisors might need to reflect on the supervisory practice and rethink about the supervision styles. Some supervisors might prefer the interventionist supervising style (Delamont, Parry, & Atkinson, 1998) and provide very detailed comments and suggestions, while other supervisors enjoyed the non-interventionist supervising styles and encouraged the students to learn through the process. This problem could be solved if the supervisors often communicate with the students and check their reactions to the supervision styles. Treat the students as individuals and find a way to help their learning, but not learn for them.

7.3.2 Supporting EFL Postgraduate Thesis Writer Development

As discussed in Section 4, the graduate students encountered linguistic challenges when writing the thesis. In this section, the problems are further discussed from the supervisors' perspectives. Analysis of the supervisors' perspectives further proved the supervisors' assistance all through the thesis writing process. Besides, their concerns are taken into the discussion of how to best support EFL postgraduate thesis writer development. Most supervisors were concerned with the language problems: grammatical mistakes, lacking connections between the ideas, irrelevant information, and illogical structure. All the complaints indicate that graduate students cannot write well with the English language. Besides, Nancy and Lee pointed out that the students did not have the competency of interpreting with disciplinary knowledge. In Nancy's words, they lacked "scientific thinking." That means, the graduate scholars do not think as scholars. The supervisors also found the students lacked proficiency in academic writing (Alter & Adkins, 2001; Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Harris, 2006). The student writers did not master the necessary writing skills and transfer these capabilities to their graduate-level performances (Buck & Hatter, 2005; Harris, 2006).

Despite the severe deficiency reflected in the students' writing, support on developing academic writing abilities is not sufficient. The students participants received writing support from two sources. One is attending an academic writing course; the other is getting supervisory feedback on their writing. Thirty-three participants of the survey (76.74%) learned writing a thesis in English through training, courses,

workshops, or seminars. However, there are conflicting findings from the interview data. Academic writing course was provided for both master and Ph.D. students in the School of Foreign language. However, some students admitted they could not conclusively apply the knowledge into the writing practice. For the participants out of the School of Foreign Language, only John sat in the English academic writing class; and Fanny learned the method of writing a thesis from a course delivered in the Thai language. Most of the students expected more academic literacy activities from the university to learn the thesis writing task. For instance, Daniel hoped the school host a series of activities to support the students go through different stages of writing a thesis. Some of the supervisors also concerned about this formal instruction of writing a thesis. Lee, Sue, Nancy, and Bella all recommended their supervisees to attend the writing course, but the suggestion was ignored by most of the students. Lee strongly suggested that the university regularly provide academic writing courses. He insisted that an academic writing course should be compulsory for graduate students. Writing a thesis is left to be constructed only between the supervisor and the supervisee. The students reported that the feedback on their writing was solely from their supervisors. The supervisors also admitted that they handled the students' writing without external assistance.

Three reasons possibly could explain this phenomenon. First, it is taken for granted that EFL graduate students have developed high proficiency in writing through

long years of English language learning (Morss & Murray, 2001). The faculty assumes that writing a thesis can be left for the students to be developed independently (Haas, 2011; Lee & Boud, 2003; Odena & Burgess, 2012). Second, the university policy determines the schools' curriculum design. Thai graduate students can choose to write a thesis in English or in the Thai language. Some programs do not request their master-level students, even Ph.D.s from Thailand to write a thesis in English. The university organizes English Proficiency Test to all Ph.D. students. Once they pass the test, they are assumed to be advanced English language users and will have no problems in communicating in English. Therefore, only the School of Foreign Language requests all the graduate students to attend an academic writing course. Other graduate programs do not have requirements for English language learning. Third, some research degree programs do not take academic writing development compulsory (Odena and Burgess 2012). They take developing the students' subject-specific knowledge as the program's priority. This vision might influence the thesis writing practice. Nancy said, "now we don't try to study English. Our major is science." In her opinion, writing skills can be developed later, but thinking appropriately within the discipline should be emphasized first. Some students supported this idea. For example, Tyler said, "academic writing is not necessarily important, only the Physical explanation counts." He thought the language problems could be ignored as long as the thesis meets the disciplinary expectations.

To best support EFL postgraduate thesis writing, the supervisors and students need to consider writing a thesis as a learning process for the student writers. Graduate students are expected to produce a book-length document that is appropriate in terms of content and formatting, argue with authoritative voices, and demonstrate their positions with the research topics and disciplinary communities (Thompson, 2012). Thus, they need to learn in many aspects. This research calls for supportive interaction between the students and more experienced academic writers. In addition to the supervisor, more experts in the discipline can be introduced to the students and then provide feedback on writing a thesis. Some students, such as Amy and John, expected a writing center where some faculty members could comment and suggest on their writings. One of the supervisors talked about a better supervisory system with multiple supervisors guiding and monitoring the students' thesis writing. To conclude, both the students and the supervisors expected more assistance in thesis writing practice.

This research also advocates supportive interaction between the student writers and their peer friends. The data revealed that social interactions with their peer friends helped the student writers develop academic writer identities. In the case of Zoe, her senior's support improved her writing and made her confident in her research. The support from the seniors and classmates was considered significant because they shared a similar experience with the participants. They went through a similar process of writing a thesis. Some participants called for more connections with their seniors and

classmates. For instance, John expected a writing group to write with friends and share the writing experience. Murray wanted more connections with other graduate students. She said, “we can be together, we can help each other, we can ask, we can make friends.” These examples indicated that the students felt a need for mental support from fellow students. They desired companionship, friendship, empathy, and academic help from other students. Therefore, the institution can organize activities to provide the platform for fellow students’ interactions.

7.4 Summary

This chapter responds to the research question, “How does the perceived support foster the development of thesis writer identity?” It is found the graduate students received assistance with their thesis writing from different sources and in various forms. The social support facilitated thesis writer identity development through improving the project, eliminating language problems, encouraging confidence, and showing empathy. More support in writing is expected by both the students and the supervisors.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This chapter is a conclusion of the study. It is organized into four sections. Section One summarizes the research findings; Section Two concerns the implications of the study; Section Three expounds the limitations of the study; the last section provides suggestions for future study.

8.1 Summary of the Study

This study aimed at exploring the experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing and thesis writer identity construction in a university in northeastern Thailand. The study was conducted with a mixed-method research design. Forty-three students in the researched university participated in the L2 Writer Identity Survey. Then, fifteen participants were purposefully selected for the following narrative inquiry and semi-structured interview. Five supervisors provided complementary information. The answers to the four research questions are briefly summarized in this section. As follows are the four research questions:

- 1) What do EFL graduate students experience in the course of writing a thesis?
- 2) What aspects of academic writer identity do EFL postgraduate thesis writers display?

3) How does EFL postgraduate thesis writing promote writer identity development?

4) How does the perceived support foster EFL graduate thesis writer's identity construction?

The findings of the research questions are as follows. First, EFL postgraduate thesis writing provides a site for the participants to exercise agency. Making decision is central for the students' actively developing into researchers. Acting as profoundly social agents (Lantolf, 2013), the writers develop their individualities from the culturally organized thesis writing activities. In addition to language-related difficulties identified in previous studies (e.g., Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Singh, 2015, 2016), the participants encountered challenges in meeting the thesis genre requirements, figuring out the institutional expectations, and negotiating power relationships. The rich data also uncovered a link between the emotional aspects of graduate-level thesis writing and the formation of scholarly identity. Positive emotions contributed to promoting thinking and motivating writing, while negative feelings inhibited thinking.

Second, EFL postgraduate thesis writers in this research show their peculiar characteristics. The participants' autobiographical self is influence by personal literacy histories of academic writing and exposure to the thesis genre. The sense of self-worth as EFL writers made some participants feel deficient in writing. Discoursal self of a thesis writer was adapted. The participants' conceptualization of a successful thesis writer influenced their language choices. The writers sensitively recognized the

imbalanced power relationship with the anticipated readers. They admitted modifying their works with the supervisors and thesis committee members' feedback. The concept of identity construction has not been spread to most of the participants. Although the participants developed an awareness of authorial voice, most of them played safe and resisted self-mention, choosing to meet the disciplinary and institutional expectations. For the participants, autobiographical self and possibilities of self-hood are more dominant in their writer identity construction than the other two aspects.

Third, EFL postgraduate thesis writing is a socially situated learning practice. The participants reported an increase of knowledge, improvement of academic writing abilities, and self-confidence development. This research claims these changes add to the students' repertoire of knowledge and thus are constructing their autobiographical self, which consequently influence their discursal construction and authorial presentation. The students attempt to adjust the way of writing and negotiate the membership in the aiming discourse communities. The awareness of the readers around is found important in building the identity of successful thesis writers.

Lastly, the EFL postgraduate students in this study perceived assistance from different sources and in various forms. The social support facilitated thesis writer identity development through improving the project, eliminating language problems, encouraging confidence, and showing empathy. Both the thesis writers and supervisors expressed their concerns about writing a thesis in the English language. More academic

literacy activities and a better supervisory system are expected.

8.2 Implications of the Study

The current study enriches the literature of Second Language Writing. The findings and corresponding discussions can help better understand the issues of identity construction in academic writing. Both theoretical and practical implications can be drawn from the findings.

The theoretical implications are twofold. First, the study brings potential enlightenment to exploring the experience of EFL postgraduate thesis writing. Thesis writing at the post-graduate level is known to be especially difficult for non-native students (Casanave, 2019; Imani & Habil, 2012; Paltridge, 2002). The previous research on EFL graduate thesis writing mainly focuses on identifying the difficulties (e.g. Aitchison & Lee, 2006; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Singh, 2015, 2016; Shen, Carter, & Zhang, 2019). This trend indicated insufficient attention to the thesis writers. This research explored the experience from the perspective of writers' identity construction, giving voices to EFL postgraduate thesis writers. The research promotes the thesis writers' self-reflection on the trajectory of writing a thesis in an EFL educational context. Both language-related difficulties and challenges beyond the act of writing are reported. This finding reconfirms thesis writing is challenging for EFL graduate students. Compared to the argument elucidated from analyzing the finished

theses, the finding in this research is more convince since it is informed by the thesis writers themselves. The research also shows that some factors might determine how the students perceive their thesis writing experience. These aspects are personal history of academic literacy, external comments on their work, and a sense of self-worth. Therefore, it is significant to explore the experience of writing an EFL postgraduate thesis from the writers' point of view. The writers' narratives can provide more convincing empiric evidence.

Second, the research enriches the issues of writer identity construction. This study finds that writing a thesis is a socially situated practice, embedding the dynamic construction of the thesis writer identity through integrating the multiple aspects of self-presentations (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998; Li & Deng, 2019; Matsuda, 2015). Both disciplinary conventions and institutional expectations form the socially available resources of writing a thesis. The thesis writer identity found in this research exhibits some characteristics. A sense of self as EFL learners makes the writers feel inferior to their native-English speaker counterparts. Interestingly, the writers also show self-dispraise to non-native English speakers who write a graduate thesis in English speaking countries. This might be caused by the EFL educational context where most of the thesis writers and supervisors are non-native English speakers. This feeling might consequently make the thesis writers passively follow the disciplinary conventions. Besides, how others label the students influence their presentation of authorial self.

That is, positive feedback on their work promotes self-confidence in claiming the ideas, while negative comments produce bad emotions and a hesitance in representing the authoritativeness. This study thus suggests more attention to the localized context of writer identity development.

This study also adds to the literature of writer identity construction by overlapping the fields of L2 writing development and academic literacy. It reconfirms writing as a learning process and applies it to research the thesis writer identity construction. With the theory of New Literacy Studies, this research investigates how the thesis writers build shifting identities when they are engaged in the “processes of identification” (Elf, 2017, p. 185). The thesis writers participated in different academic literacy activities to gain disciplinary knowledge and learning the thesis genre. The acquired disciplinary content knowledge, “formal knowledge” and “process knowledge” (Tardy, 2009, p. 20) foster the students learning to become thesis writers. They self-adjusted the process of writing with their personal history of academic literacy, meanwhile, they participate in social interaction and acculturate into the discourse communities.

The pedagogical implication first goes to a recognition of the significance of identity construction in thesis writing. The authorial voice is essential for writing a thesis at the research degree programs. However, the participants obviously reported little exposure to the notion of authorial voice in academic writing. They tended to hide their authorial voices and attribute the authority to the established writers in the

discipline. Self-mention is seldom accepted and then utilized by thesis writers. The thesis writers have been taught to avoid using first person (Hyland, 2004) but employing the “empirically-oriented persuasion strategies (Hyland & Jiang, 2017, p. 14).” There is a need for the students and the faculty to recognize the importance of writing with an authorial voice. A tolerance of more alternative approaches to writing a thesis should be advocated.

The findings proved that a facilitating system needs to be in place. Both the faculty and the students should rethink the importance of academic writing development in completing a thesis. The university needs to provide explicit instruction of thesis writing, to help the students learn disciplinary writing and encourage confidence in EFL academic writing. The university also can organize various academic literacy activities, to promote social interaction between the students and the legitimized members in the discourse communities. Seminars, workshops, lectures, and training sessions will help engage the students in disciplinary writing.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations should be taken into account. First, this study is conducted in a university in the northeast part of Thailand with a limited sample of EFL graduate thesis writers. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to thesis writer identity construction in other EFL educational contexts.

Second, the L2 Writer Identity Survey was adapted from Ruggles (2012) and designed with the conceptual framework mentioned in Section 3.1. After checking the validity and reliability, the survey was piloted with a small number of participants. The survey was finalized after more modification was conducted. However, the survey needs to be administrated with a larger number of participants to validate the results. The application of this research instrument to further research should be cautious.

Third, the study discusses identity development by analyzing the narratives of EFL postgraduate thesis writers. The findings might be influenced by whether they remembered the details and how much they could self-reflect the experience.

8.4 Suggestions for Future Study

This research recommends some suggestions for future studies. Firstly, since the current study is conducted with forty-three EFL postgraduate thesis writers in a university in Thailand, I strongly suggest more studies be reduplicated in different EFL educational contexts.

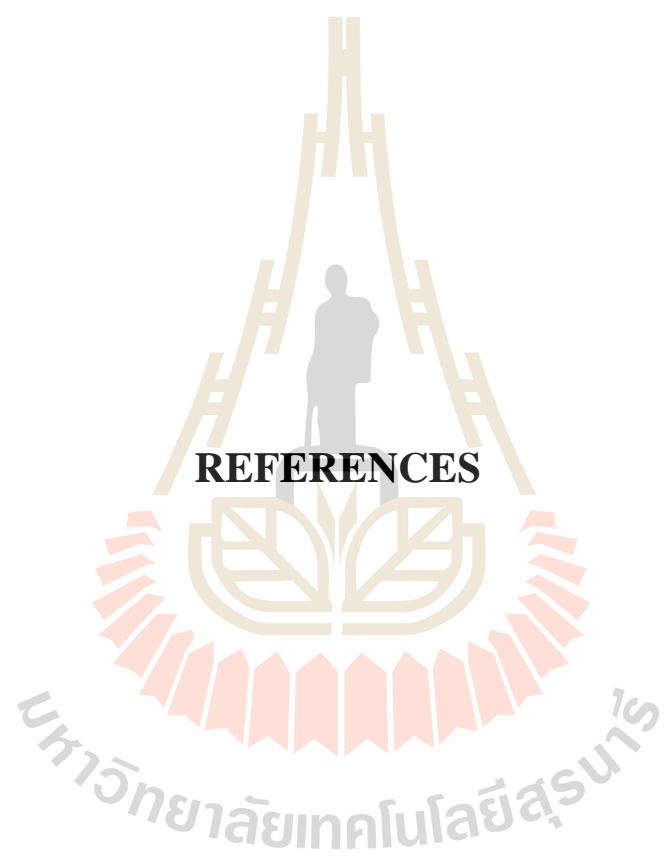
Secondly, reflecting on the small sample size of the current research, I consider validating the L2 Writer Identity Survey with a larger number of participants. This research instrument will be administered in different institutions to check its validity and reliability.

Thirdly, this research identifies some traits of EFL postgraduate thesis writer

identity. I am thinking about some research to compare the thesis writer identity at the postgraduate level with that at the undergraduate level, in order to check whether the traits identified in the current research are specific to postgraduate thesis writers.

Finally, the data collection methods rely on the participants' honest responses and the coders' appropriate interpretation of the data. The research hence recommends integrating an ethnographic approach to the study. Analysis of the thesis drafts can be of help to observe the writer identity development at different timescales of EFL postgraduate thesis writing.

To conclude, this study has enriched the literature of EFL postgraduate thesis writing in a non-native English speaking context. It focuses on the writers rather than the task of writing a thesis, thus it might contribute to bridging the gap that writers in EFL contexts have been under-presented (Belcher, 2013). Besides, the previous studies mainly study writer identity through discourse analysis of the completed thesis, this study is an attempt to investigate thesis writer identity development via a survey. It might embrace a discussion of more alternative approaches to identity construction. Finally, the study reflects on both the thesis writers' and the supervisors' perspectives and finds some overlapping concerns about wiring a thesis.



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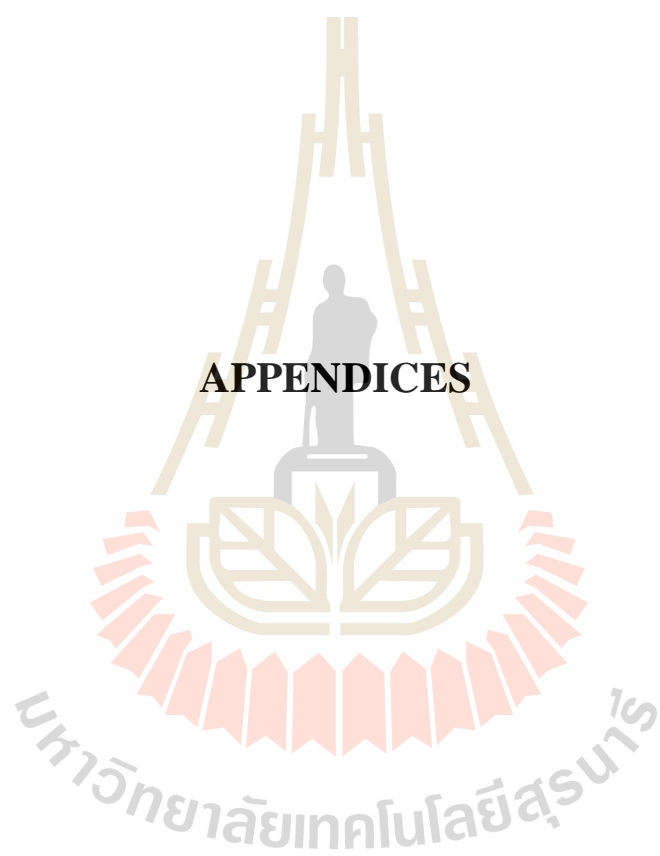
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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

Dear Miss/Mr. _____

I am Daping Wu, a Ph.D student in English Language Study program in Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. I am sincerely inviting you to participate in my research study. The purpose of my research is to better understand what graduate students experience in writing thesis in English and how they construct academic identity. You are invited to be a participant, because 1) you write/wrote a graduate thesis in English, and 2) English is not your first language.

The research will collect data from Identity Survey, Narrative Inquiry, and Interview. All your responses will be used only for research purpose. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You can decide whether or not participate in all or some parts of the research. If you choose to participate, you are also free to withdraw the research at any time. If you want to withdraw, just notify me. Please check the boxes below if you consent to participate in the applicable part of the study.

- Identity Survey. Estimated Time: 20minutes.
- Narrative Inquiry. Estimated Time: 30minutes....
- Interview. Estimated Time: 40 minutes.

The results of this study may be used only in scientific reports, presentations, or publication, but your information will be kept strictly confidential. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

The possible benefits of your participation in the research are a great awareness of your conceptualization of thesis writing and your self-reflection on the identity development.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at: dapingwu1981@gmail.com.

By signing below you are agreeing to participate to in the portions of the study selected above.

Signature

Date



มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีสุรนารี

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I am Daping Wu, a Ph.D student in English Language Study program in Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. I am sincerely inviting you to participate in my research.

The purpose of my research is to better understand what graduate students experience in writing thesis in English and how they construct academic identity. You are invited to share your experience and perspectives of supervising graduate thesis writing in a university in Thailand.

The results of this study may be used only in scientific reports, presentations, or publication, but your information will be kept strictly confidential. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at: dapingwu1981@gmail.com.

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate to in the portions of the study selected above.

(Signature)

(Date)

APPENDIX C

Graduate Programs Offered in English

Programs Offered	Educational Level	Institute
Applied Mathematics	Master	Institute of Science
Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
Environmental Biology	Master	
Environmental Biology	Ph.D.	
Physics	Master	
Physics	Ph.D.	
Applied Physics	Master	
Applied Physics	Ph.D.	
Geoinformatics	Master	
Geoinformatics	Ph.D.	
Biomedical Sciences	Master	
Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
Chemistry	Master	
Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Biochemistry	Master	
Biochemistry	Ph.D.	
Mechanical and Process System Engineering	Master	Institute of Engineering
Mechanical and Process System Engineering	Ph.D.	
Materials Engineering	Master	
Materials Engineering	Ph.D.	

Programs Offered	Educational Level	Institute
Industrial Systems and Environmental Engineering	Master	
Industrial Systems and Environmental Engineering	Ph.D.	
Electrical Engineering	Master	
Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Telecommunication and Computer Engineering	Master	
Telecommunication and Computer Engineering	Ph.D.	
Civil, Transportation and Geo-resources Engineering	Master	
Civil, Transportation and Geo-resources Engineering	Ph.D.	
Animal Production Technology	Master	Institute of Agricultural Technology
Animal Production Technology	Ph.D.	
Biotechnology (International Program)	Master	
Biotechnology (International Program)	Ph.D.	
Food Technology (International Program)	Master	
Food Technology (International Program)	Ph.D.	
English Language Studies	Master	Institute of Social Technology
English Language Studies	Ph.D.	
Information Technology (Research Only)	Ph.D.	
Cooperative Education	Master	
Cooperative Education	Ph.D.	

APPENDIX D

WRITTEN Narrative (Adapted from Olmos Lopez, 2015)

Directions: This narrative inquiry aims at exploring experience in writing post-graduate thesis in English in a university in Thailand. Please write under the title *The journey to my Master/Ph.D thesis*. It will be better if you can write your story in details.

Please include the three aspects into your narration:

1. Your personal development of academic writing ability. Please recall your academic writing experience, both in your first language and in English, for example, writing academic papers for courses, or for publication, or for admission to higher education, and so on. Please feel free to include the people and events which you think critical to your writing development.

2. Your experience of graduate thesis writing in English. Here are some areas you can consider

- Selecting the thesis supervisor and getting the topic
- Process of designing and writing thesis
- Moments of successes & Struggles in writing thesis
- Feelings toward writing thesis in English before and after
- Self-confidence in your own thesis
- The way of writing thesis

3. Your sense of yourself as English writers before and after the thesis writing practice. In this part, you are expected to describe how you feel about yourself through the journey to write your Master or Ph.D thesis in English. Please feel free to talk about the issues you are concerned with and the expectations from thesis writing.

My purpose of providing these topics is only to help you recover and arrange relevant memories. You do **not** need follow the order. You can add **anything** you think related to your own thesis writing practice.

Please send your narratives to
dapingwu1981@gmail.com

Your help is highly appreciated.



APPENDIX E

IOC Analysis for a Narrative on Experience of ESL Graduate Thesis Writing

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
1	+1	+1	+1	√
Total	1	1	1	

Notes:

1. +1 = the item is congruent with the objective
2. 0 = uncertain about this item
3. -1 = the item is not congruent with the objective

Result of IOC:

$$(IOC = \sum R/N)$$

Item number: 1

$$R = 1 + 1 + 1 = 3 \text{ (Scores from experts)}$$

$$N = 3 \text{ (Number of experts)}$$

$$IOC = 3/3 = 1$$

$$\text{Percentage: } 1/1 \times 100\% = 100\%$$

The table above shows that the analysis result of IOC is 1, and the percentage is 100%. Therefore, the items are suitable for adoption in a questionnaire.

APPENDIX F

L2 Writer Identity Survey

(Adapted from Ruggles, 2012)

Part I. General information

Name _____ Nationality _____

Currently pursuing degree: PhD/Master _____

School of _____

Part II. L2 Writer Identity Survey

Directions: This survey is to gather information about experience in writing post-graduate thesis in English and constructing an L2 writer identity. Please read each statement carefully and tick (✓) the response from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = undecided, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	My previous experience of academic writing in my first language is helpful in this thesis writing.	5	4	3	2	1
2	My previous English academic writing experience is helpful in this thesis writing.	5	4	3	2	1
3	I write my thesis in the way I used to write.	5	4	3	2	1
4	I am not a native English speaker; thus, I have difficulties in writing a thesis in English.	5	4	3	2	1
5	My English proficiency does NOT affect my progress in thesis writing.	5	4	3	2	1

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	I can write well in English.	5	4	3	2	1
7	It is important for me to like what I have written.	5	4	3	2	1
8	I put the "real me" in my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
9	I can hear my voice as I write and read my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
10	My writing expresses what I really think and believe.	5	4	3	2	1
11	When writing the thesis, I consider the readers' interest.	5	4	3	2	1
12	I try to impress the readers with my thesis that I am a professional writer.	5	4	3	2	1
13	I use hedges like "may", "might", "maybe" in discussion.	5	4	3	2	1
14	The language choices I make are deliberate and reflect who I am.	5	4	3	2	1
15	I use "I" in my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
16	I cite the previous researchers a lot to support my ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
17	I don't claim my ideas because I want to play safe.	5	4	3	2	1
18	I should have my own voice in my own thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
19	I am confident in expressing my ideas in thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
20	I am really interested in my thesis topic.	5	4	3	2	1
21	I never say no to my supervisor's feedback on my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
22	I feel comfortable in communicating with my supervisor.	5	4	3	2	1
23	Sometimes I argue with my supervisor and try to convince him/her.	5	4	3	2	1
24	I have to follow all the suggestions from the thesis committee members.	5	4	3	2	1
25	I know what a good thesis is like in my discipline.	5	4	3	2	1
26	Reading graduate thesis in my discipline is the way for me to learn how to write a thesis.	5	4	3	2	1

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27	I am familiar with the components of a thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
28	I know the rules of thesis writing in my school.	5	4	3	2	1
29	When writing the thesis, I stick to the rules.	5	4	3	2	1
30	There is usually one best way to write a thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
31	I write in a way my readers can understand me.	5	4	3	2	1
32	I have a strong sense of belonging to the academic community.	5	4	3	2	1
33	Thesis writing helps improve my academic writing ability.	5	4	3	2	1
34	I was not confident at the beginning of my thesis writing.	5	4	3	2	1
35	Thesis writing increases my self-confidence in English writing.	5	4	3	2	1
36	Thesis writing has given me deep personal satisfaction.	5	4	3	2	1
37	I am confident in the quality of my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
38	My thesis is building new knowledge to the discipline.	5	4	3	2	1
39	I put myself as a researcher when writing the thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
40	Thesis writing has nothing to do with how I feel about myself.	5	4	3	2	1
41	I attended training/ courses/ seminars/ workshops about writing a thesis in English.	5	4	3	2	1
42	I joined an academic writing group and wrote with peer friends.	5	4	3	2	1
43	I attended some group meetings where we discussed our thesis writing progress.	5	4	3	2	1
44	The writing support from the university is helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
45	I read books on how to write a thesis and follow the steps.	5	4	3	2	1
46	I took part in some conferences related to my thesis topic.	5	4	3	2	1

Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
47	My school provides clear guidelines and format on writing a thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
48	My school organizes some activities to help thesis writing.	5	4	3	2	1
49	The university provides rich resources for designing and writing my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
50	The university library provides all the books and journals that I need.	5	4	3	2	1
51	The university library provides enough databases where I can search all the information I need in writing my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
52	My school provides me chances to carry out my research in some other institutes/organizations.	5	4	3	2	1
53	I have right to select my own supervisor.	5	4	3	2	1
54	My supervisor helps me a lot in my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1
55	I am NOT clear what my supervisor expects me to revise.	5	4	3	2	1
56	What my supervisor said about my thesis does not affect my feeling of myself.	5	4	3	2	1
57	My supervisor is satisfied with my thesis.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX G

IOC Analysis for a Survey on Identity Construction in ESL Graduate Thesis Writing

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
1	+1	+1	+1	√
2	+1	+1	+1	√
3	+1	+1	+1	√
4	+1	+1	+1	√
5	+1	+1	+1	√
6	+1	+1	+1	√
7	+1	+1	+1	√
8	0	+1	+1	√
9	+1	+1	+1	√
10	+1	+1	+1	√
11	+1	+1	+1	√
12	+1	+1	0	√
13	+1	+1	0	√
14	+1	+1	+1	√
15	0	+1	0	X
16	+1	0	0	X
17	0	+1	+1	√
18	+1	+1	0	√
19	0	+1	0	X
20	+1	+1	+1	√
21	+1	+1	+1	√
22	+1	+1	+1	√
23	+1	+1	+1	√

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
24	+1	+1	0	√
25	+1	+1	+1	√
26	+1	+1	+1	√
27	+1	+1	+1	√
28	+1	+1	+1	√
29	+1	+1	+1	√
30	+1	+1	0	√
31	0	+1	+1	√
32	+1	+1	+1	√
33	+1	+1	+1	√
34	+1	+1	0	√
35	+1	+1	+1	√
36	+1	+1	+1	√
37	+1	+1	0	√
38	+1	+1	+1	√
39	+1	+1	0	√
40	+1	+1	+1	√
41	+1	+1	+1	√
42	0	+1	+1	√
43	+1	+1	+1	√
44	+1	+1	0	√
45	+1	+1	+1	√
46	+1	+1	+1	√
47	+1	+1	+1	√
48	+1	+1	+1	√
49	+1	+1	0	√
50	+1	+1	+1	√

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
51	+1	+1	+1	√
52	+1	+1	+1	√
53	+1	+1	+1	√
54	+1	+1	+1	√
55	+1	+1	+1	√
56	+1	+1	+1	√
57	+1	+1	+1	√
58	+1	0	0	X
59	+1	+1	+1	√
60	+1	+1	+1	√
61	+1	+1	+1	√
62	0	+1	+1	√
63	0	+1	+1	√
64	+1	+1	+1	√
65	0	+1	+1	√
Total	56	63	51	

Notes:

1. +1 = the item is congruent with the objective
2. 0 = uncertain about this item
3. -1 = the item is not congruent with the objective

Result of IOC:

$$(IOC = \sum R/N)$$

Item number: 65

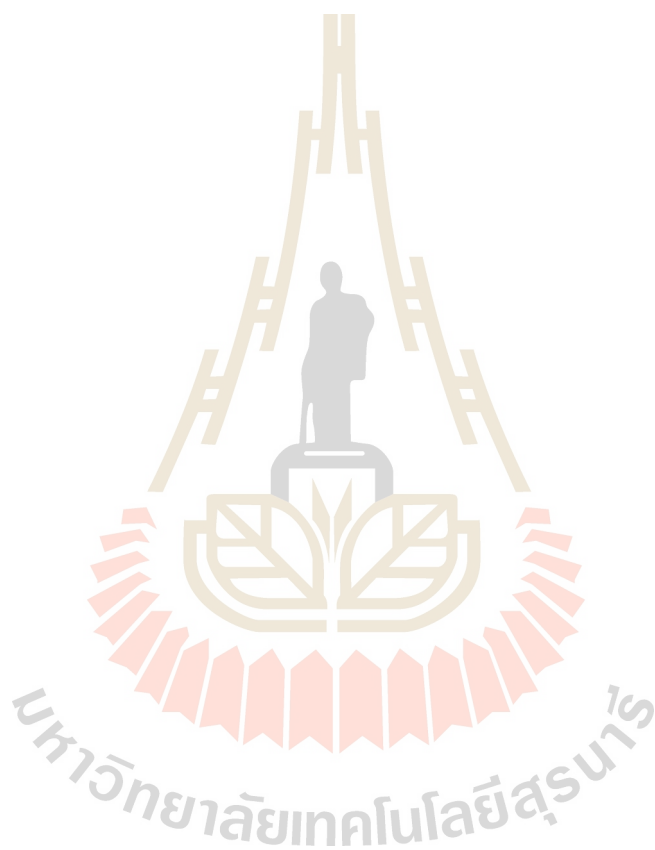
$$R = 56 + 63 + 51 = 170 \text{ (Scores from experts)}$$

N = 3 (Number of experts)

$$IOC = 170/3 = 56.7$$

Percentage: $56.7/65 \times 100\% = 87.2\%$

The table above shows that the analysis result of IOC is 56.7, and the percentage is 87.2% which is higher than 80%. Therefore, the items are suitable for adoption in a questionnaire.



APPENDIX H

Semi-Structure Interview for Graduate Thesis Writers

1. What's the status of your thesis writing? How do you feel about the practice of writing thesis in English?
2. How did you come to this research topic? Why did you choose such a topic?
3. Have you ever faced any problems in writing your thesis? If yes, what are the difficulties and how do you overcome them?
4. What kind of writing style do you think you use in your thesis? How do you think about your writing style?
5. In what ways do you recognize the role of you as a writer in thesis?
6. Have you noticed any change of yourself since thesis writing? If yes, can you describe the change?
7. Do you think thesis writing have some impact on your English academic writing? If yes, what kind of impact?
8. Did you have any experience of academic writing in English? Do you think such an experience have some influence on your post-graduate thesis writing?
9. Is there any relationship between your English proficiency and the quality of your thesis?
10. What's your opinion on using "I" or "we" in a thesis?
11. How is your communication with your supervisor? What kind of feedback does your supervisor usually give you on the thesis writing?
12. Have you ever had any time when you disagree with your supervisor's comments on your thesis? How do you react to the situation mentioned above?
13. How do you think about the relationship between you and the committee members? Do the members show interest in your topic? Do you think their comments and suggestions help you improve your writing?
14. How much do you know about the conventions of thesis writing in your discipline? How do you get the knowledge? How do you react to the conventions?
15. How do you express your own idea? Do you think it is important to claim your

own voice in your thesis? Why?

16. What kind of writing support have you received from the university? Are you satisfied with the writing support activities? What kind of writing support are you still expecting from the institute to help you write thesis in English better?
17. How do you comment on the resources available in the university? Are they helpful for your research?
18. How do you think about the advisory system in the university? Do you think this system affect your thesis writing?



APPENDIX I

IOC Analysis for a Semi-Structure Interview for Graduate Thesis Writers

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
1	+1	+1	+1	√
2	+1	+1	+1	√
3	+1	+1	0	√
4	0	0	0	X
5	+1	+1	+1	√
6	+1	+1	0	√
7	+1	+1	+1	√
8	+1	+1	+1	√
9	+1	+1	+1	√
10	+1	0	0	X
11	+1	+1	+1	√
12	+1	+1	+1	√
13	+1	+1	+1	√
14	+1	+1	+1	√
15	+1	+1	+1	√
16	+1	+1	0	√
17	+1	+1	+1	√
18	+1	+1	+1	√
19	+1	+1	+1	√
20	+1	+1	+1	√
Total	19	18	15	

Notes:

1. +1 = the item is congruent with the objective
2. 0 = uncertain about this item
3. -1 = the item is not congruent with the objective

Result of IOC:

$$(IOC = \sum R/N)$$

Item number: 20

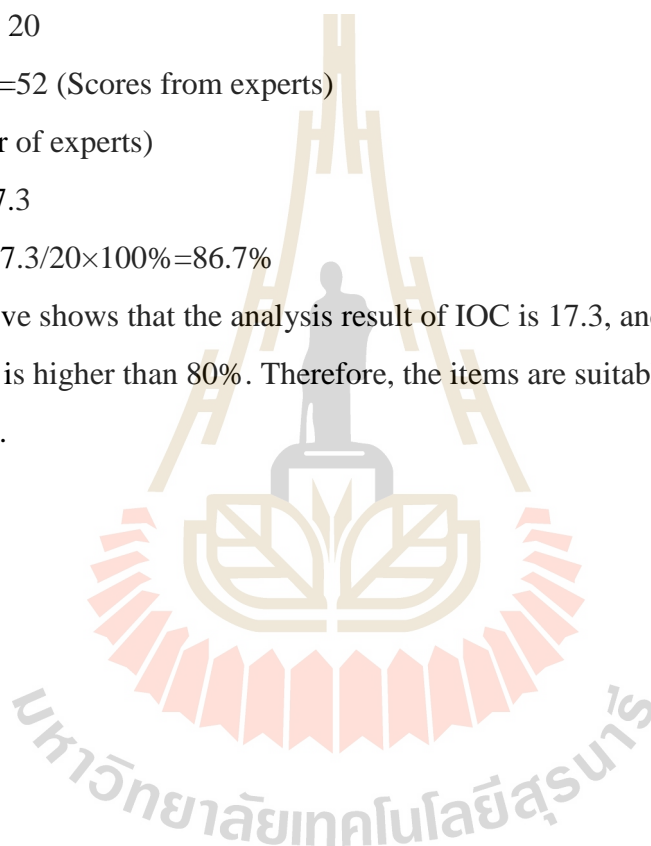
$R = 19 + 18 + 15 = 52$ (Scores from experts)

$N = 3$ (Number of experts)

$$IOC = 52/3 = 17.3$$

Percentage: $17.3/20 \times 100\% = 86.7\%$

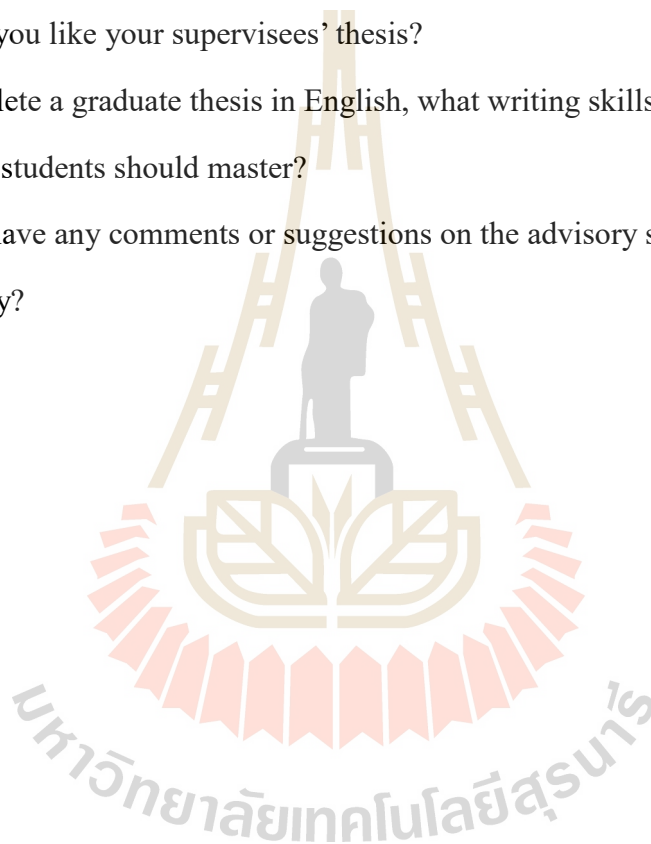
The table above shows that the analysis result of IOC is 17.3, and the percentage is 86.7% which is higher than 80%. Therefore, the items are suitable for adoption in a questionnaire.



APPENDIX J

Supervisors' Perceptions of Supervising Graduate Thesis

1. How do you usually supervise graduate students? Do you have any model or formula in advising? If yes, where did you learn this model?
2. How do you feel about advising the graduate thesis?
3. How do you like your supervisees' thesis?
4. To complete a graduate thesis in English, what writing skills do you think graduate students should master?
5. Do you have any comments or suggestions on the advisory system in the university?



APPENDIX K

IOC Analysis for a Semi-Structure Interview for Supervisors on the Advisory System

Item	Experts			Result of analysis
	1	2	3	
1	+1	+1	0	√
2	+1	0	+1	√
3	+1	+1	+1	√
4	+1	+1	+1	√
5	+1	+1	+1	√
6	+1	+1	+1	√
Total	6	5	5	

Notes:

1. +1 = the item is congruent with the objective
2. 0 = uncertain about this item
3. -1 = the item is not congruent with the objective

Result of IOC:

$$(IOC = \sum R/N)$$

Item number: 6

$$R = 6 + 5 + 5 = 16 \text{ (Scores from experts)}$$

$$N = 3 \text{ (Number of experts)}$$

$$IOC = 16/3 = 5.3$$

$$\text{Percentage: } 5.3/6 \times 100\% = 88.9\%$$

The table above shows that the analysis result of IOC is 5.3, and the percentage is 88.9% which is higher than 80%. Therefore, the items are suitable for adoption in a questionnaire.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Daping Wu was born in October 1981 in Yunnan Province, China. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Chinese Literature from Beijing International Studies University in 2004. She started to teach English to Chinese EFL learners after she earned her Master of Arts degree in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics from Southwest Jiaotong University, Sichuan Province, China in 2008. She is currently working in the School of Foreign Languages, Honghe University, Yunnan Province, China. From 2015 to 2020, she pursued her Ph.D. in the School of Foreign Languages, Institute of Social Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. Her research interest involves L2 writing, learner identity, and world Englishes.

มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีสุรนารี