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**Support and Mentoring in Writing for Research Publication: Current
Situation and Aspirations of Biology Academics**

**الدعم و التوجيه في الكتابة للنشر: الوضع الراهن وتطلعات أكاديمي علوم
الأحياء**

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Abstract

This study aims at understanding the different forms of support or mentoring that biology academics in Sétif1 University receive to face the challenges of writing and publishing research in English. The data obtained through an in-depth interview were analyzed qualitatively allowing the emergence of key themes on the respondents' experiences, strategies and aspirations. The findings revealed frustration due to the paucity of experts willing to provide satisfactory support in both disciplinary and linguistic areas. Informants asserted also their need to strengthen language aspects in the manuscripts such as generic, discursive and lexico-grammatical ones. Mentoring and support in the context of courses and interdisciplinary scientific teams were suggested as solutions to ensure more autonomous development of research skills. This work underscores the importance of finding contexts where disciplinary and linguistic expertise can be shared among academics and offers insights to the social and collaborative nature of the research writing process.

Keywords: Biology research, EAL authors, English for Research Publication Purposes, research writing support, scholarly literacy mentoring

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة النوعية إلى فهم صيغ الدعم و التوجيه التي يرجع إليها الأكاديميون بمعهد علوم الأحياء بجامعة سطيف في مسار كتابتهم و نشرهم للمقال العلمي. وظفت هذه الدراسة مقابلة معمقة لجمع بيانات حول تجارب، ممارسات، و تطلعات المشتركين المتعلقة بكتابة المقال. تم تحليل هذه البيانات نوعياً للوصول إلى موضوعات ذات صلة بهدف البحث. أظهرت النتائج ندرة في مصادر الدعم سواء فيما يخص جانب اللغة أو جانب محتوى و منهج البحث، كما أكد المشاركون حاجتهم لتدقيق عدة جوانب تتضمن النحو، المفردات، الخطاب، و تنظيم النص. للاستفادة من صيغ الدعم و التوجيه، اقترح المشاركون أطراً و مثل الدورات التكوينية و فرق التبادل البيئي. يخلص هذا البحث إلى ضرورة إيجاد سياقات لمشاركة خبرات اللغة و التخصص و يقدم رؤى تؤكد الطبيعة الاجتماعية و التعاونية لعملية الكتابة العلمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : علم الأحياء، كُتّاب الإنجليزية كلغة إضافية، الإنجليزية لأغراض نشر البحث، دعم كتابة البحث، توجيه الإلمام الأكاديمي

1. INTRODUCTION

Active involvement in scholarly exchange is commonly reflected through the number of research output published in English. Hyland (2016) underscores the fact that publishing in English is a requirement for international access and recognition. Thus, in order to increase the chances to reach a wider proportion of the academic community, researchers have to opt for using English instead of other languages (Curry & Lillis, 2019; Hyland, 2016; Ramirez-Castaneda, 2020). Due to this acknowledged importance, members of the academic community with non-native English language proficiency face

tremendous challenges in different phases of writing, polishing, and publishing their manuscripts. They are hence compelled to solicit support from various sources of support to get assistance at any of those different steps (Curry & Lillis, 2019). The way the researchers in different disciplines perceive their weaknesses and the sources from which they can obtain assistance is an area that needs further attention. This paper aims at understanding how researchers in the department of biology perceive the roles played by different support providers and the areas in which they can be cooperative.

2. Literature Review

Over the past decades, the role of English has evolved in academic settings to become a lingua franca used worldwide by scholars from different linguistic backgrounds (Bennett, 2014). Editorial policies of international journal started requiring English as a language for academic publishing, favoring the submission of papers written in English. Seen from the perspective of academics, publishing in English guarantees more visibility and recognition from the global academic community, given that most reputable and high impact factors journals use English. In addition to visibility, publishing in English has been an incentive for career advancement and access to funding for both early career researchers and established ones (Soler, 2019).

The dominance of English has been responded to differently in diverse parts of the world. Nordic countries, for example, showed a quicker pace in their transition to English than other countries. Governmental institutions and the language policies were the main contributors to this shift (Kuteeva & Airy, 2014; Mauranen, 2012). Other countries like continental European countries and Asian countries took longer to institutionalize English and use it for academic purposes in spite of the pragmatic acceptance of its benefits (Hyland, 2016; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Staiman, 2021).

Differences in transition to English and adaptation to its use in publication and higher education teaching is not shaped only but regional variations, but also by disciplinary ones. Soft sciences are reported to be slower in adopting the international language. Factors like cultural considerations, concerns of epistemic inequality are the chief causes behind the relatively slow shift compared to hard sciences (Soler, 2021; Hultgren, 2019; Mauranen, 2012).

Writing Research as a non-Native English Speaker

Research on the use of English as an additional language (EAL) in non-English

environments generated concerns about the linguistic inequity and epistemic bias (Erdocia & Soler, 2024). According to researchers from non-Anglo-Saxon environments, the validity of their knowledge does not receive proper consideration due to the shortcomings in language accuracy. This is manifested in the high rejection rates justified by the linguistic standards rather than the conceptual ones. The scrutiny of reviewers, also regarded as a form of gatekeeping, causes researchers to be excluded from the international academia community (Paltridge, 2017).

Another concern closely related to the efforts to cope with the requirement of publishing in English is the cognitive load, time investment, and financial expenses burdens. Findings from survey studies and qualitative case studies reported the resentment of researchers for spending more time in drafting and writing the research than their counterparts from Anglo-Saxon regions, causing the publishing process to be time consuming and exhausting. Time spent in polishing the language issues is thought to be taking from the research time. Although professional editing processes can be of great help to the researchers desiring to polish their works, they entail with them disagreeable financial expenses.

Moreover, studies investigating how writing research in a foreign language is different from first language writing revealed that increased levels of anxiety were felt by the researchers (Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Hanauer, Sheridan & Englander, 2019). That anxiety was attributed to the perception that limited linguistic competencies have their repercussions on access to recent resources and on the ability to communicate easily with the academic and research networks. Added to anxiety, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the published products was a characteristic of L2 research writing.

Areas of Expertise Contributing to Publishable Research

The acknowledged importance of publication fuels interest in the criteria

against which research articles are evaluated and the skills any member of the academia is expected to have. Valuable insights into this area can be drawn from a number of sources including but not limited to reviewers' criteria of manuscript evaluation, (English for Research Publication Purposes) ERPP training programs, and subjective views of researchers on how they perceive their needs and weaknesses. Interestingly, the areas of expertise do also represent areas of challenges faced by manuscript writers along the process of writing and publishing their scientific output.

As a matter of fact, for purposes of organization, the identified areas of expertise need to be categorized into broader overarching areas. This task is not straightforward due to the wide range of overlapping criteria that interfere. It is nevertheless possible to discern two broad areas: discipline-related aspects and English language proficiency aspects.

Genre and discourse

Knowing the conventions that structure the research article is crucial for research writers as new scientific contributions need to be introduced in accepted norms of the disciplinary community. Recently, numerous studies have focused on identifying the functional elements that recur in published research to provide writers with templates. The fact that these studies have yielded moves organization models made them of great educational value especially for novice researchers and non-native ones. The usefulness of templates lies in guiding the writers in the organization of the main structural elements of the manuscript. However, this aspect goes further to guiding the researchers in structuring each section and in realizing the moves. Skeletal sentences, namely, is a term referring to phrases or sentences used to linguistically realize particular moves (Yakhontova, 2021).

Research concerned with this aspect of scholarly writing falls in the category of genre analysis research, which is also predominantly pedagogically driven.

Swales' (1990) pioneering research on how articles are structured is viewed as the catalyst for numerous subsequent research. Different models were suggested on the rhetorical development of different sections, on the recurring or optional moves and steps that can be used in a wide range of academic fields.

English language competence

Language competence essential for article writing is versatile and cannot be limited to one aspect or another; however, specific elements have been prioritized over others given their role in facilitating the process of research paper writing. Sentence templates is one of those aspects gaining special focus. In a training aiming at recognizing the beneficial practices that could bring assistance to research writers (Li, Cargill, & Flowerdew, 2018), one of the strategies used by the trainers was encouraging the use of sentence templates. The trainees would use in their writings structures of sentences they have encountered while reading texts. By employing new sentence templates, the writers are hopefully expected to be more attentive to the variety of textual examples that could be found in reading materials they are exposed to. This strategy has not only been studied but also proven to contribute in developing the area of English language competence among writers (Cargill & O'Connor, 2013; Flowerdew & Wang, 2016; Morley, 2014).

Discipline-related Aspects

Scholars of the same discipline are viewed to belong to one community sharing the same standards, be it in how to approach inquiry or how to disseminate it. Supported by the laws of constructivism, members of the same disciplinary community use similar thinking processes and research practices. Content supervisors and native English speaking discipline colleagues are examples of professionals qualified to provide assistance in areas of research writing and publishing (Hyland, 2006).

Lillis and Curry (2006) make a clear distinction between academic brokers and language brokers contributing in shaping the

academic text of researchers. The major role played in the process of brokering, also referred to by the same authors as mediation, is to bring changes to the text each in the respective aspect. While language brokers focus their interventions on sentence level modifications, academic brokers draw attention to content and knowledge aspects.

One important aspect relevant to the academic expertise is facilitating access and engagement in disciplinary conversations. Contributing successfully to the disciplinary conversation and publication skills is one of the academia challenges that can be mitigated by finding the perfect journal for publication and by awareness about the journal guidelines. Alignment to the journal priorities is crucial for manuscript writers as each journal differs in focus and orientation. Support obtained from discipline experts increases chances of identifying accurately the suitable journal (Corcoran & Englander, 2021). Moreover, expert researchers from the same disciplinary background act as facilitators of access to journals and journal issues, which increases opportunities of research and polishes publication skills (Lillis & Curry, 2006).

Research Methodologies

Disciplinary expertise can also meet the challenges related to research process starting from handling the research questions to selecting the most appropriate techniques of statistical analysis. Research quality is not confined to the type of knowledge produced, but it is also tightly dependent on how this new knowledge is created. The choice of the theoretical framework of the study, the research methods, and the analysis techniques are requirement for a good quality research that can be negotiated optimally with fellow researchers of the same field (O'Donnell & O'Donnell, 2019).

Knowledge Claims

Although support provided from non-specialists can help improve many aspects of manuscript language and structure, this type of expertise remains inefficient as to the content and particularly to the new

knowledge claimed through the study findings. Experts from the same specialism can provide assistance in the choice of the level of certainty of the scientific claims, either through the accurate use of hedging devices like modals, or through content amendments (Cargill & O'Connor, 2006).

It is worth to note that although the above accounts divide expertise into distinct sets, in practical contexts however, many intersections make it difficult to know decisively where to place particular types of expertise. For example, developing a sound argument stands in the intersection between language and content. For arguments to be robustly structured, the writer needs not only to draw upon the mastery of knowledge, namely, the use of cohesive devices, but also to draw upon the disciplinary knowledge being developed. Another example is the use of hedges and boosters, which are language devices that help in adjusting the intensity of the scientific claims (Lillis & Curry, 2006).

The importance of academic exchange between experienced researchers and less experienced ones from the same discipline has been highlighted by Merga and Mason (2021). The exchange and support take different forms like co-authoring, formal training, co-researching, and supervision. These mechanisms assist the researchers to better cope with hurdles in the process of research production and dissemination, ensure more motivation in output production, and facilitate better learning from the collaboration with other researchers.

3. Methods

This paper aims at answering two main research questions: a) how does assistance from support providers (if any) address the challenges faced by biology researchers? b) based on the biology researchers' aspirations, what are the solutions that can assist to cope autonomously with the current situation?

3.1. Participants

The interview was conducted with five biology teachers at Sétif1 University. Being a qualitative investigation, this study does

not aim at reaching any kind of generalization based on numerical data; instead, the objective was to gain a deep understanding about the issue of support providers. It was preferred, therefore, to have a small number of respondents with a maximum of insights. Biology teachers were approached in their workplace, and were conveniently invited to take part in interviews. Whoever has written scientific research or was in the process of writing a manuscript in English was believed to be providing valuable information. The participants were informed about the purpose from the study and how an understanding of types of support provided from various brokers is indispensable if any framework for helping novice researchers is to be designed. Only one of interviewees has a Magister degree in biology while the others had a PHD degree in the following specialties biochemistry, biochemistry and ecology, ecology, and molecular biology. Their publications in English ranged from two to three articles.

3.2. Procedure

The interviewees were intentionally invited to start the interview by discussing the criteria of acceptable research and the challenges encountered to set the scene for subsequent accounts on support providers and establish a connection between the challenges and the assistance that can address them. In order to elicit a maximum of data concerning the challenges, prompts relating to the difficulties faced in writing each section of the article were added. In doing so, the interviewees were hopefully expected to extend their explanation to manuscript organization, and connect language aspects to content ones. Before any of the interviews was started, the interviewees were asked to provide briefly, professional information such as the specialism and number of publications in English. The interviews were conducted in colloquial Arabic with four of the interviewees, and in English with one interviewee. After being informed about the purpose of the study this latter claimed to be

confident enough to be interviewed in English.

The preparation for data to be analyzed followed the procedure of qualitative analysis. It was done manually; no qualitative data analysis software was employed since the number of transcribed data was not substantially large. Interviews were coded; then, codes were reduced into a number of themes. The satisfaction with the obtained themes was gauged by the possibility to relate them to the main focus of the study and to the existing literature. While analyzing data, special focus was placed on language and structural elements and how writing concerns can merge with specialism ones. There was also an attempt to gain maximum insights of peculiarities and nuances related to the biology specialism given the inextricable synergy between both aspects.

4. Results

Understanding the researchers' experiences with support providers requires exploring their perceptions about what makes good research articles and what strategies they chose to use in order to meet those criteria. This requires also discovering the areas of expertise they think are indispensable for manuscript writing and the mismatches between their actual limitations and the target criteria. The way support providers contribute in shaping the final manuscript can only be understood if there is a good grasp of the previous two elements, criteria and challenges.

Qualities of Publishable research

Participants' views on aspects determining good research fall into two broad categories: aspects related to the study itself as a knowledge increasing procedure and those related to the written product. Among the mentioned aspects relating to the first category appear the sound design of the experimental study, the clarity of the aim, the originality of research reflected in the way the hypothesis is formulated, and the sequencing of methodology steps. Sampling has also a very decisive role, according to one interviewee. Interviewee 3 points

“plants selected for any study should be brought directly from its environment instead of buying it from shops”. The interviewee stresses that without being acquainted with the site, it would be impossible for the biologist to identify its variety, or to know the climatic and geological conditions of the plant growth, and the orientation to the sun. The choice of analyses tests is another aspect that can determine the value of a study. The successful selection of the laboratory tests is what makes a study interesting and worth conducting.

On the other hand, the language and structure of the manuscript also play a crucial role. Intelligibility and accuracy guarantee the clarity of the work. One interviewee went further in his account about the importance of mastering language skills and pointed to the necessity to distinguish between American and British varieties. ‘One should be aware whether he/she is using the appropriate spelling for the selected variety argued the same interviewee. Avoidance of plagiarism was also mentioned as one feature of good research. Other less precise and more holistic answers were compliance to the publishing guidelines prescribed by the journal and agreement with the publishing traditions held by fellow researchers belonging to the same region.

Areas of Difficulty Requiring Support

As regards their concerns, the interviewees articulated a wide range of issues that can be again grouped into the categories of content-related challenges and language-related ones. It is worth to note that in addition to the aspect of difficulty revealed by the respondents, it was additionally possible to develop understanding on the degree of their concern about each of the categories. There was, for example, total unanimity that language problems are less bothering than methodological, and disciplinary ones. As long as the laboratory tests are well fitted to the research aim, hypothesis, and sample the language becomes a minor worry.

One commonly stressed area of methodological challenges is how to build a robust hypothesis that adds original contribution to existing literature. The hypothesis in turn, along with previous research, is thought to help in the choice of the laboratory tests. The contextualization of one’s contribution in the broader area of research is thus a step requiring much attention, and if not done properly, the work may fail to manifest its worth. The process of interpreting results can be frustrating as well because “it requires reading many articles done in the same field to make a strong comparison, whether in English or in another language, and regardless of the field of study: ecology, economics...” as put by one of the interviewees. This problem is more intense when the work is original and little research to compare with is published.

With reference to academic writing challenges, connecting ideas seems to be posing difficulties for the interviewees. Be it within paragraph or between paragraphs, ideas make sense only if the connection between them is clear. This probably explains why synthesizing information concerns the article writers.

Another relevant concern is the difficulty to organize ideas in introductions. One interviewee expressed it as follows, “it is difficult to know which element to start with”; another one said “in the introductions, a weak sequencing of ideas is a problem. It should motivate the reader and incite him to carry on reading the article”. A third one complained of not being sure whether to organize introduction elements from general to specific pattern or from specific to general pattern. Interestingly, the manner of introducing a plant appeared as an issue pertaining to the specialism and raised as one causing confusion while deciding upon how to introduce the research topic.

In addition to the previously stated challenges, the interviewees mentioned plagiarism, overuse of the same sentence patterns, and repetition as flaws to be avoided. These elements reveal how style

flaws can entail worries about academic dishonesty. Accuracy was, furthermore, mentioned as one possible cause of manuscript flaws. More precisely, interviewees complained of not feeling confident to choose words from the right word class; that is to say whether for example to choose a noun or a verb in particular sentences. Words like 'increase' and 'decrease' sharing common morphemes can occasionally be a source of confusion. Moreover, verb tenses used in each of the manuscript sections are additional source of uncertainty. Though not stressed by all the interviewees, but punctuation appeared to be problematic during the process of writing. It seems, however, that an agreed upon viewpoint is that accuracy is not the most pressing issue because according to them reading other articles helps substantially in refining one's language mastery.

Experiences with Support Providers

The general perception about the way the interviewees benefit from support providers was marked by dissatisfaction and frustration. A dearth of opportunities to have their manuscripts reviewed by reliable brokers drove them to cope with the situation in different ways. Proofreading software are tools all of the interviewees report to be using. In spite of the considerable assistance they provide, they remain artificial intelligence as stated by one interviewee "we need human intelligence". Another strategy reported by the respondents is attention to research output appearing in high impact and prestigious journals. Reading a great deal of successful published articles is likely to alleviate the encountered problems as reported by the interviewees.

As regards the available support providers, it was noticed that interviewees were referring to them from a range of perspectives, namely, past experiences as a source of attitude towards each one of them, the reviewed aspects of manuscript writing, opportunities of learning from the reviewing interaction, and suggestions for optimal support. It is therefore, logical and practical

to approach each support provider, in the rest of this section, from the same set of perspectives, without losing of sight highlighting the discrepancies between the current situation experienced by the interviewed scholars and the ideal situation they aspire to.

Colleagues including senior academics and junior ones are the most readily available potential parts in the academic environment of any scholar. In spite of their availability, interviewees did not report any satisfactory interaction with them. When asked about the help that could be obtained from senior colleagues, especially if they have a considerable number of publications, one interviewee said "the number of publications does not reflect the level or skills of publication in English", a belief shared and stressed by everyone of the other interviewees. Senior colleagues may have relied on hiring translators or may have benefitted from co-authorship without significant involvement in the writing of the manuscript. Unsurprisingly, the interviewees find their junior scholar peers less experienced and incapable of coming with any aid. "They have the same level; we are of the same generation, so I do not expect them to be able to help", said one interviewee. One other situation in which manuscript writers may encounter is to accept the help of a biologist researcher with good mastery of English, but in return a promise is given to this support provider to include his name as a co-author. This frustrating situation prevents the emerging researcher from claiming full authorship of his own work. Some traditions of help exchange do exist amongst the members of the same laboratory, which makes it unreasonable for a non-member of the laboratory to expect help outside that context.

Interviewees recognized the role that can be played by **supervisors** with early career academics seeing their familiarity with the scientific content and the experience they have in publishing. Busy supervisors' schedules and heavy workload prevent

scholars from getting any support. One interviewee exemplified her situation as follows, “My supervisor studied in the United Kingdom, but she is busy with the kids and so; I cannot ask”. In contrast to supervisors and colleagues, **co-authors** are seen as partners with whom scientific content, methodological choices and language accuracy can be discussed.

Interestingly, **reviewers’** support seems to be viewed in a very positive way. According to the informants, their feedback is very constructive. They tackle every aspect of the work, be it related to the scientific content or to the linguistic and organizational one. The clarity of their feedback is a further advantage enhancing the negotiation of work quality. Interviewee 4 exemplifies with this,

“in my second article I received corrections of errors; this helps a lot. They presented them in a table: a column for errors and the second for corrections. They highlighted those parts to make them clear. This helps even in other articles not only the one being published.”

In addition to being an opportunity to improve one’s manuscript, interaction with reviewers is reported to be a learning experience. One informant illustrated, “we learn from them. Once they gave me a remark that I have to improve language; that is, sentence quality, words, tense, and British as opposed to American variations. I became more attentive to tenses and words”.

That being said, the strengths of reviewers’ assistance are not always taken for granted. One informant put it as follow, “reviewers are very helpful depending on the quality of revision”. Another interviewee explained, “only if they revise seriously”; “at times, the manuscript writer is left without any feedback or request for modification or with a superficial feedback”. Alternatively, the feedback can be provided but the negotiation of the manuscript quality could fail because of the ambiguity with which the feedback can be put. Interviewee 4 points,

“in their feedback, they said that there is some similarity (plagiarism) and that reference format has to be modified. I reviewed some sentences where I thought similarity could exist, and changed the format of references. They sent me feedback saying that I did not make the required modifications.”

Language professionals including English teachers and translators seem to be the least preferred sources of help simply because their unfamiliarity with the discipline knowledge and the scientific content. The past experience with English teachers made them believe that little, if no help at all, can be obtained from them. Two interviewees reported having their manuscript given back after reading without any feedback. Interviewee 1 says, “I think teachers of English cannot help much. I tried to get help from a teacher of English with magister degree, but not related to publication. It was useless; she said that everything was okay.”

Aspirations

Informants found that the effective forms of assistance would ideally come from sources having both linguistic and specific domain expertise. Experts in the field with background instruction in English speaking countries can take more responsibilities in helping researchers struggling with English writing. Because most of the time such academics are busy with their own workload, they manage to help only their candidates. Ideally, the benefit can be generalized if other forms of aid are adopted.

Language professionals like English teachers who possess some knowledge in the field can provide valuable assistance. Not only can they help in diction, voice, and tense use, but they can also have their say on organizational aspects. How to write compelling paragraph openings, and how to guarantee a flow between ideas and paragraphs is best evaluated by language specialists. Interviewee 5 added a further aspect as she said, “help can also be given in writing acknowledgements. We need to

express thanks to many parts like laboratory teams and socioeconomic partners.”

The context into which such interaction between manuscript writers and support providers should take place is an issue raised with noticeable enthusiasm by many informants. Interviewee 3 suggested integrating a language professional into every research laboratory. The duties of this latter would be to

“hold meetings with the members of the laboratory to discuss what we did and we have to do (and) discuss language use in each section. This allows parallel handling of scientific and linguistic elements. So the discussion involves evaluation, suggestion and improvement (of research manuscripts)”.

This idea is shared by interviewee 5, who stressed the importance of one-on-one negotiation, and pointed to the time-saving virtue of this method. Having similar interdisciplinary contact would, in the long run, enhance the language professionals’ awareness about the researchers’ needs.

Interestingly, interviewee 5 related her own experience as a graduate student with a three-hour weekly module that was meant for preparing them to write the dissertation. For 14 weeks, the lecturer would expose the students to research articles in English and analyse them jointly. The analysis consisted in reading carefully the title, understanding the objective of the study, and check the relevance of the title to the article content. Afterwards, they would turn the article into a diagram to be presented in the form of a poster or an overhead projector slide. The assignment was performed by four-student groups. According to Interviewee 5, every researcher should have such a training in reading research articles to be ready for producing research.

5. Discussion

Based on the informants’ perceptions and contentions displayed in the foregoing section, a number of interpretations and implications can be discussed. Because the direction of this study falls into the context of how EAP and ERPP branches can afford

aid to research manuscript writers, a special focus is placed on the roles that can be played by language professionals and to the significance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

One problem faced is the scarcity of advisors with both linguistic and disciplinary knowledge. The interviewed biologists seem to cope with this scarcity by appealing to accessible strategies such as attentive reading of good quality research and use of editing software. This finding is in line with what Li and Flowerdew (2007) have termed as “operat(ing) on the principle of convenience or accessibility”. The Chinese novice scientists with whom their study was conducted did not report to receive feedback and correction from the preferred sources, rather from accessible and economic ones. It is worth to note, nonetheless, that convenient and accessible sources differ from one academic community to another, and what can be accessible to a community may not be so for another.

Discipline professionals are viewed by the respondents in this study to play a tremendous role in conceptualizing the whole research process including the hypothesis, the nature of the sample, the laboratory tests, and the discussion of data. Besides, they can play a socializing role by recommending journals where manuscripts have more chances to earn interest. These advantages are tangible only when constraints of workload, laboratory membership, and imposed co-authorship, to mention a few, are controlled. This idea resonates with what Corcoran and Englander (2021) found on the roles that can be played by the content specialists.

While discipline professionals’ role is much valued by the respondents as it shapes the manuscript before its submission, journal reviewers can only help after submission occurs. They assist in a number of similar areas such as socializing researchers into journals and research publication communities, in deciding upon study originality, methodological decisions like

refining hypotheses, sampling, choosing laboratory tests, and discussing the results.

Language professionals, on the other hand, are seen to have a less advantageous role. The potential help from them can only be maximized if the language professional is aware of the needs of the scientists, if efforts are put in gaining familiarity with the discipline, and if face-to-face conferencing is used as a channel of communication when refining the manuscript. Regarding the same aspect, Luo and Hyland (2025) point that the lack of subject knowledge and the feeling of uncertainty are responsible for this reluctance to participate more deeply in text mediation of scientific products.

Another worthwhile insight drawn from the findings is the way guidance is perceived as a step towards autonomy. Although mentoring and support are highly valued and favored over other forms, the ultimate aim extends beyond the improvement of the manuscript to the cultivation of autonomy. This was clear from the way the informants invoked the desirable one-on-one feedback from language professionals and from the satisfactory experiences they had with particular reviewers. Therefore, empowering the authors to perform better in subsequent productions is the ultimate sought-after outcome from any negotiation of manuscript quality. The informants complain of the support absence, which they labelled as 'forced autonomy' is comparable to insights gained from the study of Overall, Deane and Peterson (2011) on the same regard.

Building on the earlier points, it is imperative to recommend a number of measures. Of particular importance, is the implementation of research publication training (Cargill, 2018; Pentang & Domingo, 2024). Courses including how to read articles can be of great help to researchers embarking on the process of knowledge construction and dissemination. Reading should integrate attention to scientific content with generic, organizational, and linguistic aspects. This echoes with what Habibie (2016) asserted on the necessity to invest time in training early

career researchers to get familiar with communities' discourses. Pertaining to the same recommendation, Carry and O'Connor (2006) distinguish between two types of exercises that can be part of the research writing training: descriptive exercises and prescriptive ones. Descriptive exercises focus predominantly on identifying organizational issues such as moves and steps and occurring mostly in the contexts of reading skills, as opposed to prescriptive exercises which guide learners in the process of text production.

Courses in English for Research publications purposes (ERPP) should be founded on the idea of partnership between language professionals and domain specialists as stressed by Li and Flowerdew (2007). If any ERPP course is to be designed based on the data gleaned from this study, support should be provided on a number of areas. At a basic level, rich vocabulary, especially semi-technical one and rich sentence patterning are what can respond to the researchers' concerns of style, variety, and academic integrity. Beyond sentence level aspects, discursive features can solve problems of content flow and idea connection. Equally important is the generic structure of the article as a whole and each section in isolation. The training in these aspects should be dealt with from two different perspectives: the perspective of a reader who needs to be able to identify and spot the studied elements in others' output, and the perspective of the author who is supposed to manipulate accurately those elements. Comprehending and responding to experienced authors' feedback is a culminating point where authors manifest their good grasp of linguistic, pragmatic and interpersonal competencies.

Efforts and time should be put in training language professionals to be effective in playing roles as ERPP advisors and in ensuring a sound transition to playing roles of practitioners in English for Specific Academic Purposes as stressed by Luo and Hyland (2025). Such endeavor calls for thorough interdisciplinary collaborative

practices to guarantee providing support that integrate both language and content knowledge (Malmstrom & Zhou, 2025).

6. Conclusion

This study was guided by the purpose of exploring the experiences of the interviewed biology researchers in publishing research and their perceptions about the type of support they have access to, if any. Those perceptions, practices and aspirations were meant also to visualize the potential contexts and parts by means of which much of the barriers could be surmounted. Overall, the findings indicated that biology researchers are frustrated due to the paucity of sources of help that combine both specialism expertise with language knowledge, knowing that both aspects were regarded by the interviewees as indispensable criteria for good quality research. Interviewees value the sources of help acting as learning experiences and empowering them to work autonomously and confidently in subsequent manuscripts. Their practices were predominantly marked by use of digital editing tools, reading renowned articles, and revising the manuscript with co-authors. What they ideally aspire can be placed into two major contexts. As a graduation or post-graduation program, courses can focus on generic, discursive, and lexico-grammatical aspects that are closely incorporated to the scientific content. As a post-recruitment/doctoral program, long-term partnership can be established in laboratories by integrating permanently language professionals into scientific teams. This permanent contact is likely to familiarize the language professional with the needs of the professionals and will afford opportunities for prompt and clear feedback.

The most important implication of this piece of research is the creation of contexts where the expertise of EAP and ERPP professionals can have an active role in supporting manuscript writers. Based on the needs of specific research communities, their hardships and aspirations, language professionals can furnish more efforts in

generating opportunities of cooperation and team-working with content specialist. This team working offers promising forms of effective author support.

Further research can be conducted on other closely related topics to shed more light on the perfect mentoring and support contexts that could be afforded to the research manuscript writers. Courses designed for the purpose of catering to the needs of emerging researchers and their effectiveness in empowering the learners deserve more attention using evaluative means to gauge their potential effectiveness. Another interesting and worthwhile area is the study of authorial persistence and how the branch of ERPP aids at improving negotiation between authors and reviewers. Both authorial persistence and negotiation skills can be examined in terms of their effect on promoting the acceptance chances of the manuscripts. Ultimately, research can also examine the opportunities provided by Artificial Intelligence in supporting the publishing process without losing sight of the ethical concerns entailed by it.

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