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Academic texts in motion

A text history study of co-authorship interactions in writing for publication

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Knowledge production in collaborative writing for publication has tended to be studied as fixed in time and place; few studies have focused on the drafting and redrafting of texts and the interactions among the co-authors involved. Using a *text history* approach to a research article co-authored by an exiled academic and his two more experienced co-authors, all using English as an additional language, this study investigates the impact of interactions during text production on the focal academic's understanding of writing for English-medium international publication. We analysed the co-authors' comments on the academic's drafts, examining their *Intervention Levels* (levels of directness and explicitness) and *Intervention Areas* (disciplinary, writing, and publishing conventions) and the academic's responses to these interventions. Analysis focused on *interaction episodes* (written interactions relating to a specific point in the text and relevant textual changes throughout drafts). Findings revealed that interventions focused on multiple areas, with the co-authors acting as knowledge brokers in all domains. The interaction dynamics changed across the drafts, in the focus of interaction episodes and the levels of co-authors' interventions provided to the academic, which created a space to negotiate interventions and, consequently, to enrich his understanding of writing practices for international publication in English.

Keywords: co-authorship, English for Research Publication Purposes, international publication, textual interaction, text history

1. Introduction

English for research publication purposes (ERPP), a field of study which emerged as a response to the increasing demand on scholars worldwide to publish in

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English regardless of whether it is their first language (Flowerdew, 2012), has attracted a large amount of attention in the past few decades. It has been investigated from different angles, by focusing on the challenges academics face while publishing (Englander, 2014), their publishing experiences (Lillis & Curry, 2010), and coping strategies (Buckingham, 2014), whether through courses (Cargill & O'Connor, 2006), self-developed strategies (Oxford, 1990), or peer interventions (Mungra & Webber, 2010). The area of peer intervention, and specifically co-authorship interaction, however, has received less attention, despite co-authorship being a common publication practice (Kettunen, 2016).

Interaction with others is crucial to learning (Vygotsky, 1987); in academic writing this occurs through interactions with published texts via *intermental encounters* with their authors (Wertsch, 1991), where learning takes place through noticing and uptake, as well as in interactions with various literacy brokers (e.g., colleagues, language editors, journal editors and reviewers), who may support the writer's text production (Lillis & Curry, 2010). However, in contrast to the growing body of research on the role of literacy brokers, how co-authors interact in joint text production, particularly in academic contexts, has been given little consideration (but see Lillis & Curry 2010; Darwin & Norton, 2019). Focusing on collaborative writing for joint publication, this paper investigates an instance of co-authorship involving an exiled academic supported by the non-governmental organization the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA; <https://www.cara.ngo/>) and two more experienced academics, to explore the role of the interactions shaping text production in the academic's evolving practices of writing for English-medium international publication.

To trace the lead academic's writing practices during the collaborative writing process, we examine instances of the co-authors' responses to his writing, his uptake and understanding of their comments, and related changes in his understanding of writing practices for English-medium international publication. To this end, we use *text history* as a method based on the view of texts as sites of interaction and change. Specifically, we focus on the lead academic's interactions with his co-authors through the chronological iterations of a single journal paper. Studying collaborative texts in motion, that is, in the process of becoming rather than as fixed texts, provides insights into collaborative writing as a resource for developing writing practices for publication in English. In the following sections, we provide an overview of the literature on ERPP with a focus on textual intervention. We then present the methods we employed in this study, followed by findings from one text history (TH), where we discuss the participant's interactions with his co-authors across three drafts. We conclude with a discussion of the results and recommendations for future research and ERPP pedagogy.

2. English for research publication purposes

ERPP has developed in recent years both as a practical area focusing on supporting scholars in their efforts to publish in English but also as a research field in its own right, as indicated above. In the *publish or perish* culture, developing appropriate practices to publish successfully often in English-medium international journals, has become part of academic enculturation. This is increasingly evident in calls for universities to provide ERPP training to PhD students and in the growing requirement that students publish as part of their doctoral study; similarly, English-medium publishing is becoming a requirement for academics in a growing number of countries (see, e.g., Curry & Lillis, 2017; Hanauer & Englander, 2013). ERPP initiatives such as those reported by Li and Flowerdew (2020) and Flowerdew and Habibie (2021) aim to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) academics to successfully navigate writing for publication but may also go beyond academic enculturation to question the hegemonic position of English in knowledge production, and encourage journal editors and reviewers to support academics' efforts to publish their research (Curry & Lillis, 2017). Throughout this paper we use *EAL* to signal the complexity of writing for English-medium publication for bi/multiliterate writers, whose knowledge of multiple academic cultures may facilitate some aspects of English-medium international writing but hinder others (for contrasting perspectives on this much-debated issue see, e.g., Flowerdew, 2019; Hyland, 2016a, 2016b).

Research on academic enculturation of both students and scholars has had three key foci to date: (i) identifying different types of knowledge and/or practices (e.g., genre knowledge, disciplinary terminology, linguistic repertoires, writing processes, identities); (ii) conceptual spaces where academic enculturation occurs (e.g., disciplines, discourse communities, communities of practice); and (iii) how academic enculturation happens (e.g., through instruction) (Prior & Bilbro, 2012). The first area, the content of academic enculturation, has received most attention, particularly with reference to student writing, with studies focusing on issues ranging from acquiring genre knowledge and disciplinary terminology (Li & Flowerdew, 2020), the mastery of linguistic registers and genres (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008), and the knowledge of publishing conventions (Khuder & Petrić, 2020), to writers' practices and identities (Prior, 1998) and their ability to negotiate their writing decisions and practices (Barton, 2007).

Of the three areas of research on academic enculturation identified by Prior and Bilbro (2012), how academic enculturation occurs has received the least attention. Since social interaction is essential to academic enculturation, as pointed out in the introduction, we now turn to two types of practices that involve social interaction around text production: feedback and collaborative

writing. Feedback can facilitate academic enculturation; it can have a long-term impact on writers' publishing practices specifically when learning transfer occurs (James, 2010). However, uptake from feedback, and the ability to learn and develop as a result, may not occur if the feedback does not provide enough information (Brown et al., 2003), or if the writer lacks the strategies required to act on the feedback (Burke, 2009).

Research on feedback on student writing has used Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (for a review on research using ZPD see Storch, 2018), defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1987, p.86). This concept is helpful in explaining the link between feedback and the writers' readiness to process it. Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995, p.62) refer to effective practice of feedback within ZPD as "an act of negotiated discovery." In order to be effective this practice, often referred to as scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976), needs to be both graduated and contingent (Storch, 2018), meaning it should be sufficient to a degree that the writer/learner does not become dependent on the feedback and it should stop when the learner achieves independence. Thus, scaffolding should be dynamic and happen within the learner's ZPD. As Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995, p.480) point out: "all types of feedback are potentially relevant for learning, but their relevance depends on where in the learner's ZPD a particular property of the L2 is situated." While these concepts have been used with reference to student writing, they are also applicable to joint text production involving co-authors with differing levels of relevant subject area expertise, writing experience, and linguistic proficiency (of the language used for text production), as in the case we investigate in this study.

Relevant to the discussion of interactions surrounding text production is the notion of *literacy brokers*. Although we do not view co-authorship as the same as literacy brokerage, sometimes there are elements of co-authorship that might include literacy brokerage, specifically when the level of experience differs across co-authors. Lillis and Curry (2006, 2010) use the term *broker* in contradistinction to other terms such as mediators and sponsors (to refer to those assisting authors in their text production) to highlight the unequal status and power between participants often as a result of the various resources they can access (see also Hyninen, Shaw and Smirnova and Lillis this issue). In their study of 30 psychology multilingual academics in Hungary, Slovakia, Spain, and Portugal working with literacy brokers, Lillis and Curry (2006) found that literacy brokers' roles ranged from "academic professionals" who "orient to knowledge content and claims,

[and] discipline-specific discourse” to “language professionals” who “tend to focus on sentence level revisions and direct translations” (pp. 15–16).

Focusing on co-authorship, Darvin and Norton (2019) provide an interesting auto-ethnographic account of their own 10-year experience of co-authorship, with both parties providing their individual perspectives. Norton was Darvin’s PhD supervisor and they started co-authoring articles while Darvin was a PhD student. The supervisor in this article narrates how she socialized her supervisee into the academic community by negotiating ideas with him and asking him to be in charge of contacting journal editors. Darvin reported how his relationship with Norton and her attempt to negotiate feedback rather than asking him to make changes assisted in his socialization and made him gain more power as an author. This auto-ethnography illustrates how co-authorship with a supervisor can provide a supportive space for socialisation of supervisees into writing for publication practices and thus facilitate their transition to being junior academics. Importantly, the focus of this collaboration was not limited to text development but also included the supervisor’s steps to demystify the often-occluded practices surrounding writing for publication. Our study investigates a case of co-authorship which, similarly to Darvin and Norton (2019), was intended to facilitate academic socialisation by supporting an exiled academic in writing for English-medium international publication; however, unlike Darvin, the writer in this study was an established academic, with a record of publications in Arabic, leading the co-authorship dynamics and textual interactions among the co-authors to evolve in more complex ways, as will be shown below.

3. The study

The paper draws on a larger ethnographic study (Khuder, 2021) whose aim was to identify factors that affect the EAL academic literacies development of established Syrian academics living in exile, and who are supported by the non-governmental organization CARA. CARA carry out a range of activities aimed at supporting academics through, for example, post-doctoral placements. CARA matches exiled academics with advisors, and although publishing is not a requirement, academics are encouraged to publish and are asked to submit monthly reports on their academic activities. Our access to CARA and to the case reported on in this study was facilitated by the fact that Khuder was a CARA fellow and a volunteer interpreter in CARA’s research webinars for academics (for more information on our positions in this research, see Khuder & Petrić, 2021).

In this paper, we explore the understanding of writing practices for publication of Ahmad,¹ a Syrian academic working in the field of life sciences and based in the United Kingdom and, through CARA, working with an adviser at a research institution in a country in Africa. Prior to leaving Syria, Ahmad had published four articles in Arabic; however, he had no experience of publishing in international journals in English. Having taught at university in Syria for more than ten years, he was an established academic in the Syrian academic context, which is teaching-oriented, with no publication requirements for academics. Ahmad was selected as the focal case because of the rich account of his exceptional EAL academic writing journey, which differs from many of the exiled academics in the larger study (Khuder, 2021) who struggled to publish internationally. Ahmad started by emailing CARA in Arabic, when he had no knowledge of the English language, and developed in a relatively short time to the point when he was publishing extensively in English while in exile. He had published six English-medium articles in international journals before our first interview and another eight by the time this study was completed; he also supervised MA students in the United Kingdom and Syria. All of his papers published in exile were co-authored with more experienced academics; hence Ahmad's trajectory provides an opportunity to explore how interactions with co-authors affected his writing for international publication in English. This paper addresses this research question:

How did Ahmad's interaction with his co-authors affect his understanding of writing practices for English-medium international publication?

3.1 Methods

Ahmad was one of the 16 CARA fellows who responded to our invitation to participate in the ethnographic stage of the study, following an initial survey. Informed consent was obtained from him prior to data collection. The larger dataset (Khuder, 2021) for this study includes a TH of one of Ahmad's papers, covering a period of 21 months, February 2018 to November 2019. During this period, thick data (Wang, 2013) were collected from Ahmad using THs to create a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of his writing practices for publication (see Lillis & Curry, 2010; Lillis & Maybin, 2017), as summarised in Table 1. TH has been fruitfully used in the study of text production practices since it provides thick data regarding chronological textual development. However, rather than focusing on text development *per se*, we use one TH to analyse interaction episodes

1. All names are pseudonyms

across drafts to provide insights into Ahmad's growing understanding of writing for English-medium publication.

The text selected for analysis was the eighth one Ahmad wrote in exile, drafted in 2018 and published in 2019, and represents an example of a successful collaboration. The research article was co-authored with Julia, Ahmad's CARA advisor, who was a senior EAL academic with extensive experience in publishing internationally and who had regularly co-authored with Ahmad since he had left Syria, and Girma, a senior EAL academic with extensive experience in English-medium international publishing in the field of economics. Julia and Girma shared the same first language, which was different from Ahmad's; they therefore used English when communicating with Ahmad, including all the interaction episodes. We selected this article because Ahmad reported feeling it was the most significant in his writing for English-medium international publication journey, marking a turning point in his trajectory:

It was my first attempt at bringing something from the social sciences into our discipline [within life sciences] and not many people do that and I learnt a lot from my co-authors' comments. I think Girma's comments were so strong and that helped us publish so quickly in such a good journal. (Ahmad, Int.1)

As with his other papers co-authored with Julia, Ahmad wrote the first draft of this article, which was then commented on by Girma and Julia, whose feedback Ahmad took into account in producing the subsequent drafts until the final version. It was agreed at the start that Ahmad would be the first author as he was responsible for data collection and for producing the first draft. Data sources for the TH include the three available drafts written by Ahmad, comments from Julia and Girma, as well as interviews with Ahmad and Julia. Table 1 provides an overview of the data collected, showing that interviews ranged widely between 34 and 211 minutes. This variation is due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, which allows the interviewee the flexibility to discuss in detail issues he considered important in response to the interview questions. Interviews with Ahmad were conducted in Arabic; with his co-authors, interviews were conducted in English.

Table 1. Overview of data collected for TH (T = Text; D = Draft)

Interviews with Ahmad	Text drafts	Interviews with co-authors	Duration of data collection
1. June 18 (54 mins.)	Feb. 18: TD1 Feb. 18: Girma's interventions on TD1	1 interview with Julia (Nov. 18; 94 min.)	February 2018–November 2019
2. Sept. 18 (38 mins.)	Apr. 18: TD2		
3. Nov. 18 (211 mins.)	Feb. 19: Girma's interventions on TD2		
4. Feb. 19 (95 mins.)	June 19: TD3 July 19: Julia's interventions on TD3		
5. Apr. 19 (94 mins.)	Nov. 19: T published article		
6. Jul 19 (34 mins.)			

3.1.1 Interaction episodes

The unit of analysis of interventions and responses was the *interaction episode*, which consists of written interactions between Ahmad and his co-authors that occur at the same place in the text but are separated by time (since they were writing asynchronously). An interaction episode started with a co-author's intervention in the text in the form of a comment, question, or added text (see Intervention Levels, below), which are generally followed by a response from Ahmad. An interaction episode may consist of one or multiple interactions. An example of an interaction episode consisting of one interaction is Ahmad's sentence in D1: "Polyethylene glycol, which has a negative effect, ties to tannins and helps in lessening the negativity," which Julia revised as follows: "Polyethylene glycol binds to tannins and decreases its negative impact" (Intervention D1). Ahmad accepted this intervention as he worked on D2 without comment.

Our analysis of interaction episodes focuses on two aspects: Intervention Areas and Intervention Levels (Khuder & Petrić, 2020). We use the term *intervention* (Lillis & Curry, 2006) rather than *feedback* to highlight the broader scope of the co-authors' responses, which range from providing directive comments on the author's draft, to engaging in a disciplinary dialogue, to writing or rewriting parts of the draft. We divide Intervention Areas into those relating to disciplinary, publishing, and writing conventions. Examples of disciplinary interventions include comments on disciplinary terminology and discipline-specific arguments; interventions concerning writing conventions may focus on textual organisation, coherence, and cohesion; while interventions regarding publishing conventions include comments on target journal expectations (see Appendix A

for more information). Despite some overlap between these categories, we found them useful as analytical tools to investigate different foci of Ahmad's co-authors' interventions on his drafts and trace the related aspects of his writing practices for international publication in English.

Intervention Levels (IL) refer to how direct was the guidance and how much information was provided by the co-author(s) when making textual interventions on a draft. Figure 1 shows the different ILs divided according to the explicitness and amount of textual intervention. For example, while IL1 entails maximum intervention by the co-author overwriting a text, IL5 entails minimum intervention by the co-author only highlighting the location of the problem without explaining it, in contrast to IL4 where the intervener problematizes the issue and questions part of the text. IL3 is a guided intervention where the intervener writes suggestions and explains them.

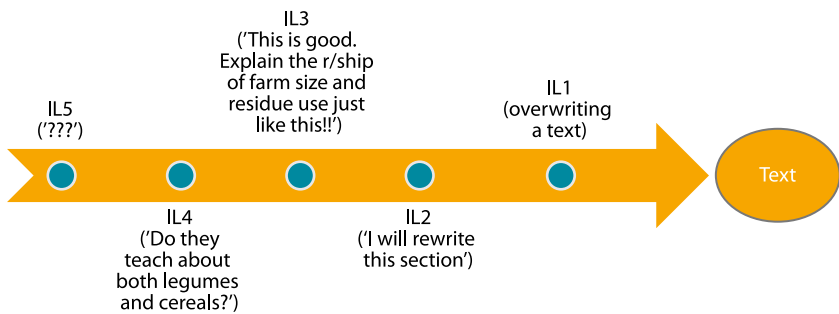


Figure 1. Intervention levels (adapted from Khuder & Petrić, 2020)

Interventions made at different levels have implications for the writer's uptake: While comments made at IL1 and IL2 leave little space for Ahmad to contribute to text production as the co-author takes control over it, IL3 and IL4 provide the co-author's guidance (IL3) and hints (IL4) for text development as well as opening up a space for individual contribution. IL5 provides no specific guidance but rather points out a problem in the text. The heuristic we developed to trace information related to intervention levels and areas in each draft is shown in Table 2.

3.1.2 Interviews

We use data from the six interviews conducted with Ahmad and one interview with Julia. Interviews were transcribed; the Arabic transcripts were translated to English by the first author, with the translations checked by a professional translator. During interviews with Ahmad, we discussed his progress as a writer, changes in his writing in terms of focus and rhetorical choices, and his awareness of publishing issues such as target journal requirements and audience. The interview

with Julia focused on her advisory and co-authorship relationship with Ahmad. During the interviews, we used selected excerpts from texts and comments as prompts for discussions of co-authors' interventions and Ahmad's responses to them, as in this example:

Q: Here you wrote [excerpt from Julia's comment on Ahmad's draft]. How do you think that helped Ahmad improve the text?

The interviews were coded to identify repeated themes through a mix of inductive and deductive approaches; that is, allowing codes to emerge from the data and allowing our reading of the literature to guide coding (Boyatzis, 1998). Interview analysis started by focusing on the themes relevant to our research question: intervention, co-authorship and writing practices, with sub-themes emerging from the data. For example, *Intervention* included *writer's perceptions of co-authors' interventions* and *reasons for uptake/ rejection of co-authors' intervention*; *Writing practices* included *self-evaluation of one's writing* and *self-perceived changes in writing practices* and *Co-authorship* included *beliefs and practices regarding co-authorship*, *writer's perceived contribution to co-authorship*, *reasons for co-authoring*, *perceived advantages* and *disadvantages of co-authorship*.

It is worth noting that analysis of interviews and interaction episodes were closely related. For instance, *intervention* was one of the main themes in interview analysis and part of the analytical framework for the analysis of interaction episodes in the categories of *intervention areas* and *intervention levels*, as described above.

4. Findings

In this section, we present the findings from the analysis of the interaction episodes of the three drafts according to the textual intervention foci: Disciplinary, writing, and publishing.

4.1 Overview of textual interventions in the TH

Table 2 presents an overview of the TH of Ahmad's paper across the three available drafts, with textual interventions presented by area and level of intervention. The first two drafts were commented on by Girma, and the third draft by Julia. As Table 2 shows, most of the textual interventions made by Ahmad's co-authors concerned disciplinary issues (34 of the total of 67 interventions), followed by interventions on writing conventions (30), with publishing conventions receiving much less attention (4). Across the drafts, there were fewer comments on disci-

plinary issues in each subsequent draft, while the number of comments on writing conventions increased. As for the levels of the co-authors' interventions, the majority in all three areas and across the three drafts were made at IL₃ that is, a guided intervention providing a suggestion for and/or explanation of the revision required. Interestingly, the number of less directive interventions (IL₄ and IL₅) decreases across the drafts.

Table 2. Overview of textual interventions made by Ahmad's co-authors on three drafts (D = Draft; G = Girma; J = Julia)

Intervention area	D1	D2	D3	Intervention level	D1	D2	D3
	G	G	J		G	G	J
Disciplinary (total)	23	8	3	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	1	1	0
				IL3	13	6	2
				IL4	5	1	0
				IL5	4	0	1
Disciplinary arguments	14	6	3	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	1	1	0
				IL3	8	4	2
				IL4	5	1	0
				IL5	0	0	1
Disciplinary terminology	4	1	0	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	0	1	0
				IL4	0	0	0
				IL5	4	0	0
Positioning the research	2	1	0	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	2	1	0
				IL4	0	0	0
				IL5	0	0	0
Reader awareness	3	0	0	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	3	0	0
				IL4	0	0	0

Table 2. (continued)

Intervention area	D1	D2	D3	Intervention level	D1	D2	D3
	G	G	J		G	G	J
Writing conventions (total)				IL5	0	0	0
	12	2	16	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	2	0	0
				IL3	6	2	10
				IL4	3	0	2
Linguistic expression				IL5	1	0	4
	3	0	5	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	2	0	0
				IL3	0	0	2
				IL4	0	0	0
Organization				IL5	1	0	3
	3	1	1	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	3	1	1
				IL4	0	0	0
Missing information				IL5	0	0	0
	6	1	10	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	3	1	7
				IL4	3	0	2
Publishing (total)				IL5	0	0	1
	2	1	1	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	0	0	0
				IL3	2	1	1
				IL4	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>				IL5	0	0	0
	37	11	20	IL1	0	0	0
				IL2	8	1	2
				IL3	21	9	13
				IL4	8	1	2
			IL5	5	5	0	

In the next section we analyse the interaction episodes relating to each area of intervention to illustrate the type of interaction that takes place, the lead author's uptake, and the impact on the text being produced.

4.1.1 *Interaction episodes concerning disciplinary conventions*

As Table 2 shows, in the first and second drafts, the largest number of comments Ahmad received were disciplinary interventions focusing on argument. Commenting on the statement in Ahmad's D1 in Interaction Episode 1, Girma asked questions, by intervening at IL4, prompting Ahmad to elaborate on his interpretation of the research problem, to further develop his argument by providing the reasons for his claim, as the following shows:

Interaction episode 1

D1	Intervention		Intervention D2	Ahmad's interview comment
	D1	D2		
The proportion of crop residue allocated for mulching may increase with the increase in the farmland size (ha)	Why? How about allocation to feed? (Girma, IL4)	“The proportion of crop residue allocated for mulching may increase with the increase in the farmland size (ha).” [No change to the text.] Ahmad's response to Girma's intervention D1: “not relevant according to the literature”	Ahmad- please see how other papers review literature to support their arguments and put it in the introduction. You shall do that. (Girma, IL3)	I learnt how to review literature from this comment. It was useful to know that analysing other papers will help me in learning. (Int. 2)

Note. Data presented are used verbatim from their source.

In writing D2, Ahmad rejected Girma's suggestion made on D1; he made no changes to the text because, as his response shows, he considered the variable suggested by Girma ('allocation to feed') irrelevant from the perspective of the literature he was drawing on. As mentioned, Girma's disciplinary background was

in a different field from Ahmad's. Therefore, Ahmad's rejection can be interpreted as his attempt to assert his disciplinary authority over Girma; in other words, he did not understand Girma's intended message as sharpening the argument he had presented. Girma then shifted his intervention to IL₃ with a more directive comment. Following Girma's advice to check how literature is reviewed in published articles and to follow their approach enabled Ahmad, as he explained, to understand Girma's advice and write a literature review in the manner of his field. The lack of interventions by the co-authors on the literature review in D₃ suggests that Ahmad was successful in writing an effective literature review. This example shows how the change in the writing practice was not straightforward but rather included negotiation and more than one round of intervention for the learning to take place.

Comparing Girma's comments across drafts shows that his interventions on D₂ took into account the fact that Ahmad could not always respond to indirect requests for revision at IL₄ on D₁, where the nature of the needed revision was pointed out by the intervener but without suggesting possible solutions, as shown in Interaction Episode 1. Girma's interventions on D₂ were more specific and detailed, such as the lengthy comment in Interaction Episode 2 asking Ahmad to develop his disciplinary argument:

Interaction episode 2

D ₂	Intervention D ₂	Ahmad's interview comment
Extension on livestock is expected to increase the use of crop residue as livestock feed (REF)	Do they teach about both legumes and cereals? Do they have any recommendation as to which residue shall be used for feeding or mulching? Do you need to be specific about legume and cereal residues for each and every variable? Some variables might affect the intensity of use of legume and cereal residues similarly. (Girma, IL ₃)	The comment is very useful as Girma included information that made me think and not just copy and paste. I found this approach very useful with my students here [in the UK] (Ahmad, Int. 6).

Thus, it was not only the content of the intervention that Ahmad found useful but also the way it helped him develop his argument. The fact that Ahmad adopted Girma's approach when working with his own MA students shows that he appreciated its benefits for teaching writing for publication practices.

Ahmad's co-authors repeatedly pointed out two areas of weakness: disciplinary argumentation and drawing wrong or unsubstantiated conclusions, as shown by Girma's interventions in Interaction Episode 3.

Interaction episode 3

Interaction episode 3		
	Intervention	
D2	D2	Ahmad's interview comment
Extension on soil mulch is expected to affect positively the use of cereal residue as soil mulch without affecting the use of legume residue as soil mulch.	You can't hypothesize this based on the results. Why would you expect this to happen? (Girma, IL4)	There is no method one can follow to draw the right conclusion. It is so easy to lose focus and write something general. I am aware of my weakness here. All I need is redrafting and rereading and to see if it makes sense. I do that with my students; I tell them to tell me their research as a story and see if the ideas are connected and if the story makes sense. (Int. 4)
This would facilitate the transport and storage of legume residue and increase its use as livestock feed	This can hardly be the message from this research. (Girma, IL4)	

Ahmad acknowledged that drawing relevant and appropriate conclusions was challenging to him, which he attributed to the open nature of conclusion making (“there is no method”); however, he developed strategies such as “telling research as a story” as the Interaction Episode 3 shows, to check whether his presentation was coherent and his conclusions were valid. Despite applying these strategies, drawing relevant implications and conclusions continued to be an area of difficulty for him, as shown by Julia’s intervention in D3 in Interaction Episode 4. Ahmad’s description of Julia’s modelled implication (provided at IL1) as “natural flow from the results” shows his appreciation of this intervention, which made him aware of a new aspect of research writing to master.

Ahmad’s argumentation was seen by his co-authors as completely irrelevant to the discussion in some instances, as is evident from Julia’s strong disagreement (“NO!!!”) with a statement he wrote. After realizing Ahmad would probably not understand her IL5 comment, in which she pointed out the problem without explaining it, as she mentioned in the interview, Julia switched to direct writing with intervention at IL1 in order to add “some suggestions for alternative implications for the study at the end of the paragraph because the implications Ahmad added did not make any sense” (Int.). Ahmad noted that Julia’s additions made the disciplinary arguments align more with the results. Julia’s comment at IL1 in D3 seems to have enabled Ahmad to understand how appropriate conclusions should be drawn from results.

Interaction episode 4

D ₃	Intervention D ₃	Ahmad's interview comment
Similarly, no such correlation was reported by REF, REF, REF in xx and REF in Sorghum.	Are these comparisons actually valid? Maybe think of another implication to your results. (Julia, IL ₄)	See her comment feels like a natural flow from the results which is something I noticed I did not have before. (Int. 4)
xx yielded significantly more grain compared to local variety.	NO!!! (Julia, IL ₅) “... therefore, nutrients need to work with breeders to select ...” (Julia, IL ₁)	

Although only a small number of interventions was aimed at reader awareness and positioning the research in relation to the literature in the field, Ahmad seemed very impressed by these comments, such as the one made in Interaction Episode 5, which made Ahmad aware of important issues to consider when writing for publication.

Interaction episode 5

D ₂	Intervention D ₂	Ahmad's interview comment
Population growth, increased income and rate of urbanization in the developing countries	You might struggle to convince reviewers how this actually increases the pressure on mixed FS. (Girma, IL ₄)	It was the first time I thought about the reviewers and the difference between presenting something that is straightforward or controversial. At first, I thought he meant I should delete that then I remembered my incident with Julia when I realized ‘may’ sometimes actually means ‘may’ and I can choose what to do. I thought I will try and write challenging things. That is why you see I deleted that in the second draft and then wrote it again with a better justification. (Int. 4)

Interaction Episode 5 shows how the phrasing of IL₄ intervention, “you might struggle to convince reviewers” was problematic by not giving the writer a clear path to follow. However, Ahmad drew on a previous “incident” (as he described it) with Julia when writing their first article (Khuder, 2021) to realize that he could defend his ideas and challenge himself to write a more convincing argument rather than simply delete it. This example reflects Ahmad's learning how to navigate and work with co-authors' comments.

Intervention Episodes 6 and 7, focusing on research positioning, show how Ahmad's understanding of this issue gradually developed through interactions with his co-authors. Since Ahmad had challenged Girma's intervention at IL₃ in D₁, in D₂ Girma extended the area of his intervention by adding comments regarding reader awareness to clarify his initial intervention, as Interaction Episode 6 shows.

Interaction episode 6

D ₁	Intervention D ₁	Ahmad's response	Intervention D ₂	Ahmad's interview comment
Women play a crucial role in livestock feeding in developing countries in general and in rural [Country] in particular ...	Can you provide any evidence for this? It sounds like an argument by a feminist. The reality is not necessarily in line with the argumentation of such groups. (Girma, IL ₃)	What is wrong with arguing like a feminist!	Ahmad, the reader needs an evidence of your claim. Can you provide that from literature? Try and argue like an academic." (Girma, IL ₃)	I did not know what he [Girma] meant here and why it was wrong to argue like a feminist. (Int. 4).

Girma here used a clearer indication that Ahmad's argument was unsupported and needed to be substantiated: His initial request for "evidence for this" (Intervention D₁) became more specific: "evidence of your claim" (Intervention D₂), followed by an indication of the kind of evidence he felt was needed: "provide that from literature" (Intervention D₂); additionally, he did not pursue his criticism of what he perceived as a feminist argument. This Interaction Episode ended by Ahmad deleting the whole section because he was unable to find literature to support his claim. Thus, while Girma's intervention regarding positioning the research in D₁ was ambiguous for Ahmad, Girma's intervention regarding argumentation in D₂ was clearer. Girma advised Ahmad to place the information he provided in a different framework as Interaction Episode 7 shows.

Girma's comment was an important learning moment for Ahmad, as shown by the interview data, drawing his attention towards the importance of putting his work in a relevant framework. Although selecting a relevant framework for data presentation is an issue that Ahmad had probably already encountered when writing his previous publications, he reported that Girma's intervention made him aware of the importance of this issue and thus made his knowledge about it more explicit.

Interaction episode 7

D2	Intervention D2	Ahmad's interview comment
The survey was carried out in six districts in [country], five in [name of region] and one in [name of region].	Try to locate them in terms of agro-ecology or farming systems. Representativeness of the districts is more important than their political administration. (Girma, IL ₃)	This comment helped me present my data in line with the thinking of specific theories in the discipline. (Int. 4)

4.1.2 Interaction episodes concerning writing conventions

As for interventions on writing conventions, the three areas that Girma and Julia focused on were: linguistic expressions, organization, and missing information affecting clarity, precision or appropriateness of presentation, with missing information receiving the highest number of interventions (as Table 2 shows).

Missing information interventions typically resulted in immediate uptake by Ahmad. The comments in this area of intervention tended to be more directive (IL₃ and IL₄). Ahmad's uptake was immediate and once executed, he continued with the newly acquired textual practice and no further interventions were made by the co-authors concerning it, as the examples in Interaction Episode 8 show:

Interaction episode 8

D3	Intervention D3	Published text
Studies have shown	Write at least 2 refs, you said 'studies have shown' but cited one study only (Julia, IL ₃)	Studies have shown [REF, REF, REF]
Results in percentages	You may actually have to write the actual numbers. (Julia, IL ₃)	Results in percentages (10%)

Ahmad responded to these comments by adding the required information. The published version indeed shows that Ahmad's additions were considered appropriate as they were not altered or revised by his co-authors.

Julia focused more on writing conventions in D₃ than Girma did in the previous drafts (16 comments on D₃ versus 12 and 2 on D₂ and D₁, respectively). Julia stated that "It was the last draft and that's when we should focus more on the expressions used in the text" (Int.). Julia commented on this area five times, as exemplified in Interaction Episode 9.

This intervention was an important learning moment for Ahmad, helping him realise how to report statistical results conventionally. To ensure he understood what Julia meant by this comment, Ahmad checked published articles to see

Interaction episode 9

D3	Intervention D3	Ahmad's interview comment
($P < 0.001$)	This p in brackets comes immediately after the word significant not at the end of the sentence. Change this in the whole document. (Julia, IL3)	I started using this strategy here and never stopped. I guess I learnt how to find answers myself. (Int. 5)

where other authors had placed not only the p value but also other statistical findings. The strategy of checking published articles for information on writing conventions, suggested to Ahmad by Girma in relation to writing the literature review section, became his regular practice. This example shows Ahmad's extension of a newly adopted practice to other areas.

Another example of an interaction episode resulting in Ahmad's uptake of an intervention regarding writing conventions concerns Girma's comment on the organization of Ahmad's paper in D2, as shown in Interaction episode 10.

Interaction episode 10

D2	Intervention D2	Ahmad's interview comment
Female headed households allocated a larger proportion of legume residue as feed compared to the male headed	This shall be part of the results and discussion section. Take the text under each variable to the discussion section and relate it with what you have come up with. (Girma, IL3)	Not only the information you provide but also the way you present it is very important. You should present it not in a simple way but in a way that people in our discipline would feel special while reading it. (Int. 4)

In response to Girma's intervention, Ahmad reorganized the text closely following Girma's guidance. His uptake, however, transcended this instance as Ahmad also reorganized other parts of the text, specifically the conclusion, in a way that reflected the discussion and results organization. This intervention was another significant learning moment for Ahmad, as can be seen from the comment above.

4.1.3 Interaction episodes concerning publishing conventions

Publishing interventions received the lowest numbers of comments; the majority of these interventions were made on D1. Girma asked Ahmad to read a sample article in the target journal and to copy the structure used in the article, as Interaction Episode 11 shows.

Interaction episode 11

D2	Intervention D2	Ahmad's interview comment
Title of article	Get a copy of the paper available at [name of journal] and follow the structure carefully. See how they structured the paper (Girma, IL3)	Girma's comment is very general. I think he should have asked me to do this in the first draft and not now [D2]. Also, he should have given me some examples of where the structure does not look OK ... this actually makes me think of my students now and how I should not do that to them." (Int. 3)

Ahmad defined "structured" as the "general format of the paper. Introduction, methods, discussion, and conclusion" (Int. 3). He thought the structure was "fine since I had already read some of the journal's articles and thought I structured the paper properly already" (Int. 3) and was unsure of what he was expected to do. Consequently, Ahmad requested a meeting with Girma to clarify what he meant by structure. Girma explained, as recounted by Ahmad, that "it was about how they introduced their topic in the paper, how to present the results ... this means what kind of logical order, do we need a conclusion or not for each section" (Int. 5). However, Ahmad found Girma's comment on structure to be "very general," indicating he would prefer more specific commentary.

Thus, Ahmad and Girma understood the term "structure" in different ways. What Girma seemed to mean was much more fine-grained than the conventional Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion format that Ahmad understood the comment to be about. Ahmad's mention of his students and what he expected Girma to do reveals how he perceived Girma's role as a supervisor. It should be noted that all publishing interventions were made at IL3, by Girma giving Ahmad direct instructions.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Examining the interaction episodes in this TH reveals a rich continuing dialogue between Ahmad and his co-authors throughout the production of a research article and its preparation for submission to an international journal. Findings from the analysis of interaction episodes show that Ahmad's understanding of writing for international publication deepened and broadened through the co-authorship experience.

In terms of foci of the interaction episodes, we identified a range of issues, broadly categorised into disciplinary, writing, and publishing conventions. Although these domains are closely intertwined, leading to inevitable overlaps,

they point to the changing focus of the interventions across the TH. Disciplinary issues, which account for half of the comments made by the co-authors, decreased in frequency across the three drafts, particularly in the category of disciplinary argumentation, an area of intense discussion in the initial draft but less so in subsequent drafts. In contrast, comments on writing conventions increased in the final draft as the submission to the journal approached and with it the desire to meet the expected presentation conventions and linguistic accuracy standards. Publishing conventions received the fewest comments, which is unsurprising given their global scope, that is, a single comment on publishing conventions may apply to the whole paper, whereas writing conventions typically attract comments at the level of the sentence, resulting in their greater frequency. Overall, then, multiple aspects of research writing were brought to Ahmad's attention during text production through the co-authors' comments, questions, criticism, and advice regarding his drafts, creating opportunities for discussion and negotiation as well as awareness raising. Ahmad was introduced to practices he had not been aware of, such as the need to consider the expectations of the journal's reviewers and by extension the audience (see Khuder, 2021); he also gained a fuller understanding of writing for publication in areas such as argumentation. Thus, his understanding of writing practices for English-medium international publication widened and deepened.

An interesting pattern in the length of interaction episodes was that it tended to relate to areas of intervention, with short interaction episodes (*draft-interaction-uptake*) occurring predominantly in areas of writing and publishing conventions, while disciplinary issues tended to support longer interaction chains, spanning across multiple drafts. Ahmad mostly accepted his co-authors' suggestions in the areas of writing and publishing conventions, acknowledging their greater linguistic and textual capital, that is, their greater proficiency in academic English as well as their more extensive experience in research article writing and publishing in international journals. In contrast, some of the longer disciplinary interventions reveal a process of negotiation between Ahmad and his co-authors, which in some instances were fraught with tension, such as when Ahmad rejected Girma's suggestions as "not relevant according to the literature" (Interaction Episode 1), asserting his disciplinary authority over Girma, whose expertise was in a different discipline. Interaction episodes such as these reflect that Ahmad was not a novice researcher, having published in Syrian journals. Nevertheless, some aspects of writing for publication were new to him, such as reader awareness and research positioning, and the interview data extracts included in the interaction episodes show his appreciation of these insights.

Ahmad's understanding of writing for publication practices was also affected by the explicitness and directness of his co-authors' comments on his text. Their

levels of intervention varied from IL2, where the co-authors suggested rewriting in an extended comment, to IL5, where the co-authors only indirectly pointed out a problem in the text; however, most of their comments were at IL3, where suggestions were provided without offering the rewording. The analysis shows that the levels varied across the three drafts; a gradual decrease in the numbers of less explicit and less directive interventions is noticeable (IL5 and IL4). This shift is illustrated by Girma's attempt to unpack his initially indirect comment (IL4) and provide a more explicit and direct explanation (IL3) in Interaction Episode 1, and by Interaction Episode 4, showing Julia both pointing out a serious shortcoming (IL5) and providing suggested rewording as a model (IL2). These instances suggest that Ahmad's co-authors adjusted their intervention practices in line with Ahmad's response.

The dynamism of Julia and Girma's interventions reflect Storch's (2018) recommendations on the importance of not limiting interventions to one level but rather engaging with the learner's needs and readiness to process interventions at a particular level. In terms of literacy brokerage, it is evident that Julia and Girma not only acted as academic and language brokers (Lillis & Curry, 2010), assisting Ahmad with various aspects of text production, but they were also highly invested in the final shape of the text as Ahmad's co-authors and textual co-owners. Their interventions helped Ahmad develop as a research writer; at the same time, they were aimed at producing a high-quality paper that would increase their own academic capital as well. The complex nature of co-authorship among more and less experienced writers and of the power dynamics involved was reflected in the range of the co-authors' interventions: from giving a firm steer in the areas of publishing issues and writing conventions, where they drew on their greater publishing experience, to a more open space for negotiation in the area of knowledge claims and discipline-specific content. To trace changes in the power dynamics among the co-authors, however, it is necessary to follow co-authorship interactions in text production of multiple texts over time (see Khuder, 2021).

The interaction episodes show that Ahmad was eager to enrich his understanding of writing practices for English-medium publication by learning from Girma and Julia; however, he did not uncritically adopt all of their suggestions. He engaged with their comments, taking on board what he found to be useful, rejecting suggestions he disagreed with, and asking for clarification when he did not understand. He found explicit comments particularly helpful, applying them, where possible, to the whole text rather than only to fix the problem attracting the comment (such as reporting the *p* value). He extrapolated this advice to developing greater independence in finding answers to their indirect interventions by himself, for instance, by checking journal articles. The fact that he imparted these practices to his supervisees when acting as a mentor shows his awareness of their

usefulness for understanding English-medium research writing practices. In sum, then, Ahmad's understanding of multiple aspects of writing for international publication in English grew through interaction with his co-authors, based on their ample interventions and adjustments to levels of their intervention and to his efforts to engage with them.

However, analysing the interaction episodes of a single article did not allow us to trace Ahmad's uptake (or lack thereof) of writing practices introduced by his co-authors in his subsequent writing. Research investigating the THs of a writer's multiple co-authored texts would enable a more in-depth understanding of how writers adopt and/or adapt new writing practices intertextually across different text production contexts and through different co-authorship relationships. Nevertheless, we believe the findings of this study and other studies of interactions in collaborative writing may provide a useful resource for ERRP by offering insights into the co-authors' interventions, often accompanied by their reasoning behind them, as well as into the writers' responses and reflections. Furthermore, data extracts such as those presented in this paper may be used as a springboard for discussion in, for example, ERRP workshops to demystify the process of collaborative writing for publication and encourage workshop attendees to reflect on their own practices of writing for international publication, collaborating with others, commenting on others' drafts, and responding to co-authors' interventions.


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Appendix A. Intervention areas

Intervention area	Intervention sub-areas	Example from interventions
Disciplinary conventions	Disciplinary terminology: using discipline-specific terminology	Replacing the words ‘cattle and sheep’ with the more disciplinary appropriate term ‘ruminants’.
	Disciplinary arguments: support an idea/discuss it from a different angle/providing justifications/mentioning ‘argument’.	It would be wise to compare and contrast the result with more than one report. Indicate reports that have both similar and different results from what you are presenting.
	Positioning the research: position the arguments in line with specific line of research.	Can you provide an evidence for this? It sounds like an argument by a feminist.
	Precision of information: edit information to be precise in line with disciplinary requirements.	Are you sure this is accurate? Check again.
	Reader-awareness: explicit reference to the ‘reader’.	You might struggle to convince reviewers how this actually increases the pressure on mixed FS.
Writing conventions	Missing information: missing fact or piece of information.	Where in the study did you measure water intake?
	Organization: move sections/sentences.	Move this part to the end of the previous section.
	Coherence and cohesion: (e.g., repetitions, consistency in terminology)	Be consistent between the two materials over use of Latin binomials.
	Linguistic expression: issues related to language (e.g., rephrasing).	‘!!!’ (on the space between two acronyms).
Publishing conventions	Delete/add sections that are customary to be included in journal articles in the discipline (e.g., issues of locality in research; journal formatting)	Get a copy of the paper available at [name of journal] and follow the structure carefully. See how they structured the paper.

الملخص

عادة ما يتم دراسة الإنتاج المعرفي الذي ينشأ عن عملية الكتابة المشتركة بصفتها عملية ثابتة في الزمان والمكان. لكن قليلة هي الدراسات التي ركزت على كيفية صياغة النصوص الأكاديمية أو البحث في عملية التواصل المعرفي بين الكتاب المشاركين في الأبحاث، وبناءً على ذلك تعتمد هذه الدراسة للبحث في تأثير مساهمات الكتاب المشاركين الهادفة لتطوير المحتوى المعرفي المعد للنشر والمقدم من قبل الكاتب الرئيسي أثناء كتابة نص أكاديمي باللغة الإنكليزية، وذلك عن طريق دراسة منهجية لتاريخ النص لمقال شارك في كتابته أكاديمي سوري مُهجر وكاتبين آخرين خبيرين.

قمنا بتحليل التعليقات التي أجراها الكاتبان المشاركان على أسلوب كتابة الأكاديمي السوري لدراسة مستويات التدخل (مستوى المباشرة والوضوح) ومجالات التدخل (أعراف الفرع المعرفي والكتابة والنشر) كما حللنا استجابة الأكاديمي السوري لهذه التدخلات من خلال دراسة حلقات التفاعل (التعليقات والمداخلات الفجراة على نقطة محددة في النص والتغييرات النصية استجابةً لهذه التعليقات والتدخلات). كشفت النتائج أن التدخلات ركزت على مجالات متعددة وأن الكتاب المشاركون لعبوا دور وسطاء المعرفة في جميع المجالات. تغيرت ديناميكيات التفاعل عبر المسودات فيما يتعلق بتركيز حلقات التفاعل ودرجات تدخل الكتاب المشاركين، مما خلق للأكاديمي السوري مجالاً لمناقشة هذه التدخلات وزاد من إثراء فهمه لممارسات الكتابة الأكاديمية المعدة للنشر باللغة الإنكليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكتابة المشتركة، الكتابة الأكاديمية المعدة للنشر باللغة الإنكليزية، حلقات التفاعل، منهجية دراسة تاريخ النص

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