

**(Un)Supporting English for Specific Academic Purposes in Graduate School: Experiences
of EAL Graduate Students in Education and Engineering at a Canadian University**

by

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores international graduate students' experiences (IGSs) learning and using English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to support their graduate work in Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba. These experiences are discussed in relation to IGSs' interactions with the available resources offered by the institution. This study is framed by language socialization theory and sociocultural theory. The students played an active role in their learning through interactions with various semiotic resources and socialization with members of the target academic communities while developing their worldviews, statuses, and identities (Duff, 2010, 2019; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017). The data collection engaged both student participants and instructor participants from Education and Engineering in semi-structured interviews. I also incorporated analysis of documents and my reflective self-narrative to gain insights into students' experiences in learning EAP and how they navigated the system using individual strategies to socialize, legitimize their statuses for adaptation, and thrive in the university. IGSs perceived EAP as influential to their studies, career development, and intercultural communication while viewing it as an ongoing learning process despite their strong language proficiency and educational backgrounds. The findings confirmed the significance of familiarizing the IGSs with Canadian postsecondary education's academic discourses and sociocultural contexts. Education student participants faced obstacles engaging in academic activities and discussions and completing graduate work due to unfamiliarity with the locally focused topics and curriculum in classrooms. Although Engineering counterparts found strengths in the common academic language foundation in engineering disciplines, they had difficulties in concise and precise technical writing, thesis writing, and writing for publication. The findings

suggested the need for support services specifically tailored for disciplinary purposes at different stages of graduate programs because the available supports were too generic and basic.

Recommendations for practices are offered to institutional policymakers, responsive faculties, instructors, and IGSs. Research results contribute to the literature on language socialization of postsecondary students in the context of English-speaking institutions by comparing and contrasting the experiences of students from the disciplines of Education and Engineering.

Keywords: EAP; academic English; international graduate students/ EAL graduate students; EAP learning experiences; language support; language socialization.

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List of Acronyms

EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
ELP	English Language Proficiency
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESL/L2	English as a Second Language
GPA	Grade Point Average
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGS(s)	International Graduate Student(s)
LST	Language Socialization Theory
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
TESOL	Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

Chapter 1: Context and Rationale of the Study

This first chapter provides a contextual background of the study and my positionality as both a researcher and an English as an additional language (EAL) graduate student. I then discuss the conceptual terms used in the study. Next, I review the literature on current approaches to EAP, the relationship between EAP competency and EAL international students' success, and the challenges of studying in Anglophone postsecondary institutions. The next part draws upon research on the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic on EAL students' learning experiences abroad. In the last part, I indicate the research problem, and I propose the research questions and the subjects of the study.

Background

Internationalization has extended the size of international students at the postsecondary level worldwide. Internationalization positively impacts host countries, and it provides international students with opportunities to study in high-quality institutions and earn overseas living experiences while advancing another language (OECD, 2022). OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries received the highest number of international students in 2022, with the United Kingdom (UK) as the top destination, followed by the United States of America (US), Canada, Australia, and Japan (OECD, 2023). Canada, the US, Australia, the UK, and the European Union (EU)-27 were the top five countries that increased revenues from international students from 2010-2019 (OECD, 2022). The benefits of internationalization ensure its critical role and priority in Canadian universities and colleges' development plans (Larsen, 2015). In 2022, 844,444 international students arrived in Canada on study permits, the largest number of students who stayed for at least six months for their studies

of all time (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). International students' spending contributed \$30.9 billion, or 1.2%, to Canada's GDP in 2022 (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). International students subsidize domestic students' education in Canada because they pay higher tuition fees (Choi & Hou, 2023) while offering an increasing source of labor to the country (Crossman et al., 2022). In addition to economic benefits, international students also contribute to Canadian education in other ways due to their diverse perspectives, languages, cultures, and experiences (Anderson, 2015; Viczko & Tascón, 2016). International students benefit academically and socially from the host countries by receiving opportunities to obtain new skills and degrees from institutions abroad, increasing their global employment prospects (OECD, 2023). Many international students are motivated by the experiences gained through interaction with the local cultures and lifestyles and the advancement of language abilities, especially English. Those students who return to or maintain connection with their countries of origin by interacting with others to share knowledge and technology advancement help develop capacity globally (OECD, 2023).

According to Statista (2023), the majority of international students in Canada coming from nine out of the top ten countries of origin, namely India, China, Philippines, France, Nigeria, Iran, Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, and the US, speak (an)other language(s) as a mother tongue or native language(s) rather than English (Crossman et al., 2022). International students must use English as their additional language (EAL) to pursue academic programs in English-speaking higher education institutions in Canada. All students, teachers, educators, and researchers are expected to use English appropriately in the academic study and research context of Anglophone Canadian HE institutions. This use of English is referred to as English for Academic Purposes (EAP). EAL international students often face particular difficulties and

challenges as newcomers, due to life transitions, personal adjustments, language barriers, and new educational approaches, despite satisfying all the admission criteria set by the institutions. The challenges are caused by academic language use in disciplinary study, teaching and learning styles, local curriculum content, and adjustment to new academic cultures and environments (Son & Park, 2014). These experiences lead to an increasing need for academic and language support at the host institution to assist students in overcoming challenges, adjusting, and transitioning to the Canadian English-speaking context (Anderson, 2015; Cox & Strange, 2016; Douglas et al., 2022).

International graduate students (IGSs) are mature students who have completed at least a bachelor's degree (for master's students) or a master's degree (for doctoral students) externally to the host country, while many IGSs also have academic and professional experiences in their field. For admission, EAL graduate students must meet the English language proficiency (ELP) standards set by the institutions (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL, or institutional academic language programs) as well as possess other requirements for the graduate level of study, such as particular grades for undergraduate and/or graduate programs, relevant academic background or professional experience, and research and publication potential for doctoral programs. Therefore, while it appears IGSs have similar challenges faced by all international students, their precise struggles are more complicated regarding their social, academic, and professional backgrounds and the disciplinary requirements of graduate study (Anderson, 2016; Kim, 2015; Read, 2016; Wette & Furneaux, 2018). Regarding ELP measures, Pilcher and Richards (2017) suggested that disciplinary instructors should have a say in students' linguistic preparedness. Having said that, the essence lies in aligning support resources and the EAL graduate students' needs to perform

discipline-specific tasks in the new postsecondary context successfully. The research area has also drawn the attention of Canadian educators and researchers searching for suitable pedagogical approaches and customized support to improve EAL graduate students' learning experiences (Anderson, 2016; Cox & Strange, 2016; Hyland & Wong, 2019; Keefe & Shi, 2017; Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Sharma, 2018; Tweedie & Kim, 2015).

In the Canadian postsecondary context, the University of Manitoba (UM) is also influenced by internationalization trends impacting many postsecondary institutions, and it, too, is characterized by its specific discourses and contexts of diversity. UM is currently one of the top ten universities attracting large numbers of international students in Canada. The increasing numbers of international students and immigrants bring a rich diversity of nationalities, languages, cultures, and lifestyles. In fall 2023, of the total 30,732 students at the University of Manitoba, 6,991 international students from about 122 countries accounted for 22.7% of the total student population (UM Office of Institutional Analysis, 2024a). According to the Office of Institutional Analysis (2024b), there were 1,515 international graduate students (IGSs) out of 3,964 graduate students in the university in Fall 2023 (University of Manitoba, n.d.a). While there are international students from countries where English is their first language, international and permanent resident students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) at the university deserve more attention from educators, researchers, and the university to accurately define, address, and support their needs and challenges around academic performance and community integration.

This background offers context for my study to explore EAL graduate students' experiences using and learning EAP to support their academic study using available institutional support resources at UM.

Researcher's Positionality and Needs for the Study

Within the larger picture of Canadian postsecondary education and in the setting of the University of Manitoba (UM), I have been reflecting on my experience as an EAL/former international graduate student, a researcher, and an EFL (English as a foreign language) instructor and learner in the context. I have contemplated the possibilities, the challenges, and the potential supports that could help international graduate students utilize time and available resources to make their experiences more meaningful and fruitful. My research is shaped by my positionality as a researcher and my interpretations that are influenced by my spatial and sociohistorical background (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this section, I reflect on my personal, professional, and academic experiences that inspired me to conduct this research.

I articulate my past experiences as an EFL learner and an EFL postsecondary instructor in Vietnam. English was introduced as a foreign language subject (EFL) and taught as a subject in public high schools (grades 10-12) from 1986 to 2002. English became a compulsory subject in both secondary schools and high schools (grades 6-12) in 2006 thanks to Vietnam's Open policy in 1986 and the U.S. trade embargo being lifted in 1994 (Hoang, 2020). English remains a foreign language among other languages taught in schools (Hoang, 2020). I first registered for an English class outside the school program in grade 4 simply because I found the language beautiful and my love for the English language arose. This love for English inspired me to continue learning English in extra classes outside of school programs, even when it was taught

three periods a week at my high school. I obtained a bachelor's degree and then a master's degree in English studies. Professionally, immediately after getting my bachelor's degree, I started my first full-time job as a teacher of English at a vocational training school. I taught English to students who were training to become tourist guides, accountants, hotel receptionists, and chefs. Four years later, I obtained a full-time position as an English instructor at a technical university in Vietnam. My main responsibility involved teaching EFL to postsecondary students who were studying to become engineers in electricity, electronics, computer science, automobiles, and mechanical engineering. During my ten-year experience working at the university, my passion for EFL teaching grew as I developed my understanding of my EFL students and became interested in understanding more about how they learn the language and what could assist them in achieving their learning goals. As a university instructor, I believe learning is my lifespan task. I perceive my teaching practices as learning opportunities to: learn English from resources I could access; inform my teaching from the students I worked with; gain new insights and hands-on experiences from my colleagues; and improve my professionalism from my self-reflection. These prior experiences and backgrounds have influenced my worldviews as a person and a professional for which I position myself as an EFL learner and an EFL instructor from an East-Asian country in approaching this research.

Upon becoming an international PhD student in Canada, I learned that the term English as an additional language (EAL) is officially used in Manitoba because many people may speak other languages rather than English as their mother tongue, first language, or official language (further explanation for the term provided in the next session). That I have used EAL to support my discipline-specific language development in a Canadian postsecondary institution has

contributed to a nuanced view of this study. Over the last seven years, I have been making both social and academic adjustments as an EAL graduate student to an English-speaking society and an Anglo-Canadian academic institution. In the process, I embraced both challenges and opportunities. The challenges came from the differences in language, culture, academic approaches to learning and teaching styles, and underlying ideologies and epistemologies due to irrelevant pre-assumptions and inadequate contextual knowledge (Liu, 2011).

From the start of the program, I realized the significant role of EAP as a tool for a smoother transition into a new context, enhanced discipline-specific study, and more effective on-campus communications. I learned different aspects of the Canadian higher education system and made efforts to complete academic tasks and socially engage in the campus community while trying to determine my socioacademic status. However, the transition process was not always smooth due to my lack of familiarity with the English-speaking academic setting, differences in academic and professional cultures, and self-perceived discrimination rooted in my foreign accent and my misuse of appropriate language or mispronunciation in communication in the context (Li & Tierney, 2013; Morita, 2002). As an East-Asian female EAL graduate student, affective factors such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and fear of losing face restrained my confidence and prevented me from participating in classroom conversations and academic context discussions in oral or written forms during the early days of the program. On the other hand, I appreciated the opportunities to learn and use English through exposure to the context and interactions and communications with peers, instructors, and staff in my discipline of Education as well as with people in the wider academic context of UM. Additionally, the new academic discourse and diversity motivated me to take advantage of my foreign credentials and

identity, and articulate my prior background to improve my EAP competence along with my disciplinary content learning in second language education. Gradually, I developed my own strategies to leave my comfort zone to learn within and beyond classroom walls. In classrooms, I actively participated in discussions and group activities while trying to read as much as possible to acquire more knowledge in the field. Outside classrooms, I volunteered to serve on several panels and committees, graduate student organizations, and support centers, and I registered myself for academic skill and knowledge workshops. I also submitted papers to conferences and worked as a research assistant and teaching assistant on campus. Through these interactions and engagements, I made friends with peers, created connections with colleagues, familiarized myself with the disciplinary academic and wider institutional communities, and gained a sense of belonging as a member of these communities.

From the discussion above, I occupy dual positions in this study, an insider as an EAL PhD student studying about EAL graduate students within my host institution, and an outsider as a former international student and a foreign EAL instructor researching EAP education at a Canadian university. This duality offered layered perspectives on the research topic and interpretations of the findings of the study.

Conceptual Terms

Within the scope of this study, I follow Hyland's (2018) definition of English for Academic Purposes (EAP): "EAP is an approach to language education based on identifying the specific language features, discourse practices, and communicative skills of target academic groups and which recognizes the subject-matter needs and expertise of learners" (Hyland, 2018, p. 383-Fib384; Hyland, 2023, p. 509; Hyland & Jiang, 2021, p. 2).

English as an additional language (EAL) is the umbrella term covering terms such as English as a foreign language (EFL), English as a second language (ESL/L2), and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). This terminology is used because of its widespread use in Manitoba, where this research was conducted. The province of Manitoba uses EAL to refer to English language programming for diverse learners whose first language is other than English (Manitoba Education, 2021).

Academic discourse is “disciplinary-specific language use or different forms of oral- and written-language-related practices expected and preferred in an academic community” (Yang, 2023, p. 2). The academic (discourse) community consists of members of a discipline who have a set of knowledge-advancing goals, mechanisms in communications and information exchanges, and genres (e.g., journal articles and conference papers) in common (Basturkmen, 2021). I also use the term *academic norms* to refer to the rules and conventions socially constructed by an academic community in the broader context of a postsecondary institution.

The term *international students* refers to those individuals who initially enter Canada on study permits (Lu & Hou, 2015). In this study, international graduate students (IGSs) are also referred to as EAL graduate students, who originally come from countries where languages other than English are spoken as mother tongues. These students use EAL to pursue master’s or PhD degrees at English-speaking universities. They either come to Canada on study permits for their graduate programs in Canadian higher institutions (initial entries) or are currently landed permanent residents who first arrived as international students on study permits.

Academic success or achievement refers to: (a) evidence of learning, which may be assessed by grade point average (GPA); (b) successful completion of required courses; (c)

student self-reports of academic satisfaction; and (d) program retention and completion (Andrade, 2006).

Rationale for Study

In this section, I justify my research focus by discussing the significance of EAP competence in the success of EAL graduate students, the related challenges facing EAL graduate students, and the role of language support aligned with students' styles and needs in assisting students' development in academic programs.

EAP Competency and the Success of EAL Graduate Students

EAP, a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is known as the language for academic purposes used by students, educators, and researchers, especially in higher education settings (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991; Kirkgöz & Dikilitas, 2018). Both students who speak English as their first language (EL1/L1 students) and students using EAL need EAP literacy and skills to study their disciplines, complete educational programs, and succeed in academia. However, international graduate students can face particular challenges using EAL for their successful academic performance, communications, integrations, and experiences in the host English-speaking institution. Conventionally, while their language competency was framed as barriers or deficits for IGSs that need remedies, many scholars insisted on changing the approaches and considering students' prior backgrounds and endeavors to empower them with relevant support in their discipline graduate study (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Flowerdew, 2019; Maringe & Jenkins, 2015; Sharma, 2018; Strauss, 2012).

As discussed earlier, English-speaking institutions set admission standards and requirements for international students based on standardized English tests or on measures from

institutional English programs. UM sets admission standards for English language proficiency (ELP) for IGSs who do not have a high school diploma or a university degree from one of the countries with an ELP test exemption. These students are required to meet the threshold scores of standardized or recognized tests for ELP measurements listed on UM's website at <https://umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/graduate-student-admissions/requirements#english-language-proficiency-requirements> (University of Manitoba, n.d.a). Specifically, students must achieve the requisite score from one of the following examination systems: level 5 on the institutional IAEP (Intensive Academic English Program) or AEPUCE (Academic English Program for University and College Entrance); 6.5 overall on IELTS (International English language Testing System); overall scores of 86 on Internet-based TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language); or 61 overall on PTE Academic (Pearson Test of English Academic) (University of Manitoba, n.d.a). For most international students, IELTS and TOEFL are the most popular choices (Read, 2016); however, the specific scores and additional requirements may differ by department and field.

Research has produced controversial results on the connection between international students' language proficiency as assessed by English language tests, their academic success as represented by grade point average (GPA), and their experience in completing academic tasks. This controversy challenges the existing admission measures. Thus, the researchers propose to give the subject matter a say in the admission process (Clark & Yu, 2021; Pilcher & Richards, 2017; Stigger, 2019; Tweedie & Chu, 2019; Weerakkody & Jerez, 2018). Tweedie and Chu (2019) questioned the equivalency of ELP measures for admission by comparing the success rate of first-year students in Engineering programs. They found a higher dropout rate among those

with the measures from the institutional ELP program. Arcuino's (2013) study found no relation between TOEFL and IELTS scores and international master's students' GPA. While Clark and Yu (2021) believed IELTS prepared a basic level of academic writing skills and provided the institution with a tool to measure at the entrance, Stigger (2019) concluded that ELP thresholds were genuine indicators of basic language requirements for a student studying in an English-speaking environment. Clark and Yu (2021) argued that it seems too ambitious to use the results of a language test to predict the performances of complex and various types of graduate writing.

The literature shows that graduate students at different stages in different disciplines reported challenges completing academic tasks although they satisfied or exceeded the ELP thresholds (Anderson, 2016; Clark & Yu, 2021; Kim, 2015; Sharma, 2018). Even having self-perceived confidence and competence in ELP with their expertise and profession of English teachers, graduate students in Kim's (2015) research recognized their lack of linguistic competency in adapting to the new academic context where English is spoken as the first language. This inadequacy is caused by the disparities in the educational systems of the host country with that in students' prior experiences. Also, doctoral students from across disciplines in Ma (2021) and Anderson (2016) reported challenges in academic writing for final papers, research, and publications. Hyland (2018) blamed standardized academic writing conventions for "imprisoning" L2 writers with native speakers' values and norms. This imprisonment created injustice in research writing and writing for publication because L2 graduate students and L2 writers found they needed to first master their academic writing before getting their papers published. The author encouraged IGSs to take more critical and proactive stands on the matter and not view their EAP-related obstacles as "a linguistic deficit" but as "endeavours" to learn

new disciplinary knowledge and discourse practice (Hyland, 2018, p. 384). Douglas et al. (2022) insisted on conceptualizing EAP with a wider range of linguistics, academics, sociocultural, and student personal fulfillment for EAL students' fuller outcomes. At the same time, Anderson (2016) and Kim (2015) affirmed that relevant support should be in place for EAL graduate students regardless of how advanced their English language competencies are upon beginning their studies.

Lack of Familiarity with the Context and the Role of Support

Considering international students' learning experiences abroad, Weerakkody and Jerez (2018) defined international student success as a collection of academic achievements, integration into disciplinary communities as well as the wider campus community, and sociocultural adjustment. EAL students are typically characterized by the diversity of cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds they bring to the host institutions and broader community. As newcomers, they encounter difficulties entering and adapting to English-medium social and academic settings in the host institution (Benzie, 2010; Read, 2016), which is influenced by their prior educational and professional backgrounds (Kim, 2015)

EAL student challenges stemmed primarily from "their unfamiliarity with aspects of source-based, critical, and writer-responsible writing, and self-perceived inadequacies regarding their knowledge of discipline-specific academic vocabulary, meta-discourse strategies, and the ability to compose concise, coherent texts" (Wette & Furneaux, 2018, p. 168). Thirty-one international graduate students at a university in the UK and another university in New Zealand in Wette and Furneaux's (2018) study encountered similar challenges in academic discourse socialization regardless of differences in students' nationalities and disciplines. Asian graduate

students in Chowdhury et al.'s (2024) study also reported the differences in methods of teaching, learning, assessment, and writing demands as challenges affecting their academic achievement in British institutions. Specifically, the students struggled with academic writing, incorporating content vocabulary to communicate within the disciplinary community, and independent learning (Read & von Randow, 2016). In addition, IGSs who reside with their families may have additional challenges adapting to a new context and a new environment in terms of managing accommodation, children's schooling, finances, new social relationships, and extra-curricular activities (Read & von Randow, 2016).

Other affective factors should also be noted, such as feeling a loss of the academic status they may have enjoyed in their home countries and transitioning back into student status. Instructors and advisors perceived acculturation, academic literacies and skills, and English communications in social and academic settings as gaps to be filled for IGSs in a Western Australian institution (Creely et al., 2021). Chinese PhD students in a Canadian institution highlighted challenges socializing in the disciplinary community, especially with domestic peers, that they could not overcome alone (Anderson, 2016). The instructors from Education in Creely et al. (2021) believed that their EAL graduate students needed to understand local culture and context, develop oral communication skills, and acquire an academic set of skills, including reaching out to cultural and academic learning resources to situate themselves in an Australian university.

IGSs need sufficient and relevant support to transition into the new academic discourse of English-speaking universities and adjust to the new academic community as well as perform academic tasks required by graduate programs (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Feak, 2016; Fenton-

Smith & Humphreys, 2015; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Read & von Randow, 2016; Wingate, 2018). Regarding transitional support, Fenton-Smith and Humphreys (2016) and Read (2016) emphasized that host institutions should provide sociocultural foregrounding for students' smoother adjustments into a new educational context. According to Son and Park (2014), institutions should address and meet international students' practical needs with relevant programs to help them overcome language and cultural differences as barriers to their studies. First-year doctoral students with a TESOL background in Kim's (2016) study reported facing difficulties transitioning into the new academic community caused by new academic norms, stressing the need for transitional support for IGSs regardless of their English competency. Solmaz's (2020) research found that graduate students are socialized into the institutional academic discourse by accessing services of the writing centres. Also, Read (2016) argued that, at the graduate level, even though students are required to develop the ability to work independently, the availability of academic support is primarily needed to help handle academic difficulties. Some students acknowledged the support from EAP courses and supplementary academic workshops with specific content and skills, and others reported the impacts of tutoring and mentoring services. Guo and Chase (2011) suggested that contextualization of internationalization criteria be introduced to the instructors to integrate IGSs into the host institution.

Regarding specificity, researchers believed the support services provided at the departmental level were more effective and pertinent to students' specific needs (Hyland, 2016; Read, 2016; Wingate, 2018). Wingate (2018) asserted that support should be provided within disciplines, especially within the curriculum, through which the students learn to communicate

the academic community's knowledge through interactions regulated by the community's conventions. On the one hand, Rodriguez et al. (2019) recommended that institutions be more efficient support providers by understanding which tools and services help EAL graduate students through barriers. On the other hand, Rodriguez et al. (2019) highlighted the role of departments in creating a sense of belonging for the students.

In addition, peers, networks in the academic community, and instructors prevalently contributed to EAL graduate students' language and academic development. Wette and Furneaux' (2018) interviewed master and doctoral students in Applied Linguistics/TESOL/Education, Biological Sciences, and Engineering and Physics at universities in the UK and New Zealand. The participants from those subject categories benefited from professors and advisors' feedback, peers' advice on language, content-subject books and articles, and other online resources while acknowledging the importance of on-campus EAP writing support (Wette & Furneaux, 2018). Hyland (2016) suggested peer support as an effective resource for IGSs' academic writing as well as academic socialization. Besides, services assisting students to integrate into the institutional community and develop a sense of belonging through dialogic interactions and communications would be helpful to their confidence building and socialization (Rodríguez et al., 2019; Hyland, 2016). Chinese IGSs in Du's (2019) study considered students' friend circle as a critical factor for adjustment and transition to a new campus while facing language and culture obstacles. These linguistic and cultural factors in a new context were considered dual bars in daily communications with friends from diverse backgrounds in a Canadian institution (Du, 2019).

The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impacts on IGSs

This research was conducted during the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which affected postsecondary education and IGSs' learning experiences globally and at UM. COVID-19 substantially impacted higher education globally and in Canada. Mirroring other contexts worldwide, UM closed its physical campuses and moved all teaching and learning online in March 2020 at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The university moved all classes and all other related activities online; therefore, all students stayed home and attended classes remotely. This change caused many challenges for both instructors and students in the transition from in-person, on-campus activities to digital activities that were limited to a computer, laptop, or smartphone screen. All student and instructor participants in this research study worked through those challenging days and throughout the study data collection period, which occurred from February to October 2021. They shared their experiences learning and teaching during this period. Therefore, I include a discussion of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on IGSs' sociocultural and academic experiences in the section titled, COVID-19 impacts and the Institution Responses, in chapter 5 of this thesis.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted academic learning across Canadian postsecondary education (Statistics Canada, 2022) and posed double challenges socially and academically for international students who went to another country to pursue overseas learning and living experiences. International students were labeled with temporary immigration statuses and faced barriers caused by language and lack of familiarity with the host country's sociocultural context and system. Chirikov and Soria (2020) claimed that language barriers led to misinformation or lack of information and an overall reduction in service provision during the pandemic. Graduate

international students in Sustarsic and Zhang's research (2022) also revealed the anxiety and stress caused by challenges in academic study, personal problems, and uncertain immigration status. Apart from those challenges, with the spread of the virus, being labelled *outsiders* made it harder for international students as they encountered increasing racism, distrust, exclusion, and inequitable treatment and policies (Bista et al., 2021). This experience barred them from socializing or networking with local peers (Mbous et al., 2022) while there were common expectations among instructors that IGSs had opportunities to practice English proficiency in social and academic communities for their academic success (Creely et al., 2021). Additionally, ESL students in Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) found the switch to online learning more challenging than did the teachers, and they blamed social distancing for their lack of language development in speaking skills. Fronck et al. (2021) saw international students' status as marginalized while Firang and Mensah (2022), Mbou et al. (2022) and Lipura (2021) called them a vulnerable group in the host countries despite the economic benefits and multicultural diversity and other capitals they brought to the host countries (Bista et al., 2021). In Canada, Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) surveyed over 155,000 student respondents on the impacts of COVID-19 and students' experience of emergency remote learning. They categorized the impacts into four main areas, including learning experiences, psychological issues and wellness, finance, and education and job prospects. Exclusion from most Canadian financial relief programs made international students "one of the most vulnerable groups" during the COVID-19 pandemic (Firang, 2020; Firang & Mensah, 2022).

Despite discouraging government policies and ineffective COVID-19 responses by institutional centres, many international students displayed perceptions and coping strategies to

overcome the obstacles. At the same time, the faculties and instructors' understanding and support for the international students were recommended to alleviate their challenges. The students developed personal strategies to cope with challenges and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on their lives. In a narrative inquiry, three international doctoral students from Canadian institutions problematized the disconnection of an academic community in COVID-19, making them feel isolated (Sen et al., 2022). They claimed that reconnecting with peers and a learning community, navigating resources, and self-caring for well-being helped them overcome obstacles caused by the pandemic. The group of doctoral students from different disciplines and areas of study in Webber et al. (2022) also valued the membership connection and networking with other doctoral students, which helped them minimize the challenges posed by graduate-level programs and COVID-19. Peacock's (2022) mixed-method study found that a good relationship between EAP instructors and students contributed to students' learning attainment. In a study in New Zealand, as the author and instructor, Wette (2022) used a flipped writing course for graduate students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and surveyed students to find out their perspectives on learning academic English online compared to those courses conducted in a face-to-face format. The students commented that the online study mode was effective for self-directed learning; however, they missed in-class interactions with classmates and instructors. Also, Deroey and Skipp (2022) pointed to multifold challenges with the added pressure of publishing faced by doctoral students in Luxembourg during the pandemic. They noted the benefits of redesigning a research article writing course in English for doctoral students that contained self-directed learning using e-books and five three-hour online sessions on

Webex. Students' feedback collected through a survey showed the positive impact on students' self-directed learning, peer review, and online class sessions (Deroey & Skipp, 2022).

Overall, COVID-19 posed unprecedented challenges and revealed multifold obstacles for IGSs in terms of academic success and sociocultural adjustment in host institutions, thus negatively influencing their well-being. Authorities and institutions must collaborate and provide systemic support for IGSs' inclusion and better learning and living experiences.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate IGSs' experiences in learning EAP in two distinct disciplines, Education and Engineering. This research discusses institutional and faculty-specific supports as a significant part of international students' learning experiences at UM. I approach this study using the theoretical lens of sociocultural theory and language socialization theory. This study is also informed by my experience as an international graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in the form of self-reflective narratives embedded with the participants' accounts. In addition, I have experience as a postsecondary instructor teaching EFL to Engineering students at a large technical university in Vietnam. Therefore, I chose EAL graduate students from Education and EAL graduate students from Engineering to include in the study. Also, Engineering (hard science) is a distinctive discipline from Education (soft science). Another reason for selecting EAL graduate students from the Price Faculty of Engineering at UM was because this faculty attracted the greatest number of international graduate students to the university from 2020-2024 (UM Office of Institutional Analysis, 2024b). According to the same source, the number of IGSs in the Faculty of Education was 70 in the fall of 2023 compared to 32 in 2020. Although the number of IGSs students in the

Price Faculty of Engineering decreased gradually from 281 in 2020 to 245 in the fall of 2023, this latter enrollment was the largest number of IGSs at the institution in each of those years.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are EAL graduate students' experiences learning and using academic English to support their graduate work in Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba?
2. What are potential sources of support provided in the respective faculties and in the wider university to aid EAL graduate students in the task of developing their academic English? What are students' perspectives on those sources of support provided? What experiences do they have with the provided support?
3. How do the faculty-specific and university-wide EAP learning experiences of international graduate students in Education and Engineering compare and contrast?

The next chapter of this dissertation presents the theoretical framework using sociocultural theory and language socialization theory and reviews relevant literature on EAP education and potential supports for EAL graduate students in Education and Engineering.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and EAP Learning of EAL Graduate Students in Education and Engineering

Chapter 2 comprises two major parts: the theoretical framework and the literature review. In the first part, I discuss how sociocultural theory and second language socialization theory frame the approaches of the study. In the second part, a literature review of the current trends of EAP teaching and learning that move toward English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) is presented followed by EAP learning needs of Education and Engineering graduate students and the potential sources of support for EAL graduate students.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Sociocultural theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978) sees learning as an active process where learners are integrated into the knowledge community. The theory holds the view that knowledge is socially constructed through interactions and dialogues with teachers and more knowledgeable peers in the target community. Vygotsky's work has had immense impacts on pedagogical and instructional approaches, research, and curriculum development in second language education and development (Compernelle & Williams, 2013; Duff, 2007; Lantolf et al., 2020, 2021; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Loewen & Sato, 2018; Ortega, 2013; Storch, 2018; Swain et al., 2015). I draw on the primary focuses of SCT to inform my approach to this study. These focuses include co-constructed knowledge, mediation, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the role of environment and support in student learning. I then review studies in L2 learning underpinned by SCT and applications for L2 pedagogical approaches.

Co-constructed Knowledge, Internalization and Applications in L2 Education. SCT argues that individuals' internalizing development is a result of long-term operations and that it is socially, culturally, and historically situated (Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge is co-constructed by learners interacting with one another and is influenced by prior experiences, the environment, and the help of teachers. Individual learners' internalized learning involves a complex process of mediation from external activities or their use of language to communicate with others (social level) to internalization (individual level) with multiple transformations and developments with inner speech (Vygotsky, 1978). Also, Vygotsky (1978) suggested that the meaning-making process is complicated because meaning is drawn not just from physical attention but also from the senses and lenses of the personal mind, which is socially constructed in prior experiences. In other words, knowledge, including language knowledge, is characterized as co-constructed with individual characteristics (Storch, 2021). In this complex process, language plays the role of a cognitive tool to facilitate communication, interactions, and collaboration, thus provoking inner speech and thoughts (Storch, 2021; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, learning activities should be meaningful in a way that meets the practical needs of learners and regards learners' levels. Those learning needs and levels are not the same for each learner because each has their particular capacity, development stage, strategy for handling problems, and different prior experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). From SCT, Duff (2015) saw learners construct their identities through practicing language and knowledge from various contexts of interactions in their lifespan. Also, collaborative dialogues between peers (Swain & Watanabe, 2012) and collaborative writing

(Storch, 2021; Watanabe, 2019) enable L2 learners to scaffold activities and co-construct knowledge.

Zone of Proximal Development and the Implications to L2 Teaching and Learning.

Vygotskian SCT's perspective on learning is centralized in students' interaction with the world, using the Zone of Proximal Development model to create co-constructed knowledge and the internalization process of learning (Vygotsky, 1987). In this process, language acts as a means for humans to first interact externally, then to construct and conduct thoughts internally, and later, to reflect how they receive the world in language (Compernelle, 2018). Scholars see ZPD as a model of nature and nurture (Kaldis, 2013), scaffolding support (Yoon & Kim, 2019) and knowledge mastering (Kim, 2001) that transforms L2 learners' abilities (Poehner & Infante, 2017).

In Vygotsky's ZPD model, students can, with help from experts/teachers or more advanced peers, master concepts and ideas they cannot understand on their own. This model has two developmental levels: (a) the level of actual development – this is the point the learner has already reached where they can problem-solve independently; and (b) the level of potential development (ZDP) – this is the point the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers. The ZDP is the level at which learning takes place. This level comprises cognitive structures that are still maturing but can only mature under the guidance of, or in collaboration with, others. Once this zone of proximal development is created, learning is internalized and results in achievement. Development is conceived much later than the learning process itself. Learners' achievement is the gap between learners' actual level and potential development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) offered the following definition: "It is

the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

ZPD corresponds to scaffolding or assisted performance, which is known as the quantity of support or instruction between expert-novice, teacher-learner, “advanced” peerless, or advanced peer in the learning environment (Lantolf et al., 2020). Learners reach development when they can complete problem-solving or learning tasks without the support of teachers and more knowledgeable others. Scaffolding support is then removed when the knowledge gained is increased; in other words, the ZPD is achieved through interactions. The level of support and the quality of development (mediation) depend on expectations negotiated between the teacher(s) and learner(s) and the goal set by individual learners (Lantolf et al., 2020). Outcomes of ZPD in L2 learning transform learners into “more knowledgeable” with the constructed knowledge, including the explicit linguistic knowledge and “the knowledge that people have of their native language as acquired in immersion settings” (Lantolf et al., 2020, p. 240).

Also, learners should learn to become critical thinkers to solve problems in their own ways and discover knowledge by socially interacting and communicating, using their socially and individually constructed perspectives (Amineh & Asl, 2015). In this dynamic collaboration, teachers or more knowledgeable peers also have opportunities to learn from diverse students through interactions with them (Kaufman, 2004; Storch, 2018). I discuss and review research on the role of experts or more knowledgeable others such as teachers, supervisors, mentors, TA, peers, resources, and the sociocultural environment in scaffolding and supporting L2 learners and novices to become competent in the target community.

Teacher. SCT emphasizes the indispensable role of “developmentally appropriate assistance”, which involves the direct physical presence of human mediators or their indirect presence through learning and teaching materials, tasks, or assisted technology devices (Storch, 2017). This assistance consists of educational and pedagogical approaches, for example, teachers’ guidance, questioning and feedback, designed activities, teachers’ teaching, tutoring, teaching and learning materials, assisted devices, or conditions or specific tasks for students’ interaction.

This theory sees learning as an active process wherein, through interactions with advanced peers, the environment, and the teacher’s instructions, individual students make meaning, discover, and interpret facts and concepts themselves (Amineh & Asl, 2015). According to Vygotsky (1978), a teacher’s guidance, instructions, and teaching, seen as assistance and support, should be scaffolded in a way that enables student learning. Storch (2017) mentioned that teacher scaffolding involves active and dynamic assistance. Therefore, learners are encouraged to engage in challenging but supported tasks. She referred to how this scaffolding should be applied in education as construction, so that when there is no longer scaffolding, learners are able to do the task themselves. She believed that learning occurs when learners complete tasks that are more advanced than their existing levels, which could be achieved with the teacher’s corrective feedback (Storch, 2017). In addition, Amery et al.’s (2020) research found that the quality of the supervisor-doctoral relationship impacted student well-being and facilitated their intercultural competence learning. In the field of education, Nguyen and William (2019) emphasized the importance of teachers’ knowledge about scaffolding and its significance in teaching EAL. They suggested that instructional scaffolding

knowledge should be included in both EAL teachers' development coursework and practicum in real contexts that are relevant and practical to students' needs. Also, Yoon and Kim's (2019) research showed the ZPD of the mentees overcoming the fear of teaching with responsive instructions and relevant structured mediation from mentors in a practicum in a TESOL program in the US. The scaffolding provided a learning opportunity for mentors through interactions and collaboration with the mentees. This approach could be beneficial for instructors and advisors from education to help them understand the needs of students and provide authentic and practical support to those who wish to become teachers in the new context.

Learning Environment and Peers. Vygotsky (1978) insisted on a learning environment in which activities in the forms of collaboration, interaction, discussion, and cooperation with peers or people surrounding them are enabled under the guidance of teachers, thus creating the ZPD of learning. Hulstijn and his colleagues (2014) argued that language learners experience different language development in different language educational settings, which should be appropriately organized to provoke cognitive process and language acquisition.

In second language learning, Storch (2015) stressed providing "the appropriate level of assistance to students' needs, which accelerates students' capacities" (p. 71). In this way, students play an active role as co-constructing agents with experts who assist with collaborative activities (Storch, 2017). Storch (2019) argued that in collaborative writing activities, peer feedback on writing is of higher quality and more effective than that in conventional peer feedback on one another's writing drafts. Peer scaffolding offers opportunities for peers to share perspectives on tasks, interact, and provide feedback for improvement collectively, thus constructing help with and without cultural artifacts attaining development, particularly in L2

writing and construction of knowledge (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Hanjani, 2019; Shooshtari & Mir, 2014; Storch, 2018; Thorne, 2003). Also, collaborative dialogues about content knowledge between peers or between novices and experts can lead to language learning (Swain & Watanabe, 2012). Morita (2009) researched an international doctoral student experiencing difficulties in various aspects of an EAL graduate student's life, notably when using academic language in classroom discussions and communicating with fellow students in "informal social gatherings" (p. 449). She recommended sociocultural and socialization theories constructing access to "peer communities" (p. 457) to learn about the new academic cultures of the existing institutional settings.

Vygotsky (1978) stated, "... human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 88), emphasizing the role of the learning environment in student learning. Significant roles are played by support sources, favorable learning conditions, and an environment that facilitates and encourages interactions, collaboration, and discussions among learners within and across communities. The background that each learner has and brings to the existing context plays a crucial role in the learning process and learners' newly constructed knowledge (Kim, 2001). Also, Ortega (2013) noted that "the ZPD potential emerges among peers, not only with an expert and it does not imply an intention to teach or an overt focus on learning, although it can entail both, particularly in formal instructional settings" (p. 255). To that end, SCT draws on the institutional role of a teaching and learning organizer to create the academic environment and communities that facilitate learning through social interactions, collaborations, discussions, and even debates for students' development. Despite reporting studying abroad as rewarding to their

language learning and academic fulfillment, Asian international graduate students in Du (2019) and Chowdhury et al. (2024) found many common challenges in daily academic life when transitioning into Western higher education settings. These students made a strong and positive community of practice by connecting, networking, and interacting with students from the same heritage backgrounds and other international graduate students (Du, 2019; Duff, 2010).

In short, SCT informs this study with effective, flexible, and open approaches to second language teaching and learning, particularly to EAP education, with its own characteristics of learners, curriculum, contexts, education policies, and pedagogy. Through the lens of SCT, IGSs' EAP learning experiences are explored in a way that appreciates their prior knowledge, sociocultural backgrounds, and personal learning needs, styles, and levels. EAL graduate students are placed at the center of the EAP teaching and learning environment, where they serve as active learners. The potential sources of support for EAL graduate students involve all educational elements, including (a) institutional and departmental support in terms of programs, policies, training, and implementation; (b) instructors as the role of facilitator, guide, coach, scaffolding supporter, and consultant; (c) peers as mentors, tutors, peer-coaches, and collaborators in an organized learning environment or a collaborative learning community; and (d) all social-cultural-historical artifacts for learning. The pedagogy informed by sociocultural theory aims to advocate and empower EAL graduate students by making their voices heard and protecting them from being marginalized due to their status as international students in English-speaking higher education institutions in Canada.

In the next part, I present the major characteristics of language socialization theory (LST), followed by some distinct features of second language socialization (L2ST). I review

research using L2ST to analyze international graduate students' experiences in learning and using EAP in the context of English medium institutions. The reason I chose LST to co-construct my theoretical framework alongside SCT is that it draws on significant features of SCT while focusing on the "cultural significance of particular linguistic and activity structures ... and ... [pays] more attention to the transformation vs. reproduction in language patterns" (Duff, 2007, p. 313).

Language Socialization Theory (LST)

While grounded in the above-discussed sociocultural theory, this research is also framed by the specific lens of language socialization theory (LST), which also views language learning as social learning (Duff, 2007, 2019; Ortega, 2013). Ochs and Schieffelin (2017) originated the theory with an argument that the processes of children's language development and their sociocultural development intertwined, and "social and cultural forces, predictions, symbols, ideologies, and practices that structure language production and comprehension over developmental time" (p. 4). In LST, language is an essential medium for children or novices to socialize through language and to use language in society (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In other words, children and novices in a community can acquire knowledge of language, socio-culture, status, emotions, and feelings through interactions wherein they communicate their knowledge and interact with others using the language as a powerful tool. Schieffelin and Ochs (2017) asserted that the theory provides a sociocultural-historical paradigm to analyze the "continuity and transformation" when novice adults socialize in a new environment or community in a life-long course. In the same light of the socio-ethnographic approach, Duff (2010) stated:

Language is learned through interactions with others who are more proficient in the language and its cultural practices and who provide novices explicit and (or) implicit mentoring or evidence about normative, appropriate uses of the language, and of the worldviews, ideologies, values, and identities of community members. (p. 172)

From this perspective, LST places interactions through and into the language at the center of the process and stresses the role of more proficient others' support in socializing novices into the target community. This is a fluid and dynamic interactive process in which the novices, as active agents, participate in interactional activities to communicate their needs, negotiate power and identities, and co-construct meaning and knowledge (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011, 2017). In other words, LST regards the legitimacy of novices' knowledge in the power relation with the more proficient others and experts (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). On the one hand, LST acknowledges the vital role of more competent others in socializing novices into the new context to learn the required knowledge and skills (Duff, 2010, 2017; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017). On the other hand, Schieffelin and Ochs (2011, 2017) emphasized the critical role of linguistic resources such as genres, goals, setting, affective factors, tone, grammatical and lexical structures, and discourse in making meaning of social interactions as well as the contexts of those interactions in which the speakers or interlocutors settle with the associated sociocultural knowledge and values. In this digital time, Reinhardt and Thorne (2019) asserted the application of LST in "digitally mediated creative expression and language use as tools for identity development and management" (p. 1). This assertion emphasized the significant role of language in the context of my study, where digital knowledge and technology became a significant part of teaching and student learning, which was fully online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second language socialization (L2) or additional language socialization has the same features as first language socialization (L1). However, L2 socialization encompasses the greater complexity of second language learners' prior sociolinguistic backgrounds and sociocultural practices while adjusting to the new context (Duff, 2007, 2011). The social interactions with others in communities of practice through routines enable L2 learners to develop their communicative proficiency (Duff, 2007). At the same time, through interactions with people in the target academic communities using the L2 as a tool, L2 learners gain knowledge in the new language, such as the values, identities, and cultural practices (Duff, 2007; Zuengler & Cole, 2005). Also, LST views language learning as a life-long process and advises that language learners should learn to adopt new practices on entering a new group: "new ways of acting, communicating, and thinking are required, and new codes, registers, genres, or literacies are given priority over others' principles" (Duff, 2007, p. 311). In this process, L2 learners could be "bidirectional or multidirectional" if "multiple models of expertise co-exist" (Duff, 2007, p. 311) in social interactions where novices could teach the more experienced interlocutors. The knowledge gained by L2 learners and identities forged may not differ from those absorbed and created by L1 learners (Duff, 2007; 2011). L1 learners usually refer to children with language socialization happening in homes, in groups of friends, in schools, and other daily social and academic settings. L2 learners usually acquire L1 linguistic repertoires elsewhere and may encounter either welcome or resistance from more competent others in the new L2 communities (Duff, 2008). On the other hand, there are resistance and rejections in the socialization process as the knowledge is filtered through individual L2 learners' worldviews as shaped by their prior sociocultural and linguistic experiences and ideologies (Duff, 2007, 2011; Duff & Anderson,

2015). In other words, L2 learners may not acquire the target language in full in the same manner as L1 learners due to the complexity of external and persona factors in L2 language socialization.

From this perspective, EAL graduate students, as novices or newcomers, use English as an additional language to socialize with other community members in an English-speaking institution's new academic or sociocultural setting and vice versa. They learn additional language and other knowledge through those social interactions and participation. L2ST emphasizes the crucial roles of "interlocutors" in scaffolding newcomers (Duff, 2007, p. 311). These people have the expertise and proficiency to mentor, coach, or help students with the language and the transition into the target context with respect to the current community's values and ideologies (Duff, 2010, 2017). The mentors who are "more experienced, old-timer peers, teachers, tutors, caregivers but also other authoritative sources such as textbooks, online resources or other media" (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 338) facilitate newcomers' learning. L2 learners communicate by asking questions, seeking information, and exchanging information, which makes L2 learners interactive interlocutors in the conversation (Duff, 2010). Duff and Anderson (2015) also noted that mentoring should be available, effective, and timely to individual needs while encouraging L2 learners to look for supplementary resources for their language and literacy socialization into academic communities. The outcomes can be in many possibilities, such as "partial learning, resistance to normative practices and ideologies, and hybrid, syncretic ones" (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 338).

Academic Discourse Socialization (ADS). In the context of postsecondary education, researchers in LST have turned their attention to EAL students' language socialization into an academic discourse community—academic discourse socialization (ADS). Friedman (2023)

offers the following definition: “Academic discourse comprises the practices, registers, genres (both oral and written), and ways of knowing that mediate individuals’ participation in academic and/or disciplinary communities” (p. 261). This perspective corresponds to ESAP, considering how disciplines use language differently, as shown in the variety of genres across disciplines (Hyland, 2016). Students can be more motivated to learn the academic discourse of their disciplines because this discourse enables them to utilize their subject and make their study relevant (Hyland, 2016). Also, Kobayashi et al. (2017), researching L2 students’ socialization into disciplinary discourses, noted that “ADS is concerned with the means by which newcomers and those they interact with learn to participate in various kinds of academic discourse in their communities and other social networks” (p.1).

Communities of Practice. The communities of practice (CoP) comprise of more experienced members, teachers, instructors, mentors, peers, and people from individual networks who help EAL students as novices socialize into the target communities and become competent members (Duff & Yamamoto, 2024). Duff (2010) stressed that language and literacy discourse should be discussed as a specific part of an academic discourse that embodies a specific discipline of knowledge or a profession practiced by the members of academic discourse communities. EAL students gain their knowledge and skills as well as build and negotiate identity and power through interactions with members in CoP via multiple means, such as course outlines, coursebooks, team/group works, and methods, including feedback from instructors and peers or scaffolding assistance by instructors and TAs (Kobayashi et al., 2017). Duff and Yamamoto (2024) added that researchers could also investigate academic discourse in the broad sense of “ideological and historical contexts and policies in which language learning takes place”

(p. 201). Alternatively, Duff and Yamamoto (2024) suggested exploring how social networks in the context could assist students in achieving academic and language learning outcomes.

Support Resources. LST highlights the indispensable role of support resources in socializing L2 students into the target communities, including institutional and departmental services, individuals such as instructors, mentors, peers, tutors, and other support staff, as well as supporting materials (Duff & Yamamoto, 2024; Duff, 2010). Okuda and Anderson (2018) did a cross-case study analysis of two case studies conducted by two departmental colleagues at similar time frames with Chinese graduate students from a Canadian institution. The focal participants were two PhD students majoring in Arts from study 1 and one master's student majoring in Education from study 2, who self-identified challenges with academic writing and reached out to the institutional writing center for writing support. One PhD reported the generic content and beginner's level of academic English courses provided by the center. The other PhD student patiently visited the center despite her time limitation. However, she was sabotaged by the center's tutors' annoying comments and rejection to support her consecutively. This experience negatively affected their graduate student's self-perceived potential to get academic jobs (Okuda & Anderson, 2018). The master's student was disappointed after several visits because the tutor helped her with a focus on grammar and corrective feedback, while she needed to produce technical, disciplinary genres in applied linguistics that were beyond the undergraduate writing tutor's expertise. In turn, the graduate student taught the tutor how to write more clearly in her disciplinary practice. Okuda and Anderson's (2018) findings show ineffective writing support due to the mismatch between the available service provided by the writing centre and the L2 graduate students' needs to fulfill their graduate academic studies.

Okuda and Anderson (2018) recommended changes to writing centres such as recruiting graduate writing tutors and training them in discipline-specific sessions while confirming the significant role of writing centres for IGSs' language socialization. Regarding this role of writing centres, graduate students in Solmaz's study (2021) were socialized into academic writing by visiting the institutional writing center and learning about the differences between American and British writing styles. They also learned how their L1 affected their English writing and realized the necessity for proofreading. Also, Rajendram and Shi's (2022) research found that implementing online and hybrid communities of practice offered constructive feedback and space for academic socialization, thus helping develop academic language competence and confirm the legitimacy of diverse identities among international graduate students in an EAP program in a Canadian institution.

Faculty or instructor support was essential to IGSs' language and academic socialization. Schneider and Jin (2020) studied faculty across disciplines to learn about their perspectives on the role of socialization in L2 learning and to identify the practices they used to socialize international students linguistically. The research context was a U.S. university with 14,000 international undergraduate and 7,000 international graduate students. The majority of participants (11 out of 14) expressed, both explicitly and implicitly, their recognition of the role of second language socialization in socializing international students into a local community with experts' support. The faculty not only played a role as explicit and implicit language socializers but also facilitated academic community socialization environments in classrooms and beyond classrooms. The faculty who did not recognize the role of L2 socialization in international students' English language skills were unwilling to take any actions to promote students'

socialization into the target community (Schneider & Jin, 2020). The research result suggested the importance of raising faculty's perception of their crucial role as L2 socializers in supporting international students to advance their language, academic, and cultural knowledge and socialize into the target communities.

The discussion above of the significant features of LST and the research on L2 socialization with respect to international graduate students in the world and Canada offers insights into EAL graduate students' experiences of learning and using EAP to gain linguistic and expertise knowledge, ideologies, and values of the target community as part of becoming competent members. Duff and Yamamoto (2024) stressed the significance of including aspects of community or society when analyzing the participants' experiences. This process of language socialization of EAL graduate students is accomplished through interactions with more experienced others or support resources in the context of the host institution.

The following section reviews the literature on EAP teaching and learning, current trends in EAP education and research, and the EAP needs of international graduate students in the disciplines of Education and Engineering.

EAP Teaching and Learning

English for Academic Purposes

With the influence of internationalization and globalization, there has been a high demand for accommodating the increasing diversity of learners' needs for EAP in increasingly complex contexts (Hyland, 2016; Hyland & Jiang, 2021). Hyland (2016), Wingate (2018), and Swales (2019) found that learners' needs were driven by discipline-specific academic discourse. Also, the central focus of the EAP field, or specific way of using the language, was determined

by the academic community. Hyland (2016) suggested that English for specific academic purposes rather than English for general academic purposes would serve learners practically in the acquisition of disciplinary conventions and practices by drawing upon learners' expertise and experience in the target contexts.

A short term for English for academic purposes is academic English which is, according to Wallwork (2016), a general term for formal English used by students, teachers, and researchers of any discipline; meanwhile, scientific English tends to be used by those from technical fields, such as Engineering, Biology, Chemistry, Mechanics, and Information Technology. The author argued that humanities or social sciences can be scientific; therefore, the distinction is minimal. With this approach, he published a series of books on EAP to support EAL learners from all disciplines. However, Hyland (2016) argued that different disciplines held different worldviews, conventions, and practices, and that EAL users' need for EAP in their specific disciplinary work and community mattered. In Hyland's (2016) categorization, EAP has two types: English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP).

Researchers in the field advocate for either EGAP or ESAP (Hyland, 2016c). Regarding EGAP, several arguments exist about the deficit in teachers' expertise, program content, and academic skills. First, language teachers are said to lack expertise on specific subject content in EAP courses despite having linguistic knowledge and language teaching pedagogy. Second, students' academic writing should include liberal arts to give students a humanities dimension and advance the status of the field (Hyland, 2006). Third, EGAP should incorporate generic

academic skills, such as scanning, summarizing, note-taking, and paraphrasing, as well as a set of common language forms and skills shared by inter-disciplines.

On the contrary, the advocates for ESAP tend to believe that EAP teachers who do not have background or training cannot provide students with adequate support. From an ESAP view, “academic deficiency” is caused by the lack of literacy skills that several English classes can fix (Hyland, 2016, 2019). Also, EAP teaching and learning is not just a focus on language forms or functions but also includes subject communicative skills in a particular academic disciplinary context where the learning should occur. In other words, EAP teaching and learning activities should be approached with the specific language knowledge and practices for students to use and communicate in the target disciplinary community (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Fenton et al., 2022a; Hyland et al., 2019; Swales, 2019; Wingate, 2018).

After conducting a systematic review of over 41 EAP studies, James (2014) concluded that EAP (EGAP) instruction emphasizes learning transfer that entails a variety of learning types and quality simultaneously without much distance. These learning transfers from EGAP benefit students in whichever discipline they later specialize in their program. However, Tweedie and Chu (2019) saw a recent movement away from EGAP, since the “one-size-fits-all” approach merely equipped the learners with general academic skills. They argued that students could have opportunities to learn academic language directly and closely linked to their disciplines (Tweedie & Chu, 2019). In a collection of research completed amid the turbulent time of COVID-19, Fenton et al. (2022) and other authors in the same edition reconceptualized academic English as “a specific use of English for the purpose of communicating ideas, theories, data, and/or perspectives on subject areas in an educational setting” with an emphasis on writing and

speaking (p. 2). Basturkmen (2021) provided a linguistic description of EAP in a review of current work in the field and concluded: “In recent decades, scholars have generally conceptualised academic English as conventionalised matters and choices of disciplinary groups” (p. 99).

In addition, EAP learning consists of acquiring knowledge and skills in “new ways of behaving, interacting, and thinking about the world” (Hyland, 2014, p. 393). This approach involves learning, acting, expressing, and communicating thoughts and ideas. These communicative acts may create particular obstacles for international students studying EAP at English-medium universities regarding academic style, academic literacy, and communicative practices (Hyland, 2014). The challenges primarily originated from the demands of communicative and academic competence required by discipline-specific programs (Hyland, 2016). Hyland (2006) suggested that EAP should discuss the impacts of culture and the “demands of multiple literacies on students’ academic experiences” (p. 17) rather than merely identify the reasons why they encounter those problems in academic discourse. In Canada, research has considered the social and cultural parts of international students’ lives (Anderson, 2015; Douglas et al., 2022; Duff, 2019). Douglas et al.’s (2022) findings indicated sociocultural competence and personal development as outcomes of international students’ EAP learning, requiring taking all IGs’ prior sociocultural, academic, linguistic, and professional backgrounds into account (Douglas et al., 2022; Duff, 2019).

From the discussion above, ESAP is a current and future trend in EAP with focuses on addressing the discipline-specific needs of EAL graduate students, including disciplinary genres and discourses with requirements of communicative features and styles set by the target expertise

field for those who want to become competent members (Basturkmen, 2021). This approach informs my study, which considers disciplinary academic language needs and EAL graduate students' prior sociocultural and academic backgrounds in understanding their experiences in Education and Engineering. In the next section, I present the literature on the specific tasks for EAL graduate students in Education and Engineering and on the reported challenges in completing their graduate work, followed by potential support for them.

Tasks in Graduate Programs in Education and Engineering

EAP rules differ from discipline to discipline, author to author, and journal to journal, requiring students to follow specific instructions (Wallwork, 2016). Basturkmen (2021) classified faculty and graduate students into one group with a focus on research discourses and inquiry for publications. She ascribed this group's academic English needs to expert disciplinary oral and written skills, which adhere to genres of relevance, such as research articles, conference proposals, and presentations. Swales (2019) did a genre analysis in leading ESP/EAP journals and found a lack of contextual factors and pedagogical implications in recent studies. From Swales' experiences working with many international doctoral students, she found that students' learning needs, styles, and goals are driven by their disciplinary and professional practices. Swales (2019) stated:

The life science students opted for simple experiments because they want to arrive at clear answers. In contrast, the social scientists opted for complicated ones because they said there are many possible variables involved. The engineers tended to split with those in civil and environmental areas preferring simple experiments, while mechanical and chemical engineers looking for elaborate ones. (p. 81)

In conjunction with this statement, Swales (2019) emphasized obtaining the perspectives of insiders who specialize in producing academic content, doing experiments, or undertaking practices within the contexts of the academic discourses or the language use formats. Therefore, the EAL learners must learn EAP in the environment and within the expertise community where the disciplinary conventions are constructed and practiced. According to Wingate (2015), communication competence is the capacity to understand and express oneself through genres using appropriate linguistic forms and functions in the academic discourse community. To achieve this communicative competency, the students must achieve epistemological and sociocultural knowledge that constructs the content and disciplinary knowledge.

In addition, Swales (2019) and Hyland (2015) substantiated the relationship between writing genres, disciplines, and the writer's identity associated with a disciplinary community. Hyland (2008) identified three critical features of formality in academic texts that distinguish one academic register from the others, including high lexical density, high proportion of content words, and high nominal style, wherein actions and events are presented as nouns and impersonal constructions. For example, passive voice is often used instead of active voice in scientific writing. Students in the hard sciences are advised to use the impersonal style as much as possible, avoiding the use of "I" whereas students in the social sciences can use the first-person form (Hyland & Jiang, 2017). Danis (2022) analyzed a corpus of disciplinary identity across six disciplines and found authors in social sciences tended to use 'I' more than those in the hard sciences, suggesting that EAP programs can teach appropriate ways of using 'I' in critiques and evaluative registers. Swales and Lindemann (2001) noted that they have "semi-hidden genres that are, in fact, strong determinants of a student's degree of success" (p. 106),

such as fellowship applications, curricula vitae, responses to reviewers' comments, meetings with advisors, and discussions with visitors. One hundred PhD students from across disciplines identified three common and problematic difficulties in learning the English language ranging from the most problematic categories, including vocabulary in general, phrasal verbs, and false friends (Wallwork, 2016).

There has been growing interest in researching EAL graduate students' EAP learning experiences and the disciplinary writing genres for graduate work in a range of disciplines, an amount of which delved into specific groups of Education (social and soft sciences or humanities) or Engineering (hard sciences) disciplines. Scholars also analyzed and categorized the specific tasks assigned to each group in English-medium universities internationally and in Canada and suggested the potential supports aligned with their specific needs. There have been various studies looking into different types of assignments and tasks for graduate students in soft sciences and those in hard sciences, including Elturki (2023), Shi and Dong (2015), Gardner and Nesi (2013), Cho (2009), Cooper and Bikowski (2007), and Hale et al. (1995). The findings are consistent in the emphasis on the driving forces of specific disciplines to the tasks assigned to the students, and they show the indispensable role of academic writing skills to graduate students completing a variety of writing tasks.

Cooper and Bikowski's (2007) analysis of 200 course syllabi from 20 academic departments in a university in the US investigated the writing requirements across disciplines for graduate students from the social sciences, humanities, and arts group, and for those from the sciences, math, and engineering group. The findings showed that the assignments for the first group were more varied and tended to involve more writing than those in the second group. Also,

the writing tasks for the students from the first group varied and included all types, from required writing such as library research papers, article reviews, reports on an experiment or projects, plans and proposals, summaries and abstracts, essays, journal articles, unstructured writing, annotated bibliographies to miscellaneous writing, respectively ranging from most common to the least. The latter group focused on the first two and most common types of writing tasks, the library research paper and the article review, while the majority of the fifty percent of students who reported no writing assignments in their programs were from Engineering. The students from both groups were expected to complete extended writing tasks and a thesis for graduation, all of which required research skills (Cooper & Bikowski, 2007).

In the US, Elturki (2023) analyzed 102 syllabi from 89 courses in 12 graduate pathways programs where students had EAP courses and discipline-specific courses simultaneously. The findings confirmed the different types of writing assignments for these two distinctive fields of study in Engineering and Education. Exercises, reports, course projects, and research papers were the most common writing tasks for Engineering, while critiques and reflections were most frequently assigned for education. Elturki (2023) also indicated that the EAP curriculum failed to meet the needs of hard sciences for their graduate studies.

In Canada, Shi and Dong (2015) found nine groups of writing assignments varied in weight and length from an analysis of 143 graduate assignments with descriptions provided by professors from 12 faculties of two areas: (a) Arts and Social Sciences (Arts, Education, Business, Social Work, Library Studies), and (b) Applied Sciences and Sciences (Applied Science- Engineering, Medicine, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Forestry, Land and Food System). The most frequent types of assignments include scholarly essays, summaries and responses,

literature reviews, projects, reviews, case analyses, and proposals. The least frequent types are creative writing and exams. Comparing among seven of the most common types of assignments, the findings indicated that the students from arts and education had more scholarly essays that required identifying, synthesizing, and assessing theoretical or methodological issues with or without data. At the same time, those from applied sciences and medicine tended to undertake case analyses (Shi & Dong, 2015).

Regarding students' experiences using EAP, the literature also consistently found EAP challenges for EAL graduate students from both fields, especially in disciplinary written tasks and in other oral communication tasks, such as classroom, group discussion, and presentations at different stages of their programs. To explain further, EAL graduate students found academic writing in their discipline the most challenging, particularly with working on complex writing genres of their discipline from course assignments to final projects and thesis (Anderson, 2016; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Ma, 2021; Odena & Burgess, 2017; Sharma, 2018). Fischer (2015) observed that engineering graduate students were usually required to report their progress in oral presentations and written papers at the end of their projects. However, the teachers' expectations of the language, the content, and the writing conventions of the report genre were seen as "hidden features" that misled these engineering students in producing the reports and responding to the teachers' feedback (Fischer, 2015, p. 75). "Overt instructions" (p. 75) with three academic language workshops were organized to help them complete the tasks in a 19-week project-based course (Fischer, 2015). The findings revealed that teachers' expectations and requirements were not sufficiently transparent for the students in terms of language and knowledge expected. Meanwhile, the students felt that their voice was not heard in some stages of the process and they

were uncertain whether what they did met teachers' requirements. As a result, a pedagogical implication was for subject teachers, language educators, and students to engage in ongoing dialogue when working across disciplines (Fischer et al., 2015).

In another study, the East-Asian STEM graduate students in Park et al.'s (2018) research reported that language proficiency negatively influenced their identity development because they were not able to fully express their knowledge nor to catch full ideas from their lab mates, especially Americans, as much as they did in their mother tongues, causing them stress (Park et al., 2018). Chinese graduate students majoring in Education (Yang & Jing, 2020) found it challenging to adapt to a Canadian university, reporting difficulties in content learning, discussion participation, and additional time spent on reading papers, challenges that were attributed to differences in educational norms and practices and limited ELP. Also, Kim (2015) researched the academic discourse socialization experiences of IGSs majoring in teaching English for speakers of other languages (TESOL) with prior academic and professional backgrounds as teachers of English for her dissertation. These IGSs reported linguistic challenges with assignments despite their solid background as English teachers with TESOL education. These challenges were caused by the assignment genres and expectations in the host institution that differed from what they had previously experienced (Kim, 2015).

To conclude, the literature has consistently documented differences in the writing styles and assignment types at the graduate level between the soft sciences and hard sciences (Elturki, 2023; Shi & Dong, 2015). Although the graduate level requires various assignment types for students from both these areas, genres in the soft sciences involve more language-related skills. In contrast, some subjects in the hard sciences have little to no writing requirements. Students

from both fields encountered difficulties using academic English in their disciplinary studies due to the requirements and expectations of the assignments in the new academic contexts. They shared common needs in research and academic writing, which must be practised and adhered to with the requirements of their disciplines. Therefore, EAL graduate students' EAP learning needs must be addressed within their academic disciplines in soft sciences and hard sciences for the students' success in their programs, which should be aligned with relevant support resources to assist the students in overcoming the challenges and achieve success in the new institution (Andrews, 2020; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2015; Elturki, 2023; Sharma, 2018; Stanchevici & Siczek, 2019)

Potential Support

Odena and Burgess (2017) identified two existing models of support in higher education: (a) EAP programs focusing on academic writing skills for EAL learners; and (b) Academic Literacies with the provision of writing workshops for students from all disciplines. They argued these two models were not working because the support services were designed to offer general support. Viewing EAP under the complexity of social, generic, and textual competence (discursive competence), Ding and Bruce (2017) argued that EAP was based on specific academic disciplines, which differentiated from TESOL and could not be fixed with generic grammar help offered at a language centre. The review of research reported earlier in this dissertation has confirmed this approach and that the institutional support centres failed to meet the discipline-specific needs of EAL graduate students. Also, graduate students in Sharma (2018) did not find the writing courses helpful and stopped visiting writing centers at the institutions, given that students were stigmatized as ESL learners and labeled as deficient. Doctoral students

in a Canadian university in Anderson's (2015) research reported students' disappointment with the generic and basic level of support from the writing centre, thus requested more discipline-oriented and relevant supports. These L2 graduate students' disappointment with the institutional writing center was because their offerings of general academic English courses for general purposes and tutors' expertise misaligned with the students' expectations of discipline genres and level of content knowledge (Anderson, 2015). In this era of changes, Essid and McTague (2020) proposed proactive changes for writing centers in the center of change to collaborate with different internal and external partners to accommodate students' expectations and needs better.

Wingate (2015) proposed a discipline-specific approach to academic literacy instruction that collaborates with subject instructors and experts and integrates disciplinary discourses, reading, and writing support into the curriculum. Much work has been done with this approach aiming to support EAL graduate students' success (Andrews, 2020; Chowdhury et al., 2024; Creely et al., 2021; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Pang & Montsion, 2022; Rajendram & Shi, 2022; Sharma, 2018; Solmaz, 2021; Wette & Furneaux, 2018). Northcott (2019) recommended an online model for academic writing feedback, with collaboration between subject experts and instructors and EAP specialists, as well as the provision of opportunities for graduate student to practice writing skills within their specific disciplines. The collaborative activities were organized early in the academic year to scaffold students through different stages of working on the graduate assignments in the manner as follows:

The courses were set up to allow EAP teachers to provide feedback on language, structure and academic conventions on specific sections of an academic assignment whilst subject specialists would provide written assignment instructions and sources and

give feedback on the content and argument of the final redrafted essay. (Northcott, 2019, p. 215)

Writing centers are not the sole support resources (Solmaz, 2021). Some bridging EAP courses have also been recommended to adopt a pass-or-fail model to reduce pressure on students. Jax (2014) wanted to provide relevant in-house support for IGSs in Engineering by designing a course: *Written Communication for ECE Graduate Students*, with a detailed guide and pedagogical approaches tailored to the ECE graduate students. Viegen and Russell (2019) evaluated an ESAP bridging program in a Canadian postsecondary context and found a shift away from general EAP and toward practical opportunities to socialize with peers and disciplinary faculty and teaching assistants in the new communities. Research findings show the positive impacts of peer support and socialization with communities and networks of practice, which usually happens within discipline faculty/departments, thus giving students a sense of belonging (Anderson, 2016; Duff, 2010; Rajendram & Shi, 2022; Rodríguez et al., 2019; Surtees, 2018). Tweedie and Kim (2004, 2019) contended that support should be made available and visible in classrooms from peers, instructors, and curriculum. Flowerdew (2019) suggested empowering teachers to support students better. In short, the discipline-specific approach must consider disciplinary relevant resources and collaborative and integrative works to support IGSs effectively.

In summary, the literature review shows a wide range of research on international graduate students' experiences learning and using academic English to socialize into host institutions. Graduate students tend to be more mature international students with diverse prior academic and professional experiences and academic requirements that focus on research in their

specialized areas (Read, 2016; Sharma, 2018). Entering a new academic context of Anglophone institutions, they can encounter linguistic and academic barriers due to the lack of familiarity with the academic discourse and cultures of the host institutions. To better assist these students, support resources should address their specific discipline needs and accommodate their prior experience. The literature review identifies a gap in understanding the IGSs' experiences using EAP to study Education (soft science) and Engineering (hard science) and their specific needs for academic language support for academic success. Therefore, this study was designed to fill in this gap by examining and contrasting the IGSs' experiences in using EAP and the available support resources to assist them in completing graduate work in Education and Engineering at UM.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents a qualitative case study approach as the research methodology that I use to address the research questions introduced in Chapter 1. It also provides a description of the study design with information about the research site, the participants, the research instruments used to investigate the research problem, the data collection procedure, the approaches to data analysis, and ethical considerations. In the later part of this chapter, I discuss issues of research validity as well as this study's limitations in practice and theory.

Research Approach

A research approach (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed) is an umbrella term to refer to researchers' worldviews (epistemologies and ontologies), research designs (case studies, ethnographies, experiments), and research methods (data collection, analysis, interpretation) that researchers use to conduct a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, 2023). Through a consideration of these aspects, researchers express their individual beliefs or perspectives about the world, and the study orientation is thus closely associated with their educational and research background and the research community (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I selected the qualitative research method because it can help me, as the study's researcher, achieve eight principal goals intellectually and practically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The applications of these goals in my qualitative study will be interpreted as follows. First, qualitative research helps in understanding how participants, in this case, the EAL graduate students, make sense of reality and how, through an investigation of their perspectives, this meaning-making affects their attitudes and actions. Second, as my qualitative research studies a small number of participants in their Canadian study context, I am enabled to view the interactions between EAL graduate students with fellows,

instructors, and sources of support in the research setting. Third, the unforeseen characteristics of the studied EAL students and their experiences in EAP learning and support may be revealed as a consequence of the flexibility of qualitative research compared to quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Fourth, since qualitative research focuses on the process of events, EAL students' experiences will be investigated over a period of time, leading to the proposed study's outcomes. As a result, "causal explanations" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 23) are offered for the researched phenomena relating to EAL graduate students' experiences. Sixth, the results and any generated theory provide information on both the EAL graduate student participants and their relation and interaction with others such as instructors and advisors, peers, and support providers in the specific circumstances of a Canadian higher institution. Seventh, the intentions help produce a formative assessment of current EAL graduate students' EAP learning experiences over a specific period, thus offering practical improvements for both the students and the institution. Finally, this qualitative research approach also provides a favorable condition for cooperation between me, student participants, instructors and advisors, and other sources of support in the actual context of UM (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

From a sociocultural approach, the specific context and setting in which the participants live, work, and interact with others play a significant role in researchers' interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I aim to make sense of the EAL graduate students' interactions with the world around them and with other people from different worldviews, cultural and historical, while sharing the academic community and context of the Canadian university. These interactions and collaborations are considered social influences on participants' perspectives, which enable me as a researcher to construct a "theory" or a "pattern of meaning" (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018, p. 8) in the context. My position as an EAL graduate student at the research site gives me an insider's lens, delving into the researched phenomena and interpreting the participants' worldviews as a result of all interactions with the socio-historical-cultural world. Besides, as an EAL graduate student and a foreign professional, my foreign credentials and background embody my outsider's perspectives when I conduct a study about EAP learning experiences at a Canadian institution.

My study comprises the characteristics of an educational qualitative study and includes researching EAL learners' EAP experiences in the natural setting of a Canadian university, where I collected data from different sources.

Case Study Design

To address the research questions and achieve the research goals, I adopted a qualitative case study design, which was developed in both descriptive and comparative forms to reveal the process of how EAL graduate students of Education and Engineering faculties experience their EAP learning while studying in their subject disciplines. According to Merriam (1998), "Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community" (p. 19). Based on Yin's (2018) categorization of case study, my case study involved two units of analysis bounded within the University of Manitoba. The two units of analysis consisted of EAL graduate students from the Faculty of Education and the Price Faculty of Engineering.

A case study is appropriate for my research because it emphasizes: (a) an in-depth study; (b) one or more instances of the phenomena; (c) real-life context; and (d) participants'

perspectives (Gall et al., 2007, p. 447). From this approach, my case study sought to deeply understand how some of the EAL students in these faculties learned EAP for their graduate program with the institutional available sources of support. Therefore, it helps to answer how, where, and what is related to the process and context (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) also stated that “case studies can and do accommodate a variety of disciplinary perspectives” (p. 19). Therefore, case study methodology allowed me, as a graduate student and educator, to gain an in-depth understanding of the researched educational phenomenon regarding EAL graduate students across interdisciplinary conventions, contexts, and policies of Education and Engineering faculties in the setting of a Canadian institution. The insights can be used for policy and practice change in the current research context and offer a reference for future research in the field.

Case studies have been used as an effective research approach for applied linguistics teachers, educators, researchers, and students (Duff, 2008). Case studies have contributed influential knowledge to understanding language learners across a wide range of ages, contexts, statuses, and other language-related aspects (Duff, 2008). Case study research has also helped researchers understand how language learners can be disadvantaged by “the dominance of another language such as English” due to their “social, political and economic conditions” (Duff, 2008, p. 33) as well as the experiences and perspectives they have while making efforts “to integrate into new communities” (p. 35).

Many researchers have used case study designs to study EAP and international graduate students’ experiences in the English-medium postsecondary context. Anderson (2016) conducted a multiple-case study with seven Chinese PhD students to study their L2 language socialization

process into Canadian postsecondary education's academic discourse context. The study found multiple factors involving in their socialization process including their resilience and strategies to achieve success, however, the lack of desirable support led to "some missed opportunities" for the socialization to happen (Anderson, 2016, p. ii). Also, in Canada, Cheng et al.'s (2004) small case study found EAL graduate students' continuing needs for language support throughout their graduate programs because they had difficulties in listening to lectures, speaking, especially giving presentations, and writing while the improvement from applying many learning strategies was slow. Clark and Yu's (2021) case study results showed recurring and complex challenges in writing at different stages of EAL graduate students in a graduate course in the UK that went beyond what IELTS equipped them. The paper revealed that the support services available to assist students in achieving the requirements of graduate courses were underdeveloped (Clark & Yu, 2021). Sadykova (2014) conducted a case study on international graduate students with diverse backgrounds and found these students' needs for interactions or close relationships with U.S. native peers in online courses. These peers were seen as mediators for IGSs to get a better understanding of the host country (Sadykova, 2014). Zhu (2004) interviewed faculty members to understand their views on academic writing teaching and learning for international graduate students in Engineering and Business. The findings helped gauge the academic writing needs of EAL graduate students from these disciplines. Two views were identified: one believed academic writing largely involved transferred skills from general writing and should be taught by language instructors. In contrast, the other believed content courses and discipline-specific instructors should play a role.

In this light, a case study is an appropriate methodology for the topic of this research study for a number of reasons. The graduate students and the instructor participants from each faculty provided their perspectives and experiences within their faculty as well as in a wider campus of UM, which offered a detailed description for each discipline and enabled comparison and contrast in the analysis. At the same time, the narrative of EAL graduate students from each discipline and the comparison between these narratives of the students from the two disciplines were knitted to create a big picture within the context of UM.

Case Study Researcher

Merriam and Merriam (1998) pointed out three crucial qualities for researchers: tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, and good communication. In the first place, as an EAL graduate student and a postsecondary educator doing research, I understood that the ambiguity of the structure in some phases of the research required patience to resolve issues and flexibility to adjust and adapt due to the challenges of the real context and conditions. For example, the concept behind this study was developed a year before the COVID-19 pandemic started, which forced me to alter participant recruitment and interview methods to make the data collection possible. Being an international student researching in a Canadian context, I was alert and sensitive to the studied context, including social norms, social conduct, cultural factors, and data collection. This aspect involved data category, depth, extent, amount of information, the instrument used, and potential bias toward the phenomenon. As a student researcher, I built rapport with participants with my sincerity, desire to understand, tentativeness, and empathetic listening, which involved carefully formulating questions and doing interviews in the form of

conversations between fellow graduate students and a graduate student with the faculty participants.

Research Site and Target Research Population

The campus of the University of Manitoba is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba with a total student population of 3,964 graduate students enrolled in fall 2023 (UM Office of Institution Analysis, 2023). The number of international graduate students was 1,515, which accounted for 38.2% of the total graduate student population for the 2023-2024 academic year (UM Office of Institution Analysis, 2024b). According to the same source, the Faculty of Education attracts more international students for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs, with 70 and 8 students, respectively. The Price Faculty of Engineering attracts approximately equal numbers for both graduate and undergraduate programs, but the faculty has the largest number of international graduate students in the university. These faculties are both located on the same university campus.

At the time of the study, 32 and 281 international graduate students were registered for the faculties of Education and Engineering, respectively (the University of Manitoba, Office of Institution Analysis, 2020). Both faculties offered thesis-based and course-based routes for master's programs in addition to required coursework, followed by dissertation completion for PhD programs. It should be noted that while the master's degree offered in Education was consistently named Master of Education (MEd) across the course-based and thesis-based programs, the names for the course-based and thesis-based master programs in Engineering were called Master of Engineering (MEng) and Master of Science (MSc), respectively.

There are two major methods for choosing samples in the research field: probability and non-probability (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Merriam, 1998). I picked the non-probability option to further the objectives of this case study. Purposive sampling allowed me to gain in-depth insights and rich information about the researched phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). I selected the sample student population based on the following specific criteria: (a) five to six EAL graduate students from each faculty of Education and Engineering who spoke and used English as their foreign or second language or additional language (EAL graduate students) to pursue their degrees at the graduate level; (b) students came from countries of origin where English was not their mother tongue or first language or official language; (c) students came to Canada on a study permit at their first entry. The instructor participants had experience teaching or supervising EAL graduate students from either Education or Engineering. The recruitment letters specified these recruitment criteria to the graduate student population and instructors in both faculties.

Research Procedure and Data Collection

The instruments of this qualitative case study included interviews, my reflective narratives as a researcher, and documentation. The data collection was conducted in three phases:

Phase 1: The study's primary source was interviews with student and instructor participants from both faculties.

Phase 2: Documentation included information collected from the websites of the university, related faculties, departments, libraries, and centres for analysis, information

from emails, newsletters, articles, advertisements, and information the researcher could collect officially as part of this study.

Phase 3: The researcher's reflexive self-narratives were written instantly while I summarized and discussed the study's findings, which provoked my reflections on my experiences as an EAL graduate student fellow and a researcher in the study.

In addition, I took notes and wrote journals called research journals during data collection; these notes reflected my observations on the interviews, data collected, and the data collection process. The detailed procedure of research ethics submission and data collection are described as in the following description of my research methods: interviews, self-narrative, documents, and my research journal.

Interviews

As interviews offer “direct information” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 23) about participants’ nuanced perspectives and increase opportunities to get in-depth information through open-ended questions, I used interviews as the principal tool for data collection in my study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described the research interview as a purposeful conversation with a structure. For my research interviews, I developed an interview protocol including interview questions for students and instructors and interview scripts (Appendix A), which established the role and preparation for the interviews since it contained all necessary information about the interview, including the introduction, the questions, and the closing instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interview questions on the researched topic were presented in this protocol with space for my notes. The interviews were semi-structured, which gave the flexibility to respond to the participants’ concurrent perspectives or embrace the newly emerged phenomena

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, I could ask probing questions constantly to explore more on the researched topic based on what participants provided (Seidman, 2013). For example, I usually asked them: “Could you elaborate with more details about that experience?” (Interview with Rosy, SI1, 02/15, 2021, p. 10), “Can you give me some examples of terminology in your discipline?” (Interview with Mike, SI1, 02/24/2021, p. 3). I also used wh-questions, such as “Why do you think you will get involved in those activities if an instructor or a professor suggests or recommends them?” (Interview with Jia, SI1, 02/14/2021, p. 14) or “When did that occur?” (Interview with Steward, SI2, 03/26/2021, p. 18)

Regarding the role of an insider-researcher as an international student with many shared aspects, the interviews were interactive conversations in which I related my own experience, offering student participants a certain level of comfort (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). For example, as a graduate student in the context, I could share personal experiences and provide more details on the same references of the institutional resources and setting that the participants were sharing, which in turn, allowed me to ask probing questions for further details. This approach turned the interviews into conversations between university mates and between a graduate student with instructors from the same faculty or a neighboring faculty and the same university. For example, in the interview with instructor Joanna (II, 04/08/2022, p. 9), I shared the Education Graduate Student Association’s initiatives to support IGSs in the faculty. To understand the in-depth experiences of international graduate students in the study, I conducted two rounds of interviews with student participants and one round of interviews with instructor participants. Each interview lasted approximately between one and one and a half hours. Under the circumstances of the

global COVID-19 pandemic leading to remote learning across the institution, all interviews were implemented virtually on the Zoom platform.

Reflexive Self-Narratives – Researcher as a Participant

Being an international graduate student from Education and an EAL graduate student myself, I found it crucial to narrate my experiences to include more insights as a research participant as well as a researcher using autoethnographic self-narrative as a method (Chang, 2021). This approach originates from the notion that I am related to others, and analyzing myself in relation to others with diverse backgrounds would offer an extensive understanding of both self and others (Chang, 2021). Also, I chose self-narrative because it allowed me to talk about my own experiences with reflection and self-reflexivity, which I found an eligible and relevant source to contribute to the existing study (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Apart from selecting the researcher's firsthand experiences, the method involves "a systematic and iterative process of qualitative research" (Chang, 2021, p. 54) to make sense of the researcher's experiences in a sociocultural context. I am also a member of the institutional and departmental communities of international students, graduate students, and EAL students, which hold standards and values shared by myself and others (Chang, 2016). Thus, elaborating my position as an insider-outsider researcher offered a more nuanced interpretation and richer understanding of the data.

The method has prevailed in social sciences, humanities, sociology, and medicine. In the field of second language education, researchers, graduate students, and teachers use narratives as a method (Swain et al., 2015) while other researchers told their stories and others' experiences using autoethnographic narration (Gibson et al., 2023; Sen et al., 2022). As an

academic and graduate student in the field, I felt a strong urge to reflect on my experiences through stories pertinent to the research phenomena. I wanted to see how relevant and legitimate my experiences were to those of my graduate peers. In this sense, I, the researcher, became the subject of the study (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). At this point, the question of the researcher's subjectivity and participant objectivity encountered Chang's (2021) claim that self-narration blurs this boundary.

Regarding the forms of narrative writing, Chang (2021) saw it as a free-writing style that allows self-narrators to select a style according to their purpose, while Ellis and Bochner (2000) viewed it as evolving alongside the research process. Regarding what to write, the question should not be "Do I reflect my past accurately?" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 746), but rather, what use or impacts these questions would impose. Integrating my experiences has been on my mind since I began analyzing data and organizing the findings about fellow IGSs' experiences. Throughout the process, all my related experiences surfaced and prompted reflection, which I constantly compared and contrasted with the experiences shared by IGSs in the study. I decided to impart my reflective narratives with reflexivity *through and against* other IGSs' experiences shared in the study to shed light on the phenomena (Chang, 2021; Chang, 2016; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Chang (2016) explained this approach:

If "others" refers to members of other communities (others of difference), understanding the similarity between self and others captures only a portion of understanding others. What is beneficial in this case is studying others thoroughly through comparing and contrasting, which inevitably brings differences to light. (p. 34)

According to the narrative categories Chang (2016) identifies, my approach encompasses a mixed writing style in which I not only describe my experiences but also expose my emotions, thoughts, and perspectives, which serves my intent and purpose of writing for this study. I am taking the *dual identities* of an academic and graduate student – an insider and a personal narrator to tell my stories regarding specific experiences in everyday life along with my fellow IGSs’ stories. Therefore, the interviews with IGSs and instructors became interactive for the shared common ground and the established rapport within the community with the participants from the Faculty of Education and within the same institutional campus with those from the Price Faculty of Engineering (Berger, 2015). Additionally, I kept all trackable co-curricular records of workshops, and seminars I attended, certificates, handouts in physical papers, PDF files, and records on the institutional system and my student email account to support my reflective narratives. In this way, the instant comparison and contrasts between self and others’ experiences surface any similarities or divergences and justify the overall student participants’ EAP learning experiences.

Researcher’s Journal

Additionally, I kept track of the data collection process by writing research journals and notes to record all phenomena that emerged, including all the noticeable aspects, emotions, feelings, ideas, perspectives, and awareness associated with the research participants, sites, documents, and myself as the researcher. These records were saved and password-protected on my personal computer. They were also used as additional data sources to provide nuances and more detailed information about the research phenomena. Duff (2008) opined that “journals are not just a record of research, but also a kind of intervention: a platform for conceptualizing,

noticing, articulating or testing out new hypotheses or ideas” (p. 142). Ortlipp (2008) used journals for her research and stated that “keeping and using reflective journals can make the messiness of the research process visible to the researcher” while “methodological rigor and paradigmatic consistency” (p. 704) can be achieved.

Documents

I documented support resources available to assist graduate EAL students in learning the academic language required for their academic programs and information on how they can access those resources. These resources illuminated the availability of legitimate support resources and helped guide the research interviews in the real context of the institution (Hatch, 2002). Also, using the resources of authentic documents enabled me to think about the research problem creatively and critically (Merriam, 1998) for the next steps of the research procedure. For example, I decided to summarize and tabulate the information on support resources and services for EAL graduate students on UM websites while learning that those resources and services are interlinked and separated institutionally and departmentally.

The main sources of the organizational document data include documents and information of various formats available for public access online via the websites of the Faculty of Education, the Price Faculty of Engineering, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, as well as institutional support centres and offices related to student and language support. The use of Internet-based information involves careful ethical considerations regarding copyright and the presentation of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I have contacted and consulted the Copyright Office at the UM; the staff in that office, in turn, contacted the personnel of faculties, centres,

and the UMGSA for approval for me to collect and use the information, screenshots, and links for the purpose of this dissertation.

The online data collected, summarized, and analyzed included information, advice, tips, instructions, articles, tutorials, navigation links, pdf files, PowerPoint slides, eBooks, tools, videos, online workshops, and e-flyers related to language and academic support for interested students, especially EAL graduate students. These resources are “powerful indicators of the value system” (Hatch, 2002, p. 117) and one of the official channels of communication, guidance, and help for the students at the university. This data aimed to illuminate the availability of resources at the institution and what the students experienced in using those resources to help achieve their learning purposes. This data gave me insight to ascertain the extent to which support availability met students’ needs for EAP learning and contributed to their overall EAP learning experiences. The comparison and contrast of the students’ experiences with those available resources were made in relation to the evaluation of the existing and evolving resources over the span of this research.

Research Ethics

I submitted the ethics protocol with a detailed research summary attached with interview protocols for students and instructors, initial contact letters to the Deans of both faculties, recruitment letters to students, recruitment letters to instructors, and informed consent forms to the institutional Research Ethics Board 2 – REB2. I received approval to conduct the study at the university. At the same time, I also applied for approval from the Survey Review Committee of the university and obtained their permission to implement the research within the

institution. Full ethics submission documentation can be found in the appendices of this dissertation.

The consent forms (see Appendix A, Student and Instructor Interview Consent Forms) contained detailed explanations about the procedure, research purposes, and related ethical issues, and were sent to the participants for review and signature a few days ahead of the first interview. After receiving the signed consent forms, an electronic thank-you e-gift card valued at fifteen dollars for Starbucks refreshments was emailed to each participant. The participants could keep the gift card even if they decided to withdraw from the study. Before the interviews, they were informed that there was no obligation to participate in the research and that they should feel free to withdraw from the research at their discretion. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time during the interview phase. Within one week after the transcripts were sent back to them for member checking, participants could inform me about their withdrawal either by email or phone.

Case studies must be conducted in a way that minimizes harm or risks to the participants, whose safety and identity protection should be the first priority in the research process. Participants were asked not to provide any names of specific students, instructors, advisors, mentors, or courses but instead to speak to the general experiences they had. Therefore, all the participants' names, classes, years of admission, faculty, positions, and any other information related to them were confidential to prevent them from being identified. All the names of participants were pseudonyms given by the participants or suggested by the researcher, with oral approvals granted by the participants. The only people who had access to the data were me, the principal investigator, and my thesis supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt.

Upon completing the interview phase of the study, I transcribed the interviews by myself. Each interview transcript was labeled as Interview One or Two (for student participants) with a record of my name as the interviewer, the pseudonyms of participants, Zoom location, dates, and times of the interviews, and page numbers for the transcripts. After checking the conciseness and ensuring all names were anonymized or identifying information was deleted from the transcripts, I sent the full interview transcripts back to the participants by email for member checking, which included adding or making changes to the transcripts. One week after sending the transcripts, I emailed the participants to collect their transcripts. All the transcripts used for data analysis were approved by the participants. Three student participants and one instructor from education revised or made changes to the transcripts. During the interview procedure, I experienced some technical problems when the recording of the interview with the instructor from Engineering was of low quality with faint and broken audio. I explained this when I sent her the transcript. She was very supportive, checked, and edited the interview transcript, and sent it back to me for data analysis. As soon as the data analysis was complete and findings and discussions were drafted, a summary of findings was sent to the participants, and the Deans of the respective faculties of Education and Engineering in response to the requests indicated in participants' consent forms. The detailed findings of the study were disseminated for my dissertation and will be used for my future scholarly works.

The data, including anonymized electronic interview transcripts, my research journals, and collected documents, were stored in my computer's hard drive in my home office in Winnipeg, with two-layer security passwords and University of Manitoba OneDrive for backup. The only person who used this computer was me, the investigator. This computer was not linked

to or part of any external network. I only needed the electronic transcripts for data analysis while no hard copies were printed out. These electronic transcripts will be kept for five years and permanently erased from my computer and the University of Manitoba OneDrive (anticipated time frame of July 2026).

Participant Recruitment

Upon receipt of ethics approval by the Ethics Board, the data collection procedure was launched as follows. I contacted the Deans of both faculties and received their permission and support to recruit the student and instructor participants through email (Initial contact to Deans, see Appendix B). The Deans' offices sent recruitment letters to their graduate student population (see Appendix B). One week later, the recruitment letters were sent to the instructors in both faculties (see Appendix B).

Student Participants

After distributing the recruitment letters, I received emails from potential participants expressing their interest in participating in the study. I adhered to the recruitment criteria and recruited six eligible student participants from each faculty. Six EAL graduate students from each of the faculties of Education and Engineering were recruited to participate in the study. These twelve students met the eligibility criteria: (a) Speaking and using English as an additional language to pursue their degrees at the graduate level in Education or Engineering in the university; (b) initially entering Canada on a Study Permit or a Student Visa. The interested participants volunteered to participate in two rounds of interviews to share with me their English for Academic Purposes learning experiences with respect to institutional EAP supports and resources of support, and other sources of support they found helpful.

Instructor Participants

I received only one email of interest from a professor from the Faculty of Education who was eligible to participate in the study. After consultation with my advisor, I researched the faculties' websites and contacted professors from both faculties to participate in the study. My invitation was accepted by another professor in Education on my first email to her. I did not have any acceptance from Engineering instructors through recruitment emails, but later I was introduced to a professor from the faculty. The instructor participant shared that she was interested in my research topic and saved the recruitment letter for later. However, it was lost among many emails in her inbox during COVID-19. Overall, two content-course or discipline-specific instructors from the Faculty of Education and one instructor from the Price Faculty of Engineering expressed their interest in students' academic English learning and discipline conventions and voluntarily agreed to participate in the approximately one-hour interviews.

Interview Procedure

Interviews With Student Participants

I conducted two rounds of interviews with student participants. Two sets of guiding questions were formulated prior to each round of interviews with the student participants (see Appendix A for the questions). First, the interested individuals who responded to the recruitment email were contacted to arrange dates and times at the participant's convenience. After obtaining agreement, I sent them an invitation to online meetings using the Zoom platform for the first interviews in February 2021. After three to four weeks, I emailed participants to schedule the times and dates of the second round of interviews. The second round of interviews was set for

approximately five to six weeks after the first. The gap between the two rounds was intended to allow the participants to reflect on their experiences and additional insights they wanted to share.

The First Interview. In the first round of interviews with the student participants, I used the preset of questions listed in “Interview 1: Questions for Student” to guide the interviews (see Appendix A). These guiding questions inquired about the student’s experiences of learning and using EAP associated with their discipline. Also, the students were asked to share their experiences and perspectives on the roles of available supports on campus. In the first part of the interviews, I asked general background questions about the participants, and I probed for information about their English education and general academic and professional backgrounds to gain an overall understanding of the participants. A few days prior to the interviews, I sent a reminder email to participants about the date and time, at which point most of the participants asked for the question set and the consent form to have more time to read ahead of time. Some participants signed the consent form and returned it to me before the interviews. On the day of the first interviews, I explained the purpose of the research and the interviews and sent the participants the consent form for their signatures (if they had not already returned one) through email or the Zoom chat function, according to their preference, to complete at their convenience. I explained to the participants that the interviews were recorded with the audio recorder of my personal computer and an external recorder - A Sony IC ICD-UX543F for backup and that at any time during the interview process, participants could choose not to answer a specific question or end the interview if they wanted. All participants consented to the recording of their interviews.

The Second Interview. All the student participants gave consent to participate in the second round of interviews. In this second round of interviews, the core questions listed in

“Interview 2: Questions for Student” were asked (see Appendix A). I employed these questions to invite the student participants to expand on their experiences and perspectives on the available supports and resources offered by instructors, discipline faculties, and the institution more broadly. I also provided them opportunities to assess the degree to which these support resources were sufficient, helpful, or relevant to their needs in their program's current and future stages and to consider any expectations or recommendations based on their assessments. The participants also had a chance to share their strategies for achieving their academic goals in the program. I started the second interview by recalling summative information from the first interviews and offering opportunities for the participants to reflect on previous interviews, add details, make changes, or clarify any information provided. This step also helped refresh the participants' minds and to continue the conversation on the topic. At the end of the interviews, I also offered them an opportunity to comment or give additional feedback.

Interviews With Instructor Participants

The interviews with the instructor participants were conducted as soon as I could arrange times and dates following recruitment. The instructor participants were asked to share their perspectives on EAL graduate students' experiences learning and using EAP for their graduate programs and to offer insights on the roles of on-campus support resources available for students (Appendix A, Interview Questions for Instructor). Also, the interviews with instructors helped glean their perspectives and pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising EAL graduate students in learning academic language and the subject-discipline conventions in their programs. The same steps of the interview procedure (aligning with how the student interviews were conducted) were followed to ensure ethical conduct and efficient, courteous interviews.

Data Analysis

Interview Data: Reflexive Thematic Analysis

After completing all interviews with students and instructors, the interviews were transcribed in writing and securely stored as dictated in the ethics protocol. For student participants' transcripts, I merged the transcripts of interview one and interview two into one Word document in the order of the interviews and paginated them to prepare the document for data analysis. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) note that although the qualitative approach offers an in-depth understanding of the researched phenomena through the participants' distinctive lived experiences and perspectives within the context, it can be difficult to identify themes and rigorously capture the essence of qualitative open-ended and text data. Thematic analysis is a strategy for qualitative researchers to spot, categorize, and analyze patterns flexibly (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Clarke & Braun, 2017). This process involves the researcher's reflexivity and requires the researcher to go back and forth between phases to "produce robust analysis" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 591). Braun and Clarke (2022) described their thematic analysis approach to qualitative research as follows:

.... [analysis is] about meaning and meaning-making, and viewing these as always context-bound, positioned and situated, and qualitative data analysis is about telling "stories", about interpreting and creating not discovering and finding the truth that is either "out there" and findable, or buried deep within the data. For us, the final analysis is the product of deep and prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness and reflection, something that is active and generative. (p. 591)

I followed the thematic analysis with my researcher's reflection, which Braun and Clarke (2022) delineate in six steps: (1) developing familiarity with the dataset; (2) coding; (3) generating initial themes; (4) developing and reviewing themes; (5) refining, defining, and naming themes; and (6) writing up. Clarke and Braun (2017) argued that thematic analysis offered data analysis with rigor and quality, which are built into the process. These six steps of the reflexive thematic analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2022) guided my data analysis as follows:

1. Familiarising myself with data. After receiving approval from the participants, I combined both transcripts into one document and numbered the pages consecutively for data analysis. When transcribing the interview, I read and reread each transcript a couple of times to become familiar with the content. Also, I noticed some experiences and perceptions and highlighted some quotes with short labels. As I became immersed in the transcripts, which told me the story of each participant and brief ideas about each analysis unit of Education and Engineering, I could readily remember individual participant's details. This phase identified several themes and sub-themes from the data transcripts, with notes on each individual transcript and the entire interview data.
2. Coding. Before this phase, I searched online for qualitative data analysis tools available for free download. Considering the advantages and disadvantages of several suggested qualitative data tools, I downloaded a free version of QDA Miner Lite v3.0.2. I watched the video tutorials provided on the website regarding how to create and manage codes for text transcripts using the QDA Miner Lite app. I then input the interview transcripts into the app for the Education student dataset, the Engineering student dataset,







the Education instructor dataset, and the Engineering instructor dataset to begin the coding phase. I named the codes based on what the participants explicitly expressed (semantic/inductive codes). I delved into the data with deep reading; I kept thinking about connecting with the research questions and how all the generating codes related and later helped to answer my research questions about the EAL graduate students' experiences. This connection helped me to make a more succinct meaning of the data to develop codes that captured and evoked important data features (latent/deductive codes). The process involved analyzing, revisiting, checking back on codes named earlier, and renaming. I identified some imprecise descriptive wording for codes, overlapping or generic codes, or too narrowed codes which needed to be revisited, and renamed to capture precise meaning. For example, some Engineering student participants shared why they did not use the existing supports, I coded as "reasons for not using" which was later renamed into narrower codes such as "irrelevance to needs," "time constraint," "general use," "basic and general" and then, "general use" was recoded to "basic and general use" to capture more related ideas. After finishing the first coding round, I started the second round to refine all the codes. I generated segments for individual codes for each dataset to check on the consistency of naming as well as the generality or narrowness of codes within each dataset and against the other datasets. After checking on and refining the codes of all datasets, I decided it was ready to move to the theming stage but kept it open to revisiting and recoding for more conciseness and rigor of data (see Appendix C1 for screenshots that illustrate coding Education and Engineering student interview datasets).

3. Generating initial themes. The first themes and sub-themes emerged during the coding phase, during which I identified some topics or patterns from groups of the codes. This phase started when the research data was coded, revisited, and recoded. I used both the app and the electronic documents. The app allowed me to group clusters of codes into categories, but Microsoft Word and Excel documents allowed better visualization of initial thematic tables/maps consisting of themes, sub-themes, and categories for each dataset. The codes were moved around and placed into the relevant broader patterns or categories for provisional themes in light of the research questions. This stage involved collating data relevant to each provisional theme so that I could work with the data and review the viability of each theme. I looked for the similarity and the flow in the meaning of codes and put clusters of codes under categories and patterns as sub-themes or candidate themes. This step was deductive as I kept coming back to the literature and theoretical framework to make sense of the data. For example, I generated some candidate themes such as “IGSs’ prior experiences and socio-ethnic background,” “The status quo of being an international student,” “EAP needs,” “Individual strategies,” “Potential supports,” from each interview dataset of Education and Engineering students. These candidate themes were placed under a preliminary umbrella theme: “Being an international student in a Canadian university” under research question 1, “Experiences with existing support resources,” and “Recommendations” under research question 2 (see Appendix C2 for screenshots that illustrate generating initial themes for Education and Engineering student interview datasets).

4. Developing and reviewing themes. This phase involved checking and being engaged with the provisional theme against the coded data and the entire datasets, from which I could connect the related details and threads from sub-themes and themes to form the flow of a story that I thought could help address the research questions. I learned that the theming process was not a straight line. This was a fluid and flexible process as the themes were further developed. Again, codes and smaller patterns continued to be moved, renamed, split, combined, or discarded. I printed out each dataset's first code book for Education student interview data, Engineering student interview data, Education instructor interview data, and Engineering instructor interview data to support the analyzing process, illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively. I reviewed the code books to collapse and refine individual themes on the app by comparing and contrasting interview datasets against one another. Next, I combined the themes of the Education student dataset and Education instructor dataset into one Education unit of analysis and the Engineering student dataset and Engineering instructor dataset into one Engineering unit of analysis to develop a broad picture of both units of analysis under each research question. The reviewing continued until themes were roughly developed with an overall story for each and both of the analysis units of Education and Engineering.

Figure 1

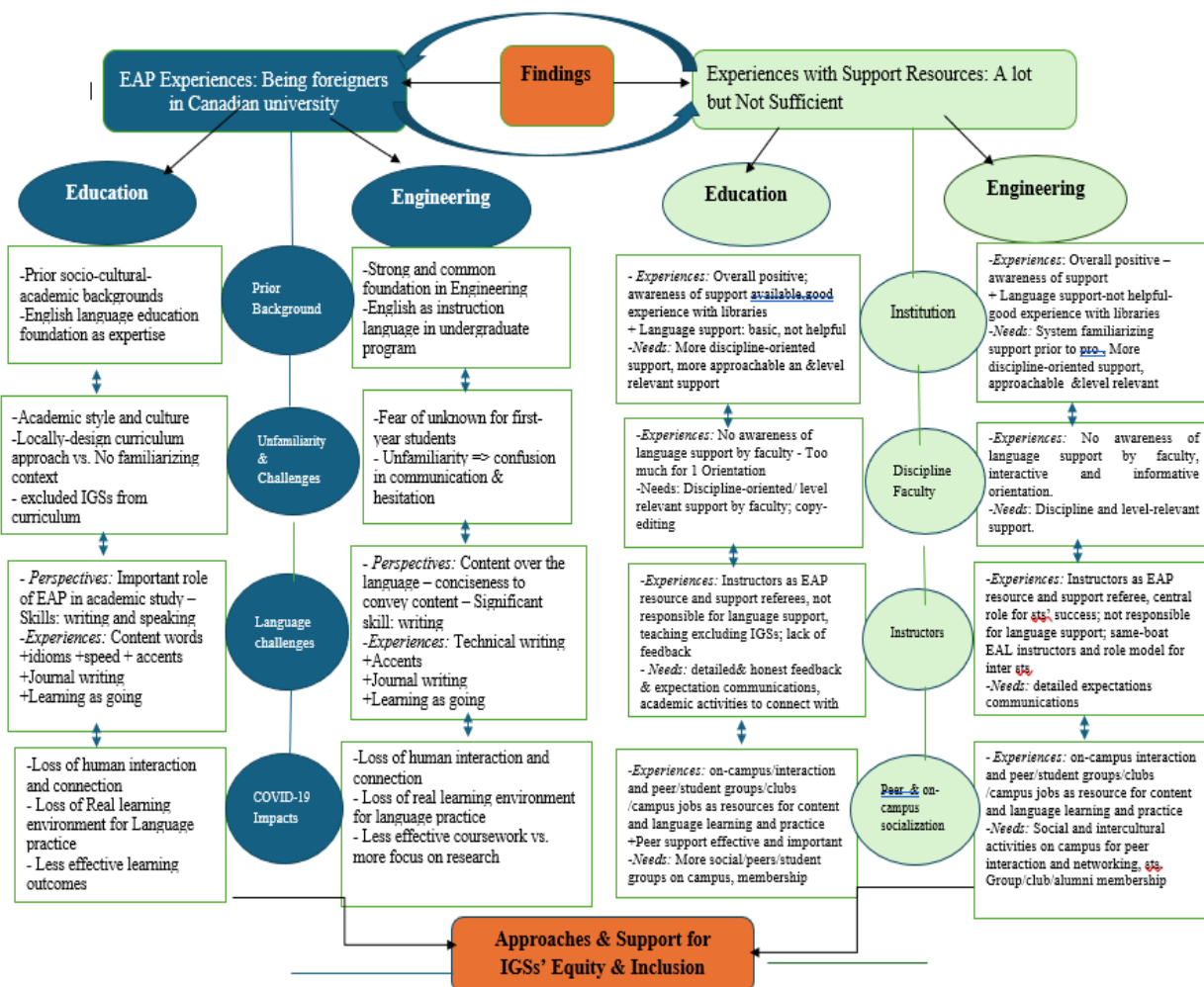
Screenshot of Sample of Codebook for Interview Dataset of Education Student Participants

-  **Challenges in system**
 - academic culture
 - always saying good is not good*
 - Being nice is just the surface*
 - =>Fake politeness*
 - Academic process/procedure
 - academic style/format/structure
 - Interculture/Diversity
 - Language barrier as disadvantage
 - learning style difference
-  **Classroom experience**
 - assignment extension
 - grade/mark
 - in-class language practice
-  **Covid-19 impact**
 - concerns about coming back
 - disrupted learning
 - fail to accomodate students'needs
 - Financial Issues
 - human interaction loss
 - Isolation
 - Language loss
 - language practice loss
 - Less effective learning
 - limited communication
 - limiting resources access
 - loss of body language
 - loss of real learning environment
 - maginalizing international sudents
 - mental health issue
 - Misunderstanding/Miscommunication
 - more focused on academic study
 - More workload
 - motivation loss
 - Networking loss
 - ▲ prolonged study time
- seperated into others or merge into other specific codes*
 - proficiency as power
 - Significance/Role
 - Significance of EAP, roles of skills or integrated skills*
 - Starting time
 - tool for academic career
-  **Experiences as a graduate student**
 - becoming independent researcher
 - learning while socializing
 - more competent to the labor market
 - purpose of graduate study
 - Role of socialization
 - Grad international students see overseas study not just for accumulating discipline knowledge but also social/life/cultural experiences in living in another country where English is spoken*
-  **Experiences Educational program**
 - An EAP course
 - audit course
 - being stuck
 - Comparing programs
 - Comparing programs for International students: one designed just for international students vs. mixed international students with domestics students.*
 - dis-interconnected courses in a program
 - excuding international student
 - complaints/ opinions on the design of the Master/Ph.D. programs whether they are designed in the way to include diverse students/international students*
 - getting lost
 - Learning and Teaching styles
 - overall positive experience
 - TA as direct support
 - Welcome mentoring
-  **Experiences with Discipline faculty resources**
 - (Ir)Relevance of Support
 - ▲ administrative support

drew in the light of literature and theoretical framework. As a result, I developed a map of findings from this approach, as shown in Figure 3, to provide a big picture to guide my analysis.

Figure 3

Map of Preliminary Findings



6. Writing up. Reaching this stage, I found the above-described stages of the analyzing process interwoven and overlapped so it was sometimes hard to tell them separately. The analyzing work was continued until the final version of the thesis report was submitted to the committee. This writing-up phase involved weaving together the analytic narrative and interview data segments and contextualizing analysis in relation to existing literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study.

I annotated each type of data when presenting findings as follows: *II* for Interview data with instructor participants; and *SI1* and *SI2* for quotes taken from the first and second interview with the student participants, respectively, followed by the dates that the data was collected and the page numbers of the transcripts. This information is placed in brackets after each quote, for example, “a quote” (SI1,02/28/2021, p. 09). Within quotes, I used square brackets ([...]) to provide some clarifications of context and meaning where necessary.

Analysis of Reflexive Self-narratives

I wrote the reflexive self-narratives of my experience as an EAL graduate student with the same references in the researched context and resources as the student participants. The autoethnographic writing involved self-analysis, self-interpretation, and self-evaluation of my experiences and notes, assignments, personal journals, documents, lectures, slides, and emails as data where “certain themes are proved, or in data interpretation where certain meanings are searched” (Chang, 2016, p.140). I found my self-narrative analysis and interpretation process complex and non-linear, using 10 strategies suggested by Chang (2016). My analysis strategies included: (a) searching for recurring topics, themes, and patterns; (b) looking for cultural themes;

(c) identifying exceptional occurrences; (d) analyzing inclusion and omission; (e) connecting the present with the past; (f) analyzing relationships between self and others; (g) compared yourself with other people's cases; (h) contextualized broadly; (i) comparing with social science constructs and ideas; and (j) framing with the theories (Chang, 2016, p.131).

For my digital and physical artifacts and records, I labeled them into categories and patterns such as “classroom notes”, “course assignments”, “EAP course notes/lectures”, “Education academic workshops”, “co-curricular records of workshop attendance”, “peer interaction and networking”, “student association membership,” “volunteer to support IGSs” “academic community socialization”, etc., which were used for analysis in the next step of narrative writing. When the interview data analysis was roughly completed, I started to write my self-narratives with guiding questions: “As a participant, what are my answers to the interview questions for students?”, “What are the connections between my 'self' with my self-narratives and 'others' with their narratives, and my 'self' and the overall 'picture and story' of the academic community and broad context?” “How do I relate with the participant(s)' experiences and the research context?”, “What are the most compelling and relevant categories of experiences that I should select to illustrate and add a nuanced layer to the thick description and discussions being delivered?” I chose the combination of analytic-interpretive and confession-emotive styles to write my self-narratives. This writing involved the constructive interpretation and analytical process in identifying, making sense of, and presenting the most substantial features that are relevant and fit in the themes and the discussion within the case study. For instance, I analyzed my co-curricular records and related slides from attending academic workshops offered by the institution, reflected on each and overall workshop experiences, and wrote my self-narrative to

incorporate with the existing discussion on the theme of students' experiences with institutional support. My lived experiences as an EAL graduate student were compared and contrasted with those of EAL graduate student participants from Education and Engineering through the integration of my reflexive self-narratives into the discussions of their experiences from the interview data. My reflexive self-narratives were annotated as *SN* in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Document Data: Content Analysis

The interview data analysis was roughly completed, and I drafted findings based on interview data and reflective self-narratives. It was time to do document data analysis. According to Miller and Alvarado (2005), content analysis of documents consists of strategies to identify the consistent and meaningful content that helps “elucidate key patterns, themes and categories” (p. 351). Although I am familiar with the institutional sources and support websites, I started by researching institutional and faculty resources offered on the websites under “Student Experiences” on the websites of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) with guiding questions: “What EAP supports were offered for EAL graduate students/IGSs?”, “What language support and resources does the institution/faculty offer to assist EAL graduate students’ learning?” “What are specific language resources such as academic writing, speaking, and presentation skills for EAL graduate students at different stages of their program?” I visited, looked for, and read all the information several times and noticed very few relevant resources answered my question. Then, I used the key terms “international students”, “international graduate students”, “EAP”, “EAL”, “academic writing”, “language support”, “socialization”, “academic community”, “peer support” to search for the related content to answer my questions. After several rounds of researching and

analyzing the content of the information on the related online documents and information on the institutional websites, student association websites, e-magazines, newsletters, flyers, and emails, I identified and summarized some categories and patterns of support resources provided by the institutions and the faculties of Education and Engineering. These categories and patterns were summarized in tables, visualized in maps, and illustrated with screenshots and hyperlinks directing to the sources in Chapter 6 of this thesis. This document analysis showcases the availability and categories/types of support resources, as well as information about the targeted student population they serve at the institution and faculties of Education and Engineering.

While the data from interviews was used as the major source of the thesis, the final thesis report writing engaged with and wove the analysis of data from participant interviews with my lived experiences as an EAL graduate student shared in reflexive self-narratives combined with the analysis of the documents regarding the available resources of support. Incorporating different data sources allowed deeper insights and interpretations beyond the descriptive findings of data sources. The study report was qualitative, with detailed descriptions of cases illustrated with quotes or dialogues, narratives, pieces of evidence, such as screenshots and hyperlinks of the websites or documents, and comparisons across the case analysis to provide a complete picture of the study.

Strategies for Validating Findings

Creswell and Creswell (2018, 2023) recommended multiple validity procedures and qualitative reliability. I used the majority of the validity strategies recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018, 2023). First, I used member checking by carefully transcribing interviews and returning the transcripts to the participants for their review and approval. I also provided a

detailed description and discussion of the setting of UM and respective faculties, as well as a bias clarification with my positionality as a researcher and my self-narratives as a participant with a shared context with the other participants. I underwent a prolonged time in the field, which gave me extensive experiences in the program and multiple interactions with different resources at UM. During this time, I built friendships and relationships with the participants in Education and developed rapport and mutual trust with participants in Engineering. Next, my advisor instantly checked with critical questions followed by suggestions throughout the research phases and reviewed my dissertation. An expert in the field then copyedited the dissertation before it was submitted for the advisory committee's review.

For Creswell and Creswell (2023), reliability lies in reliable approaches. For my study, I documented all steps, procedures, protocols, working sheets, journals, and code definitions in detail to cross-check and see the consistency of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Merriam (1988) argued that “the reliability of documents and personal accounts can be assessed through various techniques of analysis and triangulation” (p. 171). Having mentioned that, I also reported my personal experiences in self-narratives and analyzed authentic data sources from the institution while following the steps of reflective thematic analysis.

Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

The qualitative case study design offered a deep and rich understanding of the two units of analysis in my study. It is cost-effective and flexible in data collection. It also minimizes the chance of missing data, allows me to address more complex questions, and adds a human element. In addition, my self-narratives gave me opportunities to have deep reflections on my experiences in the PhD journey as an EAL graduate student when learning from the experiences

of the graduate fellows and the perspectives of instructors in this study. The process of document analysis enabled me to have a closer look and better insight into the availability of language support resources for EAL graduate students at UM and contrast those resources with students' experiences to understand the nature of the gap in language support.

At the same time, a qualitative case study has potential limitations. The case study within the boundary of one institution is limited for replication and generalization. Another downside is that they are labor and time-intensive. Since I was the primary instrument of the research process, the study was researcher-dependent (Merriam & Merriam, 1998). My dual positionality and working alone can introduce some bias in the interpretations. I shared the same community with participants from the Education faculty, which resulted in some assumptions that might have prevented me from probing further details during the interviews. On the other hand, coming from a community with a different discipline might also have prevented me from asking more relevant questions for further insights into the context of Engineering. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented me from gathering field data from observations to verify some findings further and collecting course guidelines from courses in Education and Engineering to get further insights.

Chapter 4: EAL Graduate Students' Profiles, Self-Perceived EAP Competency, and Perceptions on the Role of EAP

Sociocultural theory (SCT) and second language socialization acknowledge L2 students' prior academic and sociocultural background knowledge, skills, and status as influential factors in their transitions and experiences in the host institution. In this chapter, I provide the participants' prior backgrounds, participant profiles, and relevant information about their existing programs. Following that, I provide participants' perceptions of the role of learning and using EAP to support their graduate work in a Canadian postsecondary context. Also, the information on their prior experiences and perceptions of EAP's role is discussed in the research findings later in this dissertation.

Participants' Academic Profiles

Six student participants were recruited from each of the Faculty of Education and the Price Faculty of Engineering for a total of 12 student participants. Three instructors were recruited for the study, two instructors from the Faculty of Education and one instructor from the Price Faculty of Engineering. Table 1 shows the general demographic information for the study's participants.

Table 1*The Demographic Information of Participants in the Study*

Participant	Faculty	Master	Doctoral	Majors	Country of Origin (Continent)
Student Participants	Education	3	3	5 from CTL, Education 1 from EAFP, Education	5 from South, East, and Southeast Asia 1 from Central America
	Engineering	4	2	2 Biosystem Engineering 2 Electrical & Computer Engineering 1 Biomedical Engineering, 1 Civil Engineering	5 from South Asia 1 from South America
Instructor Participants	Education			1 from CTL, Education 1 from EAFP, Education	Canada
	Engineering			1 from Engineering Professional Practice and Engineering Education, Engineering	Canada

Note. CTL = Department of Teaching and Learning; EAFP = Department of Educational Administration, Foundation and Psychology

As indicated in Table 1, ten out of twelve student participants were originally from South Asia. Each student group had one participant from America, while all instructor participants were from Canada. The student participants were registered in either the master's or PhD levels of study in their respective faculty. I provide details on the participants' profiles in the following section.

Participant Profiles

In this section, I summarize the participants' information from each faculty in a table, followed by each participant's detailed profile. The profiles include information on participants' pseudonyms that were selected by them or assigned by me with their approvals, their countries of origin, their English education background, their academic education and professional

background, their graduate program, and their stage in the program at the time of the interviews. In Table 2 and Table 3, I used the region where their countries of origin are located to protect their privacy, followed by the information about English use in their countries of origin, whether it is used as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). The prior English education background provides information on the time they started learning English and their consecutive English education. This section also identifies if English was used as a medium of instruction (EMI) to learn academic subjects or if student participants had English education as a major at their schools or universities. I combined the information regarding English education and academic education into one column for the students from Education because five out of six had English as an academic major in their prior undergraduate or graduate programs. I combined the information regarding academic education and professional background for students from Engineering because they had Engineering as their academic major. The last column provides information on their existing stage in the program at the time of the interviews.

*Education***Table 2***Education Student and Instructor Participants' Profiles*

Participants	Country of Origin	English Spoken as	Previous English & Academic Education	Professional Background	Program	Progress in program
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS						
Alice	East Asia	EFL	Middle school Bachelor's degree in English literature	English teacher	Master, CTL (Thesis-based to Course-based)	Final term
Anna	Southeast Asia	EFL	Middle school Bachelor's degree in TESOL	English teacher (10 years)	Master, EAFP (Thesis-based)	2 nd term of 1 st year
Mike	Southwest Asia	EFL	Middle school Bachelor & master's degrees in TESOL	English teacher French teacher	PhD, CTL	3 rd year Proposal writing
Ofelia	Central America	EFL	14 years prior to Canada EAP courses prior to master's degree in Canada Bachelor's and master's degrees in L1 (a world language)	World language teacher	PhD, CTL	Candidacy Exam
Peter	East Asia	EFL	Elementary school Bachelor's degree in English literature Master's degree in linguistics	English teacher	Master, CTL (Course-based)	Final year
Rosy	Southwest Asia	EFL	Elementary school Bachelor's degree in English literature Master's degree in TESOL	English teacher for eight years	PhD, CTL	Candidacy exam
INSTRUCTOR PARTICIPANTS						
Joanna	Canada	L1		Professor	EAFP	
Peggy	Canada	L1		Professor	CTL	

As we can see from Table 2, there were six EAL graduate students from the Faculty of Education participating in two rounds of interviews: Alice, Anna, Mike, Ofelia, Peter, and Rosy. Alice, Anna, and Peter were taking their master's programs, and Mike, Ofelia, and Rosy were pursuing PhD programs. Only one student participant came from the Department of Educational

Administration, Foundations, and Psychology (EAFP), while the others belonged to the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning (CTL). Five of these six participants were from Asian countries, including China, Iran, and Vietnam, while one was from a country in Central America. Details about the demographics of each participant are provided below.

Alice. Alice came from a small ethnic group in a country in South Asia. According to Murray and Christison (2019), people may prefer to be identified according to their ethnic origin rather than their nation because of war or the power of colonialism. This case applied to Alice. Therefore, she preferred to identify by her ethnicity instead of her country of origin. She expressed her wish that she would have the same-ethnic community at the university as I do here. English was taught and learned as a foreign language (EFL) in her country of origin. At the time of the interviews, she was studying her final courses. She started learning English as a subject in grade seven and learning EAP at the university, where she studied English literature for her bachelor's degree. After graduating, she became a substitute teacher at a school before being employed full-time in a bank in her home country. She was passionate about teaching and pursued a master's degree in second language education at UM. She changed from a thesis-based to a course-based program at the proposal stage because she was unaware that following the earlier path was more time-consuming. She also expressed that she participated in the interview so incoming EAL graduate students would benefit from what she shared.

Anna. Anna taught English at a school in her home country in Southeast Asia for ten years before she came to Canada for her thesis-based master's program in Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology (EAFP). She shared that she competed in a national competition for English as evidence of her high level of English language competency. She

arrived in Canada when COVID-19 was at its height, and her classes were delivered fully online. Due to her choice of major in EAFP, which was different from her bachelor's program, she found the content of the locally based curriculum and terminology challenging. She shared with me that she did not have any difficulty with writing her assignments academically but more with what content to write. Generally, she had a positive experience with the university resources, especially the mentor offered by a center in the institution. This one-on-one support program involved experienced graduate students volunteering to help newly arrived graduate students. Anna found it a helpful resource for her academic transition and her family's transition to a new social life in the host country. However, she also pointed out that moving to a new system could be so overwhelming that one could not even name the problems facing them.

Mike. Mike was a PhD student in his third year of the program majoring in second language education in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (CTL). He had eight years of experience teaching English and French as a foreign language internationally, with a bachelor's and a master's degree in English Language Teaching. He loved languages and could speak four languages. He was teaching EAP courses for EAL students during the interviews. Being a newcomer in a system took away his self-confidence. However, he later won it back by taking pride in his English competence, internationally educated and international English teaching background, and expertise in the field. As an EAL user and learner, he discussed engaging with and learning English from any academic resources he could interact with, such as reading lists assigned by instructors, materials he worked on to prepare for his EAP classes as a part-time instructor, and lectures by instructors, professors, and emails from staff. At the time of the interviews, he was writing his PhD proposal.

Ofelia. Ofelia was a second-year PhD student in CTL, and she had just finished her coursework. She was preparing for her candidacy exam during the first interview. At the time of the second interview, she was working on her candidacy exam while preparing to move to a new place. Ofelia earned her bachelor's degree in her L1 (a world language), and then worked as a world language teacher in her home country in Central America before moving to Canada with little English proficiency. With a desire to get a master's degree, she came to Canada with \$40.00 in her pocket and the support of a professor who lent her \$10,000. She started learning English officially when she took some EAP courses at a university in the province where she planned to complete her master's degree in Education. She worked full-time to pay for an intensive 1-year EAP program called CanTest, which cost her \$3,500 every three months. She was required to achieve a score of eight out of ten for the EAP test as a threshold for admission to the master's program. When asked if the courses were helpful, she answered "yes and no" because they taught basic grammar and focused on writing. She noted: "You need more than that ... so I felt when I was out with people I was speaking like a book because nobody speaks like that. In the program, they never cared about helping you with the social aspect of the language, never, and they were very focusing on grammar, were focusing on writing, writing, writing" (SI1, 02/17/2024, p. 2). Her biggest concern was how to help professors understand her English writing, which still contains her [L1] communication style. She thought there was a connection between culture, psychology, and learning and using a language. She would request more attention or support for students' mental health. She expressed her enthusiasm for participating in the research partly because she would have an opportunity to ask me about my experiences as a senior-year PhD student so that she could better prepare for her next steps in the program. She

asked me about the candidacy exam process and my hands-on experience in preparation for the doctoral candidacy exam.

Peter. Peter was completing two courses in his master's program, majoring in second language education at the time of the interviews, and he was looking forward to graduating by the end of the year. His English learning background began with learning English as a foreign language as a subject in elementary school. He transitioned to learning English for academic purposes when he studied English literature for his bachelor's degree and his first master's degree in linguistics in his home country in South Asia. He taught English at a high school for one year before coming to Canada for his master's program. He was passionate about teaching and pursuing an academic career and planned future studies for a doctoral degree.

Rosy. Rosy was a PhD student in second language education from a Western Asian country. She was working on her candidacy exam at the time of the interviews. Rosy felt lucky when she was sent to a private school to study English three to four days a week at nine years of age. She studied English literature for her bachelor's and TESOL for her master's degree. She had nine years of experience teaching English to kids, teenagers (for approximately one year), and adults, consecutively. In the previous two years, she taught IELTS and TOEFL students. She found no difference in transitioning from the prior working and learning environment into the existing institution because she was always required to use English at schools in her prior context. During conversations with her over the study, she focused her attention on the identity of EAL speakers and believed EAP should be simple for EAL students to use.

Joana. Joanna was a faculty member who had long-term experience in teaching, advising, and administrative roles. Her area of interest was language and literacy; therefore, she

was willing to position herself as an EAP resource to assist her international graduate students should they need that. Also, she shared that she, a professor, was aware of more time and more responsibility when working with an IGS due to their unfamiliarity with the Canadian postsecondary context and culture, and the language barriers due to discrepancies between English use in their educational context and how English is used in Canada. She tried to incorporate field trips and practicums or other opportunities for students to acquire practical Canadian experiences as part of her pedagogical approaches in both her roles as a professor and an administrator.

Peggy. Peggy was a long-time faculty member who had experience teaching English as a foreign language abroad and has been teaching and advising many international graduate students in the faculty. With her experience working with many international students, she had a substantial understanding of the academic, linguistic, and sociocultural difficulties that her IGSs face in transitioning to the new context of a Canadian postsecondary institution. Also, she observed the challenges in classrooms where IGSs worked with domestic peers; the IGSs often found their peers dominated class discussions and presentations as they could take advantage of their familiarity with local knowledge of their home context. She told me she treated her international students as family members to make them feel welcome.

At the time of the interviews, the student participants were all EAL graduate students at different stages of their master's or PhD programs. All participants in Education were from countries where English is spoken as an additional language. Five of them had pursued English teaching careers, and one had taught a world language before landing in Canada and continuing the job during her time in Canada. EAL participants brought their academic backgrounds, ethnic

cultures, and professional and academic cultures to Canada, where English is spoken as the first language and used as instruction in teaching and learning.

Engineering

Table 3

Engineering Student and Instructor Participants' Profiles

Participants	Country Of Origin	English spoken as	Prior English Education	Academic & Professional Background	Program	Progress in program
Jane	South Asia	EFL	Elementary school EMI University	Bachelor's degree in home country Master's degree Electrical and Computer Engineering (UM)	PhD Electrical and Computer Engineering	Proposal writing
Jia	South Asia	EFL	Elementary school EMI at university	Bachelor's degree in home country Project manager of a startup and a designer for a technology company	Master (MSc) Electrical and Computer Engineering	Coursework. 2 nd year
Mathew	South Asia	ESL	Elementary school EMI at University	Bachelor's degree in home country Straight to the graduate program at UM	Master (MSc) Biomedical Engineering	Writing up thesis
Noel	South Asia	ESL (L3)	Elementary school EMI at University	Bachelor's degree in home country Straight to the graduate program at UM	Master (MEng) Biosystem Engineering	1 st year
Steward	South America	EFL	Secondary school An EAP prior to master's program	Bachelor's degree in science in home country Master's degree in Civil Engineering in the US Worked in the US and worked on international civil engineering projects	PhD Civil Engineering	2 nd year
Suraj	South Asia	EFL (L3)	Elementary EMI at University	Bachelor Straight to the graduate program at UM	Master (MEng) Biosystems Engineering	2 nd year
Instructor Participant						
Rachel	Canada	L1		Associate Professor	Engineering Education	

As shown in Table 3, six student participants and one instructor participant from Engineering participated in the interviews. Among six graduate students, Jia, Mathew, Noel, and Suraj were master's students, and Jane and Steward were PhD students. They were at different phases of their graduate programs during the interviews. In similarity to the student participants from Education, five out of six student participants in Engineering came originally from Asia, specifically from different South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, where people spoke other languages rather than English as an L1 or mother tongue. Noel and Suraj spoke English as a third language in addition to their mother tongue and the official language of their countries. Also, these five graduate students had bachelor's degrees from institutions where English was used as a medium for instruction. The other PhD student, Steward, was from a country in South America where English was spoken and learned as a foreign language, but he had his master's degree from a U.S. university. The following section provides more details about the participant profiles.

Jane. Jane came from South Asia and started learning English as a foreign language at approximately age five or six. She remembered taking three tests every term or year, in a similar manner to other subjects at school. All other subjects were learned in her mother tongue, so she was not able to have any English conversations until she was 17 years of age. Her EAP was acquired in her undergraduate program, where English was used as a medium of instruction. She came to Canada for her master's program, received her master's degree in 2020, and was pursuing her PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering at UM. At the time of the interview, she was writing her proposal and trying to publish articles while working as a teaching assistant. She shared that she learned technical terms from books, and her supervisor advised her on how

to write. She confessed that she sometimes used broken English to communicate with the students, but it did not affect understanding because they had the same disciplinary foundation.

Jia. Jia came from a country in South Asia. Her home country had two schooling programs: one in her mother tongue and the other in English. She began learning English in an English-speaking school where the children had to write extensively in English. Since secondary school, every subject Jia studied was taught in English except the national language subject. Therefore, she had much exposure to EAP before college, where English was also the language of instruction. She did not have many opportunities to use English when she started working as a manager for a start-up company because it was a technical job. She came to Canada for her MSc degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering. She found her prior English education and undergraduate degree with English as a medium of instruction a good preparation for her existing program. She considered her language level as intermediate and saw English as a learning process.

Mathew. Mathew came from a country in Southeast Asia. He began learning general English in elementary school and EAP in his bachelor's program in Engineering at the university, where English was used as the medium of instruction in his home country. He believed the English used in his bachelor program aligned with that in his current master's program. Therefore, he had no difficulties except translating his ideas and knowledge into academic writing. At the time of the interview, he had finished his biomedical engineering thesis. At the start of the interview, Mathew was concerned that he did not use many support resources or participate in many on-campus activities, which he perceived as not allowing him to contribute

adequately to my research. However, I explained to him that his experience uniquely contributed to the study.

Noel. Noel came from a country in South Asia. In grade three, he started learning English in his home country of South Asia. English was used as a medium of instruction at university, where he received his bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering. After graduation, he applied for a master's program at UM and was admitted. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he was studying remotely from his home country. At the time of the first interview, he was waiting for his study permit. In the second interview, he was prepared to fly to Canada for the program. COVID-19 interrupted his graduate student's experience and made it harder regarding the visa process and the unexpected remote learning for the whole program that he experienced as he pursued the course-based route (MEng). He shared that he was overwhelmed and feared entering a new institution that differed from his prior background. He called it "fear of [the] unknown". At the end of the second interview, he revealed that he was very proud that he received a very high IELTS score. This sense of accomplishment may explain why he did not want to use the support available when he received comments on his technical writing issues from one of his professors.

Steward. Steward came from a country in Central America. He began learning English as a foreign language in middle school. He received his bachelor's degree in his country and applied for a scholarship to pursue further study in the United States. For this purpose, he spent two to three months preparing for TOEFL and received scholarships for a master's program in Civil Engineering in the United States. Upon arriving in the United States, he was required to take two courses in English for academic purposes, one of which was focused on academic

writing, to achieve the language proficiency requirement for the master's program. Steward credited his English proficiency to his academic and social experiences in the United States. After working in the United States for three years, he returned to his home country. He worked in Civil Engineering, which involved using English for meetings and communications with partners in the United States and Canada. Steward originally intended to do a master's program but then switched to a PhD program in 2020. He believed learning English was an ongoing process and wanted to perfect his English skills to pursue a career in academia in Canada. At the time of the interview, he was in his second year and still had a few courses needed to complete his coursework.

Suraj. Suraj came from a country in South Asia. He began studying English as a subject at school, but English was used as the language of instruction in his undergraduate program in Agricultural Engineering in his home country. Upon admission to his graduate program, he came to Canada to obtain his master's degree in agriculture at PFE. Initially, he intended to follow the thesis-based route, but his supervisor advised him to switch to a course-based route. He had just had one semester of in-person classes before the pandemic started. Therefore, he was disappointed when the campus closed for in-person teaching and learning. He thought that if he had had more in-person experience on campus, he would have had more opportunities to socialize with domestic students for cultural and language learning. He took several English classes at UM to improve his academic writing skills. He was working different part-time jobs on and off campus, and he wanted to be well-prepared for the job market in Canada.

Rachel. Instructor participant Rachel had expertise in language education, so she was interested in participating in the study when the recruitment letter was sent out to instructors in

Engineering. She had experience teaching communication courses for and supervising international graduate students in Engineering. She found her teaching and working with students a mutual process. She found fruitful outcomes of learning to teach through professional development and self-teaching and teaching to learn from the interactions and experience with her students, which in turn informed her pedagogy. With a background in English literature and interdisciplinary education, she positioned herself as an EAP resource to her EAL graduate students.

The profiles show that student participants from both faculties began learning English in elementary school and continued studying EAP at a postsecondary level. For those from Education, five of them took English studies, TESOL/TEFL, linguistics, or English literature as their majors for their undergraduate programs and master's programs, which was their existing major as well. Alice, Anna, Mike, Peter, and Rosy pursued the English teaching profession, while Ofelia taught a world language as her profession. Ofelia took 14 years studying English, followed by EAP courses for her master's program at a Canadian institution before her current PhD program. Five of six Engineering graduate students had an undergraduate education in English instruction. In contrast, Steward had a master's degree in the United States after finishing the EAP courses required by the institution. Jia and Steward mentioned working in the engineering industry before their current programs, while Noel and Suraj went straight to the master's program after finishing their undergraduate programs.

The following section presents these EAL graduate students' perceptions of the role of EAP in their existing graduate programs and careers.

Students' Perceptions of the Role of EAP

According to Ochs and Schieffelin (2017), “language socialization presupposes that community members desire and expect children and other novices to display appropriate forms of sociality and competence. Language becomes instrumental in effectuating these ends through symbolic and performative capacities that mediate human experience” (p. 1). In this sense, language serves as a means of communication for newcomers, such as EAL graduate students, to interact with target community members with social capacities and other performances required by the community. This approach is consistent with EAL graduate student participants’ perceptions of the role of EAP in their graduate programs and future careers. The findings show the similarity between the students from Education and Engineering in their perspective of viewing EAP as a tool for gaining knowledge, communication, and career in the context of graduate programs in postsecondary education.

For all graduate student participants in Education, EAP proficiency was regarded as important, especially for those with a background as language teachers. Mike shared:

I'd say it has a prominent role in both my study discipline and also my academic life and also my profession. I can give you an example. As a PhD candidate, I am supposed to publish and write research [...] article(s). Even in doing research, like during the process of research, I heavily depend on my academic English knowledge.... (SI1: 02/24/ 2021, p. 2)

According to Rosy, writing and speaking were seen as the most important skills for a graduate student in her field, and she felt they would help her advance in her academic career regarding the need for publishing and presenting at conferences. According to Rosy’s

perspective, how someone spoke and used a language reflected their identity and power. This perspective held true especially when people used jargon or complicated words because Rosy believed people should use EAP in academia only:

Knowing academic English in any discipline gives a level of prestige at the first level. Let's think of when you attend a conference and in the breaks within a course or the lectures where people hang out and chat. I always notice that they try to use very complicated words like jargon; I don't know if you've noticed or not. It's a kind of power-sharing the kind of power. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 4)

The type of power revealed by using EAP language in the field that Rosy mentioned aligns with the power and access to the discourse community and discipline listed by Flowerdew (2019). With the status of newcomer, IGSs come to study in unfamiliar contexts of governance, under the influence of English as the dominant language, and the pressure of communication within the disciplinary expertise and discourse community where people “have a common language, set of conventions and activities” (Flowerdew, 2019, p. 55). Also, according to Flowerdew (2019), the phrase “knowledge is power” (p. 60) means professors have power over the students, especially when the student's needs are not reflected in the curriculum or when their prior knowledge and backgrounds are not accounted for in pedagogical approaches, as in the case of international graduate students.

Ofelia found that her original culture shaped her perspectives, which were reflected in her writing and the way in which she communicated her ideas. For this reason, she believed English facilitated intercultural communication. Ofelia expected that professors would approach EAL

students' work and assignments from an intercultural standpoint, knowing and accepting that students needed to transfer their ideas from their mother tongue to English:

Proficiency for me now is that I can submit the paper, and the professors understand 90% of my ideas. Also, they have to tell me your [L1] is there; I mean, because I transfer my ideas, and they say, "OK, this person is transferring her idea from [L1] to English."

Proficiency will be when they don't say that my [L1] is there anymore, but for now, it is there in some way. (SI1: 02/17/2021, p. 4)

In L2 socialization, the novice improves their language (learning and using the language that contains her heritage language) and then excels at it to become an advanced user. In Ofelia's case, it is when the professors did not see any of her heritage language in her work, and she felt this may mean that she was able to write like the English native speakers do. The L2 socialization perspective, however, challenges the eradication of the newcomers' heritage language (Duff, 2011, 2017).

The Engineering participants also acknowledged the significant role of EAP proficiency and viewed EAP as a tool for content knowledge, job searches, and communication. The Engineering student participants at different stages of their studies confirmed the importance of EAP. Jane believed she just needed basic knowledge of English to learn everything in her discipline; however, for more advanced knowledge, she needed both English and a solid background in the subject. Steward's perspective on the role of English as a tool for Engineering students to communicate content knowledge was strong. He emphasized:

With English, everything is different. Everything takes on a very large proportion because if you don't get in it or something, or you just don't quite understand something,

you're just going to automatically fall into questioning modes. You don't know what it is, and a lot of frustration comes in, so it's a mess. (SI1: 02/16/2021, p. 11)

Duff (2017) asserted that students engaged in socialization practices by accessing various higher education resources, including graduate seminars, conferences, or texts such as legal documents, and medical reports. These resources helped learners acquire different registers of English in their relevant disciplinary contexts and prepared them to socialize in their future workplaces. Workplace cultures in contexts where people come from different linguistic, cultural, and ideological backgrounds can emphasize using relevant language to socialize with coworkers, supervisors, and/or clients and partners (Duff, 2017). The Engineering participants saw the benefits of English proficiency in terms of employment. Therefore, Jia, Steward, and Suraj wanted to excel in developing their English competence for future jobs. Steward shared that his English competency enabled him to get good jobs after his master's degree in the United States. He had always sought to become a professor in the future, so perfecting the language had accounted for a significant part of his journey alongside his research. Suraj was practically interested in getting jobs and settling down in the host country; he believed that improving his accents and interacting with Canadians would enable "a good flow of English" and boost his confidence as well as help him acquire a new way of thinking and doing in the work culture. LST supported this perception that the newcomers to a community use the language as a tool to socialize and to learn a language and the values of the community, becoming more proficient and evolving into culturally competent speakers (Duff, 2019; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011).

Chapter 5: EAP as an Ongoing Journey for EAL Graduate Students

This chapter outlines the EAL graduate student participants' experiences from the start to the current stages of their programs. This chronological presentation showcases not only their experiences along their journey but also their needs, which vary at different stages of their graduate studies. I continue to incorporate the findings for both cases of students from Education and Engineering, followed by discussing and comparing the reported experiences of the two cases.

Transitioning into Graduate Programs in a New Context

Ochs and Schieffelin (2011) noted the entanglement of linguistic, social, and cultural aspects in the process of language socialization leading to language acquisition of novices in a community, thus inviting researchers to consider how novices capture and accomplish the “context of situation” and “situation in context” (p. 1). This unfamiliarity with the new educational context with multiple, complex, and tangled academic, cultural, and psychological aspects challenged the EAL graduate students from both faculties in addition to the language barriers that seemed to be present from the start.

Fear of Unfamiliarity With the New University Context

Alice from Education discussed her early days in the program when she noticed the differences in the new system, which seemed unfamiliar to her. She found herself in the position where “you don't know where you are heading to” (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 7), which made her feel so insecure that she had to look for a safe position. Alice shared that she felt more comfortable in classes with more international students because their experiences aligned. Ma (2021) explained that it might require some time for EAL graduate speakers to adjust to the English-speaking

context. Therefore, they needed a third space between the target culture and their own culture as a comfortable space. Alice found that the transition into a new academic system involved a lot of learning:

In a different system and we have to navigate the system like you starting from the scratch. Now, as we mentioned, you have to know the process, in that process, you have to know how to approach how to ask appropriately, the good language for word choice you have to be careful about the word places. And this kind of thing is, I guess those kinds of things [...] are something that native speakers [...] take for granted. (SI1, 02/18/2021, p.9)

Noel from Engineering called it “fear of [the] unknown” (SI2: 03/18/2021, p.17). This fear was compounded by cultural differences and a fear of not having the relevant skills or knowledge to meet the new education system's expectations. This fear could lead to hesitation and a sense of being overwhelmed. Noel noted:

Definitely, the cultural thing, second thing we have to communicate in English, plus it's a whole new system, different system, so you are just afraid like if I ask for help, I wonder what they're going to do next. What if they ask me for something that I don't have it. Fear of unknown. Fear of unknown or something that brings something hesitation. That's tough, fear of unknown, and you can lock up. (SI1: 03/18/2021, p. 17)

Suraj emphasized that the first year was the most challenging to for IGSs, who were just too new and overwhelmed with the whole new system. He noted only those who experienced the situation understood what it was like. He recalled that he was not comfortable taking an additional course suggested by his professor because “it was the first semester and the language

barrier is another thing, when we were moving from a non-native English-speaking country to the English-speaking country” (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 26).

What the participants shared evoked my reflection which resonates with what the participants shared. New academic system and culture could cause psychological issues and hinder an EAL speaker to perform their full competence.

As an international graduate student, I must *learn* many things and learn them under new references when they come to a new system and a new culture. I had silent and smiling moments on the very first classes in my first term. I was afraid of speaking because I feared that I could make pronunciation mistakes in front of L1 speakers or say something that was not appropriate or not accepted in Canadian academic culture. It seemed like I really wanted to keep quiet until I got to know more about what people around were talking about and if I understood it correctly at all or if it was like the system we had in my back home. (NS)

The findings show the participants’ awareness of the differences and challenges entering a new academic disciplinary culture, as has been observed by other scholars such as Duff and Yamamoto (2024) and Wette and Furneaux (2018). This new learning environment led to some psychological issues described as “fear,” “hesitation,” and a sense of being “overwhelmed,” and pushed participants to take a step back to find a more comfortable position or take it slowly as they entered the new context. This finding resonates with what IGSs reported in Brown’s study (2008). These graduate students found themselves disadvantaged and marginalized as EAL speakers and experienced stress and anxiety communicating and learning in EAL, especially at the beginning stage of their study (Brown, 2008).

Language Barriers in the Context

Duff (2019) emphasized the impacts of social and contextual dimensions in the process of second language socialization that leads to improvement in second language acquisition. She noted that the teaching and learning objective is to assist learners in making meaning of contextual cues in different forms and uses of language.

Diverse Accents. Entering a new context, some Education participants started to become aware of the diversity of the student population in Canadian classrooms, where students and instructors spoke with different accents or dialects that were unfamiliar based on the newcomers' prior backgrounds. For example, Peter studied English through different Western language resources and sat for the IELTS tests. He got used to the listening resources recorded with a different dialect in standardized conditions for English learning and testing purposes. Therefore, he had difficulties comprehending the instructors' lectures and his classmates' talking in real-life classes.

So the first time, my courses at UM, it was very challenging. I asked what the professor was saying because he was speaking so quickly and other students, too. I had no idea. You know, in most cases when we started for IELTS, I mean in international English language testing system. In most cases, we may hear English very clearly. I mean most of the people they do not speak English with extreme accents. But here you know our class is very diverse. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 2)

Sawir et al. (2012) found that language-related difficulties in communication caused insecurity for L2 students in the English-speaking context. From the viewpoint of an L2 speaker, Mike lost his self-confidence to contribute to the conversation in his first days when comparing

his accent with those classmates speaking with native accents. In her words, Ofelia felt more intimidated speaking with a “strong accent” when she interacted with professors than with peers who may also have had accents. However, Mike and Ofelia took heritage culture and socio-ethnic background as motivation to make more efforts and stay persistent to thrive. The circumstance pushed Ofelia to strive for better education. She said: “You are motivated by your circumstances by the need to pass the course, by the need of finishing program, by the need of having a good mark” (SI1: 02/17/2021, p. 8).

Similarly, most of the participants from Engineering were aware of their accents as L2 speakers and noticed the diverse accents in the context. Suraj found his accent a problem for conversations: “But the only problem I was having with the speaking problem, the way I was speaking, and maybe the accent, accent is still not that much good, but I am not using the correct sentence” (SI1, 02/12/2021, p. 12). Suraj also noticed some Canadians “having a different accent of speaking” (SI1: 02/12/2021, p. 5). Both Steward and Suraj found it a relief when seeing many professors in Engineering whose first languages/mother tongues were not English. Noel felt less pressure when his professor, who also spoke English as an additional language, shared how much time he spent working on his language. This fact helped alleviate some stress for them as EAL graduate students because of the idea of being “in the same boat” with instructors. Learning this, Suraj concluded: “But nobody in Canada, like even the professors, they don't judge from the accent of speaking if you are speaking English. That's fine, it's really [a] good piece” (SI1: 02/12/2021, p. 5). On the one hand, they saw their accents contributing to this picture of accent diversity; on the other hand, they still wanted to improve their accents. Jia was determined: “But

in part of conversation, I'm still working on that because I haven't yet developed the accent” (S11: 02/27/2021, p. 4).

Canada recorded 1.3 million new immigrants from 2016-2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022). According to the same source, these immigrants come from many different countries, the majority of which were Asian countries, including the Middle East, followed by African countries. Also, 69.4% of these immigrants claimed languages other than English or French as their mother tongues (Statistics Canada, 2022). However, some research has shown that ethnic accents are associated with racial stereotypes and racial issues, leading to those who speak with accents, especially Asian accents, facing linguistic racism, shaming, and bullying (Dovchin, 2020; Kubota et al., 2023; Sawir et al., 2012). The international students in Dovchin’s (2020) study in Australia experienced both types of linguistic racism, including “ethnic accent bullying” and “linguistic stereotyping,” noting that “linguistic racism” (p. 815) caused anxiety and fear of speaking English, even other mental health issues (if the problems pertained to their English language competencies). These issues made the EAL students feel inferior and low-self-esteem, leading to their “psychological damages” and withdrawal from social interactions (Dovchin, 2020, p. 815).

The student participants found not only “diverse accents” but even Canadian English dialects became hard to understand because of their prior British English education background. The student participants from Education were aware of the accent difference, which entailed a lack of confidence and insecurity associated with the expectation of having a “native-like” accent for the rest of the audience in the classroom context. Despite noticing the diverse accents, the students from Engineering held a more positive attitude – a feeling of being in “the same boat”

with their instructors/professors who spoke with a variety of accents other than a Canadian native accent. The finding suggests that a diverse professoriate is essential for affirming diverse students' linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the EAL graduate students' perceived need to improve their accents revealed their covert feeling of othering and the hinged expectations of the dominant native-speakerism and the standardization of the English language in Canadian postsecondary education (Holliday, 2006; Sterzuk, 2014).

Academic Norms. Language socialization perspectives might explain the participants' experiences as follows: "Learners and other users of language must also ascertain the deeper sociocultural meanings these forms hold or reference. The wider goal, then, is to have people understand how language works as a semiotic system within particular context of use" (Duff, 2019, p. 12). In the postsecondary context, those people should be the instructors and educators who explain how language works within their particular classroom or institutional settings for their EAL students. However, this explicit coaching did not seem to be the case for the participants from both faculties.

One of Alice's instructors was not mindful of the IGSs' needs when they kept using locally spoken phrases, idioms, and topics and spoke at a speed that was perceived as too fast for students to follow the lectures or instructions. This unmindful language approach obstructed Alice's understanding of the lecture flow but also discouraged the students, thus excluding IGSs in the class:

I guess she was struck because she said she never realized language difficulty is one of the factors, difficulty factors for the class. ... So, I guess she will be more mindful of

international students in the future. Because I noticed she used a lot of phrases, a lot of locally used phrases and idioms. (SI1: 02/18/202, pp. 3 - 4)

Under a second language socialization approach, Duff (2010) indicated academic discourse “has strong social, cultural, institutional, and historical foundations and functions” (p. 175). Therefore, it requires these foundations for novices like EAL graduate students to decipher the meaning of the language. The participants were learning and comparing the differences through their interactions with members of the academic community, which shows part of their academic discourse socialization. Rosy noted the difference in the way that the students may address professors by their first name to show friendliness. However, she did not feel that way. Instead, she found it disingenuous, noting: “Everything is like friendlier, you're closer, but I think it's just the surface. It's like kind of culture... It's just happening and it's like the play in it” (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 6). Anna and Ofelia expressed disliking what they called the “sugar coating” way people communicate in Canadian academic culture, as this approach did not help them learn from mistakes that were not usually straightforwardly pointed out. Anna found the situation a waste of everyone’s time when “[i]t is their culture, just always good words, good comment. They don’t point out the problem so you can improve” (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 6). Although teacher feedback is considered crucial to enhancing student performance and learning, the types of feedback and the effects of feedback are influenced by the cultural and linguistic factors perceived by teachers and students (Bale & Rossiter, 2023). Wang and Li’s (2011) research found PhD international students from across disciplines responded to supervisors’ critical feedback differently depending on their prior academic and cultural backgrounds. Hyland and Hyland (2001) noted that too much criticism could sabotage students’ confidence and motivation

while sugar-coating feedback or “sugaring the pill” (p. 185) to alleviate criticism misleads the messages and leads to misunderstanding among ESL students.

Peter shared that he always asked instructors for their expectations on how to write and speak for course tasks and assignments because they might incorrectly assume IGSs share the same prior educational context with other domestic students in the class:

Because some teachers are Canadian so they are used to writing or may have had discussions in this way and they feel quite normal, but for me as an international student I may each time I will ask the instructor to provide more information about the assignments. ... I think they do not tell the students very clearly about their expectations. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 6)

According to Murray and Christison (2019), those who moved to sojourn in another country experienced conflicts in defining their identities between their heritage culture and the culture of the host country. Mike, Ofelia, and Rosy discussed their prior sociocultural backgrounds as part of their identities. Ofelia expected the professors to accept that the heritage language influenced her writing in her papers and not frame it in a deficit orientation. In Rosy’s perspective, “English language, so it's the same language, but the underneath cultural references, which creates the expectations and leads into the identity changes” (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 3). She found that the way people judged her English threatened her identity, even a supposed compliment on her native-like English from different professors made her uneasy: “They told me you speak English perfectly. You seem like a native English speaker. I don't like that” (SI1:02/15/2021, p. 6). This situation parallels the experience of an Asian graduate student in Kubota et al. (2023) who got the compliment “Your English is so good” from a boss, which

actually implied “non-native speakerness” (p. 776). For Rosy, the comment meant an expectation of identity change. She was determined to use the language in her own way as an EFL speaker and keep her own identity which was previously shaped by her culture and background:

I get used to it [i.e., speaking like a local], but the fact that they expect me to act like that I don't like it. No, because I'm 29 years old and I've worked a lot on who I am right now. And I have my own values and my own culture and all the backgrounds and *expecting me to speak exactly the same way that Canadians do. It's too much expectation for me.* (SII: 02/15/2021, p. 3, emphasis added)

Rosy resisted assimilation into the new community because she preferred to preserve her heritage and cultural background associated with her identity as “cultural belonging” (Nunan & Choi, 2010). Duff (2008) explained that there is often an expectation of using the language as the way people in the community use it when people are speaking the language, living and learning in an environment where the English-speaking culture is dominant. Language socialization suggests taking L2 speakers’ prior heritage culture, values, experience, and identities into the language socialization process to restore their confidence and empower their voices (Duff, 2008; Morita, 2004). Kubota et al. (2023) and Sah (2019) problematized the racialized issues in the prejudices and expectations of linguistic abilities of international graduate students, as in Rosy’s experiences. In this light, LST advocates for Rosy and Ofelia’s voices and resistance to native speakers’ expectations and standards in order for them to keep their EFL speaker’s sociocultural identities with their own linguistic repertoires.

From instructor Peggy's observation, academic culture and language differences combined can lead to miscommunication and confusion about expectations for international students:

What means of academics, what parts of academic culture are word references or probably the most familiar thing to me is very often international students try to do too much. ... I need to know what the most important pieces are, but they can't read the signals about what the most important pieces of information are. (II: 03/10/2021, p. 7)

These "word references" may lie and be coded in the academic culture of an educational system that international students did not experience before completing graduate studies abroad. As a result, the academic culture could cause confusion for newcomers from a different academic cultural background. The student participants from Engineering were unfamiliar with some language conventions. For example, Suraj used "respected teacher/professor" to address his professor in emails. At the same time, Jia found on-campus communication very formal and decided to be mindful of word choice to make very polite questions to professors. For example, she shared, "And they [class discussions and class meetings] are very formal, I have to keep in mind that I am not using such informal words; I have to because there are professors there as well. So, I have to maintain a certain decorum and do the certain words" (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 4). Experts have explained that where seasoned speakers of a language can easily choose between polite or impolite speech because they are aware of the societal norms of the communities, the newcomers to the community might not be able to do so (Burdelski, 2011).

Regarding academic rules and expectations, Steward remarked on the difference in the structure of writing in English in his area, where the main points were listed in the introduction

and emphasized in the conclusion. In his heritage language, by contrast, a nice “surprise” comes at the end in conclusion. Suraj and Noel realized that Canadian academics emphasized academic integrity, especially avoiding plagiarism in writing, which was “non-existent” in their prior background, but they found it appropriate and strove to follow the rules. Suraj explained that in his previous academic context, he used to copy the information from the Internet into his assignments; therefore, “when I came here, it was totally different ... it's a little difficult for me at that time” (SI1: 02/12/2021, p. 9). Noel and Jia also found there were formalities involved in entering the new context. Jia noticed:

In academic aspect ... that here everything is more organized than back home, and then things are very formal here. And things being formal is very good because it teaches you standards and the styles in which we have to respect others and their opinions and their like comments and feedback. (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 8)

Jabeen et al. (2019) explained that the unfamiliarity with the “new academic culture and relevant language norms” (p. 103) in a targeted academic context led to challenges in communication, barring EAL students from academic socialization and involvement. As a result, the EAL students may find it hard to comprehend the academic perspectives/ideas, academic topics, and lectures that are situated in and attached to the academic conventions in the new context, thus explaining the participants’ experiences from both faculties. Weerakkody and Jerez (2018) and Shu et al. (2020) called for more linguistically and culturally sensitive and inclusive teaching and curriculum to address international students in classrooms.

From a language socialization perspective, academic discourse consists of a complex collection of language formats, practices, and knowledge that individuals in a specific contextual academic and disciplinary community must follow (Duff, 2010; Friedman, 2023).

In-Program: EAP in the Two Disciplines

Local Curriculum Focus Excluding IGSs in Education

As mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework guiding this dissertation, SCT and LST emphasize the social aspects of the second language learning process, which involves learning the language connected to social contexts and meanings (Duff, 2019; Duff & May, 2017). In this sense, the students should be introduced to the social contexts associated with the semiotic resources to understand the meanings. However, this was not the case in the classrooms of the graduate student participants in Education. The Education participants reported that their instructors introduced the subject contents based on local social and historical contexts that differed from their prior backgrounds. The students felt excluded and kept silent in classrooms because they could not contribute to the discussions, realizing they needed to read a lot more about the local history and context to understand the content introduced in the classrooms.

When asked what difficulties they faced, Anna and Peter responded that it was the content of the courses. while Alice and Mike mentioned their assignments and class discussions as most challenging, respectively. Peter found the content challenging because he did not have a relevant background:

I remember that last term, I was taking a course about cross-cultural education. I have to admit that the knowledge in that course is very challenging. We talked about some Indigenous people, some Aboriginal people in Canada, and some refugee students in

Canada, and the professor will also teach us some topics about white privilege. And I did not have any knowledge about Inuit people, First Nation peoples. (SI1: 02/14/2021, p. 4)

According to Shin (2019), it requires a lot of time and reading for newcomers to learn and understand Canadian socio-political-historical matters such as the Indigenous lands, knowledge, and peoples. Anna's experiences resonated with this practice. She explained that it would be very hard for a student from another country to get an immediate understanding of topics such as Indigenous issues and reconciliation in Canada and critically contribute to classroom discussions. She insisted that it required much time and reading about Canadian history and current policy. Therefore, Anna intentionally enrolled in a course with a name that reflected broader educational points of view, yet the instructors would curb the topic to the contemporary topics in Canada: "So, I thought that we would learn different points of view about education. But it's not. It's about social criticism, but everything is related to Indigenous people They narrowed it down to Indigenous students" (SI1: 02/18, 2021, p. 4). Peter accepted that "I do not know that it means I lack this kind of educational background or an academic background" and still questioned why he needed to study the local topics (SI1: 02/18, 2021, p. 4). He critiqued this approach to teaching and learning solely about Canadians as irrelevant to the diverse needs of the international student population. Anna concluded the courses in the program were not relevant for those students who planned to return to work in their country in another context. She stated: "This course is to prepare Canadian teachers only not like if you finish this master course, you can come back to your country, and you do well there...It's like I'm learning about Canadian history. ... it's all about Canadian people" (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 4).

Anna and Peter's experiences evoke the intersection and relationship between newcomer communities (including international students as newcomers) and Indigenous lands, knowledge, and peoples in the broad social-political context of Canada. There has been a lack of information and understanding between newcomer communities and Indigenous communities, leading to distorted images, stereotypes, and prejudice toward one another, especially toward Indigenous communities (Chung, 2012; Marom, 2016). In the diverse Canadian postsecondary student population, international students and Indigenous students are usually seen as marginalized groups who face similar challenges of racism in Canadian postsecondary education (Shankar et al., 2017; Suraweera, 2022). While there have been efforts to build the relationship (Chung, 2012), there has been a call for pedagogical approaches to teaching Indigenous content to international students, especially for pre-service teachers in TESOL programs in Canada (Marom, 2016; Shin, 2020). The Indigenous student group and the immigrant/international student group in Shin's (2020) TESOL graduate classroom both positioned themselves at the bottom in the racialized linguistic hierarchy, while the second group found the first group fortunate to be born and grow up in Canada and fluent in English which they had to struggle for. Through the interaction and reflection project on Truth and Reconciliation, the two groups gained a better understanding of one another and the struggles each group had (Shin, 2020).

The Education students revealed they felt excluded by the locally based content and classroom discussions on local topics and practices, barring these IGSs from participating in the classroom conversations and increasing challenges for them. Also, the instructors were unaware of the language barriers facing IGSs, as well as their different educational backgrounds, learning interests, and styles, resulting in a lack of context familiarization and discussion facilitation. As a

result, IGSs were isolated and left out of critical dialogues or had to be silent as outsiders. This fact overtly reveals the marginalized position of EAL/international students.

Alice found being excluded by the local topic-based classroom discussions and activities, and local context-practiced assignments for which she did not have. She shared: “Classroom discussions are really experienced debate. When they talk about mental (health) curriculum, ELA- English language arts. They talk about the curriculum in the same book, which I am not familiar with” (SI1: 02/28/2021, p. 7). Similarly, Mike was frustrated when he realized that his peers were not interested in his presentation about his foreign teaching experience while, in classrooms, “they were talking about something that is common in Canada, something that is unknown for me as an international student” (SI1: 02/24/2021, p. 4). Also, Peggy confirmed this:

Unfortunately, the K12 group has power in most graduate classes. So they're able to steer discussions towards things that are hooked followers. So they want to have conversations about what would this do in my classroom, my kids do this, my administrators do this ... they're just sharing experiences for the most part. (II: 3/10/2021, p. 4)

The instructor also observed that domestic students were those dominating the conversations with the knowledge of their “home” talks and “acting like a gang”. This might leave IGSs feeling of no legitimacy to participate in the conversations they had never heard about before they arrived in the country. Peggy felt it was the professors’ job to make sure international students had a chance to contribute to the discussion, especially in Zoom classes, because “this is not right to the EAL students that they feel illegitimate, they feel like they don't have the power to change their own circumstances” (II: 3/10/2021, p. 5). Instructor Peggy suggested providing contexts or explanations of the background knowledge for discussion topics

so that international students could relate to their prior background. Also, Peter suggested that the pedagogical approaches by the faculty or instructors could provide international students with existing background knowledge of current topics and schools of thought along with the expectations tailored for newcomer's comprehension.

This finding resonates with that reported by IGSs in Ovie and Barrantes (2020) and Tavares (2020) who also felt excluded from the "local-student-based" (p. 13) community and disadvantaged by the use of less internalization of curriculum and campus at a university in Canada. Chichon (2019) explained topics and interlocutors as major factors motivating foreign graduate students to communicate. In addition, language socialization values L2 students' interactions and participation with peers and instructors in the disciplinary communities to learn disciplinary knowledge and practices for meaningful performance (Duff, 2010; Kobayashi et al., 2017). In this sense, introducing local contemporary topics without carefully explaining the relevant context prevented EAL graduate students in education from socializing to learn. This experience of EAL graduate students offers an alternative explanation for why international students may be quieter than their domestic counterparts beyond the influences of language barriers, their culture, and their shyness (Kim, 2015; Sharma, 2018; Soltani & Tran, 2023). The experiences in the program marginalized IGSs in Education because their prior background knowledge was not valued and became irrelevant to the program content.

Graduate Work in Education and Engineering

A wide range of literature in the field confirmed the fact that writing at the graduate level and writing for publication play an essential role in graduate students' academic study but also pose challenges for EAL graduate students across disciplines (Huang, 2010; Hyland, 2016;

Odena & Burgess, 2017). The findings from the two disciplines considered in this study show that writing for graduate work was both crucial and challenging for the participants. As five out of six participants in Education specialized in teaching English as an additional language and the other also focused on second language education [a world language], the participants stressed the large proportion of writing in their disciplines. In addition, the discipline-specific terms conveyed concepts and knowledge associated with the sociocultural and historical contexts of the new educational system that was unfamiliar to IGSs, which made it challenging for them to absorb the content knowledge. The Engineering participants acknowledged the importance and challenges of conciseness and precision in writing to convey the features of their Engineering content.

Terminology is Disciplinary Content. According to Hyland and Shaw (2016), disciplines differ in their distinctive deployment of unique lexicon, grammar, and rhetoric situations to create the specified content knowledge. From an EAP approach, Basturkmen (2021) believed that content instructors “not only teach disciplinary content – that is, the concepts and ways of thinking and processing information in their subjects – but they also model and highlight how this disciplinary content is expressed linguistically” (p. 2). In soft science, Education participants worked with discipline-specific terms conveying concepts and knowledge associated with the socio-historical background of the existing educational system that alienated them from their prior experience and challenged them. In hard science, Engineering participants affirmed that the common disciplinary foundations in their field, such as mathematics, constituted the same knowledge across academic contexts and could be used for their existing program.

As mentioned in her profile, Anna reported feeling confident in her solid background in the English language. However, then she confessed: “In the beginning, it was good. I [now] feel that my academic English maybe is not good, especially in my discipline” (SI1, 02/18/2021, p. 6). Her ELP as a teacher of English did not help much when Anna found a lot of new terms studying her major in EAFP:

Because my first major was teaching English, I do not have a strong foundation in philosophy. In my major I have to write a lot about philosophy, so I have to read a lot and learn a lot. The vocabulary is very new to me, like marginalization, colonization, [and] decolonization. (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 2)

Anna’s experience was also consistent with those graduate students in Kim’s study (2015) with expertise in TESOL and English teaching, who found their linguistic challenges rooted in the complexity of socio-political issues of the local context. In Morita’s (2009) research, TESL students faced many changes and insecurity caused by the academic community in graduate seminars despite their pride and confidence in their expertise. Other participants in education shared the same experience as Anna. They found content words or specific terms that were associated with areas of disciplinary knowledge and theories difficult. They believed that terminology in their discipline reflected held knowledge that required long explanations or concepts. In Mike’s area of interest, he indicated he had to work with many terms: “There are lots of terms like I’m working on plurilingualism, or plurilingualism is kind of jargon word, on plurilingualism, multilingualism, they’re kind of jargon words they’re similar but totally different” (SI1, 02/24/2021, p. 3). Participants in Education found content words or specific terms associated with areas of disciplinary knowledge and theories difficult. Peter affirmed that

proficiency in English for academic purposes is associated with the disciplines or the areas of the program students were pursuing. He asserted: “People need to know a lot of background knowledge, a lot of words, a lot of new words, etc. ‘pedagogy’ I did not know about this before I before I entered this program” (SI1, 02/15/2021, p. 5).

The Engineering student participants found technical terms embedded in their disciplinary education in their prior undergraduate and/or master’s programs that could be used for their existing programs. Regarding content knowledge, the participants confirmed they had no difficulty because of the common foundations such as mathematics and algorithms in their discipline that they had to bring to the existing program. Mathew said: “There are same foundations, same concepts, and everything is really designed along enough” (SI1: 02/14/2021, p. 9). Also, in terms of language, Mathew reflected: “We don't use that as advanced stuff or fancy language or fancy words; it's just the technical terms and how you try to present that. That's the main thing” (SI2: 03/16/2021, p. 19). When entering the program, Jia just needed to revise those terms while confirming that her vocabulary increased as she read academic books in the field in her program. Her experience was that “I didn’t find anything new about the terminology because, like back in my country, ... when I was a student and was working, we were using the same terminologies” (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 6). This finding challenges a traditional assumption that students in hard science might face more challenges working with more technical terms than those in soft science, who might have less terminology to deal with (Wallwork, 2016).

Writing and Communication for Future Profession in Education. Although the Education student participants acknowledged the importance of reading and listening in

acquiring knowledge and content words, they found EAP in the discipline focuses heavily on writing and a smaller portion on speaking and presentation. Mike emphasized the role of academic writing for graduate students. On the other hand, he found that oral communication requirements often emerged in discussions or seminar presentations. Peter recognized that reading, listening, and speaking effectively were crucial to his academic success because, without these skills, one might find it hard to understand articles, lectures, course requirements, assignments, and expectations. He believed writing was the most significant skill for his academic study because he was required to write a lot for his course assignments including a lot of papers of literature review, discussion papers, and some shorter writing assignments. He shared his challenge in figuring out the expectations for each assignment because the instructors tended to overlook IGSs' needs with the perceived assumption that they shared domestic students' familiarity with the system. As Peter noted:

In course-based route, we also need to write 60-page papers. It is very huge even [if] it is not big like thesis for 100 pages, but it is a very big paper to graduate. So, the challenge I want to share is the expectation. Sometimes, I and my friends also expressed the same thing we are unclear of the expectations of each assignment and final papers. So, the instructor[s] at this university, they do not tell the students their expectations about the assignments, discussions, or final papers very clearly. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 10)

Doctoral students in Ma's (2021) study reported the same challenges due to the gap in learning experiences between their prior and local contexts. Ma (2021) also found that those with master's degrees completed in the same context were better equipped than those who did

master's degrees somewhere else. In some prior learning experiences, many international students were more reliant on teachers' explicit guidance in studies (Shaheen, 2016).

In the first interview, Alice assessed that writing is the most important skill for the graduate program because she was required to write a lot of paper summaries in her major, and writing for publication helped her to reach out to the audience to share her ideas and research findings: "You have to write it logically so that it makes it resonate with your audience. So, this all requires experience and academic English and it's important that part of academic English writing" (SI1, 02/18/2021, p. 5). She confessed that her final paper writing always contained mistakes regardless of how much time she spent on proofreading and editing. Also, she found challenges with the format of a thesis proposal and the steps for a thesis-based master's student to be aware of and prepared for that stage. In the second interview, her perspective changed because she was moving closer to graduation and career path which would require more speaking and communication.

Both Joanna and Peggy confirmed that writing was important in graduate-level courses in education, although they assigned other types of assignments with smaller proportions of final grades than writing. Joanna listed courses in education, including seminar-based and theoretical courses or practicums, to gain practical experience and avoid excessive writing. There is a focus on critical reading and analysis of literature, with assignments such as annotated bibliographies and papers. She added, "that there certainly is an expectation that they participate in class discussions, they probably have to do presentations, but I think more evaluation falls on their written works" (II: 04/08/2021, p. 6). Peggy reported that she usually assigned either writing papers with open topics so that students could relate their personal stories or assignments that

could spark students' creativity. The findings are congruent with what was discussed in the literature that writing accounted for a big part of graduate work and may cause some barriers for EAL graduate students, especially for those who were from more language-dependent disciplines such as social sciences or humanities (Sharma, 2018; Young et al., 2013).

Conciseness and Precision in Technical Writing in Engineering. The Engineering participants found the requirements related to the disciplinary content and precision in scientific and technical writing the main focus of their graduate studies. In Engineering, technical writing must be structured, concise, and condensed in content with the terminology of each discipline. Technical writing and/or scientific writing were indispensable skills to all graduate students, thus posing challenges for the student participants entering a new program.

In language socialization theory, academic discourse consists of a complex collection of language formats, practices, and knowledge that individuals in a specific contextual academic and disciplinary community must follow (Duff, 2010; Friedman, 2023). Jane, a PhD student, believed that to learn theories in her discipline, she needed an advanced level of English. Also, she found that “there is a specific way you have to write or use some technical terms, and then there is a specific language style that is used for technical papers” (S11: 02/11/2024, pp. 1-2). She shared the same perspective on the conciseness of writing in Engineering. For her, writing her thesis and journals, and writing for publication challenged her because the genres required more advanced writing at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level. She believed in her advisor and colleagues' support for improvement as she went through the program. She explained:

When it comes to final papers and thesis, that means journal papers or publications, I think I came across a lot of challenges. The reason is I had the knowledge of writing my final

papers and thesis from my undergraduate right, but when it comes to graduate level, you have [to write] in [a] more concise and rigorous manner, so I find it very challenging but with the help of my advisor and I have to try to be able to do. (SI1: 02/11/2021, p. 3)

PhD students from STEM and Humanities and Social Sciences in Kiley's (2015) study got stuck on learning research-related theories and used writing as a way to help become unstuck. Regarding the field of publications, Hyland (2016) criticized academic publications in English with requirements to follow standard English, which challenges EAL writers and promotes linguistic injustice.

Andrews (2020) explained that for master's students, their writing skills and other types of assignments in their undergraduate degrees were not that helpful for the performance of graduate tasks due to the differences in the level and depth of the studies. This explanation accounts for the master students' disciplinary writing challenges in this study (Mathew, Jia, Suraj, and Noel). Brook-Gillies et al. (2015) negated some graduate students' misconceptions, stating that they viewed academic writing as a passive skill that could be transferred from their undergraduate level to their graduate level of studies. The authors believed "the way something is written is just as important as the content being written about" (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2015, p. 2). The students could not see the differences in writing requirements between the two levels and the complexity in writing at graduate level due to the "invisibility of genre, voice, style, data presentation, active versus passive writing, structure and epistemology in writing instruction" (Brook-Gillies et al., 2015, p. 2). Therefore, although some participants (Jane, Jia, and Suraj) believed the alignment of their disciplinary foundation in English instruction would not cause

much difficulty in language use, they faced challenges in completing disciplinary tasks in graduate studies.

Mathew, an M.Eng. student, thought his prior undergraduate program in Engineering with EMI prepared him for graduate study, which might have been true for the earlier stage of his coursework in terms of the content, but this did not apply to the increasingly difficult academic language demands. At the time of the interview, he was writing his thesis, and he identified academic writing for biomedical purposes as one of the things he was struggling with: “the problem arises when I'm trying to write” (S11, 02/14/2021, p. 4). He explained that writing in his field should be academic and concise, which he was working on to achieve in his writing. He shared:

So, what I found is that I haven't been that much well-taught in ...academic writing. A lot of time it happens that when my professors or maybe some other folks are taking data, we try to describe those thoughts or summarize that concept really well. If I want to do that in the first place, I do have to go through a lot of iterations. So, I have to literally separate the same distance and try to add lot of adjectives and adverbs on that. (S11; 12/14/2021, p. 5)

Academic discourse socialization sees students' learning through their interactions with the target academic community, as Jia did in her experience in Engineering (Duff, 2011; Kobayashi et al., 2017). Jia learned that she was required to write many academic reports for her assignments, give presentations at the end of courses, and participate in class discussions and meetings. She found the needs for using “formal” English, in her words, so she decided to use certain words to communicate with professors and to be concise for oral classroom discussions and meetings. For

written assignments, Jia was supported to write reports for her assignments; however, she did not know the expectations for the format because the instructor did not share any writing samples. She wrote the stories and submitted them, for which she got bad grades. Later, she learned about the expected format for the report assignments from a senior PhD student in the same department.

Both Suraj and Noel received comments from course instructors that they needed to improve their scientific writing. Suraj had some difficulties in writing scientific reports because he kept forgetting “some scientific terms” and used “some layman normal language words” (SI1: 02/12/2021, p. 9), while Noel was advised to add some connecting words. Noel felt at ease when one of his instructors said that all he cared about was the content and correct facts. In addition, Suraj confessed that his oral presentation was not good: “I was not that much confident initially in speaking. My English-speaking skills were not much good; that is also [a] problem for thesis-based master’s [students] because thesis students they have to present the abstracts” (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 23). Suraj was advised to change into a master’s course-based route by his advisor who compared his competence in using the language with another student who possessed a master’s degree in prior education. On the contrary, Steward was confident that his efficient communication in English with his advisor contributed to their acceptance of him to be in the program. The instructor participant, Rachel, confirmed that students must have competency in the language, but that should be in the form of communication in their discipline as they need to explain “a lot of models or diagrams” which required students to use their English communication to assess, interpretation, and present.

The Engineering participants’ experience aligned with those of graduate students in Engineering in Kathpalia et al.’s (2019) research, who also reported difficulties in writing,

speaking, and presentation tasks. In addition, the graduate students and instructors in Lin and Morrison (2021) had different perspectives on students' EAP writing challenges in Engineering when the students struggled with linguistic features at a sentence level such as vocabulary and grammar. However, their instructors identified their problems at a discourse level including sentence connection, text organization, academic writing conventions, clarity, and conciseness (Lin & Morrison, 2021). The Engineering student participants in this study indicated their challenges at both sentence and discourse levels while believing they would figure that out as they went through the program with the assistance of advisors, instructors, and colleagues. Lax (2014) noted that the writing for publication course within Engineering would bring about more impacts, although the beginning graduate students may need additional support with fundamental academic writing, such as writing a resume and cover letters or writing a paper to learn about the academic discourse of their specialization based on library research.

The literature comparing and contrasting the experiences of students in soft sciences and hard sciences showed findings similar to mine, namely that the students from both fields encounter challenges with academic writing in their graduate studies. Wette and Furneaux's (2018) research participants consisted of master's students and doctoral students from one university in each of the UK and in New Zealand. 25 of 31 participants studied social sciences such as Education, TESOL, and Applied Linguistics, while six studied hard sciences. The graduate international student participants from their study reported the same challenges with discipline terminology, concise composition, and discipline writing due to the unfamiliarity with Anglo-western academic writing conventions (Wette & Furneaux, 2018). The authors suggested using texts or works by experts in

specific disciplines as resources for IGSs' writing support to develop the writer's identity and meet the readers' needs (Wette & Furneaux, 2018).

The finding is consistent with language socialization theory's perspective that academic discourse should be learned through interactions with experts or resources within the disciplinary community (Duff & Yamamoto, 2024; Kobayashi et al., 2017). The students learned by doing the required tasks, being exposed to and interacting with resources, classmates, and instructors in the disciplinary communities, although experiencing multiple facets of both linguistic and sociocultural challenges.

Extra Time and Work on EAP: An Ongoing Process

LST views language learning through interactions with different sociocultural and semiotic resources (Duff, 2010; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017) and this aligns with the EAL participants' experiences in the current study. Entering a new academic community, the EAL graduate student participants needed more time to learn and practice new skills, new academic discourse, new content knowledge, and sociocultural knowledge. In turn, they used these new skills and knowledge to engage competently with other community members. All the participants saw this process as ongoing throughout their graduate programs. Participants in Education needed more time to fine-tune their English when working on assignments while they were simultaneously acquiring other required knowledge and skills. Likewise, the Engineering participants accepted to invest more time and extra effort in linguistic demands.

Education. The Education participants saw EAP in association with academic competency, which they could gain through interactions with academic texts and practices, as well as other language skills. The main concern for Education participants was what rules and

conventions associated with written assignments and papers they were required to complete. Peter found that setting the same requirements and expectations for assignments and papers for EAL IGSs and domestic students was unfair to IGSs. In his experience, to complete the same assignments: “international students should work very hard, much harder than it takes domestic students to meet these requirements” (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 3). He reasoned that IGSs had to work “much harder” and spend “more hours” (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 3) to familiarize themselves with the rules or structures, deal with linguistic barriers or fill in the contextual gap and then work on the actual requirements and complete the assignments.

Graduate students from across disciplines in Zappa-Hollman’s study (2007) and from TESL in a study conducted by Morita (2009) accepted that learning all the conventions and socializing into the Canadian institutional academic culture was time-consuming and slow-paced. They reported linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological challenges, emphasizing the linguistic difficulties compared with their L1 English-speaking counterparts (Zappa-Hollman, 2008). Ofelia shared a similar experience. She felt it took her more time to meet the language demands of graduate work, especially writing, compared to her native English-speaking counterparts:

So I always ask for an extension because it takes me a lot of time writing in English and working at it. It takes me a lot of time to express my ideas and then you have to go through the proofreading your work, so they take a lot of time. (SI1: 2/17/ 2021, p. 6)

Ofelia’s experience also resonated with that of EAL doctoral students in Ma’s research (2021), where participants reported having to spend more time writing due to a lack of confidence in their English, thinking about how to write, and requiring more time for feedback

and proofreading. They disclosed that they often spent more time on writing and rewriting as they had to go through a translation process from their first language to English, figuring out the rhetorical differences, searching up vocabulary, and checking on grammar. The TESOL background graduate students in Kim (2015) and Chang and Kanno (2010) reported spending double the time reading and completing tasks compared to L1 students.

Language socialization asserts that students accumulate linguistic and other knowledge through routine activities and interactions with competent others in the target community over a long span of lifetime (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017). The experience and perspectives of my participants reflect this view as they interacted with different resources such as documents, workshops, and knowledgeable members, and socialized into the academic context by working as a research assistant or teaching assistant. The student participants felt assured that their EAP learning was continuing along their programs. Also, those who worked learned much from their academic work on campus. Peter affirmed that: “There is no end of learning English for academic purposes in my life” (S11: 02/15/2021, p. 5). Mike also saw a significant advancement in his EAP competency compared to his EAP competency at the start of his PhD program. Working as an English instructor at the UM, he shared that he was learning to teach as well as teaching to learn EAP:

So as I'm creating those brochures or PDFs, I am also broadening my knowledge of academic English, I come across some new vocabularies that are useful, so I definitely just offered or recommended to my students and also save them for myself. (S11: 02/24/2021, p. 2)

Not only did the students' language improve as they progressed through the program, but the participants also confirmed they attained the knowledge and skills needed by working and dwelling in the target community to become competent members. Alice said that she learned how to conduct a literature review before she actually started her thesis proposal when she was working as a research assistant for a research project. However, Alice shared that only after she learned all the steps a thesis-based master's student needed to take did she realize she was running out of time in the program. Another example of learning through work, Peter only learned that graduate students must apply for ethical approval from the Research Ethics Board of the institution for research involving humans when he started working as a research assistant because that was not required in his prior experience.

I could relate to Peter's experience because the process and practices were also different in my academic and educational background. Therefore, I spent some more time working on the references for the related terms and on what the purpose of this process is, and what steps are required.

In my prior master's program and my workplace in postsecondary in Vietnam, I conducted research for my master's program and an institutional study without applying for ethics approval but only for the approval of my research proposal. Therefore, I had no relevant reference for the term "ethics submission," even after a professor mentioned it somewhere in their lectures. It was not until conversations with peers who told me that we would be required to apply for institutional approval to conduct our dissertation research I learned that we must submit a protection plan for participants' privacy and well-being. Being told that it was a complex process, I registered for the ethics workshop

twice during my coursework; I grabbed some forms and concepts such as informed consent, consent, and ethics protocol and had the name of the office I should approach. I only knew how the idea actually worked when I applied for ethics approval for this dissertation study. With the support from my advisor and feedback from the ethics committee, I learned a lot from the process of planning and writing for ethics submission. (SN)

Engineering. All Engineering student participants accepted that EAP was an ongoing process as they went along the program. They observed that the further they went in the program and the context, the better EAP proficiency they achieved. Jia worked in industry before starting her graduate program, which allowed her to learn and practice English. She assessed her current level of EAP proficiency at “an intermediate level,” which was sufficient to pursue the program, but she would continue to learn to adapt to the requirements of the new academic setting:

I would say like my proficiency in English as academics is an intermediate level. I won't say I'm an expert because I'm still learning. Since English in academic learning is completely different thing, I've been introduced to very new concepts, new styles, new format in speaking and writing in English. (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 3)

As a result of the ongoing process, she claimed that her vocabulary expanded over the courses, and her writing and reading skills were at “a new level” then. She found Engineering “a very cutting-edge field” (SI2: 03/27/2021, p. 19) and believed that to keep pace with fast-changing knowledge, she must keep learning the language associated with new developments. Noel accepted that “extra time goes into it” as an instructor who also spoke EAL shared on the first day of the class that he needed more time to complete some particular tasks “ because he's not a native

speaker, so he's going to make sure that everything is perfectly fine” (SI1: 02/16/2021, p. 6). Steward was convinced that regarding the language, IGSs were always a few steps behinds the domestic graduate students who speak English as their first language.

Huang (2013) and Ma’s (2021) research findings explained that L1 English students also required EAP for their academic programs; however, the EAL students must access academic cultures and communities considered familiar and home to their native-speaker counterparts. Steward confirmed that EAL students’ language was an ongoing process because they had to spend more time learning names of things which the domestic students may take for granted:

I think it is an ongoing process, right? Because we are international students spending a great part of our life speaking a language other than English, so everything makes sense when you go. ... or even at the lab, you know the name of every single tool you are working with, or you're seeing at the lab, but when it comes to English, it's a lot of things. (SI1: 02/16/2021, p. 8)

Some literature also considered instructors’ perspectives which reaffirmed the participants’ experiences and perspectives in this study, resulting in more work for instructors to support them (Creely et al., 2021; Heringer, 2021; Schneider & Jin, 2020). The instructor participants in both Education and Engineering were aware of this issue and understood their international students’ needs for more time and the corresponding workload for necessary adjustments. Joanna observed that IGSs had a “much heavier load” because of the extra reading, rereading, keeping track of terms, editing, learning grammar, styles, and formats (II: 04/10/2021, p. 5). Therefore, as an advisor, she committed to spending more time supporting her IGSs on those areas than her domestic students who speak English as their L1. Instructor Peggy explained

that the problem for EAL graduate students was rooted in the “standard academic discourse” (II: 03/10/2021, p. 3) they must follow to communicate at a graduate level in Canadian institutions. Peggy suggested giving IGSs more time to complete assignments and to respond to professors’ questions in the classrooms. Instructor Rachel was aware of the fact that at the graduate level, the students were self-motivated, self-directed, and independent thinkers and learners with individual purpose. Rachel saw that the language barrier was known to EAL students, which required them to spend more time and effort compared to L1 English students because they needed to spend more hours translating both language and content. The ESL doctoral students and graduate students from both sciences and social sciences in Odena and Burgess (2017) and Ma’s (2021) studies reported the same experiences as the participants in this research. Some talked about more time spent translating ideas from their L1, others needed help proofreading for grammar and other linguistic mistakes, and many had to spend more time drafting and redrafting their theses.

Students’ Individual Strategies

With the perception of EAP as an ongoing learning throughout their graduate program, the student participants reported that they developed their own strategies to advance their academic language to meet the requirements academically and socially in the new context. Although the strategies vary individual by individual according to their stage of study and styles, they all maximized all opportunities to pick up the language by exposing them to various language resources, including interaction with people and physical and online resources.

The participants in Education found the class reading materials helped a lot. While Peter took an optional course for language development, Anna shared her strategy:

So my strategy is when I have difficulty in writing or in speaking something, I need to read a lot of that. I will read more articles and be well-prepared. Before the presentation, [I read] a lot, and then when [I wrote, I gave myself] enough time to check what [I] wrote and especially the referencing. (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 16)

Both Rosy and Mike learned to teach, and teaching helped advance their linguistic capacity. Finishing her coursework, Rosy learned to combine academic language with daily language by watching YouTube tutorials on her topic of interest, which she found in academic English closer to life and academic journals and books. For her research paper, Alice always wrote “well-written words” in a notebook and looked at them before bedtime so that she could remember some phrases or structures to use later in her own words.

Engineering participants had similar approaches to advance their language competency. Jane and Steward wanted to excel in conversational language by watching films and comedies. Also, Jane and Suraj believed conversing with Canadians who speak the language as native speakers would help both language and thinking processing. Also, for his academic writing, Mathew used Google to search for terminology on the Internet and relied on academic papers on his research topic. He shared: “Day to day understanding the topic, in my experience, I had to go through a lot of papers sort of study-based kind of thing. I read through the paper, and I can perceive the trend” (SI1: 02/14/2021, p. 4). Besides materials from the university libraries, Steward used Grammarly a lot to support his English use. Suraj also talked about Grammarly as a helpful tool:

Right now, I am using Grammarly in my iPhone extension, and whenever I'm typing something in English, it automatically tells me where my writing mistake is, where I have

not put my comma, or any kind of punctuation marks, and it's really helpful. The only thing is that in the free trial, we can't use that to check for plagiarism; if you have a premium plan, then we can use that, and we can use it as a paraphrasing tool, and we can use Grammarly. (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 29)

Suraj also suggested the university assist students by covering the costs of installing such applications as Grammarly. Suraj's suggestion echoes the controversial discussions of the rising use of artificial intelligence (AI) applications as support for EAL learners. There has been research about beneficial applications of AI tools to assist EAL students to battle linguistic challenges and succeed in a new context of English-speaking universities (Chen et al., 2022; Mageira et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023). The rise of AI tools confronted the traditional approaches to support EAL graduate students (Garne et al., 2023). Some researchers recommended collaborating with AI applications to support and enhance EAL students' learning experiences with careful considerations to handle related ethical issues, academic integrity, accuracy, and culturally relevant sensitivity (Gagne et al. 2023; Wang et al., 2023)

Considering that EAL graduate students are required to complete graduate programs with the same standards as domestic students, the finding shows their readiness, motivation, resilience, and efforts invested in their academic endeavors despite self-perceived challenges in the program. This finding challenged not only the idea of viewing them with linguistic and sociocultural deficits but also the traditional educational approaches that exclude EAL graduate students' identities, linguistic repertoires, prior knowledge, and cultures (Bista, 2019).

Summary of IGSs' EAP Learning and Use in the Two Disciplines

In short, although the IGS participants claimed having strong English education backgrounds, the findings uncovered some common challenges in the academic language for their specific disciplines, including writing and oral communication tasks such as speaking and presentations. As EAL speakers, they accepted having to spend extra hours on the assignments with the same requirements as their native-speaking counterparts and self-committed to advancing their English proficiency with their individual strategies as they went along in the program. In this process, they persisted in keeping their identities associated with their heritage languages and cultures, which are supported by language socialization and sociocultural theories.

Education participants found it hard to relate and contribute to the curriculum contextualized by local sociocultural and historical background knowledge. The disparity between their prior backgrounds and that of the host country hindered their understanding and ability to relate and contribute to the lectures, classroom conversations, and discussions. They also complained about the instructors' lack of IGS-friendly teaching approaches using local idioms, tailoring the class activities to local topics, and narrowing and contextualizing assignments associated with some terminology related to local history. As a result, they felt excluded in classrooms. While the Engineering counterparts reported that they could use the same foundational knowledge in science and Engineering, they also identified some challenges in technical writing for conciseness and preciseness. The differences in disciplinary conventions may be the reason for this divergence in the participants' experiences.

The finding revealed the covert racism lying in the listeners' expectations of native-like accents and speech to be produced by EAL graduate students (Kubota, 2002; Kubota et al.,

2023). With the statistically proven and visible growing intercultural backgrounds and diversity of the student population in Canadian universities, this study's findings challenge the narrow vision of educational instructions with native-speakerist language standardization and Canadian-oriented curricula that exclude IGSs' prior linguistic repertoires, cultures, and backgrounds and isolate them in academic spaces (Tavares, 2024).

COVID-19 Impacts and the Institutional Responses

As mentioned in the literature review of this thesis, the interviews took place amid the global COVID-19 pandemic spread when all people including the participants, were confined at home with restrictions to travel and in-person contact while universities remained closed, delivering online learning. In the literature reviewed, the international students who studied in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the US were labeled as “vulnerable,” “disadvantaged,” and “marginalized” groups based on the impact of the pandemic (Firang, 2020; Firang & Mensah, 2021; Luczaj et al., 2021; Mbous et al., 2022). These students faced greater challenges related to their status as foreign students in another country compared to domestic students living in their home country. Research about international students' experiences during COVID-19 showed the impacts on academic performance and social and psychological aspects of the student's lives. However, there was little discussion in those studies of how their English communication and learning were impacted. Only some experiences of the students from EAL or ESL classes or programs were addressed in the literature.

Interruptions in EAL Students' Language Socialization

Loss of language learning community. The participants in my study reported a loss of their language learning environment and language interactions, leading to a loss of opportunities

to socialize and interact in the language. Anna accepted online learning was convenient in some ways, such as saving her from some awkward situations, but learning online did not help her improve her academic English. Mike also found fewer opportunities for his English language use during the COVID-19 lockdown because the limited interactions prevented him from getting immediate feedback in face-to-face discussions. Rosy and Ofelia also complained that they could not reach those channels that could help them improve their academic English use, such as with their professors. In contrast, a doctoral student in a study conducted by Yang (2023) developed their own initiative for study and gained confidence as an academic writer through regular online meetings with her supervisor during the pandemic.

Jane from Engineering complained about losing her international community during COVID-19 while spending most of the time speaking with friends from her ethnic community in her native language; therefore, the only opportunity for her to speak English was when she met her instructor and worked on her paper. Jane shared:

When it comes to language learning, nowadays, I'm talking with my supervisor and it's only [with] him that I talk in English, and because all my friends are from [home country] and I really need the other international graduate students, and I don't have any kind of best friend or kind of friends from the international community. (SI1: 02/11/2021, p .6)

Mathew admitted that the COVID-19 lockdown took away opportunities for him to use and practise English. He shared: “Obviously, the English learning experience, I think that [English learning experiences] has some devastated, stolen” (SI1: 02/14/2021, p. 14). Jia complained that she lost the environment to improve her speaking skills, while Suraj decided to take another master’s degree because COVID-19 took away his real overseas experience on a

Canadian campus. Piller et al. (2020) explained the language challenges of COVID-19, including the language barriers caused by loss or restriction of face-to-face communication and raised the importance of oral and written forms of language in developing trust and relationships.

Loss of human interactions and communications. Language socialization happens when EAL learners socialize and interact with people in the context and learn the sociocultural values of the host community. Experts observed that the pandemic had negatively impacted children's language development and adults' social communication skills in languages (Charney et al., 2022; Kindred & Bates, 2023). This negative impact on language development was also the case for the EAL students in my study. COVID-19 destroyed both their English language learning and practicing environment and their authentic communication opportunities to develop their communication skills in the target language.

COVID-19 affected international students negatively, especially those who had just started the program or those at a critical time in their studies. As programs were less interactive, it was hard for people to build, maintain, or develop real connections virtually. Anna came to Canada for her program during the COVID-19 pandemic and reported that networking was hard because she had no in-person connections with classmates or peers in the faculty when all activities were online. She revealed that she had no chance to make friends or network online, especially when she was the only international student in one of her classes. She described the activities in her online classes:

I was the only international student in the class, so I just contacted one of the students because we led the seminar together, so we worked together for a short time. Mostly that's

it. For the second class, it is like you post in [the online learning system] and then write replies. So, we did not have real-life context. (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 5)

Apart from COVID-19, Mbous et al. (2022) found that language, communication and cultural perspectives added to the gap between international students and their local peers. Engineering IGS, Suraj, missed opportunities to make “Canadian friends” (SI1: 02/12/2021, p. 8), while Jia felt fortunate that she had the chance to talk with her advisor in person prior to the pandemic. Jane shared her loss of interactions with lab mates: “Usually, I was in a lab, but there were some students. So usually, we used to talk while we're having a break. But now, like it's not there” (SI1: 02/11/2021, p. 6). In addition, Creely et al. (2021) concluded that students’ loss of social interactions through English negatively during the COVID-19 pandemic affected their academic engagement and academic task completion. In contrast, instructor Rachel liked the idea of teaching online because it was easier to handle big classes using different tools to enhance students’ interactions and participation in the way that her physical classrooms did not allow due to the arrangement of chairs and tables. This perspective agrees with the findings from Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) that the switch of learning instruction from offline to online was harder for many students to adapt than the teachers. The students reported that their speaking skills did not seem to improve as much as their writing during this time.

Less Effective Learning. In addition, during the Covid lockdowns, most students claimed that the full virtual mode of learning was not as effective due to technology fatigue, which was combined with technical problems. Peter suggested that graduate students’ learning happened when they interacted with classmates, professors, instructors, and scholars in academia in person, but at the time “all students did was typing the idea and [it was] very time-consuming”

(SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 13). He believed the online learning format did not work for the graduate level: “It is not actually much [of] a course for me” (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 13). Alice also found the online format ineffective for a couple of reasons. The first thing was her poor internet connection, which always cut her off during the lesson. When she got connected back to the class, the conversation was no longer there for her contribution anymore. Second, while she acknowledged the convenience that virtual learning brought; the pandemic prolonged her time in the program because things got slower:

It is convenient, you can stay at home, you can join a meeting and you can take the course, but I am 100% sure it is not as effective as in-person learning. COVID-19, it definitely prolonged study duration and then a lot of professors, and instructors still working from home. Everything is slow, less efficient, and less efficient and that’s affecting us, of course.

(SI1: 02/18, 2021, p. 14)

In Engineering, Jane was working on her proposal or research at the time, and found the online format limited her communicating her ideas with her advisors. Jia could not ask as many questions for her professors after class because many others were lining up virtually, nor make appointments as expected. Jia used to be active and involved in workshops, groups, and clubs in Engineering, but she was not anymore because all activities were virtual. She explained: “It’s all completely online, so right now I’m not actively participating in that because at home I feel a lot of burnt [out] and I cannot focus my mind to solve the task on that” (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 12).

Instructor Joanna also indicated that the online format did not offer the same benefits of experiences as the physical classes despite the instructors’ efforts to make it interactive. She insisted that the situation diminished the learning abroad experiences for IGSs; therefore, she

also advised her incoming international students to defer their programs until the pandemic was over. Narang's (2024) results confirmed there was space for virtual academic socialization for L2 graduate students via Zoom, although the tool had some limitations. However, the sole tool for formal interactions was not sufficient; therefore, the research suggested incorporating other online tools for increasing L2 graduate students' interactions with other members of their community of practice for the same purpose (Narang, 2024).

Institutional Response and Support to International Students During COVID-19 Pandemic

During COVID-19 lockdowns, the UM administration was the focal point for determining safety measures and supporting students on campus. The situation was much more challenging for international students compared to their domestic counterparts. More broadly, international students in Canada were not eligible to apply for much support (Firang & Mensah, 2021). For example, only those who were Canadian citizens, registered Indians, permanent residents, and protected persons were eligible for the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) (Government of Canada, 2022).

Ofelia, formerly an IGS, commented on the situation of international students in the COVID-19 pandemic: "Especially, you are international students, you are isolated" (SI1: 02/17/2021, p. 11). Peter was an international student with no family in Canada, living in a rented room near the university. He found it hard for himself when all those connections and communications were interrupted. In addition, Peter was disappointed because the university raised tuition during this time when he did not witness any meaningful increase in supports. He insisted that the university should do more to support international students. Peter's experience aligned with that of Chinese doctoral students in Fu et al.'s (2022) research, who reported that

emotional support was neglected and also stressed the need for more efficient support from the institution.

In addition, the student participants were not content with the amount and level of support offered by the Education faculty. At the same time, they recognized the work of the Education Student Graduate Association (EdGSA). The participants said the faculty did not do much to support students during the pandemic, so they relied mainly on the university. Peter affirmed:

It has been one year since our university shifted from in-person classes to online learning.

It has been running, I mean 12 months, but these 12 months, I do not see some additional support from faculty. (SI2: 03/19/2021, p. 16)

Peggy found the situation most dire when EAL/ESL students had limited access to the available language and social supports: “They [the UM] need to provide writing support and language support and social support because it's difficult for a lot of students to access what is available, particularly during COVID-19” (II: 03/10/2021, pp. 3 - 4). Peggy believed there should be an inquiry into how ESL students were being treated during the Covid lockdowns. The UM, in fact, conducted a survey on campus in 2020, the report of which confirmed the vulnerability and marginalization of international students at UM (University of Manitoba, 2020). This will be discussed more in the next part of this dissertation.

In contrast, Engineering student participants spoke highly of the institutional responses including moving all activities online. Steward was content with the institution’s quick response to the pandemic situation thanks to “their smooth yet quick transition” (SI1: 02/16/2021, p. 17) for academic learning to continue. Suraj shared the same experience with the institutional response to the Covid situation. He noted the institution financially supported the students with

some co-op funds and a laptop for online learning. Also, during COVID-19 lockdowns, emails from the university came to students everyday with information about continuing workshops and activities, which were delivered online.

In short, the COVID-19 pandemic just exacerbated the challenges for international students, making them more vulnerable. The participants from both disciplines in the study encountered problems such as loss of environment for language learning and language practice, loss of human interaction for socialization in the target community, ineffective learning and technical issues, and concerns with the institutional responses in the pandemic. These COVID-19-related problems were reported by postsecondary students, international students, and IGSs worldwide; however, the participants contributed their voices to those who were vulnerable and disadvantaged but neglected. Also, the IGSs' experiences during COVID-19 revealed how they were marginalized and excluded in a Canadian postsecondary context in addition to other challenges. The participants' experiences were congruent with the literature about COVID-19 impacts elsewhere (Wisker et al., 2021, 2022); however, this study's findings addressed a research gap in EAL graduate students' disrupted L2 socialization process as one of the impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the light of SCT and LST, the finding that the loss of environment for social interactions and language practice led to less effective academic and language learning emphasizes the crucial role of the sociocultural environment and community of practice for language socialization and academic learning to happen.

Issues of Equity for International Students

Piller (2020) noted that linguistic diversity is based on geographical, socioeconomic, educational, and cultural backgrounds. In educational institutions, where language barriers exist,

so does linguistic injustice (Piller, 2020). The above-discussed challenges implicitly revealed the disadvantaged position, marginality, and vulnerability of the EAL graduate students in the study, while a couple of students explicitly talked about their linguistic and status insecurity. Therefore, the findings raised concerns about equity for the IGSs.

Being Disadvantaged as EAL Speakers

As newcomers and EAL speakers, the participants found themselves in a disadvantaged position when communicating or using English in a context where many other students used it as their L1 or mother tongue. This experience has been reported by many international students in many studies (Bista, 2019b; Chowdhury et al., 2024; Cox & Strange, 2016; Maringe & Jenkins, 2015; Read, 2016a). Steward from Engineering said:

As a second language [speaker], we are always disadvantaged. So frankly, they always know that how hard we try, how proficient we are, we'll always be at least a few steps behind. ... I mean, we're always of some disadvantage. (SI1: 02/16/2021, p. 14)

From his experience, it is often the situation that the EAL speakers doubt themselves when misunderstandings happen. Steward and Noel talked about the doubtful and questioning modes of EAL speakers despite their good English competence. Steward explained that even if someone was 99.9% confident about their language competence, there was still 0.1% for EAL speakers to second guess themselves. Noel confessed English was not even his second but his third language and required attention to many aspects such as grammar, sentence formation, topic, and audience judgment in communication. He shared: “The same fear is coming here that I have to talk in detailed language, and I'm afraid: by the way, did I deliver the right idea, right?” (SI2:03/18/2021, p. 13). Sawir et al. (2012) confirmed language as a “pervasive factor” (p. 435)

affecting international students' human security. From this perspective, the participants' experiences showed their insecurity as EAL speakers.

From another angle, student participants in Education saw English as a powerful tool for knowledge, communication, and jobs. The power of EAP was as a tool/medium for students to learn and access "specialized knowledge" and other related norms, thus being able to communicate with the discourse community in the target language (Flowerdew, 2019, p. 55). Alice and Rosy saw language proficiency as power and privilege, which implies that native English speakers have covert power over those who do not speak the language as their first language. If speaking English as a first language is considered a privilege, the inference is that those who are not native speakers do not have the same privilege but are placed in a disadvantaged position. Alice commented:

I am not saying that they are not good teachers, I believe that using idioms a lot in classrooms and confusing students is not their intention. They just don't realize speaking English as a major language in Canada is a privilege. (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 3)

Ofelia believed that having EAP competence opened the door to jobs. Parijs (2011) reported that "linguistic justice for unfair inequalities [was] rooted in competence" (p. 95), and those who had a native language competence (linguistic privilege) may have advantages in access to distribution and opportunities over those who did not. Schmidt and McDaid's (2015) research found that linguistic barriers barred internationally educated teachers from employment in Canada and Ireland regardless of how much they could contribute to the workforce with their international education and experiences (Schmidt & Janusch, 2016). Also, in Kubota et al.'s (2023) research, international graduate students and racialized faculty identified English

proficiency and whitened names as significant criteria for getting picked in job markets. These research results explain why Ofelia stressed the key role of EAP competence in her employment prospects.

In addition, the participants in this study were concerned about their foreign accents. For example, Ofelia felt intimidated speaking with an accent and desired to improve it for her communication in the host institution. Piller (2016) believed that linguistic privilege was when a person did not feel it necessary to study a language to get a job, communicate in a community, engage in classroom discussions, or be worry-free about their accent in employment situations. Dovchin (2020) extended the concept of linguistic injustice by discussing racialized ideologies. As a result, individuals can face linguistic racism on their geographical “accents” and ESL/EAL status regardless of their high proficiency in the standardized language. From this perspective, EAL participants in this study were compelled to continue their language learning; therefore, they faced “linguistic injustice” (Piller, 2016).

Being Marginalized by Unfamiliarity With the System

The international graduate students had double disadvantages: being unfamiliar with the host institution's requirements and using English as an additional language (Read, 2016). The status of being newcomers and foreigners marginalized IGSs. The student participants from both faculties identified insecurity caused by unfamiliarity with the new education system, which they had to learn from scratch. The unfamiliarity with the system caused hesitation and fear for Noel and Suraj in Engineering. Noel noted: “Students feel hesitation. The hesitation is there to contact because there's a lot of formalities within” (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 17). Ma (2021) explained that EAL graduate speakers might sometimes be required to adjust to the English-speaking context.

Therefore, they needed a third space between the target culture and their own culture as a comfortable space. For Alice, two years in a master's program was too short for her to find a comfortable position in a new system; however, she did find a safe space and decided to approach people because she realized "you're kind of at the end of program or your every final stage of your study and you literally don't have anyone" (SI2: 03/17/2021, p. 18). Peter also felt insecure and always had to ask instructors for more information on their expectations for classroom assignments because he had little idea about expectations or codes of conduct in a Canadian institution. He stated:

This is actually a serious problem, we have so many international students, especially for master's students. And when they transfer from Bachelor to master's, [there is] not enough support in conducting research in formal academic writing. It is important for me to know teachers' expectations about coursework, thesis, and other academic activities. Also, it is important for me to know what are acceptable in Canadian contexts and what are not. (SI2: 03/19/2021, pp. 15-16)

Peter explicitly raised the question of equity for EAL students graduating with the fulfillment of all requirements as the domestic/ L1 counterparts. The institution, professors or faculty set the same requirements, expectations and standards for diverse students, which were problematic because they had oversight of IGS groups with linguistic barriers and other gaps equal access to an unfamiliar system. He incorporated an understanding of the politics of diversity in the setting and suggested:

[I]n Canada, we always say that we treat people equally from anywhere ... there is also a problem that if you really set up a different standard for international students, it would

also become a problem in terms of equality in the University. So, my suggestion is to have more support for international students from either faculty, and professors, or University. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 3)

Tavares (2021) called for Canadian institutions' radical actions for international students by addressing their "structural issues" and regarding them as a "marginalized group" in their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusive (EDI) framework (p. 1). For EAP, Flowerdew (2019) supported a critical approach to taking the subject - students' status in the centre as "right analysis" in the pedagogical approach to empower the students. Piller (2020) suggested that one way to overcome linguistic injustice was to learn about the student's needs and integrate content and language training across the curriculum.

Peggy argued that it was more significant to empower the students and allow their voices to be heard by giving them the tools. Peggy postulated that students may not know the policies, rules, or rights they could use to advocate for themselves. Peggy found there were aspects that would marginalize the international students who would be in the marginalized position as they did not know about the system. Peggy noticed that the language issues were unaddressed by the institutional president's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, which was responsible for identifying barriers and challenges, developing recommendations based on their report's findings, and reviewing the best practices subsequently (University of Manitoba, 2020). In Peggy's opinion, UM's EDI Task Force overlooked the language discrimination that international students experienced on campus. She stressed:

Another intersectionality ability [a term used in the EDI report], but they failed entirely to look at language because the task force didn't put anybody on the committee who actually

had any knowledge of language issues and international students. So, they created the EDI task force leaving now probably the most one of the most pressing issues on campus, because linguistic equity is an academic problem. (II: 03/10/2021, p. 13)

This finding was pertinent to those challenges shared by the international students in the final report of the community experience research conducted by the UM President's Task Force on equity, diversity, and inclusion at the UM in Winter and Spring 2020 (University of Manitoba, 2020). In the report, the international students were identified as a "vulnerable group" who faced "many challenges including language issues for those for whom English is a second language and difficulty adjusting to Canadian culture" (University of Manitoba, 2020, p. 14). In the same report, some reported that EAL international students encountered both language barriers and racism, while international graduate students claimed they were powerless (University of Manitoba, 2020). Although English as a second language was identified as a barrier in the document, no recommendations or policies to support the students in developing their English or EAP competence were specified in the same document (University of Manitoba, 2020) and on the institutional website at <https://umanitoba.ca/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/office-equity-transformation>. Having said that, the finding of this study not only raised an issue of equity for international students but also inquired whether they have equitable opportunities and access to succeed in graduate education, especially concerning supports to bridge the linguistic and sociocultural gaps in the host university context (this is discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation).

Summary of Section

This section presented the participants' experiences in using and learning EAP to support their graduate work in the context of UM. The findings showed that the IGSs faced challenges posed by the unfamiliarity with the academic cultures, processes, and expectations in the host institution. The findings unearthed some differences and similarities between the experiences of the participants of two different disciplines in using academic English for their study. The LST notion of learning through language, which could be through their first or second language (Fisher, 2021), embraces multilingual and diverse approaches to learning. Also, the participants' EAP experiences depicted their process of socializing into the academic discourse of their graduate program to learn both language and content discipline despite the challenges (Anderson, 2021; Duff & Yamamoto, 2024). Learning took place in all situations where they could interact with relevant resources such as instructors, advisors, peers, lab-mates, students, and academic staff, and through classroom discussions, assigned reading materials, working materials, journals, and presentations. In addition, the EAL graduate students perceived that the absence of an in-person learning environment during COVID-19 led to their loss of opportunities for EAL practice, thus taking away their linguistic and sociocultural experiences in the host country. This finding confirmed the critical role of the learning environment and interactions in the EAL graduate students' learning and language socialization process. At the same time, SCT and LST offer a framework to support the students' learning and empower the EAL graduate students.

In addition to all of the above challenges, COVID-19 exacerbated the IGSs' vulnerability, making them "a disadvantaged community" with existing barriers and being excluded from many

support programs (Sustarsic & Zhang, 2021, p. 73). Cox and Strange (2016) categorized international students as marginalized and disadvantaged students who needed to voice their concerns. The IGSs' experiences in the study raised concerns about equity for IGSs in the UM context, which could make it challenging for the institution to address diverse needs and provide tailored supports to remove barriers and alleviate challenges regarding the diversity of the student population at UM specifically (Fox & Strange, 2016). At the same time, this finding reveals the marginalization and vulnerability of IGSs and calls for critical actions for their equity and inclusion in the university community and campus.

Chapter 6: IGSs' Experiences With Available Supports

In this chapter, I present the findings and discussions on the IGSs' experiences with the institutional supports provided by the UM, the students' faculties, and the departments. These supports include opportunities to interact with academic members such as peers, mentors, tutors, instructors, and advisors. The findings are discussed by comparing and contrasting the student participants' experiences with the evolving supports and resources offered by the institution at the time of writing this thesis (Winter & Fall, 2024).

Institutional Resources vs. Education and Engineering Graduate Students' Needs

Institutional Support Availability

First, I will present the data collected and analyzed through researching institutional websites. I then discuss the students' experiences with any resources they reported accessing and how they socialized through the available resources.

For the document data analysis, I relied mainly on my search for EAP-related information and documents available on the institutional websites. Subsequently, I summarized and categorized the types of resources and supports and whom they are targeted to serve, which helped to showcase what was available for the EAL graduate students or IGSs, as illustrated in a chart in Figure 4. The tables, charts, screenshots, and links illustrate the information accessed, discussed, and analyzed. Although the presentations of resources of support on the institutional websites gave an idea of many types of support available, the cross-referral links provided led to the same resources across the institution, and my subsequent analysis shows the majority of the supports available were generic and not tailored to the needs of EAL graduate students.

Figure 4

The Chart of Centralized Distribution of Supports and Resources at the UM

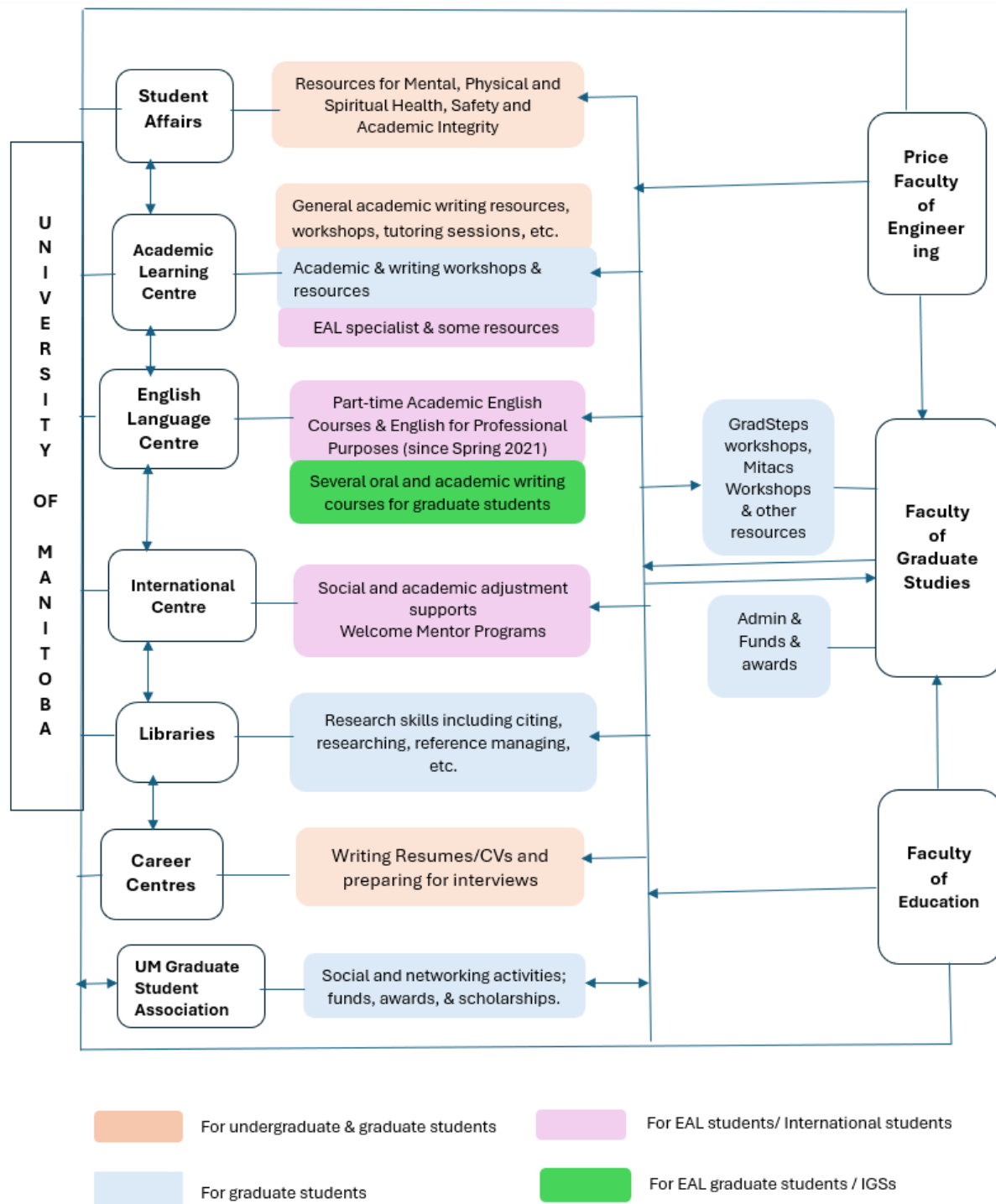


Figure 4 shows the institutional centres and organizations, including Student Affairs, Academic Learning Centre, English Language Centre, International Centre, Career Centre, and Libraries, as centralized distributors of general training workshops and supports to all students at the UM. These centres and organizations provide online and in-person workshops, seminars, raining sessions, including some general research writing and presentation skill workshops, and different formats of online resources such as lectures, brochures, PDF documents, videos, tutorials, and referral links on their websites. They also provide one-on-one tutoring sessions or some drop-in workshops on campus. The Academic Learning Centre was designated as a writing centre for UM's students in the Canadian Writing Centres Association directory (CWCA) (Canadian Writing Centre Association, 2019). I also discussed ELC as the only centre that offered language support through academic English courses for EAL graduate students (see Figure 4). However, the participants in my study reported that those courses did not meet their specific needs for their Education and Engineering studies.

The faculty of Graduate Studies partners with these above centres to offer GradSteps workshops and collaborates with external partner Mitacs to provide Mitacs workshops for graduate students at UM. All faculties, including the faculty of Education, the Price faculty of Engineering, and UM Graduate Student Association (UMGSA) at the university refer students to those workshops and training for the institutional supports and resources through cross-referral links provided on their websites. In practice, they all refer to the same internal sources, as shown in Figure 4 and illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Screenshot of FGS's Cross-referral to Different Institutional Centres and Organizations

umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/student-experience/graduate-student-workshops

Other workshops for grad students

The University of Manitoba English Language Centre and Academic Learning Centre have a number of workshops designed to help graduate students succeed.

Part-Time Academic English Courses

The English Language Centre (ELC) offers several Part-Time Academic English Courses (PTAEC) for current UM students and community members who would like to improve their academic English.

Academic Learning Centre tutorials

The UM Academic Learning Centre (ALC) provides a number of online tutorials to help graduate students with their writing skills.

Student experience

Thesis and practicum

#UMGradGoals

Workshops

Advisor Student Guidelines

Core academic requirements

Graduation information

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®)

Workshop partners

We have partnered with the following on- and off-campus organizations to deliver these workshops.

On-campus organizations

- Academic Learning Centre →
- Access / Privacy Coordinator's Office →
- Career Services →
- Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning →
- Copyright Office →
- Financial Aid and Awards →
- Health and Wellness →
- Health Research Ethics Boards →
- Human Rights and Advisory Services →

- International Centre →
- Libraries →
- Marketing Communications Office →
- Services for Students (Bannatyne Campus) →
- Student Advocacy →
- Student Counselling Centre →
- Technology Transfer Office →
- UMGSA ↗
- HSGSA ↗

Off-campus organizations

- Entrepreneurship Manitoba ↗
- Government of Manitoba ↗

- Manitoba Start ↗
- Mitacs ↗
- Workplace Education Manitoba ↗

Note. From *Faculty of Graduate Studies: Graduate student workshops*, by University of Manitoba, retrieved October 18, 2024. (<https://umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/student-experience/graduate-student-workshops>)

Figure 5 illustrates how cross-referral works from the Faculty of Graduate Studies by demonstrating what followed students' clicks on the cross-referral links. For example, GradSteps workshops offering training in general academic and writing skills for all graduate students on

campus were listed on the website at <https://umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/student-experience/graduate-student-workshops#upcoming-gradsteps-workshops>, on which they also provided cross-referral links to “other workshops for graduate students” offered by the internal partners. Following the referral link for graduate students to the Academic Learning Centre website at <https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning#tip-sheets-for-writing-and-study-skills>, there was information on general writing workshops for all graduate students such as Writing a Literature Review, Writing a Research Proposal, Thesis Structure and Organization, Writing Process and Routine, and Preparing for Oral and Poster Presentations, which were those offered in the GradSteps workshop listing. In addition, the GradSteps workshops were categorized into Basic, Healthy, Research, Communication, Career, and Entrepreneurial; if a student clicked on any of these categories, it showed the same list of workshops (see Appendix D for illustrations of the same list under both ‘Basic’ Category and ‘Research’ Category), which is misleading. These cross-referrals lead students to the same sources of support and resources across the institutional websites regardless of which category the student is looking for. This way of presenting support information might have confused the student participants when they navigated and searched for the support resources on the websites, as they reported in the later section of this document.

IGSs’ Experiences with Institutional Support

As discussed above, the cross-referring and presentation of the institutional support resources gave the students an idea of many resources available to support IGSs, which they might not have had in their prior experience. This idea made them feel welcome, but it also caused confusion and was overwhelming. Although support resources are advertised across the

institutional websites, those that targeted the specific needs of the IGSs in Education and Engineering were insufficiently provided. The participants in both faculties reported an awareness of the university's support resources, and most had experiences using some types of support or services at some points in their programs, especially those workshops for academic skills and general academic writing workshops at the beginning of their programs. However, they shared the same comments about the irrelevancy of the graduate level supports and the generalness of the supports and resources, which misaligned with their specific needs to complete the tasks required as they went further in their programs.

Academic Skill Support. At the beginning of the programs, most student participants attended the GradSteps workshops focusing on general research and academic skills offered by the Faculties of Graduate Studies and their partners. Anna from Education, and Noel, Suraj, and Jia from Engineering, who just started or were doing coursework, might have wanted to attend those workshops and seminars to equip them with the skills needed for their study in a new university, including workshops related to using libraries to research information, using different reference manager apps, paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism, writing literature reviews and so on. The participants were overwhelmed with the many types of support listed on the institutional websites and advertisements sent to their students' email accounts. Anna, Suraj, and Noel struggled to classify different supports for different purposes and what would meet their existing needs. Anna explained:

I think the institutional offices and centers have offered a lot of help. But the problem is that students do not reach out to them, just like me. And sometimes it is hard to pin down like what my problem is. I just have a difficulty that I don't know exactly where and how

to improve it. There's a disconnection between what is offered and what is needed. (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 12)

Peter from Education talked about institutional workshops he attended: "They provide that help for all of the people, not only in education. It's not in education, we may need some other support because different disciplines may have different requirements and expectations" (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 11). Some Engineering participants did not attend many workshops except those for orientation, academic, and research skills offered through the libraries and GradSteps workshops. Jia was taking coursework for her master's program in Engineering and she attended many academic workshops, including orientation sessions, APA referencing, preparing a CV/resume and job interview skills, and so forth, with which she was satisfied. Regarding writing workshops, she recalled:

I remember I was attending one academic writing workshop in the beginning of my studies, ... they like taught us the difference between the formal and informal writing and [...] how formal is the academic writing and they also taught us a few concepts about like it was basically a revision, regarding grammatical mistakes and punctuation mistakes, and then there was other software we can use for citing references and managing our database. (SI1: 02/27/2021, p. 11)

EAP Support. From the discussion above and the analysis of the language support offered at the institutional level, it was clear that the supports were generic and focused on basic academic and writing skills preparing all graduate students from different disciplines to start a graduate program at the institution.

Figure 6 shows a screenshot of a language resource from the Academic Learning Centre with an EAL specialist instructor (name covered) supporting all EAL students on campus. However, from the description in the source (Figure 6), this specialist provides general EAL support at a basic level, such as grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and so on.

Figure 6*Screenshot of EAL Support at the Academic Learning Centre*

nitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning/tutoring-group-study#english-as-an-additional-language-s

English as an additional language supports

EAL Specialist Instructor

██████████ the English as an Additional Language specialist, can analyze your language and writing needs and develop a plan to help you improve your academic English, including grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, as well as academic integrity, paraphrasing, summarizing, citations, and references. Make an appointment with ██████████ in the [Content and Study Skills schedule](#).

EAL resources

Graduate student resources

The Academic Learning Centre offers graduate student writing support on the Graduate Writing & Study Skills Schedule.

Get help with:

- Developing and organizing ideas
- Organizing large research projects
- Synthesizing and integrating research
- Citing and referencing sources
- Preparing research or thesis proposals
- Meeting thesis or dissertation deadlines
- Producing and delivering presentations
- Improving editing strategies

[Make an Appointment with a Graduate Writing Tutor](#)

Note. From *Academic Learning Centre: EAL supports and Graduate student resources*, by the University of Manitoba, retrieved November 19, 2024. (<https://www.umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning/tutoring-group-study#english-as-an-additional-language-supports>)

The Academic Learning Centre mainly delivers writing workshops or seminars, 30-minute one-on-one appointments (the appointments were 1 hour for the graduate students at the time of the study), and English Language Centre with Part-time Academic English courses for writing, speaking, discussion, and so on were subsidized at low-cost for all graduate students. As discussed above, on the English Language Centre website, these courses were targeted to UM's current EAL students and community members although there were several academic courses listed as for EAL graduate students. Alice also reported this fact later in this section.

The results from Fenton-Smith and Humphrey (2015) affirmed that although graduate students have maturity and solid linguistic and educational backgrounds, they still need a strong orientation to develop their language skills to adapt to the new context and the requirements of new programs. Anderson (2015c) observed that many international students sought supports around campus, which was true for IGSs in this research. Most of the student participants in Education tried some types of these writing resources, while Steward and Jane from Engineering did not try any writing workshops. A couple of Engineering students were confused about the functions of the two centres, the English Language Centre and Academic Learning Centre, while some students from Education complained about the inconvenient delivery methods of the writing service, such as overloading end-of-term appointment booking system without walk-in services. This was consistent with that of IGSs in a study conducted by Rodriguez et al. (2019) who did not know how to tap onto the available services. Generally, the student participants found the workshops and English courses too generic and basic, while the writing appointments did not meet their needs.

Anna was aware of a lot of workshops offered on campus, and she took some writing workshops, which, in the beginning, she found “oh good knowledge, I can relate, but when I had to write my own paper again, I felt confused again” (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 14). Rosy recapped her thirty-minute appointment as a waste as it did not help her improve what she had already written. Alice took two courses at the English Language Centre because her advisor recommended her to do so. She said: “I took two courses and I feel like it is not relevant, it isn’t meeting my needs” (SI2: 03/17/2021, p. 26). She pointed out the misalignment and miscommunication between units within the institution concerning the information about courses for students. She reflected:

The writing course itself was not for graduate students ... we also have students like undergraduate students and people outside UM. That course was definitely not designed for UM students, but the speaking course is for graduate students. So I guess the expectation is not consistent, I mean, between the center and our program advisors/instructors. Even if the course was designed for graduate students, their expectations were vastly different. (SI2: 03/17/2021, p. 25)

Peter shared his experiences attending writing workshops:

[During COVID-19] I attend some online workshops about either writing a summary or paraphrase such kind of thing, but you know the Academic Learning Center or English language center, they all they always offer workshops in general, meaning that students from all majors are in this workshop. That is the workshop in general. I hope that our faculty can give us opportunity to attend more workshops that is specifically related to our discipline, our subjects. (SI2: 03/19/2021, p. 14)

This comment resonates with the insights shared by graduate students in Anderson's (2015) study, who found the writing centre's services more relevant to the undergraduate students' needs. Wingate (2012, 2018) argued that academic writing courses should be discipline-specific to motivate students to align with students' needs with disciplinary conventions and subject matter learning at the same time. As they went further in the program, the participants from both faculties sought more intensive support specific to their discipline to complete their graduate tasks. At this stage, they targeted specific types of support or training. Mathew, at the thesis writing stage of his program in biomedical Engineering, was looking for some specific supports that aligned with his discipline-oriented needs:

I know that GradSteps have something like how to write your first paper, how to do that on that but they are on the basics level. I mean on the basic stuff. But I think it would be better if I have something more curated to my own needs. For example, I am trying to write a paper for the biomedical engineering, so "How do I address the audience and how do I explicitly do that?" So, if it is more specific for my needs, maybe some someone from my academic background, or maybe someone from biomedical background that would be tremendously helpful. (SI2: 03/16/2021, p. 17)

From EAP scholarship, Swale (2019) confirmed that by interviewing people within specific disciplines, an "insider" understanding of their conventions and discourses could be gained. Interviewing international doctoral students from a variety of disciplines enabled Swale to see disciplinary differences. He believed this understanding would help to bring relevant benefits to the students pedagogically and educationally (Swales, 2019). Jane from Engineering shared that she never used any support resources except those delivered by the library. At the

time, she needed to publish two papers as a requirement of her PhD program, but she solely relied on the support of her advisor. Jane also found that the available supports at the institution were for “general use” and assumed that it might be more “useful” for Education students rather than Engineering students. She found her discipline in Engineering was different because mathematics was involved in the subject, which meant “you have to talk Math in English” (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 15). When asked if she was recommended any types of support, she indicated that she had heard about a colleague’s experience using writing support at the Academic Learning Centre, which was not good, and this dissuaded her from using the service herself. Jane provided her own explanation:

The reason I guess why she said that maybe like the tutors those who are there, do not have the background in Engineering. They don't know the jargons that should be used, and they will feel like “OK, this is not matching here,” but that is the word that usually used in Engineering when you write. There is some stuff in math or anything like that, there are some technical jargons that we should use while writing the papers. And you know them when you learn the subject, but they don't have that kind of experience. (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 14).

Jane’s explanation resonated with that of a master’s student in Okuda and Anderson’s study (2018) who received feedback from a writing tutor on grammar and spelling but, in turn, taught the tutor how to write in their discipline due to the undergraduate tutor’s gap in the disciplinary background. This mismatch was caused by the fact that writing centers usually recruited tutors from all disciplines to provide general writing support for all students (Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Mackiewicz, 2004; Weissbach & Pflueger, 2018). Regarding writing centres’

personnel, Graves and Graves (2012) depicted that a PhD student in English or American literature ended up working with or teaching writing to Engineering students in a writing centre. Mackiewicz's (2004) did a linguistic analysis of the effectiveness of two undergraduate and two graduate writing tutors' comments on engineering writing. The findings showed that three tutors with no familiarity with engineering genres gave comments on "surface features of writing" (p. 326) while failing to adhere to the purposes and conventions of the disciplines and giving irrelevant advice for students to write engineering academic essays and research papers. By contrast, the experienced tutor with expertise working with technical writing provided appropriate interactions with engineering writing on "specific features and specific ideas" (p. 324) with a focus on intended purposes and audiences (Mackiewicz, 2004). Mackiewicz (2004) concluded: "... writing tutors who lack familiarity with engineering writing may hinder students' development into writers of good engineering documents" (p. 327). This finding and discussion showed that general writing support in writing centres was not only unhelpful but also problematic with irrelevant advice and tutoring approaches.

Instructor participants saw the students eye to eye regarding institutional support. Rachel from Engineering also viewed those support resources served the general needs of the student population rather than graduate students' needs:

I know there are centres and libraries offering support for EAL students such as centre of academic learning and libraries. However, the thing is that the students' needs and level of support they need vary from individual to individual depending on the disciplines they take, the cultures they come from or the educational background they possess. (II: 10/01/2021, p. 11)

Peggy criticized the two centres in their approaches to supporting students and questioned if they could recruit qualified teachers by testing their ability to use Zoom functions. She reasoned:

The ALC and ELC have insufficient expertise in working with ESL students. They take a big picture issue. The new guidelines that they came up with in the integrity module and the other modules that grad students have to do now leaves the door open to discrimination for language issues because it specifically identifies copyediting as plagiarism and copyediting is not plagiarism, it's just a system. (II: 03/10/2021, p. 13)

The participants' experiences resonate with my own experiences with many workshops and seminars I registered for during my coursework in 2018-2019:

I attended almost all orientation workshops upon arrival, and then registered myself for many workshops during my coursework, trying to equip myself with academic skills needed to work and study in a Canadian institution. I found those research skills workshops to be the most useful ones for my existing research. Other academic workshops offered very brief general ideas on each topic. I also took a research-writing class at the English Language Centre recommended by my advisor; however, the course disappointed me with a few classes on basic grammar, thesis structures, and some advice on sentence-level and academic vocabulary for research writing that I could find online. Graduate students from all disciplines were registered for the same course. The instructor said he did a course-based master's degree in teaching English. The course did not add anything to my academic writing skills for my discipline. I quit registering for

institutional workshops after my coursework but attended those talks and seminars available at the Faculty of Education. (SN)

Acknowledging the importance of writing support, it is essential to note that IGSs at UM relied mainly on the Academic Learning Centre (ALC) and English Learning Centre (ELC). The ELC provides Part-time Academic English courses for which graduate students could register with a subsidized fee by applying through the University of Manitoba Graduate Student Association (UMGSA). According to the UMGSA office, the subsidy to graduate students was offered and covered by UMGSA for Spring/Summer 2022 and then split between UMGSA and FGS starting from Fall term 2022. Until Winter Term 2024, the subsidy had paid for 186 graduate students at UM (UMGSA office, 2024). Although the figure did not show the actual number of students who wanted to improve their English competency for graduate study, it supported the need for academic English workshops among graduate students at UM. The writing workshops, writing tutor services, and writing bootcamps were designed for all graduate students. In addition, EAL support on the UM website refers to one specialist instructor who could help EAL students at UM to improve their academic English, followed by some EAL resources as shown in Figure 6. Sharma (2018) and Anderson (2015) pointed out that it was problematic that many institutional writing centres used the same sources of support for IGSs and international undergraduate students while disregarding the complexity of IGSs' needs. Feak (2016) asserted that efficient support for IGSs should always attach to their needs and layout the transition at the beginning of the program as well as ongoing and throughout to the end. Despite the efficient support at the faculty and department levels, Evans and Andrade (2015) insisted on

institution-wide support in assessing the diverse needs of international students, and quality assurance of those needs being met.

In conclusion, the findings show the need for academic writing support specially tailored to the student's academic disciplinary needs throughout the graduate program. The analysis of the institutional resources showed that they mostly supported students' general academic skills and introductory aspects of academic writing. The student participants found the institutional support too generic and basic, which did not align with their discipline-specific needs for their graduate program at UM.

On-Campus Socialization

Some participants acknowledged the physical and virtual space, classrooms, facilities, graduate workshops, and a couple of programs/activities organized by the International Centre, such as the Welcome Mentor Program and Game Night, as meeting venues and channels for them to socialize into the postsecondary discourse and integrate into the context of UM, especially at the beginning of their programs. They also stressed the practical social and academic learning and networking from becoming involved in on-campus employment. Only one student from each faculty reported getting involved with or being impacted by the UM Graduate Student Association (UMGSA) but did not acknowledge its social role in IGSs' and graduate students' lives. Most participants talked more about their connections and networking within their discipline faculties, which are discussed in this section.

Anna expressed her perspective: "I think the biggest support I got is from friends" (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 11). Learning from fellow international students was most helpful to her as they may have encountered the same issues or had the same concerns; therefore, they usually shared

the relevant resources or support for her needs. Anna had some social support from “The Welcome Mentor program,” where old-timer graduate students volunteer to assist new graduate students. The International Centre offered this program. Anna found the support helpful to her socially, making her feel confident knowing someone was there for her, but she wished to have an academic mentor in her academic program as well. She shared:

I have a mentor in my social life. That is a program from [the] International Center, that is a Welcome Mentor. She helped me a lot with academic life like registration. If I don't know anything, I'll ask her. When I didn't know how to use the bus, I asked her. My mentor helped me a lot. She's from the International Center. So maybe we need someone like that about academic learning. (SI2: 03/18/2021, p. 12)

On-campus social interactions between EAL students and others, including peers, classmates, staff, senior students, alumni, club/group members, mentors, tutors, conversation buddies either in-person or online through different platforms or spaces or working on any institutional resources, all offer potential opportunities for students' L2/EAL acquisition and learning (Surtees & Duff, 2022). In this perspective, language socialization theory acknowledges resources such as humans, artifacts, documents, physical and virtual space/platforms, and information technology-assisted resources that facilitate students' interactions for language learning and knowledge learning. Being employed as a research assistant helped Alice improve her academic skills and communication skills because she learned to conduct a literature review and communicate with the ethics board. Fulfilling this role not only helped with her own thesis project but, at the same time, also helped develop her thinking. She asserted: “It's helpful, not just in learning the process, in the filling of form appropriately, but also in communicating

effectively with other people, makes yourself understood to others in a professional way” (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 13). Rosy was also working as a research assistant. However, she preferred to work as a teaching assistant (TA) because “I find a TA more helpful and upgrading my language skills or generally my academic skills” (SI2: 03/24/2021, p. 18) while she did the same tasks for her research assistant role such as interviewing participants and preparing transcripts.

In Engineering, a couple of participants, Jane and Suraj, considered both interacting with other students, including international graduate students, and talking with the students who spoke English as their L1, as opportunities to learn, socialize, and improve their English. In Jane’s words, she sometimes spoke “broken language” so she could learn English properly “if I can interact with more Canadian people or native English-speaking people” (SI2, 03/11/2021, p. 16). For Suraj, he liked to get connect with international students at workshops he attended before COVID-19. Also, he wanted to learn the academic discipline and the language by interacting with Canadian students and having an in-person learning experience on a Canadian campus. He reckoned that working on campus helped him improve his English better than other activities because he could interact with instructors and students. Also, working facilitated his discipline learning:

I’m [...] working as a teaching assistant, and someone is asking me questions. Because as soil science or agriculture is all about geographic, and as I’m new to Canada, I don’t know much about the Canadian [geography], how the Canadian soils and the Manitoba soils are, or what kind of original crops there are for how the standing of the crop box here. In [my home country], the system is totally different, and here in Canada it’s totally

different and it's really good experience for learning the new thing from the Canadian students. (SI1, 02/12, 2021, p. 8)

The sociocultural theory stresses the role of the environment, which provides space and opportunities for learning. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) discussed earlier provides scaffolding assistance and instructions, interactions, and collaborations between the students and more competent others (Vygotsky, 1978). Also, Surtees and Duff (2022) emphasized the multi-modal social aspects of second language acquisition, especially oral language use and communication competence, when L2 students socialized into the target communities and learned sociocultural values. Thus, Surtees and Duff (2022) suggested distancing from traditional accuracy and grammar-focused outcomes and using repertoire-based approaches to encourage L2 students to get as involved as possible with interlocutors in the context they could. In Jane's and Suraj's cases, they either exchanged knowledge or learned the language used by interacting with Canadian students as teaching assistants.

However, the instructor participant, Peggy, noticed the backlash in professors' minds in terms of recruiting students for teaching assistant or research assistant jobs. The international students were lower on their list of choices because "[i]t doesn't matter how brilliant the international student is, it is the professor's brain work" (II: 3/10/2021, p. 9). The international student participants in a study implemented by Arthur et al. (2022) might relate to Peggy's concern because they also were worried about Canadian employers' biases, which barred them from employment prospects. The authors recommended the collaboration between employers and postsecondary staff to enhance the opportunities for international students. Fisher (2021)

emphasized the importance of teaching and learning professional development for international teaching assistants.

The doctoral students from four departments of humanities and sciences taking part in Golde's (2005) study confirmed that peers and the student community were valued as a source of support and education. In this study, the communicative environment was a campus setting where students used the language to interact with different agencies, people, and artifacts for social, cultural, and academic purposes, which, in turn, became opportunities for them to practice and learn to use the language. Also, the interactions with peers and people in the students' networking beyond classroom walls helped bring about confidence and shape their identities and writing choices (Bankier, 2022). Regarding participation with UMGSA as a wider graduate student population, the participants from both faculties found a lack of both social and academic activities or events for graduate students to socialize across the UM. Being a member of the organization, Jane found "there are a lot of things" going inside, and sometimes those people are doing things themselves and using their friends, and they are not taking account of us [i.e., international graduate students], so I just dropped [out]" (SI2: 03/24/2021, p. 17). On the contrary, Rosy was actively involved with the UM Graduate Student Association, which gave her a chance to acquire some new language because her student peers were in different disciplinary contexts from hers. She shared:

Lots of terms that they use, which are new to me, and I think it's like a good opportunity for me to get familiar, so I believe different ways of engaging with different people from different majors helping about some specific like administrative tasks are making me familiar with the new language. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 11)

The students considered the institutional EAP support and resources as a bridge into the UM academic context and found on-campus working experience as an effective way to learn, become familiar with the system, and socialize in the wider context. In other words, the institutional resources and support met the students' early needs for preliminary/pre-program social and academic transition into the wider UM context, while further in-program needs remained unsatisfied. From the perspective of sociocultural theory and language socialization theory, institutional writing support centres and other academic supports leave a gap for the faculties and/or departments to fill in within their disciplinary approach to supporting their students. Otherwise, it was time for the centres to change their approaches and include IGSs' needs (Rienties & Jindal-Snape, 2016; Sharma, 2018).

Experiences With Discipline Faculties of Education and Engineering

In language socialization theory, instructors and peers are active agents in students' socialization into academic discourse through interactions with communities of practice or networks (Duff & Anderson, 2015; Kobayashi et al., 2017). I view faculties as communities of practice where they could either directly provide language support or create a playground or opportunities for language-related mentoring, teaching, or training to happen. The research looked into the cases of the disciplines of Education and Engineering. Support services could be provided at the faculty or department levels. I present information on departments in the Faculty of Education and Price Faculty of Engineering in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. The Education participants discussed supports at the faculty level, while the Engineering participants usually referred to their discipline departments, namely the Department of Electrical Engineering or the Department of Civil Engineering, in the interviews. The findings showed that at the

faculty/department level, there was little academic language/writing support from both faculties, leaving the responsibility in the hands of the institutional centres of support.

Golde (2005) confirmed the significant role of departments and disciplines in reducing the research-based graduate students' "attrition" and decreasing the drop-out rate. Golde (2005) argued that the departments could support students' preparation for research life with courses or tutoring sessions on required background knowledge or cover potential gaps in disciplinary content. Further familiarizing students with the departmental community's cultural fundamentals would facilitate their adaptation speed. The students believed the programs structurally connected them to the rest of the community, including peers and the department. It should be noted that the graduate students from humanities experienced greater isolation and social challenges entering graduate school than those from sciences who had prior experience with labs or were taken to labs right away (Golde, 2005). The study (Golde, 2005) pointed out that the department level could help to end the isolation by organizing some activities to pull the student population together. However, the participants from both faculties in this study claimed that they were not aware of any EAL-specific supports from the faculties except for their circulations of emails on workshops or training provided by the institutions. The students from Engineering were more satisfied with the availability of supports in their faculty than their Education counterparts. IGSs in both Education and Engineering sought more support from the disciplinary faculty. The participants valued peers and graduate fellows within the discipline as good resources for learning, hands-on experiences, or "same-boat" and "like-mind" sharing and networking. Although the membership or participation in activities in a student association, group, or academic club made them feel connected as eligible members of the academic

community, most participants referred to their informal peer networking built between individuals as more efficient and prevalent than the student associations or groups.

Education

I searched the Education website for available international graduate student supports found at <https://umanitoba.ca/education/student-experience/resources-graduate-students-education> and from the Education Graduate Student Association (EdGSA) website at <https://edgsa.weebly.com/> and collected information as a community member. I summarized and categorized the information into administrative, social, and academic supports in Table 4 below. The fund for copyediting could be seen as a type of language support for graduate students, including EAL students, in the faculty; there was no other EAL support for EAL graduate students or IGSs in Education.

In Table 4, the Faculty of Education is represented by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research who works with graduate students represented by EdGSA. These two visible organizations collaborate to organize two major events yearly: orientation in the fall term and the graduate student research symposium in the winter term. They also collaborated with the ALC to organize one-off writing workshops delivered to students of Education (2020- 2021). After the data collection of this study completed in 2021, I observed the activities and events have evolved with the start of a graduate student presentation panel series, academic workshops, and monthly PhD writing group meetings facilitated by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research (ended in 2023) and the copyediting fund was newly offered in 2023. However, there was no information of language support for EAL graduate students provided by the departments.

Table 4*Administrative, Social, and Academic Resources in the Faculty of Education*

Departments/Offices	Administrative Roles	Social & Academic Supports for Graduate Students	EAL/EAP Supports
Graduate Programs and Research (GP&R) Contact: Associate Dean's Office	-Admissions -Forms -Awards and funds -Administrative support for PhD program	- Collaborating with EdGSA to organize student symposiums and academic workshops or seminars -Distributing information and advertisement emails -Newsletter -PhD writing group (academic year 2022-2023) - <i>Copyediting Fund</i> (since 2023) -Partnering with ALC workshops (in 2020 & 2021)	<i>Copyediting Fund</i> (since 2023)
Department of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (CTL) Contact: CTL Department Head's Office	Administrative support for master's programs in CTL	N/A	N/A
Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology (EAF&P) Contact: EAFP Department Head's Office	Administrative supports for graduate students in master's programs in EAFP	N//A	N/A
Education Graduate Student Association (EdGSA) Contact: EdGSA Office, Education Building, WhatsApp (ended 2023), Discord (since 2023), website, email	N/A	-Collaborating with Office of GP&R to support and connect graduate students to organize yearly symposiums, academic presentations or workshops - Organizing social media groups and gatherings for graduate students' networking and engagement	N/A

Note. N/A refers "Not Available"

No Language Support for EAL Graduate Students. Five out of six of the participants were unaware of any EAL supports or resources provided by the faculty, they referred to the student-initiated study group as a form of social support. Anna responded to the question about whether there were any specific supports for EAL graduate students as follows: "No, I'm not

aware that there is any kind of support yet. I've never used any of these” (SI1: 02/2018, 2021, p. 8). Peter acknowledged the yearly graduate student symposium, though not EAL or IGS-specific, as helpful in orienting and directing graduate students academically, and had a better experience attending a workshop collaboratively offered by the faculty and the Academic Learning Centre. However, he insisted that the support offered by the faculty was insufficient to the needs of students. He asserted: “In the past, I would say that our faculty do not provide enough or support academic English writing skills. At this moment still maybe, I mean the workshops, the training workshop are not enough” (SI2: 03/19/2021, p. 24). Rosy, a third-year EAL PhD student, replied:

I lack knowledge in this part, I really don't know what faculty are doing for EAL graduate students. I am an EAL graduate student, but I don't know, so it is not very good to not be aware of the services if they exist. So there I find that kind of lag gap informing if there is anything (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 9).

With an understanding of how the administration system runs, Peggy and Joanna verified the role of Faculty, especially the Office of Graduate Programs and Research, to support PhD students and the departments' role in supporting master's students. Joanna insisted that the department head and the Associate Dean should have “regular check-in meetings” with the students and make sure that the instructors were capable of working with IGSs. Joanna persisted:

I would like to see more accessible and regular access to writing support within the faculty with people who are familiar with the kinds of assignments students would be getting, the kinds of topics and theories that they're going to be dealing with,

terminology, and who can help with their specific assignments throughout the year. (II: 04/08/2021, p. 12)

Instructor Peggy concluded that there was no “political will” to address IGSs’ needs at the administration level of the faculty. She noted there were many promises made to increase support for IGSs that have never been realized. Peggy’s request that dedicated funds be used to support copy editing services for IGSs was rejected at the time the ask was made, though later the faculty implemented a copy-editing fund for all graduate students in response to some L1 students complaining it was unfair to provide supports specifically and solely for EAL students.

I considered myself as an old-timer EAL student in the faculty who also worked as an Education Graduate Student Association executive member for three years. I could relate with the Education participants’ experiences as an IGS in the faculty. Since I had always wanted to improve my academic writing and communication, I became involved in several graduate student initiatives as follows:

I was assigned to be a member of a council formed in an endeavor to work with a couple of professors who were experts in the field and request EAL writing support for IGSs in the faculty. There were discussions back and forth among the members of the council and the professors on what support, and how it should be delivered; however, the endeavor failed without any actions. I believe the reason was the faculty administrators did not take the problem seriously to collaborate with the council to support IGSs with academic writing. Over the last seven years in the program, I have seen a few turnovers in the administration of the faculty who never tapped on the issue again. I wonder if the

students were negatively impacted by those fast-track turnovers of the administration with the inconsistency in managerial styles. (SN)

Peer Support Within the Discipline. Douglas et al. (2022) indicated that student associations/unions or individuals contributed significantly to advocacy and support for international students' experiences through their activities. The participants from education saw the activities and events organized by the Office of Graduate Programs and Research and Education Graduate Student Association as opportunities to learn, practice, and socialize with people in the community. Also, they mentioned the student WhatsApp group, which they thought was run by the association, and the formal study space for graduate students as a major venue to network with other graduate students. The WhatsApp group was originally initiated by some Education graduate students for the students to get connected. They all loved being in this virtual group because all the activities were initiated by students and for students, which kept them engaged and offered a sense of belonging. Before the pandemic hit, the study groups organized some regular in-person meetings where graduate students could walk in, share ideas, and/or ask questions. However, all participants believed the study group should be better-organized and prioritize "useful activities" to help students. Peter expressed:

I know sometimes we have such kind of activity. So, before the winter break last year, maybe you know that [a name of EdGSA member] always organized some activities.

That is good. To be honest, I think our faculty support in this app isn't enough. These activities are helpful for me to communicate informally with peers. (SI2: 03/19/2021, p. 20)

Bankier (2022) suggested that socialization through CoPs or networks inside and outside classrooms with peers in L2 communities could facilitate both academic writing and understanding of the expectations. Also, Braxley (2005) found that dialogues with peers, instructors, writing tutors, and texts helped them master both content learning and academic writing genres in their fields. In this study, Rosy found some informal conversations with peers in the graduate study space in the Education building helped her develop academic thoughts. Mike also found it beneficial to attend symposiums and gatherings organized by the faculty and graduate student association. Conversations with professors and graduate fellows who were “like-minded people” enabled him to build a network and widen his knowledge in the field: “I remember during the previous symposiums we could get together; we could speak to some professors, we could just benefit from their knowledge” (SI1: 02/24/2021, p. 9).

In short, the Education participants acknowledged interactions with peers and student populations as resources for their socialization and learning on campus. Although the students put many expectations on the group as an accessible and hands-on experience for students from the same discipline to interact, they also felt student-initiated activities for students and by students could be more impactful if the scale, efficiency, topics, and needs were more thoroughly addressed.

Engineering

From the Engineering directory, I searched for supports and resources at the Graduate Programs tab leading to different departments at <https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/programs-of-study#graduate-programs> and the Student Experience tab accessed at this link <https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/student-experience>, which navigated to several societies and

students groups for students to get involved. I also searched for the names of departmental graduate student associations on the Internet to get information on their support resources, which I found from their social media accounts, while information for the Biomedical Graduate Student Association was advertised on the department website. I collected, analysed, summarized and categorized the data of five departments, Research and graduate programs, student organizations and related societies in Engineering, and the Engineering library as shown in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5

Administrative, Social, and Academic Resources in the Price Faculty of Engineering

Departments/Organizations	Administrative Roles & Facilities	Social & Academic Supports	EAL/EAP Supports
Research and graduate programs Contact: Associate Dean Office	-Administrative roles	N/A	N/A
Biomedical Engineering -a multidisciplinary graduate program between the faculties of Engineering, Medicine and Science Contact: Department Head's Office Website: https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/biomedical	-Administrative documents, guides, and forms. - Information on funds and awards -Research labs	-Bi-weekly Biomedical Engineering Seminars (Mandatory) -Referral links to FGS' resources	N/A
Biomedical Engineering Graduate Student Association Website: https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/biomedical	N/A	-Student support, advocacy, leadership & engagement -Activities: orientation programing & off-campus trips	N/A
Department of Biosystems Engineering Website: https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/biosystems	-Administrative documents, guides, and forms -Information on funds and awards -Research labs	-Referral links to Engineering faculty's & FGS' resources	N/A
Biosystems Engineering Graduate Student Group- BEGSG (since2016 on Facebook): https://www.facebook.com/groups/374690529587201?locale=es_ES	N/A	-Networking and productive relationships among BEGSA at UM -Activities: Talk series online (2021)	N/A
Department of Civil Engineering https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/civil	-Administrative documents, guides, and forms -Information on funds and awards	-Civil Engineering Seminars and Workshops -Referral links to Engineering Faculty's and FGS' resources	N/A

-Research labs

Civil Engineering Graduate Student Association (CEGSA). Contact:CEGSA@groups.myanitoba.ca	N/A	N/A	N/A
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/electrical-and-computer-engineering	-Administrative documents, guides, and forms -Information on funds and awards -Research labs & groups	-Referral links to Engineering Faculty's and FGS' resources	
Electrical and Computer Engineering Graduate Students' Association – UManitoba ECE-GSA https://www.facebook.com/ECEGSAUofM/	N/A	-Networking and engagement	N/A
Department of Mechanical Engineering https://umanitoba.ca/engineering/mechanical	-Administrative documents, guides, and forms -Information on funds and awards -Research areas & labs	Referral links to Engineering Faculty's and FGS' resources	N/A
Engineering Library	Facilities to accommodate individual and group study needs.	N/A	N/A
Representational Societies https://umes.mb.ca/page/student-groups/representational-societies University of Manitoba Engineering Society (UMES) UMES Student Groups – Undergraduate Leadership	N/A	The Women of Manitoba Engineering Network (WOMEN) -Connecting people with the same interests in Engineering	N/A

Note. N/A refers to “Not available.”

Table 5 shows five departments with graduate programs in Biomedical Engineering, Biosystem Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, which were home to 245 IGSs out of a total of 402 graduate students in the faculty in the Fall 2023 (UM Office of Institutional Analysis, 2024a; 2024b). The student participants were from the first four departments, and no one was from Mechanical Engineering. One participant was from the Biomedical Engineering program jointly administered by the faculties of Engineering, Science, and Medicine. Therefore, I have included the department

information. The participants referred to the faculty supports, or lack thereof, at the department level.

No Language Support From the Faculty. The Engineering students were unaware of the language writing support provided by the faculty and at the department level, but the administration circulated the related information about workshops or training courses provided by the institutional centres and organizations to their students through email. The participants all admitted that it would be helpful if departments provided some sort of language-related support to Engineering graduate students. Jane confirmed:

Department, I think mainly what they do is distributed those emails. I think they don't play any specific role in making the EAL graduate students learn English kind of thing. They don't offer any courses or any tasks for them, but they circulate the events that are coming through the English Learning Center, something that graduate students can join. (SI1: 02/11/2021, p .4)

However, Douglas (2015) indicated that L2 graduate students' needs for scientific writing were hard to meet by the university-wide writing support with the staff certified with general TESOL certifications rather than English for specific or academic purposes expertise. Also, since the students did not learn disciplinary writing embedded in the academic curricula nor receive writing support from their discipline department, they used the resources provided by other stakeholders or campus-wide support services who wrote their own "underground support systems" (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2015, p. 1).

The Engineering Instructor Rachel's perspective concurred with the students' experiences. She ascertained that "We don't have academic English support for this major for

this specific thing in the faculty” (II: 10/01/2021, p. 11). However, she affirmed that there was a need for such kind of support among EAL graduate students in Engineering, especially the thesis-based and EAL students. Instructor Rachel emphasized:

But I think we need someone to do this because I think it’s extremely important to support EAL graduate students in communicating their research. To my understanding, they may need to hire someone; they have student services and academic writing supports at U of M, but I think the Engineering graduate students need more support. I think that would be very beneficial for the students. (II: 10/01/2021, p. 5)

The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board recognized the importance of Engineering graduates’ ability to communicate for their profession. Therefore, they insisted on the need for a communication unit for Engineering education (Graves & Graves, 2012). This approach addresses the support tailored to specific needs to enhance understanding of technical language associated in technical documents (Graves & Graves, 2012). When asked about perspectives on the departmental or faculty support for EAL graduate students, Mathew had no idea if they had something tailored to the student’s needs. Mathew was struggling to write his thesis: “I mean the advanced level, maybe more oriented to the Engineering, more oriented to the life of sciences” (SI2: 03/16/2021, p. 20). He believed the faculty members could do the job because they had relevant experience. Steward also envisioned something tailored just for Engineering:

I looked at that particular one in Engineering because it was tailored to Engineering research. So, the kind of data that we do is that we don't do a lot of qualitative data, we use a lot of quantitative data. So, it was tailored for that because it's completely different

than psychology, for instance. I think each faculty could have its own. (SI2: 03/26/2021, p. 25)

Echoing Steward's remarks, Brook-Gillies et al. (2015) asserted that academic writing was not only different by discipline but also by sub-disciplines, which means the insiders in each discipline determined the writing conventions. Russel (2002) insisted that discipline writing with specific "rhetorical conventions ... so bound up with the activity of the discipline" (p. 17) should be included as a part of the disciplinary education or taught by the discipline faculty.

Peer Support. Rodríguez et al. (2019) found that international graduate students in the hard sciences developed a sense of belonging in the academic departmental community through interactions with peers and classmates in activities such as orientations. All Engineering students considered peers or classmates as reliable resources for academic study, communication, and hands-on experience. In contrast, workshops or other academic, social, and cultural activities organized by the faculty/department were perceived as ideal places to exchange knowledge, widen knowledge, and network within their discipline community. For a couple of them, on-campus jobs played a vital role in gaining experience, preparing for future jobs and learning and practicing language as well.

Noel was impressed with the orientation hosted by the department, where the department head shared information about the program, while Suraj, Jia, and Jane said they had never experienced any social and cultural events in the faculty. Jane was aware that groups and associations were offered to students in her department and at the university, but she never had experience with departmental workshops or activities:

In the department, there are some like student groups, but I have never seen that they do any workshops, or any activities. There are people who can get together and talk even in the inside the department, I'm saying. Inside the department or the Engineering faculty, I have not experienced something like this. (SI1: 02/11/2021, p. 5)

Participants from Engineering also regarded graduate fellows or classmates as helpful resources who shared the same concerns and interests and were close and easy to reach. Jia could learn a lot of hands-on experience and skills from her lab mates and lab advisors. She shared: “I socialize a lot with my lab mates, and then there are some other PhD students who are in the faculty, but I can generally jump in and they're helping a lot” (SI2: 03/27/2021, p. 27). For example, Jia expected the instructor of a course to share the sample format for an assignment, but they did not. Later, she asked a PhD student in the department to show her the sample. She benefited from graduate fellows’ hands-on experience:

If I ask the most important question from the professor after the class so that the rest of the questions, I try to get its answer from my classmates, so usually I have got those answers. I haven't got any like, it's not needed for me right now, so maybe I can use that, then I can use that resource, and it works. (SI1, 02/27/2021, p. 7)

Table 5 shows many student clubs/groups for graduate Engineering students to join. All participants perceived the benefits that student clubs/groups/organizations could bring to them. Jane and Jia belonged to some groups, but some others might not have a chance yet or just uninterested for several reasons. For example, Steward had to prioritize family with small kids; Suraj disliked online meetings due to COVID-19, while Noel, in his first term, was too new to identify if staff from the International Centre were working with an undergraduate student

organization. Mathew used to be involved with some social groups and enjoy activities such as getting around the city and doing things in winter, but he did not anymore: “it’s because of the time with my projects going on and all the courses, all the stress” (SI2: 02/16/2021, p. 21). Jane was a member of a group of female engineers where she had opportunities to develop her communication skills, including how to write formal emails and leadership skills, which participants could not learn from courses:

Yes, with this sort of IEEE, we usually organize small events like technical seminars and then talks and then information sessions, and then we also do outreach events for high school students. ... In that case also, you will learn how to write an email, how to write an email in a polite manner, ... It's really hard as a student to learn them by a course, it's always to use them in your life and learn them, I guess. (SI2: 03/11/2021, p. 17)

It is true that communication competence must be applied in the relevant social, cultural, and academic contexts. It is of paramount importance to learn to communicate in English in the context of a Canadian postsecondary institution for EAL graduate students so that they would feel more confident to socialize with people on campus and be themselves. They would need to learn from the small things such as how to address professors in an email, how to start a conversation in an academic setting.

In short, Education students found the student community within the faculty helpful in advocating for graduate students and international students while the participants were not aware of EAL or EAP support at the discipline faculty. Engineering participants did not experience language support, nor did they find the official presence or advocacy from a student association. The participants from both disciplines acknowledged the bigger role of peers in terms of social

support than that in academic support although peer interactions enhanced communication skills among fellows in the same academic community. It should be noted from the finding that the students from Education acknowledged the role of the sole graduate student association in the faculty in providing supports and a network for IGSs. In contrast, no one from Engineering mentioned a similar perspective regarding their department or faculty, although almost every department had one graduate association (see Table 5). The Education Graduate Student Association was founded by IGSs and domestic students and continued to have strong leadership from this group by the time of the interviews conducted. The Engineering participants also did not mention much about all of those societies and groups in Engineering in Table 7 except for the IEEE and Women in Engineering. This finding raises a question of the efficiency of those graduate student associations from departments and challenges the relevance or inclusion of the associations, societies and groups for students in Engineering and posited whether they were more suitable for undergraduate students. The other possibility could be that IGSs did not see themselves represented in these associations in Engineering in the same way that students did in Education. From the instructors' perspectives, although they were willing to provide the EAL graduate students with additional assistance, the faculties did not offer sufficient resources for them to support their students.

Experiences With Instructors and Advisors

Within sociocultural theory and a language socialization lens, agents such as instructors, advisors, mentors, and more experienced peers are crucial to the development of a novice/newcomer to the community in the way that the interactions with those people facilitate their learning or create the opportunity for learning to happen (Kobayashi et al., 2017). On the

one hand, the participants acknowledged their important roles as the major resources of their learning, the resource navigators, and the primary point of communication. On the other hand, the participants negated advisors'/instructors' responsibility to help students with EAL learning and viewed them as supports only for the subject matters. The role of instructors, in general, is seen as very important to the graduate students, while the role of advisors was perceived by IGSs as the most influential to IGSs.

Within this study, professors and instructors are both referred to as instructors who teach courses or interact with students for the purpose of academic teaching and training. Advisors or supervisors refer to program advisors who are appointed to supervise and advise a graduate student in a master's or PhD program.

Students' Perspectives

It's Not the Instructor's Responsibility but They Were EAP Resources and Referees. The students still expected to receive more direct help from instructors and advisors rather than being referred away to a third space for support. Peter reasoned, "I also think that our university has expected our supervisors to do a lot so much" (SI1: 02/15/2024, p. 11). He asserted:

So actually, I do not think that instructors or supervisors are responsible for helping international students to learn English for academic purposes. This is not their job. Their job is to teach the courses, but they can offer some advice about how to improve your English for academic purposes, maybe provide some useful sources, either online or on campus. (SI1: 02/15/2021, p. 9)

While Anna expected the instructors to take more active roles by identifying students' problems and referring them to the support resources for EAL students, Alice appreciated the action her advisor undertook to refer her to English language classes even though the English courses did not help much. She also lauded an instructor who introduced a teaching assistant with expertise in the field to offer support related to academic areas and served as a mentor to give students advice as the teaching assistant had the experience. She speculated that one of the reasons that the professor provided the support was because they used to be an IGS so they had the "same boat" experience: "she's been there so she understands what we are going through... so it's really nice to have a professor who has similar who shares similar experiences" (SI2: 03/17/2021, p. 19). Alice's sharing revealed her expectations as a student that instructors would understand or get to know more about the IGSs' needs and provide support accordingly.

In the same light, all participants in Engineering agreed that it would be too much to ask professors and advisors to provide language support because they were already busy although instructors and advisors played an important role and were regarded as more trusted and authentic than "external sources" in their graduate program. They valued their instructors' and professors' roles as EAP resources for their learning and EAP resource navigators but negated their responsibilities for language support. Jane found that the real-time interactions between graduate students and instructors in the class were limited. Therefore, students were largely expected to work on their own. Jane noted:

All the courses that I took were done by English-speaking professors. So, I don't know how they can help actually, because like it's very limited time that we engage with them

just three hours a week and then we just talk with them if we have questions on that. (SI1: 02/11/2021, p. 4)

Suraj's instructors and advisor encouraged him to be exposed to different genres featuring the English language, from academic journals to novels. He explained his advisor's purpose in doing that: "[w]hat they try to do is try to open up your thoughts, try to give you some experience on how to structure your sentences. So, I think that my advisor has been so helpful for me" (SI1: 02/14/2021, p. 10). Odena and Burgess (2017) argued that writing support must be provided within the practices of graduate students' disciplines, which involved the advisors' academic expectations aligning with requests for advisors' more active supervision to support their students.

Instructors and Advisors as Role Models of Expertise and Success in the Field. The student participants from both faculties wanted more interactions or connections with their instructors or advisors because they saw them as good resources for disciplinary language and expertise in the field. Curtin et al. (2013) acknowledged the role of advisors to connect doctoral students with their departments and to encourage them to develop an academic self-concept and a sense of belonging. In other words, the advisors influence both international and domestic doctoral students in how they conceptualize their academic success in the field. Ofelia, Peter, and Rosy expected to connect with their instructors and advisors as experts/scholars/researchers in the field to gain more perspectives and approaches. Ofelia highlighted:

I think there is a need to help understand and to create this kind of interactions and connections with all of instructors, especially with the stress that they speak English as a native language. I think that this is going to be very, very useful. But not only that they

speak English as the first language, more especially speak it in your area, in your field, they can support with frequently discussions with different cultural visions about, different perspectives, cultural perspectives. I have my perspective because I'm from [home country], but what is the perspective of a woman from Canada? (SI2: 03/24/2021, p. 13)

At the graduate level, the program advisors or supervisors played critical roles in students' graduate program experiences and the success of IGSSs' study because they were regarded as the checkpoint where the students would go when they had any questions about their studies. The doctoral students from both STEM and humanities in Kiley (2015) struggled with threshold concepts and theorizing their research results and required supervisors to help with these aspects. Also, from a sociocultural perspective, Northcott (2019) emphasized tailoring scaffolding and support to learners' needs because graduate students academically specialize in particular disciplines. In SCT, Storch (2017b) suggested appreciating the learners' active agency in their learning and offering them opportunities to self-direct and take actions or problem-solve, which involved activating their L1 and prior backgrounds.

The Engineering participants were satisfied with the level and quality of support from their supervisors; therefore, they seemed to mention more about their advisors' role as the central point or "best attention" with big impacts on their study. From their experience, it seemed that their advisors were ready to provide some language advice support. Jane believed that if a student had any difficulties in their studies, they would normally go to their advisor. Her advisor guided her to write papers and helped her correct her mistakes on her journal papers which she found challenging to write. Jane said, "When it comes to my supervisor, I don't think he should

do anything more, he's like trying more than enough to help me” (SI1: 02/11/2021, p. 3). Jane considered her supervisor as a resource who helped her correct her papers and with whose expertise she could practice “resourceful conversations” by presenting, convincing, and demonstrating her research ideas. In Jia’s opinion, the advisor also played the role of a guide to a graduate student, and then the student did the rest with their independent working and learning ability.

Schneider and Jin (2022) explained that instructors who explicitly recognized their roles in socializing their IGSs into the target academic community were more likely to foster and promote socialization linguistically within and outside classrooms. Some of these instructors in this study, as explicit socializers, offered critical writing feedback and shared experiences in using linguistic skills and cultural knowledge for job search to socialize graduate students in future professional communities (Schneider & Jin, 2022). The Engineering participants would all like to have good relationships with their instructors and advisors because they considered them as sources of knowledge and inspiration. The participants looked up to their instructors/advisors as a role model. Mathew was proud of his instructors in the faculty and saw them as examples of academic success because many of them were EAL speakers and might originally be from backgrounds other than Canadian-born. He believed that they played a significant role in motivating IGSs to succeed in academia. Steward regarded instructors and advisors as the source for academic socialization, he did not mind going “an extra mile”, while Suraj wanted to build good relationships with professors because they would be his referees for employment.

Instructors' Perspectives

Cao et al.'s (2014) research findings generated from data collected in two big universities in the US revealed that if the faculty committed to supporting international students, it would motivate professors and faculty members to make relevant adjustments in their teaching practices to meet the needs of these students. Also, the results from the questionnaire completed by 413 faculty members participating in the study showed that the faculty members' perspectives were followed up with concrete supportive actions they could take to support international students (Cao et al., 2014). The internationalization of education positively impacted not only international students' academic performance and engagement but also the instructors' own teaching satisfaction (Cao et al., 2014). The instructor participants in this study were sensitive to their EAL students' needs and supported them by either referring them to available resources or helping them to improve some language aspects. In my study, Joanna confirmed the instructors' role in connecting students with different resources, including peers and the communities in the institution. Also, Joanna emphasized the importance of building a relationship with students, especially EAL students, and taking time to understand them and their backgrounds. With language aspects, she was willing to help her students: "although I certainly alert students to other resources, I personally do a lot of editing with those students, and I know that's going to happen" (I: 04/08/2021, p. 3).

Cao et al. (2014) pointed out that "if a teacher is not satisfied with the English proficiency level of the international students in her class (presumably this is not an English or ESL course), she will not necessarily do something about it if she doesn't think it is important to address this issue" (p. 590). They emphasized the significance of motivating faculty members'

engagement and enhancing their readiness and a sense of responsibility to support international students. Rachel's perspective related to students' opinions that providing linguistic support was not the instructor's or advisor's responsibility, but she asserted that they must be aware of the EAL students' challenges and had some resources to refer them to. She elaborated:

But professors don't have the responsibility to fix the communications of the student, they expect the students to have that level of communication skills. But they probably don't have resources for the students, either they send them for help, or they mean it and ask them to develop skill to get the top of it. (II: 10/01/2021, p. 9)

She observed that many other instructors in the faculty applied the same approach. She believed both domestic and EAL graduate students might need to improve their academic writing. As an advisor, she offered herself as a language support resource for both her domestic and international students to help them improve their writing. In addition, Rachel's pedagogy involved mutual and active learning through interactions and got students interacting together and engaging through activities. She developed her teaching and kept her mind open to address the diverse needs of learners from various backgrounds. She educated herself to take inclusive steps to enact accessible teaching, and she valued different perspectives of IGSs. This perspective is congruent with that of Freak (2016), who advocated for instructors to keep learning graduate students' writing and speaking needs because their needs were diverse and intricate with some new emerging concerns. On the contrary, instructors in some research denied their responsibility to support students in improving their language competencies due to their existing heavy workload (Goldsmith & Wiley, 2016; Heringer, 2021). For instance, instructors in a Canadian institution viewed international students' needs for language support as

“burdensome,” “overwhelming,” and “a lot of homework” because they had to juggle different responsibilities at the same time as they seemed to be unprepared for supporting international students in the class (Heringer, 2021, p. 219).

In short, student participants from both faculties regarded the instructor and advisor’s roles as EAP resources and EAP resource navigators. From the student’s perspective, the university might have laid too many responsibilities on professors who were so busy that the students did not want to burden them more by asking for language support from them. Viewing instructors primarily as content providers, the students expected increased engagement and mindfulness, especially constructive feedback and authentic time with students. Looking up to instructors as experts in the field, the students also searched for opportunities to build good relationships, communicate, and interact directly with their instructors and advisors for motivation and direction in the program and for their future careers. IGSs expected an understanding of their needs and relied on instructors, especially their advisors, as anchors for relevant advice and guidance to move forward in the program and even after graduation. The instructor participants in this study accepted taking additional roles to provide language support for their students, although they believed it was not their responsibility. They reported that the faculty and institution did not have much available support for them to support the students in terms of policy and resources, nor did their workload make it easy to take on this role.

Summary of the Section

EAL student participants socialized into the target community through both oral and written discourse socialization. Students perceived they improved with feedback from

instructors, advisors, and peers (Anderson, 2016) through interactions in classroom discussions and presentations (Zappa-Hollman, 2007) or outside classrooms (Bankier, 2022).

The study findings show that EAL graduate students socialize into the target disciplinary community and broader academic context of UM through dynamic and multiple-faceted interactions with available resources and services. According to Duff (2007), the L2 socialization approach as a sociocultural theory prioritizes the interactions and collaboration or “mutual engagement” with instructors, tutors, peers, and more experienced others. These interlocutors are viewed as “old-timers” (p. 314) in the target community or a community of practice, facilitators to the process of acquiring knowledge and skills as well as gaining legitimate membership and identities. To mitigate the social, academic, and linguistic barriers and fulfill their experiences of learning in a Canadian system, the EAL participants looked for relevant transition support from the institution and discipline-directed support from the faculty. They wished for additional feedback and interactions with instructors and advisors as a resource and motivation and more intercultural and meaningful activities for engagement and networking, especially for membership in student groups or associations. At the graduate level, the student participants also plotted their strategies to adjust and gain new skills and knowledge to meet the new requirements of a Canadian institution. However, despite having a positive view of the range of resources available and the generally helpful support staff at the UM, they remarked the resources as overtly generic and too basic to their specific needs and varied disciplinary requirements throughout their graduate programs. Also, there were gaps in the support delivery, and the students needed it, leading to frustration and hesitation. They found a shortage of opportunities for IGSs’ engagement and networking on campus, especially with peers and old-

timers in the programs, which assisted them emotionally and academically (Friedman, 2022). The findings revealed that few relevant resources existed to address EAL students' needs for academic and social adaptation at the faculty or department level. These findings continue to raise concerns about the equity of IGSs in the institutional setting where the international students identified their EAL as a barrier, and sociocultural barriers. The UM President's EDI Task Force is responsible for making recommendations to address the issues. However, I searched the keywords: "EAL," "EAP," and "international students" which were not found among the eight recommendations on the website at <https://umanitoba.ca/about-um/equity-diversity-inclusion/task-force-final-report>.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This qualitative case study aimed to understand EAL graduate students' experiences learning and using EAP to support their graduate studies in Education and Engineering at UM. The study explored what resources the student participants used to advance their academic English and complete their graduate tasks, and the extent to which supports were provided by the respective faculties and the broader university. This final chapter addresses how the findings of this research achieved the intended purpose, and recommendations stemming from the findings. The first section revisits and answers the research questions by encompassing the findings of the analyzed data of the EAL graduate students and instructors from both Education and Engineering, the available resources, and my self-reflective experience with respect to how the EAL graduate students perceived and navigated their experiences and support resources to use and excel their EAP for graduate program tasks in a Canadian postsecondary institutional setting. The second section makes recommendations to the institution, instructors, and students based on the research results. Reflections on the study and its significance conclude the dissertation.

Research Questions Revisited and the Research Results

In this section, I revisit and respond to the research questions that guided the study.

1. What are EAL graduate students' experiences learning and using academic English to support their graduate work in Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba?
2. What are potential sources of support provided in the respective faculties and in the wider university to aid EAL graduate students in the task of developing their academic English? What are students' perspectives on those sources of support provided? What experiences do they have with the provided support?

3. How do the faculty-specific and university-wide EAP learning experiences of international graduate students in Education and Engineering compare and contrast?

Research Question One: Unfamiliar Educational Setting and Academic Culture and Discourse Challenges

The first research question asked about the EAL graduate students' experiences learning and using academic English to support their graduate work in Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba. All the participants perceived themselves to have strong English education backgrounds and came to the programs with relevant disciplinary foundations. The Canadian university system, which has different teaching and learning styles, academic discourses, and academic cultures than what the students were used to, posed challenges and difficulties for the EAL graduate students in transitioning and adapting to the new context. The participants from both disciplines validated the significance of EAP as a "gatekeeping" and powerful tool for content knowledge, sociocultural and academic communication, and future careers. All the participants stated EAP was an ongoing area of development and they were motivated to continue advancing their EAP repertoires for their academic and life purposes. However, they perceived that speaking English as an Additional Language could be a disadvantage when attempting to fulfill the exact requirements of graduate assignments or tasks as their English native-speaking counterparts do. The EAL graduate students needed more time and effort to deal with the linguistic aspects of their graduate work than their native English-speaking fellows. They observed that as they went further in the program, they developed their competence. However, student participants in Education reported intimidating and distant feelings when communicating with instructors due to their accents and different academic

cultures. The Engineering counterparts felt in the “same boat” as their professors because many of them also spoke English as an additional language.

All the participants rated writing as a decisive skill for their graduate work and speaking skills, including communication skills and oral presentation, as essential skills to thrive in the new context and communicate within the targeted academic community. The Engineering participants expressed the need to learn to write concisely and precisely in technical and scientific reports and papers. On the other hand, their Education counterparts challenged the conventional idea of conforming to specific rules and styles in academic writing. They insisted on keeping academic English simple and requested the professors accept their heritage language writing style, including the writing styles of other world languages, embedded in their English writing style. In other words, the participants wanted to proclaim their identities in their academic English writing or maybe to claim the freedom or their proprietary of the use of language. The idea challenged the traditional idea of viewing English as belonging only to those who speak it as their first language.

Regarding their academic discipline programs, while the Engineering student participants found strength in the common foundation of engineering coming to the graduate program, the participants from Education were disadvantaged by the locally oriented curriculum and teaching approaches aligned with Canadian sociohistorical content, for which IGSs lacked the relevant knowledge and background. For example, the student participants reported that discussions focused on, and the instructors always catered to, contemporary Western and Canadian topics such as “Indigenous studies” or “White privilege,” prioritizing concepts such as “decolonization” and “reconciliation” for which they did not have relevant backgrounds to relate.

As a result, the IGS participants were unintentionally excluded from classroom discussions or conversations. The participants disputed how locally focused teaching approaches met the diverse student population's needs and prepared them for a broader international education context. Both Peter and Anna doubted the extent of applying the curriculum content to their future teaching context if they returned to their home countries and worked there. Even if they did not, this local focus without much elaboration on the contextual knowledge not only challenged newcomers, especially first-year IGSs, but also silenced them. Anna revealed: "As for class discussion, as I told you, because I don't know much to say, I'm normally very quiet" (SI1: 02/18/2021, p. 5). As for Mike, in his first term, he tried hard to participate in classroom discussions; however, he could not contribute to his classroom discussions because they were talking about Canadian contexts, which he had not yet had the opportunity to learn about. This finding undermines SCT approaches and LST that view learners as active agents in teaching and learning processes that should value and facilitate learners' prior experiences, identities, and voices (Duff, 2019; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017). From this perspective, the locally based approaches in classrooms prevented the EAL students from using the language to socialize and inhibited their ability to socialize and learn the language.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the challenges for IGSs because they lost their physical opportunities to fully experience overseas study, practice, learn the language, and explore the new culture through interactions with people and their temporary statuses, thus becoming a vulnerable and marginalized population. In addition, the participants narrated their experiences with such words and phrases as "disadvantaged," "insecure," "intimidating," "scared," "fear of the unknown," and "lost my self-confidence." According to Brown (2008),

such words feature the anxiety experienced by international students facing challenges with academic tasks attached to using English in an unfamiliar postsecondary setting. One of the participants directly raised the question of equity for IGSs concerning their disadvantaged statuses while completing all the exact requirements and expectations within the same amount of time as those for the domestic-English native-speaking counterparts. The research finding exposed that IGSs faced systemic barriers and raised the issues of equity and inclusion for IGSs in the research context.

Research Questions Two and Three: Insufficient Support Resources to Align with the Students' Specific Needs in Education and Engineering

The research questions asked what potential sources of support provided in the respective faculties and the wider university aided EAL graduate students in developing their academic English and what the students' perspectives on and experiences with those sources of support provided. Research question three sought to compare and contrast the perspectives and experiences of the student participants from Education and Engineering.

In alignment with the approaches framed by sociocultural theory and language socialization, the findings showed that the participants acknowledged different agencies or “more proficient” people as resources for EAP and content knowledge learning. Although it looked like the institution offered a range of support resources, all participants from both faculties found the existing language resources, especially workshops on academic writing, too generic and basic to meet their specific language needs in their graduate work. The Education and Engineering students reported little or no support at the departmental level and faculty at the time of the study. The Education participants summoned internal faculty support to accommodate the IGSs'

needs because of the relevance of the expertise. The Engineering participants also inquired about supports to be more science or engineering discipline-oriented.

The findings showed that the students received and valued peer support, interactions, and contacts with friends, academic staff, mentors, and tutors within the faculty and on the wider campus as helpful resources offering hands-on experience for their social life. They also liked being members of a graduate student association or a student group for a sense of belonging and eligibility in a disciplinary community within the academic context. However, only Education participants acknowledged the visible role of the Education Graduate Student Association in socializing and networking the students in the faculty. On the contrary, the Engineering counterparts did not mention or see a similar organization in their departments even though these student groups existed.

The participants from both faculties validated the critical role of instructors and advisors in their study as trustful resources of EAP and content knowledge. However, the students perceived that instructors were not responsible for providing EAL students with language support. The student participants substantiated their advisors as the primary source of motivation and inspiration for their academic success. The participants depicted their professors as so busy that they did not spend enough time with the students or give detailed feedback on students' work for their academic improvement or advancement. They expressed needing more communication on expectations and feedback from instructors and advisors. Also, students hoped to develop more interactive relationships with instructors and advisors to support their learning and direction. They also requested more IGS-inclusive approaches in their teaching and advising.

My findings were consistent with research results found in the same context by Heringer (2018) and Jung (2014), who noted that the EAL or international students indicated facing systemic barriers in terms of language and culture, which should be alleviated with relevant supports and resources. However, my research showed that the available supports and resources did not address their needs or align with their evolving graduate work requirements as they went along the programs. The participants believed that more experienced or more competent others who could be senior graduate students or experts in the specific discipline would be able to provide relevant content and language support.

Recommendations for Practice

In this section, I provide practice and research recommendations to the institution's policymakers, related language and student support centers, respective faculties, instructors and advisors, and EAL graduate students.

Institutional Policy Makers

The findings indicated that entering a new system with a different academic culture and teaching and learning styles was challenging for IGSs. The participants reported feeling overwhelmed, fearful, and hesitant in a new academic context. Some participants took steps back to find a comfortable position and entered the new context slowly. Participants suggested the obstacles in the early stage of the graduate program could be alleviated with more pre-arrival support and international student-inclusive approaches of instructors by providing more contextual foundations of practices in their first classes. Linguistic anxiety and linguistic racism resulted in some negative effects on IGSs' emotions and psychology (Brown, 2008; Dovchin, 2020). Therefore, the IGSs should be more aware of the mental health issues, followed by radical

institutional actions to assist this “marginalized” and “vulnerable” student group. I would suggest including “linguistic racism” in EDI action terms and providing EAL or EAP support to IGSs in their recommendations to the institutional President. Tavares (2021) insisted that the issues should only be addressed structurally through actual actions taken by institutions.

In addition, the institutional supports were perceived as generic and basic, confusing students and showing a gap between the support resources and the delivery to reach IGSs. EAL graduate students found a need for discipline-specific academic language, which varies depending on the stages of their programs. They insisted on the support resources that align with their EAP learning needs. This finding also suggests the support resources and teaching and learning approaches should be designed more inclusively and efficiently within disciplines to help alleviate their difficulties in completing graduate work at different stages and improve their overall learning experiences (Anderson, 2017; Clark & Yu, 2021; Kim, 2015; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Ma, 2021). At the same time, for a more international student-included environment on campus, there should be more intercultural events to celebrate the diverse cultural atmosphere, enhance intercultural experiences and awareness, and thus create intercultural competence and culturally responsive education approaches among students, scholars, and staff within the institution (Stembridge, 2019; Tavares, 2021).

Regarding English language proficiency measures for admissions and EAP programs, it is significant to emphasize the discipline-specific relevance for those staff and teachers who are involved in the process of recruiting, designing, and delivering support resources and programs (Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Tweedie & Chu, 2021). In the meantime, more attention should be drawn to the thesis-based students’ needs for more discipline-relevant research writing support.

Some participants suggested lifting burdens from professors and advisors so that they could spend more time with their students.

Faculties of Education and Engineering

While findings found little EAP or writing support in both faculties, the students indicated that they need discipline-specific support, for which those experts with knowledge in content and language use would be the ideal support providers. This perspective signified the crucial role of disciplinary departments and faculties in playing their part and providing EAP learning and support for their EAL graduate students (Hyland, 2019; Lin & Bruce, 2021; Ordena & Burgess, 2017; Tweedie & Chu, 2019).

The findings indicate that student participants from both faculties benefit from working on campus and learning from interactions with more experienced peers from the same department or faculties. More employment opportunities on campus should be created for IGSS to contribute to and learn. Besides, the faculty and the student association students should create intercultural and academic spaces and gatherings for like-minded peers, such as study buddies, small study groups, and intercultural clubs, where old-timers, senior students, and fellow academic mentors could share their experiences. Also, the findings revealed the role of student groups and student associations in socializing and helping students gain a sense of belonging through networking and membership. More presence and engaging activities related to these student organizations would be suggested for IGSS who need academic communities and networking in a new context.

Education. As discussed, the student participants were unfamiliar with the locally focused curriculum and discussion topics in the classroom, for which instructors should lay out

more contextual backgrounds and adjust them to align with IGSs' prior educational backgrounds and contexts. Also, the curriculum should be more internationalized for the increasing diversity of the student population who may wish to return to their countries or travel elsewhere to work after graduation. According to Choi and Hou (2023), most international students leave Canada, while three out of ten become landed immigrants after graduation. The instructors should bring diverse and internationalized pedagogical approaches and choose discussion topics in classrooms while being mindful of students' linguistic backgrounds. This approach would alleviate some linguistic barriers facing students with local-referenced words and topics, heavy content words, or terminology associated with the Anglo-Western educational backgrounds and Canadian history. Besides, the participants emphasized their identities in their language use. This perspective challenged the traditional convention of viewing the English language as the property of those who speak it as their first language, giving them privilege and power over EAL speakers. The finding suggested that an appropriate instructional approach may also entail the acceptance of some intercultural styles embedded in IGSs' English academic writing as part of their identities, taking an open stance of seeing English as "lingua-franca" or "World Englishes," not a privilege or a property of native speakers.

Some master's students emphasized that their short time in the program did not allow them enough time to navigate the system alone, simultaneously managing their academic workload with little support provided by the faculty. They expected the faculty to offer instant academic discourse socialization and discipline-specific language support that should be congruent with the students' evolving needs throughout different stages of graduate programs. The support might include mentoring and workshops tailored for IGSs, proofreading services,

and copy-editing support at the end of the program (the Faculty of Education started to offer funds for copyediting for graduate students recently).

Engineering. The IGS participants identified the common foundation of Engineering disciplines as a firm basis for progressing in their programs. However, the students also needed to learn disciplinary writing and oral discourses in the Canadian postsecondary system. For this purpose, they expected more discipline-specific support and recommended that those with expertise in Engineering or experience with technical writing would be the most suitable to provide the support or the training.

Some master's students who did not have research writing and research experience before their programs expected more support to bridge the gaps with those with a master's degree. A student suggested assigning tutorials or introductory courses for students to complete before starting the program as preparation for Canadian academic discourse.

Instructors and Advisors

The student participants considered instructors and advisors as significant resources for their learning in discipline knowledge, disciplinary language practices, and motivation and inspiration for study and future careers. For those reasons, they expected more opportunities to interact and get feedback from them. However, they all denied that instructors had the responsibility to provide language support as students perceived their professors had numerous competing academic burdens. Some students suggested that instructors could be more sensitive to EAL students' needs for language support in classes instead of just sending them away to a third party. It is recommended that more time be allocated for students, instructors, and advisors to discuss constructive feedback on the students' language and academic performance. Also,

from what students shared in their experience, they would like to be included in classroom discussion topics and for instructors to be mindful of their EAL backgrounds in designing classroom activities. Some students in both Education and Engineering expected more communication on the detailed expectations of the assignments and wanted samples. All student participants looked forward to a quality relationship with their instructors and advisors. In addition, the student participants found relief and comfort when instructors spoke with a foreign accent and shared an international status, suggesting that diversifying the professoriate should be a strategic change to accommodate inclusion, diversity, and equity for UM as one of the top ten Canadian postsecondary institutions attracting international students.

For a more inclusive teaching curriculum to meet the diverse needs of IGSs and to reflect current trends in curriculum design, students' EAP needs should be placed within each disciplinary program to respond to the requirements of each specific discipline (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016). The disciplinary instructors should develop an awareness of the significance of providing and explaining contextual and linguistic knowledge of the content in classrooms with EAL students with different prior contextual backgrounds in another L1. Considering the internationalization and the increasing diversity of graduate students and academics in Canadian universities, Amery et al. (2020) recommended promoting intercultural competence between advisors and graduate students for better mutual understanding and well-being of both graduate students and advisors. At the same time, Andrews (2020) proposed to internationalize the teaching curriculum, and Ma (2021) and Yahya and Abdullah (2023) integrated intercultural competence into support services to assist students in interacting and socializing with competent members of the target communities. Also, in the internationalization trend of education, Heringer

(2021) called for higher education institutions to get professors ready to teach diverse students instead of just accommodating students in a classroom in return for their tuition fees (Heringer, 2021). Also, to better support Engineering IGSs, Lin and Morrison (2022) emphasized the balance in addressing students' self-perceived needs with the faculty's observations on what the students need to improve.

EAL Graduate Students

Participants' voices were prioritized throughout this dissertation. In this section, I summarized recommendations from the student participants' contributions and added more based on the research findings. Students need to develop strategies to explore and navigate the system and promptly reach out to relevant and tailored support resources as much as possible. They could gain valuable study experience abroad through exposure to the context and reach support, which requires their courage to socialize and network with other graduate peers, instructors, advisors, tutors, and teaching assistants for their social, academic, and language learning.

Significance of the Study

The study results provide insights into the EAL graduate students' experiences of learning EAP to achieve study targets and seek personal fulfillment and professional development, which affects their future careers and lives. From these insights, the study focuses departmental and institutional attention on essential and effective academic English support sources that align with the specific and individual needs and expectations of EAL graduate students.

The findings give insight into how the available support services meet the IGSs' needs to support their graduate tasks, thus making recommendations for pedagogical approaches and

curriculum and programs attuned to students' needs at a Canadian university. Also, the study findings help fill the gap of research on IGSs' experiences learning and using EAP in the light of SCT and LST by comparing and contrasting their experiences associated with potential sources of support at the researched higher education institution in Canada.

In the research context of the institution and higher education in Canada, the study contributes to the international graduate students' voices to avert their marginalization in the academic communities caused by language and other sociocultural barriers. The findings also suggest an approach to include language and lack of familiarity with the academic discourse of the host institution as barriers to the equity, diversity and inclusion agenda for better international student inclusion on the campus.

Implications for Further Research

The findings of this study contribute to multiple social, academic, and linguistic facets in the process of academic language socialization of EAL graduate students in two disciplines of Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba, a mid-sized research university in Western Canada. The results show that international graduate students confirmed their identities in their ways of using the language and affirmed their contributions through on-campus employment and learning while continuing to advance their linguistic competencies to meet the demands of graduate work. The language socialization challenges were mainly created by the different educational systems and academic cultures with the misalignment of the available support resources. The IGSs relied on their commitments and motivation to complete graduate program requirements and their learning through interactions with other graduate fellows, more competent peers, mentors, instructors, and advisors within and beyond the classroom walls to

socialize in the target academic communities on campus. Several differences in the IGSs' experiences interacting with their disciplinary communities in the department and faculties in Education and Engineering reflect the nuances of a novice entering a different disciplinary community. This finding calls for more research into the language socialization experiences of EAL graduate students from different disciplines and routes (thesis-based and research-based) as active agents in the process.

I believe an intensive study should be conducted to determine different elements of support and resources to be included to develop a comprehensive support model to help alleviate students' challenges and close the gaps identified in this study. The model should aim to align with the discipline-specific needs of IGS at different stages of their programs, which support them to be socially and academically well-adjusted and situated in the new academic culture and educational context. Future studies could also be done by conducting a comprehensive needs analysis to develop a comprehensive package of support and course offerings for IGSs. A call for intercultural competence training among students, faculty members, and staff might be included in future research.

Final Reflection

The research reflected the journeys of the EAL student participants and myself with the rich, layered sociocultural context of graduate studies at the University of Manitoba, in which we sought a legitimate space to thrive and contribute with some sense of belonging and success in our academic pursuits. As an EAL graduate student, I found much of my own experiences in the IGS participants' shared experiences. Coming with foreign sociocultural, academic, and professional backgrounds, IGSs and EAL graduate students face sociocultural and linguistic

challenges navigating the system, decoding expectations and conventions, and mapping out pathways to available resources to perform and succeed academically. Along the way, we might need to negotiate and show resilience while taking in opportunities for learning (and sometimes unlearning) in our engagement with the Canadian postsecondary system. However, the relevance and alignment of institutional supports and resources with IGSs' experiences and needs should be a requisite for IGSs' thriving and attainment. Each IGS's journey and experiences are never the same, underscoring the need for tailored support.

Being informed by this research's findings, as a postsecondary educator, I would commit to taking interdisciplinary and intercultural approaches by encouraging students to bring in individualized discipline-specific perspectives and practices, collaborating with disciplinary experts to address disciplinary needs, and altering teaching and learning designs. I would also create opportunities for exposure to linguistic, academic, and social resources as much as possible for my EAL students while maintaining linguistic and cultural barrier-free space and taking extra steps to provide individually tailored support.

As the principal researcher of this study and an international graduate student, I felt it was my honor and responsibility to make my IGS participants' voices and myself heard by the institution. It is long overdue for postsecondary institutions to start listening and responding to IGSs' needs, which is one way to bring justice and equal opportunities for this student group to grow and succeed (Tavares, 2021).

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Appendix A

Student Interview Consent Form



Research project title:

Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering

Principal Researcher:

Huong Thi Thu Cao, PhD student, Faculty of Education

Email: [REDACTED]

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Research Supervisor:

Dr. Clea Schmidt, Professor, Faculty of Education

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This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the research: The proposed research investigates international graduate students' (referred to as EAL graduate students) experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for their discipline-specific programs in Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba, Canada. The research examines the experiences of EAL graduate students with respect to institutional EAP resources of support, and what other sources of support might be helpful.

Research Procedures and Recording: There will be two 1 to 1.5 hour - virtual interviews on the Zoom platform. The first interview will focus on your EAP learning experiences in your graduate program using the available support provided by instructors, the faculty, and the institution. The second interview will be conducted in 4-6 weeks after the first one is done. In the second interview, you will be asked to give clarification or in-depth information about your EAP learning experiences embedded on campus and in academic community and your needs and expectations about the support resources. The interviews will be in the format of a conversation and recorded with the audio recorder of the computer and an external recorder - A Sonny IC ICD-UX543F for the back-up. These recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher for analysis. Also, during the interview phase, I will write down notes on the research journals any related non-verbal gestures, feelings, ideas, or awareness of participants, interviews, and the researcher.

Risks and Benefits: Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any questions, end the interview, or withdraw from the interviews and the study at any time during the interview phase. Also, I will send you the interview transcript to review (anticipated time to be in August 2021) via email or mail as indicated by you. **After getting the transcript, you have two weeks in total to submit either revisions or approval of the transcript or indicate withdrawal from the study. After this point, you will be unable to withdraw from the study. You can either email or phone me to notify your withdrawal from the research. You can either email or phone me to notify your withdrawal from the research.** Once the participant informs the researcher of their withdrawal from the study, all data including personal information, recordings or notes will be destroyed permanently from the computer and manually by the researcher.

I do not anticipate any risks to participants' academic activities or successes as a result of participation in this study. Your shared English for Academic Purposes learning experiences at the university will give an understanding of the EAP learning experiences, needs, styles, and strategies of EAL learners to achieve academic achievement in a Canadian institution context. This will help make recommendations for instructors, advisors, mentors, discipline faculties, and the institution to better support EAL graduate students.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: I will follow the rules and regulations set by the Ethics Research Board to protect your anonymity. The researcher is not looking for any specific names of instructors/advisors, students, courses, or sessions that may directly or indirectly reveal to protect the identities of third-party

bystanders. The participant will identify themselves by names during the recruiting process and interviews. In the interviews, the participant will choose a pseudonym for themselves and the pseudonym will appear in all documents related to this study. The participant's anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as follows:

- The recordings will be removed from the recorder and stored on encrypted audio files in password-protected folders on my personal computer. I will transcribe verbatim the recordings. The recordings will be deleted permanently from my computer after the transcripts are checked and returned to me by participants.
- All identifying information which might reveal the participant's identities will be deleted from the transcript documents, coded or replaced with pseudonyms.
- I will remove all identifying information from the research journals (notes) and just use the pseudonyms.
- The interview transcripts and research notes will be saved as password-protected word documents **in the same encrypted folders** on my personal computer located in my home office in Winnipeg and **a copy of the electronic transcripts will be stored in University of Manitoba OneDrive**. The computer is not a part of an external network. Only me and my supervisor Dr. Clea Schmidt will have access to the data.
- The back-up printed hard copies of the data and written research notes will be kept in different locked drawers of a locked cabinet in the principal researcher's home office.

Compensation and Participation: There will be a digital thank-you gift card valued at 10 dollars for Starbuck refreshment offered to you **via email** once you sign the consent form. You can keep the gift card even if you decide to withdraw from the study.

Feedback and Debriefing: **The interview transcripts will be sent back to the participants individually for member checking either via mail or email specified by the participant (anticipated time to be in August 2021). If you find any problem with the transcript or if you wish to add or remove details, you can phone or email me with the changes.**

Dissemination of Results: The summary of the findings from preliminary data analysis with anonymized information about participants will be sent to all participants and the respective discipline faculties of Education and Engineering should they ask for it. I will notify them by emailing or phoning as soon as the

data analysis and findings and discussions have been roughly written (the anticipated time to be November 2021). The data and detailed findings of the study will be disseminated for my dissertation, may be used for my future published article(s) and scholarly works or may be presented at academic conferences.

Destruction of the Data: Both electronic and hard copies of these data will be kept in five years' time. The electronic data will be deleted permanently from the hard drive of my computer and **the University of Manitoba OneDrive**, and the hard copies of the data will be shredded professionally using a shredding machine located in my home office (anticipated time to be July 2026).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal right nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent so you should be free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

Participant's Agreement: Please initial the boxes that apply:

I agree to participate in both interviews described above.

I agree to be audio-recorded for the purpose of the research described above.

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by regular mail. My address is:

.....

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by e-mail. My e-mail address is:

.....

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date**Notice Regarding Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information by the University**

Your personal information is being collected under the authority of *The University of Manitoba Act*. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). If you have any questions about the collection of your personal information, contact the Access & Privacy Office (tel. 204-474-9462), 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.

Instructor Interview Consent Form



Research project title:

Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering

Principal Researcher:

Huong Thi Thu Cao, PhD student, Faculty of Education

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Clea Schmidt, Professor, Faculty of Education

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this study is to investigate international graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes in two distinct disciplines: Education and Engineering. The Institutional and faculty-specific supports will be discussed as a significant part of international students' learning experiences at the University of Manitoba.

Research Procedures and Recording: You will be invited to participate in a 1 to 1.5 hour - virtual interviews on the Zoom platform. The researcher will contact the participant by mail or phone to arrange a convenient time for the interview. In the interview, you will share their experiences, perspectives, and your pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising English as Additional Language graduate students in learning academic English and the subject-discipline conventions in the programs.

The interviews will be in the format of a conversation and recorded with the audio recorder of the computer and an external recorder - A Sonny IC ICD-UX543F for the back-up. These recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher for analysis. Also, during the interview phase, I will write down notes on the research journals any related non-verbal gestures, feelings, ideas, or awareness of participants, interviews, and the researcher.

Risks and Benefits: Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any questions, end the interview, or withdraw from the interviews and the study at any time during the interview phase. **Also, I will send you the interview transcript to review (anticipated time to be in August 2021) via email or mail as indicated by you. After getting the transcript, you have two weeks in total to submit either revisions or approval of the transcript or indicate withdrawal from the study. After this point, you will be unable to withdraw from the study. You can either email or phone me to notify your withdrawal from the research.** Once the participant informs the researcher of their withdrawal from the study, all data including personal information, recordings or notes will be destroyed permanently from the computer and manually by the researcher.

I do not anticipate I do not anticipate any risks to participants' academic activities and statuses as a result of participation in this study. Your shared experiences, perspectives and pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising EAL graduate students in learning academic English and the subject-discipline conventions in the programs will help give an understanding on the students' EAP learning needs and styles, and strategies or approaches to address them and help EAL learners to achieve academic achievement in a Canadian institution context. This will help make recommendations for other instructors, discipline faculties, and the institution in broad to better support EAL graduate students for better academic performance at the university.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: I will follow the rules and regulations set by the Ethics Research Board to protect your anonymity. The researcher is not looking for any specific names of instructors/advisors, students, courses, or sessions that may directly or indirectly reveal to protect the identities of third-party bystanders. The participant will identify themselves by names during the recruiting process and interviews. In the interviews, the participant will choose a pseudonym for themselves and the pseudonym will appear in all documents related to this study. The participant's anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as follows:

- The recordings will be removed from the recorder and stored on encrypted audio files in password-protected folders on my personal computer. I will transcribe verbatim the recordings. The recordings will be deleted permanently from my computer after the transcripts are checked and returned to me by participants.
- All identifying information which might reveal the participant's identities will be deleted from the transcript documents and replaced with pseudonyms.
- I will remove all identifying information from the notes and just use the pseudonym
- The interview transcripts and notes will be saved separately in password-protected word documents **in the same encrypted folders** on my personal computer located in my home office in Winnipeg and **a copy of the electronic transcripts will be stored in University of Manitoba OneDrive.** The computer is not a part of an external network. Only me and my supervisor Dr. Clea Schmidt will have access to the data.
- The back-up printed hard copies of the data and written notes will be kept in different locked drawers of a locked cabinet in the principal researcher's home office.

Compensation and Participation: There will be a digital thank-you gift card valued at 10 dollars for Starbuck refreshment offered to you **via email** once you sign the consent form. You can keep the gift card even if you decide to withdraw from the study.

Feedback and Debriefing: **The finished interview transcripts will be sent back to the participants individually for member checking either via mail or email specified by the participant (anticipated time to be in August 2021). If you find any problem with the transcript or if you wish to add or remove details, you can phone or email me with the changes.**

Dissemination of Results: The summary of the findings from preliminary data analysis with anonymized information about participants will be sent to all participants and the respective discipline faculties of Education and Engineering should they ask for it. I will notify them by email as soon as the data analysis and findings and discussions have been roughly written (the anticipated time to be November 2021). The data and detailed findings of the study will be disseminated for my dissertation, may be used for my future published article(s) and scholarly works or may be presented at academic conferences.

Destruction of the Data: Both electronic and hard copies of these data will be kept in five years' time. The electronic data will be deleted permanently from the hard drive of my computer **and University of**

Manitoba OneDrive, and the hard copies of the data will be shredded professionally using a shredding machine located in my home office (anticipated time to be July 2026).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal right nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent so you should be free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

Participant’s Agreement: Please initial the boxes that apply:

I agree to be audio-recorded for the purpose of the research described above.

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by regular mail. My address is:

.....

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by e-mail. My e-mail address is:

.....

Participant’s Signature

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

Notice Regarding Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information by the University

Your personal information is being collected under the authority of *The University of Manitoba Act*. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). If you have any questions about the collection of your personal information, contact the Access & Privacy Office (tel. 204-474-9462), 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.

Interview Protocol

Interview 1: Questions for Student



Hello! My name is Huong Thi Thu Cao, a Ph. D candidate from the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba. I am here to learn about EAL graduate students' learning English for Academic Purposes with a focus on your relevant experiences using the available on-campus support sources for your academic study/success. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable talking about what and how you experience like. I would expect you to feel like having a conversation.

Interview Questions:

1. Could you tell me about your background, please? (Sub-questions: What is your name, country of origin, education, professional experiences? What is your current program? What stage of the program are you taking?)
2. How long have you been learning English? When did you start learning English for Academic Purposes?
3. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had as an English as an Additional Language graduate student at the University of Manitoba so far?
4. How do you perceive English for Academic Purposes proficiency?
5. How do you assess the role of learning academic English in your discipline study and your academic life at the English-speaking university, University of Manitoba?
6. What academic language skills and knowledge (reading, writing, speaking, listening, other language-related skills such as presentation skills, or discipline terminology/terms) do you find significant to your academic success in your discipline?
7. What challenges may you have in learning English for your academic discipline requirements such as assignments, classroom discussions, final papers, reports, or thesis?
8. How do your prior socio-ethnic background and status affect your English for Academic Purposes learning in the context of an English – speaking university like the University of Manitoba?

9. What roles should your instructors/advisors play in helping EAL graduate students learn English for Academic Purposes?
10. As an education/engineering graduate student, how do you experience the faculty support for EAL graduate students?
11. Can you share your experiences using available resources of academic support provided by the university through centres, libraries, and existing online and off-line resources?
12. What role do the on-campus activities of all kinds play in improving your academic English learning experiences and your academic socialization overall? (On-campus activities may include workshops, inter-cultural festivals, symposiums, conferences, on-campus jobs, students' clubs, study groups, and student associations)
13. How does the Covid-19 pandemic affect your academic and language learning experiences at U of M?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Interview 2: Questions for Student



Hello! My name is Huong Thi Thu Cao, a Ph. D candidate from the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba. I am here to learn about EAL graduate students' learning English for Academic Purposes with a focus on your relevant experiences using the available on-campus support sources for your academic study/success. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable talking about what and how you experience like. I would expect you to feel like having a conversation.

Interview Questions:

1. Regarding the last interview, what would you like to add about your academic and language learning experiences at U of M so far?
2. Based on the support and guidance you have received in your graduate program thus far, what do you feel will be your biggest academic and professional challenges in the future?
3. Do you feel you have received sufficient support corresponding to your EAP learning needs to achieve your academic goals?

Sub-questions: In what areas would you like to receive more support with your English for Academic Purposes? How, where, and when should the support be delivered? By whom should it be delivered?

4. Regarding the current stage of your graduate program, what linguistic knowledge and skills do you need to advance to help you achieve your academic goals in the next term?
5. Do you want to add any more comments on the role that the instructors/advisors and the department should play in helping EAL graduate students with their language learning? (Sub-questions: Overall, how efficient do you think their services to meet students' needs? How can the support be improved?)
6. What is the general role of on-campus language support in your academic study and for your next academic stage?

Sub-questions: For your academic success at U of M, what other further language support resources do you need in the future?

7. Did you develop any personal strategies or skills to improve your EAP competency and academic socialization experiences?

Sub-question: Can you give me some examples? What are the outcomes of these strategies?

8. Overall, what recommendations do you make to help improve EAL graduate students' experiences regarding their language and academic socialization into the academic setting of an English-medium Canadian university like the University of Manitoba?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Student Interview Script

Hello! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As a part of the ethics procedure, I would like you to spend some time reading and signing the consent you see on the screen and please save a copy for your record. Thank you very much. And I would like to send you an e-gift card for Starbucks refreshment via your email as my sincere thanks to you.

As you know, from the reading and signing the study consent form, I am investigating English for Academic Purposes learning experiences of international/ English as Additional Language graduate students. The institutional and faculty-specific support and resources for language learning will be discussed as a significant part of international graduate students' learning experiences at the University of Manitoba. I think that it is very important to research this topic in order to understand international graduate students' needs and styles in learning English for Academic Purposes, and how the available support and resources at U of M address those needs to help students achieve their academic success.

In this first discussion, which will be about an hour or more, I will ask you some questions that you may have had a chance to look at in the email attachment. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, that is fine. I would like you to feel comfortable talking about what and how your experience like. I would expect you to feel like having a conversation.

Do you have any questions before we start?

1.Ok, so let's begin with you telling me about yourself:

- What is your country of origin?
- What year or stage of your study/program you are currently in?
- What is your major?

Could you tell me about your background, please? (Sub-questions: What is your name, country of origin, education, professional experiences? What is your current program? What stage of the program are you taking?)

2. I would like to ask about your English learning.

How long have you been learning English? When did you start learning English for Academic Purposes?

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) refers to the English language used in an academic context or discourse that is associated with a specific discipline. Within this study, EAP has viewed the learning needs and purposes:

English for Academic Purposes refers to language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular groups in academic contexts. It means grounding instruction in an understanding of the cognitive, social, and linguistic demands of specific academic disciplines. (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 2)

3. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had as an English as an Additional Language graduate student at the University of Manitoba so far?
4. How do you perceive English for Academic Purposes proficiency?
5. How do you assess the role of learning academic English in your discipline study and your academic life at the English-speaking university, University of Manitoba?
6. What academic language skills and knowledge (reading, writing, speaking, listening, other language-related skills such as presentation skills, or discipline terminology/terms) do you find significant to your academic success in your discipline?
7. What challenges may you have in learning English for your academic discipline requirements such as assignments, classroom discussions, final papers, reports, or thesis?
8. How do your prior socio-ethnic background and status affect your English for Academic Purposes learning in the context of an English – speaking university like the University of Manitoba?
9. What roles should your instructors/advisors play in helping EAL graduate students learn English for Academic Purposes?
10. As an education/engineering graduate student, how do you experience the faculty support for EAL graduate students?
11. Can you share your experiences using available resources of academic support provided by the university through centres, libraries, and existing online and off-line resources?
12. What role do the on-campus activities of all kinds play in improving your academic English learning experiences and your academic socialization overall? (On-campus activities may include workshops, inter-cultural festivals, symposiums, conferences, on-campus jobs, students' clubs, study groups, students association)
13. How does the Covid-19 pandemic affect your academic and language learning experiences at U of M?

Closing: Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?

Thank you so much for your time and your contribution today. I will contact you back for another interview in 4-6 weeks. Take care and talk to you later. Have a good day. Bye

Interview Questions for Instructor



Hello! My name is Huong Cao, a Ph. D candidate from the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experiences advising, instructing, and supporting EAL graduate students in the faculty as well as your perspectives about the students' experiences learning English for Academic Purposes for their academic programs with the available on-campus support. Please note that I am not looking for any specific names of students, instructors, advisors, mentors, or courses. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like to feel comfortable sharing your experiences and your perspectives about this. I would expect you to feel like having a conversation.

Interview Questions:

1. Could you tell me about your background, please?

Sub-questions: What discipline do you teach? What roles do you take in the faculty?

2. Could you tell me about your experience working with EAL graduate students, please?

Sub-questions: How many EAL graduate students do you teach? How many EAL students do you supervise? What are your pedagogical approaches to EAL students?

3. What is your perspective on the role of acknowledging EAL graduate students' English for Academic Purposes learning needs intertwined with the disciplinary requirements in your teaching and supervising responsibility?

Sub-questions: Do you think it is important to align these learning needs with other educational activities, program and curriculum development, teaching materials, classroom activities, and assessment methods?

4. What are challenges do you think the EAL graduate students encounter when pursuing a Master's or Ph. D. program in an English-speaking university?

5. How important is the EAP competency to the students' academic success?

Sub-questions: What linguistic skills do you believe are needed for the success of your students in their academic programs? Do you think learning discipline-specific EAP will get them linguistically ready for the academic programs' requirements?

6. What common types of academic assignments are your students required to do for coursework and graduation papers?

7. What do you do to support your EAL graduate students to achieve their academic success?

Sub-questions: Do you have any challenges doing your job as an instructor or advisor for EAL graduate students? How do you perceive your role in supporting your students to achieve their academic success?

8. In your opinion, how do a student's socio-ethnic background and status affect their experiences learning English for Academic Purposes in the context of an English-speaking university like the University of Manitoba?

9. What is your perspective on the role of the department in assisting EAL students?

Sub-questions: What is your opinion about the available departmental support for them? Do you think the available support sources are designed and provided in a way that meets individual student's needs? Can you give some examples? What recommendations would you like to make so that better departmental support should be provided to EAL students?

10. What role does the university play in helping EAL graduate students?

Sub-questions: When are you asked for help by EAL graduate students with language-related concerns what sources of support do you navigate them to? Do you think that the available sources of language support are sufficient and align with the students' needs? Why yes? Why no? What recommendations would you like to make so that better departmental support should be provided to EAL students?

11. What advice would you like to give to EAL graduate students so that they could take and improve their EAP learning experiences on-campus and achieve their study success?

12. How do you think the Covid-19 pandemic situation affects EAL graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes and academic disciplines in general? Do you have any advice for them?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Instructor Interview Script

Hello Dr. (name)! How are you? My name is Huong Cao, a Ph. D candidate from the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba. It's my big pleasure to meet you today. One more time I would say thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study and thank you for your time today, I understand that you are super busy. Your participation is a big contribution to the success of my thesis.

I would like to restate a bit about the purpose of this interview which is to learn about your experiences advising, instructing, and supporting EAL graduate students in the faculty as well as your perspectives about the students' experiences learning English for Academic Purposes and the role of the available on-campus support to them. Please note that I am not looking for any specific names of students, instructors, advisors, mentors, or courses. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like to feel comfortable sharing your experiences if you have some and if even no experience at all, still your perspectives about this topic will be immensely valuable to my study. I would expect you to feel like having a conversation. During the interview, if you get tired and want to stop, please let me know.

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me? OK. Shall we start?

1. So first, I would like you to tell me about your background, please, such as what discipline do you teach? What roles do you take in the faculty or department?

2. Could you tell me about your experience teaching/advising/or working with EAL graduate students, please (if you have some)?

Sub-questions: How many EAL graduate students do you teach? How many EAL students do you supervise? What are your pedagogical approaches to EAL students?

(If you may have had a chance to look at the interview question set, I would like to change the order of the questions for the sequence or the flow of the conversation. I will move question 3 until later after I ask question 6).

III. (4) What are challenges do you think the EAL graduate students encounter when pursuing a Master's or Ph. D. program in an English-speaking university?

IV. 3. (1). What do you think Academic English means to International Graduate students in Engineering?

(5). How important is the EAP competency to the students' academic success?

Sub-questions: What linguistic skills do you believe are needed for the success of your students in their academic programs? Do you think learning discipline-specific EAP will get them linguistically ready for the academic programs' requirements?

+ In a couple of my interview with international grad students from engineering, the students mentioned about scientific writing or technical writing, could you please tell me what it is in engineering?

+ What is your perspective about academic writing to international graduate students in engineering? Is the role of academic writing different for thesis based versus course-based students?

V. (6). What common types of academic assignments are your students required to do for coursework and graduation papers?

VI. (3.2) What is your perspective on the role of acknowledging EAL graduate students' English for Academic Purposes learning needs intertwined with the disciplinary requirements in your teaching and supervising responsibility?

Sub-questions: Do you think it is important to align these learning needs with other educational activities, program and curriculum development, teaching materials, classroom activities, and assessment methods?

7. As an instructor or advisor, what do you do to support your EAL graduate students to achieve their academic success?

Sub-questions: Do you have any challenges doing your job as an instructor or advisor for EAL graduate students? How do you perceive your role in supporting your students to achieve their academic success?

8. In your opinion, how do a student's socio-ethnic background and status affect their experiences learning English for Academic Purposes in the context of an English-speaking university like the University of Manitoba?

9. What is your perspective on the role of the department in assisting EAL students?

Sub-questions: What is your opinion about the available departmental support for them? Do you think the available support sources are designed and provided in a way that meets individual student's needs? Can you give some examples? What recommendations would you like to make so that better departmental support should be provided to EAL students?

10. What role does the university play in helping EAL graduate students?

Sub-questions: When are you asked for help by EAL graduate students with language-related concerns what sources of support do you navigate them to? Do you think that the available sources of language

support are sufficient and align with the students' needs? Why yes? Why no? What recommendations would you like to make so that better departmental support should be provided to EAL students?

11. What advice would you like to give to EAL graduate students so that they could take and improve their EAP learning experiences on-campus and achieve their study success?

12. How do you think the Covid-19 pandemic situation, the whole virtual learning situation, affects EAL graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes and academic disciplines in general (I mean both the old and newcomers who started when everything is already moved to remotely, knowing that many of them study from their back home)? Do you have any advice for them?

- That was the last question of the interview today. Before we end the interview, is there something that you would like to add or any comment on the topic?
- So, as a part of the ethics procedure, I would like you to choose a pseudonym for yourself, which will appear in my dissertation and related scholarly paper. Do you have one in your mind now?
- Thank you. After this interview, I will transcribe, and may I send the transcript for you sometime in this October for member checking so that you will feel free to add or make any changes of the content of the interview today?

Thank you so much again for your time and your input today.

Appendix B

Recruitment Materials

Letter to Dean of the Faculty of Education



{Date}

Dear Dr. {Name of the Dean}

My name is Huong Thi Thu Cao, a Ph. D candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and my supervisor is Dr. Clea Schmidt. I am undertaking a study as a part of my PhD dissertation called: “Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering”. The purpose of this study is to get an understanding of international graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in two distinct disciplines: Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba. The institutional and faculty-specific support will be discussed as a significant part of international students’ learning experiences at the University of Manitoba.

I am writing to you to ask for your permission and support to conduct this study and recruit student and instructor participants from the faculty for this study. I need to recruit five to six graduate students who speak and use English as an Additional Language (EAL) for pursuing their degrees at the graduate level from the Faculty of Education for virtual interviews. The students will be invited to share with me their English for Academic Purposes learning experiences at the university. Also, I need to recruit two content-course or discipline-specific instructors from the Faculty of Education, who are interested in students’ academic English learning and discipline conventions from the faculty of Education for the interviews. The participant instructors will talk about their experiences, perspectives, and pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising EAL graduate students in learning academic language and the subject-discipline conventions in their graduate programs. The participants will be asked not to name *any specific names of students, instructors/ advisors, mentors, or courses* in the interviews in order to protect the identities of third-party bystanders. The findings of the study will give an understanding of the EAP learning needs, styles, and strategies of EAL learners to achieve academic achievement in a Canadian institutional context. Additionally, pedagogical and policy recommendations for instructors, discipline faculties, and the institution will be made to better support EAL graduate students' academic performance at the university.

The interviews will be conducted between January to May 2021 when the study is approved with permission granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Education. The student participants will be asked to participate in two 1 to 1.5 hour- audio recorded virtual interviews which are 4-6 weeks apart, and the instructor participants will participate in a single 1 to 1.5 hour- audio recorded virtual interview. The time of the interviews will be decided for the convenience of the participants.

The participation is completely voluntary, and the participants may choose not to answer any questions, end the interview, or withdraw from the study at any time during interviews or one week after returning the member checking-transcripts to the researcher. The participants can either email or phone me about their withdrawal. Once the participants inform the principal researcher of their withdrawal from the study, all data including personal information, recordings or research journals will be destroyed permanently from the computer and manually by the researcher.

The case study will be conducted in a way that minimizes harms or risks to the participants in the research process. I do not anticipate any risks greater than normal life. The participants will choose a pseudonym for them and the pseudonym will appear in all documents related to this study. All the participants' personal information such as class, intakes, courses, statuses, positions and any other information that might directly or indirectly reveal their identities will be removed or altered so that they will not be identified by others under any circumstances. The anonymized electronic interview transcripts will be stored in the password-locked word files in the encrypted folder in the hard drive of my personal computer located in my home office in Winnipeg. This computer is not linked or part of any external network. The back-up hard copies of these data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office in Winnipeg. Both electronic and hard copies of raw data will be kept in five years' time. These electronic data will be erased permanently from the hard drive of my computer and the hard copies of the data will be destroyed professionally using shredding machine located in my home office (anticipated time to be July 2026). I and my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt are the only people who will have access to the electronic data and the back-up hard copies of the data. Data analysis and research findings may also be presented at academic conferences and published as scholarly work.

For the purpose of this study, I would request that the Dean kindly give me the consent to conduct this study and help me recruit participants by sending out the letters to graduate students and instructors in the faculty through the Dean's office. When the data analysis is complete approximately November 2021, I will send the summary of findings to all participants and you by the contact method of your choice.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

Your approval is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided) or my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided)

Thank you very much in advance.

I give the consent for the researcher to conduct the study and proceed with the recruitment for this study.

Dean's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by regular mail. My address is:

.....

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by e-mail. My e-mail address is:

.....

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Your personal information is being collected under the authority of *The University of Manitoba Act*. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). If you have any questions about the collection of your personal information, contact the Access & Privacy Office (tel. 204-474-9462), 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.

Letter to Dean of the Faculty of Engineering



{Date}

Dear Dr. {Name of the Dean}

My name is Huong Thi Thu Cao, a Ph. D candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and my supervisor is Dr. Clea Schmidt. I am undertaking a study as a part of my PhD dissertation called: “Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering”. The purpose of this study is to get an understanding of international graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in two distinct disciplines: Education and Engineering at the University of Manitoba. The institutional and faculty-specific support will be discussed as a significant part of international students’ learning experiences at the University of Manitoba.

I am writing to you to ask for your permission and support to conduct this study and recruit student and instructor participants from the faculty for this study. I need to recruit five to six graduate students who speak and use English as an Additional Language (EAL) for pursuing their degrees at the graduate level from the Faculty of Engineering for virtual interviews. The students will be invited to share with me their English for Academic Purposes learning experiences at the university. Also, I need to recruit two content-course or discipline-specific instructors from the Faculty of Engineering, who are interested in students’ academic English learning and discipline conventions from the faculty of Education for the interviews. The participant instructors will talk with me about their experiences, perspectives, and pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising EAL graduate students in learning academic language and the subject-discipline conventions in their graduate programs. The participants will be asked not to name *any specific names of students, instructors/ advisors, mentors, or courses* in the interviews in order to protect the identities of third-party bystanders. The findings of the study will give an understanding of the EAP learning needs, styles, and strategies of EAL learners to achieve academic achievement in a Canadian institutional context. Additionally, pedagogical and policy recommendations for instructors, discipline faculties, and the institution will be made to better support EAL graduate students' academic performance at the university.

The interviews will be conducted between January to May 2021 when the study is approved with permission granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Education. The student participants will be asked to

participate in two 1 to 1.5 hour- audio recorded virtual interviews which are 4-6 weeks apart, and the instructor participants will participate in a single 1 to 1.5 hour- audio recorded virtual interview. The time of the interviews will be decided for the convenience of the participants.

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The case study will be conducted in a way that minimizes harms or risks to the participants in the research process. I do not anticipate any risks greater than normal life. The participants will choose a pseudonym for them, and the pseudonym will appear in all documents related to this study. All the participants' personal information such as class, intakes, courses, statuses, positions and any other information that might directly or indirectly reveal their identities will be removed or altered so that they will not be identified by others under any circumstances. The anonymized electronic interview transcripts will be stored in the password-locked word files in the encrypted folder in the hard drive of my personal computer located in my home office in Winnipeg. This computer is not linked or part of any external network. The back-up hard copies of these data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office in Winnipeg. Both electronic and hard copies of raw data will be kept in five years' time. These electronic data will be erased permanently from the hard drive of my computer and the hard copies of the data will be destroyed professionally using shredding machine located in my home office (anticipated time to be July 2026). I and my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt are the only people who will have access to the electronic data and the back-up hard copies of the data. Data analysis and research findings may also be presented at academic conferences and published as scholarly work.

For the purpose of this study, I would request that the Dean kindly give me the consent to conduct this study and help me recruit participants by sending out the letters to graduate students and instructors in the faculty through the Dean's office. When the data analysis is complete approximately November 2021, I will send the summary of findings to all participants and you by the contact method of your choice.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

Your approval is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided) or my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided).

Thank you very much in advance.

I give the consent for the researcher to conduct the study and proceed with the recruitment for this study.

Dean's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by regular mail. My address is:
.....

I wish to receive the transcript and summary by e-mail. My e-mail address is:
.....

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Recruitment Letter to Students



Dear graduate fellows,

My name is Huong Thi Thu Cao, a Ph. D. candidate in the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba, and my supervisor is Dr. Clea Schmidt. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study, which is conducted as a part of my PhD dissertation called: “Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering”. The purpose of this study is to get an understanding of international graduate students' experiences in learning English for Specific Purposes (EAP) in two distinct disciplines: Education and Engineering. The Institutional and faculty-specific support will be discussed as a significant part of international students' learning experiences at the University of Manitoba.

To conduct this study, I am looking for five to six graduate students who speak and use English as an Additional Language for pursuing their degrees at the graduate level from the faculty of Engineering and Education for interviews. The students who come from countries of origin where English is not their mother tongue, or first language, or official language. The students come to Canada on study permits for their graduate programs in Canadian higher institutions (initial entries), or they are landed permanent residents who first arrive as international students on study permits. The students can be graduate students at the beginning, middle, or final stages of their master's or PhD programs. The students of any age and gender and taking either full-time or part-time modes of the academic programs will be invited to participate in two 1 to 1.5 hour- virtual audio-recorded interviews which are 4-6 weeks apart between January to May 2020. In the interviews, you will share with me your English for Academic Purposes learning experiences pertinent to sources of support at the university, which will give an understanding of the EAP learning needs, styles, and strategies of EAL learners to achieve academic achievement in a Canadian institution context. This will also help to make recommendations for instructors, discipline

faculties, the institution to better support EAL graduate students for better academic performance at the university.

If you agree to participate in the study, your confidentiality will be maintained. You will choose a pseudonym for yourself and your personal information will be anonymized. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any questions, end the interview, or withdraw from the study at any time during the interview process and in two weeks after getting the interview transcript for member checking. The interview will be arranged at the time convenient for you and will be audio-recorded.

Your participation in this study is very much appreciated. Although there is no remuneration, a digital thank-you gift card valued at 10 dollars for Starbuck refreshment will be offered to participants once you sign the informed consent form. You can keep the gift card even if you decide to withdraw from the study.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

If you are interested and would like to take part in this research project, please feel free to contact me by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided) or my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at (phone number provided)

Thank you very much in advance.

Huong Thi Thu Cao

Recruitment Letter to Instructors



Dear instructors,

My name is Huong Cao, a Ph. D candidate in the faculty of education, the University of Manitoba, and my supervisor is Dr. Clea Schmidt. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study, which is conducted as a part of my PhD dissertation called: “Learning the Academic Language Conventions of Graduate School: A Study of EAL Students in Education and Engineering”. The purpose of this study is to investigate international graduate students' experiences in learning English for Academic English (EAP) in two distinct disciplines: Education and Engineering. The institutional and faculty-specific support will be discussed as a significant part of international students’ learning experiences at the University of Manitoba.

To conduct this study, I need to recruit two content-course or discipline-specific instructors who are interested in students’ academic English learning and discipline conventions from each of the faculties for a virtual interview. The instructors who identify themselves as having experience working with EAL graduate students and are interested in graduate students’ English for Academic Purposes learning will be preferred. The interested instructors will be invited to participate in a 1 to 1.5 hour- virtual audio-recorded interview which will be conducted between February to April 2020. In the interview, you will share with me your experiences, perspectives, and pedagogical approaches in supporting, teaching, and advising EAL graduate students in learning academic language and the subject-discipline conventions in the programs without naming *any specific names of students, instructors/ advisors, mentors, or courses*. The interviews will help give an understanding of students’ challenges, needs, and attempts to learn EAP and achieve personal goals and academic success in a Canadian context from the perspectives of educators. From the findings of this study, pedagogical and policy recommendations for instructors, discipline faculties, and the institution will be made to better support EAL graduate students' academic performance at the university.

If you agree to participate in the study, your confidentiality will be maintained. You will choose a pseudonym for yourself, and your personal information will be anonymized. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any questions, end the interview, or withdraw from the study at any time during the interview process and in two weeks after getting the interview transcript for member checking. The interview will be arranged at the time convenient for you and will be audio-recorded.

Your participation in this study is very much appreciated. Although there is no remuneration, a digital thank-you gift card valued at 10 dollars for Starbuck refreshment will be offered to participants once you sign the consent form. You can keep the gift card even if you decide to withdraw from the study.

This research has been reviewed and approved by a Human Ethics Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus.

If you are interested and would like to take part in this research project, please feel free to contact me by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED] or my supervisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt, by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED]

Thank you very much in advance.

Huong Thi Thu Cao

Appendix C

1. Screenshots to Illustrate Coding Interview Data *Education Student Dataset*

The screenshot displays the QDA Miner Lite interface for the 'EAP dissertation EduStudent data.qtt' project. The main window shows a transcript of an interview with a student named Alice. The transcript includes the following text:

A: YES.

I: Can you tell me about your experiences that you have had learning English for academic purposes at UoM so far?

A: I didn't learn English for academic purposes here. Mostly I use it when I have to write final papers and all kinds of papers. My problem is not how to write English, but what to write.

(5:14)

I: In terms of the content, do you find anything that is new to you that you think you have to learn?

A: Sure. Because my first major was teaching English, I do not have a strong foundation in philosophy. In my major I have to write a lot about philosophy, so I have to read a lot and learn a lot. The vocabulary is very new to me, like marginalization, colonization, decolonization.

I: I guess that is a part of English for academic purposes, right?

A: That's right.

I: When I first came, I learnt those new words like decolonization. It is not just a word. It is a term with the content inside.

A: It shows the history of this country, things like that.

I: As a graduate student at UoM, how do you describe your experience?

A: When I first started, I attended orientation sessions of the international center of UoM. I was so impressed. They were very helpful. I learned that there are a lot of services that help students with the checking their final paper, things like that. But I've never used it and the biggest problem was that I normally just finished my paper several hours before the submission time. so

On the right side of the transcript, there are several codes applied to the text:

- on-going learning
- Locally-oriented curriculum
- Locally-oriented curriculum
- on-going learning
- discipline terminology
- awareness of support availability

The interface also shows a list of codes in the bottom left panel, including:

- Adaption to social context
 - Accent copy
 - diversity awareness
 - interculture as an advantage
 - local culture mindfulness
 - social adaption/ local socialization
- Challenges (other factors)
 - affective factors
 - cost for EAP courses
 - Gender issue
 - personal challenge
 - racial issue
- Challenges in academic study
 - Academic skills
 - interdisciplinary matter
 - Locally-oriented curriculum

The status bar at the bottom indicates '1 / 6' and 'Par 2, Col 20'.

Engineering Student Dataset

QDA Miner Lite - QDAProj.wpj

Project Cases Variables Codes Grid Document Retrieve Analyze Help

CASES: transcripts for coding

- En.Stu.Jane
- En.Stu.Jia
- En.Stu.Mathew
- En.Stu.Noel
- En.Stu.Steward
- En.Stu.Suraj

VARIABLES

FILE En.Stu.Jane
LOCATION transcripts for coding
DOCUMENT [DOCUMENT]

CODES

- Gender issue
- personal challenges
- racial issue
- Challenges in academic study
 - academic skills
 - Interdisciplinary matter
 - Lack of feedback
 - locally-oriented curriculum
- challenges/experience in language use
 - accent difference
 - conversational/communication skill
 - discipline terminology
 - double check understanding
 - Ielts vs. English in practice
 - Instructors' speed/language use
 - journal writing
 - Language ambiguity
 - Language as barrier
 - language practice
 - linguistic insecurity
 - local idioms/phrases/use

DOCUMENTS:

DOCUMENT

CODE: Canadian working experience

J: So intrigued under when I went through my bachelors, yes to the University there we had to learn everything in English. But until then, like on the like high school we I learned everything in [mother tongue] which is my native language actually.

I: OK, so can you tell me about your experiences you have had as an English as an additional language graduate student at the University of Manitoba so far?

J: Do you want to know about the hardships that I encountered or something like that?

I: How do you find your English learning as a part of your learning English to study your discipline right to pursue your academic program like Master Program or PhD program here, learning here in University of Manitoba, like maybe your own strategies, or using any resources or support at the University?

J: OK, so as I said like in [home country] I went to the University and studied engineering in English. Then we had to do all the assignments, projects and theses writing everything in English. So I had that background. So when I came here, I did not come across any difficulty but there is something when you write to Journal papers or if you want to do any publication. There is a specific way you have to write or use some technical terms and then there is a specific language style that using technical papers. So I had to learn that one specifically when I was writing one of the publications or not the thesis is. I said I don't use any resources given from the University of Manitoba for that, but I use many books to learn some terms and size and also like the supervisor advise me on how to write also.

I: That's really good, right? So can you tell me more, you say you learn from books and your advisor like so, where the books you get?

J: I think one book was suggested to me by the advisor. He told me like he was

good English competency

journal writing

discipline terminology

EAP resource

Library facilities

help with writing skill

1 / 6

2. Screenshots to Illustrate Generating Initial Themes

Generating Initial Themes Under Research Question 2 From Education Student Interview Dataset

EDUCATION		RQ2: WHAT ARE POTENTIAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED IN THE RESPECTIVE FACULTIES AND IN THE WIDER UNIVERSITY TO AID EALGRAD STUDENTS IN THE TASK OF DEVELOPING THEIR ACADEMIC ENGLISH? WHAT ARE STS' PERSPECTIVES ON THOSE SOURCES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED? WHAT EXPERIENCES DO THEY HAVE WITH THE PROVIDED SUPPORT?					
Theme 1: Potential resources							
Needs?				STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS			
	future plans support for career	language prep course	more feedback/orientation from support resources	Preparation for career Individual strategies	social adaption/local socialization		
Potential/Expected support resources							
	Assignments' expectation communication (1)	discipline-oriented support(4-2)	EAP training by discipline faculty (1)	Faculty-run wsh/conferencess for networking (2)	graduate fellow-mentor (6)	student-led wsh (Rosy)	
EAP Students relevant program (1)	Not instructors/advisors' responsibility (1)	Program procedure/ process communication	Same socio-ethnic community (2)	social events as bridge (3)	academic wsh/specific wsh (Sosy) (wsh that prepare sts for different in their study)	study forum for same stage sts (Ofelia)	
		Timely feedback from instructors/advisors (1)	Staff with relevant experience and expertise (1)				
Theme 2: sts' perspectives and experiences on provided sources (bleu do the hien cac provided sources)							
INSTITUTION RESOURCES	(Positive)						
	Awareness of support availability (8)	English classes (2)	Non-credit language courses (1)	Perception on the resources	other support for international students (1)		
	library facilities (2)	No awareness (2)	visibility/accessibility (4)	Writing support (2)	illy-designed writing course n(1)		
	(Negative)						
	Disappointment (1)	insufficiency (3)	Confusion 4-2 parti	Helplessness (3)	Irrelevance to needs (5-Mike, peter)		
	Service delivery (10-Anna 7, Alice, Waste of time(2)	Waste of time(2)	timely matter (2)				
SYMPOSIUMS/WSH							
	Beneficial to students (2)	hands-on experience (3)	EAP learning opportunity (2)	Guiding role/Orienting role (Prep for new social life		
		networking opportunity (Psychological Support (1)	Not involve due to time conflict (1)			
Discipline Faculty							
	Awareness of available support (3)	Unawareness of support	Ir(relevance of support (3)	Insufficient support resource reasons for not using resou	Administrative support (1)		
External resources							
	google search	Grammarly App (1)	Online website (2)	Youtube lectures (1)			

Generating Initial Themes Under Research Question 1 From Engineering Student Interview Dataset

ENGINEERING		RQ1: BEING AN INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT IN A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY			
Sub-theme 1: International students' prior experiences and socio-ethnic background					
Good E competency (6)	Good foundations (7)	Culture affect learning styles (1)	Culture affect personal trait (1)	Culture affect communication style (1)	
	Starting time (3)				
Sub-theme 2: The status quo of being international students					
A foreigner (2)	Disadvantaged (2)	Overwhelmed (1)			
Sub-theme 3: EAP Perception and Experience					
		Experience			
A tool for content (4)	Tool for jobs (5)	Be precise (6)	Language Requirement (1)		
Communication tool (6)		Content over language (9)	On-going learning (12)		
Domestic vs International students 3-Steward)		All dissertation (1-Steward)	Language skills (13)		
		Perception (4)			
EAP course required (1-st Terminology (6)		Significant role (9)	Specific EAP (2)	Students' own task (1)	Perception of EAP (6)
Challenge in Academic study		Language related challenge			
Affective afactors (2- Noe	Racial issue (1)	Speaking issue (3-sujai)	Accent difference (13)	conversational/communication s	Disadvantaged (1)
		Ielts vs. English in practice (1)			
technical writing (6)	Discipline terminology	English use in practice (1)	Instructors' speech/language use	Language as barrier (5)	Journal writing (1)
				Metacognition vs.	
Double check understand	Reading (1)	Linguistic insecurity (3- steward)	Manner-mindful (3-Jia)	language (2-Steward)	No issues (3- Mathew)
		writing (4)	Writing issues (8)		

Appendix D

Screenshot of GradSteps Workshop Listings Under “Basic” Category

:-experience/graduate-student-workshops#upcoming-gradsteps-workshops

Basic Healthy Research Communication Career Entrepreneurial

Know Your Resources: the Basic Step

Regardless of where you are from or where you are on your educational pathway, starting a graduate program can be a daunting prospect. The objective of the Basic Step is to help provide you with a solid foundation for your success as a graduate student.

There are many facets to this step, ranging from introducing graduate students to their rights and responsibilities and advice on working with their advisor, through introducing international students to the delights of Winnipeg, to beginning the process of career planning and determining what graduate students want to do post-graduation.

•

GRADSTEPS WORKSHOPS LISTING

A Gentle Introduction to Open Source GIS Software	+
Academia or Industry? What's Your Plan?	+
Canadian Workplace Culture	+
Communication and Conflict Resolution: Skills to Improve Your Interactions With Others	+
Copyright and Your Thesis/Practicum	+
CORE'd out? A Guide to Fort Garry Research Ethics Board Submissions	+
Data Visualization: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly	+
EndNote Advanced	+
EndNote Basics	+
How to Network Workshop and Speed Networking	+
How to Write a Literature Review	+
Indigenous Health Research – Comprehensive Search Strategies for Best Results	+
Job Search Essentials	+
Keeping Current, Keeping Alert	+
Luck Isn't Everything: Creating Your Own Opportunities	+

Note. From *Graduate Studies: GradSteps Workshops Listing*, by University of Manitoba, retrieved November 19, 2024. (<https://umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/student-experience/graduate-student-workshops#upcoming-gradsteps-workshops>)

Screenshot of GradSteps Workshop Listings Under “Research” Category

ent-experience/graduate-student-workshops#upcoming-gradsteps-workshops

at lunchtime and are one- to two-hours in length. Note that not all workshops are offered every term.

Basic Healthy Research Communication Career Entrepreneurial

Data Management: the Research Step

For many graduate students, the collection and analysis of data is the core of their program. The objective of the Research Step is to help you work with library databases and statistics, as well as introducing you to the regulations which govern the ethical and legal use of both human subjects and animals in research.

GRADSTEPS WORKSHOPS LISTING

A Gentle Introduction to Open Source GIS Software	+
Academia or Industry? What's Your Plan?	+
Canadian Workplace Culture	+
Communication and Conflict Resolution: Skills to Improve Your Interactions With Others	+
Copyright and Your Thesis/Practicum	+
CORE'd out? A Guide to Fort Garry Research Ethics Board Submissions	+
Data Visualization: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly	+
EndNote Advanced	+
EndNote Basics	+
How to Network Workshop and Speed Networking	+
How to Write a Literature Review	+
Indigenous Health Research – Comprehensive Search Strategies for Best Results	+
Job Search Essentials	+
Keeping Current, Keeping Alert	+
Luck Isn't Everything: Creating Your Own Opportunities	+

Note. From *Graduate Studies: GradSteps Workshops Listing*, by University of Manitoba, retrieved November 19, 2024. (<https://umanitoba.ca/graduate-studies/student-experience/graduate-student-workshops#upcoming-gradsteps-workshops>)