

Research Article:

A Self-Study of Critical-Pragmatic Practices in Teaching Academic Writing in the Indonesian Context

Lavinia Disa Winona Araminta

School of Curriculum, Teaching and Inclusive Education, Faculty of Education, Monash University,
19 Ancora Imparo Way, Clayton, Victoria 3800 Australia

*E-mail: Lavinia.Araminta@monash.edu

ABSTRACT

This study explores the applicability of critical pragmatism in teaching academic writing to Indonesian students preparing for postgraduate study abroad. The study is situated during a time of increasing opportunities for Indonesians to access international education. Adopting the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practice (S-STEP) methodology, I reflected on my pedagogical practices in an online academic writing course, focusing on designing and delivering materials to three cohorts of Indonesian master's students from diverse academic backgrounds. The course addressed their need to develop academic writing skills. This study revisits the literature on critical pragmatism and reflects on how I navigated pragmatic aspects, such as distinguishing student voice from scholarly sources, effective use of reporting verbs, and paraphrasing, alongside critical elements, such as promoting argumentation and encouraging students to take a stance. The analysis highlights complementary practices, revealing insights into balancing the critical and pragmatic dimensions in an Indonesian academic context. Through analysis of my reflective notes, this study sheds light on how both approaches interact, offering pedagogical insights for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors in Indonesia. It also provides implications for the broader scholarly discussion on the integration of critical pragmatism in academic writing pedagogy.

Keywords: Academic writing, critical pragmatism, English for Academic Purposes, Indonesian academic context, self-study, writing pedagogy.

Published: 30 September 2025

To cite this article: Araminta, L. D. W. (2025). A self-study of critical-pragmatic practices in teaching academic writing in the Indonesian context. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 40(2), 259–278. <https://doi.org/10.21315/apjee2025.40.2.12>

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of study abroad has been observed globally, and various countries have eagerly implemented higher education internationalisation policy (Garson, 2023; Johnson, 2023; Khodr, 2023). For the destination countries, examples of the positive consequences of the internationalisation of higher education are revenue generation, job creation (Garson, 2023), a betterment in international student services, market expansion, stronger diplomatic influence (Johnson, 2023), and regional collaboration between institutions (Khodr, 2023). Given the widely embraced internationalisation policy, international student mobility is inevitable, especially with the strengthening of mobility infrastructures, for example, education consultants, existing social networks who have study abroad experience and social media (Jayadeva, 2024).

On the part of students, their considerations in making decisions related to destination countries for studying range from the affordable tuition and living costs, scholarship opportunities, the availability of specific majors (Kim & Zhang, 2022), the excellent reputation of target universities which can equip them with degrees and qualifications that are valuable for achieving post-study career aspirations, to a possibility to obtain permanent residency (Dos Santos et al., 2024). Unfortunately, gaining international education in overseas countries remains an unattainable luxury for students from underprivileged families who may not have the mobility intentions due to cost considerations or performance-related prerequisites for studying abroad (Lörz et al., 2016). One of the performance-related factors is foreign language proficiency and use in daily life, as students who have a low opinion of their proficiency or use foreign language infrequently may perceive this issue as an impediment and, thus, forgo study abroad prospects (Ovchinnikova et al., 2024). As such, while studying abroad promises upward social mobility, the opportunities to access it are inequitable (Kommers & Bista, 2021).

Indonesia is no exception to the phenomenon of mobility of its students. Although not all Indonesian students are privileged with economic capacity or foreign language skills, chances for Indonesians to access international education are increasing. One contributory factor is the provision of scholarships, allowing them to pursue higher education, mainly postgraduate study, at overseas universities. The funding bodies of such scholarships include foreign governments, such as Australia with its Australia Awards scholarship program and Japan with its Monbukagakusho Scholarships (Haupt et al., 2021), reflecting the bilateral relationship between the countries and Indonesia (Missbach & Purdey, 2023), and the Indonesian government itself through The Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) scholarship program, which is said to serve as a policy instrument geared toward economic catch up (Rachman, 2023). While the majority of LPDP awardees went to domestic universities, thousands of awardees studied in, among others, the UK, Australia, the Netherlands, and Japan (Rachman, 2023). Their international experiences have brought positive outcomes to the individuals. For example, Indonesian civil servants receiving dual-degree scholarships reported soft skills development, knowledge, and career advancement opportunities (Haupt et al., 2021). Given the claimed outcomes, Indonesians studying

abroad are projected to return home and act as future leaders in their respective line of work in the country (Missbach & Purdey, 2023).

Despite the promised value of overseas learning for Indonesia's human capital development (Rachman, 2023), studying in an unfamiliar academic setting is an arduous undertaking. The literature has documented the struggles of international students with academic expectations, especially in writing, including confusion about the elusive academic writing standard, cultural differences in academic writing conventions, fear for non-native labelling and perceived inadequacy (Maringe & Jenkins, 2015; Wang & Li, 2008). These challenges prompt pedagogical needs related to academic writing (Wang & Li, 2008), such as special training addressing vocabulary, grammar, citation, and critical thinking, as well as feedback on students' writings from mentors, proof-readers, or peers (Phyo et al., 2024).

A small number of empirical studies have been conducted in the Indonesian context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), with a specific focus on academic writing. The topics vary from students' online self-regulated learning strategies (Mahmud & German, 2021), their perceptions of the use of learning tools that are online (Jarjani et al., 2022) or based on artificial intelligence (Utami et al., 2023), and broad challenges surrounding socialisation into academic writing at their tertiary institution (Mukminin et al., 2015). One study stands out for being experimental in comparing the multisensory model of instruction with the genre-based approach (Baehaqi, 2023). Overall, those studies are heavily skewed towards perceptions and reflections of learners, rather than teachers, highlighting the need for documenting teacher reflection on their academic writing instructional practices. Teacher reflection is instrumental for not only examining situational practices (*descriptive reflection*) and justifying them (*conceptual reflection*) but also understanding the social, political, ethical, and moral contexts of teaching beyond the classroom (*critical reflection*) (Farrell, 2014).

Along with the absence of teacher reflection, critical-pragmatic discourses are not discussed in the existing empirical studies in the Indonesian EAP context. With regard to teachers' conceptual and critical reflection (Farrell, 2014), one under-investigated discourse associated with the teaching of EAP is critical pragmatism (Harwood & Hadley, 2004), which arises to bridge the scholarly debates on whether EAP pedagogy should be pragmatic – focusing mainly on skills development – or critical – sensitizing students to cultural and linguistic injustice (Allison, 1996; Benesch, 1996; Pennycook, 1997). Understanding teaching *principles*, whether they are purely pragmatic, solely critical, or a combination of both, are important to account for the teaching methodology and practices in the classroom and recognise their impacts on students socially, politically, and ethically (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019).

Against the backdrop of study abroad opportunities for Indonesians, the researcher was involved in the development of an online academic writing instructional program for scholarship-funded Indonesian students who were commencing their postgraduate study at foreign universities and did not receive any language preparation from their funding bodies. The course ran for four weeks across seven 90-minute sessions, and three groups of students enrolled in the course at different times. This self-study delves into the ways

the researcher integrated critical pragmatism in her practices of developing the academic writing materials for three groups of Indonesian learners preparing for their overseas postgraduate education. Building on Farrell's Framework for Reflecting on Practice (2014), this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the teacher's teaching principles reflect critical pragmatism?
2. How do the teaching principles influence the teacher's pedagogical decisions in the development of academic writing materials?

This research attempts to fill the empirical gap in the literature on EAP teaching in Indonesia by zooming in on teacher reflection, rather than that of students. Theoretically, this study can extend the discussion on critical pragmatism as a teaching principle that influences EAP teachers' pedagogy at the level of methodological choices and classroom actions and how it is shaped by the larger contexts of teaching and interacts with teacher-as-person (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). Practically, this study can offer pedagogical implications for EAP teachers in designing and delivering academic writing instruction in Indonesia and elsewhere through reflective practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly Conversations on Critical Pragmatism in Academic Skills Pedagogy

The discourse of critical pragmatism pertaining to academic skills pedagogy can be traced back to the last decade of the 20th century, with Benesch (1996) and Allison (1996), among others, debating on whether EAP pedagogy should take a pragmatic or critical approach. The debate seems to take a paradigmatic turn when Pennycook (1997) and Harwood and Hadley (2004) consolidate the two poles with the notion of critical pragmatism, which is then taken up in a few recent publications (Du, 2022; Ruecker & Shapiro, 2021).

Benesch (1996) is one scholar objecting the pragmatic approach to EAP. She criticises needs analysis in EAP for being descriptive and disagrees with teaching students the appropriate behaviour and language in order for them to adhere to the status quo, without questioning the politics of the target situation. Instead of describing learners' needs, she recommends a critical needs analysis by discovering systemic tensions between institutional demands and learners' desires. She suggests activities to aid students in navigating the contradictory demands of the target situation, namely dealing with limitations (e.g., letting students compare and re-examine lecture notes), challenging the requirements (e.g., interacting with students in a relaxed situation and allowing them to ask questions, as opposed to teacher-dominated talks), and creating possibilities for social awareness and action (e.g., inviting students' critical scrutiny over a topic not discussed in depth in the classroom) (Benesch, 1996).

In response to scholars' disapproval of pragmatic language pedagogy, Allison (1996) tries to characterise the pragmatist discourse in EAP to see if critics' charges, as he puts it, at EAP

pragmatism are sensible or assumptive. He begins with revisiting Swales's pragmatic goal of helping EAP learners, both native and non-native, to develop academic communicative competence, which has received backlash from critics for being accommodating and unquestioning of the social and political context of EAP. Allison (1996) debunks the censure by reminding how communicative language teaching in itself has been transformative and drifting away from the elitist 'sink or swim' traditions, which let learners struggle on their own. He further contends that appropriateness should not be understood narrowly as standardised language use or conformity, but students' use of resources to make their own linguistic choices. Referring to five empirical studies on undergraduate EAP teaching, Allison (1996) acknowledges that the studies do not attempt to examine the system, its underlying interests, and the excluded people, but examples of EAP researchers helping students solve their learning problems and excel in their respective context is already a huge pedagogic commitment that is undeserving of blatant condemnation.

While taking side with advocates for critical pedagogy, Pennycook (1997) makes an elucidative move by returning to Cherryholmes' dichotomy between vulgar and critical pragmatism; the former stresses functionality and the absence of reflexivity in accepting the norms, whereas the latter calls for a contestation of discourse-practices and their contextualisation. Pennycook (1997), however, observes a tendency of EAP practitioners falling into the pit of vulgar pragmatism due to the maintained neutrality of English as a medium of scientific communication and an international language, disconnecting it from cultural contexts. He also criticises universities turning into sites of cultural and epistemological impositions. Pennycook (1997) then redirects his attention to critical EAP, aiming at the pluralisation of academic writing norms and knowledge. He envisions an EAP that considers the political aspect of language, academic content, and language pedagogy and engages directly with not only differences but also the clash between learners' cultural, educational, and linguistic practices and those of academia.

Entering into the 21st century, Harwood and Hadley (2004) re-examine the above critical-pragmatic discourses and views pragmatic EAP and critical EAP as two poles at the end of a spectrum, instead of a binary opposition. On one side, pragmatic EAP concerns the access to power, and on the other side, critical EAP addresses the exploration of diversity. Meanwhile, critical pragmatic EAP stands in between, balancing the two. Echoing Allison (1996), Harwood and Hadley (2004) understand the value of pragmatic EAP for second language speakers trying to pass the gates of academia by helping them uncover the discourse practices, without which learners can be marginalised further and become reconciled to the norms. From a critical viewpoint, Harwood and Hadley (2004) underscore the importance of raising students' awareness of the elusive academic writing standards and the variations across disciplines, departments, and lecturers. A critical pragmatic pedagogy is, thus, favoured for its emphasis on dominant discourse norms and the constant invitation for students to reflect, evaluate, or even challenge them.

Since Harwood and Hadley (2004), empirical studies on EAP pedagogy indicate either a pragmatic approach aiming at instructional efficiency, such as flipping the classroom in aiding academic vocabulary learning (Knežević et al., 2020), or a critical approach

promoting learners' agency, for example, providing corpus-based activities that expose them to authentic usage data (Yılmaz, 2021) and involving students in the development of materials that reflect their local contexts through student-generated digital stories (Kohnke, 2019). Apart from studies with an exclusive orientation at one approach, there have only been a couple of studies that fall within the category of critical pragmatic EAP (Du, 2022; Ruecker & Shapiro, 2021). The scarcity of studies specifically highlighting critical pragmatism in EAP implies the persisting dichotomy between the pragmatic and critical approaches among scholars and practitioners, but the conceptual foundation laid by Pennycook (1997) and Harwood and Hadley (2004) merits further exploration in practice and discussions to discover other values of critical pragmatism for EAP pedagogy.

Ruecker and Shapiro (2021) praise the usefulness of critical pragmatism as a conceptual umbrella that caters to both teaching and problematisation of norms. They further give illustrations from their own practice in integrating critical pragmatism into course policies (e.g., additional education designations to attract students who might hesitate about enrolling in a writing support course), course contents (e.g., development of a course on World Englishes and incorporation of literary works by multilingual writers), assignments (e.g., a rhetorical analysis assignment allowing students to be bilingual in their writing), and classroom instructions (e.g., encouraging comments on bilingualism) (Ruecker & Shapiro, 2021).

Throughout three years of action research, in response to instances of plagiarism found among master-level students, Du (2022) elucidates the adoption of critical-pragmatic pedagogy for source-attribution instruction in an EAP writing curriculum in a Chinese context. The action research consists of three instructional cycles. In the preliminary cycle with a pragmatic approach, students were given genre analysis of a newspaper article and a journal article, explicit instruction on attribution conventions using a blank-filling exercise, and correction of defective examples as the main classroom activities. In Cycle 1, three critical activities were introduced through discussions around plagiarism by comparing two pieces of artwork, a questionnaire-based discussion on referencing knowledge, and a case-based discussion prompting students to write a response from a journal editor's point of view. In Cycle 2, further critical activities were presented, namely self-critical reflection on implicit and explicit attribution, a reading-based discussion centred on historical perspectives regarding authorship attribution, and a follow-up oral debate that touched on cultural aspects of attribution. Du (2022) attributes the unit's critical aspects to pedagogical efforts to encourage reflection and contestation of academic conventions that are situated in a larger sociocultural context and are possible to change.

More than sharing innovative ideas, the articles by Ruecker and Shapiro (2021) and Du (2022) exemplify teacher reflection at the level of principle, theory, and also practice (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019), as they claim their principle as critical-pragmatic, justify the value of critical pragmatism, and describe their instructional choices and classroom actions. In a similar spirit to these studies, this research seeks to present teacher reflection on the incorporation of critical-pragmatic principles into the development of academic writing course materials, as well as contributing to the paucity of the latest scholarly discussions on critical pragmatism.

Framework for Reflecting on Practice

This research reflects the spirit of reflective practice observed among TESOL professionals (Alexander, 2012; Du, 2022; Ruecker & Shapiro, 2021; Yilmaz, 2021). Reflective practice is beneficial not only for TESOL practitioners themselves but also for the field of study. As teachers explore their beliefs and practice through evidence-based reflective practice, they can correct any errors in their beliefs, modify their practice and solve practical problems, and this reflective engagement with their teaching can boost their self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as nurture resourcefulness and resilience (Farrell, 2014). Given their continued professional responsibility, TESOL practitioners will be able to not only consume but also generate TESOL knowledge, which can bring advancements in TESOL theories and multilevel changes, hence bridging theory and practice (Farrell, 2014).

Particularly, this study employs the Framework for Reflecting on Practice (Farrell, 2014) in its analysis of findings. This framework is aimed at facilitating TESOL practitioners in probing into their actions related to teaching and uncovering the sources, meanings, and consequences of their actions even outside of the classroom (Farrell, 2014). The framework consists of five levels, namely *philosophy*, *principles*, *theory*, *practice*, and *beyond practice*, as illustrated in Figure 1. To reflect on *practice*, teachers should consider *philosophy*, *principles*, and *theory*, which constitute the theoretical foundations of practice, and also *beyond practice* that transcends the technical aspect of teaching (Farrell, 2014).

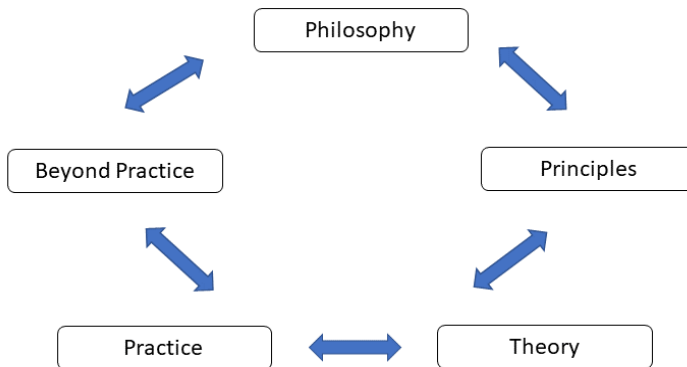


Figure 1. Framework for Reflecting on Practice (Farrell, 2014)

At the level of *philosophy*, teachers obtain self-knowledge by exploring how past experiences influence their perspectives (Farrell, 2014). One of the most promising strategies is teacher-generated stories of past experiences or teacher narratives, which can be produced as a chronological in-depth biography, completed narrative frames, or reflections on career critical incidents (Farrell, 2014).

At the level of *principles*, teachers examine their assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions regarding teaching and learning (Farrell, 2014). Assumptions are usually taken for granted but can be investigated through teacher maxims, such as following the prescribed method

(maxim of conformity) or giving learners control (maxim of empowerment) (Richards, 1996). Beliefs are more hidden and need intentional articulation, for example, through metaphors (Farrell, 2014). Meanwhile, conceptions classify meanings attached to the teaching role (Farrell, 2014), for instance, scientifically based conceptions of teaching which ground on research and the accompanying experimentation and empirical investigation, theoretically based conceptions which are driven by theory (what should work) or values (what is morally right), and art/craft conceptions which refer to eclectic teaching approaches in response to situational demands (Freeman & Richards, 1993).

At the level of *theory*, teachers examine how their professional practices are shaped by aspects of theory by inspecting their lesson planning, reporting and analysing career critical incidents, such as in an autobiographical sketch, or studying cases, such as journal entries documenting classroom management problems and an account of how a teacher implements lesson plans (Farrell, 2014). The use of lesson plans and post-lesson reflections to guide teacher reflection has been a common practice among teachers from different disciplines (Ga et al., 2025; Gutierrez, 2019; Sapkota & Hayes, 2024). While scrutinising lesson planning can reveal the focus of the lessons, the theory behind methodological choices, and the roles designated to teachers and students in the lessons, examining relevant critical incidents and cases in or beyond the classroom not only uncovers insights on theory but also allows teachers to express theoretical and practical problem-solving strategies (Farrell, 2014).

At the level of *practice*, teachers may engage in reflection-*in*-action, reflection-*on*-action, and reflection-*for*-action, with classroom observations and action research as the strategies (Farrell, 2014). Reflection-*in*-action happens in the midst of teaching by accessing thoughts and feelings in an internal dialogue. Reflection-*on*-action is done in a retrospective mode after classroom events take place. After these two stages, teachers are then ready for reflection-*for*-action, in which they take the proactive action of modifying practice for improvements in the future (Farrell, 2014). Lastly, at the level of *beyond practice*, teachers are involved in critical reflection to understand power dynamics between them and learners and question formerly unchallenged norms in the larger teaching context, which underlie teachers' assumptions and practices, and such a critical reflection is best conducted in teacher reflection groups (Farrell, 2014).

Although the five levels are interconnected when teachers engage in reflections, each can be inspected on its own depending on the needs of TESOL teachers (Farrell, 2014). The framework suits the reflective nature of this self-study that dwells on the researcher's rumination on her teaching practices as guided by critical-pragmatic pedagogy. Reflective practice in this research is attempted at two stages of reflection, namely *principles* (i.e., teachers' pedagogical assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions) and *theory* (i.e., methodological choices) (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019), in the analysis. After-lesson reflections and materials as the data were analysed to identify the teacher's instructional decisions in each lesson and how they reflect critical pragmatism at the level of *theory*, and the results were discussed in a separate section to focus on the researcher's individual assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions (Farrell, 2014) and how they come down to critical-pragmatic pedagogy at the level of *principles*.

METHODOLOGY

This research avails itself of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practice (S-STEP) methodology. Ontologically and epistemologically speaking, S-STEP gives prominence to teaching practitioners' *experience* in contributing to the knowledge base through investigations into one's practice, reviews on problems of practice, and reframing of personal experiences, as opposed to formal knowledge creation by means of reasoning (Fletcher, 2020). It is possible for S-STEP research to appear exceedingly subjective, but the underlying principle goes beyond mere subjectivity and extends to rounds of critical reflection on one's teaching context, thus situating teacher knowledge (LaBoskey, 2004) by means of "exemplars that represent contextually bound claims and interpretations about knowledge and understanding *in practice*" (Fletcher, 2020, p. 276). While similarly privileging the *I*, self-study is designed distinctly from narrative (i.e., story of the self) and auto-ethnography (i.e., social and cultural dimensions of the self), as it is directed at practice/improvement (i.e., *self in action*) (Hamilton et al., 2008).

The *self* in this study is the researcher, who will now claim the pronoun *I* to emphasise subjectivity. I am a higher education practitioner in the field of TESOL, with overseas learning experiences at the postgraduate level in New Zealand and Australia. My work focuses on EAP, especially academic writing. I have also provided education counselling as a day job and activism, equipping students with resources to access international education. Thus, the self in action being investigated is me as an academic writing course designer and instructor. The context of the *action* is an online skill-focused academic writing class I developed and taught over seven sessions. Each session contained a combination of two or more lessons and corresponding exercises. Despite focusing on my personal experience, I interacted with the language centre director as a *critical friend* (LaBoskey, 2004) during materials development, with my students in the class, and with the professional literature composing the materials, all of which inform this self-study to some degree.

Two text-based data sources were used. The first one comprises seven PowerPoint presentation files of the academic writing materials and their accompanying worksheets for students. The second data source is seven journal entries, each dedicated to every session of the course, that I wrote over three days of reflection. In my entries, I paid attention to my pedagogical choices in lesson planning (Ga et al., 2025; Gutierrez, 2019; Sapkota & Hayes, 2024), engaging in reflection at the level of *theory* (Farrell, 2014). As the student groups' time of enrolment in the course was close to each other, I did not manage to review and revise the materials in depth right after each class. Instead, I engaged in a reflection after all cohorts finished the course, illustrating reflection-*on-action* (Farrell, 2014).

The units of analysis are my reflections, and they were examined using a deductive analysis. After reviewing key readings (Allison, 1996; Benesch, 1996; Harwood & Hadley, 2004; Pennycook, 1997), I selected "pragmatic teaching", "critical teaching", and "critical-pragmatic teaching" as the sensitising constructs and formulated a tentative definition for each (see Table 1) to operationalise the theoretical propositions (Fife & Gossner, 2024) by those EAP scholars.

Table 1. Operationalising theory

Sensitising constructs	Tentative definition
Pragmatic teaching	Classroom techniques and activities that expose learners to established academic writing norms aimed at developing their academic communicative competence, without challenging the discourse norms (Allison, 1996; Harwood & Hadley, 2004; Pennycook, 1997).
Critical teaching	Classroom techniques and activities that attend to linguistic and cultural varieties in academic writing practices and invite learners to exercise criticality in thinking and writing (Benesch, 1996; Pennycook, 1997).
Critical-pragmatic teaching	Classroom techniques and activities in which the critical and pragmatic dimensions are present and interact (Harwood & Hadley, 2004).

I then read my reflections line by line and coded each statement of the reflection entries into one of the three pre-determined themes based on the constructs. Drawing on Farrell and Kennedy (2019), I also categorised the statements in the reflections into the levels of *principles* (i.e., critical, pragmatic, or critical-pragmatic) and *theory* (i.e., how the principles are embodied in lesson planning).

The trustworthiness of qualitative findings in this research was ensured by reflexivity and methodological triangulation. While pure objectivity is implausible in qualitative research, being reflexive is a way for qualitative researchers to demonstrate intellectual honesty (Adler, 2022). Reflexivity was carried out through self-reflections by pointing out personal biases (Hadi & José, 2016). Before analysing the data, I read each of my reflection entries and wrote side notes, while inspecting the multiplicity of my identities and viewpoints and how they influence data analysis in any way (Lietz et al., 2006). Meanwhile, methodological triangulation does not aim to determine if the data collected are true but seeks to ensure that inferences drawn from multiple data sources are valid (Hadi & José, 2016). In this research, my reflective journal entries were the primary data source, while the materials, including the presentation slides and students’ worksheets, were referred to when validating information in my reflections (Adler, 2022).

RESULTS

Table 2 summarises the findings. The right column contains the skills, activities, and techniques I chose to include in the materials, and these are categorised into three approaches of pragmatic teaching, critical teaching, and critical-pragmatic teaching.

Table 2. Summary of findings

Teaching approaches	Lessons focused on
Pragmatic teaching	Differentiating between general writing and academic writing in English in terms of functions and linguistic features. Describing the principal characteristics of written academic style. Analysing assignment questions (i.e., directive words, content terms, and limiting terms). Drilling paraphrasing skills. Pointing out ethical citation practices. Differentiating between information-prominent and author-prominent citations through examples. Identifying student voice and the voices of cited authors (i.e., direct voice, indirect voice, and external voice) and training students to insert their voice into their writing. Introducing resources and techniques to find sources in the pre-research and research stages.
Critical teaching	Setting expectations for Master's studies, compared to undergraduate-level studies, especially overseas. Evaluating sources based on currency, relevance, accuracy, authority and purpose through class discussions.
Critical-pragmatic teaching	Outlining four types of graduate assignments and noting possible variations across disciplines. Introducing a variety of reporting verbs and examining a writer's different attitudes towards cited sources through his/her use of reporting verbs. Providing techniques and examples of disagreeing with sources, guiding students in commenting on sources, and encouraging them to take a stance towards sources.

Teaching Academic Writing Pragmatically

As can be seen from Table 2, the academic writing materials I developed were dominated by pragmatic teaching. At the heart of it are the desire to help students master practical skills, as my students “did not have a chance to practice the skills intensively because their undergraduate studies were in Indonesia” (Entry 2), and also to provide access to freely available resources, such as “to accommodate my students’ learning before they got access to the library of their respective university” (Entry 6).

My pragmatic *principle* was manifested further in the provision of exercises and feedback, as “my focus, thus, was on techniques and exercises, which students needed to complete individually” (Entry 2). Some of the exercises do not require productive skills and only need straightforward feedback from the teacher in the form of right/wrong responses and

explanations. These exercises include matching words to the correct definitions (Worksheet 1, Worksheet 3, Worksheet 7), multiple choices (Worksheet 1), blank-filling exercises (Worksheet 3) and voice identification (Worksheet 4, Worksheet 5). Meanwhile, other exercises, such as paraphrasing (Worksheet 2; Worksheet 3), require students to put their writing skills into practice. Students were asked to do the exercises individually on a digital answer sheet, and I gave personalised feedback on each answer, as the answer sheet “was anonymous so that students would not be ashamed if I gave criticism on their writing” (Entry 2).

Throughout my years of learning, I found that receiving feedback from both teachers and peers was very valuable. It was through feedback that I uncovered academic writing standards at my university in Indonesia and in the global context, and assessed the state of my ability. (Entry 2)

Nevertheless, after reflecting on my own reflections, I noted several instances in which I neglected criticality, for example, by exposing them to the norms of postgraduate assignments at global institutions (Handout 1) and asking them to conform. In this case, I favoured pragmatism, as I prioritised students’ academic success and avoidance of future conflicts with their lecturers.

I found this lesson essential, as in my experience, lecturers at a foreign university would give clear instructions in the form of assignment questions, and with the word limit, it is necessary for students to decide on what to include in their assignment before starting to write. (Entry 1)

In lessons on paraphrasing skills (Handout 2; Handout 3), I included a warning against direct quotation overuse. I wrote that “I also disagree with overusing direct quotations because it somehow reduces the voice of the author and makes the writing seemingly less creative” (Entry 2). Without asking students’ opinions, I was imposing my beliefs on them, yet I did not realise I was doing this when I was developing the materials or teaching them and only found out about this during my reflections. A similar stance was observed in the lesson on different voices in academic writing, including student voice and that of the cited authors (Handout 4). I wrote in my journal that “I concluded the materials with a statement emphasising the importance of having student voice in their writings [...]” (Entry 4). Reflecting on this entry, it occurred to me that I myself did not question the advocated norm of being authoritative as an academic writer, let alone inviting my students to challenge it.

Teaching Academic Writing Critically

Only two lessons are associated with the critical approach. First, when talking about academic expectations on postgraduate students at overseas universities (Handout 1), I engaged students in a class discussion, relating it to my personal experience of studying in New Zealand for a master’s degree and in Australia for a PhD. I went on asking students about their expectations of studying at their respective institutions in different countries. This activity “was meant to set expectations, especially since they would study outside of

their home country so that they would be met with even different academic expectations” (Entry 1). Having a class discussion on cultural issues was aimed at raising their awareness of various academic expectations across countries, especially between Indonesia and their destination country.

The second lesson is evaluating scholarly sources (Handout 7). I wrote in my journal, “I pointed out that not all that we read must be trusted entirely and can be directly used for assignment writing” (Entry 7), which shows my intention to nurture students’ critical thinking. In the materials, this is followed by an exercise asking students to check the accuracy of a short magazine article in a graduate assignment and partake in a class discussion. “By discussion I mean probing students’ justification for their answers and telling them my views, instead of providing correct/wrong feedback” (Entry 7). Not only does the lesson inherently involve critical thinking on the part of the learners, but it is also delivered through an interactive technique that allows for an exchange of ideas. This lesson was intended to let students understand that individual differences in perspectives are typical of academic discourses.

Integrating the Pragmatic and Critical Aspects

It is interesting to find that I actually combined both approaches in three lessons. One example concerns the types of graduate assignments. I was being pragmatic when I showed them sample assignments for each type and discussed their common structure and linguistic features (Handout 1). Before concluding the session, “I assigned homework for them to look up their respective university’s website and find, if any, the assignments typically given to students in their study program” (Entry 1). At this point, I shifted into critical teaching as I related the materials to my students’ respective study area and learning context, pointing out the plurality of knowledge and ways of knowing, because “it’s important for them to relate the materials to their own learning context so that the knowledge would be practical” (Entry 1).

Another example of critical pragmatism is the lesson on disagreeing with sources and commenting on them. During the classes, “I underscored the fact that sometimes there are key readings that are noteworthy for citation but against our own beliefs and let them know that it is okay to show disagreement” (Entry 5). I began with a critical position of endorsing criticality, but followed this up with practical linguistic devices that can be used to point out limitations, show objections, and critique further by citing another source (Handout 5).

Nonetheless, there are contradictory statements in my reflections. I admitted that “teaching this specific lesson felt counter-intuitive because I was not really a great critic in a sense of openly objecting to a source, unless it is about drawing a difference between my study’s findings and evidence in the literature, if any” (Entry 5), suggesting that disagreeing with authors is not my personal writing style, but at the same time, “I told my students that in Indonesia, we have this culture of collectivism, so we tend to agree with others in public although we have a different opinion. And I encouraged them to have a say, to take a stance” (Entry 5). I seemed to unconsciously endorse the normative authority in academic writing valued in Western scholarship despite being personally uncomfortable with it, displaying inconsistency between what I believed in and what I wanted my students to believe in.

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: To what extent do the teacher's teaching principles reflect critical pragmatism?

My teaching *principles* consist of assumptions, beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning (Farrell, 2014). Although the data collected do not contain maxims or metaphors, which are two strategies suggested to assess teachers' *principles* (Farrell, 2014), the findings reveal seven general teaching principles which reflect both pragmatic and critical pedagogy.

On the pragmatic side, in my teaching, I hold rational orientations (Richards, 1996) towards opportunities for practice, provision of learning resources, individualised feedback, and conformity to assignment requirements. These principles are shaped by my *philosophy* (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). From a *teacher-as-person* perspective (Farrell, 2014), I reflected on my identity as an international student whose ultimate goal was to succeed academically. For me and my students who were studying on a full scholarship, giving the best possible academic performance is obligatory. Being a non-native academic writer, I was aware of the struggles that come with scholarly writing in English, including confusion, lack of confidence, and perceived deficiency in the technical aspects (Maringe & Jenkins, 2015; Phyo et al., 2024; Wang & Li, 2008) and realise the unfair conditions faced by international students who might be punished for their imperfect academic English despite their intellectual potential. Thus, a pragmatic approach was largely taken on purpose.

The principles of opportunities for practice and provision of learning resources originate from situating students' needs, for instance, having no access to the library or no opportunities for academic writing practices. My intentional pragmatism is driven by an altruistic call to aid students' learning (Allison, 1996). Meanwhile, the principles of individualised feedback and conformity to assignment requirements are influenced by my prior learning experience. As I recalled critical incidents (Farrell, 2014) in my study abroad experience, I realised the value of personalised feedback, which socialised me into academic writing norms, and the importance of understanding and answering assignment questions to prevent my students from being marginalised in academia (Harwood & Hadley, 2004).

On the critical side, I uphold the principles of development of critical thinking, articulation of personal opinions, and contextualisation of knowledge, all of which are directed at promoting learners' agency (Yılmaz, 2021). With the principle of critical thinking development, students are made aware of the fact that knowledge is not neutral (Pennycook, 1997), so they need to be able to not only comprehend and reiterate the contents of scholarly readings but also question the thoughts of other people, thus raising their social awareness (Benesch, 1996). The principle of articulation of personal opinions is related to the former principle. As students begin to criticise their readings, they are invited to insert their own voice and contribute to scholarly conversations, making academic writing more democratic (Harwood & Hadley, 2004). Meanwhile, the principle of knowledge contextualisation stems from the importance of making EAP teaching context-specific (Allison, 1996; Kohnke, 2019) and a realisation about disciplinary divergence (Harwood & Hadley, 2004), as my students came from an array of disciplinary areas.

Research Question 2: How do the teaching principles influence the teacher's pedagogical decisions in the development of academic writing materials?

Although the seven teaching principles above correspond to either pragmatic EAP or critical EAP separately, they interact in the online course materials development at the level of *theory* (Farrell, 2014). Given the pragmatic principle of conformity to assignment requirements, I did not provide room for students to oppose the status quo (Benesch, 1996), as I unintentionally moulded them to be obedient international students by exposing them to lecturers' expectations and urging them to follow the requirements faithfully. However, I balance this out with the principle of knowledge contextualisation through comparing and contrasting activities (Harwood & Hadley, 2004), in which students, speaking from their own context, point out different assignment requirements across tertiary institutions.

Furthermore, examples showing the principle of provision of learning resources, which is aimed at empowering students in the progress of their academic communicative competence (Allison, 1996), are the list of self-paced exercises they could do on their own and databases containing free-to-access articles. I followed this up with the principle of critical thinking development by means of reading-based classroom discussions (Du, 2022), for instance, to check content relevance and accuracy and to determine other authors' standpoints towards certain issues.

Last but not least, the pragmatic principles of opportunities for practice and individualised feedback can be seen throughout the materials and are manifested in exercises asking students to produce written responses, which do not interrupt the existing conditions and are meant to fulfil students' need (Benesch, 1996) to understand the normalised linguistic conventions and master technical skills in writing. I complement these with the principle of articulation of personal opinions at the later stages of learning. Once students seemed to be more confident and proficient in using their technical skills, the productive exercises became more complex, for example, inserting their own voice in the middle of cited contents, commenting on sources, and even challenging other authors' standpoints. I purposefully chose topics which contain social issues to arouse their interest and English language use but are still relevant to their life (Pennycook, 1997), such as workers' rights in the ride-hailing services industry and the COVID-19 pandemic handling by the Indonesian government, hence allowing students to also contextualise their knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Analysing my own reflections in this study reveals the values of the triple helix of teacher reflection (i.e., *descriptive*, *conceptual*, and *critical*) (Farrell, 2014) for engaging in reflective practice at the level of *philosophy*, *principles*, *theory*, *practice*, and *beyond practice* (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). As I recalled what I did during lesson planning (*descriptive reflection*), I documented my *theory* and *practice* as data. In scrutinising the data, I related my *theory* and *practice* to sensitising constructs informed by the scholarly literature (*conceptual reflection*) and uncovered the *principles* behind my *theory* and *practice*. This process led me to *critical*

reflection in which I saw myself as a person with a subjective teaching *philosophy* and carefully examined my teaching context *beyond practice*, looking back and forth at how the personal interacts with the social, cultural, and political.

I conclude this paper by concurring with Pennycook (1997) that EAP teachers tend to be pragmatic in their approach, while underscoring that their degree of being vulgar or critical varies across individuals. However, I argue that vulgar pragmatism is not always intentional; it could be internalised without the teacher realising it, or it could also be a political choice amidst contextual factors that do not allow them to exercise critical pragmatism. Moreover, evaluating a teacher's vulgar/critical stance cannot be done only by observing their *practice*. It is important to look at their *philosophy*, *principles*, and *theory*, and how these shape their *practice* and impact the students and him/herself *beyond practice*. At the end of the day, EAP teachers are individuals whose voices, beliefs and perceptions are as important as students' and need to be considered by institutional leaders and scholars contributing to the EAP literature.

Regarding pedagogical implications, this study's findings ascertain the possibility of applying critical pragmatism in teaching academic writing. However, while it is possible to integrate the critical and pragmatic approaches, striking a balance between the two might not be necessary. The extent of criticality/pragmatism as guiding principles in teaching is determined by a teacher's individual philosophy. Hence, EAP teachers should first reflect on their philosophy before locating themselves on the critical-pragmatic continuum in their teaching principles.

This study has its limitations. One of them is the cameo role of critical friends, who are central in S-STEP. If this methodology is to be employed in future studies, collaborative reflection could be sought after, for example, with the language centre director, other instructors, or students. The study could also have been more robust if it had expanded the reflection to other levels as well, such as practice through class observations. All in all, the EAP literature could be enriched further with more teacher reflection on their teaching of academic skills and a deeper engagement with the discourses of critical pragmatism. This way, EAP practitioners can facilitate learners to be resourceful and agentive in making academic-related choices during their studies.

REFERENCES

- Adler, R. H. (2022). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 38(4), 598–602. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08903344221116620>
- Alexander, O. (2012). Exploring teacher beliefs in teaching EAP at low proficiency levels. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 11(2), 99–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2011.12.001>
- Allison, D. (1996). Pragmatist discourse and English for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes*, 15(2), 85–103. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906\(96\)00002-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0889-4906(96)00002-6)

- Bachaqi, L. (2023). *Supporting academic writing skills of pre-service English language teachers in Indonesia in an online learning environment: A multisensory approach* [Doctoral dissertation, Charles Darwin University (Australia)]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. <https://doi.org/10.25913/6gt3-1z90>
- Benesch, S. (1996). Needs analysis and curriculum development in EAP: An example of a critical approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 723–738. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587931>
- Dos Santos, L. M., Lo, H. F., & Kwee, C. T. T. (2024). Australia as the destination for study abroad: International students' mobility. *Heliyon*, 10(23), e39741. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e39741>
- Du, Y. (2022). Adopting critical-pragmatic pedagogy to address plagiarism in a Chinese context: An action research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 57, 101112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2022.101112>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2014). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315775401>
- Farrell, T. S. C., & Kennedy, B. (2019). Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: One teacher's reflective journey. *Reflective Practice*, 20(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2018.1539657>
- Fife, S. T., & Gossner, J. D. (2024). Deductive qualitative analysis: Evaluating, expanding, and refining theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241244856>
- Fletcher, T. (2020). Self-study as hybrid methodology. In J. Kitchen, A. Berry, S. M. Bullock, A. R. Crowe, M. Taylor, H. Guðjónsdóttir, & L. Thomas (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 269–297). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6880-6_9
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J. C. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2), 193–216. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587143>
- Ga, S. -H., Cha, H. -J., & Yoon, H. -G. (2025). Pre-service elementary teachers' technological pedagogical and content knowledge in lesson planning and post-lesson reflection discourses on science classes using virtual and augmented reality content. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 34(1), 171–182. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-024-10171-3>
- Garson, K. (2023). The unintended consequences of relying on economic rationales in Canadian internationalization. In R. L. Raby, & S. Kamyab (Eds.), *Unintended consequences of internationalization in higher education* (pp. 246–265). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003189916-7>
- Gutierrez, S. B. (2019). Teacher-practitioner research inquiry and sense making of their reflections on scaffolded collaborative lesson planning experience. *Asia-Pacific Science Education*, 5, 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41029-019-0043-x>
- Hadi, M. A., & José Closs, S. (2016). Ensuring rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research in clinical pharmacy. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 641–646. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-015-0237-6>

- Hamilton, M. L., Smith, L., & Worthington, K. (2008). Fitting the methodology with the research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and auto-ethnography. *Studying Teacher Education*, 4(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17425960801976321>
- Harwood, N., & Hadley, G. (2004). Demystifying institutional practices: critical pragmatism and the teaching of academic writing. *English for Specific Purposes*, 23(4), 355–377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2003.08.001>
- Haupt, J. P., Sutrisno, A., & Hermawan, M. S. (2021). Motivations and outcomes in dual-degree programs: Insights from graduate scholarships for Indonesian civil servants. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 22(3), 535–548. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-021-09687-9>
- Jarjani, U., Zamzami, Z., Teuku, Z., Dorine, L., & Yusri, Y. (2022). When online learning and cultural values intersect: Indonesian EFL students' voices. *Issues in Educational Research*, 32(4), 1196–1212. <https://www.iier.org.au/iier32/usman.pdf>
- Jayadeva, S. (2024). “Study-abroad influencers” and insider knowledge: How new forms of study-abroad expertise on social media mediate student mobility from India to Germany. *Mobilities*, 19(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2023.2220944>
- Johnson, K. A. C. (2023). Russia's successes and unintended consequences to internationalization of higher education through international student recruitment initiatives. In R. L. Raby, & S. Kamyab (Eds.), *Unintended consequences of internationalization in higher education* (pp. 43–58). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003189916-4>
- Khodr, H. (2023). The internationalization of higher education in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Oman: Inspirations, aspirations, and unintended consequences. In R. L. Raby, & S. Kamyab (Eds.), *Unintended consequences of internationalization in higher education* (pp. 97–118). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003189916-7>
- Kim, S., & Zhang, C. (2022). Factors influencing Korean students' choice of study abroad destination short-term and long-term by destination country. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 23(1), 197–208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-021-09705-w>
- Knežević, L., Županec, V., & Radulović, B. (2020). Flipping the classroom to enhance academic vocabulary learning in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. *SAGE Open*, 10(3), 2158244020957052. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020957052>
- Kohnke, L. (2019). Exploring critical pedagogy and choice in EAP material development: A case study. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(4), 1069–1460. <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.4.10.1219>
- Kommers, S., & Bista, K. (2021). Study abroad and student mobility: From educational experience to emerging enterprise. In S. Kommers, & K. Bista (Eds.), *Inequalities in study abroad and student mobility* (pp. 1–8). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367855130-1>
- LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 817–869). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6545-3_21

- Lietz, C. A., Langer, C. L., & Furman, R. (2006). Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5(4), 441–458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325006070288>
- Lörz, M., Netz, N., & Quast, H. (2016). Why do students from underprivileged families less often intend to study abroad? *Higher Education*, 72(2), 153–174. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9943-1>
- Mahmud, Y. S., & German, E. (2021). Online self-regulated learning strategies amid a global pandemic: Insights from Indonesian university students. *Malaysian Journal of Learning & Instruction*, 18(2), 45–68. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2021.18.2.2>
- Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J. (2015). Stigma, tensions, and apprehension: The academic writing experience of international students. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(5), 609–626. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2014-0049>
- Missbach, A., & Purdey, J. (2023). Indonesian international students in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic: Coming out stronger? *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies*, 16(1), 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.14764/10.ASEAS-0085>
- Mukminin, A., Ali, R. M., & Ashari, M. J. (2015). Voices from within: Student teachers' experiences in English academic writing socialization at one Indonesian teacher training program. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1394–1407. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2280>
- Ovchinnikova, E., Van Mol, C., & Jones, E. (2024). Foreign language skills in the study abroad decision-making process and destination choices. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 28(5), 711–742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153241251925>
- Pennycook, A. (1997). Vulgar pragmatism, critical pragmatism, and EAP. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16(4), 253–269. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(97\)00019-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(97)00019-7)
- Phyo, W. M., Nikolov, M., & Hódi, Á. (2024). What support do international doctoral students claim they need to improve their academic writing in English? *Ampersand*, 12, 100161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2023.100161>
- Rachman, M. A. (2023). Scholarship for catching up? The Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) scholarship program as a pillar of economic development policy. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 96, 102701. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102701>
- Richards, J. C. (1996). Teachers' maxims in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(2), 281–296. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588144>
- Ruecker, T., & Shapiro, S. (2021). Critical pragmatism as a middle ground in discussions of linguistic diversity. In T. Silva, & Z. Wang (Eds.), *Reconciling translanguaging and second language writing* (pp. 139–149). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003003786-14>
- Sapkota, B., & Hayes, A. H. (2024). Preservice teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching: Focus on lesson planning and reflection. *School Science and Mathematics*, 124(5), 323–339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssm.12644>
- Utami, S. P. T., Andayani, A., Winarni, R., & Sumarwati, S. (2023). Utilization of artificial intelligence technology in an academic writing class: How do Indonesian students perceive? *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 15(4), ep450. <https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/13419>

- Wang, T., & Li, L. Y. (2008). Understanding international postgraduate research students' challenges and pedagogical needs in thesis writing. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning*, 4(3), 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.5172/ijpl.4.3.88>
- Yılmaz, S. (2021). A plurilithic approach to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing instruction: Insights from English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research. In B. Yazan, & A. F. Selvi (Eds.), *Language teacher education for global Englishes* (pp. 125–131). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003082712-22>