Empowering Pre-Service English Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers in Academic Writing and Publishing: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges

Sri Wahyuningsih
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kudus
E-mail: wahyuningsih@iainkudus.ac.id

Abstract
Despite the growing emphasis on academic writing and publishing in EFL teacher education, limited research has explored how pre-service EFL teachers navigate it. This study addresses this gap by examining the opportunities and challenges faced by pre-service EFL teachers in academic writing and publishing. The study employed a qualitative case study. Through interviews with two pre-service EFL teachers, observation, and documentation, the findings highlight opportunities in academic writing and publishing programs, including enhancing professional competency, fostering critical thinking and communication skills, promoting evidence-based teaching practices, advancing career recognition, and encouraging reflective practice. Equipped with academic writing and publishing skills, pre-service EFL teachers are better prepared to meet the demands of modern classrooms and contribute to the educational field through research and publication. However, participants also faced challenges, such as linguistic and rhetorical difficulties, limited research and critical thinking skills, psychological barriers, and issues related to the publishing process. The study offers practical implications for teacher education programs, emphasizing the need for explicit instruction in academic writing and research methodologies, mentorship, feedback, and support for participation in academic conferences. Furthermore, the findings suggest that institutional culture and academic expectations also influence pre-service teachers' engagement in scholarly writing. A lack of exposure to real publication practices, limited access to academic journals, and insufficient training in digital literacy were additional concerns. Addressing these factors holistically can significantly enhance teacher candidates' readiness for academic contribution.

Keywords: academic writing, pre-service teachers, challenges, opportunities, publishing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of teachers has evolved significantly—from being mere transmitters of knowledge to becoming active participants in academic research, practitioners of evidence-based pedagogy, and contributors to scholarly discourse in education. Despite these expanding responsibilities, many teacher education programs still lack structured support for developing academic writing and publishing competencies (Coleman & Tuck, 2020; Lahiff, 2005). At the same time, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and challenges for teacher development, particularly in the realm of academic literacy. As Kweldju (2016) emphasize that the educational field needs to engage with artificial intelligence through interdisciplinary and creative approaches that foster innovation in academic writing practices. However, this integration is not without risks. Wahyuningsih (2024) highlights concern about the overreliance on AI among pre-service EFL teachers, including diminished critical thinking and weakened ethical awareness in academic work. In response to these complex demands, pre-service English teachers need to be equipped not only with academic writing skills but also with critical thinking, digital literacy, and ethical awareness to become reflective, future-ready educators.

In other words, embedding these skills within pre-service teacher education is essential, as it not only strengthens professional competency but also develops critical communication abilities as well as critical thinking skills for effective instruction and fosters the application of research-backed practices in the classroom (Afshar et al., 2017; Sutherland & Incera, 2021; Wahyuningsih, 2020). In more detail, Lahiff (2005) reports that participants demonstrated increased confidence in understanding academic engagement requirements by joining academic writing training. Professionally, they effectively applied their learning, notably in assessing student work and providing feedback, which proved empowering.

More importantly, to navigate the disruption brought by AI, they need to cultivate a heightened sense of humanity, demonstrating increased passion for teaching and empathy toward students. Developing teachers' identities, encompassing both their physical and digital presence and interactions, is essential. Further, emphasizing humanistic engagement supports students in discovering the deeper meaning of education since learning extends beyond acquiring knowledge; it is fundamentally about the process of becoming, the ongoing formation of human identity. Therefore, empowering academic writing and publishing training for pre-service English teachers is one of my strategies to develop professional competency, critical thinking, communication skills, and an academic career for lifelong development.

Previous research on academic writing has primarily focused on the experiences of students and teacher educators in higher education contexts. For instance, Rahnuma, (2023) examined the experiences of ESL students and highlighted the value of employing Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a reflective tool to reassess, reimagine, and redesign learning activity systems. Similarly, Fathi & Rahimi (2024) investigated the role of AI-powered writing support in enhancing EFL learners' academic writing skills, revealing significant improvements in students' performance through the integration of AI tools. Velazcoendoza et al. (2023), through a survey-based study, explored teacher educators' engagement in scientific writing and publication, emphasizing the need for professional development strategies, adherence to citation standards, preservation of language and culture, and the promotion of collaborative and editorial excellence.

While these studies have significantly contributed to our understanding of academic writing among higher education stakeholders, they have primarily centered on students or in-service teacher educators, offering only surface-level insights that call for deeper exploration in academic writing empowerment. Notably underexplored, however, is the strategic empowerment of pre-service EFL teacher educators in academic writing and publishing, particularly as essential competencies for navigating the complexities of the disruption era in Indonesian higher education, marked by digital transformation, globalization, and evolving scholarly expectations. This study addresses this critical gap by examining both the opportunities and challenges associated with developing academic writing and publishing capacities among pre-service EFL teachers. The novelty of this research lies in its targeted focus on pre-service educators at a formative stage of their professional identity development, within a context where academic literacy is becoming increasingly vital. By offering empirically grounded insights, this study contributes to the field by informing the design of context-sensitive curricula, advocating for the integration of academic writing into teacher education programs, and supporting the implementation of technology-enhanced academic literacy training. Ultimately, it seeks to equip future EFL educators with the critical competencies necessary to actively participate in scholarly discourse and to make meaningful contributions to academic and professional communities.

METHOD

The present study employed a qualitative case study approach. As Creswell (2013) asserts, qualitative research enables participants to share their lived experiences and perspectives in depth, allowing for a rich understanding of complex phenomena. This approach was particularly suitable for the study's aim of exploring how pre-service EFL teachers perceive and navigate the challenges and opportunities in developing academic writing and publishing competencies. The case study design allows for a focused, contextualized examination of specific educational settings within Indonesian higher education, capturing the nuanced interactions between institutional support, individual agency, and technological change.

Dealing with the participants' recruitment, the researcher employed purposive sampling by selecting two pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in an English education program at an Indonesian university. Both participants, identified as S1 and S2, were male and in their fifth semester of study. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that the participants possessed specific characteristics relevant to the research focus, namely, ongoing engagement with academic writing and exposure to publishing practices within the context of their teacher education program. Although the number of participants is limited, the qualitative case study approach does not aim for generalization but rather seeks to gain in-depth, context-rich insights into individual experiences and perspectives (Merriam, 1998). These two participants were selected based on their willingness to share detailed reflections, accessibility, and the transparency of the information they could provide regarding the empowerment process in academic writing and publishing. Their narratives offer valuable illustrative cases that help illuminate the broader challenges and opportunities faced by pre-service EFL teachers in the disruption era. To protect their identities, pseudonyms were used throughout the study. The following table presents the profile of the participants.

Table 1. The Profile of the Participants

Participants	Age	Sex	Semester
S1	19	male	5
S2	20	male	5

For data collection, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. The study instruments included an interview guide and an observation sheet, both designed to explore participants' experiences with academic writing and publishing. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted conversationally to allow participants to express their thoughts freely. During the process of data collection, the researcher explained the study's purpose and followed ethical research protocols, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality. Data were collected on August 7, 2024.

The observation was carried out during participants' academic writing classes and writing consultation sessions. The researcher took field notes using a structured observation sheet that focused on participants' engagement, interaction with peers and lecturers, and responses to academic writing tasks. This allowed for a deeper understanding of their academic behaviors and contextual challenges. In addition, documentation was used to support and triangulate the data. The documents analyzed included participants' academic writing assignments, feedback received from lecturers, writing portfolios, and institutional writing guidelines.

In analyzing the data, the researcher followed a structured qualitative approach involving transcription, coding, and thematic analysis, guided by Widodo (2014) interpretive framework. First, all interview data were transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of the participants' voices. Transcriptions were carefully reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy and familiarity with the content. Following transcription, the researcher engaged in open coding, where segments of the data were labelled according to meaningful units that reflected emerging concepts related to academic writing and publishing. These initial codes were then refined and categorized into broader themes through axial coding, as the researcher examined relationships and patterns across the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The present study elaborates on the findings of the study, which consist of the opportunities of empowering academic writing and publishing for pre-service EFL teachers and the challenges in joining academic writing and publishing empowerment.

Opportunities for Empowering Academic Writing and Publishing for Pre-Service EFL Teachers

The results of interviews illustrate the opportunities for empowering academic writing and publishing for pre-service EFL teachers, covering enhancing professional competency, fostering critical thinking and communication skills among pre-service EFL teachers, promoting evidence-based teaching practices, and promoting evidence-based teaching practices, elaborated as follows.

Enhancing Professional Competency

Based on the interviews, academic writing and publishing are beneficial for enhancing the participants' professional competency (S1 and S2). In this case, they have insight and competency, especially in academic writing and publishing, which are meaningful for their career professional development in the future. As reported in the following excerpt:

"Academic writing and publishing empowerment given by my lecturer is meaningful for improving my professional competency in the future. I have insight regarding article writing and publication in journals. Moreover, I have research and publication experience in the journal, which can promote my career in the future" (S1)

Similarly, S2 reported the same view regarding the role of academic writing and publishing empowerment.

"As a teacher in the future, I am so grateful for gaining the empowerment of academic writing and publishing skills provided by my teacher educator in the academic writing course. I was taught about knowledge and experience in research, academic writing, and publishing articles in the journal. This means a lot to me for enhancing my professional competency" (S2).

In addition, based on classroom observation, students have a positive response toward the empowerment of academic writing and publishing activities. This can be proven by their participation in conducting research and presenting their papers in academic forums such as workshops and seminars as follows:

Figure 1. The Students from S1 and S2 Participated in an International Conference in Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia, on July 11, 2023.

The above documentation depicted that fostering students to be engaged in such conferences is crucial for developing their professional competency as candidates for teachers. They were directed to have good preparation starting from writing articles (title, introduction, method, findings, and discussion), reviewing and proofreading articles, and submitting the articles to the conference. By joining the conference, they had networking opportunities with peers, experts, and other academics. Further, they gain insights into the latest research, trends, and innovations in their field. This can help them stay updated and inspire new research ideas or methodologies.

Fostering Critical Thinking and Communication Skills among Pre-Service EFL Teachers

Based on the interviews, S1 and S2 reported that critical thinking and communication skills are pivotal for pre-service EFL teachers as the candidate of teachers. Academic writing and publishing training facilitated by teacher educators is

beneficial for them, especially in shaping critical thinking and communication skills. In addition, they gain insight dealing with how to criticize issues and present arguments in academic writing. More importantly, they become more knowledgeable about publishing articles in journals, as reported in the following excerpts:

"By participating in the academic writing and publishing activities, I gained insights regarding the ways critical thinking skills in academic writing such as criticizing issues, presenting arguments, and so on. Further, I can shape my communication skills when presenting my paper in the workshop" (S1).

In the same vein, S2 reported the same idea.

"Joining academic writing and publishing training in an academic writing course is crucial for shaping my critical thinking and communication skills. I was taught by my lecturer the ways to present arguments and criticize issues being talked about. Further, I can develop my communication skills when I present my paper in the workshop" (S2).

The excerpts above are strengthened by the participation of S1 and S2 in conferences in which they present their papers through critical communication in front of other academics, illustrated by the following documentation.

Figure 2. The Student from S2 was Presenting His Paper about Photovoice in the EFL Classroom at the International Conference (July 11, 2023)

Figure 3. The Student from S1 was Presenting His Paper about Teachers' Role in the Digital era at the International Conference (July 11, 2023)

The above documentations denote that engagement in academic writing workshops, training, and seminars is pivotal for pre-service EFL teachers to shape their

critical thinking and communication skills. In this matter, critical thinking skill is reflected in the process of presenting ideas and arguments in academic writing. Meanwhile, critical communication skill is depicted in the process of delivering her paper verbally and answering questions from other academics dealing with their papers.

Promoting Evidence-Based Teaching Practices

The result of interviews reveals that academic writing and publishing empowerment can promote evidence-based teaching practices. As the candidates of teachers, S1 and S2 reported that by having academic writing and publishing skills, they will be more capable of evaluating pedagogical approaches and applying research-based methods in their classroom activities. Moreover, they are acknowledged in navigating references particularly dealing with journals supporting their teaching resources. This is evidenced by the following excerpts:

"I gained meaningful benefits when actively participating in academic writing and publishing. For instance, in terms of teaching practice, as the candidate of teacher, I can shape my teaching practices based on the evidence of research. Moreover, I can evaluate pedagogical approaches I used in the classroom and navigate various resources to support my teaching activities" (S1).

"By actively joining academic writing and publishing course, I become more knowledgeable in the ways in promoting evidence-based teaching practices. Further, by mastering academic writing and publishing skills, I can evaluate approaches and methods in education that I can apply in my teaching activities. More importantly, I can do research dealing with my teaching and disseminating the results in journals" (S2).

Promoting Recognition and Career Advancement

In the interviews, S1 and S2 highlighted that scholar with more academic work such as publications in journals tend to have more recognition and career advancement. By participating in academic writing and publishing courses, they have research and publication experiences that can promote recognition and career advancement when being a teacher as reported in the following excerpts:

"I learn a lot about academic writing and publishing after joining the academic writing training in the academic writing course this semester. I have been engaged in research and writing activities by my teacher educators. As a result, I have research and publication experiences that benefit promoting my recognition and career in the future" (S1).

Similarly, S2 reported the same experience regarding career advancement.

"I am so grateful for participating in the academic writing course provided by my teacher educators. I have research and publication experiences that can enhance my recognition and career advancement in the future" (S2).

The above excerpts demonstrate that publishing can provide early professional recognition, which may lead to career advancement opportunities and a stronger professional network. By improving research quality, visibility, and publication success rates, such training equips scholars with essential skills to produce impactful, high-quality work. The following documentations denote that the outcome of joining a workshop or

seminar in academic writing and publishing can help the pre-service EFL teachers to have better recognition through their publication in journals.
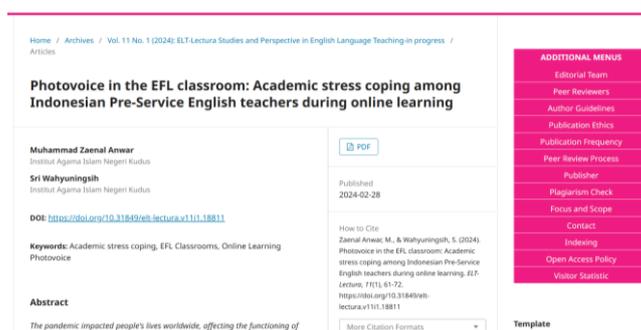

Figure 4. The Student from S2 Published His Article in the Journal (ELT-Lectura), Accredited by Sinta 4

Figure 5. The Student from S1 Published His Article in the Elite Journal, Accredited by Sinta

Encouraging Reflective Practice

S1 and S2 emphasized that empowering academic writing and publishing training can encourage reflective practice, which means that providing effective and supportive training in academic writing and publishing can help scholars develop the habit of self-reflection and continuous improvement in their writing processes. In addition, empowering training in academic writing provides participants with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to write and publish academic work effectively covering guidance on research writing, journal selection, peer review, and responding to feedback. Importantly, it can foster reflective practice as reported in the following excerpts:

"For me, academic writing and publishing have an opportunity to encourage reflective practice involving thinking critically about my writing and learning from experience to develop future work" (S1).

The statement of S1 echoes with S2 reporting the same view of reflective practice in academic writing training.

"Academic writing and publishing empowerment have a chance for me to foster my reflective practice. This means that I can analyze strengths and weaknesses in academic writing by considering feedback constructively and developing strategies for better academic writing" (S2).

Challenges in Academic Writing and Publishing Empowerment for Pre-Service EFL Teachers

Apart from the opportunities for empowering academic writing and publishing, pre-service EFL teachers face challenges including linguistic and rhetorical challenges, limited research and critical thinking skills, psychological and motivational barriers, and the publishing process challenges. These challenges can hinder their ability to develop strong academic writing skills and successfully publish their work.

Linguistic and Rhetorical Challenges

Based on the interviews, S1 and S2 faced challenges dealing with linguistic and rhetorical challenges especially dealing with mastering academic English conventions. This covers difficulties in structuring arguments, maintaining coherence, and utilizing proper academic vocabulary. In addition, they have challenges in comprehending and using disciplinary conventions including hedging, citation implementation, and research article structure. As reported in the following excerpts:

"I had difficulties dealing with linguistic and rhetorical aspects. For instance, I faced challenges in presenting arguments and developing cohesion and coherence. Moreover, I need to use appropriate academic vocabulary in academic writing and publishing" (S1).

"Academic writing and publishing need strong argumentation, academic convention, and vocabularies. It is not easy for me to present arguments and criticize the issue of the topic being discussed" (S2).

Limited Research and Critical Thinking Skills

Other challenges dealing with academic writing and publishing are the limited research and critical thinking skills of the participants. As the candidate of teachers, they have limited experience in research publications. Indeed, this is their first experience in research publication in academic writing and publishing training provided by the lecturers. As highlighted in the following excerpts:

"This is my first experience participating in the empowerment of academic writing and publishing activities through the workshop. In this process, I had challenges dealing with limited research experience and critical thinking skills. Indeed, academic writing requires critical engagement with literature, synthesis of ideas, and argument development, which may be underdeveloped in pre-service teachers" (S1).

"I had challenges dealing with the lack of experience in undertaking research, interpreting data, and positioning my work within academic discourse. In addition, critical thinking skills are crucial for research publication" (S2).

Psychological Challenges

The interviews denote that both S1 and S2 experienced psychological and motivational challenges such as writing anxiety, fear of failure, and lack of confidence in their ability to publish. Moreover, the complicated and competitive nature of academic publishing can be a challenge, especially when having peer review and rejection as illustrated in the excerpts below.

"Honestly, I had psychological challenges such as writing anxiety and fear of failure when submitting my paper to the journal. Further, competitive selection can be challenging in the publication process" (S1).

"As a pre-service EFL teacher, I faced writing anxiety in the process of academic writing and publishing. Moreover, the strict selection in the publication process may decrease my confidence" (S2).

The Publishing Process Challenges

Based on the interviews, the pre-service EFL teachers lack awareness of the journal selection process, including the scope and the guidelines of the journal, and the peer review process. In addition, they felt challenged in addressing reviewers' feedback, revising manuscripts, and navigating ethical considerations such as plagiarism and self-plagiarism highlighted in the following excerpts:

"The publishing process takes time, starting with the understanding of journal scope, the guidelines, and the review process. Those can be challenging for me" (S1).

"I felt challenged in the publishing process, especially dealing with addressing reviewers' feedback and revising the manuscript. In this case, I was helped by my teacher educator in the revision process" (S2).

Discussion

The present study explores the urgency of empowering pre-service EFL teacher educators in academic writing and publishing including the opportunities and challenges. Based on the interviews, pre-service EFL teacher educators are increasingly encouraged to engage in scholarly activities including workshops, seminars, and training sessions, delivered both online and face-to-face, as a means of enhancing their professional competence. These academic forums serve as crucial platforms for developing writing proficiency, gaining exposure to research practices, and participating in scholarly dialogue. Support from faculty mentors plays a pivotal role in this process, offering guidance throughout the writing and publishing journey, including manuscript preparation, critical feedback, and, in some cases, financial assistance and institutional endorsement.

The data indicate that engagement in academic writing and research significantly strengthens the professional capacities of pre-service teachers, particularly in classroom management, instructional decision-making, and reflective practice. As Cirocki & Widodo (2019) assert, targeted professional development enables teachers to critically examine and refine specific pedagogical dimensions. Similarly, Nygaard (2017) emphasizes that participation in conferences and writing-focused events fosters scholarly identity and networking. These experiences not only enhance research capabilities and written expression but also support the development of an academic voice (Wahyuningsih, 2024). Structured academic writing programs further contribute to the cultivation of critical thinking, reflective inquiry, and intellectual independence—competencies essential for 21st-century teacher professionalism.

Huijboom et al. (2020), DuFour (2007) argue that professional development should transcend classroom-based practices, encompassing engagement with academic discourse and knowledge production. Through participation in writing and publishing, teacher candidates begin to develop the confidence and scholarly disposition necessary to

engage with and contribute to professional communities (Liu & Borg, 2014). In this regard, writing empowerment becomes a transformative element in teacher preparation. Moreover, academic writing sharpens communication skills that are transferable to the classroom context. The ability to clearly articulate complex ideas, construct coherent arguments, and engage with evidence enhances not only academic success but also pedagogical effectiveness. As Abbas et al. (2020) observe, writing for publication demands analytical reasoning, precision in argumentation, and a command of disciplinary conventions. Programs that integrate writing into teacher education curricula thus contribute to the development of reflective, articulate, and evidence-informed educators.

Participants' experiences further illustrate that involvement in writing workshops and academic presentations fosters critical literacy. Hasan & Abdelrazek (2016) underscore the importance of analytical skills for EFL teachers, including the ability to engage with multiple perspectives and synthesize arguments. Academic writing tasks develop these capacities by encouraging evaluation, critique, and reflexivity. As S1's and S2's conference presentations demonstrated, students gained not only writing proficiency but also public speaking confidence and academic presentation skills. These outcomes align with Musanti & Rodríguez (2017) claim that structured writing initiatives promote scholarly communication and rhetorical awareness.

The integration of digital tools in writing instruction further enhances academic communication. Shingenge & Henning (2024) note that digital platforms improve students' ability to reflect, structure arguments, and present ideas with clarity. In this study, S1's success in presenting on digital education at a national conference reflected fluency in academic discourse and engagement with digital literacies. Exposure to peer and mentor feedback in these contexts nurtured confidence and resilience, strengthening students' capacity to revise and refine their work effectively. In addition to improving communication skills, academic writing also nurtures a culture of research-informed teaching. Pre-service teachers who are trained in academic reading and writing develop the capacity to critically evaluate pedagogical approaches and implement evidence-based strategies. As Chien (2019) notes, this reflective engagement with literature enhances teaching quality. Furthermore, scholars who publish regularly contribute to the professional discourse and serve as role models for research-informed practice (Flowerdew, 2019).

Reflective practice, long considered a hallmark of effective teaching, is also fostered through academic writing. As Farrell & Kennedy (2019) argue, reflection enables teachers to bridge theory and practice and respond adaptively to evolving educational contexts. Hanim & Wahyuningsih (2024) emphasize the importance of guided reflective writing in developing critical self-awareness and pedagogical insight. By engaging in academic writing, pre-service teachers begin to internalize this reflective stance, applying scholarly inquiry to their professional development.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that pre-service teacher educators encountered considerable linguistic and rhetorical challenges in their writing journeys. Participants reported difficulties in using academic vocabulary, structuring complex sentences, and expressing nuanced ideas in English—challenges corroborated by Ekoç (2020), who attributes these difficulties to language learning backgrounds and limited access to academic English instruction. Islamiyah & Al Fajri (2020) similarly found that EFL students often struggle with clarity, cohesion, and disciplinary conventions. Wahyuningsih (2018) also observed that undergraduate writers exhibited weaknesses in lexical variety, argument construction, and rhetorical coherence. These linguistic

challenges, if unaddressed, may limit students' engagement and progression in academic publishing. As Liu & Buckingham (2024) argue, proficiency in academic English is foundational to scholarly participation and career advancement in global academia. However, the participants' progress in this study underscores the potential of integrated writing programs that embed language support, genre awareness, and rhetorical instruction into teacher education curricula.

In addition to linguistic constraints, participants faced challenges in research conceptualization and manuscript development. For many, publishing was a novel experience that required navigating unfamiliar territory, including research design, literature synthesis, and academic argumentation. Çakmak & Çelik (2024) highlight similar issues among novice writers who lack adequate training in positioning their arguments within existing literature. S1 noted difficulty in synthesizing prior research, while S2 struggled with interpreting findings and constructing a cohesive discussion. These findings reflect the broader need for systematic training in research methodology, critical analysis, and disciplinary writing. Furthermore, participants demonstrated limited proficiency in higher-order thinking skills, particularly in constructing arguments and engaging in evaluative reasoning.

Emotional and psychological challenges also emerged as significant barriers to writing development. S1 and S2 expressed feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of criticism—common experiences among novice writers. Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) found that such affective factors can negatively impact students' writing fluency, confidence, and willingness to persist. Writing anxiety was particularly pronounced during thesis and article preparation, especially under the pressure of potential rejection. Rejection, although often perceived negatively, can serve as a powerful learning opportunity. Alstete & Flavian (2024) assert that successful publication requires not only technical accuracy but also conceptual clarity, narrative coherence, and originality. Reviewer feedback, though sometimes daunting, encourages writers to rethink their arguments, refine their theoretical positioning, and revise their work for greater impact.

To effectively support pre-service EFL teacher educators in academic writing and publishing, teacher education programs must adopt a holistic and integrated approach. First, explicit instruction in academic writing genres, citation styles, and rhetorical strategies should be embedded across the curriculum—not confined to writing courses alone. Yu & Jiang (2022) emphasize that mentorship not only enhances writing quality but also fosters perseverance in the face of critical feedback. In this study, participants who received regular mentorship were more adept at revising and resubmitting manuscripts based on reviewer comments.

Moreover, creating opportunities for collaborative research and publication can build both competence and confidence. Requiring publication-oriented assignments as final course projects and involving lecturers in the supervision of these outputs may bridge the gap between academic instruction and scholarly contribution. Zhu et al. (2022) found that collaborative peer feedback enhances students' ability to engage critically with their work and respond constructively to critique. Such communities help normalize writing challenges and provide emotional as well as academic support. Ultimately, empowering pre-service EFL teacher educators to write and publish academic work entails more than developing technical writing skills. It involves cultivating a scholarly disposition, building critical and reflective capacities, and fostering resilience in the face of linguistic and emotional challenges. By integrating writing instruction, mentorship, research training, and affective support, teacher education programs can equip future

educators to participate confidently in scholarly discourse, contribute meaningfully to the profession, and engage in lifelong academic inquiry.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigates opportunities for empowering academic writing and publishing for pre-service EFL teachers and the challenges. Based on the interviews with two pre-service EFL teachers, the findings reveal that opportunities for empowering academic writing and publishing cover enhancing professional competency, fostering critical thinking and communication skills among pre-service EFL teachers, promoting evidence-based teaching practices, developing recognition and career advancement, and encouraging reflective practice. In this matter, those equipped with academic writing and publishing skills are not only better prepared to face the demands of contemporary classrooms but also more capable of contributing to the educational field through research and publication. However, the challenges were also experienced by the participants covering linguistic and rhetorical challenges, limited research and critical thinking skills, psychological barriers, and publishing process challenges. As a qualitative inquiry, this study is interpretive and context-specific, relying on the subjective experiences of participants. While it offers rich, in-depth insights, the findings are not intended for broad generalization but rather for understanding the complexities within a particular educational setting. The findings suggest that to enhance academic writing and publishing empowerment among pre-service EFL teachers, teacher education programs should offer explicit instruction in academic writing and research methods, structured mentorship, and opportunities for scholarly engagement. Educational institutions and policymakers should also prioritize these competencies to foster a confident, research-oriented teaching workforce.

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