



November 2021

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Recommended Citation

Rabbi, Shakil (2021) "Uptake Processes in Academic Genres: The Socialization of an Advanced Academic Writer Through Feedback Activities," *Journal of Response to Writing*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/journalrw/vol7/iss2/6>

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Uptake Processes in Academic Genres: The Socialization of an Advanced Academic Writer Through Feedback Activities

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Abstract: Academic socialization has been a common framework in writing studies for decades. Recent scholarship on rhetorical genre studies and feedback on writing can develop this paradigm in generative ways. In particular, examining how writers take up feedback as they write in genres can inform how writing pedagogy understands such activities. This study examines and interprets the case of a graduate student as she works with in-person and textually mediated feedback in research group meetings and reviewers' letters. Approaching graduate students as advanced academic writers—simultaneously performing the role of expert and learning the content needed to be a full member of a discourse community—enables the identification of genre competencies that are needed for such activities in students' socialization. The article concludes with a discussion of the potential insights these genre competencies might provide for instructors who teach and mentor student writers.

Keywords: feedback, uptake, writing processes, genre competencies, academic socialization

Academic socialization has been a common framework in writing studies for decades (Bartholomae, 2005). This framework considers writing classrooms as sites that initiate student writers into academic discourse communities (i.e., groups with common literacies) through ways of using language, methods, and genres in classroom activities. These activities often include, for example, peer review workshops or annotated bibliographies. Questions remain, however, about how academic socialization functions in the acquisition of disciplinary literacies. For example, research on feedback has yet to show whether writing spaces should bring together writers with similar experiences and disciplines or writers with different experiences and disciplines to foster development as members of discourse communities (Evans & Ferris, 2019). Genre approaches to socialization would recommend engaging with this topic in terms of authenticity (Bawarshi, 2003) by asking whether said writing activities correspond to the actual, novel tasks of a given field (Simpson, 2013). Critics have argued that simulating tasks within academic contexts does not lead to authentic disciplinary development, and thus, writing studies should not use such pedagogical spaces (Freedman et al., 1994). At the same time, sociocognitive frameworks contend that literacy development is not about simulating performances of “meaningful interaction” during the socialization process. Situations and social experiences connected with writing, as Duff and Kobayashi (2010) have argued, “go hand in hand as a part of a process of internalization, performance, and personal transformation through mutual engagement with others” (p. 92).

One way to build on the insights of both genre studies and sociocognitive approaches to academic socialization is to examine the process through the lens of feedback uptake on genres. Utilizing the concept of “genre uptake,” Freedman (2002, as cited in Bawarshi, 2003) has argued that connections between texts (the generic ways in which essays, for instance, resemble one another) shape how student writers respond to textual tasks and consequently perform in those tasks. In this uptake, the user arguably “selects, defines, and represents its object from a set of possible

others” (Bastian, 2015, para. 5). Feedback that writers get during the writing process functions as a part of this link between texts, often in the form of interactions between writers and reviewers (or mentors or peers) in the context of given genres. A part of “genre competence” (i.e., the ability to compose contextually appropriate texts; Bawarshi, 2003) is realizing that feedback on a text is not a one-way relay of information that is merely accepted or declined. Rather, it is a type of situated and interactional activity (Russell, 1997), and looking at “uptake processes” (Bastian, 2015) in given situations can improve understanding of writers’ interpretations and responses.

Furthermore, the uptake of feedback is particularly relevant to graduate students’ socialization as “advanced academic writers” (AAWs; Tardy, 2009) because the socialization process relies on interactions with disciplinary members during writing activities. When graduate students write articles for publication—performing the role of disciplinary members and AAWs—they interact in authentic activities with experts in their field. At the same time, when graduate students take up feedback, their uptake processes must balance performing expertise and gaining membership in the discourse community with the needs of learning the content of their field and developing disciplinary identities. Researchers who focus on graduate students composing research articles can identify this balance between performing expertise and gaining membership generatively during the socialization process, understanding both activities as “space[s] of social action” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 10) and sets of “complex performances that take place between and around genres where agency is very much in constant play in relation to myriad forces and facts” (Bawarshi, 2016, p. 247). In other words, these researchers highlight the need for authentic learning activities.

This article focuses on the uptake of feedback by Susan, a PhD candidate in Political Science and Gender and Women’s Studies. The case study shows that her processes of interpreting and responding to feedback in a research-group meeting (RGM) and in reviewers’ letters illustrate

“dialogic spaces” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) in which comments and advice by disciplinary members are negotiated, interpreted, and responded to, signaling genre competence (Bawarshi, 2003). The article concludes with a discussion of how connecting conversations on feedback and uptake can contribute to understanding the academic socialization of AAWs (Kim, 2018).

Discussions of Uptake and Feedback in Academic-Socialization Research

Genre uptake has been a productive subject of interest in writing-studies scholarship in recent years. As mentioned earlier, it has served as a useful and dynamic “heuristic to understand how texts and genres cohere in contexts” (Bastian, 2015, para. 5). Rhetorical genre studies have focused on the contextual, generic, and textual elements of this phenomenon, producing insightful research on texts that bring together recurring situations and interactions in terms of “set[s]” (Devitt, 2010), “systems” (Bazerman, 1994), or “ecologies” (Spinuzzi, 2004). This initial body of work argued for understanding uptake and connections between texts structurally, positioning writers and their writing activities in context. In the last decade, however, there has been a move to research the role of uptake in writing pedagogy and writers’ performances. Much less studied than topics such as feedback, socialization, or even genre uptake between texts, this recent scholarship has highlighted writers’ perspectives, analyzing how users of genres interpret and perform activities by examining their uptake processes in terms of “memory, translation, and selection” (Bastian, 2015, para. 5); intermediate genres (Tachino, 2012); or mediums (Ficus, 2017). These studies have shown how writers’ prior experiences, epistemes, and focuses shape how writers take up and respond to information.

Recent studies of uptake during students’ writing processes have been framed in terms of writing pedagogy and conducted in composition classrooms (as spaces to socialize students into the academy). Focusing on how new members’ interactions with the academy are influenced by their uptake

of feedback while completing writing assignments in the composition classroom, these studies have shown that prior genre knowledge shapes students' writing performance in college. Rather than support the development of writing skills, however, Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) and Rounsaville (2012) posited that knowledge developed through previous experiences with writing disrupts students' uptake in postsecondary contexts. Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) argued that this disruption occurs because students often do not select and translate from extant genre knowledge appropriately. The problem, in other words, is one of "negative transfer" (Rounsaville, 2012). Students who perform better at writing tasks are those who cross boundaries in domain knowledge when they take up said assignments, drawing from their knowledge in "circumspect ways" and thus allowing a transfer of multiple strategies from a selection of genres (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). This was not normal for the composition students Reiff and Bawarshi examined, though, as most exhibited a fixed sense of genre knowledge separate from other domains—a view held by "boundary guarders" (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011, p. 314).

In a similar study to Reiff and Bawarshi (2011), Rounsaville (2012) argued that one composition student, John, struggled to understand a writing assignment because his conceptualizations of academic genres did not foster synthesizing personal and academic evidence. The student was constrained by what Rounsaville called "platforms and interpretive frames" toward academic genres. His inability to understand the term *evidence* in the assignment sheet illustrates how a "link [between] the current writing task with prior memories . . . is the 'place,' the uptake, where the contexts between prior genre knowledge and current task mingle and are translated" (Rounsaville, 2012, para. 30). This examination lends support to Emmons's (2009) contention that genre knowledge shapes the writer's "dispositions and subjective orientations" such that "previous experiences with genres fix the process of uptake of subsequent genre encounters" (p. 135). Taken together, these studies make a persuasive case that failing to appropriately take up feedback during the writing process is a function of

“habitual uptake” (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). This latter concept is important to consider because “what we [choose] to take up and how to do so is the result of learned cognitions of significance that over time and in particular contexts become habitual” (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 86).

The extensive work on the connection between feedback and socialization has included examinations of this connection’s role in graduate student education (Casanave, 2002). Scholars in this area have advocated for incorporating feedback activities into graduate writing pedagogy, from presubmission RGMs to helping students understand reviewers’ feedback postsubmission (Tardy, 2009). Research has focused on interactions during feedback (Mochizuki, 2019), identities that shape students’ experiences with feedback (Madden et al., 2019), and self-regulation (Castello et al., 2013). Mangelsdorf and Ruecker (2018), Kim (2018), and Aitchison (2009) showed the potential ways feedback and interactions support the disciplinary socialization of graduate students. They documented how writing groups help students learn the academic literacy practices needed for membership in the disciplines. They pointed out that these activities tend to become impromptu, default spaces of socialization through writing, a part of the support network cobbled together by the graduate student. They argued that successful networks bring together writers at different stages of their disciplinary socialization, with more advanced writers guiding less experienced writers through “cognitive apprenticeship” (Aitchison, 2009). These writing networks are effective in supporting student development—even when reviewers and writers differ in their disciplines and language abilities—because their writing activities raise “students’ rhetorical awareness and strengthen their understanding of genre conventions” (Mangelsdorf & Ruecker, 2018, p. 25).

Paltridge (2015), Lillis and Curry (2006), Curry and Lillis (2015), and Simpson (2013) all analyzed the importance of negotiating reviewers’ letters, especially for disciplinary interactions in U.S. and Anglocentric disciplinary contexts. Paltridge (2015) found that outsiders and newcomers in knowledge communities, such as graduate students, struggle to take

up requests for changes as feedback that necessitates a response. Curry and Lillis (2015) pointed out how comments on language in the reviewers' articles impact the uptake of the articles and index a certain view of communication. Consequently, these scholars argued, graduate students must acquire the codes of academic literacies, and their academic socialization must develop these competencies through activities that provide explicit metacommentary (i.e., reflection about language and literacies) when possible. Lillis and Curry (2006) analyzed the role of "literacy brokers," textual mediators who intercede between writers and their publication contexts, for these types of knowledge development.

Simpson (2013) supported these arguments in his case study of Paulo, a graduate student working through feedback from the principal investigator (who was also his advisor) and journal reviewers. Previous writing experiences during the graduate program were important for Paulo to understand the feedback. Simpson (2013) found that a lack of available feedback—the principal investigator and Paulo's lab mates were not available during Paulo's writing processes, and the writing center was not prepared to comment on disciplinary topics—constrained Paulo's interpretation of reviewers' comments on his research article. Simpson (2013) helped confirm the importance of literacy brokers: Even though Paulo knew generic conventions, without a source of feedback to clarify reviewers' comments he struggled to "reorganize and adapt these conventions in ways that fit his individual goals in [the] novel situations" (p. 244).

Building on this previous research, the present case study discusses how genre competencies function in academic socialization by connecting conceptualizations of uptake and feedback. The preceding studies have pointed to the importance of previous experiences in how tasks are taken up and how codes of feedback often remain tacit for student writers. There has also been important scholarship on research-article feedback as mediated by resources in situational contexts, such as literacy brokers (Lillis & Curry, 2006). At the same time, Rabbi (2020) showed limitations in the ways this scholarship can inform writing pedagogy—for example, how

situational and socialization contexts shape the way feedback is taken up in publication genres rather than classroom genres. This case study addresses such topics by providing a picture of the uptake processes of an AAW in the context of feedback activities and genre competence. To this end, I pose the following questions:

- How does an AAW take up in-person and textually mediated feedback while writing research articles?
- How are her uptake processes shaped by memory, selection, and translation?
- How do her genre competencies inform academic socialization?

Methods

A Case for This Case Study

Case studies are ideal for raising questions about course design, decision-making, and practices (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 2013). In qualitative writing research, they have provided theoretical considerations and ways to innovate pedagogy. Through a focus on writing classrooms, they have represented the emic perspective of the students socializing into the space of higher education (Saidy, 2018).

Case studies of AAWs have also been especially popular in fields focusing on multilinguals (Duff, 2014) and AAWs in transition (Casanave & Li, 2008). These studies have persuasively argued that subject matter expertise does not automatically translate to writing expertise; even highly advanced writers must learn the activity systems (Blakeslee, 2001; Castello et al., 2013) and the language of communicating in their disciplines to perform genres competently (Lillis & Curry, 2006).

In line with critical qualitative methodology undergirding case study research, before introducing the subject and the analytical methods, I will first disclose my own subjectivity and interests. My interest in Susan and her transition into an expert writer is rooted in my own transitions as a

graduate student. My dissertation was on all-but-dissertation graduate student writers as early-career professionals, interpreting them as expert “writers in transition” (Castello et al., 2013), whose practices can demystify the role writing plays in the socialization process. Susan is representative of such a population.

I met Susan while working at my university’s graduate writing center, which she visited regularly. I found her invested in writing processes and motivated to secure an academic career in her discipline. Susan came to political science circuitously. She majored in American Studies during her undergraduate degree and described herself as “always interested in the humanities”; she had also worked with a women’s rights organization in New York City before pursuing a PhD.

Susan was interested in a joint-program graduate degree in political science and gender and women’s studies rather than just political science because she believed it provided a “better chance” for a career. This “strategic disposition” (Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017) was fundamental to her identification of a community intersecting with both fields during her PhD. Her disposition helped her to conceptualize given activities in terms of the bigger picture, mixing pragmatic needs of immediate and long-term situations. Her committee was made up of professors from political science and women’s studies. This interdisciplinary identity often made her feel like an outsider, and in an interview she shared that she was told by others in the program that she did not “think like a political scientist.”

I identified with this experience. I had also tried to be as pragmatic as possible when I was developing my dissertation on writing in a program more tailored for rhetorical studies. At the same time, I also recognized that Susan and I are both international scholars who were identified as ESL (English as second language) writers, even though we had both received our postsecondary educations in the United States. Like her, I was advised to assemble a network of resources like colleagues, mentors, and friends who understood my identity as an international student and academic

writer. This network has been crucial to my development as both a scholar and a writer in my discipline.

As a researcher, I am aware that stories of graduate students and international students are mostly told in aggregate. Our experiences are reduced to statistics on enrollment, years to completion, publication outcomes, and placements, or lack thereof. I believe situated narratives provide nuances and subtleties impossible to capture in other forms. There is a lot to learn from observing writers as they assemble and make use of resources. In addition to helping scholars understand the complexity of uptake processes, such narratives can also provide ways to think about academic socialization and how academic genres relate to those uptake processes (Rabbi, 2020).

Collecting and Interpreting the Data

The picture presented here comes from a multiyear, IRB-approved, ethnographic study of the academic socialization of graduate students in PhD programs. The resulting narrative is not to be interpreted as representative of all similarly situated writers. Rather, I want to stress Susan's story as a space to identify a list of genre competencies that could be useful for AAWs in feedback activities.

To learn about Susan's socialization and writing in her discipline, I interviewed her nine times over 11 months, utilizing the "intermittent time mode" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 63).¹ I met with her and collected data on her writing activities flexibly, "dipping in and out of the research site" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 63) during selective moments and events as they were relevant to my research. These interviews were semistructured and focused on questions related to Susan's general background and interests, attitudes about writing and her writing processes, and the resources that helped her (see Rabbi, 2020, for the interview protocol). I observed

¹ This mode is about collecting data in instances when she was particularly invested in writing activities. For example, I attended one RGM when Susan was not presenting but was providing feedback to others. I took general notes but did not record the meeting. All the other times I attended RGMs were when Susan was presenting her paper. I recorded those meetings and used one RGM here for analysis.

and recorded several sessions of an RGM in which Susan presented her work. (More details on the RGM are provided below.) I collected a selection of various texts she composed, including research articles (with corresponding cover letters, letters from the editor, and reviewers' letters that make up the genre sets), syllabi for courses she taught, cover letters and curricula vitae for job applications, and so forth. In this article, I only focus on the genre set for one research article and one RGM. Additional discourse-based interviews were conducted based on this data; these were "talk around texts" (Lillis, 2008, p. 355) that asked about specific texts, literacy events, and writing processes, as well as how these elements functioned in her socialization. There were no fixed questions used for these interviews.

To address my research questions related to the uptake processes shaping Susan's reception of feedback, I utilized an ethnographic triangulation of a section of the data collected. I examined her responses to feedback by "constantly comparing" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 32) across the data set. This triangulated approach helped me interpret and construct a narrative centered on uptake as a process made up of tasks of "memory, selection, and translation" (Rounsaville, 2012, para. 26). Comparing interviews with observations and transcriptions of RGM interactions, for example, helped me interpret the role of the speaker in feedback uptake. Comparing my interviews, RGM recording transcripts, letters from the editor, the reviewers' letters and Susan's responses, and the text of her articles helped highlight differences between interactional in-person uptake and textually mediated uptake, as well as ways in which a medium of activity interrupts habitual uptake (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010).

Finally, I gave Susan my initial, general analyses to verify the "credibility" of my interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), and I incorporated her responses and concerns into my revisions. For example, Susan, though agreeing with my interpretation, raised concerns about the disclosure of her nationality in the initial drafts of the text. I consequently removed that

detail. Member checks, in sum, helped me ensure my interpretations were valid and ethical (Saidy, 2018).

Findings

Uptake of Feedback in RGMs

Susan's uptake processes shaped her use of disciplinary readers in monthly RGMs made up of both faculty and graduate students in political science and gender and women's studies. In these meetings, one member of the group would have an article workshopped by others. The comments took the form of questions, suggestions, and recommendations about the topic, the argument, the method, and the analysis of the paper. During the RGM I examine here, feedback was provided verbally but also supplemented with written feedback by one participant (a tenured professor). Susan's responses to the in-person feedback suggest that AAWs translate and select feedback for their writing agendas framed through their memory of graduate education (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011) and the prioritization of hierarchy this inculcates (Kim, 2018).

Susan took up the feedback in the RGM substantially as she rethought the focus of her overall paper through processes framed by her advisor's comments during the session. This session took place at a restaurant in a hotel on campus, during a quiet time of the day. It operated as a somewhat informal peer review of a draft. Participants, who had read the article before the session, advised Susan on developing the piece for publication. At the end of the session, Laura (a professor in political science and women's studies) and Linda (Susan's advisor and professor in political science and women's studies) provided Susan with their summative comments:

Laura: I think you need to find your stronger argument and organize your stuff around that.

Susan: So, do you find a stronger argument for a women's studies journal?

Laura: There are all these interesting dynamics about gender and the context for that story [a topic fit for a women's studies journal].

Linda: But there are two ways to tell that story, though. One is that here are the social, political, and economic ways that these women are brought in or not brought in. That is the article that is general . . . The other one is the identity one . . . That is the one I would send to the journal . . . (RGM, April 20, 2015)

Laura's feedback about finding the strongest argument in the paper and organizing around it could have been read as tacit criticism that the paper lacked an adequate focus. Susan certainly interpreted the comment in that way; she said in a follow-up interview that her takeaway from the RGM was that "the paper [is] all over the place and the group said [she] should break it up into two papers." Yet her response in the RGM also showed that Susan translated the comment into a specific query: She asked Laura what would be "a stronger argument for a women's studies journal." That is, the uptake processes transformed Laura's assessment into an opportunity to ask for an explicit recommendation. Susan understood, as a socialized member of the field, that the members of the research group are experienced members of the discipline and can speak authoritatively about an appropriate framing for such audiences. Linda, her advisor, stated that she read the paper's argument about identity as a better fit for a women's studies journal ("That is the one I would send to the journal").

Susan remembered Linda's point above those made by others in the RGM, showing the indirect ways literacy sponsors (Lillis & Curry, 2006) can shape feedback activities. Her interpretation of the RGM feedback illustrated that a successful writer understands that feedback (even from experts) must be selectively negotiated. Susan knew to pursue certain threads and pass over others, and her uptake processes shaped this. She said:

My initial idea was how to look at how marriage migrants are situated politically rather than socially. But from the group, I got the point that they like the idea of how Chinese migrants identify themselves while in Taiwan. My advisor said

looking at their political and economic and social integration, it is generic. I want this to be strong for women's studies, and so identification is more [salient] in that field.

Susan's reading of the group's feedback shows an important point: Hierarchy matters in the uptake of feedback (Evans & Ferris, 2019; Kim 2018). It matters even in instances when the people providing feedback are all experts, and a framing perspective helps the writer select and filter suggestions. A hierarchy provides a way to generate this framing. Susan might have remembered the group's responses in terms of Laura's comments about gender dynamics and comments, for example, but she did not mention it. She also might have remembered comments by others in the group, for example, a remark by another professor that the article needed to include an analysis comparing ethnicities in terms of political opinions in Taiwan.

Susan remembered her advisor's comment as the takeaway. Linda stood for the entire group and the discipline overall in the uptake. Susan recalled how Linda summed up the group's assessment: "They like the idea of how Chinese migrants identify themselves." Susan's socialization as a graduate student had fostered a prioritization of the advisor, on whom she relied to understand her writing. Susan remarked that when "[her] drafts are ready to be sent out, it's pretty much [Linda's] approval." Her memory of previous experiences with multiple writing processes and other interactions during her PhD had shaped her processes such that her advisor implicitly dictated what was prioritized and framed during uptake (Kim, 2018; Simpson, 2013). The RGM's feedback is taken up—uptake in relation to selection and translation—in terms of Linda's advice that the focus of the paper should switch from political situatedness to identification.

Uptake of Feedback in Article Publication

Susan's negotiation of reviewers' comments on another article also shed light on her uptake processes. During the processes of writing and publishing an article, Susan worked with textually mediated feedback from

editors and reviewers, and her responses were shaped in crucial ways by her insider knowledge as acts of memory. The selection and translation processes also took place over a length of time, interrupting habitual uptake (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010) because they forced her to unpack how she took up and interpreted comments. The article had initially been submitted to a journal focusing on sociology research, but it was rejected. However, Susan also received comments from reviewers and a recommendation from the editor for a journal to which she might consider submitting the article:

I sent it to . . . a sociology journal . . . It was rejected . . . they had issues mainly with my data. So I talked to my advisor, and she suggested ways in which I could fix the data issues, so I fixed it, and I sent it off again [to the other journal the editor] recommended.

A “strategic disposition” (Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017) shaped Susan’s practices and uptake in this situation. It also showed that a crucial part of literacy brokering is ensuring that feedback is appropriately taken up (Curry & Lillis, 2015). The editor’s comments enabled Susan to translate the rejection as an opportunity to “fix” her data before submitting it to the recommended journal. However, before submitting to the new journal, Susan conferred with her advisor (evidencing again the implicit effects of the mentorship models of graduate education shown in the previous example), who mediated her understanding by telling her that the new journal “was a lower ranking journal [but it] was a good journal.”

The article went through multiple rounds of review at this new journal before it was published. After one round of substantial revisions, the journal’s editors told Susan that they had considered rejecting the article. They concluded that she still had not revised the article satisfactorily, and the journal did not provide multiple opportunities to make major revisions. In an ambivalent move of “academic brokering,” they wrote in their letter to her that “[they] were on the fence as to offer an opportunity to revise again or reject the manuscript” and that Susan should “take this final opportunity to study the reviewers’ comments and respond appropriately.” They

stressed, in other words, that Susan's uptake of feedback needed to be substantial and applied to the textual revisions accordingly.

The textually mediated feedback Susan received for the article showed that the reviewers placed significant weight on the analysis, argument, and language of the article. The reviewers focused on these issues through directive statements (Paltridge, 2015), with elaboration on how requested changes might be carried out (Curry & Lillis, 2015). The editor's letter underscored these "global" dimensions of the feedback by encouraging Susan to take the "opportunity to go through and make sure that the paper is cohesive, the argument is strong, and the research design is clear." The situation for Susan, in other words, exhibited how efficacious feedback in the written form can be explicit and elaborated (as necessary). It also corresponded to the genre pedagogy framework, which emphasizes instruction in coherence (form knowledge), argumentation (rhetorical knowledge), and research design (subject-matter knowledge) in disciplinary communication (Tardy, 2009).

Susan took up the feedback rhetorically, as something to be negotiated, but addressed all points. Textually mediated feedback provided her space to "study the reviewers' comments" and consider how best to respond. Because of the nature of literacy, her response and interactions were not immediate, and so they interrupted a habitual uptake (Bawarshi & Rieff, 2010). These writing processes afforded her the identification of the role of persuasion in negotiating reviewers' comments. She said: "I will need to play [the relevance of the research] up more. It is not going to satisfy the readers based on the promise of the research." This understanding also shaped her uptake of feedback regarding scientific language in the discipline, as she asserted: "some reviewers . . . want the paper to be really political science-y [*sic*] in terms of avoiding words like 'inspiring' and 'encouraging.' If you are gonna [*sic*] talk about that, just talk about how they are correlated, how they are positively or negatively correlated."

The high stakes of successfully navigating reviewers' comments meant Susan had to be less selective in her considerations of feedback. Rather

than responding to certain comments and letting others pass (as she did during the RGMs), Susan addressed all comments to the satisfaction of the editors. Otherwise, as the editor's letter warned, her article would be rejected. The editor's feedback, in other words, functioned as the dominant frame for her uptake of reviewers' comments in the way Linda's perspective shaped Susan's takeaways from the RGM. Susan's rewriting of her text and her response letter communicated that her revised article responded to all comments from reviewers but also showed that she still translated them as suggestions or advice (Paltridge, 2015).

This interpretation can be seen in her uptake of a reviewer's comment that the argument in the "first half of the paper . . . [or] the set-up" needed to be "circumspect," evidenced in the corresponding textual changes made to the paper. The reviewer wrote that Susan's articulation of the literature on the "role model" effect in her text "misrepresents the literature." In response, Susan drew from her knowledge and experience (i.e., memory) that "the social sciences have to care about generalizability" to interpret this feedback and rewrite her text. She wrote in her letter to the editor that she took the reviewer's "advice" and

remove[d] any language that may imply that there is only one mechanism in which female politicians could serve as role models . . . Watching my word choices enable[d] me to avoid generalizability of all literature on the role model effect, as well as overcome the reviewer's concern.

Susan's use of the term *generalizability* to communicate how she translated the reviewer's "advice" represents a connection between the activities of her academic socialization as a social scientist and the genre function of a research article in that field. This use of disciplinary discourse signaled that Susan understood that "scholarly conversations" are a textual construction and that the reviewer's concern about "misrepresenting the literature" had to be taken up. This is a crucial competence of academic expertise (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Rinck & Boch, 2012). A less advanced academic writer, one could imagine, might interpret the comment

of being more “circumspect” as a critical assessment of their knowledge of the field (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). Susan, illustrating insider membership and knowledge, translated the comment as a directive that she should study and represent the role model effect in the field more precisely.

This insider knowledge is also arguably evidenced in her explanations of not accepting certain suggested changes. In one instance, she refused to elaborate on her rationalization of assumptions of “gender paradox” in East and Southeast Asia, as a reviewer had advised. Susan, in her cover letter for the draft, stated that:

I appreciate the reviewer’s suggestion on including a few possible reasons for my expectations . . . As I try to keep in mind the word limit of the manuscript, I emphasize that I do not directly test the effect of the gender paradox on women’s representation and participation.

Calling the feedback a “suggestion” shaped Susan’s uptake processes in certain ways and afforded this response. She could recognize the comment was a suggestion and communicate to the editors that it had been appropriately considered but not applied. Her response was framed in terms of observing the length requirements of the text, something the editor had mentioned in all their letters (signaling its emphasis). Her previous experiences told her that genre requirements of the form must be considered, and so she used the editor’s comments in their letters to frame her response rejecting the suggestion.

Discussion

Susan’s Genre Competencies for Taking Up Feedback Meaningfully

Academic socialization for graduate students is usually structured by feedback activities, and for AAWs, these activities often involve writing articles and other authentic genres in their communities. The importance and frequency of these activities in socialization raises the question of how genre competence, or a fitting response, is enacted in such situations.

How do AAWs take up feedback appropriately in given contexts? How is this process shaped by socialization experiences and agendas? What can writing studies do to facilitate these feedback activities? Susan's case study shows that AAWs must be adept in their uptake processes for framing feedback appropriately for their goals. Susan's uptake processes are a function of her socialization and her interactions during her program. They have shaped her experiences with feedback, her ability to home in on certain aspects of the feedback over others, and her ability to represent the feedback in ways that suit her agenda. Susan's genre competences vis-à-vis uptake and feedback, from this case study, provide these takeaways:

- Feedback activities are effective when approached with a self-defined agenda;
- Feedback situations require the explicit acknowledgment of hierarchy;
- Feedback utterances—recommendations, advice, suggestions, comments, and so forth—must be interpreted and translated; and
- Feedback procedures should interrupt habitual uptake.

The first thing to notice is that Susan did not approach feedback situations passively. Well-versed in the ways feedback can develop the text and genre, she controlled the agenda in both instances. There are multiple reasons for this control and agency. Susan was well advanced in her academic socialization as a PhD candidate. She knew her data and the research more thoroughly than the people in her research group or the experts reviewing her submission. She also had a sense of how she wanted to present herself through the text; in her own words, she wanted to communicate her contribution and be “strong for women's studies” even as a political scientist.

Writing scholarship has highlighted how successful writers in the disciplines exhibit well-developed metacognitive and self-regulatory abilities (Negretti, 2012; Rounsaville et al., 2008). These studies pointed out that writing processes are effective when the onus is put on writers to incorporate revisions and justify their choices. Learning takes place as writers

practice understanding, strategizing, monitoring, and modifying performances in said activity; negotiate feedback reflectively; and situate it in broader contexts. Susan repeatedly brought conversations in the RGM back to her goals of publication, turning comments about the lack of focus back to discussions of the target journal. This agency helped her avoid the confusion writers might face when they receive contradictory pieces of feedback (Kim, 2018; Mangelsdorf & Ruecker, 2018). There was clear ownership of the activity in Susan's use of the group as a part of her network of support. This also meant that she self-regulated her use of these resources for feedback based on the text, the stage she was in during her writing processes, and her general aim for feedback.

Second, Susan used feedback from authority figures to frame her uptake. Although she may have set the agenda for the RGM and the review process, the hierarchies acted as a filter for these uptake processes. She had been sufficiently socialized into the academy to recognize that disciplines have chains of command and that uptake processes ought to take this into account (Evans & Ferris, 2019). Literacy sponsors and brokers (Lillis & Curry, 2006) impact the way genres are performed in practice. In both the RGM and the review process for the publication, utterances by figures of authority shaped the way Susan engaged with comments. Laura's comment about finding the strongest argument and the editor's note about "studying" the reviewers' comments and responding appropriately provided a lens for how Susan might take up comments from reviewers and other members. This relates to the earlier remark in the first part of the findings about deciding which reviewers' comments to select out of the ones the editor suggested should be addressed.

Genre approaches leave room for recognizing the role of power and hierarchy in textual operations (Cotterall, 2011; Tardy, 2009). Susan's uptake processes highlight this presence. In her RGMs, she selected and translated feedback from the RGM into what would be the "strongest argument for a women's studies journal." She took up the feedback from the reviewers' comments as a suggestion ("including a few possible reasons")

that she could forego adherence to word limits. She knew that framing her response to those comments as suggestions delimited by the editors' advice made them negotiable (Paltridge, 2015).

The third thing to recognize is that Susan interpreted and translated feedback in both cases. She took feedback as a dialogic space of negotiation (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This competence not only signaled to reviewers during the publication process that Susan was a member of the discipline but also influenced her uptake processes (Aitchison, 2009). During her interactions with other members in the RGM, she translated a comment on a lack of focus into an opportunity to ask for directions. Her use of the rationale of generalizability about the role model effect showed how Susan often took up feedback through the terms and discursive context of the discipline. Its values and epistemes colored the suggestions and recommendations the reviewers made, and Susan could interpret them effectively because she was competent in these aspects of the genre of article writing.

Uptake researchers have pointed toward the need for genre users to understand that texts are not fixed (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Rounsville, 2012). The problem arises when genres and activities are seen as static. Even feedback in high-stakes situations such as reviewers' reports is negotiable; academic writers need to understand "directions, suggestions, clarification requests, and recommendations" (Paltridge, 2015, p. 111) as rhetorical utterances. One can respond to them and take them up appropriately as long as one is sensitive to the academic situation and can respond in those terms. Simply rejecting or refusing to take up feedback is not a legitimate move; responding to it coherently, articulated in disciplinary discourse, is the more fitting response.

Finally, the feedback practices identified here point out the generative effects of breaking habitual uptake (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Rounsville et al., 2008). Studies of uptake and writing processes show the need to interrupt habitual uptake through reflection and unpacking one's mental process. Thinking and responding slowly and procedurally to feedback

is fundamental to critical thinking and learning during academic socialization (Negretti, 2012). The textually mediated aspect of feedback and interaction during the review process of publication meant that Susan had to consider the feedback and consider the various ways she might understand it (Lillis & Curry, 2006). She had to be circumspect in her uptake, as one reviewer recommended. She had to think about how her rewrites ought to persuade the readers “by playing up” her research contributions (Rabbi, 2020). Her revisions during these processes were not automatic, but they were careful considerations of developing an argument in response to the use of the texts of the genre set (Tachino, 2012). She could distinguish between “directions, suggestions, clarification requests, and recommendations” (Paltridge, 2015, p. 111) in the feedback and interpret what could and could not be negotiated. The stakes of publication and the textually mediated nature of the comments made by the reviewers and editors prompted Susan’s deliberative process; the need to carefully read the reviews interrupted habitual interpretation and responses.

Research on circumspection during students’ writing processes shows its importance for learning during socialization. It provides the space in which development occurs (Simpson, 2013), and literacies in this space represent the materialization of the uptake space. Many researchers have argued that the immediate goal of circumspection is to foster writing competencies regarding feedback (Evans & Ferris, 2019; Kim 2018) and metacognition (Negretti, 2012). At the same time, textually mediated feedback activities also have the added benefit of interrupting habitual uptake by encouraging circumspection and engagement with reviewers’ comments, helping the author understand them rhetorically. The more advanced the student writer is when they are participating in circumspection, the more effective this mode of feedback is. AAWs are sufficiently socialized to be able to decode comments (Paltridge, 2015); what is needed is space to reflect on and plan a circumspect response.

Implications and a Takeaway

This case study on the perspective of a graduate student as an AAW identifies important facets of genre competence that have implications for writing pedagogy. It shows that Susan's writing processes worked because they fit into her socialization framework, whether in the context of her research group activities or textually mediated genre writing. Though basing my suggestion on one case study, I propose that peer review and feedback activities for graduate students work when they are well structured. This implication is worth considering, regardless of the philosophy with which writing instruction is approached—whether writing tasks are seen in terms of academic socialization or critical pedagogy, or (more likely) both.

Clear structure and clear agendas lead to greater investment from writers (Aitchison 2009; Simpson, 2013) and help them select from the various suggestions, recommendations, directives, and other types of advice they receive. Literacy sponsors have a role to play in these processes by scaffolding feedback activities while also providing space for new members to choose their networks of writing support. Disciplinary faculty could do this by working collaboratively with writing-support programs or asking for student narratives of reflection on disciplinary socialization. They might also guest lecture in transdisciplinary spaces to elaborate on their experiences in their respective fields. Designers of such spaces might therefore consider how they can create hierarchies in feedback activities and networks of sponsors because such resources would go some way in simultaneously socializing new graduate students and investing in feedback activities. Continued research in this area is also needed as such pedagogical frameworks are implemented (Evans & Ferris, 2019).

Such structured approaches to peer review in writing classrooms at the K–12 and the first-year writing (e.g., Eli Review, the CARES [Congratulate-Ask Questions-Request More Information-Evaluate-Summarize] feedback framework, etc.) levels have grown in recent years. These initiatives and approaches can be extended to writing pedagogy for more advanced

students, aligning directive pedagogical genre paradigms with research paradigms, such as academic-discourse socialization frameworks for understanding writing. These endeavors could further writing studies' agenda of fostering critical thinking, understanding writing phenomena, and training members to communicate in the disciplines. Seeing writing as a community-based, interactive skill is a major insight of writing studies, and we must always advocate for writers to identify and cobble together networks of support as a crucial part of their writing processes. From my perspective, those who have provided feedback on my writing have been a crucial resource for my disciplinary development.

This case study shows the value of using empirically grounded stories of writers and writing practices to inform our theorizations. Susan's story illustrates that writers' performances layer multiple functions and that no single writing theory can capture all facets of the publication and socialization phenomenon. Researchers must keep documenting what writers are doing when they write in different contexts and activities, generating the types of situated information with which writing instruction and programs can be developed further. This research might ask how the uptake processes of feedback transfer across contexts and situations during graduate education. Do graduate students transfer knowledge differently when negotiating feedback in disciplinary spaces than when negotiating feedback from nondisciplinary spaces? What would it mean if they did? We might also ask how novice and experienced writers' conceptualizations and experiences of these activities might differ, and how such differences might impact genre uptake of feedback.

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