

What's so special about EAP instructors?

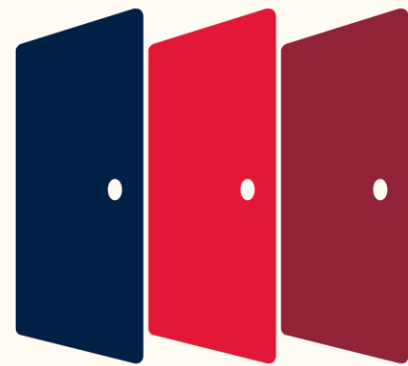
*An exploratory inquiry into academic
socialization of multilingual students*

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MUSE Project

Multilingual University
Student Experience



The Team

- Multilingual
- Many current or former (international) students studying in a language other than our L1



Research Context

Credit-bearing EAP programs at three Canadian universities

1. BCU:

- Direct admission without EAP courses: TOEFL iBT ≥ 90 ; IELTS 6.5
- Admission through EAP program: TOEFL iBT ≥ 70 ; IELTS 5.5
- First year bachelor's program for undergraduate students on international visa

2. OU:

- Full admission: TOEFL iBT ≥ 88 ; IELTS 6.5; Duolingo 120
- Undergraduate students (international and domestic)
- First-year courses counting toward General Education requirement or elective

3. QU:

- Full admission without EAP courses: TOEFL iBT ≥ 90 ; IELTS ≥ 7
- Full admission with required EAP courses (0-15 credits, depending on results of in-house placement test): TOEFL iBT = 75-89; IELTS = 6 or 6.5
- First-year required courses for undergraduate students (international and domestic)

Research Questions

1. How do EAP instructors act as agents of socialization in second language (L2) academic writing classes?
2. How do program characteristics shape the ways in which instructors enact their roles?

(Academic) Language Socialization

LS as a dynamic, socially and culturally situated, often multilingual process: "with unpredictable uptake, intentions, behind-the-scenes power plays, investment on the part of learners, and outcomes. Such dynamics are particularly visible in academic communities." (Duff, 2010, p. 186)

Learning (beyond) language and through language: What is learned is much more than aspects of a linguistic code (e.g., grammar). LS underscores the values being inculcated, the challenges facing learners and agents of socialization, and (although less so) the degree of success in learning such practices. (Duff and Talmy, 2011, p. 4)

Academic discourse as a site of internal and interpersonal struggle especially for newcomers or novices that involves considerable emotional investment and power dynamics. (Duff, 2010, p. 170)

EAP Instructor Identities

"the teacher too was not a neutral player in the classroom...her positionality in relation to her students, and to the broader context in which the teacher was situated was vital" (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22)

- **Transformative practitioner** (Morgan, 2009) helping students recognize lexico-grammatical elements and rhetorically persuasive discourse, to become aware of socio-political conditions and power relations
- **Ecological approach** (Preistly et al., 2015) instructor agency connected to social and material context
- **Language teacher agency** (Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019) as relational, social, complex – related to intersectional identities, temporal and situated engagements, teacher subjectivities
- **Language teacher agency and emotion** are co-constitutive (Miller & Gkononou, 2018; Zembylas, 2003)

Emotions & Emotion Labour in EAP

- “Sticky objects” (Ahmed, 2010)
- “Emotion labour ... unacknowledged and uncompensated, yet ... more taxing (Benesch, 2012, p. 113)
- Need to acknowledge “unhappy feelings” (Benesch, 2012, p. 128) to “learn how we are affected by what comes near” (Ahmed, 2010, p. 216)

Research Design + Methods

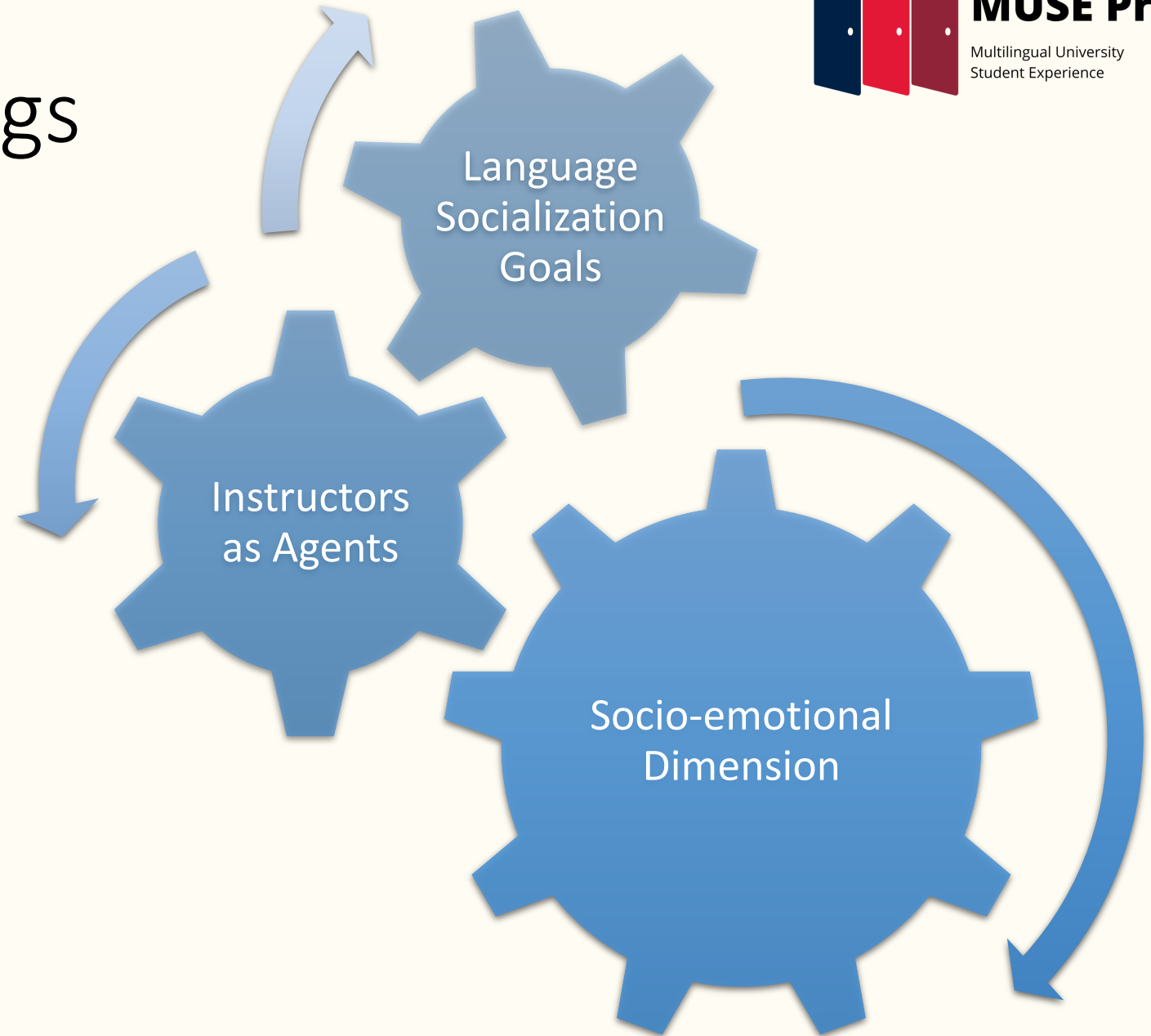
- Multiple Case Study design (3 sites)
- Semi-structured focus groups/ interviews with EAP faculty on Zoom
- Full transcriptions of audio data; *Otter.ai*-generated; verbatim; use of transcription protocol; double verification
- (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry & Hayfield, 2021):
 - Iterative process of data analysis
 - deep familiarization, multiple rounds of coding by multiple researchers; theme development based on patterns identified across data
 - Coding approaches
 - Inductive and deductive
 - Semantic and latent meaning
 - Researcher reflexivity embedded at each stage of research project
 - Positionality; researcher reactions; negotiation of multiple perspectives

Participants

18 EAP instructors

- Experienced teachers ($M = 20.1$ years)
 - Total teaching experience (declared $n = 13$) between 15 and 33 years
- Mixed lengths of service at respective institutions ($M = 10.8$ years)
 - Institutional teaching experience (declared $n = 16$) between 8 months and 23 years
- Largely multilingual participant group
 - First languages: English, Cantonese, Russian, Korean, Bosnian, Persian/Farsi, and Ukrainian
 - Additional languages: Spanish, French, German, Italian, Korean, Arabic, Mandarin, Romanian, Hebrew, and Japanese

Preliminary Findings



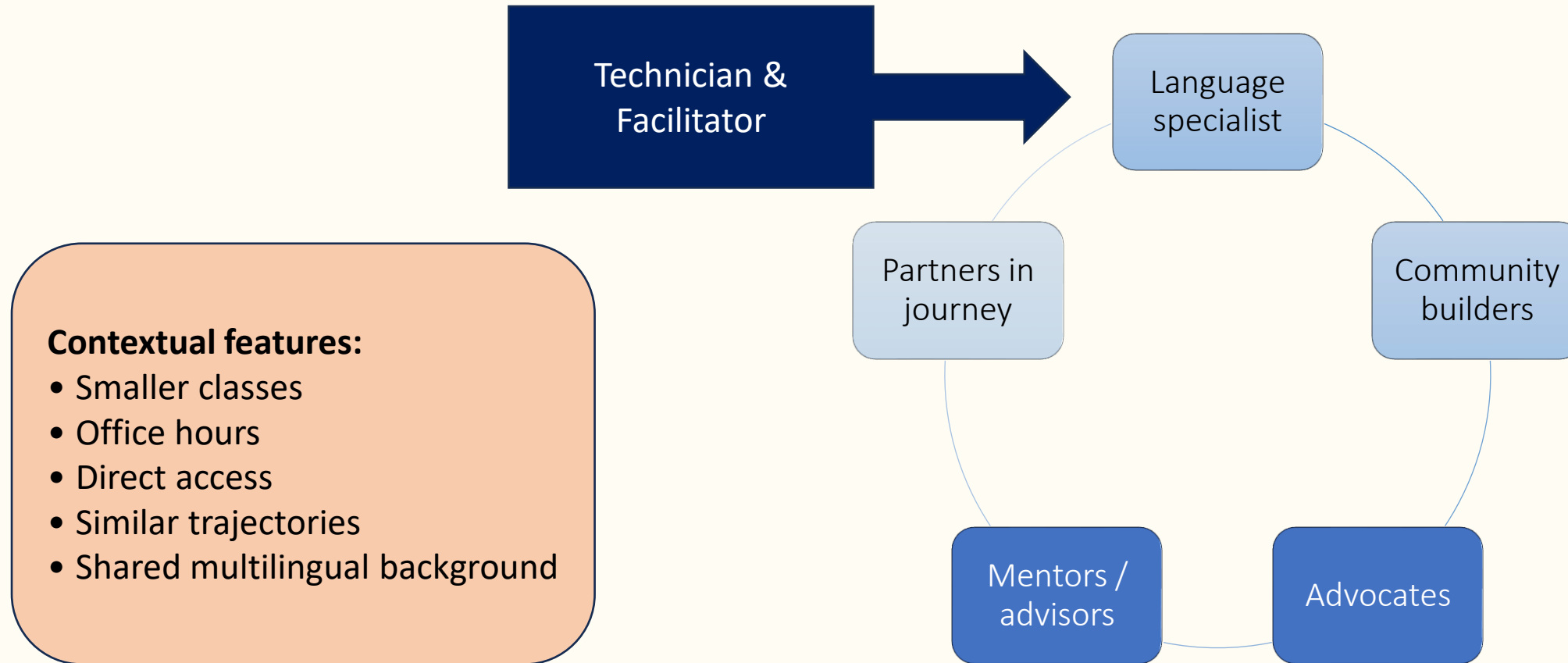
Language socialization goals

...being able to, to write reflectively to engage with others develop this **critical language awareness**, this awareness of, of language as it's used in different ways to accomplish different things in and then they can they can compare, right? (OU F03/04)

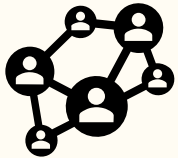
...focus on(...) **how writers relate to readers and knowledge** within their writing, and **create the relationships** between those things in terms of exact power and distance and formality (BCU F03)

...not so much focused on grammar, but a lot more working with texts, and being able to read and write from texts, forming an argument, supporting that argument. And I think **it's more of a literacy type of approach than it is traditional language teaching** (QU F002)

Instructors as agents of socialization



Instructors as advisors and advocates



I encourage them to **explore more on our campus**, to access [...] campus resources [...]. **In one of the small assignments**, they were asked to interview someone on campus, so they were given choices to visit, for example, the Student Centre, the library, [university's] centre for Indigenous Knowledges (OU F07/Y08)



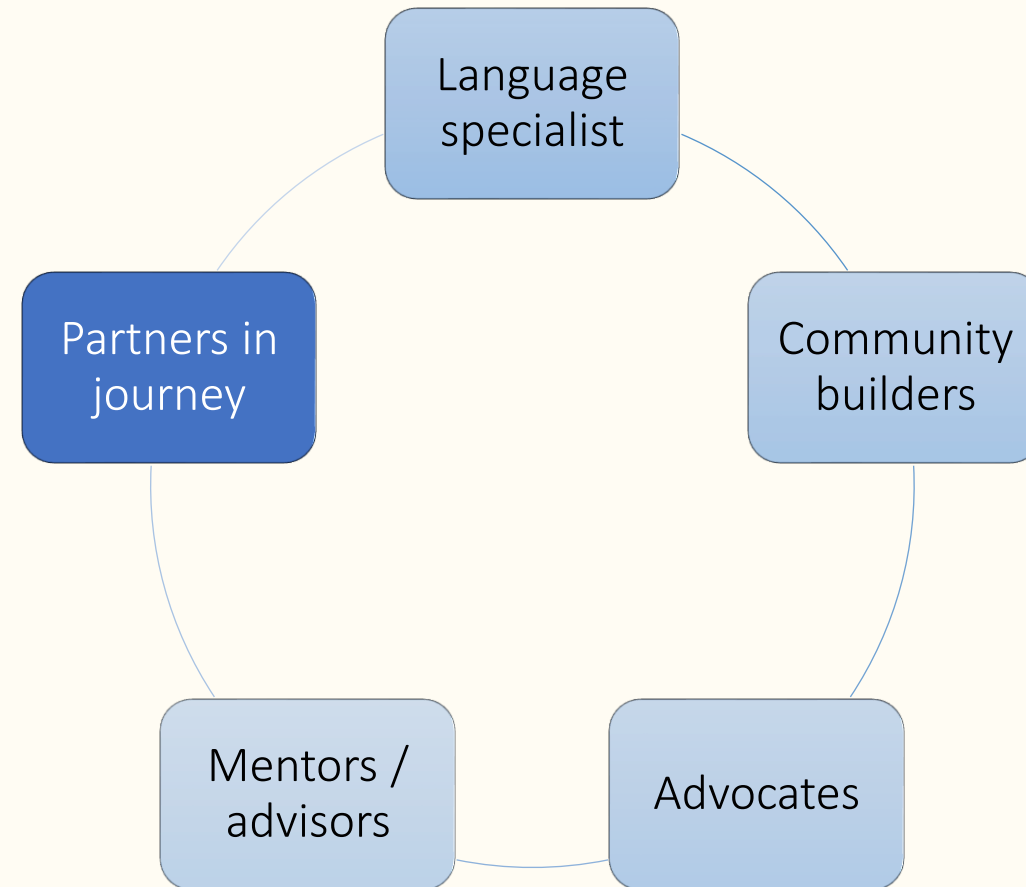
...there's a lot available, and I want them to know what's available at [QU] so that **they can see can learn to be their best advocate**, you know, the parents aren't here, I cannot advocate for them too much outside of the classroom, **so they have to stand up**. And they can do it. [...] being here is a victory already. (QU F04)



..there's been a couple of students who did not know that they could get **[academic] accommodations** [...], the students who have extenuating circumstances etc. (OU F08)

Instructors as agents of socialization

...and then I was more than a teacher for her. (QU F03)



Strategies of Socio-Emotional Support

- “I understand my task was to unite them and to create this positive environment.” (QUF003)

Building Community



- “It's just a matter of saying, you know, ‘Hey, [...] is everything okay today’ you know, or ‘is there anything I can do to help’ or [...] you know, empathy or just reaching out to the student can make the difference” (QUF005)

Enacting Empathy



- “I felt they needed a space where they could shine.” (OUF001)

Supporting Confidence & Empowerment



Emotion Labour of Instructors

Supporting Students

- “You can do your job with all of your heart. Or you can just do it as a job.” (QU 006)

Students who fail

- “Often ...if they're failing [the EAP course], a lot of them are failing other courses.” (QU 005)

Time Pressures

- “I have tried to address those other needs that they have like sentence structure. But there really isn't much time. And whenever I try to set aside time for those things, it's taking away time from other things.” (OU F002)

Motivating Students

- “It takes so much more effort and planning that's [...] front loaded on the part of the instructor is to strategize ... to not allow 50 to 60% of students to just kind of fall into this passive, apathetic mode, where yeah, they can pass the course.” (OU F003)

Socio-Emotional Context

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Firsts for Students

“Our students, some of them, they're dealing with a lot of firsts. It's their first time in university, or seminar at a North American University, first time in their field of, chosen field of discipline.” (OU F001)



Students' Workload

“They take a lot of courses at [BCU], they do a lot of work, they're kept very busy, and most of them are, are good at keeping up with that work.” (OU F002)



Students' Goal Orientation

“You know, and some of them have been asked to be on ... a special, elite, Student Ambassador kind of program where they represent the school. And ... one person ... said, 'You know what? We're going to say no, because that's not why we're here. You know, we're here to really focus on our studies.’” (QU F004)



Impact of Students' Grades

“The grades worry them a lot, because they are under pressure of getting as high grades as possible.” (QU F003)

Revisiting the RQs

RQ 1: Instructors as agents of socialization

- Strategies of socio-emotional support to assist students in heightened challenging socio-emotional context
- Emotion labour for instructors surrounding conflicting demands on their course schedules and relationships with students.

RQ 2: Influence of program characteristics on instructor roles

- University language and admissions policy on instructional practice
- Cross-listing and integration with degree programs and disciplinary content

“Sticky Objects”

- Grades and Grading/ Students who fail courses
- Students’ socio-emotional needs
- Instructor and student workload

Discussion and Implications

- Academic socialization context in which learners engage is shaped by social-emotional interactions that are mutually constitutive (Miller & Gkononou, 2022)
 - Emotions constructed by external structures and sociopolitical context/circumstances of students
 - Opportunity to exchange emotion for social capital (Shapiro, 2022)
 - Points to opportunities to resist and challenge positioning and agency (Benesch, 2020)
- Examining emotional experience of faculty highlights social relations, discourses and ideologies that shape academic socialization contexts (Da Costa, Rawal & Li, 2018)
 - Marking appropriate emotions
 - Indexing unequal power relations in which EAP instruction is embedded - sense of frustration, disappointment (Benesch, 2017)
 - Underscoring privileged position of instructors

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