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BECOMING A PUBLISHED SCHOLAR: INDONESIAN EFL TEACHER EDUCATORS NEGOTIATING FEEDBACK, IDENTITY, AND RECOGNITION

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Abstract: Becoming A Published Scholar: Indonesian EFL Teacher Educators Negotiating Feedback, Identity, and Recognition. **Objectives**: While existing research often highlights the struggles of early-career academics, less attention is paid to how experienced scholars in peripheral contexts navigate the peer review process. This study explores how Indonesian EFL teacher educators respond to journal reviewers' feedback in international publishing. **Methods**:Guided by academic literacy theory, the study adopts a qualitative case study with three female teacher educators and one male teacher educator from four different Indonesian universities. Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. **Findings**: Findings reveal two key insights: (1) participants faced persistent challenges, including time constraints, unclear feedback, limited mentoring, and restricted access to scholarly resources; (2) they employed adaptive strategies such as time management, peer consultation, and self-funded training. Moreover, their success was shaped by the interplay of personal resilience, sociocultural support, and institutional conditions. These findings challenge individualistic accounts of academic publishing and highlight the importance of recognizing the structural and contextual conditions that shape scholarly participation in the Global South. **Conclusion**: The study concludes that more equitable academic infrastructures, sustained mentoring, accessible professional development, and institutional support are needed to enable Indonesian EFL teacher educators and other scholars in peripheral contexts to participate more confidently and sustainably in international knowledge production.
Keywords: Identity, Published scholar, Reviewers' feedback, Research publication

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▪ INTRODUCTION

Academic publishing has been an increasingly consequential domain of scholarly work, serving not only as a means of disseminating knowledge but also as a crucial indicator of faculty credibility, academic standing, and institutional prestige(Bao & Feng, 2022; Yu & Jiang, 2022a). Across higher education systems, scholars are consequently expected to maintain publication in reputable journals as part of their professional and career development. Such expectations, however, are experienced unevenly across institutional and national settings. While some universities facilitate well-established research cultures, mentoring arrangements, and material resources to support faculty publication (French, 2020; Ruan et al., 2024), scholars working in under-resourced and non-Anglophone settings may have to navigate publication demands with comparatively limited institutional support. In Indonesia, this demand is further shaped by national policies that deal with academic publication and academic promotion (Jayadinata et al., 2022; Wahyuningsih, Basthomi, Suryati, & Hidayati, 2025; Wahyuningsih, Basthomi, Suryati, Hidayati, et al., 2025). Faculty members therefore negotiate publication demands alongside substantial teaching, administrative, and individual responsibilities, making ongoing engagement with international academic publishing particularly demanding.

Within this wider publication context, addressing reviewers' feedback reflects a critical yet underexplored aspect of academic work. Peer review functions as a dual mechanism: it serves as a gatekeeping mechanism for sustaining academic standards while also giving opportunities for authors to develop their research and academic practice (Wang et al., 2024). Reviewer feedback can therefore facilitate academic learning and socialization by making disciplinary conventions, methodological expectations, and standards of academic argumentation more visible (Wahyuningsih et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2024). Detailed and constructive feedback may even prompt authors to transform unsuccessful submissions into stronger academic outputs. Derrick et al. (2023), for instance, asserted that researchers whose proposals were initially unsuccessful could use constructive feedback to refine their work and subsequently achieve funding success. Nonetheless, the developmental potential of peer review is challenged by persistent concerns regarding reviewer bias, inconsistency in reviewer expertise, limited transparency, reviewer workload, and wider systemic inequalities within the review system (Adamson, 2012; Atjonen, 2018; Derrick et al., 2023). Thus, reviewer feedback represents not merely a technical aspect of publication but a multifaceted site in which authors navigate academic expectations, evaluative judgments, and disciplinary norms.

For academics affiliated with multilingual and non-Anglophone environments, these navigations can be particularly demanding. Responding to reviewers necessitates more than correcting language or incorporating suggested changes. Moreover, it may involve reconfiguring theoretical arguments, shaping methodological justification, developing analytical claims, and aligning a manuscript with the epistemological and rhetorical conventions of international journals (Wang et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023). For multilingual academics, these demands may be heightened by unfamiliarity with Anglophone academic conventions and the implicit expectations governing international academic communication (Lim & Bowman, 2024; Yang et al., 2022). Revision, therefore, extends beyond a predominantly cognitive or technical activity but can cover substantial emotional and behavioural labour, especially when reviewer comments are unclear, contradictory, overly critical, or perceived as culturally misaligned (Yu & Jiang, 2022a). The process may necessitate teacher educators to

navigate frustration, uncertainty, and self-doubt while concurrently making strategic decisions about which comments to accommodate, navigate, reinterpret, or challenge.

Research has consequently revealed the urgency of personal agency and relational support in fostering scholars to negotiate publication-related tensions. Individual motivation, confidence, resilience, and perceived agency play a significant role in shaping academics' interpretations of and responses to critical feedback (Ardi et al., 2024; Dugas et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2022). At the same time, academic writing and publication are rarely achieved through individual efforts alone. In this sense, peer mentoring, collaborative writing, and collegial review can provide intellectual, linguistic, and emotional resources that enable academics to interpret reviewers' feedback and develop more effective responses (Ring & Ring, 2015; Thomas et al., 2014; Turmudi et al., 2024). Such support has been particularly consequential where institutional mechanisms for research development are weak. Studies in under-resourced settings, for instance, have explored how limited infrastructure, constrained institutional support, and the complexities of the peer-review process continue to impede faculty members' publication efforts (Hendy et al., 2024). Mentorship, research training, and conducive professional contexts have been advocated as crucial situations for enabling scholars to negotiate the complex and often opaque publication process (Merga et al., 2021; Wahyuningsih et al., 2026).

Crucially, however, how academics receive and act upon reviewer feedback cannot be perceived solely in terms of personal competence or institutional resources. Feedback is embedded within sociocultural and relational initiatives that strengthen how criticism, authority, and academic expertise are perceived. Cultural orientations toward hierarchy, for instance, may influence academics' willingness to navigate reviewers' judgments, particularly when feedback is understood as face-threatening (Herber et al., 2020). Academics regarded outside dominant academic communities may also face additional difficulties in negotiating taken-for-granted norms of international academic communication (Alstete & Flavian, 2024; Mason, 2018). From this perspective, feedback literacy involves more than the technical ability to revise a manuscript. It includes the capacity to interpret evaluative judgments, navigate academic expectations, exercise academic agency, and mobilize interpersonal and institutional resources in context (Esterhazy & Bastiansen, 2021; Spooner et al., 2013). In the same vein, institutional recognition of publication-related activities may reinforce the extent to which academics are able and motivated to invest in these practices, particularly when peer review and related scholarly labour are insufficiently recognised in promotion and evaluation systems (Golper & Feldman, 2008).

Despite these insights, the existing scholarship provides an incomplete insight into how experienced scholars successfully negotiate reviewer feedback in resource-constrained, non-Anglophone contexts. Much of the existing research has emphaiszed on doctoral students (Bao & Feng, 2023; Yu & Jiang, 2022b), novice writers or early-career researchers (Abdul Rahman & Kurniawan, 2022; Karacan-ozdemir, 2025), whose experiences and available resources may differ substantially from those of established faculty. Moreover, studies have focused on investigating individual, institutional, or sociocultural aspects of publication separately, rather than exploring how these domains intersect in reinforcing academics' responses to reviewer feedback. This constraint is particularly meaningful in the Indonesian higher education context, where faculty members are expected to be involved in internationally oriented academic publishing while simultaneously working within institutional environments characterised by diverse levels of research capacity and support. Therefore, there remains a need to recoginze how experienced Indonesian EFL faculty

navigate reviewer feedback, what enables them to overcome publication-related challenges, and how their revision practices are constituted through the interplay of personal agency, sociocultural expectations, and institutional situations.

Addressing this lacuna, the present study explores the lived experiences of successful Indonesian EFL faculty in responding to reviewers' feedback during the research publication process. It specifically investigates the challenges faculty members encounter and the strategies they use to negotiate reviewer feedback. The following research questions guide the study:

1. What challenges do successful Indonesian EFL faculty encounter when responding to reviewers' feedback during the publication process?
2. What strategies do successful Indonesian EFL faculty employ to navigate and address these challenges?

▪ METHOD

Research Design and Context

This study employed a qualitative case study design situated within the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm to explore how Indonesian EFL teacher educators engage with journal reviewers' feedback in the publication process. It enables an in-depth exploration of personal experiences as socially and temporally situated, revealing how individual agency, identity, and meaning-making are shaped through academic writing and revision (Creswell, 2013). Combining this with a bounded case study approach allowed for both a contextualized understanding of individual trajectories and a holistic view of institutional influences. Guided by a constructivist logic, the study viewed knowledge as co-constructed through dialogue, interpretation, and reflexivity, making it well-suited for unpacking the nuanced, lived realities of faculty members negotiating power-laden publishing norms (Creswell, 2009). Data collection took place at four different universities in Indonesia, consisting of a public university in Central Java Province, a public Islamic university in Central Java Province and two private universities in East Java Province, Indonesia. These institutions were purposively selected to examine how differing organizational cultures, research mandates, and support infrastructures influence faculty experiences with academic publishing. In the context of Indonesia's regulatory emphasis on Scopus-indexed publications for promotion and institutional ranking (Gaus et al., 2020; Jayadinata et al., 2022), teacher educators need to navigate a complex interplay of personal commitment and institutional constraint. Thus, the chosen design not only captured the emotional and strategic dimensions of revision but also illuminated how broader sociocultural and systemic factors shape faculty engagement with reviewer feedback and their scholarly development.

Participants

This study employed purposeful criterion sampling to recruit participants with demonstrated expertise in academic publishing and direct experience in responding to journal reviewers' feedback. Three female EFL teacher educators—designated as TE1, TE2 and TE3— and one male teacher educator designated as TE4 were selected from three distinct institutional settings: a public university in Central Java, a public Islamic university in Central Java, a private university in East Java, and a private Islamic university in East Java, Indonesia. As depicted in Table 2, these participants were chosen based on two key criteria: (1) a consistent track record of publishing in

Scopus-indexed journals within the past five years, and (2) active involvement in academic writing development, including participation in mentoring programs, research communities, and professional workshops. Their dual role as both academic and institutional contributors (e.g., accreditation teams, research administrators) provided a nuanced perspective on the emotional, cognitive, and organizational challenges of manuscript revision. To ensure ethical integrity and protect participant anonymity, pseudonyms were used, and informed consent was obtained in accordance with institutional ethical review protocols.

The urgency of studying this population stems from the escalating demands in Indonesian higher education for faculty to publish in internationally recognized journals as a condition for promotion, institutional ranking, and national funding eligibility (Gaus et al., 2020; Jayadinata et al., 2022). The Directorate General of Higher Education mandates scholarly publication as part of its academic governance framework, yet many faculty members, particularly in non-elite institutions, face significant constraints—including heavy teaching loads, limited research infrastructure, and restricted access to high-impact journals (Yuan et al., 2022). For female academics, these challenges are often compounded by gendered expectations and disproportionate administrative responsibilities (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). TE1, TE2, TE3 and TE4 embody these broader structural conditions but have also demonstrated agency in overcoming such barriers, making them ideal informants for this study's objective: to uncover how individual resilience, institutional support, and sociocultural context interact in shaping faculty members' capacity to respond to reviewers' feedback. Their narratives offer valuable insight into the systemic inequities and hidden labor involved in sustaining research productivity in resource-constrained environments.

Table 2. Participant Demographic and Scholarly Profiles

Participants	Gender	Age (years)	Qualification	Affiliation	Total Scopus-Indexed Publications	Engagement in Research Development Programs
TE1	Female	34	Doctoral Degree	Public University in Central Java	8	Joined local/national research training; self-funded mentoring programs
TE2	Female	37	Master Degree	Public Islamic University in Central Java	16	Participated in peer-led workshops; involved in Photovoice mentoring community
TE3	Female	32	Master Degree	Private Islamic University in East Java	6	Participated in peer-led workshops, joined local/national research training

TE4	Male	42	Doctoral Degree	Private University in East Java	25	Participated in peer-led workshops, joined local/national research training

Data Collection

Data for this study were garnered through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which are widely recognized as powerful instruments in qualitative research for accessing participants' lived experiences, interpretations, and emotional responses. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers to maintain a flexible, yet focused, inquiry process in which core questions were posed while affording participants the space to elaborate on their stories, reflections, and critical incidents regarding their engagement with journal reviewers' feedback. Each participant took part in a one-on-one interview lasting approximately 50–60 minutes, conducted in May 2025. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure completeness and accuracy, and subsequently transcribed verbatim to preserve the narrative structure and linguistic nuances of the data. To enhance the depth and clarity of the collected data, follow-up communications were conducted via asynchronous text-based messaging to clarify ambiguous statements and validate the intended meaning of key responses.

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the data collection process, multiple methodological procedures were employed. First, the interview protocol was theory-informed and pilot-tested, drawing on prior research in academic writing and feedback engagement (Yu & Jiang, 2022a). The protocol was structured around three key thematic domains: personal trajectories, institutional context, and response strategies, enabling consistency across interviews while maintaining responsiveness to emerging insights. Second, reflexive journaling was conducted by the interviewers to document impressions, positionalities, and potential biases that could influence data interpretation. Third, prolonged engagement with participants was maintained through ongoing rapport-building and informal exchanges to promote trust and open dialogue. Finally, triangulation by member checking was carried out, whereby participants reviewed the preliminary transcripts and analytic summaries for accuracy and resonance. These methodological choices were grounded in established qualitative standards to uphold the rigor of data collection (Creswell, 2013). Table 3 summarizes the data collection procedures.

Table 3. Summary of Data Collection Procedures and Validity Measures

Component	Description	Strategy for Rigor
Interview Type	Semi-structured interviews	Aligned with rich, contextual data
Interview Duration	50–60 minutes per participant	Allowed in-depth exploration of themes
Medium	Audio-recorded voice interviews and follow-up	Ensured clarity and completeness

	written clarification via text messaging	
Interview framework	Feedback response strategies	Promoted consistency and comprehensiveness
Transcription	Verbatim transcription of all recordings	Maintained linguistic fidelity and narrative integrity
Instrument Validation	Pilot-tested protocol based on existing studies and theoretical models	Enhanced validity and alignment with research objectives
Researcher Reflexivity	Reflexive journaling to monitor interviewer bias and assumptions	Supported transparency and self-awareness
Prolonged Engagement	Sustained communication and rapport before, during, and after interviews	Strengthened authenticity and participant trust
Member Checking	Participant validation of transcripts and thematic summaries	Improved credibility and confirmability

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was guided by reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), a robust and theoretically flexible method developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) that is particularly well-suited for research grounded in the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. Reflexive thematic analysis allows researchers to explore how participants make meaning of their lived experiences while acknowledging the interpretive role of the researcher. This approach is especially appropriate for studies involving narrative interviews, where the goal is not merely to categorize responses but to understand how themes are embedded within social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Unlike coding reliability approaches that emphasize replicability and consensus, RTA emphasizes reflexivity, researcher subjectivity, and theoretical transparency, making it particularly relevant for examining the intricacies of how Indonesian EFL faculty respond to journal reviewers' feedback—an emotionally and cognitively complex academic task. Furthermore, the method's flexibility enabled the researchers to engage both semantic (explicit) and latent (underlying) meanings, allowing for a thorough and multi-layered interpretation of the participants' stories.

▪ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Challenges in Addressing Reviewers' Feedback

The findings were drawn from interviews with the participants. Through these interviews, they highlight the challenges they encountered when interpreting and responding to reviewers' feedback during the academic writing and publishing process, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Challenges in Addressing Reviewers' Feedback

Subtheme	Description	TE1 and TE3	TE2 and TE4
Self-regulation & competing demands	Difficulty balancing revisions with academic workload, family duties, and doctoral studies	Time constraints during accreditation; PhD tasks	Overload from 20-credit teaching, research, family
Interpreting complex reviewer comments	Struggling to understand and act on detailed, technical, or ambiguous feedback	Issues with technical revisions and novelty	Repeated readings required for full comprehension
Lack of supportive research environment	Limited access to collegial collaboration or institutional peer dialogue	Initial isolation, limited research dialogue	Absence of collaborative networks
Limited access to scholarly resources	Inability to access recent, high-quality references required by reviewers	Hindered revision quality and argument strength	Reliance on peers from other institutions
Inadequate financial support	Constraints in publication funding or rewards	Some institutional support; often self-funded	Limited rewards; reduced motivation
Minimal training/mentoring opportunities	Infrequent or inaccessible professional development programs	Some institutional support; often self-funded	Limited rewards; reduced motivation

Table 4 demonstrates that participants encountered difficulty in balancing the intellectual and emotional labor of responding to reviewers' feedback with their numerous academic and personal obligations. TE1 and TE3 faced the dual burden of fulfilling their responsibilities as doctoral students and faculty members engaged in institutional accreditation processes, while simultaneously managing strict revision deadlines from journal editors. Despite this demanding schedule, she demonstrated determination in prioritizing revisions over other tasks: "I have two weeks to revise for a Scopus Q2 journal while being in a 10-day mandatory accreditation quarantine. Despite this, I prioritize my doctoral studies by revising the article immediately" (TE1). Similarly, TE asserted the consistency in addressing reviewers' feedback: "I felt overwhelmed revising the article while completing my dissertation, but I managed to handle it through consistency and focus" (TE3). TE2 faced a similarly overwhelming workload, juggling a 20-credit teaching assignment, research obligations, administrative duties, and family responsibilities. These pressures significantly compromised her ability to maintain consistent focus on her revisions: "Repeated revisions caused fatigue and stress, requiring me to balance personal and professional tasks effectively" (TE2). In the same vein, TE4 added the cumulative pressure of these competing demands

significantly constrained his ability to sustain consistent attention to the revision process. As he explained, “Repeated revisions caused fatigue and stress, requiring me to balance personal and professional tasks effectively.” Taken together, these reflections highlight the emotional exhaustion and time-management difficulties faced by faculty navigating multiple competing roles—factors that directly influenced their revision performance.

The participants also reported substantial challenges in deciphering and responding to the often dense, technical, and multifaceted nature of reviewer feedback. TE1 and TE3 shared how the need for deep revisions across multiple areas of the manuscript—including language use, novelty articulation, and methodological clarity—added significant complexity to the revision process: “Some feedback required deep revisions, including technical language, research novelty, methodology, and conclusions. Reviewers also demanded at least 50 recent, reputable sources.” TE2 echoed similar struggles, citing the high level of intellectual engagement required to process the feedback effectively: “Reviewers' feedback required technical (cohesion, coherence, grammar, references) and substantial (data analysis, findings, implications, novelty) revisions.” These experiences highlight the significant cognitive and linguistic demands placed on non-native English-speaking scholars, who must engage with feedback that often assumes familiarity with rhetorical conventions and discursive expectations embedded in global academic discourse.

Another prominent theme that emerged from the narratives was the lack of a conducive research and publication culture within the participants’ institutions. The participants reported institutional environments that failed to foster collaboration, dialogue, or peer feedback. As TE1 and TE3 explained, limited access to scholarly communities restricted her ability to critically process and respond to reviewer comments: “At the start of my publication journey, I struggled with a lack of research support and limited networking, making it difficult to discuss ideas and address reviewers' feedback.” TE2 similarly described her experience of academic isolation, where the absence of collegial networks and institutional encouragement diminished her confidence in the revision process: “Limited support on campus, lack of collaborative networks, and an unsupportive academic culture hindered my understanding of reviewer feedback.” TE4 similarly reflected on the difficulties of responding to reviewers when adequate academic support was unavailable: “I often struggled to interpret the reviewers’ comments because I did not have enough opportunities to discuss them with colleagues. The limited support from my institution and the lack of a collaborative academic environment made the revision process even more challenging.” These accounts illustrate the sociocultural constraints that faculty face in institutions where research infrastructure is weak or underdeveloped, emphasizing the importance of scholarly community and dialogic engagement in fostering academic resilience and competence.

A significant institutional challenge reported by both participants was the restricted access to current, high-quality academic journals—resources that are essential for integrating new literature, refining arguments, and meeting reviewers’ expectations for theoretical and empirical engagement. TE1 and TE3reflected on how this lack of access impeded her ability to strengthen her manuscript during the revision process: “Limited access to reputable journals hindered manuscript revisions, making it difficult to address feedback, critique findings, strengthen arguments, and highlight novelty.”

TE2 also experienced these constraints and relied heavily on support from peers at more resource-rich universities: “Lacking university access, I relied on colleagues from top Indonesian universities for support.” Their testimonies expose the systemic inequalities in scholarly resource allocation that persist across institutions and how these disparities manifest in the revision outcomes of faculty attempting to meet international publishing standards.

Financial barriers also emerged as a core challenge to successful engagement with the review process. Although the participants occasionally had access to research funding and publication rewards, the support was inconsistent, competitive, and often insufficient to cover the costs associated with high-quality publication. TE1 and TE3 noted their reliance on personal funding despite the presence of institutional incentives: “Limited institutional funding for research and publication was a challenge, often requiring personal funds. However, the campus rewards successful publications in reputable journals.” In contrast, TE2 highlighted how rigid institutional policies actively demotivated her from investing further energy in the revision process: “Faculty could only request rewards for one published article, despite multiple publications. This limited support reduced my motivation, especially during the revision process.” These disparities in financial and motivational support not only shaped faculty perceptions of institutional commitment to research but also influenced their persistence and enthusiasm for navigating multiple rounds of peer review.

Finally, the participants described limited access to capacity-building initiatives such as academic writing training and structured mentoring programs—resources they deemed essential to developing the skills required to respond effectively to reviewer comments. TE1 and TE3 recounted their need to rely on self-funded opportunities to compensate for institutional gaps: “My university offered research and writing training, but I often funded my mentorship… Limited training affected my research and writing skills, hindering manuscript publication and revision.” TE2’s experience was further constrained by administrative hierarchies that restricted access to professional development based on faculty rank: “I could not join my university's training, as it was limited to faculty in structural positions… This lack of support hindered my academic writing skills.” TE4 also encountered institutional barriers that limited his access to opportunities for strengthening his academic writing and publishing capabilities. He explained that professional development activities were not equally accessible to all faculty members, particularly those without formal administrative positions: “Most of the training opportunities were intended for lecturers who held certain administrative roles. Since I was not in one of those positions, I had limited opportunities to participate, which made it difficult for me to further develop my academic writing skills.” These narratives reflect a broader structural issue in higher education systems, wherein the uneven distribution of academic development opportunities disproportionately affects those who may benefit from them most, early- to mid-career scholars striving for publication in global academic forums.

Coping Strategies in Responding to Reviewers’ Feedback

In addition to investigating the challenges they encountered, the participants also highlighted a range of strategies they used to navigate and respond to reviewers’ feedback. These strategies reflect their efforts to manage emotional responses, seek

support, strengthen their writing, and refine their manuscripts during the revision process. The coping strategies used by the participants to address reviewers' feedback are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Coping Strategies Used by Participants to Address Reviewers' Feedback

Coping Strategy	TE1 and TE3 Actions	TE2 and TE4 Actions
Self -regulation and prioritization	Time-blocked revision amidst doctoral and admin workload	Reallocated teaching/research balance for focused revision
Collegial dialogue and peer consultation	Consulted senior colleagues in a reputable journal publishing	Sought guidance from mentors and peers
Establishing a positive research environment	Joined national writing communities for academic exchange	Sought informal support through peer groups
Accessing alternative resources	Shared journal access with external colleagues	Relied on inter-university academic networks
Securing funding and rewards	Competed for limited internal grants and honorariums	Expressed hope for policy reforms to increase access
Participating in external training and mentoring	Joined self-funded mentoring groups and forums	Participated in Photovoice-based mentoring initiatives

A foundational strategy employed by both participants was the use of self-regulation and prioritization to manage competing demands. TE1 and TE3, in particular, emphasized the need to navigate their multiple identities as doctoral students, academic professionals, and mothers while maintaining their commitment to scholarly publication. Their narrative underscored the importance of intentional planning and emotional resilience: "Balancing my roles as a wife, mother, and educator helped me address reviewers' feedback effectively." Similarly, TE2 highlighted how deliberate prioritization of revision work allowed her to maintain momentum despite an overloaded schedule: "Effective self-management was key to publication success. I prioritized revisions, balanced personal and professional tasks, and strengthened motivation and resilience." TE4 demonstrated how disciplined self-regulation enabled him to sustain engagement with the revision process despite competing professional and personal demands. Rather than allowing an overloaded schedule to disrupt his progress, he deliberately allocated time for revisions and adjusted his other responsibilities accordingly. This approach helped him remain persistent and motivated throughout the publication process: "I had to manage my time carefully and make the revision process a consistent priority. Even when my other responsibilities became demanding, I tried to

keep working on the manuscript so that I could maintain my progress and motivation." These accounts affirm the critical role of metacognitive regulation—planning, monitoring, and adapting one's behavior—in successfully engaging with the iterative nature of academic feedback.

The participants actively sought intellectual and emotional support from peers and mentors to navigate the complexities of feedback interpretation. Rather than approaching revisions in isolation, they engaged in collaborative meaning-making through academic dialogue. TE1 and TE3 described how experienced colleagues served as informal mentors who offered both technical guidance and emotional encouragement: "I discussed it with experienced colleagues having more publications in reputable journals… They guided me in the process of revision." TE2 also emphasized how peer consultations helped her unpack and respond to reviewers' expectations: "I had discussions with my friends and mentors regarding the feedback. This helped me comprehend the reviewers' comments." These examples demonstrate how dialogic engagement with trusted colleagues can demystify academic conventions, enhance confidence, and transform solitary revision into a social learning process.

Recognizing the lack of institutional support structures, the participants took deliberate steps to build their own micro-environments that fostered accountability, motivation, and shared learning. Their initiatives included forming informal research groups, joining national academic communities, and participating in scholarly networks that promoted constructive dialogue and encouragement. TE1 and TE3 reflected on the motivational power of a collegial and collaborative space: "A conducive research and publication-related environment is meaningful for motivating me in the process of publication, especially when dealing with addressing reviewers' feedback." TE2 similarly emphasized the psychological safety and intellectual stimulation offered by her academic circle: "I tried to find out an academic community and a conducive and publication-related environment. This helped me a lot in fostering motivation and a positive effect in successful publication." These narratives affirm the importance of socially constructed academic spaces in sustaining momentum, particularly when formal institutional environments are absent or discouraging.

A pragmatic coping mechanism employed by both participants involved sourcing updated and reputable academic references through informal means. Confronted with institutional limitations in accessing journals and databases, they mobilized personal networks to obtain the scholarly literature required to meet reviewers' demands. TE1 and TE3 described how peer-based resource sharing became a workaround for institutional shortcomings: "Without journal access, I relied on colleagues for resources. The university should provide access to reputable journals." TE2 similarly drew on inter-institutional academic alliances: "Relevant and current resources are vital for publication, as required by reviewers. Lacking university access, I relied on colleagues from top Indonesian universities for support." In addition, TE4 described how collaboration beyond his home institution helped compensate for limited access to academic resources. When institutional databases and research facilities were insufficient to meet the demands of international publication, he sought assistance through professional connections with colleagues at other Indonesian universities. These external academic networks provided access to current literature and other resources needed to address reviewers' expectations: "When the resources available at my university were limited, I reached out to colleagues at other universities. They helped me access recent references and materials I needed to strengthen my manuscript and address the reviewers' requirements. These strategies reveal the resilience and

creativity of faculty working in under-resourced settings and underscore the necessity of equitable access to scholarly infrastructure for faculty across all institutional tiers.

Financial considerations were a central concern in the participants' publication journeys, particularly when managing expenses associated with manuscript submission, revision, and open-access fees. TE1 and TE3 were proactive in applying for competitive institutional funding, which she found partially effective: "I secured competitive university funding for research and publication, which motivated me through rewards for reputable journal publications." TE2, however, encountered systemic barriers that limited her ability to benefit from institutional reward systems: "High competition and limited rewards make funding difficult, with only one reward despite multiple publications." These contrasting experiences highlight institutional inconsistencies in supporting scholarly publishing and signal the urgent need for more transparent and equitable research incentive policies to ensure that scholarly productivity is not penalized by budget constraints.

Recognizing the lack of sustained institutional investment in faculty development, the participants took initiative in accessing external training and mentorship. TE1 and TE3 reported that participation in academic writing forums and mentoring programs not only improved their technical skills but also deepened their understanding of the publication process: "I joined academic forums, writing training, and mentoring… These provided networking, collaboration, and guidance in addressing reviewers' feedback." TE2 similarly found professional support through a structured mentoring initiative: "I joined professional development programs like Photovoice-based mentoring by Indonesian Community Researchers to foster research collaboration." These initiatives demonstrate the transformative potential of structured, peer-based support systems, particularly in equipping faculty to respond effectively to the complex, high-stakes task of manuscript revision for international publication.

▪ DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore the multifaceted challenges, strategies, and enabling conditions experienced by Indonesian EFL faculty members in responding to reviewers' feedback, addressing a notable gap in the literature on academic publishing in non-Anglophone, under-resourced contexts (Ruan et al., 2024; Yu & Jiang, 2020). While peer review is often presented as a standardized and neutral mechanism for quality assurance, this study, grounded in Academic Literacy Theory (Lea & Street, 1998), reveals that the process of engaging with feedback is deeply ideological, shaped by institutional hierarchies, disciplinary conventions, and unequal access to epistemic capital (Canagarajah, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Unlike prescriptive models of revision that foreground mechanical improvement, this study conceptualizes response to feedback as a situated, socially negotiated act involving identity work, emotional labor, and navigation of power-laden discursive norms, particularly salient in Scopus- and Web of Science–indexed publication contexts (Hyland & Jiang, 2016).

The findings show that the participants encountered challenges that extend beyond technical obstacles to encompass affective, cognitive, and structural dimensions. They struggled to manage revision workloads amidst teaching, research, and family responsibilities—an issue mirrored in previous research on faculty burnout in high-publication-pressure environments (Hendy et al., 2024). Yet, from the perspective

of Academic Literacy Theory, their difficulties also reveal the epistemological gatekeeping embedded in reviewer expectations, such as demands for novelty, methodological sophistication, and alignment with dominant Anglophone writing conventions. The participants' challenges in interpreting ambiguous reviewer comments, especially those involving implicit assumptions about academic discourse, further underscore the argument that feedback often functions as a mechanism of epistemic control rather than purely constructive guidance (Floris et al., 2024; Ishak et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024). In this light, difficulties in responding to feedback are not merely the result of individual shortcomings but systemic asymmetries in how knowledge is validated and rewarded across global academic contexts.

Despite these systemic constraints, the participants displayed resilience and agency through a repertoire of self-directed and socially mediated coping strategies, such as prioritizing revision over other tasks, engaging in peer dialogue, and joining external mentoring communities. These strategies, when viewed through the lens of academic literacies, represent acts of "critical negotiation" with dominant epistemologies, enabling participants to reshape their scholarly identity while resisting the marginalizing effects of exclusionary review practices (Fu & Wang, 2022; Wahyuningsih, Widiati, & Basthomi, 2025; Wargo & De Costa, 2017). The participants' reliance on informal networks and self-funded training also reveals the inadequacy of institutional infrastructures that fail to support sustainable academic development, highlighting how scholarly growth is often contingent upon individual initiative and extramural support rather than formal policy (French, 2020; Nygaard, 2017). Such findings align with the argument that academic writing is not solely about language proficiency or structural compliance but also about negotiating participation in discourses that are historically and ideologically situated.

Ultimately, the interplay of personal resilience, sociocultural collaboration, and institutional ambivalence shaped the participants' capacity to respond meaningfully to reviewers' feedback and succeed in publication. Yet, Academic Literacy Theory prompts a more critical interpretation: these trajectories are not neutral but reflect the broader politics of academic inclusion and exclusion. Without intentional structural reforms—such as equitable access to academic resources, transparent reward systems, and inclusive mentoring frameworks—the burden of adaptation continues to rest disproportionately on scholars from linguistically and economically peripheral contexts (Ruan et al., 2024; Turmudi et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2022). This study calls for a shift from deficit-oriented models of faculty development toward a critical engagement with the ideological dimensions of academic writing, recognizing that successful navigation of peer review is as much about epistemic alignment and identity negotiation as it is about technical revision. In doing so, institutions can better support faculty participation in global knowledge production on equitable terms.

▪ CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the complex, multidimensional experiences of Indonesian EFL teacher educators as they navigate journal reviewers' feedback within a higher education landscape marked by resource limitations, heavy workloads, and institutional inequalities. The participants demonstrated considerable resilience and strategic agency, drawing on self-regulation, collegial networks, and informal mentoring to overcome challenges such as unclear reviewer expectations, lack of access to scholarly databases, and minimal institutional support. Their narratives underscore that successful

engagement with reviewer feedback is not merely a technical task but a socially and institutionally mediated process shaped by emotional labor, disciplinary positioning, and academic identity development. Despite its valuable contributions, the study's scope is limited by its focus on three participants from similar disciplinary backgrounds and geographical contexts, which may constrain generalizability to broader faculty populations. Nevertheless, the in-depth qualitative design provides rich, situated understandings that are transferable to other under-resourced, non-Anglophone academic settings. To support faculty success in publishing, institutions must adopt more inclusive and sustainable research support policies, such as providing equitable access to updated databases, reducing bureaucratic barriers to training opportunities, fostering communities of practice, and implementing fair and transparent publication reward systems. National policymakers should also consider differentiated publication expectations that account for institutional capacity and disciplinary variation, ensuring that academic publishing serves as a meaningful vehicle for knowledge production rather than a compliance burden.

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