Intervention and revision: expertise and interaction in text mediation

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Abstract:

Many EAL (English as additional language) scholars enlist text mediators' support when faced with the challenges of writing for international publication. However, the contributions these individuals are able to make in improving scientific manuscripts remains unclear, especially when language professionals such as English teachers do this work. In this paper, we explore this topic by examining how three mediators employed their very different expertise and brought different processes to bear on the same discussion section of a medical manuscript written by a novice scholar in China. We find that successfully mediated texts are often the result of an interplay between the mediator's expertise and the relationship between the participants. Our findings contradict those of previous studies which question the role of English teachers in this process and have the potential to inform both text mediation practices and revision studies.

Key words: text mediation, subject knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, mediated authorship, relational agency

Introduction

The pressure on academics to publish their research in international English language journals has reached almost every corner of the globe. Novice scholars everywhere now find their careers depend on publishing in SCI-indexed journals published, very largely, in English. Such requirements place an enormous burden on novice authors, many of whom turn to text mediators to help improve their manuscripts and their chances of successful publication. In this paper we explore the experience of one novice researcher seeking to publish in English and the journey of her paper through the hands of three text mediators. In discussing this case we explore some of the key factors which affect the textual outcomes of mediation and hope to illuminate some of the interactions involved in this process.

Discursive challenges for academics publishing globally

One of the more bizarre effects of globalization is the requirement of academics across the planet to publish their work in English. While this obviously provides a scholarly *lingua franca* and facilitates the wider exchange of knowledge, it also serves to reduce research to successful publishing and distort the academic experience of countless authors. Many of these authors find themselves having to gain control of an academic register in a language they barely speak and rarely hear; to do so they often have to turn to others for support. But while governments, universities and academics themselves have come to see this situation as a reasonable consequence of 21st century academic life, many might regard it as a mockery of what doing and disseminating research should mean.

It is no secret that international publication poses enormous challenges for almost all academics, regardless of their first language and affiliation, with many journals rejecting up to 90% of the submissions they receive (Hyland, 2015, 2016). The expectations of editors and reviewers that authors frame a novel issue as a disciplinary problem and present it using the kinds of arguments and rhetorical conventions that readers will find familiar, interesting and persuasive is often beyond many novice writers. The ability to present themselves authoritatively in the overlapping space of content (subject knowledge) and rhetoric (discursive competence) is something that is only acquired with experience (Hyland, 2015;

Swales, 2004). These difficulties are compounded when authors are writing with intermediate levels of English at best (Hanauer & Englander, 2011). Low English proficiency can seriously compromise the presentation of their research (Ehara & Takahashi, 2007), distorting their manuscripts into hybrids of sophisticated disciplinary concepts and simplistic expression (Burrough-Boenisch & Matarese, 2013)

Research suggests that EAL authors often report considerable difficulties when writing for publication due to language issues, as surveys of non-Anglophone European scholars confirm (e.g. Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Hanauer and Englander (2011) have even sought to quantify this perceived relative burden. Their study of Mexican scholars indicates that subjects saw writing a scientific article in English as 24% more difficult and generating 21% more anxiety than writing papers in Spanish. Despite this sense of disadvantage, it remains unclear whether it is language, subject knowledge, publishing savvy or rhetorical awareness which is more decisive (Hyland, 2016). These difficulties, moreover, are particularly pronounced when it comes to writing the discussion section of an article. Here the novelty and significance of the research is "most vigorously 'sold'" (Hyland, 2009, p. 73) and its writing poses the greatest challenges for novice researchers (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). This section appears to offer writers an array of rhetorical options as writers support and invigorate their novel interpretations and persuade readers of their claims (Swales & Luebs, 2002).

The discussion section has been described by writing scholars in a series of between three and eleven moves and carrying a range of functions and with most entailing more than one step (e.g. Basturkmen, 2012; Holmes, 1997). Some moves are more routinely organized than others, such as the result-comment pairs (Basturkmen, 2012), some are optional (e.g. background information) and others obligatory (e.g. statement of purpose). Like much academic writing, however, this rhetorical knowledge is rarely explicitly taught so that writers often rely on patchwork borrowing and the kind of language re-use described by Flowerdew & Li (2007). It is these challenges which encourage authors to turn to the array of editing, translation and other literacy advising services we are calling *text mediation*.

Text mediators and types of mediation

A plethora of terms have been used to refer to those enlisted by EAL academic authors to enhance their chance of international publication, including correctors, translators, revisers, local editors, language professionals, language service providers, authors' editors (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Flowerdew & Wang, 2016), article shapers (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Li & Flowerdew, 2007) and convenience editors (Willey & Tanimoto, 2012, 2013, 2015). Lillis and Curry (2006, 2010) borrow the term "literacy broker" from Barton and Hamilton (1998) to designate those directly involved in the production of texts who are not authors. The term "broker" draws attention to the "unequal status and power" they see as existing between participants as a result of differential access to knowledge and other intellectual and material resources. Following a social literacies approach, these are regarded as structural inequalities embedded in a system loaded against EAL scholars, so that brokers are "often from Anglophone-centre contexts" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 93).

In contrast, we draw from the concept of agency in Gidden's (1984) theory of structuration where structure forms an interdependent duality with agency. While structure imposes constraints and offers resources, human beings are active agents with the ability to make a difference, in social practices, to achieve their purposes. The rigid structural hierarchy of participants suggested by Lillis and Curry (2010) is therefore negotiated, or "mediated," to some extent in the process of interaction itself. Thus while we understand the connotations of cultural and intellectual capital implied by the commercial term "broker," we prefer the more neutral "text mediator", emphasizing that while inequalities may occur in the mediation itself, these are not pre-determined by the institutional positions or differential knowledge bases of the participants. People bring more to a situation than a passive adoption of institutionally or societally defined roles, and these are worked out and enacted in the course of a relationship. While Lillis and Curry see power invested in brokers, who are the more commanding and dominant members of the dyad, our mediators sometimes occupy the un-regarded parts of the academy and bring expertise gained through work in lowly-regarded language centres.

Specifically, we frame EAL authors' efforts to publish in international journals as a social

practice in which text mediators serve as authors' proxies, enacting agency on the latter's behalf (see Bandura, 2006; Ludwig, 2014). The textual changes they make are effected through this proxy agency. As Giddens observes, there may be social and material constraints which any individual agent may be unable to change, but we cannot accept a power-hierarchy as fixed condition. Text mediators' agentive power originates from their expertise which crucially shapes their textual changes. Meanwhile, text mediators' proxy agency is often constrained and enabled by the social context in which they are embedded (see Giddens, 1984). For them, the most relevant context is their relationship with the author.

We also find Edwards (2010) theory of relational agency useful in accounting for how the author-mediator relationship affects mediator performance. According to this theory, the capacity of professionals to tackle complex tasks across professional boundaries is enhanced through close interaction alongside other professionals with different expertise. The agency which a professional enacts collaboratively with others is called "relational agency" as it is the synergized agency of the involved parties and thus usually more powerful than individual agency. In the case of text mediation, the author is both the client and a professional with different expertise in relation to the mediator. Thus the idea of relational agency helps us to see how the ability of text mediators to work on manuscripts is enhanced if they interact closely with authors during the mediation process. In this paper, we are particularly interested in examining the effect of text mediators' expertise and the author-mediator relationship on the proxy agency of the mediator embodied in textual changes.

In addition to suggesting a greater role for agency in the author-mediator relationship we also propose a greater role for the "language brokers" themselves. Individuals with different types of expertise have been identified as text mediators conveniently divided into "academic brokers" and "language brokers" by Lillis and Curry (2010) with the latter playing a relatively minor role. Academic expertise is said to comprise both subject knowledge and a discursive competence (e.g. Beaufort, 2000; Geisler, 1994; Tardy, 2009), but it is unclear if this is also the case for text mediators. Not only are authoring and revising distinguishable activities, but can also take on very different forms when performed by different people. Academic composition is generally done in relative solitude: often in isolation in the humanities

and as part of an assigned division-of-labour in the sciences where sections or parts of a paper are assigned to individuals. During text mediation, in contrast, the two roles may be occupied by different people, especially where the mediator works in collaboration with the author, complementing the skills of the latter and bringing a different expertise to the process (Luo & Hyland, 2016).

Nor can we assume that all authors have the same specialist knowledge, grammatical competence or rhetorical expertise and require different kinds of assistance from a mediator (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Thus, the expertise needed by any particular mediator varies with the context. Despite this, conventional wisdom tends to assume that a mediator requires a significant grasp of relevant subject knowledge. This is clear in the emphasis given to this by language services in their advertising:

> …one of our editors with specific expertise in your academic area will remove all grammar
>
> errors and make recommendations for improving the flow and readability of the manuscript.
>
> (A*merican Journal Experts* www.aje.com, accessed 04/20/2016)

This assumption is also reinforced by many journal editors:

> You need to find an editing service — not somebody who's just going to fix your grammar
>
> but who understands your work and can highlight what's important…
>
> (Kaplan, 2010, p. 722)

This assumption that mediators need specialist subject knowledge also receives support in the applied linguistics literature. For instance, Willey and Tanimoto's (2015, p. 63) English teachers editing abstracts in the healthcare field often found themselves "drifting into strange territories" while Lillis and Curry (2010) argue that "language-brokers" mainly orient to sentence level corrections and that the mediation of subject specialists was essential in assisting their non-Anglophone European scholars to publish. The view that subject knowledge is a central source of a mediator's agentive power feeds a market of text mediation dominated by subject-specialist mediators (Kaplan, 2010; Xia, 2013). On the other hand, however, discursive knowledge of academic genres cannot be underestimated as a key resource in text mediation (Burgess, Fumero Pérez and Díaz Galán, 2006; Kerans, 2001). Various studies

show that language mediators often compensate for their lack of insider subject knowledge by working closely with the author on rhetorical issues (Flowerdew & Wang, 2016; Li & Flowerdew, 2007). More radically, their knowledge of appropriate rhetorical practices allows them to go beyond linguistic revising to influence how scientific content is presented (Burgess et al 2006; Kerans, 2001; Luo & Hyland, 2016).

Research questions

The issues discussed above raise important questions concerning the extent that subject knowledge and rhetorical genre knowledge are necessary to successfully inform the work of text mediators. They raise the possibility that language professionals can overcome their unfamiliarity with the subject knowledge of the text to effectively advise authors in revising for publication. This further suggests that there is an important interactional dynamic in play in this process and that a better understanding of such interactions has the potential to inform both text mediation practices and revision research. Our approach to these issues was to focus on a single text written by an EAL doctoral student in China and explore the mediations performed on it by three different individuals. Following this case study method we address the following questions:

1) How do different types of expertise influence text mediators' textual changes?
2) How does the author-mediator relationship shape textual outcomes?

Context and participant: Introducing Amy

Our study focuses on Amy (pseudonym) whom we recruited as a participant for a larger study of how Chinese scholars used text mediators. Amy was finishing her doctoral program at a hospital affiliated to a national university in China (NU Hospital) where successfully publishing in SCI-indexed journals was a prerequisite for graduation. The Chinese government's determination to become a leading international player in scholarly activity has meant that many universities now require PhD candidates not only to publish in SCI (science citation index) journals as a graduation requirement, but that those journals should have impact factors beyond a certain threshold. Consequently, doctoral students now

account for the majority of authors of SCI-indexed papers in many Chinese institutions (e.g. Wuhan University, 2015). Amy's institution ranked target journals into a hierarchy of four categories of A, B, C and D with very clear requirements for graduates:

…to publish one article in a category B journal or two in category C journals (with at least

one being SCI-indexed)… (NU Hospital document, 2012)

Despite this, few Chinese scholars have received training in written English and many lack any knowledge of academic English. English education in secondary and higher education largely neglects writing altogether (Cai, 2012) or comprises short essays on a limited range of topics (You, 2004). Research students have recently been offered academic writing courses (Luo & Hyland, 2016), but these remain inaccessible to the majority (Cargill, O'Connor, & Li, 2012). This situation is not improved by the fact that many supervisors themselves are limited in both English proficiency and publishing experience (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Luo, 2015) and thus unable to effectively mentor students. Many scholars therefore feel disadvantaged when writing in English (Li, 2002) and struggle with the English they need to write papers, often leading them to submit their work to low impact factor journals (Fu, Frietsch & Tagscherer, 2013). Consequently, text mediators have become a key resource for many PhD candidates desperate to publish to meet graduation requirements (Xia, 2013).

When we met Amy she was only three months away from the end of her programme and was in a state of panic, having had her paper rejected first by a category A journal (hence Journal A) without review and then by another in category B (hence Journal B). While a third journal in category C (hence Journal C) had given her a "revise and resubmit" decision, she could not fully understand the reviewer's comments and did not know what to address. She desperately needed to secure publication in this journal or would have to submit to less prestigious journals, thereby devaluing her research and delaying her graduation.

Amy's manuscript was an experimental article with a conventional IMRD structure focusing on the effect of a gene called Fsg3 (pseudonym) within the mitochondria on the formation of atherosclerosis.

The topic lays at the intersection of molecular biology and medicine. Like many graduate students in China, Amy had not received any formal instruction in English academic writing but instead adopted a strategy of language reuse (see also Flowerdew and Li, 2007). As she said in an interview:

> I copied most of the sentence structures from published articles and squeezed in my own
>
> content.   (interview, 05/09/2014)

A serious problem for Amy was that she felt "all alone on the road to publication," Her supervisor, professor Hu (pseudonym), had helped her select an interesting topic but was inexperienced in publishing internationally and had limited English proficiency. So, despite being the corresponding author, Hu merely gave general criticisms while Amy worked alone on the paper. Amy's fellow doctoral students and co-workers could not help with her article and so, with little confidence in her own writing ability and without institutional support, Amy decided to hire a professional text mediator to edit her paper prior to submission. In the end, her paper was only published after intervention by three text mediators.

Methodology: Data collection and analysis

Our methodology follows Myers (1985) by employing multiple data sets and types of analysis, drawing on interviewing, records of participant communications, research diaries, and analyses of the manuscript, a process Lillis and Curry (2010) more recently described as "text history." Specifically, we collected eight versions of Amy's paper: the original draft, three drafts edited by three text mediators (M1, M2 and M3) with track changes, two self-edited drafts under M3's guidance, the draft before final acceptance and the published version. We examined all these versions highlighting the three drafts edited by the three text mediators.

Amy was interviewed twice in Chinese with each interview lasting about one hour and conducted face-to-face and audiotaped. The first interview revolved around her context of publishing and her experiences with the first two mediators while the second focused on the text itself and her responses to the mediators' interventions. Amy also responded to queries during the research via QQ, a synchronous messaging service popular in China, and supplied all communication records with M1's employer, M2,

and with the three journals to which she had submitted her manuscript. Additionally, information about M1 was supplied by her employer and that of M2 was downloaded online from a website where he advertised his editing service.

M3, the first author of this article, was included since she was the last mediator who worked on Amy's manuscript and because, as Canagarajah (2012, p. 260) argues, the researcher him/herself should be valued as "a rich repository of experiences and perspectives" rather than suppressed. Recognizing her peculiar role in this research, we took rigorous measures to ensure the reliability and objectivity of her data. She kept a research diary and wrote a detailed recount as a text mediator in response to questions posed by the second author in lieu of the interview. We strongly believe that her inclusion as a participant does not affect the validity of our research but strengthens it considerably.

The recorded interviews, together with all the other qualitative data, were transcribed and entered into MAXQDA 11, a qualitative data analysis programme, together with all the other qualitative data for coding. Following Saldaña (2009), the coding process involved a two-cycle procedure of open coding and axial coding. In the first cycle, data were read line by line and assigned to different concepts. The second cycle of coding grouped these concepts into themes. The data, codes and themes were then repeatedly checked and refined over several months. The textual data also underwent two analytical cycles, one form-based and the other function-based. In the form-based analysis, the taxonomy in Willey & Tanimoto (2012) was adapted to include revisions of different sizes coded as major, meso and minor. A major revision is one of ten words or more, a meso is one between six and nine words, and a minor one fewer than five words. A revision spanning more than one sentence was only counted once.

The fact that form and function are inseparable in language use, means that form revisions always have functional effects, and the most salient functional changes are those which affect move structure and theme progression. Therefore, changes in these were examined to see the functional effect of revisions, comparing the original with the revised versions. We followed theme analysis discussed in Thompson (2005) and the move analysis proposed by Holmes (1997). Names of the moves, steps (constituents of moves) and move cycles were either derived from previous studies (e.g. Basturkmen, 2012; Holmes, 1997)

or based on our own analysis. Texts were double coded by both authors with an agreement rate of 93.8%.

We decided to focus on mediations which impacted on the discussion section only for two main reasons. First, it was the only section which all the three mediators worked on in detail and so best reflects the different contributions of the mediators and the main changes in the text. Second, it is widely regarded as the most difficult section of the research article (RA) to write, and Amy confirmed that she regarded it as the most rhetorically challenging.

Amy's original discussion section consisted of nine paragraphs in 59 sentences with 1520 words. In terms of moves, the original text was confusing and displayed novice features. While the first and the last paragraphs summarized and restated major findings respectively following conventional practice, the middle paragraphs deviated from the commonly found results-comment patterns described above. Instead, Amy's text was characterized by constantly recycled information-result moves with some information moves sprawling over as many as seven consecutive sentences. Moreover, previous studies were only loosely listed without strategic organization while the results Amy presented always confirmed rather than differed from previous studies. The excessive use of information moves and constantly confirming earlier results marked Amy as a novice writer unable to authoritatively foreground novelty.

Text mediation: The life of a research paper

M1 worked on the manuscript before its submission to Journal A which endorsed the topic as interesting but dismissed the writing as unfocused with a number of editorial comments and rejected the paper without review. Amy approached M2 for help revising the paper for content and structure, but the revised paper was rejected by Journal B. With her graduation deadline approaching, Amy sent the manuscript, with little further revision, to Journal C which asked her to revise and resubmit, ensuring that the novelty of the paper was more clearly foregrounded. As a novice author, Amy could not interpret the comments she received so showed them to M2, who required an additional fee to help. Amy then saw the first author's advertisement recruiting participants for her dissertation project, promising to edit a paper free of charge in return for sharing experiences about publishing. Amy volunteered, and M3 undertook

extensive changes to her discussion section. The resubmission satisfied Journal C which subsequently published it after a few minor changes. We narrate the story of this process in more detail below.

M1: The discipline specialist mediator

   M1 is a fulltime native English speaking specialist mediator in biology working for a Europe-based language editing company. She had a strong background in molecular biology with an MS in biochemistry, molecular and cell biology and a PhD in molecular biology. She has also published over 20 journal articles and had extensive experience in editing papers for EAL authors.

   Amy selected this editing company after a recommendation from a friend. Unclear about the service her manuscript needed, she selected one called "English Language Editing" from the company's website. This was advertised as being particularly useful for NNES authors, promising:

   [We] will ensure your paper is free of spelling and grammatical errors and is consistent.

While Amy liked most logistic arrangements of this company, she resented the fact that she could not communicate with her assigned editor directly:

   Everything must be intermediated by the company. So there is no possibility for communication,

   synchronous communication.   (interview, 07/16/2014)

   Like other editing companies, this company deliberately restricted communication between the editor and the author to prevent their editors from making private commercial arrangements with their clients. Amy's communication with M1 was therefore channeled through the company, as stated in its website:

   We welcome any feedback. The edited manuscript may contain editor's comments. You can

   modify or respond to the editor's comments in the manuscript and flag your changes. Your

   manuscript will then be rechecked by the original editor at no charge to you. (accessed

   05/28/2014)

   This double-blinding of the author and the editor meant their only communication was via the text, and while both sides tried to make full use of this limited space, it was frustrating for Amy. M1, however,

was active in communicating with Amy on the text itself by making 69 margin comments across the manuscript, 18 in the discussion section, in the first edit and then adding three more in the second. 30 (43.5%) of these comments asked Amy to double check the revisions. Amy responded to 11 of these and added two new comments explaining her intention or asking questions. Two responses were in Chinese because she could not express herself clearly in English. Although her responses and new comments triggered seven replies and four textual changes, the process was disjointed and unsatisfactory due to the company's intervention. Unable to communicate further with M1, Amy accepted most of the revisions and submitted the paper to Journal A.

Analysis of M1's track-change version shows many small changes distributed evenly across the text. She shortened the discussion section from 1520 to 1367 words and increased the number of sentences from 59 to 61 without altering paragraphing. M1's revisions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: M1's Form-based revisions of Amy's discussion section

	Minor (≤5 words)	Meso (>5 words, ≤10 words)	Major (>10 words)	Total
Addition	6	0	0	6
Deletion	37	1	1	39
Rewriting	21	1	1	23
Reordering	11	2	0	13
Recombining	2	0	0	2
Substitution	23	2	0	25
Mechanical fixing	118	0	0	118
Total	218	6	2	226

Table 1 shows that M1 made a total of 226 revisions in the discussion section. 97% were minor in size and mainly involved mechanical fixing (52%) followed by deletion (17%), substitution (11%) and rewriting (10%). These revisions fulfilled the company's commitment to provide English language editing which ensured correctness and consistency in the text. They did not, however, address functional issues such as theme progression or move structure. Journal A rejected the manuscript without review.

Amy then turned to M2.

M2: The field specialist mediator

 M2, another specialist mediator, had a strong background in both molecular biology (an MS in molecular biology and PhD in information science and marine biomedicine) and medicine (working as a postdoc fellow on brain tumor at a US-based medical center for some years). As a Chinese freelance editor brought up and educated mostly in China, M2 was able to communicate with Amy directly in Chinese. In addition, he was very familiar with the editorial and review process as he had published around 20 articles himself, acted as a peer reviewer for several international journals and edited extensively for Chinese authors.

 Amy sought help from M2 because she believed his specialist knowledge and publishing experience could, according to her:

 … revise the content to make it more appealing to reviewers or to help me avoid doing extra

  experiments or major revisions… (email from Amy to M2, 11/12/2013)

After receiving his edited version, Amy negotiated with him on three separate revisions through eight emails. Altogether they exchanged 31 emails in addition to their initial communication in an online forum, a total of over 4,000 words. They communicated mainly in Chinese except when quoting text extracts. There was greater communication between these two than with M1 due to the direct contact and removal of the language barrier, but the simultaneous communication that Amy had hoped for was rejected outright. M2 also ignored the supporting materials Amy sent him. For instance, she explicitly stated in another email:

 I hope to communicate with you in detail for the revision. Please check what other materials you

  need. I attach everything in the submission to the first journal here. (email, 11/08/2013)

Amy included here her detailed margin comments including this one, addressing an editorial comment from Journal A:

 I have decided to change all "cholesterol efflux" into "cholesterol transport" or the

protein expression facilitating cholesterol efflux to avoid doing cholesterol efflux

experiments using H3.

To her surprise, however, M2 actually increased instances of "cholesterol efflux" from 28 to 33, and her email protesting at this drew the immediate response:

Change all "cholesterol efflux" into "cholesterol transport". (email, 11/22/2013)

Throughout the process, M2 behaved as if the author's wishes were irrelevant and that he never needed to consult her.

The main effect of M2's mediations was to shorten the whole article by eliminating 1097 words, cutting the discussion section from 1444 to 869 words, including removing two paragraphs before the conclusion and reducing the number of sentences from 61 to 39. Table 2 shows the extent of this drastic reduction in text length.

Table 2: M2's form-based revisions of Amy's discussion section

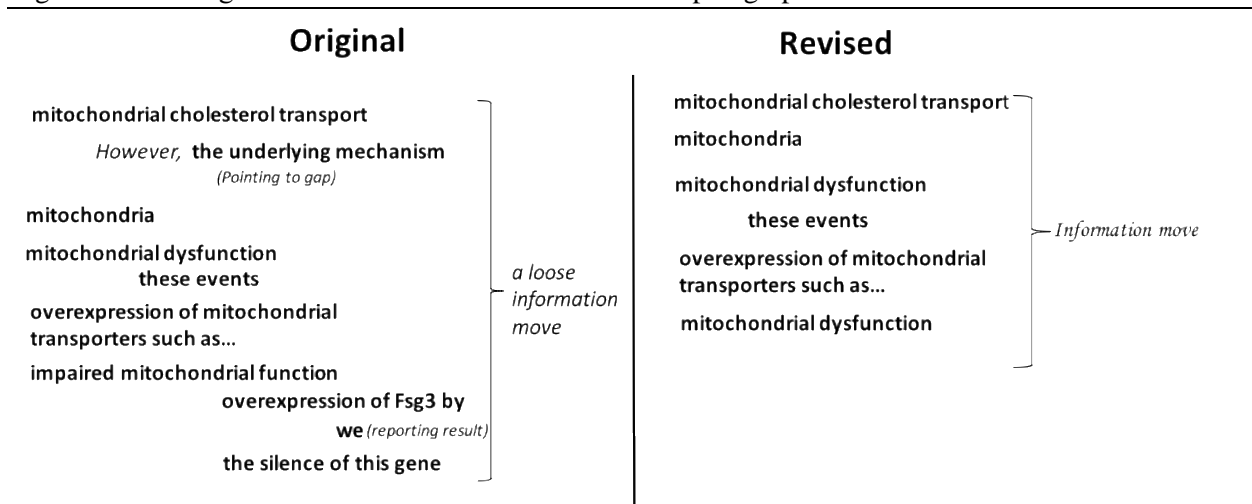|	Minor (≤5 words)	Meso (>5 words, ≤10 words)	Major (>10 words)	Total
Addition	15	0	0	15
Deletion	10	1	13	24
Rewriting	3	7	6	16
Reordering	1	0	0	1
Recombining	1	2	2	5
Substitution	11	1	0	12
Mechanical fixing	23	0	0	23
Total	64	11	21	96

The largest category of M2's revision therefore was deletion, comprising 25% in all with 13 major in length. The second most frequent category with major and meso revisions was rewriting, accounting for 17% and affecting a greater number of words than all other categories except deletion. Recombining also involved both meso and major revisions.

Most significantly, M2 altered the move structure of the manuscript considerably, primarily via

deletion. He reduced six moves from the middle paragraphs of Amy's discussion section, including two information moves, two result moves, one research gap move and one further research move. Four of the eliminated moves were in the 7th and 8th paragraphs which he deleted completely. The other two move changes appeared in the 2nd paragraph and had the effect illustrated in Figure 1. These revisions made the text more focused, which was the main reason Journal A had given for rejecting the manuscript.

Figure 1 shows that M2 removed the second sentence, a confusing move which pointed to the research gap without filling it in the next position. Near the end of the paragraph, he deleted three sentences and rewrote the last one, thereby removing the only sentence in this paragraph which reported results, converting the entire paragraph into an information move.

Fig. 1 M2's changes to the move structure and themes of paragraph 2

Original

mitochondrial cholesterol transport
However, **the underlying mechanism**
(Pointing to gap)
mitochondria
mitochondrial dysfunction
these events
overexpression of mitochondrial transporters such as…
impaired mitochondrial function
overexpression of Fsg3 by
we (reporting result)
the silence of this gene

a loose information move

Revised

mitochondrial cholesterol transport
mitochondria
mitochondrial dysfunction
these events
overexpression of mitochondrial transporters such as…
mitochondrial dysfunction

Information move

M2 did not change the purpose of other moves although he deleted sentences in most of them. Only in paragraph 5 did he extend the result move by splitting one sentence into two rather than adding new information to the text. These revisions were insufficient for Journal B and the subsequent submission to Journal C, which asked for revisions with these key comments:

* much data on the importance of …and even Fsg3, were already known.
* as correctly said in the manuscript…the present results are in agreement with data from three references previously published.
* combined, these facts appear to limit the absolute news value of the present version. Provided this impression can be corrected by proper condensation on known facts and instead giving

highlight on absolute news values, such a revised version may be sufficiently improved.
(email, 03/07/2014)

At this point Amy turned to M3.

M3: The language mediator

Mediator 3 differed enormously from the other two. With a BA in English and an MA in law, M3 taught English and acted as a text mediator, having edited some 30 manuscripts for colleagues, mainly in medicine, at the time she was contacted by Amy. This experience had led her to a doctoral programme where she was writing a thesis on text mediation for Chinese scholars writing for international publication, a research interest which had familiarized her with genre theory and move structures of experimental RAs similar to the one written by Amy. M3 communicated with Amy via QQ before they conferenced face-to-face. Her previous editing experiences had encouraged her to work closely with the author to pool their respective skills to combine subject knowledge and rhetorical knowledge.

M3's discourse knowledge of the RA genre allowed her to diagnose the main problems in the text so that when Amy told her that she believed only a minor revision was needed, M3 disagreed that the discussion section required serious revisions to foreground the novelty of the paper which was buried among the informing and confirming moves. Restricted by her limited subject knowledge, however, M3 was unable to effect these changes alone, and her advice on QQ failed to translate into effective changes. She therefore met Amy face to face and advised her to delete the second paragraph or condense it into a single sentence. When Amy refused to do this she insisted that a topic sentence be added to link that paragraph more closely with the overall topic, or hypertheme, of Fsg3, and that Fsg3 should become both theme and subject in the new sentence.

This led to Amy reordering the first sentence of paragraph 3 in which Fsg3 was both theme and subject there, triggering a discussion where Amy explained the relationship between the following sentences. This resulted in a collaborative reorganization of the paragraph as M3 now had the understanding to add an overarching sentence and rearrange the order of the existing sentences, adding

metadiscourse markers where necessary. These changes made the paragraph considerably more coherent, as Amy immediately recognized:

I suddenly found my argument being transformed. We're evaluating previous literature

here rather than just listing them! (face to face conversation, 05/08/2014)

With Amy using her subject knowledge and authorizing each revision, M3 rewrote the three middle paragraphs and edited the other two. Finally, Amy was satisfied:

This is exactly what I wanted to say! This is exactly what I wanted to say but did not know

how to.   (face to face conversation, 05/08/2014)

The revised version was sent to Journal C and accepted soon after a few minor changes.

In contrast to the other two mediators, who reduced the text, M3 increased the length of the discussion section slightly and altered the paragraphing. These formal revisions are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: M3's form-based revisions to Amy's discussion section

	Minor (≤5 words)	Meso (>5 words, ≤10 words)	Major (>10 words)	Total
Addition	15	1	5	21
Deletion	4	1	2	7
Rewriting	4	3	3	10
Reordering	1	2	4	7
Recombining	2	1	0	3
Substitution	6	0	0	6
Mechanical fixing	12	0	0	12
Total	46	8	14	66

M3 initiated the fewest revisions but many of these (32%) were major in length. Her largest category of revision was addition, 21 of 66 (32.8%) with five major and one meso in size. The longest one was a differentiating result move in three consecutive sentences at the end of paragraph 3. Reordering also featured prominently with four major and two meso cases. M3's changes mainly addressed

paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, though a functional analysis shows that only revisions in paragraphs 3 and 4 disturbed move structure.

Most significantly, M3 changed the loosely organized result move in the 3rd paragraph into a close-knit gap-result combination, thereby highlighting novelty and the value of this study. Figure 2 shows the effect of these changes diagrammatically, with the themes and moves in the original and the revised versions. M3's suggestions encouraged Amy to delete the somewhat purposeless information move and replace it with a more dynamic research gap move to drive the discussion forward with new results.

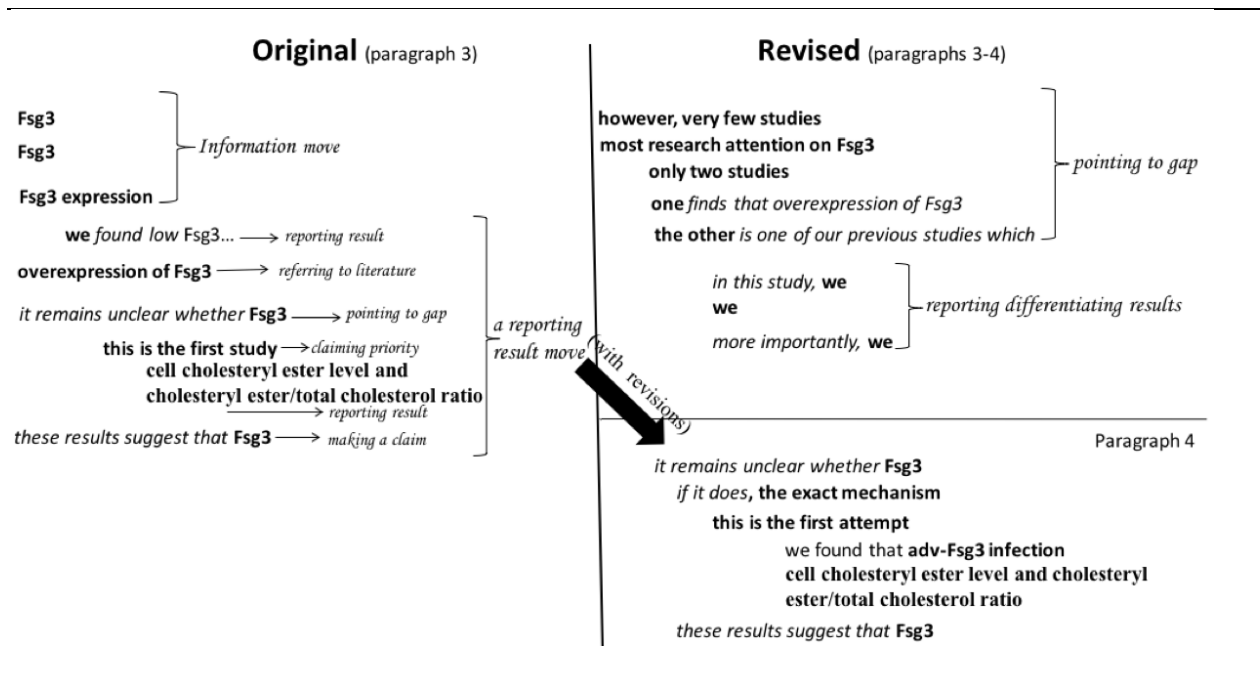Fig. 2 M3's changes to the move structure and themes of paragraph 3

Figure 2 also shows that M3 foregrounded the research gap and occupied by opening a new paragraph and then strengthened the gap by splitting one sentence into two. In addition, she enhanced the coherence of the second paragraph considerably by revising its theme progression (see Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 Theme progression of paragraph 2 before and after Mediator 3's revision
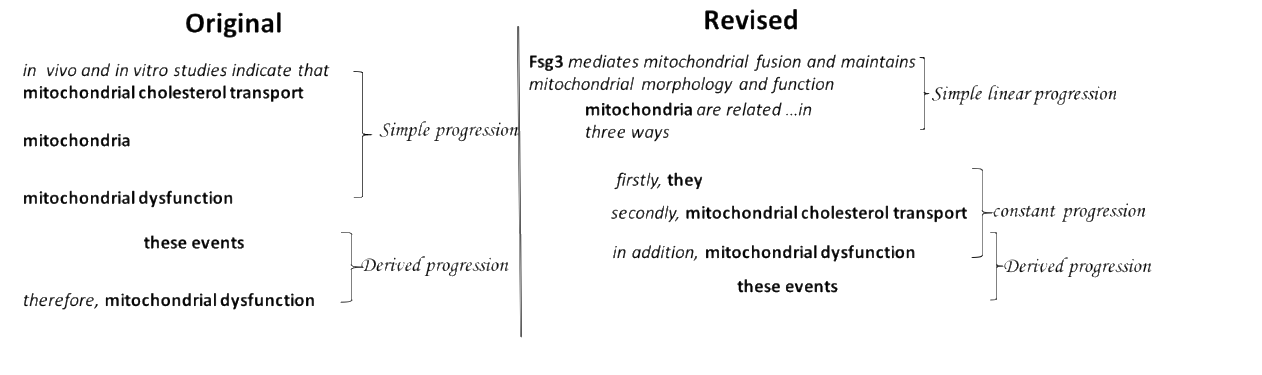
Expertise and interaction in text mediation

We have shown how the efforts of the three text mediators, each contributing something different to the process, collectively turned Amy's manuscript into a publishable paper as the majority of their changes were incorporated into the published version. While M1 primarily effected changes of language correctness and appropriateness, M2 and M3 overhauled Amy's manuscript by changing its move structure and theme progression, contributing to her success in publishing the paper and confirming that text mediators can have an impact on EAL scholars' publication success (Lillis & Curry, 2010). The data we present here provide insights into key issues about text mediation practices, which we discuss below.

Different categories of mediator expertise

Most importantly, we hope to have shed light on the part that different kinds of expertise play in text mediation, demonstrating that subject knowledge is only one source of mediators' agentive power. It may, moreover, only be necessary where the author and the mediator are working independently and interacting through the revised text. While both M1 and M2 accomplished their editing alone, M3 was only able to effect changes through negotiation with the author, incorporating the author's knowledge of the topic into her own diagnosis of the problems and her suggestions for ways of foregrounding the novelty of the study. Although M2, whose disciplinary knowledge matched that of Amy's most closely, made the largest number of major revisions, he seemed to operate by relying primarily on his intuitive

knowledge rather than an informed understanding of the genre, and so he focused more on content than the presentation of Amy's research.

In contrast, M3's knowledge of the RA genre enabled her to envisage Amy's discussion more holistically. Above all, her linguistic knowledge and familiarity with the rhetorical structure of scientific articles allowed her to see that linguistic structures like "In the present study, we explored…Our results showed that…Lastly, we find that…" work to summarize major findings and signal move boundaries (Basturkmen, 2012). She then relied on Amy's citation and language signals to decode the discussion section into moves, indicating that there were too many informing and confirming result moves but no differentiating result moves. Thus she concluded, without subject knowledge, that a major revision in the discussion section was needed to correct this.

The fact that moves are typically marked by linguistic signals allows language professionals ignorant of subject knowledge but with an understanding of discourse analysis to recognize the function of text chunks in discipline-specific texts and to edit them accordingly. That this text linguistic knowledge can empower language professionals in this way has been noted in other studies. Thus Ventola and Mauranen (1991) argue that their knowledge of systemic functional linguistics allowed them to improve the global organization and use of connectors, thematic patterns of the result section of a physics paper while Burgess et al (2006) found rhetorical knowledge crucial in helping an author revise an educational psychology paper. The value of this support can also be explained in terms of Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver and Stratman's (1986) revision model. In this model, a reviser's effectiveness hinges upon an ability to diagnose the problem accurately which in turn depends on an ability to manipulate text patterns. While academics generally acquire knowledge of the text patterns of their disciplines via professional enculturation (Berkenrotter & Tardy, 1995; Tardy, 2009), language professionals like M3 gain this knowledge via the discourse studies literature.

Awareness of a metalanguage for analyzing texts helps language professionals to diagnose where problems lie in texts and, with the author's assistance, to revise them. For this reason, professional text mediators without such knowledge often turn to the discourse analysis literature to support their work (e.g.

Shashok, 2014). But this knowledge alone does not qualify a language professional to take action on a text and evaluate the changes they have made, which meant that M3, unlike M1 and M2 who adopted what seems to be the default "solitary editing" process taken by most specialist mediators, worked hard to develop a collaborative relationship with Amy. In other words, M3 exercised relational agency while M1 and M2 enacted individual agency.

Text mediation is a complex task which straddles disciplinary boundaries, requires empathetic interactions and involves a distribution of expertise. Both participants are able to contribute more, and do so more effectively, by recognizing the expertise of the other, each expanding their capacity by working relationally with each other. In this study, Amy knew more about what she wanted to say in her manuscript and M3 knew more about the structure of the genre and the metalanguage to discuss it with Amy. This pooling of expertise created a synergy which enabled them to co-construct an effective and successful text. In other words, the process shows us that the role of the text mediator is to *complement* the professional know-how of the scientist by filling in the gaps in his or her discursive understandings through negotiation and working through together what the author is trying to communicate.

We see here that discursive knowledge of the target genre can serve as a key source of a mediator's agentive power, facilitating mediation and challenging the popular belief that only specialist mediators have the capacity to mediate texts beyond language. While we acknowledge that this may be an unusual case in that the "language mediator" M3 came to a paper free of mechanical errors, it also underlines the significance of rhetorical knowledge and supports the view of one participant in Willey and Tanimoto's (2013) study that subject knowledge "would be beneficial but is not necessary" (p.28).

Author-mediator relationships and textual outcomes

The study also suggests that author-mediator relationship helps shape the mediator's textual performance in two main ways: the interaction of the participants in the mediation process and the author's willingness to delegate literacy responsibilities to the mediator.

First, the relationship influences the extent the mediator can intervene in editing, a finding which

lends support to work by Luo & Hyland (2016) and Flowerdew and Wang (2016). We have argued that close interaction with the author is crucial for language professionals who lack specialist knowledge of the author's topic because it helps both participants to complement each other's knowledge. We also hope to have shown that this is no less important for specialist mediators, although it is possible that a commercial relationship may militate against this. While M1 was prevented by both her employer and language barriers from communicating with Amy effectively, M2 evinced little interest in doing so. In fact, neither had full insider status or was well-versed in Amy's subfield. A more personal relationship may have facilitated the development of relational agency and a better understanding about Amy's intentions and helped her to clarify her claims in a way which would be more recognizable by journal gatekeepers.

Without such cooperation neither understood the other's actions: Amy was uncertain about the changes M1 and M2 made, and they failed to see her intentions. For example, M1 inserted 30 margin comments across the text to ask Amy to double check her edits. M2 also misunderstood the author on several occasions and so made revisions which ran counter to the author's expectation, as in the case of "cholesterol efflux." In addition, we can see from Table 4 that M1 and M2 made no meso and major additions, nor did they make any major changes of reordering. Although M1 made two changes of meso reordering, neither went beyond the sentence level. M3, however, introduced five major and one meso additions, and four major and two meso revisions. Since addition at meso and major levels as well as inter-sentence reordering tend to involve knowledge of textual relations, the absence of such revisions suggests that both M1 and M2 failed to draw on Amy's intentions which were implicit in the text and struggled for adequate realization. While M1 was admittedly only asked to edit for language, M2 had responsibility to address issues raised by the reviewer of Journal C by revising content and structure.

Table 4: Comparison of meso and major additions and reordering by three mediators

	Size	Mediator 1	Mediator 2	Mediator 3
Addition	Major	0	0	5
	Meso	0	0	1
Reordering	Major	0	0	4
	Meso	2	0	2

As we mentioned earlier, revising Amy's discussion section for publication in a prestigious journal required the deletion and amalgamation of moves and the addition of new moves. By failing to communicate with Amy, M2 accomplished the first step but not the second. In contrast, through close communication with Amy, M3 was able to add a differentiating result move and turned an information move into a gap move via addition and reordering. Most importantly, she was able to draw on Amy's scientific knowledge rather than limiting herself to what was already in the text. We suggest, then, that the author's participation can augment the mediators' proxy agency by complementing their subject expertise and clarifying his/her intentions, suggesting that the mediator's relational agency with the author is more powerful than his/her individual agency (Edwards, 2010). In other words, EAL authors like Amy are not merely victims of social forces or the dupes of mediators. Instead, they are active agents who can not only marshal external support but also expand the latter's agentive power by participating in the mediation process relationally with them.

We have also identified how the author shapes textual outcomes by authorizing what the mediator should do when acting as a proxy. Normally, a well-informed agent authorizes proxy agency based on the nature of the task and the expertise of the proxy (Bandura, 2006; Ludwig, 2014). However, Amy, like many EAL authors ill-informed about the RA genre and text mediation services, initially misunderstood the nature of the task by believing what her manuscript had needed was only language editing when she enlisted M1. Only after the paper was rejected by Journal A did she realize that her paper needed more than language editing, asking M2 to "revise the content in way to make it more appealing to reviewers and to help me avoid doing extra experiments or major revisions." This different authorization allowed

M2 to make substantial changes to the structure of the paper. M3, without specialist subject knowledge, was asked to address the comments from Journal C which required Amy to foreground the novelty of her study. These observations suggest that the kind of author-mediator relationship which the author is prepared to authorize will influence the extent of text mediator proxy agency and the success of the process.

Conclusion

We hope to have shown in this case study that text mediators' agency in mediating text is jointly determined by their own expertise and the author-mediator relationship. Both subject knowledge and discursive knowledge can serve as key sources for a text mediator, but the former only seems indispensable when the mediator has to work alone. The latter can empower a mediator but has to be applied in close collaboration with the author and with his or her authorization, creating a context in which mutual trust and support is provided through relational agency.

Our findings have important implications in text mediation practices. First, the finding that a language professional can act as an effective text mediator for scientific authors mean that authors should not be apprehensive about approaching a resource which is often available locally and who speak their native language. Second, the study suggests an expanded role for language professionals, going beyond simply fixing grammar errors often reported in the literature (e.g. Lillis and Curry, 2010). Such skepticism runs deep in the academy (e.g. Kaplan, 2010; Spack, 1988) so that many English teachers struggle to have their expertise recognized in their institutions and among their colleagues in the faculties whose students they teach (Hyland, 2002). Third, our findings may also have implications for revision studies, helping to inform this area with the insights gained from collaborative text mediation practices.

Currently, many journal gatekeepers require authors of poorly written manuscripts to seek editorial assistance from specialist mediators who are proficient in English. Most academics in the periphery, however, simply do not have access to such resources, and when they do find active researchers skilled in academic English, they are often too busy with their own research to edit papers for others (Luo,

forthcoming). As we have argued in this paper, turning to commercial services offering specialist assistance is often not the answer authors are looking for. This apparently straightforward solution fails to engage the author and is successful only intermittently. It presupposes that text mediation is a solitary enterprise decided mainly by the mediator's subject knowledge. Amy's case challenges this assumption in two ways: 1) a mediator, to optimize textual outcomes, needs to exercise agency relationally with the author, and 2) the metalanguage knowledge of the language professional crucially complements disciplinary knowledge in text mediation.

These observations suggest that the reliance of specialist mediators on their disciplinary expertise to make textual interventions is no substitute for productive interactions with a rhetorically savvy mediator. While contractual agreements with companies or freelancers may offer apparently attractive solutions to writers' struggles to produce acceptable papers, the personal relations constructed around the co-construction of a text is likely to be more productive than the commercial relations underpinning for-profit mediation. To dismiss the more readily available and potentially more valuable resource of language teachers as mediators could be a very false step.

The situation that we have described with Amy calls attention to the challenge thousands of EAL authors have to face of being required to write and gain acceptance for articles in a register of which they have little understanding. It is, however, an outcome of global institutional forces that compels academics to publish significant research in international journals to keep their jobs and further their careers, debasing the meaning of research as a means of satisfying curiosity, furthering knowledge and improving lives by making publication an end in itself. This situation not only distorts research, makes unreasonable demands on academics and helps undermine indigenous academic registers, it also sustains a massive English language publishing industry and a burgeoning profession of corporate and freelance mediators as described in this paper. However, commercial services in which mediators enact only individual agency may not serve the best interest of many EAL academics like Amy. A better solution seems to foster close collaboration between this group and local language professionals who not only possess significant discursive expertise, but are also able to exercise agency relationally with their author-clients.

This study focuses on only three mediations in revising just one section of a manuscript for publication, and so we are appropriately cautious in claiming too much for our findings. We believe, however, that our discussion speaks to wider issues concerning the nature of revision practices and writing support, the participation of EAL academics in international publishing, and the role and status of language teachers in this enterprise. While we admit it can be extremely difficult to attend the complexity of the writing and publishing context, it is worthwhile to untangle these relationships for the scholarship of writing and literacy.

Most importantly, we want to stress that periphery-based EAL authors are often trying to take their first tentative steps on the treadmill of global academic publishing with very limited rhetorical resources. The advice of language professionals, equipped with appropriate genre knowledge and a willingness to discuss issues with authors, can be the most effective form of support that EAL scholars might have in becoming published scientists. Finally, we hope the study we have reported here can trigger changes in text mediation practices and broaden the access that authors have to competent and effective mediators. Equally importantly, we hope that studies such as this stimulate further research into the institutional forces which drive this system.

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