Researchers’ interests in studying academic literacy socialization in the EAP arenas have been increasing. However, a review of literature shows that the subjects in past studies are mainly L2 students studying in the English-speaking countries. Little is known about the process of EFL graduate students studying in their home country. As more L2 students pursuit post-graduate degrees in their home countries, there is a need to understand the academic literacy experiences of this particular group of students.

Informed by the theories of language socialization and communities of practice, the purpose of the study is (1) to investigate the sociocultural and other contextual factors impacting on the students’ experiences in the process of academic socialization; (2) to examine students’ identities, social positioning and negotiations in academic written discourse; and (3) to examine the developmental differences in the process of academic socialization between the three cohorts of students who are at different developmental stages. Three cohorts of graduate students (5-7 students in each cohort) and two of their instructors are recruited. The data include interview transcripts, participants’ written documents, and field notes.

The findings highlight multi-layer academic practices in which the participants had to negotiate in the socialization process. The academic practices can be conceptualized in a three-layer circular model. The central layer is the institutional practice which features the rules and regulations in the program. The middle layer is the academic practices in Taiwan, while the outer layer–international academic standards– refer to the practices accepted by the global academic community. Through the meaning negotiation, the participants gain knowledge about culture, values and ideologies of both the local and international academic communities. The findings also suggest that social interactions with peers, such as peer discussion, peer support, and peer coaching is an effective approach to become legitimate members of the community.

Keywords: identity, academic literacy, sociocultural context.