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Literacy Experiences and Disciplinary Socialization of Second Language Students
in an M.A. TESOL Program

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

by

Chi-Chih Tseng

June 2013

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Melanie Sperling, Chairperson
Dr. Begoña Echeverria
Dr. John Wills

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2013

The Dissertation of Chi-Chih Tseng is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with love to my awesome God, whose purpose for me is simply perfect through living, learning, and being in the places I have been and I am now:

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Psalm 16:11, New International Version).

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Literacy Experiences and Disciplinary Socialization of Second Language Students
in an M.A. TESOL Program

by

Chi-Chih Tseng

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Education
University of California, Riverside, June 2013
Dr. Melanie Sperling, Chairperson

This dissertation uncovered how a group of second language (L2) students, including international and immigrant students, became socialized into American academic discourse through the writing that they did as graduate students in the context of their academic field. In particular, this study focused on Mandarin Chinese-speaking graduate students studying in an M.A. program of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at a major U.S. university located in the Bay Area of Northern California. This study used a combination of writing research methods—case study techniques of interview and document collection, combined with discourse and text analysis of students’ oral and written language—within a socio-cultural/historic theoretical frame. This study revealed that even within one language group learning to write in a particular field, there is great variety among the students in terms of their writing perspectives and performances, struggles and strategies, as well as participation

norms and membership negotiation in their academic/professional discourse community. Further, the students' differing perceptions/perspectives reflect the different social and writing experiences that they bring to their new learning and living contexts, with ambivalence and tensions inherent in their academic literacy practices that show their individuality as well as group membership. This study also revealed the TESOL community a complex and varied one, allowing different kinds of written participation that (re)define the students as they engage in writing and other related activities in their course(s). Implications and recommendations for the areas of theory, research, and teaching are also discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

My experience with academic writing is one of the major factors in pursuing this topic for my own dissertation research. Being a somewhat “old-timer” second language (L2) learner and teacher from Taiwan studying in the field of second language education at the graduate level in the U.S. academy, and hearing various anecdotes about colleagues and fellow students learning to write academically, I have come to understand that writing an academic paper is not an easy task for native or nonnative-English speaker students in their field. Being an L2 student who studied in the U.S. graduate programs for several years (first in an M.S. TESOL and then in a Ph.D. Education program), I still find composing an academic paper not an easy job at all. The practice of graduate writing means to me a struggle not only with the act of writing itself, but also other relevant literate and social activities: thinking and doing, communication and collaboration, and the expected conventions and conversations of my chosen field. These multiple and interrelated challenges were also addressed by established scholars, both L1 and L2 researchers, who themselves learned to write as graduate students in their own discipline/field (e.g., Ackerman, 1995; Casanave, 2002; Dong, 1995; Silva, Reichelt, Chikuma, Duval-Couetil, Mo, Vélez-Rendón & Wood, 2003).

By systematically and explicitly documenting the experiences of Mandarin Chinese-speaking students like me of learning how to write at the graduate level, I wish to contribute to an understanding of who these students are in the larger field of L2

education in terms of their perspectives and practices in higher education, and English learning and writing in their home countries and in the U.S. What is more, in pursuing this line of inquiry, I also wish to extend conversations about how professionals in varied fields can best “socialize” their students to be competent members in their academic/professional communities.

Previous studies have adopted different approaches to investigate various issues on academic writing in disciplinary contexts of *social sciences* (e.g., Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988; Casanave, 1995, 2002; Ivanič, 1998; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995), *sciences* (e.g., Benson & Heidish, 1995; Braine, 1995; Dong, 1995; Myers, 1985), *engineering* (Braine, 1995; Herrington, 1985), and *business* (e.g., Connor & Kramer, 1995). To my knowledge, however, there has been no study focused on Taiwanese or Chinese students’ literacy and disciplinary socialization experiences in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)¹, an area which comprises a large segment of L2 populations from East Asia learning to teach English as a second or foreign language (TESOL, 2005). Therefore, in my study, I examine issues that are vital to writing and academic discourse socialization processes of students from Taiwan/China studying in an M.A. TESOL program.

¹ While this dissertation represents a pioneering work in examining graduate writing practices of Mandarin Chinese-speaking students in a TESOL program, previous studies conducted in a TESOL program at the masters degree level include Morita (2002), who examined the classroom participation of six international Japanese students in the Canadian setting; and Casanave (2002), who examined the academic literacy practices of both L1 (white students) and L2 (Armenian and Japanese students) at an American university. Prior (1991, 1998) also include his discussions on the situated, locally-constructed writing processes of international (from Taiwan and China) students in graduate seminars of the Second Languages Program. These studies will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

In order to locate this study theoretically, in what follows, I first provide a brief overview of the theoretical background that informs and directs the current study, and then, specifically, I consider a few gaps in the literature as a prelude to suggesting my research questions.

Background of the Study

This study situates at topics of writing research, academic discourse, disciplinary enculturation, and other related fields. As well documented in recent history, writing researchers of L1 and L2 generally recognized that there are two major paradigms, product- and process-oriented research, characterizing these fields (e.g., Connor, 1988/2001; Matsuda, 2003; Polio, 2003; Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Specifically, the *product-oriented* approach focused exclusively on writers' finished texts, and made the writing features (e.g., lexical choice, organization, and register) the most essential tasks for writers to accomplish in order to achieve academic success. The *process-oriented* approach, on the other hand, considered both of the written products and writing processes, and stressed the importance of understanding the social nature of the teaching and learning of writing (e.g., instructors as reader-assessors of students' writing) and the cognitive strategies of writers (e.g., skills required for prewriting and revising) in any given writing context.

Other researchers, however, claimed that these to be false dichotomy in that both methods are necessary in understanding students' learning of writing and teacher's teaching of writing (e.g., Delpit, 1988; Spack, 1988/2001). For example, Delpit (1988) argues that the debate over process and product approaches overshadows a more

important topic in “understand[ing] the need for both approaches” (p. 28), an integrated approach which can better help culturally-diverse students on all levels to initiate into an academic discourse. In L2 community, Spack (1988/2001), too, suggests a blurring process/product dichotomy and a shift of research focus to a more fundamental issue regarding how best we can serve our students in learning and teachers in teaching when socializing ESL college students into their new disciplinary communities.

Despite various definitions and debates characterize the two approaches, research on *writing as process* has become the interest of focus since the 1970s in which studies “shift[ed] from textual features to the process of writing itself, with researchers from various philosophical and methodological orientations investigating the processes underlying the production of [academic] written discourse” (Matsuda, 2003, p. 21). In the context of L2 writing, the movement of writing as process was paralleled by the development of *English for Academic Purposes* (EAP) and *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP), both of which emphasized on L2 graduate/undergraduate students’ learning of writing in disciplinary/subject areas (e.g., Belcher & Braine, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Leki, 1995; Leki & Carson, 1997; Matsuda & Silva, 2001; Matsuda, 2003; Spack, 1988/2001). One representative approach associated with this strand of writing research is genre analysis approach (influenced by *genre theory*). Writing scholars associated with this approach, such as Bazerman (1981), Dudley-Evans (1995), Johns (1995, 1999, 2003), Swales (1987, 1990), and Swales and Feak (2004) emphasized the social nature of genre and attempted to raise the rhetorical awareness of students learning to write in academic contexts through balancing writing process and written product.

Studies employing this approach have traditionally attempted to identify specific linguistic skills, organizational moves, and/or rhetorical conventions across different genres (e.g., essay examinations vs. authentic tasks) or sections within a single genre (e.g., summaries vs. critiques, and “introduction” or “discussion” sections of a research paper) in advanced levels of academic use, such as what academic and language skills are required in order to successfully complete the academic tasks assigned in various classes and disciplines (e.g., Dudley-Evans, 1995; Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Johns, 1995, 1999; Swales, 1987; 1990; Swales & Feak, 2004).

For example, Swales and Feak (2004) developed a handbook of *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* to raise students’ meta-awareness of different genres in different writing contexts. Specifically, Swales and Feak present many common academic genres such as summaries, book reviews, critiques, data commentaries, and research papers, accompanied by activities (e.g., answering questions of what features define a critique, filling in blanks of which reporting words work for a data commentary) that help students to raise their awareness of how genre dimensions, such as audience, purpose, organization, style, presentation, flow, shape the form and content of different types of writing within or across discipline(s). For example, knowing one’s purpose and readers enables a writer to make decisions about what information can safely be assumed and what needs to be explained, and whether to use a relatively informal or formal style; recognizing different kinds of genres in a field allows a writer to appropriately take a stance and establish himself/herself as a member of his/her disciplinary community (Swales & Feak, 2004, as cited in Henze, 2009, p. 63). In facilitating students become

socialized into rhetorical conventions that characterize their disciplines, this work was purposely designed as a textbook along with a commentary to be used both by instructors and students in many graduate (and undergraduate) level courses.

Following a genre analysis approach, Bazerman (1981) examined field-specific written texts in three distinctive discourse communities of sciences, social sciences, and humanities to understand how disciplinary knowledge is constructed through written language. In comparing the writing contexts in terms of the object under study, literature of the field, the anticipated audience, and the author's own self, Bazerman (1981) found that disciplinary-specific knowledge pertained to the relation of each text to its writing context:

[In sciences,] [t]he biological and biochemical audiences share an acceptance of much knowledge, evidence gathering techniques, and criteria of judgment against which to measure Watson and Crick's [a scientific article] claims and to suggest how the claims might be applied; therefore, the authors do not urge, but rather leave the audience to judge and act according to the dictates of science. [In social sciences,] [t]he sociological audience, sharing no uniform framework of thought or criteria of proof, must be urged, persuaded, and directed along the lines of the author's thoughts. [In humanities,] [t]he literary audience, concerned with private aesthetic experience, must find the critic's comments plausible, but more important must find the comments enriching the experience of reading; evocation of the richest experience is persuasion. (p. 378)

While Swales and Feak (2004) and Bazerman (1981) and others have advanced our knowledge about genre research and pedagogy in disciplinary use, however, they cannot offer insight into the potentially complex and idiosyncratic processes of disciplinary enculturation which often involves issues more than the act of writing itself. In observing this gap, others have re-conceptualized writing as *practices* (Casanave, 1995, 2002; Ivanič, 1998) or *activities* (Prior, 1998) in which non-textual factors (e.g., experience

with academic literacy, apprenticeship and membership, and roles and purposes of various disciplinary communities) were examined alongside the production of academic texts (e.g., Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Casanave, 1995, 2002; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995).

Research conducted within this perspective often asked how individuals acquire and learn the ways (e.g., thinking and doing; communication and collaboration; conventions and conversations), under specific writing contexts, that characterize their disciplines and that (re)define their identities.

Unlike genre-based research which has tended to presume uniform discourse communities in which unambiguous writing tasks, linguistic skills, and/or rhetorical conventions define the disciplines and their students (Casanave, 2002; Morita, 2002), studies taking a socio-cultural/political view on writing focused on writing assignments as instantiations of academic socialization processes, with the aim of exploring the related issues of power, identity, and learner agency (Sperling & Freedman, 2001). This approach was also paralleled by scholars in the field of composition studies and who assume that academic discourse is not simply a matter of acquiring pre-given sets of skills and knowledge, but also a complex process of negotiating membership, discourses, and power relations (e.g., Bizzell, 1986, 1988, 1990; Delpit, 1988; Rose, 1983/2006, 1985). It is this type of process-oriented approach that informed my study. Specifically, this study focused on the way academic writing instantiates disciplinary enculturation processes as language/literacy learning and professional development in a discourse community of TESOL.

What is more, recent studies following a dynamic view on academic writing and discourse socialization have called for more research examining this process in depth. Casanave (1995, 2002), Ivanič (1998), and Prior (1995, 1998) suggest that in order to understand writing is a site of struggle in which writers are negotiating their participation and membership in a given discourse community, it is important to examine students' personal life histories and prior experiences in relation to their current interactions with their social environments. Dantas-Whitney (2003) and Morita (2002) suggest the need for more research examining L2 academic socialization in depth with specific cultural/language and disciplinary groups. This study, therefore, took a qualitative approach and examined issues pertained to writing, academic discourse, and disciplinary enculturation as they manifest themselves in the experiences of a group of Mandarin Chinese-speaking students who participated in American academic discourse through the writing that they did as graduate students in the context of their M.A. TESOL program.

Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to better understand how a group of L2 students become socialized into American academic discourse through writing at the graduate level in an academic field. As I will explain in Chapter 2, the underlying assumption of this study is that L2 students, as newcomers, come with different discourse(s) experiences along with differing attitudes and values, and participate in academic writing in different ways. Theoretically, as informed by Bakhtin's (1981) notion of *discourse* and Gee's (1989/2001, 1992) of capital D *Discourse*, as well as Peirce's (1995) *social identity and investment in L2 learning*, these students experience struggles as they come into contact

with others in a new learning context. What is more, adding the dimensions of identity and agency (Gee, 1989/2001, 1992; Peirce, 1995), I conceptualize L2 students as active participants who negotiate multiple identities as a result of claiming membership in various settings associated with the different D/d discourse(s) that they are part of. Based on these theoretical assumptions, specifically, I ask, in the context of writing in L2 within a U.S. graduate program:

- (1) What kinds of writing perspectives do the students bring as they enter their new field of study? Specifically, what kinds of D/d discourse(s) along with their attitudes and values do the students reveal as they speak of past and present literacy practice experiences?
- (2) How do the students access linguistic resources and negotiate entry into the written Discourse of an academic field? Specifically, what kinds of struggles and strategies do they experience in terms of becoming a member of the field?
- (3) What does the students' academic writing, along with their own and the instructors' accounts, reveal about them as particular participants and members in the Discourse of their field of study?

Findings of the Study

This dissertation reveals three major themes in relation to the three research questions that I posted, summarized as follows:

(1) Students brought with them, as newcomers in their M.A. TESOL program, three kinds of writing perspectives. First, the students revealed the perspective, seen through

their everyday practices, that writing is a social medium. This perspective was found to further shape their academic writing experience both as a personal one and a social one. Second, the students held the view that education and English learning was an investment, developed through their former schooling and teaching experiences in Taiwan/China. This view informed their decisions in pursuing an M.A. in TESOL, and the students regarded academic writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment. Third, the students revealed ambivalent views regarding what they thought writing is and their actual writing practices, reflecting sometimes competing perspectives on writing as simply utilitarian and writing as a key and authentic practice (Chapter 4).

(2) The students struggled to situate their voices to the voices of three kinds of authoritative or powerful others represented in the field, both written and oral: scholars in the field as represented in their written work, course instructors, and fellow students. Specifically, first, the students struggled to take on a professional identity to write with an authoritative voice in the field through reading the scholarly written works of others in their courses. Second, the students struggled to balance conflicting selves, an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer on the one hand, and, on the other, the role of a student as they wrote papers for various instructors in the program. Third, the students struggled to reconcile competing voices regarding how to write so that they qualified as good academic writers as they collaborated with their fellow students in various writing-related activities. Last but not the least, the struggles that the students experienced ultimately transformed into new opportunities for learning in a way that helped them to shape their sense of self as TESOL professionals. In responding to the

kinds of struggles that the students spoke of, three kinds of strategies were revealed to reflect these new ways of learning in their program: reading/observing the written works of others, relating personal experiences to the content area, and relying on resources outside their field of study (Chapter 5).

(3) The students practiced diverse ways of writing, which contributed to and helped shape their written participation as individual users of academic language in TESOL. Along with their varied difficulties and strengths, the students also revealed varied ways of trying to become professional members of the TESOL community (Chapter 6).

This dissertation also discusses its implications for the areas of theory, research, and teaching that can be drawn from the findings of this study in the last chapter (Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature and the theoretical framework that situate and direct the current study. In the first section of this chapter, I provided an overview of the literature organized by three themes: (1) *writing and its conceptualizations*, (2) *writing and academic discourse* and (3) *writing and disciplinary enculturation*. The purpose of this review is to examine how these three bodies of research complement one another in a way that informs the current study.

For each theme of research review, I first describe briefly its context and development, and then specifically, I summarize and compare a number of representative studies to demonstrate some of the issues that have been raised and debated within these perspectives. In what follows, a review on conceptualizations of writing serves as a prelude to suggesting broad definitions of writing and its learning. It is this kind of writing processes approach, with the aim of exploring writing connections and related notions of literacy and written discourse, that informed my study.

Review of the Literature

Writing and Its Conceptualizations

As briefly introduced in Chapter 1, the rise of research on writing as process took place in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Matsuda, 2003; Sperling & Freedman, 2001; Yancey, 2009). Within this development, writing is conceptualized as a cognitive and social process which includes both the internal (e.g., the writer's cognitive strategies in

prewriting and revising) and external (e.g., the reader and writer relationship; the text and context relationship) aspects of composing (e.g., Polio, 2003; Swales, 1987, 1990).

Recent research/reviews/reports have collectively called an approach that is sensitive to connections between writing and reading and writing and speaking (Sperling, 1996; Sperling & Freedman, 2001), and between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices (Kroll, 2003; Lunsford, 2011; NCTE, 2009a, 2009b; Sperling & DiPardo, 2008; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Yancey, 2009). In what follows, I focus on two major organizing issues: (1) *writing as inclusive of reading and speaking* and (2) *writing as inclusive of writing in all forms*, as examples to suggest broad conceptions of writing in the context of literacy and learning processes.

Writing as Inclusive of Reading and Speaking

In their review entitled “Research on Writing,” Sperling and Freedman (2001) considered the historical development of writing research in U.S. schooling contexts and conceptualize writing as an instantiation of broader literacy and learning processes which include reading and speaking. Drawing on Vygotsky’s and Bakhtin’s theories to writing, they argued that writing needs to be seen as a sociocognitive and sociocultural process in which writing and learning to write occurs through interactions with imagined readers or immediate speakers (also discussed in Sperling, 1996). Specifically, Sperling and Freedman suggested that reading and speaking play a role in shaping students’ writing processes and outcomes, such as others as readers/audiences/responders of student writing, teachers’ written or oral comments as input on student writing, teacher-student

writing conferences as supportive talk on revision processes, and peer response as reciprocal opportunity in stimulating students' thoughts on their writing.

In the context of L2 writing, Grabe (2003), too, emphasized the role that reading plays in shaping students' academic success in varied disciplines, as students at this advanced level are generally required to read to write about various content and genres and to write from multiple source texts pertained to their disciplinary studies. Grabe also suggested that reading-writing relations be connected with other relevant issues pertained to L2 learning such as language proficiency, cultural and language differences, and social contexts, to better understand L2 students' language/literacy development and content learning in academic contexts.

In their empirical study, Connor and Kramer (1995) considered the challenges that L1 and L2 graduate students face when they write in response to relatively long readings in the discipline of business management. The primary reading strategy that the authors found about the more successful business graduate students practiced was rhetorically purposeful reading, or reading with the writing task in mind. What is more, while language proficiency was found to interfere with L2 students' performance of reading-to-write, previous professional training and experience were also found to affect both L1 and L2 students' understanding of assigned tasks. In addition, Connor and Kramer (1995) suggested that the differences in reading-to-write processes exist between L1 and L2 writers "may be cultural and educational as well as language-oriented" (p. 172). The authors focused their conclusions on international students and make recommendations for improved ESL reading and writing instruction: to "emphasize longer texts for reading

with increased opportunities for critical thinking and creative problem solving” (Connor & Kramer, 1995, p. 155). This point also resonates with that in Belcher’s (1995) study in which she suggests that ESL graduate students be exposed “to the explicit criticism that exists in most, if not all, disciplines” (p. 138) through extensive reading of exemplar texts representing each discipline.

Writing as Inclusive of Writing in All Its Forms

In her report on *Writing in the 21st Century*, Yancey (2009) reviewed the historical perceptions of writing and relevant themes of writing and writing instruction in 20th century America. The development of writing was characterized by Yancey as moving from a measured phenomenon at the beginning of the 20th century, to an experience-centered curriculum in the 1930s, then to a process of composing through the 1960s to 1980s, and finally to a computerized composing process in the 1980s and 1990s. Today as people continue to write using new and old tools, Yancey (2009) captures a portrait of how writing happens today in the 21st century:

With digital technology and, especially Web 2.0, it seems, writers are *everywhere*—on bulletin boards and in chat rooms and in emails and in text messages and on blogs responding to news reports and, indeed, reporting the news themselves as I-reports. Such writing is what Deborah Brandt has called self-sponsored writing: a writing that belongs to the writer, not to an institution, with the result that people—students, senior citizens, employees, volunteers, family members, sensible and non-sensible people alike—want to compose and do—on the page and on the screen and on the network—to *each other*. Opportunities for composing abound—on MySpace and Facebook and Googledocs and multiple blogs and platforms—and on national media sites, where writers upload photos and descriptions, videos and personal accounts, where they are both recipients and creators of our news. (p. 4-5)

As demonstrated, writing has transcended the limits of time and space, contexts and methods in light of its historical conceptions and grown into a multimodal expression in

all its forms—in print, online, audio, visual, and graphic—a phenomenon commonly observed by researchers in writing-related fields (e.g., Gee, 2004; Lunsford, 2011; New London Group, 1996; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Sperling & DiPardo, 2008; Street, 2005). Given her observation, Yancey (2009) accredited this change to what she calls *the Age of Composition*, “a period where composers become composers not through direct and formal instruction alone (if at all), but rather through what we might call an extracurricular social co-apprenticeship” (p. 5). In other words, people write to share, to dialogue, and to participate without “a hierarchy of expert-apprentice, but rather a peer co-apprenticeship in which communicative knowledge is freely exchanged” (p. 5).

In a study examining students’ writing that they produced both in- and out-of-school settings, for example, Andrea Lunsford and her colleagues at Stanford conducted their five-year, longitudinal study beginning in 2001 and collected all writing samples (both in-class and outside writing) of 189 undergraduate students from their first day of class until one year beyond their graduation. They also conducted annual surveys to all students and annual interviews to a subgroup of 36 participants. In the kinds of student writing that they collected, the range is fairly wide from “lab reports, research essays, PowerPoint presentations, problem sets, honor theses, email and textings (in 11 languages), blogs and journals, poems, documentaries, fan fiction, even a full-length play entitled ‘Hip-Hopera’” (Lunsford, 2011, p. 1). In nearly 15,000 pieces of student writing that they performed in class and out, Lunsford (2011) found students practiced writing extensively in both settings although they became most serious and enthusiastic about their “life writing” (outside writing; p. 1) than for their academic writing. In addition, students

were found to be “increasingly aware of those to whom they were writing and adjusted their writing styles to suit the occasion and the audience” (p. 1); for example, they distinguished the difference from composing an academic paper for their professors to posting a message for their friends on Facebook. Moreover, students “wanted their writing to count for something” and “increasingly saw writing as collaborative, social, and participatory rather than solitary” (p. 1).

In the context of L2 learning, Pennington (2003) also argued for the positive impacts that a variety of literacy forms (i.e., word processing, networking, hypertext/hypermedia, web pages and web sites, and the Internet and World Wide Web) have on the teaching and learning of L2 writing. While L2 teachers and students varied in their perceptions about the use of technologies in literacy learning (e.g., older L2 learners were found to be “computer-phobic” (Pennington, 2003, p. 288) and were uncomfortable to use technology), they generally recognized the values of these communicative tools and used them widely to complement or enhance teacher’s teaching or students’ learning both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, E-mail exchanges, Listservs, bulletin boards, and chat rooms are commonly-used pedagogical tools for assisting language and content learning in any type of written context. Similar to Lunsford’s (2011) study, Pennington (2003) also proposed that “L2 teachers have a responsibility to be proactive in ensuring the optimal use of technology not only in promoting but also in transforming literacy” (p. 286).

In this chapter thus far, I have situated my study in research on writing by suggesting broad definitions of writing and its learning. I have also summarized a

number of studies representing this approach (writing as inclusive of reading and speaking and of a diversity of forms). In the next section, I focus on literature pertaining to writing and academic discourse in higher education.

Writing and Academic Discourse

Studies with a socio-cultural/political interest in exploring students' academic writing processes in higher education took its start in the 1980s and were often associated with the fields of college composition and disciplinary writing (Sperling, 1996). Studies following this research trend have frequently focused on the writing processes of L1 and L2 students in the context of basic writing or disciplinary writing (Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Within this focus, researchers such as Bartholomae (1985/2001), Bizzell (1986, 1988, 1990), Delpit (1988, 1995/2001), and Rose (1983/2006, 1985) have all maintained that writing is more than writing and that learning to write is a complex process of negotiating access to an academic discourse community.

Defining Academic Discourse

As early as the 1980s, refuting a determinist perspective within cognitive or cultural-difference models, researchers who conduct their studies in the context of basic writing suggest that the notion of *academic discourse* be any given discourse community which involves often multiple and sometimes competing cultures, discourses, perspectives, voices; with conflicts and tensions inherent in its academic practices (e.g., Bartholomae, 1985/2001; Bizzell, 1986, 1988, 1990; Rose, 1983/2006, 1985), and that writing instruction should be made explicit and equitable in order to initiate all students (L1 and L2) into an academic discourse (e.g., Delpit, 1988; Spack, 1988/2001).

Research on Academic Discourse Community

As a writing teacher and researcher, Bizzell (1986, 1988, 1990) argued that while some students are already comfortable with academic discourse, others seem quite unfamiliar with it and resistant to learning it. In her study, Bizzell (1986) examined a freshman composition class and identified problems that these beginners have when they learn how to write. She suggested that the problems include students not having a basis of Standard English, as well as unfamiliarity with academic discourse conventions which stem from different ways of speaking and thinking in college as opposed to non-college settings. She further pointed out that while these basic writers are being asked to learn a new dialect and new discourse conventions, the outcome of such learning is acquisition of a whole new world view.

Bizzell (1986) suggested that students who fail to share in an academic discourse often belong to a social group that has experienced other exclusions and disenfranchisements. In order to respond to this problem, Bizzell proposed that instead of exerting one uniform discourse which only welcomes people who know it, writing teachers need to try to explore ways to initiate all students into academic discourse. This point was further articulated in her other studies where Bizzell (1988, 1990) criticized Hirsch's (1982, 1987) concept of *cultural literacy* (with the premise that all citizens are socialized into one uniform discourse and culture with a list of shared background knowledge) and disagreed that there is a relatively stable and unitary form of such discourse in American society. Although Bizzell (1990) agreed on the ground that in order for people to share language, they must share a certain level of "common

knowledge” (p. 662), such as conventions or expectations required for functioning in a writing society, she rejected the notion that academic discourse can be predicted and predetermined; rather, she proposed that it is important for students and teachers to work collectively toward achieving consensus on a pluralistic grouping of ways to do academic discourse. In a word, Bizzell believed that there should be a community of multiple discourses in which all students can participate.

Echoing Bizzell, Rose (1983/2006) studied college remedial writers and suggested that the “failure” of these writers stems not from their cognitive ability but their inexperience and unfamiliarity with academic discourse. Refuting a deficiency model imposed upon these remedial writers, Rose suggested that there is a need for basic writers to gain experience in academic discourse by being explicitly introduced to the organizational patterns of academic writing as strategies by which one explores information and structures by which one organizes it. Rose suggested that the difficulties students have are also at least partially due to the instructors’ teaching methods and assumptions about these students.

In his close analysis of institutional language that informs the teaching of writing, Rose (1985), again, contested the then-current model of writing instruction at the university. He found that professionals at the university, such as program administrators and teachers, tend to use “the language of exclusion” (Rose, 1985, p. 341) that reveals a fundamentally behaviorist model toward the inaccurate assessment of student ability and need. For example, the language of exclusion includes the following: “How many ‘minor errors’ are acceptable?” and “We must try to isolate and define those further *skills* in

composition...” (Rose, 1985, p.341). Such skill-oriented use of institutional language, according to Rose (1985), became a major cause for labeling the student as “illiterate” (p.352) or “remedial writers” (p. 349) in the first place without thinking about their deficiency from a sociocultural perspective. Rose suggested that writing should be conceptualized as an activity that everyone can participate in through struggling and active engagement with the facts and principles of a discipline. Teachers have the responsibility to help all students decide what is central to a discipline and how best to teach that, while at the same time they meet the university’s educational missions.

In his research on incoming college freshmen’s writing, Bartholomae (1985/2001) reviewed 500 essays from a college placement exam to determine the stylistic resources that allow writers to situate themselves in academic discourse and how that language either makes or unmakes a writer. Bartholomae (1985/2001) used the term “invent[ing] the university” (p. 511) to explain how a student who sits to write must learn to speak the language of the university, learn to speak as those in the discipline, and try on the specific ways of knowing that define the academic discourse community. He argued that this learning process becomes more imitation than invention and discovery. He was concerned with this accommodation that students make as they try to locate themselves in a discourse that is not yet theirs. He suggested that students learn to use key words of the discipline while carrying their own elaborations and sets of references as “writers who can successfully manipulate an audience...are writers who can both imagine and write from a position of privilege [... and] see themselves within a privileged discourse (p. 515) [...] of being ‘insiders’—that is, of being both inside an established and powerful

discourse, and of being granted a special right to speak” (p. 516). In order for novice writers to claim membership in a new discourse, then, students’ writing must reflect an alteration of “the political and social relationships between basic writing students and their teachers” (p. 515).

In her article on “The Silenced Dialogue,” Delpit (1988) also linked writing and writing instruction to “culture of power” (p. 282), that is, “there are codes or rules for participating in power;... [for example,] linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting” (p. 283). Delpit proposed that these rules of power be explicitly introduced to Black and poor students on all levels in a way that would ensure an equitable opportunity to initiate students of all kinds into an academic discourse community. Similarly, in her other study, Delpit (1995/2001) contends Gee’s (1989/2001) two premises on discourse socialization: *first*, discourses cannot be taught in the classroom but can only be acquired by enculturation or apprenticeship in the home or community; *second*, individuals who are primarily socialized into one discourse with one set of values may experience major conflicts as they try to gain membership in another discourse with another set of values. Delpit suggested that rules of a new and dominant discourse are teachable to students of color or of poor in a classroom setting. In proposing solutions to what she perceived as problematic in Gee’s arguments, Delpit suggested that students with diverse background must be seen as prominent learners who can master a discourse that is not theirs, and that committed teachers with sustained instructional support can help socialize any diverse student into a dominant discourse.

Similar to Delpit's perspective on academic discourse socialization, in the context of L2 writing, Zamel (1997), too, argued for a *transculturation*² model to replace the deterministic view of a cultural difference model which correlates L2 students' writing performances directly to their ethnic or cultural background. Refuting previous views regarding what kinds of organizational structure an L2 student can produce (Kaplan, 1966) or what skills/tasks an L2 student can accomplish (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996) based on their languages and cultures, Zamel revealed her contention as this:

[B]ecause of what their languages are assumed to value, ESL students are viewed as less capable of reevaluating beliefs and values, rethinking issues, and raising intelligent questions than their English-as-L1 counterparts are. Not only do the authors [Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996)] characterize students in this way, but they also suggest that challenging students to think critically is oppressive, as if critical thinking does not exist in other cultures. (p. 342)

Zamel presented several studies as counter-cases to challenge these assumptions about L2 students learning to write in English. For example, Bloch and Chi (1995) found out that "Chinese rhetoric [...] is 'as complex and ever changing as is Western rhetoric' (p. 271) [...] and students were encouraged to judge for themselves and to question canonical texts" (as cited in Zamel, 1997, p. 346). In addition, established researchers of Chinese-origin also reflected their own experiences with learning to write in English as "recognizing that his new 'English self' did not mean 'losing' his 'old cultural values'" (Shen, 1989, p. 462, as cited in Zamel, 1997, p. 346) [...] and] struggling with languages

² According to Zamel (1997), "Transculturation assumes and celebrates the selective, generative, and inventive nature of linguistic and cultural adaptation and thus reflects precisely how languages and cultures develop and change—infused, invigorated, and challenged by variation and innovation. And because the transculturation model recognizes this process of adaptation as dynamic, involving active engagement and resistance, it pushes us to raise questions about our pedagogical goals and research orientations and to probe unexamined assumptions..." (p, 350).

and drawing on their dynamic interplay can be an enriching process” (Lu, 1987, as cited in Zamel, 1997. p. 346). In addition, other studies have also shown that while East Asian international students (from China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan) perceive their former English training that they received in their home countries more helpful for passing exams or learning about grammar rules than for academic writing, they could still develop various strategies for learning to write academically in their new (U.S.) learning environment. In order to achieve academic success, these strategies include having papers read by native speakers, highlighting good sentences, visiting the writing center, and reading more papers and books in their chosen fields (Serverino, 2004; Silva, Reichelt, Chikuma, Duval-Couetil, Mo, Rendón, & Wood, 2003).

Moreover, an emerging body of research has revealed that East Asian international students are complex and active social agents and that their learning processes should be conceived as a complex process of exercising learner agency, rather than be attributed only to cognitive capability or motivation (Lee, 2005; Morita, 2002). Studies focusing on these students’ living and learning experiences in their new ESL/undergraduate/graduate settings have also shown that, even within one ethnic/language group (e.g., Japanese or Korean), differing perceptions/perspectives reflect the different experiences that students bring to their new learning and living contexts. These differences, in turn, reveal students as individual language users, which cannot be predicated on their ethnicities. For example, Lee (2005) argues that while the Korean students shared certain commonalities such as being Korean and being educated in a Korean national educational system, they were quite diverse in perceiving and coping with struggles in their new learning

environments. Similarly, Morita (2002) found that even though the Japanese female students shared a similar linguistic/cultural background and the same gender, there was considerable variability among them in the ways they negotiated their participation and experienced personal transformations across the curriculum of their academic communities.

In raising students' awareness of the rules of the culture of power of their academic/disciplinary discourse communities, other studies have sought to investigate the process of involving students in creating assessment criteria or in observing their own language learning experiences. For example, Henze (2009) advocates "transparent assessment criteria" (p. 61) to make instructors' instruction equitable and to help all students succeed in college settings. In her study, Henze argued that when diverse students (e.g., immigrant and international students for whom English is their L2) do not grow up with ways of learning that are dominant in an academic environment, they are likely to undergo a disempowering learning process because they are not familiar with the kinds of expectations demanded upon them. Being a full-time faculty member teaching disciplinary writing in a specialized field, Henze (2009) proposed that it is instructors' responsibility to "make assessment criteria transparent and [to] fulfill an important role in making our instruction equitable" (p. 61). In recognizing the need to make her evaluation explicit for the kinds of assignments that she set up for her graduate students, Henze had her graduate students participate in the process of developing assessment criteria and then implemented such criteria in the courses where students wrote their papers for. Students were found to benefit greatly from such approach as it empowered them as co-evaluators

of their own written work and helped them to achieve a sense of belonging in their own professional area. Similarly, in her study on *ESL learners as ethnographers*, students collaborated with Dantas-Whitney (2003) on a language research project and acted like ethnographers to observe their own language learning processes. Students were found to highly value this research experience as they regarded self-observation and critical reflection to be useful tools and resources for their future language development and personal empowerment in their new academic learning environment.

In this section, I have discussed how researchers of academic writing and L2 learning who take a critical stance view issues related to academic discourse socialization. I have also summarized a number of studies conducted in the contexts of college composition and L2 writing/learning. In what follows, I focus more specifically on studies of disciplinary writing in varied disciplinary discourse communities.

Writing and Disciplinary Enculturation

Research on *disciplinary enculturation* has frequently adopted the discourse community metaphor and asked how individuals acquire and learn the ways (e.g., thinking and doing, communication and collaboration, conventions and conversations), under specific writing contexts, that characterize their disciplines and that (re)define their identities (e.g., Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988; Casanave, 1995, 2002; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995). Studies following this line of inquiry examined varied non-textual factors alongside with the production of academic texts. In what follows, I organize and summarize a number of studies under two interrelated themes: (1) *disciplinary writing as*

use of academic language and (2) *disciplinary writing as situated learning*, with an aim to demonstrate some of the issues that have been explored within a disciplinary enculturation perspective (e.g., experience with academic literacy, apprenticeship and professional development, and roles and purposes of various disciplinary communities). Studies that follow this perspective often use a combination of research methods, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and such specific methods including text analysis, discourse analysis, surveys, text-based or discourse-based interviews, and participant observation (e.g., Calfee & Sperling, 2010; Prior, 2004).

Disciplinary Writing as Use of Academic Language

This section highlights studies that focused on students' use of academic language (oral or written) that characterize them as individual language users in their new discourse communities (e.g., Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Buell, 2004; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995).

In examining a first-year Ph.D. student's use of language (both oral and written) as he carried out the reading and writing tasks required in his new rhetoric program, Berkenkotter et al. (1988) found that writing in this discipline demands the newcomer to respond to the conversations, as well as to follow the conventions established in the discourse community. Drawing on data analysis (using data collected in classroom observation, student and instructor interview, student weekly self-reports, and assignments), they observed the potentially complex and conflictual nature of disciplinary enculturation of the student, Nate, particularly in his process of learning about discipline-specific knowledge. Specifically, Nate, a native speaker, had a hard time

in acquiring the knowledge of conventions and conversations of his discourse community, and connecting that discourse competence to actual writing practice in the program. The findings suggested that in his ways of “crack[ing] the code of academic writing” (Berkenkotter et al., 1988, p. 21, as cited in Dong, 1995, p. 27), Nate first fell back on the discourse style that he had previously socialized to in his own discourse community, and then gradually enculturated into the new discourse community.

In her case study, Buell (2004) explored the writing process, particularly the use of multiple codes in his writing, of Kwassy, a trilingual language learner who had experienced ESL, math at a community college and electrical engineering at the undergraduate level in U.S. academic contexts. Using interpretive analysis of his texts (as in the intensive analysis of one paragraph in the student’s essay), intertextual analysis (as in the instructor’s response text and the student’s other writing), and ethnographic analysis (as in the student and instructor interviews), Buell attempted to develop a research methodology that worked to enrich an understanding of codes and code-switching in L2 students’ written texts. The findings illustrated that, Kwassy, the writer, felt greatly passionate about the writing topic; yet, he had no accepted way to express that except through the more removed impersonal framework of writing (e.g., through the form of an academic exposition established in the English writing conventions). As a result, Buell suggested that Kwassy was involved in conflicts regarding the representation of his worldviews as well as the representation of identity he wanted to present as he shifted from personal narratives (the form that he felt more comfortable in expressing his thoughts) to academic exposition, and vice versa. Buell argues that, presumably, L2

writing displays a mix of codes (e.g., as manifested in the shifts of rhetorical and cultural structures) which entails the switch of identity that the writer represents in the text and in the context where such writing was situated. Therefore, just as code-switching is a useful framework for research in speaking, Buell suggested that, when applied in the research of L2 writing, this framework proves to be equally useful especially in examining the overt or covert tensions between writer and representation.

In examining the disciplinary enculturation process of international students learning to write in the U.S. academy, Schneider and Fujishima (1995) focused their study on one M.A. student, Zhang, from Taipei Taiwan, in a graduate program in International Public Administration at MIIS³. Despite Zhang was found to be a highly-motivated and a hard-working learner, he was characterized by a professor as “by far the one [foreign student] that had the most difficulty in English” (p. 20) and by another as “very utilitarian” and “pragmatic” (p. 13) in terms of his interests in the program and his training in English. Zhang was revealed to be an unproficient language user “particularly his problems in expressing himself comprehensibly in speech and writing” (p. 19). In addition to language-related struggles that might commonly characterize an international student like Zhang, Schneider and Fujishima (1995) attributed Zhang’s academic failure to his unfamiliarity “with the larger university culture and disciplinary subcultures, including accepted patterns of interaction” (p. 3). For example, Zhang did not seem to be engaged with others through literate activities as passionately as he did with signing up and attending classes. As implications, Schneider and Fujishima (1995) proposed “a

³ MIIS refers to *Monterey Institute of International Studies*.

coordinated effort” (p. 21) among ESL instructors, administrators, and academic programs which “might have helped Zhang improve his record [...] not only for solving individual crisis but also for course development purposes” (p. 21).

Disciplinary Writing as Situated Learning

This section discusses studies that focused on disciplinary writing as situated learning which assume that disciplinary enculturation processes must be understood in terms of the contexts in which they occur, and that learning to write is not simply a matter of acquiring pre-given sets of skills and knowledge, but also a complex process of negotiating identities, discourses, and power relations, (e.g., Casanave, 1995, 2002; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998).

In her study examining the locally-constructed disciplinary enculturation process of graduate students, Casanave (1995) studied twelve first-year Ph.D. students in a sociology program at a prestigious University in California. The participants varied in their interests, choices, and directions in studying sociology as they did in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hispanic, and Caucasian. Casanave (1995) argued that the discourse community metaphor “[be] imbue[d] with a more viable interactive dimension, one that captures some of the complexity faced by writers as they compose in real situations” (p. 108). As revealed in her study, this first-year cohort was not all found their ways to becoming a sociologist as they interacted with the system of training, their professors and fellow students, as well as the writing tasks in the core course sequence. That is, while some students were found to take up the system well, others simply drop out of the program or look for other possibilities. Similar to that

of Delpit's (1988) view of the culture of power, as implications, Casanave (1995) proposed that an awareness of "discovering the power of flexible thinking and writing—in learning how to play the game and step in and out as necessary" (p. 108) be introduced particularly to international and minority students. In recognizing the "multidirectional and local nature of socialization" (p. 108), students will be empowered to try on different "disciplinary personae" (p. 108) and to "own" (p. 107) their own experiences in their chosen field.

In seeking to understand the extent to which enculturation takes place in an M.A. TESOL program, Casanave (2002) examined five M.A. students, including native speaker and international (from Armenia and Japan) students, in the TESOL program at MIIS (the same University where Schneider and Fujishima did their study on Zhang). Drawing on her data analysis (using data collected in student and instructor interviews, classroom observation, and assignments), Casanave found that, on the one hand, the students struggled with developing voices and identities in learning to play the "writing games" of academia (p. 17). On the other hand, the game continues to shape and is shaped by the writers. In his interpretation of Casanave's (2002), Ganey's (2002) suggests that "the writing games are revealed to be not only textual but also personal and political depending on the particular graduate program the students are in" (p. 2). Casanave found that students were challenged with developing a sense of authority, agency, and authenticity, as they become an enculturated member in their disciplinary community. For example, although graduate students were expected to enact an authoritative role in the process of accomplishing their written assignments, "they needed

to continue to play the role of student” (Casanave, 2002, p. 127) in order to meet various expectations for different courses/professors. Finally, similar to Prior’s (1991, 1995, 1998), Casanave (2002) suggested the importance of the teachers' feedback in helping the students integrate into a discipline.

In his study, Prior (1991) examined advanced levels of disciplinary socialization by studying the contexts for writing and response (as in the form of teacher feedback and expectations, both oral and written) in a graduate education seminar with fifteen masters and Ph.D. students, including eight international students (from Taiwan, China, and Spain), in the field of second language education. Prior asked how the professor explicitly and implicitly communicated expectations for the form and content of writing assignments, how the students understood, negotiated and undertook these tasks, as well as how the professor evaluated and responded to students' final written texts. This study demonstrated that, first, the professor’s role was not just to respond to students’ texts as linguistic documents and manifestations of genre conventions, but to respond to and aid students in terms of their potential as professionals and their progress in completing their degrees. Prior also argues that the students' writing tasks occur in complex, multidimensional, and historical interweavings of personal and social contexts, and that advanced levels of disciplinary socialization are marked by a specific set of issues (e.g., as manifested in institutional and historical forces) which has an effect on the students' emerging authority and conflicts inherent in disciplinary microsocieties. Finally, in contrast to that revealed in Casanave’s (2002) study, Prior (1991) found that although international students “appeared to function much as native-speaking students did” (p.

304), the professor attributed these students as a “special group” (p. 305) in terms of their difficulties with language-related problems “especially when language problems and limited patterns of participation coincide” (p. 305). This in turn seemed to further deteriorate these students’ participation, both oral and written, in negotiating written assignments in a classroom setting. Nevertheless, regardless of the fact that the course instructor directed his feedback at form of international students’ papers than his response to U.S. students’ papers (as reflected in more editing of language and in marginal comments that often stated rules for writing), content remained the major focus of the professor’s response to and evaluation of both groups’ papers.

In his other study, Prior (1998) again adopted sociohistoric perspectives⁴ and argued that disciplinary writing as literate activity and disciplinary enculturation as an open system defined as “heterogeneous networks of relationships among people, practices, artifacts, institutions, and communities” (p. 31, as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 90). Seen from this view, disciplinary enculturation was re-conceptualized “not to novices being initiated, but to the continual processes whereby an ambiguous cast of relative newcomers and relative old-timers (re)produce themselves, their practices, and their communities” (Prior, 1998, p. xii). Drawing on multiple data sources (samples of students’ texts, field transcriptions, discourse-based interviews, and self-narratives), Prior presents a series of case studies in a variety of social science disciplines with an aim to illustrate thick descriptions of the contexts and processes of graduate students’ writing:

⁴ As documented in Prior’s (1998), “In contrast with the structuralist penchant for abstraction, uniformity, and spatialization, sociohistoric theories offer accounts of communication, knowledge, learning, community, and the person as concretely situated, plural, and historical phenomena” (p. 19).

In one case, Prior (1998) focused on how texts “come into being” of one first-year MA student, Lilah, learning to write in a graduate seminar in American Studies. In tracing Lilah’s writing process, Prior observed an interwoven nature of her biography and diverse issues that she blended from home and school, from past and present classes, and from her learning reflections inside and outside of the classroom in the production of a particular paper (as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 90-91). In another graduate seminar in language education, Prior found that an international M.A. student, Mai from Taipei Taiwan, participated more in the role of a solitary worker without collaborating with others or engaging in ideas, while Teresa, from a Catalan-speaking province of Spain, participated more deeply through interacting with the instructor and peers. Even though the two students were involved in very different modes of participation, they were treated equally as legitimate member through their own contribution to the construction of the situated practice environments they were part of. In a last case, Prior examined the extent to which a Ph.D. student, Moira, became enculturated in sociology as she incorporated or resisted her advisor’s written comments in her multiple drafts of a project for her dissertation work. In welcoming her professor’s written feedback with little resistance while at the same time insisting on following her particular interest in a research topic, Moira was found to transform over time—from a novice member to a well-developing sociologist recognized by her professor in this specialized disciplinary group (as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 146-149).

At the undergraduate level, in the discourse communities of engineering, Herrington (1985) studied the local nature of writing contexts of design proposals and lab reports in

two chemical engineering classes. Using surveys and discourse (text)-based interviews, she found that students developed different perspectives about themselves in different writing contexts even though they were taking classes from the same professors. For example, for the lab course, students assumed professional roles to solve real life problems. In Dong's (1995) interpretation, she stated: "Herrington emphasized that the audience, purpose, and social roles formed a unique discourse community and had a strong impact on the students' texts" (p. 27). That is, Herrington (1985) found that "even within one discipline, chemical engineering, different courses may represent distinct forums where different issues are addressed, different lines of reasoning used, different writer and audience roles assumed, and different social purposes served by writing" (p. 354).

In her ethnographic case study, McCarthy (1987) investigated the situated writing process of Dave, a college freshman and a biology pre-medical major, in three academic courses. In her data analysis (using classroom observation, student and instructor interviews, and assignments), McCarthy found striking differences in Dave's interpretation of each writing task, and his understanding of the conventions and conversations of each class community in his freshman composition, poetry, and biology classes. For example, it was found that Dave, a native speaker, was more successful in biology and freshman composition classes than he was in poetry class. The researcher showed that meaningful writing assignments motivated the student to figure out and produce the discourse as anticipated by each classroom community. Also, the roles that students and the teacher played influenced Dave's writing as well. In spite of the fact that

Dave was writing for his teachers in all the three classes, there was a difference in Dave's perception of his role in these classes and that of the teachers. For instance, in the composition class, the instructor shared her writing experience with the students and thus provided more opportunities for the students to act the role of writers. In the biology class, the instructor played more the role of an experienced professional, helping Dave get to know the ways of writing in the discipline. In the poetry class, Dave played the role of an outsider, while the teacher played the role of the insider. In the writing process, Dave was constantly drawing on a variety of sources for information, including teacher-provided instructional support, sources Dave found on his own, and his prior experience in writing (as cited in Dong, 1995, p. 26-27). McCarthy (1987) raised the question of how teachers could best help student "strangers" to become competent users of the new language in their academic territory (p. 262).

In her study, Ivanič (1998) examined the academic literacy experiences of eight mature (students who return to college over the age of 25) undergraduates, all native speakers, in a U.K. college setting. In analyzing the students' writing and asking them about their linguistic choices for one major academic essay text, Ivanič focused primarily on students' discorsal construction of identity in academic writing in a particular writing context related to social science disciplines. She proposed three ways of talking about writer identity⁵: autobiographical self, discorsal self, and the self as author. Similar to

⁵ According to Ivanič (1998), *autobiographical self* is shaped by individuals' prior experiences in social contexts, and changes as their life-history develops. It is related to a writer's sense of their roots of where they are coming from, and their own ways of representing experiences in their life, which influence their current way of being; *Discorsal self* refers to the tendency that writers consciously or unconsciously bring themselves into a particular written text. It is constructed through "the discourse characteristics of a text, which relate to values, beliefs, and power relations in the social context in which they were written" (p. 25).

Casanave's (1995, 2002) argument, Ivanič sees academic enculturation as an experience involving tension and struggle among people, system, and writing tasks in which students have opportunities to take up, resist, or look for other possibilities. Also, similar to Prior's (1991, 1995, 1998) argument, Ivanič suggests the complexity of students' discursal construction of identity as they write their essays—students were revealed to weave disciplinary- and course-specific and personal voices into one kind of paper, indicating their multiple writer identities within a particular discipline/department. For example, in detailing one student case, Rachel, Ivanič (1998) found that her writing process was complicated by her struggles as an inept writer: Rachel was not able to position herself confidently as a legitimate contributor in her academic community rather than as a student, even though “she attempted to take on social roles and to portray qualities which were valued by her different readers” (p. 168, as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 43). This point resonates with that in Casanave's (2002) in which the M.A. TESOL students at MIIS struggled over their identities as an evolving professional and as a student.

In this section, I have summarized a number of studies with a purpose to demonstrate academic writing as instantiations of language/literacy learning and professional development in varied fields of study. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I describe more explicitly the theoretical framework of the present study which, on the one hand, has informed the key issues pertaining to my research questions, and on the other hand, has guided my data collection and analysis.

The concept of *self as author* is about the ways writers present their voices as authors in terms of their position, opinions, and beliefs.

Theoretical Framework: Discourse(s) Perspectives

To examine how a group of L2 graduate students become socialized into academic written discourse through writing in an academic field, I conceptualize writing as a social activity and writers as social actors. I draw on two major theoretical perspectives that inform these conceptions of writing and writers: Bakhtin and Gee. In what follows, I first discuss Bakhtin's (1981) notion of *discourse socialization*, and then Gee's (1989/2001, 1992) relevant notion of *capital D Discourse*. I also link Gee's *Discourse* to Peirce's (1995) *social identity and investment in second language learning* to understand how L2 learners, in particular, make sense of their own writing perspectives and practices under different learning and writing contexts. As I will show, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive; instead, these scholars can complement one another in understanding key related issues pertaining to academic writing and L2 discourse socialization from a poststructuralist⁶ view: issues of power, identity, and learner agency.

A Bakhtinian Perspective on Academic Discourse Socialization

My understanding of academic discourse, including oral and written discourse, as a social activity is based on the work of Bakhtin (1981), who perceived that language can only have meaning in its sociocultural contexts. According to Bakhtin, *discourse* is comprised of words and of ways of using words by particular people, in particular contexts, for particular purposes. He notes, therefore, that to understand discourse, it is

⁶ The poststructuralist paradigm of SLA (second language acquisition) challenges the structuralist paradigm of *the psychological subject* of language learning (i.e., every language learner has an essential and fixed attribute such as the dichotomy of introvert vs. extrovert or motivated vs. unmotivated) associated with the fields in linguistics and psychology (e.g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). Rather, it focuses on the dynamic nature of L2 learning with the aim of uncovering the issues of culture, power, identity, and agency that critically play in L2 socialization.

essential to see it within the contexts in which it occurs, or the situations that speakers/writers are engaged in.

In order to understand what the students' academic writing reveals about them as particular participants in American academic discourse through writing in their field of study, it is useful to draw on Bakhtinian notions of voice. *Voice*, according to Bakhtin, is "the speaking personality recognized, heard, or valued in an utterance or text" (Lee, 2005, p. 46) in a specific socio-cultural/historic situation in which particular discourses are embedded. For example, the voice of an L2 writer is shaped by the sociocultural features of a particular academic field such as social relationships between students and professors and ideologies maintained in the structure of that field, as well as their ways of speaking and writing which mark them as participants from a particular language group.

Bakhtin's (1981) distinction between authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse is also useful for understanding that L2 students, as academic written participants, are "ideologically becoming" (p. 342) and experiencing power struggles among the different voices inside themselves when they participate in an academic field (On this point, see also Freedman & Ball, 2004; Lee, 2005). An *authoritative discourse* is an "official language coming from outside one's consciousness. It implies, for example, the "religious, political, and moral appropriation of words, including the words of parents, leaders, and teachers" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342, as cited in Lee, 2005, p. 48). In my study, for example, an authoritative discourse can be an instructor's guidelines on how to come up with topics or ideas for term papers. It can also be an instructor's feedback (both oral and written) to students' writing. Most

significantly, it can also be ways of speaking, writing, and being as members in a professional field.

Internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, “is an unofficial language coming from within one’s consciousness” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345, as cited in Lee, 2005, p. 48). It implies, for example, a word that is not acknowledged by scholarly norms or by public opinion, such as the words of children, subordinates, and students outside academic situations. In my study, for example, L2 students form their own ideas through coming into contact with discourse of others, such as their peers inside and outside of the classroom. These discourses influence the ways these students think and contribute to forming what ultimately is internally persuasive for them.

To Bakhtin, *ideological becoming* suggests “how we develop our way of viewing the world, our system of ideas, what Bakhtin calls an ideological self” (Freedman & Ball, 2004, p. 5). In my study, for example, ideological becoming refers to how students from a particular language group make decisions about how much to identify with and acquire ways of viewing, speaking, writing, and being which mark them as members of a particular academic field, and how these decisions change over time as they participate in such field. Theoretically, these students bring a range of internally persuasive discourses that they have acquired in various contexts on their own, which impact their ideological development to varying degrees as members/participants since they have to constantly deal with authoritative discourses implied by the experienced members of the field due to their hierarchical authority and apparent power in this field.

In the process of ideological becoming, these students, theoretically, experience tensions between authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses. As a result, these tensions can present both challenges and struggles as students become socialized to the academic written discourse (On this point, see also Freedman & Ball, 2004). That is, these students may struggle with the processes of appropriating an authoritative discourse as they interpret another's discourse and communicate in their own way to others. These processes often develop "along with a rejection of, and struggle with others' discourses stimulated by one's own internally persuasive discourse" (Lee, 2005, p. 48). As noted in Chapter 1, I have observed from my own experience and that of peers that such a state of conflict seems inevitable, particularly in the process of learning how to speak and write in academic fields/disciplines.

Gee's Capital D Discourse Theory

Bakhtin's notion of discourse socialization helps me to see power (in the form, for example, of authoritative discourses) as a crucial factor influencing academic writing socialization. Yet he does not fully address the fact that academic writing can be a dynamic process where individual identity and agency also have significant implications when students try to obtain access to an academic field (On this point, see also Lee, 2005). In order to conceptualize L2 students as agents who negotiate their academic identities when claiming membership in an academic field, I draw on Gee's capital D Discourse theory.

Gee (1989/2001, 1992), a sociolinguist and a literacy theorist, starts from a Bakhtinian perspective that when people use language they must say or write the right

thing in the right way while playing the right social role and holding the right values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, what is important is not language, and not grammar, but “saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations” (Gee, 1989/2001, p. 526). Gee calls these combinations *Discourse*. Gee’s concept of Discourse asserts that becoming a member of a cultural group (e.g., obtaining access to a Discourse) is a process of developing a particular identity through participation in a Discourse’ sociocultural practices. Gee also views Discourse through the metaphor of *identity kit*, with appropriate customs and instructions on how to act, talk, and write for the members of particular cultural groups. What is more, individuals can own and operate multiple (and sometimes conflicting) Discourses and decide what social practices are to carry out in each Discourse. And “since Discourses are inherently ‘ideological’” (Gee, 1992, p. 111), people who anticipate to obtain access to them must learn/acquire a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and viewpoints seen in acting, talking, and writing in order to legitimately gain “social goods (money, power, status) in a society” (Gee, 1992, p. 112).

I found this last point of Gee parallels Peirce’s (1995) conception of *social identity and investment in L2 learning*, to which I also used for understanding L2 graduate students’ academic writing experiences.

Peirce’s Social Identity and Investment in L2 Learning

Peirce’s (1995) poststructuralist perspective on L2 learning as an investment complements Gee’s Discourse theory as it offers insight into L2 learners’ perspectives on and practices in academic writing in a new (U.S.) context. Drawing on and extending Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory in 1977, Peirce’s (1995) notion of *investment*

captures “the complex relationship of language learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak it” (p. 9) and conceives language learners “not as ahistorical and unidimensional, but as having a complex social history and multiple desires” (p. 9) as one decides what best to learn and participate in the complex social worlds surrounding them. Viewing L2 learning as an investment means that language learning is itself multiple, idiosyncratic, and ever-changing, in a way that language learners are “constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus, an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s own social identity, and identity which is constantly changing across time and space” (Peirce, 1995, p. 18). In other words, language learning, investment, and social identity entail one another.

In her study, Peirce (1995) utilized Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory to explain the complex relationships among language/literacy learning, investment, and social identity. Bourdieu (1986) identifies four kinds of capital (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital) and notes the “interconvertability” (Lee, 2005, p. 57) of the various forms of capital. For example, an individual who obtains cultural capital (such as educational qualifications or specialized knowledge and expertise) may at the same time acquire symbolic capital by being “institutionalized” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243) in the form of a prestigious title (an English professor, a senior engineer, a business CEO, etc.). Drawing on and extending this view to the field of SLA, Peirce (1995) reveals her thesis as this:

I take the position that if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners

will expect or hope to have a good return on that investment—a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (p. 17)

This view of language learning as an investment is compatible with Gee's (1989/2001, 1992) of Discourse as he also asserts that when people use language they do so with an anticipation that they will gain power and social goods (including money, power, and status) inherent in a Discourse' sociocultural practices. Seen from Gee's and Peirce's views, then, academic writing can be seen as an investment which individuals choose to do because it ultimately grants them access to certain goods that identify them as graduate students or field professionals (e.g., passing grades, obtaining advanced degrees, and becoming a member of a scholarly community, etc.).

Taken together, adding the dimensions of identity and agency, I conceptualize L2 learners as a site of struggle in which they negotiate their multiple and sometimes competing perspectives and contrasting practices in writing, inheriting from a variety of D/discourses to which they were socialized. In addition, in order to understand how L2 students as social actors learn ways of the written Discourse in a field, it is helpful to look at how they gain access to linguistic resources and negotiate entry into their academic community. Specifically, this study examines the kinds of struggles and strategies that the students experience in terms of becoming a member in their chosen field.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

As laid out in Chapters 1 and 2, this study employs a qualitative case study approach to better understand some of the complexities of how a particular group of L2 students become socialized into American academic discourse through writing in an academic/professional field. In this chapter, I present methodology and methods for this pursuit of inquiry. First, through describing my background and roles as a qualitative researcher, an L2 student and an L2 teacher, as well as a member of an academic/professional field, I situate myself in the inquiry and reflect how my experiences might influence the ways I collect, analyze, and interpret data. Then, I discuss in more detail the research design of this study, including information about the sites and participants, methods of data collection and data analysis procedures.

Reflexivity: Background and Roles of Researcher

Agar (1996) and Erickson (1986) emphasize that it is both crucial and necessary to reflect who the researcher is since the conducting of interpretive research is not only a professional enterprise but also a personal one. As a qualitative researcher, I am aware that I influence the inquiry process in this study. Specifically, my background and roles as a researcher play an important part in my selecting of participants, gathering of data and analysis. My roles are multiple: I am an insider, an outsider, an L2 learner, teacher, and writer, as well as a former graduate student from Taiwan majoring in TESOL and Education. I understand that my social roles and affiliations influenced the methodology

that I used, the data I collected, and the interpretations I made. Therefore, it is important to reflect who I am as a researcher:

I was born and brought up in the city of Taipei, Taiwan, and went through the Taiwanese national education system from kindergarten through the undergraduate level. In addition to studying English as a formal subject from middle school through college, I learned English as a foreign language at age 11 when I started to go to a private English institute. My families have been very supportive toward my English learning as I advanced to higher education along the way. I obtained a B.A. degree in English from Tamkang University in Taipei. During my undergraduate study, I accomplished an English practicum as well as worked as a part-time English teacher. In 2002, after graduating from the university, I decided to go to the U.S. in order to learn more about language teaching at a graduate level. I also felt that as an English major, I should “immerse” myself in such environments where I have access to “real” English practices. I was first admitted to the masters program in TESOL at State University of New York at Buffalo in August 2002. At the same time, I married a Taiwanese whom I met in Taiwan and who worked as an engineer in Southern California. After one quarter of studying at SUNY Buffalo, in August 2003, I reapplied and became an M.S. student at California State University, Fullerton, for two years, majoring in TESOL. Upon completing TESOL, in September 2005, I further pursued a Ph.D. in the area of Curriculum and Instruction (Program renamed in Fall 2011 as Education, Society, and Culture) in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Riverside.

I was born outside of the U.S. and, in May 2012, became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Given my multiple social roles and affiliations, I was an insider in my participants' eyes, because I, too, was a Taiwanese student studying in a U.S. university. I, too, spoke Mandarin Chinese as a native language. My ability to speak Mandarin as my first language helped me to better collect and interpret student data. At the same time, I was an outsider because I was not familiar with them or their particular social, personal, or educational histories. Lastly, my own sociocultural transformation as a result of participating in a variety of academic discourses in Taiwan and the U.S. over the past ten years (2002-2012) has given me an emic perspective with the reflexivity of the etic view. In the process of conducting research for this study, I have been reflecting on my earlier and recent academic experiences as an L2 graduate student inside and outside of the U.S. classrooms. I have noticed many differences now and then regarding my attitudes and values toward learning, writing, and living in the U.S. context. Nevertheless, in the process of interpreting the data I obtained, I tried to reserve any personal judgments while listening to and reading the focal students' experiences. I also tried to make sense of their experiences from their perspectives. By documenting explicitly my own role as a researcher, I expected to obtain the perspective of the students rather than imposing my views on them (Agar, 1996; Erickson, 1986).

The Site

The participants were a group of L2 graduate students from Taiwan/China studying within the field of TESOL at a major U.S. public university. I undertook this

study at Western American University (WAU)⁷, located in the Bay Area of Northern California. Reflecting the cultural richness of the area, students at WAU, including foreign-born and U.S. born students, come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This site offers rich access to L2 students from Taiwan/China. As briefly stated in Chapter 1, the reasons I recruited participants from TESOL are twofold. First, the field of TESOL includes a large segment of the population of L2 students from Taiwan/China learning to teach English as a second or foreign language (TESOL, 2005). Second, my status of being a former TESOL graduate student allowed me to interpret and analyze my data from that perspective as well as the students’.

I recruited the participants by sending out a letter of invitation to all Mandarin Chinese-speaking students who were currently taking M.A. TESOL-related courses⁸ and those who have recently completed their degree at WAU. Of those who respond with interest, five students agreed to participate. These students share the following attributes as focal students in my study: (1) students were studying/studied at a graduate level outside Taiwan or China for the first time, (2) students were born in Taiwan or China, consider their native/heritage language to be Mandarin, and therefore can be characterized under the same category: “Mandarin Chinese-speaking students” in the U.S. academic context. Students who participated in this study were at different stages in their program: three were current students and two were newly graduates. There was much diversity of experience among the participants, as there naturally is among Mandarin

⁷ Pseudonyms are used for all the names of research locations and participants.

⁸ These include both seminar- (e.g., TESOL core curriculum) and lecture-type (e.g., linguistics/language-related prerequisites) courses that are required of all M.A. TESOL students at WAU.

Chinese-speaking students, for example, diversity of academic, professional, linguistic, and cultural background. Therefore, in my study, I looked for themes and patterns such as students' previous literacy practice experiences that I could compare across students, thereby adding richness and complexity to the interpretations of Mandarin Chinese-speaking students' academic writing experiences in an M.A. TESOL program.

The Participants

The following description of each focal student includes biographical, academic, professional, and English learning backgrounds, as well as their purposes and goals for studying in the field of TESOL. Such information on individual students' unique social histories is essential for an overview and in-depth understanding of their writing experiences. It also allows us to see the wide variety that exists among the students who might be represented under a particular group of "Mandarin Chinese-speaking students in TESOL."

Esther, Sharon, Susana, Thomas, and Grace are the five Mandarin-speaking students and their names are all pseudonyms. English name pseudonyms were given to these Mandarin speakers because each of them had adopted and used an English name among their friends. Except for Grace, who was born in China, the students were born in Taiwan. All the students came to the U.S. at different times with different academic experiences. While Esther had spent more than twenty years living and studying in California, the other four students were newcomers with under five years each in the U.S. While both Esther and Sharon were new graduates from the M.A. TESOL program at WAU, Susana, Thomas, and Grace were currently enrolled in the same program but were each at

different stages of their program. All the students were single and in their twenties during the time I interviewed them.

Esther

Esther, 27, immigrated with her parents to the U.S. when she was six. She had spent most of her life in the Silicon Valley in California, and underwent American mainstream education all the way through the college level. While Esther is fluent both in English and Mandarin, she fondly considered English as her first language. She never experienced formal education in Mandarin in Taiwan. After graduating from high school, Esther took a two-year college track at a community college and later transferred to the university. She obtained her B.A. in Humanities and Communication with an emphasis in English at one of the California State universities.

After completing her B.A., Esther went back to Taiwan and taught English at a private institute in Taipei. After one year teaching in Taiwan, Esther soon realized that this field was really what she wanted to continue to work on; therefore, she decided to pursue her M.A. in TESOL. Esther had taken a few online TESOL classes and obtained two certificates before she entered the graduate program at WAU. During her studies in TESOL at WAU, Esther was selected to teach a course in “Grammar for Writers” for upper-division students who had failed the university’s Writing Skills Test. At the same time, she was also working with incoming freshmen on academic writing skills in preparation for English 1A in one-on-one and small group settings. She had finished the WAU TESOL program in December 2008 when I began my interviews with her in

January 2009. Esther was currently involved in the *AmeriCorps*⁹ program and volunteering as a reading tutor in one-on-one settings at the library of WAU.

Sharon

Sharon, 26, came to study in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU immediately after she obtained her B.A. in English Literature at Soochow University in Taipei, Taiwan. She had experienced the Taiwanese educational system all the way up through the college level. Sharon started to study English as a compulsory subject in secondary school and was taught by Mandarin-speaking teachers. English is not the principal language of instruction either in her secondary or college level education. In addition, she never used English outside the school context in Taiwan.

After receiving her B.A. in English, since Sharon felt that she had learned “too much literature stuff,” and since she wanted to learn about language and language teaching theory in order to be an English teacher, she decided to pursue her M.A. in TESOL. When Sharon first arrived at WAU, she spent one year studying in the ESL program; meanwhile, she was taking a few TESOL classes at WAU, the credits for which she was later allowed to transfer when she was formally admitted to the WAU TESOL program. Therefore, it took Sharon only three semesters to finish the program. While working on her B.A. in Taiwan, Sharon occasionally taught English to secondary school level students in one-on-one settings. While studying in the program, like Esther, Sharon taught ESL in the U.S. setting for one semester to fulfill the practicum requirement.

⁹ The *AmeriCorps* program is a U.S. service and collaborative effort among universities, community organizations, and public schools in domestic counties, with the goals to address the educational needs of low-income immigrant families through literacy tutoring and to help them succeed in the educational system (cited from Wikipedia.org and the WAU website).

Despite all these experiences, Sharon did not feel completely comfortable with speaking English for long periods of time. Sharon finished the program in May 2008, and I began to conduct interviews with her in January 2009. Sharon was currently on her *Optional Practical Training* (OPT)¹⁰ contract by working as a part-time journalist for a local Chinese newspaper agency in the Bay Area.

Susana

Susana, 27, came to study in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU after she obtained her B.A. in Business Administration at National Chung-Hsin University in Taipei, Taiwan. Similar to Sharon's experiences, Susana experienced the Taiwanese educational system and studied English as a compulsory subject all the way through the college level. Susana stated that the reason she pursued her M.A. in TESOL was that she wanted to improve her English ability and skill, and that she was interested in becoming a teacher in the near future. Unlike Sharon and Esther, Susana had never had any English teaching experiences, nor had she ever enrolled in an ESL program or taken any TESOL-related courses before entering the M.A. program. In addition, Susana's English ability was weaker than theirs, evident in her proficiency test and GPA scores.

Susana had a *TOEFL*¹¹ score of 550 and was minimally qualified by the WAU TESOL program (later the program raised the score from 550 to 577). Second, unlike the other four students, she did not have any formal training in the field of English or

¹⁰ *Optional Practical Training* (OPT) is a period during which undergraduate/graduate students with F-1 (non-immigrant) visa who have completed or have been pursuing their degrees for more than nine months are permitted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work for at most one year on a student visa (cited from Wikipedia.org).

¹¹ *TOEFL* (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is an English proficiency test required by students who speak English as a foreign language.

linguistics; therefore, she was having a hard time learning in TESOL. For these two main reasons, she struggled to maintain a GPA of 3.0 (grade average of B). Third, in addition to not feeling comfortable speaking English, Susanna constantly had difficulty producing and comprehending academic as well as social discourses in classroom settings. As a result, she had spent more time than average in the program. By the time I started to interview her, she was in her third year with one more semester to finish the program¹².

Thomas

Thomas, 24, came to study in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU immediately after he obtained his B.A. in linguistics at a major Hawaiian university. Unlike Sharon and Susanna, Thomas did not have experience obtaining a degree at a Taiwanese university. While in Taiwan, after graduating from junior high school, Thomas followed a vocational track and studied at a five-year vocational college. He majored in Applied Japanese at JinWen College of Science and Technology in Taipei. Nonetheless, after three years of study, he decided to withdraw from the college and instead pursued his B.A. in linguistics in Hawaii.

Upon arriving at the Hawaiian university, Thomas spent one and a half years studying in the ESL program. In addition to linguistics, he took Japanese as a minor and was good at speaking Japanese. Meanwhile, he was taking a few TESOL classes such as “Second Language Acquisition” along with his other undergraduate studies. Thomas felt that if he was to continue his advanced studies in linguistics, it “will not get me to anywhere”; instead, to pursue a degree in TESOL would provide him a number of

¹² The average time for students in the WAU TESOL program was two years.

teaching opportunities in Taiwan. Like Susanna, Thomas had never had any English teaching experiences. Despite his undergraduate experiences at an American university, like Sharon and Susana, Thomas did not feel completely comfortable with speaking English for long periods of time. Thomas was in his second semester in the M.A. TESOL program when I began my interviews with him.

Grace

Grace, 22, came to study in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU immediately after she obtained her B.A. in English at Hu-Nan Agriculture University in China. Similar to Sharon's and Susanna's experiences, Grace studied English as a compulsory subject and received formal education in Mandarin Chinese all the way up through the college level. It was her first semester in the program, and she had been at WAU for just one month when I started my interviews with her. Although Grace was the youngest and the newest among all the participating students, she had high English proficiency as well as English tutoring and thesis writing experiences. While working on her B.A., she taught as an English tutor and served as an assistant at a private English institute in China. These teaching experiences inspired Grace to pursue her M.A. in TESOL.

Grace had a TOEFL score of 600, above the minimum score of 577 required by the program. Despite this high score, she had never experienced any TESOL-related courses before entering the program at WAU. She was taking three classes in her first semester, with two prerequisites in TESOL and one business-related course outside of the program. As a result, she had not taken any core courses by the time I started to interview her. In other words, she had the least experience in TESOL writing among all the participants.

Like Sharon, Susana, and Thomas, Grace also did not feel completely comfortable with speaking English for long periods of time.

A list of student participants is summarized in Table 3.1, shown below:

Table 3.1

Overview of Student Participants

Student	Age in 2009	Sex	Program of Study	Degrees	First/Heritage Language	# of Years in U.S.	Formal Education in Mandarin	Formal Education in English
Esther	27	F	TESOL (Grad.)	BA (English) MA (TESOL)	Mandarin	20 yrs	None	K-College
Sharon	26	F	TESOL (Grad.)	BA (English) MA (TESOL)	Mandarin	3yrs	K-College	None
Susana	27	F	TESOL (3 rd yr)	BA (Business Administration)	Mandarin	3 yrs	K-College	None
Thomas	24	M	TESOL (1 st yr, 2 nd term)	BA (Linguistics)	Mandarin	5 yrs	K-High school	College
Grace	22	F	TESOL (1 st yr, 1 st term)	BA (English)	Mandarin	1 mo	K-College	None

Methods

Data Collection

As already indicated, this study employed a qualitative case study approach.

Multiple sources of data were used. The multiple sources of data included interviews with the focal students and their self-narratives written for this study, samples of the

writing that the focal students did in their TESOL courses, interviews with the instructors and instructor-generated texts, as well as a variety of course-related documents.

Student Interviews

I interviewed each student three times, once in the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end of the data collection period (defined as one semester, approximately 16 weeks) in which I conducted my research. Each interview lasted from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. The main purpose of the interviews was to understand the focal students' earlier and current academic literacy practice experiences.

Specifically, I asked the focal students about how they perceive the expectations from their academic program on how they should speak, write, act, believe, and value, in order for them to become an effective member in an academic field in which they participate (Gee, 1989/2001, 1992). I also interviewed students about what it means to be an L2 graduate student in the process of academic writing both in the academic contexts of Taiwan and the U.S., including how they understand the differences and struggles that are inherent in the differences. Since reading and writing are inextricably intertwined (Sperling & Freedman, 2001), I also interviewed students about the kinds of texts they read inside and outside of the classroom and how those texts might contribute to their acquisition of academic writing skills and knowledge.

The interviews also followed up on what students wrote in class, and on what they were telling me in their self-narratives. Specifically, I used the interviews to probe what the students have been sharing with me in their narratives, and also to pursue topics of interest to the students. In order for students to freely express their thoughts and feelings

without any language obstacles, the students had options to speak either in their native language, Mandarin Chinese, or in English. Their language could also shift at any time if they wished to do so. All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed/translated by the researcher.

Student Self-Narratives

The focal students provided three written narratives about their academic writing experiences inside and/or outside of the classroom, one each at the beginning, middle, and end of the data collection period in which I conducted my research. Each narrative task was given to students prior to conducting interviews. Self-narratives helped me to better understand the students' ideas about their academic writing experiences, the strategies they employed over time, conflicts and/or negotiations with instructors and/or classmates and colleagues, and some of the challenges and/or changes they went through as they participated in a variety of writing activities in TESOL.

Unlike interviews, which by their nature unfold "on the spot," the self-narratives provided an opportunity for students to mull over and shape their thoughts and feelings. As narratives, they also revealed students' storied plots, which can convey key information about students' perceptions of their experiences (Bruner, 1991; Sperling, 1994). Finally, the information that I obtained in the narratives helped me to modify my interview questions to each student accordingly as the data collection phase progressed.

In order for students to freely express their thoughts and feelings in their narratives, they were offered the opportunity to write in their native language if they wished, Mandarin Chinese, or in English. The purpose of providing the students a choice

in writing in their first language lies in the rationale that the narratives are a tool to understand the students' ideas rather than to focus on form in their writing.

In the narratives, I asked students to discuss writing and use in their courses. In order to ask the students to produce writing that indeed be narrative in form, I provided a set of prompts for the students to respond to. I suggested prompts such as “tell me the story of how you wrote your current assignment”; or “tell me how you came up with topics or ideas for this paper”; “tell me the story of how you accessed resources when you wrote papers for the class”; and “tell me your story of struggles and strategies in the process of writing this paper in English.”

Student Writing

Other key data included, in particular, students' writing with course instructors' comments. The focal students agreed to provide as many written assignments as they wanted in a variety of courses they took over the semester(s) during their time of study in the TESOL program. For the students who were studying in the program, this means to select and submit papers they did in current or previous semester(s); for the students who had finished the program, this means to select and submit their papers they did over the entire program. Since the primary goal of this study was to document students' discourse experiences in academic writing, it was essential to look over all their writing for the semester(s) they chose to submit to the researcher in order to describe how and why their writing was “academic” or “personal,” for example, and to chart these characteristics over the course(s) of the semester(s). A variety of students' writing samples helped reveal how they participated in English learning and writing in their field of study.

The students varied in their decisions and willingness in choosing and submitting their papers for this study: while some students provided me more assignments over several courses and spent more time talking about them, others submitted only a few and spent less time talking about them. In addition, many students mentioned that they lost or gave away pieces of their papers so that they cannot give particular papers to me even if they wanted to. This experience with collecting data is the same as what Prior (2004) expressed regarding a key dilemma in collecting and keeping track of texts: “In many cases, it is not possible to collect every text produced... some are thrown out or get lost... electronic texts may be deleted...marginal notes on readings are forgotten” (p. 172). The types of writing samples that the students submitted for this study will be further demonstrated, in Chapter 6, as I discuss the kinds of academic literacies that the students practiced in their M.A. TESOL program.

Instructor Interviews and the Instructor-Generated Texts

Another set of data included instructor interviews and instructor-generated texts, such as writing prompts and written comments on students’ writing, which helped to enhance, to confirm, or to disconfirm the interpretations that I made of the students’ academic experiences (as in the student interviews and self-narratives) as well as their texts (as in students’ writing). Gaining the instructors’ perspectives was important as they helped to offer a fuller picture of the context for student writing (Buell, 2004). In addition, their perspectives (both oral and written) serve as important textual and non-textual elements in understanding students’ appropriation of conventions and expectations embedded in a written discourse community.

Four of the focal students' course instructors were each interviewed on one occasion toward the end of my data collection period. Specifically, I asked the instructors about what they expected the students to write in the courses. I also asked them about what struggles they perceived that students from Taiwan/China might experience in their academic writing practices. Since I collected students' writing with the instructor's written comments, I also asked the instructors about why and for what purpose they wrote such comments on a particular piece of writing. All this information provided me a way to understand the ideology embedded in the written Discourse of TESOL (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1989/2001, 1992).

Other Sources of Data

Other data included course outlines (syllabi) and program descriptions in which these focal students participated. The course syllabi provided a source of information regarding the university and the instructors' expectations about how the students should speak, write, and act in the program, which provided a way to examine the authoritative discourse embedded in the academic Discourse of TESOL (Bakhtin, 1981). Program descriptions served as another example of authoritative discourse in the field of TESOL, which helped me to understand the ideology maintained in graduate-level education in the U.S. academy (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1989/2001, 1992).

A summary of data collection methods is listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Summary of Data Collection

Methods	Collecting period(s) and times	Data
1. Student interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview 1: Beginning of the semester • Interview 2: Middle of the semester • Interview 3: End of the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio-recorded and transcribed/translated • 15 interviews (65.25 hours) in total/ An average of 1.43 hours each student
2. Student self-narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative 1: Beginning of the semester • Narrative 2: Middle of the semester • Narrative 3: End of the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written narratives • 15 narratives in total/ An average of 749 words each narrative
3. Student writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing as research conducted during the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 writing types over 6 courses
4. Instructor interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once with each instructor toward the end of the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio-recorded and transcribed • 4 interviews in total • An average of 1.25 hour each instructor/interview
5. Instructor-generated texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing as research conducted during the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing prompts for student writing • Written comments for student writing
6. Other sources of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing as research conducted during the semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course syllabi • Program description • Class readings and handouts

Data Analysis

I analyzed the primary data collected from student interviews and student self-narratives, as well as student writing, with my specific research questions in mind. I now turn my discussion to analysis procedures, focusing on the generation of coding categories for each data source in relation to the theories that I used to analyze the data.

Analyzing Student Interviews and Student Self-Narratives

Analyzing student interviews and student self-narratives helped me to answer the first

and second research questions: “What kinds of writing perspectives do the students bring as they enter their new field of study? Specifically, what kinds of attitudes and values do the students reveal as they speak of earlier literacy practice experiences and current ones in their field of study?” and “How do the students access linguistic resources and negotiate entry into the written Discourse of an academic field? Specifically, what kinds of struggles and strategies do they experience in terms of becoming a member of the field?” A *content analysis* was used to analyze the student interview transcripts and student self-narratives. Moving beyond simple summary of the interview transcripts and narratives, the purpose of conducting a content analysis is to gain a deeper understanding of what the transcripts/narratives as *texts*, talk about (Huckin, 2004).

Following Huckin’s (2004) content analysis procedures, analyzing interview transcripts and narratives by focusing on constructs of interest offered another layer of data that allowed me to more complexly examine the writing perspectives that the students had as they entered their new field, the challenges and struggles that they had in their writing practices, and the strategies they employed as they became academic writers. Based on my three research questions, I focused in this analysis on the constructs of power, identity, and agency. I identified and quantified words, phrases, concepts and other observable semantic data with the aim of uncovering the kinds of experiences, attitudes, values, struggles, strategies, and sense of self that may reveal insights about the issues of power, identity, and agency. These issues in turn, told me about how the students perceived struggles in their academic literacy practices, particularly in writing, and how they thought about themselves as represented in their field.

In order to create coding categories for these data, I first read the interview transcripts and written narratives repeatedly and decide relevant topics (e.g., *writing as an academic vs. personal practice*) to be focused upon. With the research questions as my guide, six broad categories emerged as I read the data. The six major coded categories included: **student literacy practice experiences, student attitude, student values, student struggles, student strategies, and student sense of self**. Specifically, coding for the categories and their topics along with examples (the semantic data found in the interviews) involved identifying topics and then coding relevant chunks as units of analysis. Whenever appropriate, the units were double-coded as each chunk could not only be understood on its own but also related to each other, and provided context for each other (Eubanks, 2004).

In order to recognize which data fit in each category, I focused both on the form and content of the units (words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs), as examples, to look for any signs of semantic meaning that fit into these six categories:

(1) **Student literacy practice experiences**

Definition: Indicated in the language when the student speaks of previous or current literacy practice experiences (a) as an academic practice or (b) as a personal practice.

Examples: (a) *reading and writing as an academic practice*:

“I don’t normally read an entire book in a field .. I’m more used to reading articles or excerpts from books in the linguistics or TESOL field. (...) I think reading in a field isn’t something that I’ve done enough in anyways” (Esther, 1st H01).¹³

¹³ For a key to the symbols used in presenting interview extracts, please refer to Appendix.

“We write a lot of journals for the courses [in TESOL] .. this is something I’m familiar with since I had already started doing them in my college” (Esther, 1st E20).

(b) *reading and writing as a personal practice:*

“Reading has always been my leisure activity” (Sharon, 1st J09).

“I used to write my blog everyday (...) I’d write almost everything happens in my life” (Sharon, 1st E04).

(2) Student attitude

Definition: Indicated in the ways the student demonstrates a particular kind of manner (positive/negative/neutral) toward writing (a) as an academic practice or (b) as a personal practice.

Examples: (a) *writing as an academic practice:*

“I don’t write papers as my own personal interest .. it’s just something needs to be done” (Thomas, 1st F02).

(b) *writing as a personal practice:*

“I keep an on-line blog of my own .. but most of the time I just post articles that interest me (...) I generally don’t prefer to write that much” (Thomas, 1st K20).

(3) Student values

Definition: Indicated in the ways the student recognizes (or not) the merits of writing (a) as an academic practice or (b) as a personal practice.

Examples: (a) *writing as an academic practice:*

“I think that every assignment has its meaning and purpose .. I also learn from doing that” (Sharon, 3rd C24).

(b) *writing as a personal practice:*

“I write only when I have to write .. like when I have to prepare for the tests or

write for the class (...) I don't think writing is important in my personal life" (Grace, 2nd B03).

(4) Student struggles

Definition: Indicated in the ways the student indicates the kinds of barriers toward learning in an academic context.

Examples: (a) *reading in an academic context*:

"I like to read when I was a little girl .. but now I want to read research papers as less as possible (...) the language is so hard that I can't fully grasp the idea" (Esther, 3rd H28).

(b) *writing in an academic context*:

"it's [writing is] really different from the way I learned in Taiwan .. I've never written so many papers when I was there .. and now I feel like dying when I write here" (Susana, 3rd G06).

(c) *speaking in an academic context*:

"I don't like to ask questions, even in China, too. (...) I just felt that the U.S. students like to ask questions too much" (Grace, 3rd F13).

(5) Student strategies

Definition: Indicated in the ways as the student decides to participate (or not) in an academic context.

Examples: (a) *reading and observing the written work of others in the field*:

"in order for me to speak and write like a scholar (...) I observe, in particular, what words they use and how they express their ideas through writing" (Sharon, 3rd J20).

(b) *student decides not to participate to the full extent*:

"I didn't care to sound like a native speaker [in speaking and writing] (...) it suits me well just so long as I can communicate and make myself understood to others" (Thomas, 3rd K15).

(6) Student sense of self

Definition: Indicated in the ways the student reveals understandings or perceptions as someone represented in an academic field.

Examples: (a) *as a newcomer*:

“even though I don’t struggle that much with writing .. I still see myself as a newcomer in this program [TESOL]” (Esther, 3rd O19).

(b) *as a problematic learner*:

“I’m almost dying after writing this assignment (...) I felt like an idiot (...) I felt the content is so hard, and I can’t even follow the class (...) I felt so embarrassed the whole time 'cause I simply didn’t know what’s going on in class” (Susana, 2nd C10).

Analyzing Student Writing

Analyzing student writing helped me to answer the third research question: “What does the students’ academic writing, along with their own and the instructors’ accounts, reveal about them as particular participants in the Discourse of their field of study?” As indicated in Chapter 2, to Bakhtin, voice is the speaking personality recognized, heard, or valued in an utterance or text (Bakhtin, 1981), and the voice of an author can be displayed in textual features within the text (Bazerman, 1981). Following Bazerman’s (2004) and Buell’s (2004) *textual and intertextual analyses*, I paid attention to the features that add up to a role, a “persona” (in Bazerman’s term, 1981) or a “writer identity” (in Ivanič’s term, 1998) in these student papers (i.e., an academic/professional identity as a “TESOLer”), which makes the reader aware of the writer as a particular language user and a professional member of an academic field.

Specifically, I used Buell's (2004) frameworks of code-switching in second language writing to examine how the students used a mix of codes in their writing (e.g., as manifested in the shifts of rhetorical and cultural structures, as well as intertextual representations, along with their text-based interviews and other relevant data) which entails the display and switch of identity that the student represents in the text and in the context where such writing was situated. This particular way of examining both the product and the process helped to illuminate data bearing on the research issues of participation negotiation and identity formation both at and beyond the textual level.

In order to understand the kinds of writer identities that the students display as they write for their courses, I categorized switches of writing codes in order to examine how such writing features index multiple aspects of identities. To accomplish this goal, I conducted *cultural-rhetorical and intertextual analyses* for all writing assignments that the students submitted. Specifically, I first began with an observation of the layout of the entire writing, then I moved to an examination of syntactic and lexical features, including *rhetorical structure* (e.g., the shifts of first person pronoun "I" to an academic register such as "for the purpose of this paper"), and *cultural structure* (e.g., the shifts of English to another foreign language code). I noted each such occurrence in the text and then created an analytic category called "**shifts in cultural and rhetorical structures**" for these data. I also looked for *intertextual representations* through identifying the traces of other texts and contexts, including direct quotation, indirect quotation, mentioning of a well-known person and place, relying on common beliefs or familiar discussions, as well as using recognizable terminology in the student's field. I noted each reference in the text

and then created another analytic category called “**shifts in intertextual representation**” for these data.

As I demonstrate below, in the first category, a cultural analysis reveals that the student writers’ identities as related to their *cultural roots* or *language experiences*, and a rhetorical analysis reveals that their identities as related to their *personal stories* or *academic stances*. In the second category, an intertextual analysis reveals that the students’ identities as related to their *personal affiliations*, *professional membership*, or *accommodations of academic culture of their fields of study*. The two major analytic categories along with their writing features are listed as follows:

Cultural-rhetorical analysis.

(1) Shifts in culture structures: Writer identity related to cultural roots or language experiences:

(a) *Cultural shaping of a text*, as reflected in a switch of English to a foreign language code (e.g., from the use of English letters to the use of written orthography of Chinese characters), or in the mentioning of geography that relates to the student’s place of origin (e.g., Taiwan or China) that marks the student as *a Taiwanese/Chinese Mandarin speaker*.

(2) Shifts in rhetorical structures: Writer identity related to personal stories or academic stances:

(a) *Cross-lingual grammatical and semantic shifts*, as reflected in a switch of English convention to semantic or syntactic structure that marks the text as second language writing (e.g., “This belief is ‘well spread’ in Taiwan”: the phrase “well spread” is used

instead of the conventional “widespread”) and indexes the student as *a second language writer*.

- (b) *Register and style*, as reflected in a switch of an informal first person pronoun (e.g., “I”) to a formal expression (e.g., “for the purpose of this paper”), or vice versa, that marks the student as *an academic writer* or *a person who tells stories/experiences*. Also known as a switch of a personal narrative (e.g., “I was born in Taiwan, where nearly everyone knows about the ‘Hakka’ heritage”) to an academic exposition (e.g., “The dialect of Taiwanese originates from the southern region of China”), as reflected in a switch of using formal and technical expressions in the form of an expository account to using informal expressions in the form of a narrative account, or vice versa.
- Intertextual analysis.*

(1) Shifts in intertextual representation: Writer identity related to personal affiliations, professional membership, or accommodations of academic culture in the field:

- (a) *Relying on a certain context*, as reflected when a specific context was mentioned (e.g., “I spent most of my life in Silicon Valley, an area with a diverse Asian population”) that marks the student as *a Taiwanese American living in California*.
- (b) *Depending on common knowledge*, as reflected when popular or familiar discussions was brought up (e.g., “Once, I had been one of the members who believe that native speaker teachers are better than non-native speaker teachers in terms of language teaching”) that marks the student as *a member of a specific interested group in the area of ESL*.

- (c) *Using recognizable kinds of field-related language*, as reflected in the use of terminology or concepts in the student's field (e.g., "English is a global language,"; "English is an international language") that marks the student as *an academic/professional member in TESOL-related fields*.
- (d) *Using indirect quotations of others in the field*, as reflected in the student's paraphrasing of an original work in his/her words by specifying a source in a parenthesis (e.g., "English shifts from foreign-language to second-language status for an increasing number of people (Graddol, 1997)") that marks the student as *an academic/professional member in TESOL-related fields*.
- (e) *Relating to an initiating text elicited by the instructor*, as reflected in the student's response to an instructor-generated writing prompt (e.g., The instructor's prompt: "Write a response in which you reflect on the role of pragmatics." The student's response: "As to the definition of pragmatics, I think it represents the great complexity and plenty of different concepts.") This might indicate the student's multiple identities as *a student-writer, an L2 learner and teacher, and a professional of the field*.
- (f) *The instructor's comments as an intertextual element in understanding the student's appropriation of academic convention*, as reflected in the instructor's written comments on the student's writing (e.g., The instructor's comments: "While I appreciate the first person narrative, this being an academic essay, I expected a more formal style as well as a better treatment of the text you read."). This kind of feedback might indicate the student's dual identities both as *a student writer* (learning to use a

formal style in academic exposition) and *an evolving professional* of the field (learning to criticize those of other scholarly works).

It is well noted that the two major categories (shifts in cultural-rhetorical structures and intertextual representations) as discussed might include the same chunks/units (examples) and thus indicate an overlapping writer identity since the categories could provide context for each other, which helps to explain how or for what purpose each category of data is being used in the writing by each focal student. Specifically, my analysis focused each category of reference in relation to the context of what the student is saying that helps to construct him or her as a particular language user or member that reflects his or her appropriation of academic culture and sometimes maintaining of their own. To complement such analysis, I also took into account the students' text-based interviews (in an attempt to uncover the student's tacit knowledge of, and motivations for their writing), the instructors' interviews, as well as the instructor-generated texts (e.g., their written comments on the student's writing), as they helped to enhance, to confirm, or to disconfirm my interpretations that I made of students' texts.

Generating and Testing Assertions

Once the data were coded in terms of salient categories and topics, emergent assertions (hypotheses) were generated across the individual students. Following Erickson (1986), these empirical hypotheses were then tested against across each individual student and were confirmed, reframed, or disconfirmed. Specifically, I compared and contrasted the hypotheses developed about the five students and then developed assertions that seemed to explain the similarities and differences across their

experiences. For example, in analyzing one student's interviews and self-narratives, I developed a tentative hypothesis that the student's positive attitudes and values regarding current writing practices in the field of TESOL seemed to tie to whether she had an English-related degree. However, when testing this notion out against three other students who also held English-related degrees, I found that two of them spoke of how meaningless they thought academic writing was. I needed to go back to the data and search for alternative hypotheses. In sum, alternative explanations were sought when an interpretation that seemed to explain the case of one student but did not hold true in the case of another. To supplement this process, I also tested an assertion about the individual students across different writing assignments as they shared their experiences. For example, the analysis of a student's writing experience in one assignment seemed to suggest that she did not find writing meaningful mainly because she did not think the topic related to her personal experiences. This assertion was confirmed when tested against her experience in another assignment where she was able to choose her own topic and found such writing relevant to her as a living person in the world (e.g., an English teacher of Taiwanese origin living and learning in the U.S. and U.S. academic contexts). Such emergent hypothesis was then developed and then tested against other students and found confirmed as well.

Developing Generalizations from the Study

Many scholars have attempted to develop *generalizability*, or *generalizations*, from qualitative research about culture and schooling in the field of education (e.g., Agar, 1996; Erickson, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Wehlage, 1981;

Wolcott, 1990). In this study, I follow Wehlage (1981) who claimed that the purpose of generalization in field-study research is to “discover cultural rules and perceptions that govern the action of people in school settings” (p. 211). With this goal in mind, in my study, I attempted to develop generalizations that describe the writing perspectives of L2 graduate students in an academic field (e.g., their attitudes and values as well as sense of selves) and why they act (e.g., participate in the written Discourse of TESOL) the way they do (e.g., whether to participate or not). Therefore, using Wehlage’s perspective of generalization as described, I try to develop the meaningfulness of the student’s varied participation in an academic field. In addition, in my study, I also tried to uncover what it is about the implicit sociocultural rules maintained in the structure (e.g., “ways of writing in TESOL” and “ways of being TESOLers,” as revealed in Chapters 5 and 6) that shapes the students’ previous and current literacy experiences as an academic writer.

Wehlage (1981) claimed that while it is up to the reader to observe for “analogous situations” (p. 216) in which findings from a study can be applied in new contexts, the researcher has the responsibility to document detailed descriptions of the researched cases through analytic narrative vignettes (e.g., in the form of a descriptive case portrait) and direct quotes (e.g., from student interview data; Erickson, 1986). With this purpose in mind, although this study is limited in its scope to a multiple case of a graduate-level program and a small number of focal students, it attempted to demonstrate “the thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) by organizing the findings into portraits of each student and focusing on moments for the individual students when specific written contexts illustrated multiple D/d discourses in which the student was socialized. It is hoped that

by uncovering the hidden sociocultural conventions of a variety of D/d discourse(s) both in academic and personal contexts that shape the experiences of those who participate in it, the interested reader can be engaged in active reflection on the many complex issues involved in L2 students learning to write in a new academic context, such as the issues of power, identity, and agency.

Having described the methods of inquiry, I will present the findings of this study in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 will discuss the five focal students' earlier experiences with writing and how those accumulated experiences shaped their current writing perspectives and practices as newcomers in an M.A. TESOL program. Chapter 5 will discuss the kinds of struggles and strategies that the students experience in terms of becoming a member of this professional field. Chapter 6 will discuss what the students' academic writing reveals about them as participants and members in their disciplinary community.

CHAPTER 4

WRITING PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES OF NEWCOMER STUDENTS IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the students' writing perspectives and practices as newcomers in an M.A. TESOL graduate program. I present the kinds of D/d discourse(s)¹⁴, along with their ideologies, to which the students were socialized when they spoke of past and present experiences with writing, inside and outside of the classroom, in the contexts of Taiwan/China and the U.S.

Students brought with them, as newcomers in their M.A. TESOL program, three kinds of writing perspectives. *First*, the students revealed the perspective, seen through their everyday practices, that writing is a social medium. This perspective was found to further shape their academic writing experience both as a personal one and a social one. *Second*, the students held the view that education and English learning was an investment, developed through their former schooling and teaching experiences in Taiwan/China. This view informed their decisions in pursuing an M.A. in TESOL, and the students

¹⁴ For the conventions of the *D/d discourse*, in the chapters I use capital Ds (from Gee's perspective) for situations that refer to sociocultural practices of a certain group or field, in particular, for example, the academic written Discourse of TESOL, the Discourse of graduate school in the US academy, the academic Discourse of Taiwan/China, and student as a particular member of a Discourse, as revealed in the findings. On the other hand, I use lower case discourse when she discusses ways with words from a Bakhtinian perspective, for example, the authoritative discourse of an instructor, the internal discourse of a student, the popular/political discourse in the U.S./Taiwan/China. For a few times, I use a combination of D/d discourse in an effort to untangle and to understand the multiple and complex relationships among D/d discourse(s), particularly in my discussions about the student's previous discourse socialization experiences. Sometimes, however, I use lower case to simply refer to a general/popular concept such as discourse socialization experiences, the discourse structure in a student's writing, and mainstream discourse of U.S. schools.

regarded academic writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment. *Third*, the students revealed ambivalent views regarding what they thought writing is and their actual writing practices, reflecting sometimes competing perspectives on writing as simply utilitarian and writing as a key and authentic practice.

In Chapter 3, I briefly introduced each student's social history, including biographical, academic, professional, and English learning backgrounds, as well as their purposes and goals for studying in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU. In order to see how the students formed their attitudes and values about writing, it is both essential and necessary to examine how they developed their particular ways of viewing writing in the D/d discourses to which they had been previously socialized. Here, I am informed by Gee's concept of *Discourse*, and Bakhtin's *authoritative discourses* and *internally persuasive discourses*. Starting from a Bakhtinian perspective, Gee's (1989/2001, 1992) Capital D Discourse asserts that in order to claim membership in a particular cultural group or field, one must say or write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and holding the right values, beliefs, and attitudes. Bakhtin's (1981) authoritative discourse refers to a language that is being acknowledged by an authority, such as ways of speaking, writing, and being as members in a field of study or in society at large. An internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, suggests a language coming from within one's consciousness or through the words of others that individuals encounter in their daily lives.

These concepts help to untangle the multiple and complex relationships among D/d discourses to which the students had been previously socialized before engaging in

the written Discourse of TESOL. The students' earlier and recent experiences with writing, both in personal and academic contexts, provide a way to understand how they participated in the new written Discourse of TESOL. In other words, seen in light of the D/d discourse(s) perspectives, such information helps us to see the kinds of D/d discourses(s) along with their ideologies into which the students were socialized in the various settings of Taiwan/China and the U.S., and how previous experiences might have influenced, transferred to, or (re)shaped the student's attitudes and values in the new academic written Discourse of the graduate TESOL program.

Overview

The rest of this chapter is divided into three main sections, which correspond to the three main findings outlined at the beginning about the kinds of perspectives that the students developed regarding their writing practices at the time of entering the M.A. TESOL program. In the first section, I begin by discussing how the students developed a perspective on writing as a social medium, through their everyday practices in it, both in schooling and non-schooling settings. Then, I discuss how this point of view helped shape their academic writing experiences both as a personal one and a social one, respectively. In the second section, I explore how the students formed a view on education and English learning as an investment through their former schooling and teaching experiences in Taiwan/China. Then, I examine how this perspective informed their decisions to pursue an advanced degree in M.A. TESOL, and thus regarded academic writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment. In the third section, I examine the students' ambivalent views between what they think

writing is and their actual practices in them, which reflected competing writing perspectives in a way that they saw graduate writing both as a utilitarian and an authentic practice, at the time of entering the M.A. TESOL program. Finally, I will end this chapter with summary and discussion.

Questions and prompts that elicited student data included (1) what kinds of writing did you practice inside and outside of the classroom in the contexts of Taiwan/China and the U.S.? (2) What does it mean to you to write in your life and in school? (3) How does it feel to be learning to write here in the U.S. in your graduate program (TESOL)?

Writing as a Social Medium for Everyday Practice

First of all, almost all the students brought with them a repertoire of writing performances through writing in diverse forms and in a variety of settings. In addition to the assignments that the students wrote in academic settings, a lot of them wrote diaries, short stories/poems, blog posts, e-mails, projector slides, and MSN or Facebook messages. This observation of the pervasiveness of writing and the diversity of writing forms fit with the observations of multiliteracies in the 21st Century advanced by several writing scholars/organizations (e.g., Lunsford, 2011; NCTE, 2009a, 2009b; Sperling & DiPardo, 2008; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Yancey, 2009) as the students in the current study incorporated both technology and traditional pen and paper as their day-to-day writing practices. For example, Esther commented on how writing had become an indispensable part of many of her life experiences; in her words¹⁵:

¹⁵ For a key to the symbols used in presenting interview extracts, please refer to Appendix.

[S]ince writing to me .. even today, I communicate better in writing than verbally .. so for my own lectures, I started to type the words on the screen and I'll project .. so writing is a medium that I sometimes prefer, including emails. I love emails, I even found I spent too much time emailing .. whether it's professional or personal, I try to make it funny. (Esther, Interview)

Esther's view about writing also fits with Lunsford's (2011) reports about today's youth's literacy performances in a way that they see writing "as collaborative, social, and participatory rather than solitary" (p.1). Esther not only saw writing from a broad perspective that includes slide-projecting and emailing, but more essentially, she perceived writing as one key method that she used to interact with people, both professionally and personally. In addition, Esther fondly regarded writing as part of her extracurricular activities, as she recalled below:

For writing, it's something I love. And when I was in high school, I took a lot of creative writing classes .. and then I remembered when I was young, I kept a diary when I was in junior high school, and I loved it .. and then I also participated in composition contests .. so it's not just an assignment, it's something that I enjoy. (Esther, Interview)

Esther apparently enjoyed writing and practiced it from an early age. Throughout elementary and junior high schools, she got awards for composition competitions in English. In particular, she proudly remembered her first writing sample response to a story reading in her ESL class:

I remembered when I was in my first grade, in ESL, half time in that class with other students, six of us, and in second grade all day with the main class .. I remembered I wrote a story and my teacher posted it .. so I like to be read to and also to read storybooks when I was very little .. and you know the story *The Velveteen Rabbit*, a very famous American story, the story that I wrote when I was young was like that. (Esther, Interview)

Among the students that I studied, Esther was also the only one who practiced reading extensively in her private life, throughout childhood to adulthood. She had read to the point where her life, day and night, was filled. As she recalled:

I remembered my mom always read bedtime story to me [when I was in Taiwan], and I remembered I always speak English as soon as I arrived at U.S. And at that time my mom didn't have time to read to me, so she always babysat me in the bookstore .. and when I was working on my B.A. in English, I took a part-time job at a Borders [bookstore] for four years .. so I guess it's safe to say that reading indeed has played an important role in my whole life. (Esther, Interview)

Seen from her literacy story in excerpts above, Esther had always done well in reading and writing, had always enjoyed it, and received prize or praise for her writing from a very young age. The various Discourses, those of home, school, and work, into which Esther had been socialized, involved valuing and doing various writing, and these writing *ways*, as we have seen, included writing short stories, taking creative writing classes, keeping a journal, participating in composition contests, lecturing through projects, and emailing. Seen from this view, writing had indeed become an indispensable part of many of her life experiences. At the end, she emphasized that writing is something that she “truly loves” (Interview), and that she rarely found it difficult to write except for writing in academic contexts—“I don't struggle with writing [in terms of language skills], I struggle with the concepts” (Interview). This point will be further illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6 as I demonstrate how academic writing is separate from language skills, through examining the struggles that the students experienced as they became a member of the written Discourse of TESOL.

Similarly, Sharon recalled with enthusiasm that she kept her own Chinese diary (with traditional pen and paper) of daily events as young as she could remember: “I

started to keep a diary when I was younger, and I'd write almost everything happens in my life" (Interview). As Sharon grew into her adulthood, she started to keep a Chinese blog of an on-line journal, and according to her, "I wrote everything happens in life, including my own emotions and feelings" (Interview). She appeared passionate about journal writing: "I write so I exist" and "writing is always for my own self-improvement" (Interview). Sharon wrote daily in journals to express ideas and document experiences in her daily contacts with the world surrounding her.

Seen from the above excerpts, Esther and Sharon seemed to be developing an internal ideology that highlighted the value of writing, especially as a social medium where writing, learning, and personal/professional development were inextricably bound. To further illustrate this observation, when Sharon went to study in the U.S., she started to keep an English section on her blog where she wrote about her learning of new words and phrases, as she recalled below:

There was one day I saw a sign on a park said *drug free zone*, at that time I remembered that the word *free* has two meanings: one refers to free of money, but the other one could also mean liberal. And since I often read the word as free of money in Taiwan.. but then it can't be that the drug is free of money, so I asked my professor what that means, and he said it means "you can't use the drug." Because I found it's so interesting, I wrote it down on my blog. (Sharon, Interview)

Bakhtin notes that the environment surrounding us mediates ideological becoming and offers opportunities that allow us to grow and to learn. In this sense, I interpret Sharon's personal writing experience in the U.S. as situated in a learning environment where her values could be fostered. As a result of this experience, Sharon regarded herself as a valued language learner (in the sense of getting to know English in an

authentic U.S. learning context). In other words, Sharon seemed to be forming her own ways of learning and writing about English in a new (U.S.) context through coming into contact with the discourse of others, negotiated with her own internally persuasive discourses, as seen in her negotiating the meaning of free with her professor.

Academic Writing as a Personal Practice

As discussed, since for Esther writing was a highly valued part of her life experiences, she also found it significant to her as a person to be in academic situations where she could draw on her personal background. As she worked on her B.A. in English, she took courses associated with humanities and social studies, and she was introduced to a variety of issues related to multiculturalism such as culture, language, gender, ethnicity/race, etc.—“As I went to college, I found myself relate to this program because we have a lot of classes talking about multiculturalism” (Interview). Esther recalled that students in the program were provided with plentiful opportunities to bring their own experiences to bear on these issues. For example, she saw herself as an example of multiculturalism in U.S. academic contexts, and proudly recalled that she turned her personal frustrations into a 30-page Senior thesis:

This project is not the best example of my writing ‘cause obviously I was younger .. but it’s probably the most personal, and the most dear to me ‘cause we were given complete freedom to choose the topic, and I really appreciate that. At that time I took women study classes, I think in my life it resonated more inside .. because my mom is a single-mom .. so with all the life frustrations living inside of me, it’s like I thought I already have the content, my real life experiences, and not until I took those classes did I have a form. (Esther, Interview)

Seen from Esther’s case here and from previous sections, both her home- and school-based Discourses seemed to consistently infuse her with a belief that expressing

personal ideas through writing is important and that writing was a useful medium both personally and academically. As indicated above, these pieces of writing were “not just an assignment,” but something that she “loved,” “enjoyed,” “preferred,” and “appreciated,” and as something that she felt to be “personal” and “dear.” In a Bakhtinian sense, these viewpoints and perceptions indicated Esther’s ideologies about writing, reflecting writing as an empowering medium that she had developed throughout many aspects of her life.

Seen from the discourse(s) perspectives (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1989/2001, 1992) that I am taking in analyzing the students’ experiences on education, English learning, and writing, I suggest that Esther came to the field of TESOL with a range of her own internally persuasive discourses characterized by favorable attitudes and values of what personal and academic writing meant to her, derived from the Discourses to which she had been socialized, those of home, school, and workplace, which constitute these internal ideologies. As revealed in the previous sections, since Esther had been introduced to a variety of D/d discourses where her perspectives on writing were consistently developed in positive ways, as she entered TESOL, these writing attitudes seem to have been fully transferred and were continually shaped in the same positive way. As she wrote across the TESOL curriculum, Esther talked with great enthusiasm about how the content topics in TESOL brought the best out of her, in her words:

[When I found out that] I can apply personal aspect into academia, it’s like an a-ha moment to me, that I can do this .. and that’s why it became so interesting since I already have personal frustration in my real life .. and then I found so many people did this kind of research (...) and we had a few classes here talking about *English as a hegemony*, you know things like patriarchy and colonialism .. that’s why those classes attract me so much. I think it’s really interesting since they’re

not narrow to U.S., it's global .. and those topics to me are very personal, they empowered me .. and I really appreciated it. Maybe some of my other peers felt that they didn't have much to say .. or maybe they had a little bit to say, but I felt like, hey (snap finger), I have *a lot* to say! Since I'm.. I'm bicultural. (Esther, Interview)

As revealed in the previous sections, the U.S. academia (in her undergraduate studies of humanities and social sciences) to which Esther had been socialized encouraged an attitude and value of bringing personal aspects of students' lives to academia. In TESOL, a graduate program also characterized by interdisciplinary studies (Casanave, 2002; Morita, 2002), academic writing had once again become an important medium that Esther found to be a powerful one in negotiating her personal frustrations in an academic form. In particular, over a two-year period of learning and writing in the program, Esther recalled her favorite paper, which she did in an elective course in sociolinguistics:

The paper that I did was a personal reflection. The assignment was about our linguistic heritage, so I wrote about Hakka, Mandarin, and English .. you know, how I came about learning and using those languages, and I really like that paper since it's very personal to me. (Esther, Interview)

In addition to the meaningfulness that Esther found when writing narrative forms such as personal and reading reflections across different courses in TESOL, she also found it significant to apply her teaching experiences to research writing:

In the past I thought only professors or professionals in the field can conduct research, but ever since I encountered the term *action research*, and also at that time I was enrolled in our tutoring practicum .. I got to choose and focus on one student and I did a bit research, and I was like, *Wow*, I can do this, too! So research does become personal to me. (Esther, Interview)

Esther further compared this research writing process to the metaphor of “sewing a quilt,” as she reflected her writing experience in a required, core course in culture and second language acquisition:

The whole project was like sewing together a small quilt, the patchwork being our research components and perhaps not seeing the full ‘picture’ until all the threading was done. Even near the end of the paper, I began to envision how my “project” could become a bigger “quilt,” or how the “threads” could be stitched into more detailed in other areas, etc. (Esther, Self-narrative)

In Bakhtin’s terms, this narrative writing experience can be understood as a process in which Esther considered her evolving sense of self not only as a writer or a researcher, but as a professional who gradually was developing skills through participation in particular writing practices. To illustrate this point, since Esther had been primarily exposed to her undergraduate studies as characterized by linguistically and culturally diverse students, faculty, and curriculum, she was exposed to a range of TESOL terms like *hegemony, patriarchy and colonialism, linguistic heritage, and action research*, representing her own discourses about others (as seen in her metaphor of “threads”). In being socialized to these terms, she was able to further develop what ultimately became internally persuasive for her. That is, Esther’s perspectives on academic writing were facilitated by exposure to the diverse content of TESOL because they yielded plenty of opportunities for Esther to continue to cultivate her own internally persuasive discourses through “a-ha moments” to perceive and interpret her experiences as a Taiwanese immigrant who had spent more than twenty years living, learning, and writing in the U.S. and U.S. academic contexts. These findings resonate with those of Morita’s (2002) which suggests that TESOL curriculum plays an important (contextual)

role in influencing Japanese students' oral participation in their TESOL graduate classroom communities.

The case of Esther challenges the well-established picture about Generation 1.5 students in a body of college composition studies focusing on U.S. educated immigrant students learning to write (e.g., Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Harklau, 2003; Leki 1992; Reid, 1997). As demonstrated in the earlier sections, Esther had always done well in reading and writing and had always practiced it from a very young age, both in her home language, Mandarin Chinese, and in English. Although English was the only language through which she received formal academic preparation, in the meantime, she did not seem to “lose” the writing systems of Chinese and thus does not fit into the “traditional” portrayal of Generation 1.5 students who have not learned writing systems and academic registers in their first languages (e.g., Harklau, 2003). On the contrary, Esther seemed to have developed a good sense of lexical and syntactic knowledge of written narrative in Chinese primarily through reading and being read to during her preschool hood (Purcell-Gates, 1988).

For example, before immigrating to the U.S. at the age of six, Esther fondly remembered her first and favorite series of storybooks in Chinese, *China Fairytale*¹⁶: “My favorite episode in the series occurs in October, since it’s my birthday month,” she said. Not only did this early experience provide Esther with a personal connection with her home country, Taiwan, but it also allowed her to acquire the written orthography of

¹⁶ In Taiwan, the *China Fairytale* (中國童話) series is well-known and widely popular among the children. It wins a household name, particularly in the middle-class families in the Taiwanese society.

some Chinese characters, even though English had become her principal language as soon as she arrived in the U.S.:

Back in Taiwan I remembered my mom always read *China Fairytale* to me as bedtime story .. so later when I tried to read it to myself, I was able to pick up some Chinese characters. I'm always proud of the written orthography of Chinese since it represents the uniqueness of the place where I came from. (Esther, Interview)

Reflecting upon how she had become familiar with the written orthography of Chinese characters, Esther formulated her own view about the relationship between reading and writing and believed that reading at an early age had helped her to “build up writing skills,” as she continued:

Some said that when a child starts to write, a good thing is to give him a model .. maybe you'd think he's copying others' stories, but it's actually a good way to help him to build up his writing skills. (Esther, Interview)

Esther's reflections fit well with findings from Purcell-Gates' study (1988) where she examined and compared the literacy development in linguistic structures and rhetorical styles of a group of 20 kindergarteners and 20 second-graders in their oral and written narratives. She found that these kindergarten-aged children, who are well-read-to before they start their formal academic instruction in school, demonstrate better lexical and syntactic knowledge in narrative forms than those who do not. This experience also positively contributes to their reading and writing development as they proceed through second grade in school. As seen from Esther's success story, I would add that this experience might continue to impact one's literacy development until adulthood. Therefore, it renders a fruitful topic for future research in conducting a longitudinal study to examine students like Esther in whether reading and being read to in their home

language makes a difference before they start their formal academic instruction in the U.S academic settings.

Academic Writing as a Social Practice

As discussed in the previous sections, being an international student from Taiwan studying in the U.S. for two and a half of years, Sharon, while representing quite different life trajectory from that of Esther at the time of entering the M.A. TESOL program at WAU, also developed a perspective on writing as a social medium through her everyday practice in it. Regardless of her previous exam- and grade-oriented attitudes to English learning in Taiwan, having practiced outside writing as a way to participate in the world surrounding her, Sharon reconsidered and understood academic writing in TESOL as a practice where true learning occurred through interacting with new contexts and their people who participate in them. In spite of the challenges that she faced in the whole writing process, Sharon considered herself to be a relevant member who fits naturally in this academic community:

Among all the TESOL classes, I liked Course C¹⁷ .. since the topics were so interesting and relevant to my own experiences, and it represents myself culturally .. I had a lot of insights to contribute to the class. I saw myself most related in this course. (...) I enjoyed the whole writing process (...) even though sometimes I felt writing is such a tough task, but I always think that every paper is a practice, and I truly learned from writing it .. and not just about finishing an assignment like I always did in Taiwan before. (Sharon, Interview)

Seen from above, Sharon contrasted her attitudes and values of learning and academic writing between the U.S. and Taiwan. Because the mainstream education of

¹⁷ A core course in second language acquisition (SLA) and culture. The kinds of courses (Course A-F) that the students spoke of in this study are further illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6, as I discuss their writing processes and experiences across the TESOL curriculum.

Taiwan fostered an attitude toward English learning and writing as isolated from real experience, Sharon perceived that she had been merely fulfilling assignments. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Sharon had received formal education in Mandarin and had studied English as a compulsory subject taught by Mandarin-speaking teachers. This mainstream academic Discourse of Taiwan seemed to incorporate attitudes and values in opposition to those of Sharon's socially-oriented perspective on learning and writing.

She recalled:

Back then when I learned English in Taiwan, my teachers required that we learn by repetition, such as memorizing the grammar rules and practicing drills. (...) We were not encouraged to ask questions, nor were we provided opportunities to practice English in the context. (...) The kind of English that we learned is all in the books, so I don't think that I really learned. (Sharon, Interview)

Here, Sharon regarded English learning in Taiwan a solitary work in a way that language is learned primarily through text ("the kind of English that we learned is all in the books") rather than context (Bakhtin, 1981). This way of learning, representing the authoritative discourse to which Sharon had assimilated in Taiwan, seemed to conflict that of her personal practice and that of TESOL's written Discourse. Sharon also considered this way of learning futile and meaningless in terms of learning to write. For example, when working on her B.A. in English in Taiwan, Sharon recalled:

Well (sighs), in Taiwan, I think the assignments are not that challenging in my English composition class .. since it's really easy, just intro-body-conclusion, that's it, very simple. I did only paragraphs in my sophomore class, and not until the senior year did I start to write the whole essay.. and the instructor required only that we followed the format, you know the intro-body-conclusion .. and he's not that push us, or maybe I didn't put too much effort into this either. It's not a solid effort at all. (Sharon, Interview)

In contrast, through the TESOL Discourse, Sharon had opportunities to form new ways of learning and writing in the new (U.S.) academic context. As a result, despite the fact that writing in TESOL has been such a challenging task for her, Sharon considered it all worthwhile:

I've never written so many papers in my whole life before I came here .. but I believe that every assignment has its meaning and purpose .. I also learn from doing that. Sometimes I felt an assignment is so tough, but I always think that every paper is a practice. (Sharon, Interview)

Regardless of this *new* experience of writing academic papers in the U.S. (of having to write a fair number of papers), Sharon seemed to enjoy the whole writing process after all. In particular, as with Esther, since she had formerly developed a personal written discourse in non-school settings where she wrote daily in journals to express ideas and document lived experiences, among all kinds of writing in TESOL, she became most enthusiastic about writing reflective journals:

I love writing journals the most because it's like a self-discovery assignment to keep me thinking what I've been learning, and reflecting what I've been encountering in my real life. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

As previously revealed, Sharon considered writing blog posts an empowering social medium through which she perceived and interpreted the new world (in the U.S. and U. S. academic contexts) surrounding her, as seen in her negotiating the meaning of free with her professor. Here, the Discourse of TESOL seemed to incorporate attitudes, values, and ways of writing that conformed to her own ideology about writing. To further illustrate this point, Sharon described her research writing experiences in Course A¹⁸ as she compared this process to “run(ning) a marathon”:

¹⁸ A required introductory course in TESOL.

In the writing process I recalled, I felt like all my classmates and I were in a marathon and the goal was the worth reading research paper. (...) I, as one of the participators in the run, could follow others' steps for a while until I figured out what pace I should take. I was not studying only from the professor but also my classmates. If I didn't know what to do, classmates were always the first to consult with. Then, our professor is more like a station in the competition where you can get water and medical aids. (...) Then, just like a marathon, no matter how fast and how slow you finish the journey, all the people will clap for you, no matter how far I was from those academic papers, professor and classmates gave me support and encouragements. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

Sharon seemed to increasingly see her (research-based) writing as essentially a social one in terms of participating and practicing in some kind of *game* ("running a marathon").

This observation fits with Casanave's (2002) notion of academic writing practices in higher education "as a game-like situated social practice" (p. 19).

From this perspective, then, Sharon understood research writing as an activity in which participation takes place through collaborating with others ("studying from professors and classmates"), and through repeated practice ("follow others' steps for a while") until she learned how to achieve some kind of gain ("write a readable research paper") in her own way ("figure out what pace to take"). Seen from this view, Sharon not only recognized writing as a game-like situated social practice, but more importantly, as a social activity that entails "rule- and strategy-based practices, done in interaction with others for some kind of personal and professional gain" (Casanave, 2002, p. 3). This *gain* can further be seen when Sharon spoke of claiming her membership as a TESOLer:

[T]o fitting in the TESOL world, the best way is to expose myself to the environment. I wouldn't get improved if there is no role model [classmates and professor] in front of me. If I want to be like someone, I imitate what that person does. When I read a good paper, if I encountered a good sentence, I highlighted it and tried to write it in the same way. (...) When I found out my Korean classmate visiting writing center very often, I tried to finish paper earlier so I can also get a chance to have my paper read by others. Hence, to be a TESOLer, I feel that I

have to enforce myself to get in touch with the world. Then, I will change gradually toward them unconsciously. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

To a great extent, being a new TESOL graduate who had been socialized into its academic written Discourse, Sharon seemed to be quite acquainted with, and perhaps aware of the mechanism of learning and growth/change in terms of moving toward being a legitimate member (a TESOLer) through participating in the new (TESOL) social world (e.g., “the way is to expose myself to the [TESOL] environment” and “getting myself in touch with the [TESOL] world”). In other words, through coming into contact with the diverse voices of others, such as contributing insights to the class, reading about various model papers, working with classmates and instructors, Sharon seemed to have internalized these newly formed ways that identified her as a TESOLer.

Sharon’s disciplinary socialization experiences can be seen from Gee’s (1992) perspective on “ways of being” when a newcomer negotiates his/her membership into a new Discourse. Gee (1992) suggested that “Discourse is always ways of displaying (through words, actions, values, and beliefs) membership in a particular social group or social network (people who associate with each other around a common set of interests, goals, and activities; p. 107).” Sharon, in being socialized to the new written Discourse of TESOL, seemed to have acquired membership through identifying with and acting out ways of being defined as a TESOLer, as well as through recognizing others when they did so. These ways of displaying membership in the new written Discourse to which she belonged, based on Sharon’s words, included, for example, “highlight a good sentence and write it in the same way” and “finish paper earlier and to have it read by others.”

Seen from the case of Sharon, these findings appear to contrast with those in Prior's (1998) study, in which he found that an international M.A. student, Mai from Taiwan, participated more in the role of a solitary worker, without collaborating with others or engaging in ideas, even though she was still treated as a legitimate member of the group. Similarly, the present study also challenges findings from Schneider and Fujishima's (1995) study, in which they found that an M.A. student in International Policy Studies, Zhang from Taiwan, participated solely as a "dogged worker" (p. 19) who seemed to aim his effort primarily at language-related issues on the textual level without seeming to be aware of the personal and social aspects of his graduate learning (e.g., previous literacy experiences, relationships with the peers and professors, motivation for studying, and strategies for learning) that might impact his overall writing process and learning outcomes.

Taken together of Esther's and Sharon's accounts, one point that might contribute to future research is whether their status of being new TESOL graduates matters for their perspectives about writing that distinguished them from other students in the present study, particularly their metaphor-based, personally- and socially-oriented views about writing in M.A. TESOL, in which they received their degree. Being new TESOL graduates, while representing quite different life trajectories as they stepped into an M.A. TESOL program, they seemed to ultimately master the writing games themselves, and thus represent quite successful stories of graduate students learning to write in terms of being enculturated into their discourse community. This finding will be further

demonstrated through the students' graduate writing and their instructors' comments about them in Chapter 6.

Specifically, while Esther received formal academic preparation primarily through English as soon as she arrived in the U.S. when she was six, Sharon arrived much later in her twenties for graduate studies and had learned English as a foreign language through which she received formal instruction mainly from Mandarin-speaking teachers. The findings reveal that, on the one hand, they both seemed to do pretty well in writing regardless of their immigration status (as seen in their extensive practices of writing in class and out), and on the other hand, they seemed to be quite reflective of their own learning and transformation in terms of claiming membership in a new discourse community (as seen in their uses of metaphors in “sewing a quilt” and “running a marathon”). Having fully experienced the graduate program in TESOL, Esther and Sharon seemed to have had participated legitimately and moved gradually from the metaphorical periphery towards full participation. While this is a plausible explanation to be suggested here, I do not intend to draw final conclusions based on this point as too few TESOL graduates of this particular group that I examined are included in the present study. Nevertheless, whether students' stage of study makes a difference in terms of learning to write in their graduate program renders a promising topic for future research. In addition, as suggested by Casanave (2002), it might as well be useful to investigate how M.A. TESOL graduates continue to participate through writing for conferences, publication, and research projects as they transition into their field of profession.

In the sections that follow, I discuss how the students formed a view on education and English learning as an investment through their former schooling experiences in Taiwan/China. Then, I discuss how such perspective informed their decisions to pursue an M.A. in TESOL, and thus regarded graduate writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment.

The Ideology of Education and English Learning in Taiwan/China

All students except Esther represented a generation who had undergone entrance exam-oriented schooling where English was taught in a *teacher-centered* classroom through drill and practice, focusing mainly on grammar rules, vocabulary, and translation (Lee, 2005; Serverino, 2004). An illustration of this type of literacy practice can be seen in Sharon's words:

Back then when I learned English in Taiwan, my teachers required that we learn by repetition, such as memorizing the grammar rules and practicing drills. (...) We were not encouraged to ask questions, nor were we provided opportunities to practice English in the context. (...) The kind of English that we learned is all in the books. So I don't think that I really learned. (Sharon, Interview)

In her study, Lee (2005) traced the sociocultural, historical, and political roots of schooling operations in Korea and described that both Confucian culture and state exam system contribute to the teacher-centered methods of English learning in the classroom. As a result of the implementation of standardized exam-oriented schooling in Korea, English was learned as a compulsory subject for the purpose of passing a variety of tests and entrance exams (Lee, 2005). Similar to the schooling context and background in Korea, the Chinese Confucian tradition, Japanese colonization and the National education system (Fwu & Wang, 2002) have all played a role in forming the relatively competitive

exam-oriented schooling in Taiwan and China. As a result, students, parents, and teachers who assimilate to the national curriculum operated by the Taiwanese/Chinese government, representing the authoritative discourse in the society of Taiwan/China, adopt a value-based view in exams (and diplomas) as they act as ladders to social and economic success. This can be illustrated in Grace's example:

I felt my English writing is so formatted as required by the exams and the degree. Because of my opportunities, the contexts, and the reader expectations, all of which required me to do so. I wouldn't write out of these requirements. After all, I had to pass my exams and obtained my degree. (Grace, Interview)

Therefore, the students in the current study, in being socialized into this ideology of education and English learning as investment, tended to have some kind of exam- and degree-oriented attitude, and at the same time they all saw the potential social and economic value, other than academic, behind the M.A. TESOL degree (Casanave, 2002; Gee, 1992). This finding fits with Gee (1989/2001, 1992) as he asserts that every Discourse is inherently "ideological" (Gee, 1992, p. 111), people who participate in it must learn/acquire a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and viewpoints that belong to it in order to legitimately gain power and social goods. In what follows, I discuss the kinds of investment that the students recognized as they pursued their M.A. in TESOL, which, in turn, suggests that they saw their graduate writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for these professional investments.

Academic Writing as a Pragmatic Means for Professional Investment

The findings revealed that the students were all investing in different ways as they decided to pursue their M.A. degree in TESOL, including learning English as a second language, mastering English teaching skill, or simply obtaining an advanced (foreign)

degree from a U.S. university. That is, they practiced their academic writing for different kinds of investment (Peirce, 1995). Peirce (1995) notes that individuals invest in a second language expect “good return” (p. 17) on that investment. This finding also resonates with Casanave’s (2002) “game” metaphor as she depicts individual writers as players in academic writing games for “personal and professional gain” (p. 3).

For all students who had once learned and/or taught English as a foreign language in Taiwan/China, they strongly believed that to obtain an “advanced foreign degree” will lead them to the ultimate acquisition of symbolic capital, including money, power, and status as there is a very demanding market for English teachers in Taiwan/China. At the same time, the students were also investing in their own social identity as a “valued English instructor” as this in turn grants them access to a wider range of symbolic and material resources that they cannot obtain otherwise. For example, Susana said that she has observed that students in the U.S. do not seem to value education as highly as those in Taiwan, and that English teachers/instructors deserve much better pay as well as better titles as in Taiwan. This view also applied to Esther as she outlined her career goal clearly about becoming an English instructor in the university if she returns to Taiwan for teaching: “With this degree, I hope I can find a teaching position at the university level, and not in some kind of private English institute” (Interview). The students’ views seemed to conform to Fwu and Wang (2002)’s observation as they found that teachers enjoy fairly high prestige in the society of Taiwan.

However, this is not the only kind of investment that the students recognized. Esther and Sharon, for instance, believed that pursuing an advanced degree in TESOL

would lead them to acquire specialized knowledge about English teaching, and would eventually guide them to master their teaching skills—“I wanted to pick up a skill and then I can develop to somewhere, and I always wanted to go teaching abroad” (Esther, Interview). Thomas, Susana, and Grace, talked about learning to speak/write in English as a practical end for better language skills: “I want to improve my English for communication or business’ purposes, but not for academics” (Grace, Interview).

In addition to viewing their graduate writing practices as a pragmatic means for professional investment, this dissertation further reveals that the students constantly spoke with ambivalent views between what they think writing is and their actual practices in them. These *paradoxes*, representing a range of the students’ internally persuasive discourses, seemed to have been influenced by this investment-oriented perspective on education, English learning and teaching; and thus predominated in their motives for their writing practices, which I will discuss in the remaining of this chapter. That is, all students had imagined their graduate literacy practices in TESOL to be practical and not that academic in a way that will help them to pick up a skill or see the real thing, both for the purposes of teaching English and learning authentic English.

Talk of Writing: Competing Perspectives

While Esther and Sharon had more enthusiasm for and insights about their outside writing practices, Susana, Thomas, and Grace did not think quite the same way even though they were all doing similar kinds of writing. Thomas, for one, spoke with an ambivalent attitude when doing writing, inside and outside of the classroom:

I usually don’t write a diary, but I do write on my own blog .. but most of the time I just post articles that interest me, then I’d offer my own opinion regarding them.

As for school papers [in English], you'd need to read before you write .. but for my own blog, you don't necessarily read before you write .. but you just reveal your own perceptions. And since this is personal stuff, so I usually write in Chinese. I *don't reject* writing this kind of personal stuff .. but I generally don't prefer to write that much. (Thomas, Interview)

Thomas' case reveals a few paradoxes between his understanding of writing and his actual practices. First, he seemed to be a reluctant writer when he talked about writing, even though he indeed wrote blog posts and regarded this as an emotional outlet ("reveal [my] own perceptions"). Second, while Thomas practiced reading both for his "life writing" (i.e., writing in his blog; Lunsford, 2011, p. 1) and academic writing, he seemed to attribute reading primarily to something that he did in school settings ("for school papers [I'd] need to read before [I] write .. but for my own blog, [... I] just reveal [my] own perceptions."). Third, while writing in English appeared to be an academic work that he needed to do in the school setting, writing in his own language, Chinese, seemed to function as an outlet through which he expressed personal views in non-school setting ("since this [blog writing] is personal stuff, so I usually write in Chinese."). Overall, Thomas did not seem to think about writing from a broad perspective where life writing was part of his life, even though he did practice outside writing from time to time ("I don't reject writing this kind of personal stuff .. but I generally don't like to write that much."). These paradoxical writing attitudes can also be seen in another example as Grace tried to make sense of her view of writing and her actual literacy practices:

I do keep my own on-line blog, but I never intended it to become something serious. Writing to me has always been some kind of "new year's resolution." Although I tried to write for self improvement, but I always gave it up after writing 1-2 entries. So I think I'm just not that interested in writing, and I don't think writing is important, too. I really admire people who write well actually, but I never wanted to become one. (Grace, Interview)

Like Thomas, Grace was also revealed to be an unwilling writer who constantly spoke with mixed feelings and hesitant attitudes about writing, such as keeping a blog but not intending it to be serious, trying to write but always giving up on it, admiring good writers but never wanting to become one. These viewpoints and perceptions about writing, especially outside writing, seemed to be in contrast with those found in Lunsford's (2011) study in which she found that undergraduate students at Stanford always demonstrate more enthusiasm about life writing and wanted their writing to "count for something" (p. 1).

Academic Writing as a Utilitarian Practice

The paradoxical attitudes that Thomas, Grace, and Susana revealed in the current study seemed to represent a range of internally persuasive discourses characterized by utilitarian values of what personal writing and academic writing meant to them, derived largely from their former school settings in Taiwan/China. For example, Grace considered writing primarily as an imposed duty in academic settings:

I write only when I have to write .. like when I have to prepare for the tests or write for the class. But I don't think I'm a lousy writer .. maybe I should write more, but I don't like it. (Grace, Interview)

Thomas, too, saw writing as some kind of work that "needs to be done" in academic contexts:

I don't write papers as my own personal interest, it's just something needs to be done. I don't even care about reading the instructor's feedback or reading through my whole paper again. I think no student would study that hard and keep rewriting and revising .. I don't think there's such person exists, but that's just my own opinion. (Thomas, Interview)

Similar to Thomas and Grace, Susana appeared to be struggling to balance competing perspectives about English learning and writing, such as knowing to find ways to improve English, but always ending up with meeting deadlines and keeping up grades:

I know I should find some ways to improve my English because I realized that my English ability was much weaker than a lot of my classmates. But I always ended up catching up on all kinds of deadlines and keeping up my grades. (...) Because I didn't have enough time, I can't but choose to put grades as my first priority. (...) After all, I really need to pass the exams and get the degree. (Susana, Interview)

When talking about English learning and writing, Susana kept emphasizing the competition and the exhaustion that she had experienced under the entrance exam system in Taiwan: "I don't quite remember what I've read or write before since I felt I've been busy passing exams in my whole life" (Interview). Likely as a result of this experience, as she went to school and throughout college in Taiwan, Susana appeared to value grades that academic writing could bring. She stated, for example, "I write because I need to prepare for the exams" and "I won't spend too much time in one assignment if that paper doesn't count too much point" (Interview). In other words, like Thomas and Grace, Susana had been treating writing mainly as an instrumental means toward getting through school. While this finding seemed to extend those of a range of disciplinary studies which found that students' primary goal for their academic writing practices is to pass courses and to obtain good grades (e.g., Casanave, 2002; Lunsford, 2011; McCarthy, 1987; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995), I would also add for this present study that since the students had formerly been socialized into the society of Taiwan/China where a foreign advanced degree and the English teaching market are powerful goods, academic writing did not appear to be of social value to them as an endpoint but rather as *a means* for them

to ultimately obtain a degree and status in Taiwan/China. It was this pragmatic attitude that drove them and seemed to empower them to study in the TESOL field.

Academic Writing as an Authentic Practice

Although most of the students had been socialized into a Chinese educational Discourse whose value system focuses on grades and ranking, I am by no means to suggesting that this was the only kind of internally persuasive discourse that seemed to have governed the students' perspectives on writing. The students were in fact engaging in conflicting views about ways of language learning, that of *natural* language practices in authentic contexts and that of *simulated* language learning in the school settings. For example, Susana talked with a sense of regret because she had not been provided with adequate access to resources and possibilities in authentic literacy practices except for the ones that are learned through preparing for exams. In her words:

You know many parents in Taiwan send their children to a private institute to study English before they receive formal instruction in the subject of English in school? Yeah, I've never been to one of those. I didn't even start to learn English until I went to the middle school, and then I did English poorly. I felt that I learned for the purpose of passing all kinds of exams, and I've never been exposed to real English outside the school context in Taiwan. And you know I was majored in Business Administration .. so I didn't know much about the knowledge of English before I studied in TESOL.. and I didn't get to go to the language school either. (Susana, Interview)

Thomas, for another, loathed the way English was taught in the schools he went to because they focused primarily on memorization and punishment “for students' own good.” His comments were straightforward: “the kind of English I learned was not useful at all” and “I didn't even learn anything back then” (Interview). Grace also felt that the

ways English was taught in China were geared toward preparing students for exams. She became discouraged by these ways of learning:

In China, English is taught as if it stands alone .. language is learned through *imitation*. We didn't apply it in real life, nor did we experience it in real life. (...) In my English department, they don't have enough resources for students to practice English. English is taught by Mandarin-speaking teachers .. and native speakers teach conversation classes only. But again, students seldom have access to those English speaking teachers. (Grace, Interview)

However, unlike Susana, Grace had had an opportunity in being socialized into another type of educational Discourse, that of private English institute whose values toward English learning were practical and to be used with others. These beliefs influenced her practice-oriented attitude toward English learning and writing. In her words:

When I worked as an assistant at the Crazy English¹⁹ Institute at China, I realized that English should be used in a more practical way. That is, English should be used as a means of communication rather than doing academics .. and since I'm an English major, of course I'd want to study in the U.S. and see the real thing. Otherwise, it's just like learning to swim without water. (Grace, Interview)

In a Bakhtinian sense, Grace seemed to have observed mostly the practical value behind English, and these viewpoints became internally persuasive to her in a way that she decided to pursue an advanced degree in TESOL. Esther, for somewhat different reason, stated that her initial motive for studying TESOL was because she wanted to “pick up a skill” rather than to “do research”:

I always think that college is not necessarily be my ticket. I felt like when I was young, I wanted to pick up a skill, or a trait.. and then I can develop to somewhere. And I always wanted to go abroad .. I don't even think about at that point .. even

¹⁹ Crazy English (瘋狂英語) is a brand name related to a non-traditional method of learning English in China conceived by Li Yang whose method places heavy emphasis on practicing English orally and criticizes the traditional way of learning English in China is ineffective (cited from Wikipedia.org).

to do research in TESOL. It's only because after that one year teaching in Taiwan did I realize, hey, maybe I should go back to school and I don't want to give up. I found this field is really what I want to continue to work on.. I feel right about it. (Esther, Interview)

During my interviews with the students, many of them repeated to me over and over that they had initially planned their literacy practices in TESOL to be “practical” and “not that academic” in a way that will help them to “pick up a skill” or “see the real thing” for various purposes of teaching, learning, and communication. Sharon, for one, stated that she had learned “too much theory” while she was in the M.A. TESOL at WAU and wished that the program could have otherwise provided students with more “hands-on” teaching experiences, such as the “real things” that an English teacher would face in the classroom:

Our program is really theory oriented.. we only have [courses on] practicum and curriculum that are more practice oriented. (...) I didn't mean that theory is not good .. it is used to support practice. But for us who plan to go back to teach in our own countries, I want to be equipped with some real-deal and hands-on knowledge. (...) I wish there is a class where they show you “real things” that happen in classroom.. the questions and problems that you anticipate to encounter in the classroom, such as what are some of the questions that teachers actually encounter and.. how they solve them .. like what teaching strategies we can apply, etc. (Sharon, Interview)

Grace, for another, also stated that “I would like to improve my English and writing for business or teaching purposes, but not for academic purpose” (Interview). At the end, however, this does not seem to work out perfectly in a way that the students had originally envisioned. For example, after her first semester in the program, Grace realized that studying in TESOL was not something she wanted:

I originally wanted to become an English teacher after finishing up TESOL .. but now I feel that this field emphasized too heavily on theory, and it just didn't appear practical to me anymore. (...) I think that doing academics is one thing and

real life is another. (...) Now I want to transfer my major to a business-related area and perhaps that'll be more practical. (Grace, Interview)

Similar to Grace's example, and perhaps other students, too, one gap that Casanave (2002) and others observed between the student and the local academic community is their mismatched understanding of how and what knowledge was thought to be constructed. In the present study, the students seemed to form their *ways of knowing* (e.g., Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983; McCarthy, 1987) primarily through hands-on literacy experiences (such as for pedagogical skills or business communication), whereas the academic program seemed to focus theirs mainly through theoretical and extensive reading and writing practices. For example, Susana emphasized the amount of writing that she had to do in TESOL, using three times of "lots":

I just felt that this field focuses so much on writing (...) lots and lots and lots of papers you need to do which I've never experienced that before. (...) So I've become very exhausted and I don't want to talk about it. (Susana, Interview)

Thomas, for another, also spoke of his writing experiences in TESOL to be very "dry" and he "didn't even have anything to say" regarding certain topics:

Sometimes it could be fun to write [reflective journals], but I think that it has become a routine for me .. and for most of the time I just felt so dry and I didn't even have anything to say about it [a certain topic]. So I'll just have to squeeze my brain to see if there's anything coming up. (...) But I think sometimes we write journals too often, and it's not necessarily a good thing you know .. I felt I was just writing out of responsibility and not out of my gut feeling. (Thomas, Interview)

Like Susana, Thomas did not find himself related to the topics of the course, nor did he find interest out of it. He further stated that writing papers are "very boring," and he just wanted to "get it done" and to "hand the papers in as soon as possible."

Taken together, while all students shared certain attributes in their biographies (e.g., being Mandarin Chinese-speakers and in their twenties), they took quite different trajectories in terms of socializing into a variety of D/d discourses and held disparate and contradictory views toward what writing means to them, even though they all wrote in diverse forms and in a variety of settings. These differences, in turn, seemed to have helped influence, transfer to, or (re)shape the students' newly-formed perspectives on their graduate writing practices at the time of entering the M.A. TESOL program. This chapter highlights the significance of understanding what the students bring with them as individual language users, and how these experiences continue to shape and are shaped by their writing practices in the varied D/d discourses they were part of. These findings, as discussed throughout the chapter, also build on previous research that emphasized the importance of understanding individual learners as “complex cognitive, social, and emotional beings whose accounts not only tell us about themselves but also about social practices in which they participate(d) in the past, present, and future” (Morita, 2002, p. 208). It is by untangling the students' complex and multiple D/d discourse(s) experiences, can we start to understand their struggles and strategies that they experienced as particular participants through writing in their chosen field, to which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Summary

In order to understand the students' perspectives on writing as newcomers in an M.A. TESOL graduate program, this chapter presented the kinds of D/d discourse(s), along with their ideologies, to which the students were socialized inside and outside of the

classroom, in the contexts of Taiwan/China and the U.S. First, the students revealed the perspective, seen through their everyday practices, that writing is a social medium. This perspective was found to further shape their graduate writing experience both as a personal one and a social one. Second, the students held the view that education and English learning was an investment, developed through their former schooling and teaching experiences in Taiwan/China. This view informed their decisions in pursuing an M.A. in TESOL, and the students regarded graduate writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment. Third, the students revealed ambivalent views regarding what they thought writing is and their actual writing practices, reflecting sometimes competing perspectives on writing as simply utilitarian and writing as a key and authentic practice.

CHAPTER 5

STRUGGLES AND STRATEGIES: ON STUDENTS' IDEOLOGICAL BECOMING IN A PROFESSIONAL FIELD

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to explore the students' literacy experiences as newcomers in their new graduate studies in TESOL. In order to understand the students' ideological development through their academic writing, I present their struggles and strategies as they spoke of current writing experiences across the TESOL curriculum.

The analysis revealed that the students struggled to situate their voices to the voices of three kinds of authoritative or powerful others represented in the field, both written and oral: scholars in the field as represented in their written work, course instructors, and fellow students. Specifically, *first*, the students struggled to take on a professional identity to write with an authoritative voice in the field through reading the scholarly written works of others in their courses. *Second*, the students struggled to balance conflicting selves, an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer on the one hand, and, on the other, the role of a student as they wrote papers for various instructors in the program. *Third*, the students struggled to reconcile competing voices regarding how to write so that they qualified as good academic writers as they collaborated with their fellow students in various writing-related activities. Last but not the least, the struggles that the students experienced ultimately transformed into new opportunities for learning in a way that helped them to shape their sense of self as TESOL professionals. In responding to the kinds of struggles that the students spoke of, three kinds of strategies were revealed to reflect these new ways of learning in their program:

(1) reading/observing the written works of others, (2) relating personal experiences to the content area, and (3) relying on resources outside their field of study.

In order to understand the students' learning and development in terms of becoming a member of the written Discourse of TESOL, it is necessary to see how and what kinds of struggles and strategies they experienced through their academic literacy practices across the TESOL curriculum. Here, I am informed by Bakhtin's (1981) concept of *ideological becoming*, which suggests how we develop our ways of viewing the world. Drawing on and extending this concept, it helped me to analyze how L2 students from a particular language group made decisions about how much to identify with and acquire ways of writing that could mark them as members of a particular academic community, and how these decisions changed over time as they participated in such community. It also helped me to understand why, how, and what struggles occurred when these students made their way to becoming professionals in their field of study through learning to write. As illustrated in Chapter 4, the students were all equipped with multiple and competing perspectives on writing at the time of entering the M.A. TESOL program. This chapter focuses on how the internally persuasive discourses that the students brought with them impacted their current interactions with course curriculum and instructor, as well as with their peers in the varied written contexts of TESOL.

Overview

The rest of this chapter is divided into two main sections, which correspond to the main findings outlined at the beginning about the kinds of struggles and strategies that the students spoke of. Each section is divided into sub-sections. In the first main section, I

discuss three major kinds of struggles, respectively, which were a result of reading and interacting with the voices of more authoritative or powerful others in the field: (1) reading the scholarly written works of others, (2) interacting with course instructors, and (3) interacting with fellow students. Then, I present how the students regarded struggles as new learning opportunities in a way that helped shape their sense of self as TESOL professionals. Finally, I examine the kinds of strategies that the students employed when learning, which contributed to their written participation in TESOL. These strategies, as identified by the students, were (1) reading and observing the written works of others in the field, (2) relating personal experiences to content areas of the field, and (3) relying on outside resources.

Questions and prompts that elicited these responses included (1) In this program (TESOL), are there certain ways that you are expected to write? (2) How does it feel to be learning to write here in the U.S. in your program (TESOL)? (3) Is it any different from writing, learning to write, in the academic contexts of Taiwan/China and the U.S.?

Struggling with Reading the Scholarly Written Works of Others

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, students in the study struggled to take on a professional identity and to write with an authoritative voice through reading the scholarly written works of others. In this section, I discuss how they struggled with situating their voices to the voices of more authoritative others represented in the field as they learned to read others' texts in order to write about them (read-to-write).

Reading in TESOL

In terms of the contact with the scholarly written works of others in the field, the

findings appeared consistent among the five students. Not one of the students, regardless of their academic experiences or English competence, had been prepared for reading extensively in a professional field at the graduate level in previous literacy practices. Therefore, without hesitation, all students named academic reading as one of their top struggles in terms of learning to read-to-write:

I liked to read when I was a little girl .. but now I want to read research papers as less as possible since there's just too much to read, and sometimes the language is so hard that I can't fully grasp the idea. (Esther, Interview)

Reading in TESOL is super difficult. (...) In order for me to search ideas for my next research paper, I had to read to a point where my eyes almost got blind! (Sharon, Interview)

I don't like to write because I don't like to read these books. (...) Since you only need to read one book to take a test, but you'd need to read a whole lot books to write just one paper. (Thomas, Interview)

I'm not interested in writing these reading reflections. (...) Some of the topics just don't appeal to me that much. (Susana, Interview)

I think reading in TESOL is a bit boring and quite challenging as well. (...) I've never read such a long paper before. (Grace, Interview)

The students seemed to be struggling between the discourse of *reading-to-write* (e.g., Connor & Kramer, 1995; Grabe, 2003; Sperling & Freedman, 2001) embedded in the TESOL curriculum, and their own views and perceptions about what academic reading meant to them in terms of learning to write at the graduate-level. To elaborate this point, on the one hand, the study of TESOL at WAU incorporated reading the scholarly written works of others as one major component across its curriculum, representing a form of authority that asks students to fulfill it as a course requirement; on the other hand, students were expected to produce their own written texts based on what they read in

class and/or out, guided to meet potential readers' expectations or the instructor's assessment criteria.

In addition, all students agreed that reading was one critical step toward accomplishing a written assignment for their courses, and that reading well is strongly equated with writing well (Sperling & Freedman, 2001). For example, a few students believed that reading extensively was an important and essential skill to master if they wanted to achieve academic success and be recognized as a professional in the field. In her graduate literacy practices in TESOL, Sharon recalled:

[T]hat part [TESOL-related readings] was just super difficult for me to read. But sometimes I had this ambition thinking, no, I have to do it. Since in order for me to become a TESOL person, and this is related to writing .. in order to speak and write like a scholar exactly, demonstrate an academic tone, I'd read how other people in the field display an academic tone. I observe, in particular, what words they use and how they express their ideas through writing etc. (...) So then I'd start to notice those writing features in order to expand my own "word bank"- or some interesting topics that might inspire my next research paper .. just to skim or scan through them and I'll apply them to my research papers. (Sharon, Interview)

Sharon described her academic reading practices in the field as one first step toward writing a research paper, a process that involves observing word choice, noticing writing features, expanding her "word bank," and skimming and scanning through field-related materials, in order to shape ideas to write about. Other students, while not necessarily demonstrate an interest in reading, also recognized the critical role that reading plays in the process of writing. Thomas, for example, stated that "it doesn't matter whether you like it or not, you just can't write until you start to read" (Interview). Grace, too, suggested that "it seems that they [the program] place such a heavy emphasis on reading, as if no writing could be done without reading in the first place" (Interview). However,

as indicated earlier, while academic reading seemed to play a determining role in shaping students' writing, all the students in the study also felt that reading in TESOL was a challenging task. Specifically, the struggles included reading to compose in a particular genre and reading to write in the content area, as I explain below.

Struggling to Compose in a Particular Genre

Students struggled to write with an authoritative voice in particular genres through reading these genres extensively. They read book reviews, literature reviews, annotated bibliographies and data commentaries, and they also studied terms related to research methodology. Esther, for example, recalled that the *book review* and the *literature review* were two of the most difficult papers for her to write. As she suggested, mainly these kinds of papers require students to do a great deal of reading and interpreting others' texts, as well as taking and defending a position in order to create their own:

Book review is one of my more challenging papers, and I've only written one [in Course A]. First of all, I don't normally read books in a field, especially entire books. I'm more used to reading articles or excerpts from books in linguistics or TESOL field. So it's not something that I've read enough anyways. However, that is the basis for a book review for you to write the entire book review. (...) Second of all, I felt like most book reviews that I read need some kind of criticism, and I wasn't comfortable with that .. maybe I don't think that I have enough background to do that. (...) I think the major issue is that I lack the confidence of the content area .. so even though I have my master's in the TESOL field, I certainly don't feel comfortable talking about all the research and forming a strong stance .. and I think that a book review will be able to give the reader not only the background of the book, but some kind of perspective .. so that's challenging for me. (Esther, Interview)

Like other students in the study, Esther had not been prepared from her previous literacy practices to read books extensively. While this lack of experience seemed to help explain why she struggled in writing a book review, I also suggest that Esther struggled to

identify with, as well as imagine for herself, the privilege of being an insider (Bartholomae, 1985/2001), a person who has the power to claim the right to speak and write in her field. That is, she seemed to assume that to write a book review meant to become someone who is well established, including being well read, in the field in order to write from a position of great authority and form a strong stance to meet reader expectations:

[D]on't you think that the book review cites others as well, like when someone read Krashen's book, and then he goes *In Krashen's previous blah blah blah...* and then he goes *but according to [someone else's opinion]...* and you'll think, wow, this is a well-read person. I don't read a lot of literature, once in a while when I feel like it, but I think a person who is really qualified to write a book review is someone who is very involved in the field. And I don't think I'm that .. especially on the literary, academic level, you know. (Esther, Interview)

Esther appeared to be intimidated by more experienced others' written work. In making sense of her graduate literacy practices this way, she also appeared to position herself tacitly as an outsider to her academic community in terms the practice of reading in order to write (reading-to-write) that would characterize her as a professional in the written community of TESOL. This observation about Esther reflects Bartholomae's (1985/2001) suggestion that unequal power relations between novice writers and their teacher readers limits a novice's ability to write from a position of authority, and thus students' writing "becomes more a matter of imitation... than a matter of invention and discovery" (p. 516).

While the students in the present study were not necessarily revealed to be imitating the language of more authoritative others as those undergraduates did in Bartholomae's study, the finding of my study still resonates with Bartholomae's observation particularly

on the roles that power and identity play when novice writers learn to write. Specifically, the students in my study struggled with learning to try on a professional voice that was not yet theirs. As Bartholomae indicates, “it is very hard for them to take on the role—the voice, the person—of an authority whose authority is rooted in scholarship, analysis, or research” (Bartholomae, 1985/2001, p. 513). This observation might help explain why Esther struggled with identifying as “someone who is very involved in the field,” even though she had already finished the program.

The findings of this dissertation challenge several studies/handbooks which have traditionally attempted to identify specific linguistic and rhetorical conventions in advanced levels of academic use, such as what tasks and skills are required in order to successfully complete the academic writing assigned in various disciplines (e.g., Johns, 1995; Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 2004). These works seemed to unintentionally neglect the often asymmetrical social and political relationships between novice writers and their expert counterparts in a discourse community, which, in turn, as the current study suggests, seemed to have constrained students’ opportunities in succeeding academically in terms of claiming membership in their academic written Discourse.

The findings of the present study suggest that students did not simply struggle with language-related issues in terms of reading-to-write in a particular kind of profession-related genre. Instead, they struggled with taking on a professional voice with authority in their field because they were positioned in layered relations of power, and thus perceived themselves being marginalized by expert writers in the field of TESOL.

Struggling to Write in the Content Area

Students were challenged to take on a professional identity as a scholar in the field through situating their voices among the sea of others' words established in the content area of TESOL. As stated in the previous sections, students were expected to read extensively for their graduate-level courses, which included instructor-assigned and recommended readings, as well as other materials that the students searched for themselves, in order to create their own texts. The students articulated their struggles particularly in two required core courses where they learned about the main content area represented in the field: advanced English structures (Course B) and culture and second language acquisition (Course C). Students usually take these required courses starting the second semester after they have built some foundation in their pre-requisite courses and the required introductory course in TESOL (Course A). In Sharon's words:

[T]he first semester was to build foundation .. things like linguistics and grammar [the pre-requisites]. Since we kind of have that background back in Taiwan already, I felt Ok. But then starting the second through the third semester, there're a lot of theories for us to read at that time. (...) We were required to use theories to support whatever we write, even for lesson plan assignments [in Course B]. Also things like cultural concepts and second language acquisition theories [in Course C] as I can recall were very difficult to understand. (Sharon, Interview)

Sharon's testimony applies to most of the students in the present study. As briefly stated in the previous sections, none of the students had been prepared in their previous academic literacy practices for the content knowledge of the field. Therefore, in order to fulfill various written assignments for these courses, students were challenged to make a range of scholarly written works their own, such as using well-established field theories

to support their self-created lesson plan activities. This observation can be seen in Esther's case as she discussed her struggle in Course B:

Course B was one of my more challenging courses in the TESOL program because the field (Discourse and Conversation Analysis) and topics covered were pretty new to me... though I did well on this [lesson plan] project, it'd been challenging to address other topics we covered (e.g., the systematics of turn-taking, Labov's narrative structure, etc.)... Most of this had to do with connecting theory and analyses to the application of teaching—namely, *how do I re-interpret and apply these concepts to teaching?*... to design a lesson plan for the topic we chose, we had to provide a lit review along w/ the rationale, etc. for our discourse topic. (Esther, Self-narrative)

Seen from Esther's reflection, for the lesson plan project in Course B, students were required to follow a format similar to a research paper using a particular organizational structure, and providing a literature review along with the rationale for a discourse topic based on students' choosing. In other words, students who learn to write in TESOL must also learn to position themselves within the multiple texts of others, through reviewing one another's written work in the field and then connecting those works to teaching and learning in the form of a research project. In this appropriation process, in Bakhtin's sense, Esther seemed to be experiencing power struggles as she paraphrased another's ideas and made them her own ("how do I re-interpret and apply these concepts to teaching?"). On the other hand, Esther also seemed to be struggling with communicating her own ideas to others, seen in her efforts when trying to situate a topic to the larger framework of discourse studies in the field. This observation was also confirmed elsewhere in Course C, when Esther struggled to locate a cultural topic of her interest within the existing studies in the field:

While some of my classmates were still pulling for research ideas [in Course C], I'd known exactly what I'd wanted to "research." However, I hadn't anticipated the

challenges of turning interesting questions about TESOL and culture into a feasible framework for research...I could not find specific-enough literature to review, and my initial inquiry became rather unfocused... however, the more lit reviews I came across in the TESOL field and the more focused I became with my own research inquiries, the more comfortable I was formulating my own...as I moved forward in the project, I learned more about how to build initial inquiries in the field into a more formal and focused study on the topic (Esther, Self-narrative)

In discussing her process of writing the final project in Course C, Esther seemed to become increasingly aware of judgments and expectations made upon her in terms of writing a research paper in the field (e.g., to turn interesting questions into a feasible framework for research). At the beginning of this process, she seemed to be wrestling to place her own ideas (“my initial inquiry”) within those of others in the implementation and presentation on a culture topic (“I could not find specific-enough literature to review, and my initial inquiry became rather unfocused”). At the end, however, Esther seemed to settle by realizing that in order for her to “research” a topic of personal interest, she had no way to express that except through the words of others in a way that she had to locate her inquiry in a body of existing studies relevant to her own (“the more literature review I came across... the more focused I became with my own research inquiries... the more comfortable I was formulating my own”). This finding resonates with Casanave’s (2002) finding that novice academic writers at a Japanese university wrestle with “merging the voices of published authorities with their own” (p. 66) when students were required to use a certain number of references to help support their arguments in their papers.

Similarly, Thomas also expressed that one of the most challenging tasks parts for him in writing a paper was to search for relevant ideas in the area to help him locate his own in relation to those of others on a certain topic:

I think the most difficult part in writing this essay [in Course A] was to search for relevant information that others already did on the topic that I wanted to do. Like for this essay I wanted to talk about the history of English language teaching in Taiwan, but then I couldn't find specific literature that's relevant enough to this topic. So at the beginning I had to spend quite some time to just look for if anybody else has ever done on this topic before. Fortunately I did at the end... but then it's still hard to write... since how am I going to make their works work for me and then use my own words to express my work through their words? (Thomas, Self-narrative).

Sharon, like Esther, also realized that in order to explore her topic of interest in Course A, she had to use well-established genres and content knowledge in the field:

[For me] the most difficult part [in Course A] is to decide on and narrow down the topic that I wanted to do, and the course assignments kind of set up in a way to help us go through that process. For the first one, annotated bibliography, it let us have an overall feel of what the field looks like, and then we can start to have our own thoughts. For the second one, book review, we had to go in depth and study one book very closely, and so we'd know what kind of topic can be written as one book and how others talk about their topics in what ways. And literature review is to demonstrate our own thoughts through comparing with what we've read, etc. (Sharon, Interview)

These sentiments reflect Bakhtin's (1981) notion that language (writing) is always half-ours and half-some else's. In Bakhtin's sense of multivoicedness, the students' academic voices were simultaneously shaped by and developed through voices of scholarly others in the field, which seemed to evoke a potential conflict in terms of ways present a topic and thus reflected a struggle both with power and identity.

Nevertheless, I would also add for Esther that while it may seem plausible to link Esther's struggle with writing in TESOL to a conflict between writer and written representation, she nevertheless recounts, "I learned more about how to build initial inquiries into a more formal and focused study on the topic," recognizing that her struggle with research writing ultimately led to her learning. This point will be further

elaborated as I discuss how students view their struggles as new learning opportunities in the second part of the chapter.

Struggling with the Academic Voices of Course Instructors

Students struggled to balance conflicting selves, that is, an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer and the role of a student as they wrote papers for various instructors in the program. Below I discuss how the students struggled with situating their voices (as characterized by a range of ideologies that they learned/acquired from various D/d discourses) to the voices of their instructors (both written and oral), as manifested in instructor expectations in the courses that they wrote papers for.

The Instructors

In the M.A. TESOL program at WAU, the instructors all taught several required core courses in addition to occasional electives and undergraduate-level courses in writing or in the content area. The courses and instructors that the students spoke about were Dr. Ashley (Courses A and C instructor), Dr. Boyd (Course B instructor), and Dr. Avi (Courses A and C instructor). Both Dr. Ashley and Dr. Avi taught and alternated in teaching Courses A and C. Sharon took Courses A and C with Dr. Ashley; Thomas took both courses with Dr. Avi. Esther took Course A with Dr. Avi and Course C with Dr. Ashley. Although Dr. Boyd also alternated in teaching Course B with another instructor, most students in the present study took this course with Dr. Boyd. As stated in Chapter 3, since students were all in different stages of the program, except for Esther and Sharon

who took Course C together with Dr. Ashley, none of them took the same course(s) with one another.

In the process of learning to write, the students spoke of their instructors in terms of teaching style, assessment criteria, and ways of giving feedback (both oral and written).

Dr. Ashley was described by the students as a “strict” professor who was “really organized in her way of setting each assignment up” (Sharon). Sharon recalled that Dr. Ashley regarded writing as a process, breaking up the whole project into different parts of assignments revolving around the research topic (based on students’ choices). Students submitted those assignments step by step as the course progressed. Dr. Ashley was also known for making her assessment criteria clear and explicit, especially in Course A where students were learning about various kinds of genres and research terms in the field. “She even has a ‘checklist’ [for assessing different kinds of assignments] to help you know if you have been doing things right,” Sharon recalled.

In contrast, Esther and Thomas recalled Dr. Avi, who alternated in teaching Courses A and C with Dr. Ashley, as a professor whose class is “very open and self-directed,” and whose handwritten feedback “you can’t even read it.” In presenting quite a contrasting picture to that of Dr. Ashley, Dr. Avi was known for being “unorganized” in a way that “students have to keep asking him how to do the assignments,” Thomas recalled. Esther also recalled that Dr. Avi “did not provide lots of examples or actual mechanics of how to compose a genre in the field” and that “I think he’s a famous scholar in his own research, yet he’s a bad teacher in the classroom.” Dr. Boyd (Course B instructor) was characterized by Esther as a professor whose instruction is to “force you

to think in a different way” and whose “main goal is to turn our assumptions upside down about discourse [the subject of the course].”

Struggling to Write with Authority, Agency, and Authenticity

The students struggled with identifying themselves as independent writers and thinkers when it came to deciding on a research topic. While the students appreciated that they were given complete freedom to choose their topic of interest for research papers in the courses (as discussed in Chapter 4), at the same time, most of the students were also challenged to take responsibility in order to think and write independently like a researcher, as expected by the course instructor:

The most difficult part in Course A was that we have to come up with our own topic when it comes to writing an essay. Back in my undergrad and ESL studies, the instructor would just assign a topic for us to write. However, in Dr. Avi’s class, we have to think and decide what we want to research about...another thing is, I wasn’t really sure of what Dr. Avi wanted because there was never instructional guide for any of the papers...I prefer that the instructor tell us exactly about the topic, the content, and pages so that I can better organize the paper. (Thomas, Self-narrative)

As seen above, Thomas seemed to be undergoing tensions in terms of learning to write as he transitioned from the undergraduate level, and from language school, to the graduate-level. As stated in the previous sections, Course A was a required core course on the introduction of TESOL that students take as their first graduate-level course. In course A taught by Dr. Avi, students were required to accomplish two essays on topics related to selected themes of their own choice. Since Thomas had never been provided with such an opportunity to explore a topic of his own, he appeared to struggle with this way of learning which seemed to require that students develop a sense of authority and agency that asked them to act as legitimate contributors to a professional community

(Casanave, 2002). In addition, Dr. Avi's ambiguous instruction ("there was never any instructional guide for any of the papers") also seemed to partially contribute to Thomas' struggle in this process. However, this kind of struggle did not pertain only to students who enrolled in Dr. Avi's Course A. Sharon articulated a similar struggle in Course C, an advanced core course in culture and second language acquisition which she took with Dr. Ashley near the end of the program:

[In Course C] What I had been doing back and forth might be to decide my topic. Everyone had a meeting with Dr. Ashley before we started our project, we had to think what topic we want to do and what was the answer we were looking for. I spent a lot of time on this process. Unlike the paper that we did in Course A, this assignment required us to think deeper and deeper. Dr. Ashley didn't want something general but something specific and we better found something that no one else had an answer yet. That was the most difficult part for me... yet that seemed to be the basic requirement of a researcher (Sharon, Self-narrative)

Unlike Course A where students were not provided with opportunities to participate in genuine practices such as carrying out a research project, in Course C, students were required to gather authentic data on their own and then write a research paper based on the analyses of data. As stated in the previous sections, Dr. Ashley was characterized by Sharon as a professor who was very organized and explicit in her instruction and assessment criteria. However, like Thomas, Sharon seemed to equally struggle with developing a sense of authority, agency, and authenticity which would characterize her as a researcher ("yet that seemed to be the basic requirement of a researcher"). This finding fits with that in Casanave's (2002) study in which she also found that M.A. TESOL students at MIIS²⁰ struggled to develop these qualities as they learned to write for their course instructors.

²⁰ the Monterey Institute of International Studies

As stated earlier, Sharon regarded Dr. Ashley as a professor who was very clear in guiding students through the research process in deciding a topic:

During the process, I did have doubts and didn't know what I should do to set up the research topic, there are many things needed to be taken into consideration. For example, is this topic done by someone else already? What does the topic mean to you? What are your interest and the field you have more knowledge? She gave us a lot of questions to help us discover what we would like to know, reviewed the topic we chose together, gave suggestions (Sharon, Self-narrative)

According to Sharon, unlike Dr. Avi, Dr. Ashley provided many examples and actual mechanics for how to come up with a research topic. However, this did not work out perfectly for Sharon as she seemed to be struggling to situate her voice, characterized by her previous literacy experiences in academic contexts in Taiwan, to that of the course instructor. In her words:

It's [My college writing experiences in Taiwan is] really unlike the impact that I had here in the U.S. I felt my brain was blown up with the instructor's questions. Something like *why you think this way and not that way*, or *why you say this but not the other*, and she just kept asking me more questions from my previous answers for the previous questions! .. and I felt like that my brain is so dried out. Since I was not trained that way in Taiwan, so when the opportunity was presented to me at that moment, I really don't know what I should say .. and I have to think for a while what I want to say. (Sharon, Interview)

Sharon attributed her struggle to the difference in learning to write in two different academic contexts. As stated in Chapter 4, the Taiwanese schools that most students in the present study had experienced appeared to highly value students' learning of isolated concepts or ideas as preparations for all kinds of exams. Most students expressed that they did not like to ask questions in their learning processes nor did instructors encourage them to do so. Therefore, students did not seem to be equipped with the critical inquiry skills that were essential at the graduate-level for writing in the

U.S. (“I was not trained that way in Taiwan...”). However, I do not mean to suggest that this was the only reason that might contribute to the students’ struggle in terms of learning to write in a new (U.S.) context. I present an alternative explanation in the following discussions.

Struggling to Resolve Conflicts with Instructors

Esther, for a different reason, also struggled with “narrowing her topic down” after she began her research project in Dr. Ashley’s Course C:

At that time [after submitting my first lit. review], I didn’t even narrow my topic down to contrastive rhetoric [I’d originally wanted to explore the external perceptions of ABC [American-Born Chinese] EFL teachers in the Taiwanese bushiban [cram school] industry [i.e., Chinese native-English-speaking teachers] .. and Dr. Ashley was trying to steer me toward another topic on NNES [non-native English speaker] ‘cause the original one was not that research backing, and this one maybe related more .. but I think it’s not personal enough to me. She wanted our topic to have strong connection with research, but since I didn’t have enough time to go in deeper [on NNES that Dr. Ashley suggests] so I had to change my topic to CR [contrastive rhetoric]. (Esther, Interview)

There seemed to be a clash of opinions between Esther and her instructor when it came to deciding on a research topic. That is, in the process of learning to write a paper for the course instructor, there seemed to be an unresolved conflict when Esther tried to position her voice, which was well rooted in her own preferable, personal experiences, to that of Dr. Ashley, who was expertly established in the field. As a result of this conflict, Esther had to change her original topic completely to another one (“contrastive rhetoric”). As described in Chapter 4, Esther had previously had one-year of English teaching experiences at a private English institute in Taiwan. Because of this personal experience, she became interested in exploring topics related to Chinese native-English-speaking teachers in the Taiwanese *bushiban* industry. However, Esther was not able to move

forward in the project after submitting her first literature review because Dr. Ashley found her topic “was not that research-backing” and asked Esther to switch to another topic on NNES. In order to develop a sense of professional identity in the process of graduate writing, Esther seemed to be constantly challenged to “drop her assumptions” based on personal experiences, perceptions, and intuitions. This observation can further be seen in Course B which she took with Dr. Boyd:

Dr. Boyd constantly reminded the class not to rely on “native-speaker” intuitions when it came to analyzing data. So while I’d always been pretty confident about my own perceptions of spoken communication, I was challenged to drop my assumptions. Therefore, the analyses of discourse data themselves involved a new approach. Dr. Boyd wanted us to be able to back up our claims (e.g., *this shows hesitation*) with either evidence found elsewhere in the entire data, or from research norms (e.g., *an in-breath usually occurs when a speaker is about to speak or trying to get a word in*, etc.) (Esther, Self-narrative)

Similar to Course C, students were required to collect authentic data by themselves through conducting an interview with a non-native English speaker and then create their own lesson plan projects based on the analyses of discourse data and theories that they used. As described in the previous discussions, Dr. Boyd was characterized by Esther as a professor who “turns students’ assumptions upside down about discourse” and “forces them to think in a different way.” Students were told to make these instructions their own, in a way that they had to fulfill instructor’s expectations in order to move forward in the course and the program overall.

In sum, while the students appeared to adjust their ways of learning in order to meet the instructional expectations of each instructor, interestingly, regardless of the teaching style or assessment criteria of each instructor, the students were consistently revealed to be struggling to write with authority, agency, and authenticity. On the one hand,

instructors with varying teaching methods or strategies seemed to uniformly expect that their students participate in the professional community through critical thinking and independent writing which would characterize them as a researcher in the field. On the other hand, while students were expected to take authority, agency, and authenticity in their writing as part of their professional development, at the same time they were expected to continue to play the role of student as their instructors still held a great deal of power over them in the sense that they determined whether students would receive good grades for the papers and pass the course. These findings extend those in Casanave's (2002) study in which she found that students in the M.A. TESOL program at MIIS struggled to balance an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer with the role of a student as they wrote papers for various instructors in the program. I would add for the present study that this paradox, which Casanave (2002) first found in her study, seemed to be an ongoing and unresolved struggle in the academic programs of TESOL overall.

Struggling with the Academic Voices of Fellow Students

Students struggled to reconcile multiple and competing assumptions about how one should write that qualifies as good academic writing as they collaborated with one another in various writing-related activities. Specifically, three kinds of assumptions were revealed to illustrate how these international students struggled to situate their words to those of their native and non-native counterparts as they learned to compose a good academic paper. First, students were challenged by the assumption that to write well meant to do "a lot of drafts." Second, students were challenged to believe that

“well-presented” writing meant good academic writing. Third, students were challenged by a profound belief that to write well meant to achieve a “native-like” writing standard.

As illustrated in this chapter so far, the students struggled with the discourses of more authoritative others as these voices manifested in the scholarly written works of others and their course instructors. In this section, I continue to discuss how the students struggled with situating their voices to the voices of more powerful others (both oral and written), including their native and non-native English speaker fellow students, as they interacted with one another in a variety of written contexts across the curriculum.

The Fellow Students

Students in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU had plenty of opportunities to interact with their fellow students on writing both inside and outside of the classroom. As part of the course curriculum (e.g., Courses A, B, and C), students were required to comment on one another’s papers, read papers together in small groups, discuss each other’s writing process during class time, and exchange journals with one another in class or via an on-line blackboard. In some cases, instructors would intentionally pair or group students who were native English speakers (NES) with students who were non-native English speakers (NNES) to help increase their learning opportunities with one another.

The student proportion in the courses was described by students in the present study as “half and half” (i.e., half NES and half NNES). Students and instructors in the field of TESOL tend to characterize NES as domestic students and NNES as international (or foreign) students. According to the students, the international student population was composed mostly of representatives from countries in Asia (e.g., Taiwan, China, Korea,

and Cambodia), the Middle East (e.g., Iran), Latin America (e.g., Mexico) and Europe (e.g., Germany and Spain).

In the next section, I discuss how the students struggled to reconcile competing voices as they collaborated with their fellow students in various writing-related activities. As revealed in Chapter 4, Sharon regarded academic writing in TESOL as a social activity where learning occurred through collaborating with others. In the discussions that follow, therefore, Sharon will be highlighted as she included telling examples and thus represented a distinctive case to illustrate this finding. I also discuss other students as well.

Collaborating with the Classmates on Writing

As described in Chapter 4, Sharon compared writing in TESOL to “running a marathon,” a game-like social activity in which participation takes place through collaborating with classmates and through repeated practice until she learned how to write “a readable research paper.” In the processes of writing, Sharon recognized and believed in the value of interacting with peers, both native and non-native fellow students:

I expect my classmates to pick me up from my own thoughts since sometimes I became so stuck in my own thinking process. So I'd share my thoughts with them and ask them if this or that is right or not .. and what do you think about this or that. I also asked my classmates to look at my grammar, and since one half of my classmates were non-native speakers .. so a great chance is that I usually had them read my papers and I still found it useful. (Sharon, Interview)

No matter how great a native speaker is in English, he or she still needs to spend a great amount of time to compose a good paper...international students would have inspirational ideas as native speakers do. Therefore, sometimes, we even helped each other in providing a different view and a good model of structural arrangement in the article. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

Sharon considered collaborating with classmates helpful and useful for composing a good academic paper in terms of content and form. She also acknowledged both native and non-native fellow students and found them equally valuable for her writing and learning to write. However, at the same time, she also expressed many of her conflicts and questions, representing competing voices inside of her, regarding how one should write that qualifies a good academic writer. Below are illustrations of how Sharon experienced a variety of competing voices through working with her fellow students in various writing-related activities.

Struggling to Practice Until It Makes Perfect

In Course A taught by Dr. Ashley, students were expected to discuss one another's writing process after completing an assignment. As described in the previous sections, Course A was a required introductory course whose goal is to help students use academic English at the graduate-level as well as familiarize kinds of genres written in the field of TESOL:

After submitting the first assignment [the annotated bibliography], we had an in-class discussion. We talked about each other's writing process. How people formulated their ideas and how they prepared the assignment. There was a guy named Henry²¹, he was a journalist before and had a lot of experiences in writing. He told us that he usually writes drafts, a lot of drafts. I know that writing drafts is very useful and I believe in it, but, embarrassedly, I rarely write drafts unless it is required by the Professor or counts as an assignment. To think of a reason, I'll say laziness and lack of time. My writing habit is really weird! I have to read through all the paper before I compose one. My classmates often read and write at the same time. They just write what reflects from the paper they read. For me, I need to get a whole picture and then narrow down all the idea. Because of this weird habit, I always lack of time. That is part of the reasons that I don't write drafts much. Another thing is that I realized I wasn't alone. There were many classmates had the

²¹ Sharon called her classmates by their English names; therefore, English name pseudonyms were given to each student that she mentioned.

same question and encountered similar difficulties as I did. Well, that was really good to know! (Sharon, Self-narrative)

It seems that Sharon was struggling to identify herself as an experienced writer who practices writing repeatedly until it makes perfect. Because her experience of writing drafts seemed to have been governed predominantly by a utilitarian perspective in previous experiences (“I rarely write drafts unless it is required by the Professor or counts as an assignment.”), in order to appropriate her classmate Henry’s idea, representing a somewhat authoritative discourse in terms of learning to write well, Sharon struggled to make sense of why she rarely writes drafts. In this self-making journey, while she seemed to feel regretful at the beginning (e.g., because of a “weird” writing habit, being lazy, and “lack of time”), she seemed to ultimately find her way through making the voices of more ordinary others her own (“There were many classmates had the same question and encountered similar difficulties as I did...that was really good to know!”). Sharon seemed to be inevitably caught in a dilemma in which she struggled to make sense of her own writing experiences among multiple and conflicting voices in the classroom setting.

Struggling to Compose “Well-Presented” Writing

In another in-class activity in Course A, students were expected to read each other’s assignment and then provide written comments on the paper. In this peer-review activity, students were provided with sample articles along with a genre framework to examine expected features in a particular assignment that they reviewed. Based on these guides, students were required to practice analyzing academic genres as well as give written comments on their classmates’ papers:

Before we reviewed classmates' writing, we had read sample paper together as a whole class. Professor would give us some guides to review the article and we shared idea as a whole team. It was a really warm up for doing peer-review in class. At least, I knew what I should look for. Even we had done some practice before reviewing classmates' writing, when I reviewed my classmate's paper, I found that it was still difficult to do so. Grammar, used to be the most confident part most international students have. However, when it comes to writing, not about principles anymore, I got frustration very often. Articles, prepositions and sentence structures in academic tone are really complicated. It turned out that I usually read the flow and check subject verb agreement only. If the flow is fine, I wouldn't have too many comments.... (Sharon, Self-narrative)

In the process of reading her classmate's writing, Sharon experienced a moment of impact because different aspects of writing were emphasized, expected, and evaluated in the U.S. as compared to Taiwan. As stated in Chapter 4, the writing classes that Sharon had taken in the Taiwanese schools tended to focus on students' learning of isolated grammar rules. However, in the process of reading other's writing in a peer-review activity, Sharon soon realized that it was "not about principles anymore." At the same time, she seemed to have a hard time imaging what a good academic paper should look like:

I thought I had a good start already in my country that I've learned a lot, however, compared with my American classmates' "real" writing, I feel that there's another level of difference for me. In my college writing in Taiwan, there seems to be a well-fixed format for you to follow .. but when I write here, things seemed to change totally. It's like when you read something good but you just don't know how it was written that way .. there seems to be no formula for you to follow .. and it seems to me like a style of writing that you *construct*? I don't know .. it's hard for me to explain. (Sharon, Interview)

After she reviewed her classmates' papers, during our interviews, Sharon kept repeating to me that "I can't write," "I don't know which word to put into use," "I'll never write like them [my American classmates]," and "it'll never be enough for me [in terms of writing well]." During the peer-review activity, Sharon had an opportunity to

read her fellow native students' papers, and she seemed to be challenged by an assumption that these students can produce "real" writing whereas she could not. Sharon perceived that her English training in Taiwan had been to follow a set of rules and that she rarely had had opportunities to write or speak English in actual contexts. Because of this experience, she found herself struggling to manipulate uses of English words, which seemed to be an important skill ("there seems to be no formula for you to follow"), and at the same time, she wrestled to reason out what makes good academic writing ("it's like when you read something good but you just don't know how it was written that way...").

In the context of academic writing, students in the present study seemed to need to create some kind of academic voice, a speaking personality characterized by ways of using words and recognized as fulfilling potential readers' expectations (Bakhtin, 1981; Bartholomae, 1985/2001; Bazerman, 1981). This might help explain why Sharon suggested that good academic writing is "a style of writing" that one "constructs."

In another activity in Course C, in which students interacted with peers about their writing, students were required to exchange reflective journals with one another, each time with a different classmate, and provide written comments on the journal:

I had exchanged my journals with Alan and Esther, and they are not native speakers of English. Alan was born in Cambodia...he speaks very fluently and his writing achieves academic standard...many professors said that his writing can be submitted to TESOL Quarterly or other academic journals. He actually did and got published...Esther was born in Taiwan, but her writing was so native that I had been enjoying it very much. Unlike Alan's writing, Esther's writing is more close to a journal. Take dress codes as a metaphor, Alan's writing will be like formal dress, and Esther's writing will be semi-formal. As for mine, it will be like kid's clothes. Reading Alan's journal is like reading papers, but reading Esther's is like reading just journal or someone's diary. Compared with them, I felt I was far from them in terms of the word choices or usage. At the beginning I did feel a little bit upset because they are not native speakers but have such a high competence in writing....

However, since they could make it, as a non-native speaker, I could make it as well and it is just the matter of time. Therefore, reading their journal revealed what I was lack of and inspired me in writing. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

While Sharon struggled to compete with her non-native counterparts in terms of writing well, at the same time, she was challenged to a new belief that non-native speakers can achieve professional-level writing:

I felt I was far from my classmates in writing process. I felt like that it might take ten years to turn me into a professional writer like them. It is difficult but achievable, so I don't worry. I know if I want to do it, and I can do it. Just matter of time and practices, I guess. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

In an effort to make sense of self-writing, Sharon compared her writing to the ideas that “it’s like elementary kids saying something big” (Interview) in terms of the presentation of writing (“I felt I was far from them in terms of the word choices or usage.”). She also perceived that “international students would have inspirational ideas as native speakers do.” In an interview she re-stated that “I felt like that although we [international students] have really good ideas, but somehow they [native speaker students] have better presentation skills than us” (Interview). Sharon seemed to be challenged to put her ideas into a “well-presented” academic form, in comparing her writing with that of her peers’, which she felt to be a key in characterizing good academic writing. In other words, Sharon seemed to equate well-presented writing to good academic writing, as seen when she compared writing to a dress code (Alan’s [writing] like a formal dress, Esther’s like semi-formal, and mine’s like kid’s clothes). However, this was not the only assumption that Sharon struggled with regarding how one should write as a good academic writer. She as well as most of the other students were also

challenged by a profound belief that to write well meant to achieve a native-like writing standard, to which I now turn.

Struggling to Achieve “Native-Like” Writing

In the group activity in Course C, students were required to work with two other classmates in preparation to lead one session of class discussion on one of the course readings:

In the group activity, I had partners with Yvonne and Ian. Ian is a native speaker of English. In this assignment, we had to come out some questions for the class discussion and write down the instructions for the in-class activities. I remembered that I was responsible for the instruction; I wrote it down first and sent it to the other two classmates. Ian was very nice to help me do the spell check and review. The result turned to be there was a great portion of the context changed. When I read the revision, I had a weird feeling. I knew that Ian was trying to help and he had been very friendly, but at the same time, I was questioning myself if I really had to write like a native or not. Was my original writing hard to understand? I couldn't recall the content, but I felt like it was understandable but didn't sound native. Isn't communication the purpose of language learning? Should I demand myself more? There were a lot of questions pondering in my mind at that moment. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

Sharon seemed to experience quite an impact in reading her native counterpart Ian's written feedback on her writing, a set of instructions for in-class activities. As a result, she seemed to become suspicious of her own ability in terms of producing good academic writing. In Bakhtin's sense, Sharon seemed to have a hard time resolving many contesting voices inside of her when deciding whether she should “write like a native or not” (e.g., “There were a lot of questions pondering in my mind at that moment.”). In one interview, Sharon expressed similar conflict when she expressed the belief that “We're supposed to have some good level of language competence because this is ‘TESOL,’ wouldn't it be a strange thing if we don't write well?” (Interview). Likewise,

other students in the present study also articulated such struggle. For example, Thomas stated that “I really want to know how to write like a native speaker because it will empower me as an English teacher.” Grace, for another, said “I think to be able to speak and write like a native will make me a competitive English teacher.” As seen from their words, the students believed that it was necessary for them to learn to use English, both in written and spoken form, as if it were their first language, especially in the TESOL program where they were trained to be English teachers. As Sharon said:

After working with Ian, I was aware of the next stage I should go, be more native. Being able to communicate might not be enough for an English teacher. As a result, I started my struggle stage in writing. I began to write and rewrite all the time when composing an article. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

In assimilating to this view of “writing like a native,” while Sharon felt that it became necessary for her to practice over time in order to produce such writing, she seemed to struggle, more fundamentally, with the issue of identity:

The conflict I had was just trying to be native-like or being myself. If I take myself as a teacher and a viewpoint from marketing, being native-like is very important because students prefer a native-sound teacher. But another thought I had was that I don’t have difficulties in communicating with others- so being myself should be fine... Of course, the best outcome for me would be if I can handle both the idea and the written presentation-but if I can’t, I would prefer a good idea with a modest presentation. (Sharon, Self-narrative)

In making sense of her academic writing this way, Sharon inevitably seemed to struggle with the question of “who she is” in terms of the kinds of writing that she produced (“The conflict I had was just trying to be native-like or being myself.”). That is, on the one hand, she seemed to want to achieve native-like standard because it seems to grant her more power (e.g., “If I take... a viewpoint from marketing,... students prefer a native-sound teacher.”). On the other hand, she also did not seem to want to give up on

who she thought she really was, a person who does not have difficulties in communicating with others in English.

Struggles as Pathways to Becoming a TESOL Professional

As discussed in this chapter thus far, students in the present study struggled to situate their voices, characterized by a range of previously learned/acquired discourses, to the voices of three kinds of authoritative or powerful others represented in the field: the scholarly written works of others, course instructors, and fellow students. While the students articulated their conflicts and questions as a result of interacting with one another in their courses, at the same time, they did not take these struggles as final indicators of their writing experiences. This finding resonates with that in Zamel's (1997) study, in which she found that international students learning to write in ESL classes do not simply and necessarily end up struggling with writing in English, but experience much of the beneficial and facilitative aspects of writing in English. However, I would also add for the current study that not only did students recognize the positive influence of writing in English, but also the positive influence of learning to write through interacting with texts and with others about their texts. In this process, while students seemed to struggle to make their own the words of more authoritative or powerful others, at the same time, and as a result, they seemed to be on their way to growing into TESOL professionals. Sharon's reflection, for one, helped to illuminate this finding:

Just like I have mentioned earlier, I felt I was far from my classmates in writing process. I felt like that it might take ten years to turn me into a professional writer like them. It is difficult but achievable, so I don't worry. I know if I want to do it, and I can do it. Just matter of time and practices, I guess. To be a TESOLer in this stage, I thought I should demand myself more at that time, reading more research papers, thinking deeper and deeper about questions and phenomenon in the field. I

was happy about my progress last semester, and then I was humble after realizing how far the journey was to be a professional this semester (Sharon, Self-narrative).

As demonstrated in the previous sections, after working with peers about various texts that they composed in writing-related activities, Sharon was challenged on several assumptions about good academic writing. These struggles, nevertheless, seemed to transform into learning opportunities through which Sharon found herself transformed:

It's like I've been lifted up to another level. I was not who I was in the language school. Maybe it's because the more I read, the more I was able to manipulate sentence structure .. and also found myself better at using the right word. I have a sense of which word is best to put into use in a certain context, and not just know its surface meaning .. but the underlying message embedded in a word in a particular context. I've learned a lot reporting verbs, for example, something that sounds *academic!* (Sharon, Interview)

It seemed that as Sharon gradually became socialized into the program, she became better at picking up ways of writing that seemed to be expected by potential readers in the field (e.g., being able to manipulate sentence structure and word choice). In this professionally becoming process, for example, she claimed to be better at presenting personal ideas in an academic form which she previously stated as an important quality for a good academic writer at the graduate-level (“I’ve been lifted up to another level. I was not who I was in the language school.”). Similarly, she also spoke with excitement when reflecting on her own improvement in Courses A and C: “Wow, how much I’ve been progressing... I found my ability to communicate in papers has greatly improved. I realized it’s a process in which I’ve learned to write better along the way...” (Sharon, Interview).

Esther, for another, also considered the overall writing process to be a valuable experience, in particular on the basis of a project that she found value in:

Overall, I'm very proud of the finished project since it was both an accumulation of my lesson-planning skills, as well as a mini-research project within a field I had less familiarity with...And again, I truly feel like this was the kind of project in which I did not initially "appreciate," but did so as the project progressed, learning along the way. This is one of the main reasons I'm particularly proud of this assignment, because I truly learned more about the topic and my own skills (both as a researcher and teacher in the field) through the process. Even now, as I look through the lesson plan, I feel that this is definitely something I can use in a future class, with a few "tweaks" of course (depending on the course). (Esther, Self-narrative)

Esther seemed to be gradually developing her ways of viewing, writing, and perceiving, which all contributed to her sense of self as a "proud" member of TESOL. In the previous discussions, Esther claimed that the lesson plan project in Course B was "one of my more challenging papers" mainly because she had less familiarity in the content area. Nevertheless, as she carried out this research-based lesson plan step by step from the beginning to the end, she seemed to develop new senses of being which characterized her as a professional in the field, both in the researching and teaching areas ("I'm particularly proud of this assignment...both as a researcher and teacher in the field through the process.").

Susana, for another, shared her thoughts after she accomplished the lesson plan project at the end of the course:

I certainly feel that this project not only encourages and raise myself confidence but also gives me a valuable opportunity to delve into myself creative potential. It seems very amusing to suddenly have more self-confidence and been more interested in writing and L2 teaching than before. In sum, I'm quite thankful for this opportunity of creating the lesson plan to practice my pedagogical ability, and I believe this lesson plan project really raises my familiarity with second language teaching field, creativity, and writing competence. (Susana, Self-narrative)

While a student whose language proficiency was weaker than her counterparts' in the present study, Susana nevertheless seemed to change her sense of self as she fulfilled

the research-based lesson plan project. Like Sharon and Esther, she also regarded the writing lesson project to be a fruitful process in which she became much improved in terms of aspects and qualities that characterize her as a professional in the field, including creativity, familiarity with content knowledge, and writing proficiency.

In sum, as students were becoming socialized into their field of study through coming together with a variety of others in the program, as we have seen, the struggles that they encountered seemed to ultimately transform into pathways which led them toward becoming TESOL professionals.

Strategies of Navigating the World of TESOL

As illustrated thus far, the students were learning ways to write like TESOLers. In this section, I continue to explore how they developed their ways of learning as a result of these struggles. All the students were revealed to be active participants as they seemed consciously to articulate their ways of navigating “the world of TESOL” (Sharon), representing strategies of learning to write for their courses. In what follows, I discuss three kinds of strategies that were revealed to respond the struggles that the students spoke of in terms of learning to write for their courses: reading/observing the written works of others, relating personal experiences to the content area, and relying on outside resources.

Reading and Observing the Written Works of Others

All students in the present study agreed that, whether they liked it or not, reading and observing the written works of others in the field became an important strategy in the process of writing (Belcher, 1995; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Sperling, 1996; Sperling &

Freedman, 2001). They also agreed that “you have to read in order to write” (Thomas) because they recognized reading as “one right way that others do” (Sharon) in the field. In particular, Esther, Sharon, Susana, and Thomas read for ideas and topics, e.g., “I have to read through all the relevant materials before I compose my own” (Sharon), “I looked for writing topics through reading on the Internet and the books from the library” (Susana), “My ideas are based on an article that I’ve researched and read in my other classes” (Esther), and “I spent almost a month to search and read the articles that I want to use for my paper” (Thomas). Esther described in detail how she “discovered” her own way of composing a literature review in Courses A and C:

I was enrolled in Course A the same semester, and had mostly discovered the process of composing a “literature review” through models from articles within TESOL. This form was somewhat new to me since I didn’t recall organizing and presenting previous research in one section the overall premise and/or basis in my undergrad research papers... The trick, with most research papers, is representing and synthesizing all the information between authors concisely and with relevance to your topic. To me, copying down direct passages (which provide a summary and/or emphasize a point) and building entire paragraphs around them have always been a strategy. I tend to write papers this way, pulling direct quotes from what I’ve read as starting points, but balancing them with my own paraphrasing and analyses. (Esther, Self-narrative)

Esther’s reflection represents how one might read for both patterns and ideas in the process of writing. First, as revealed in the previous sections, while Esther regarded the literature review and book review as two of the more challenging papers that she had written in TESOL, she nevertheless realized that it was only through reading models from articles within the field that she could start to find her own way to compose her own (“The trick... is representing and synthesizing all the information between authors concisely and with relevance to your topic.”). In addition, in order to place her “initial

inquiry into a feasible framework,” as she stated, she also realized that “it is essential for you to have a premise before you can move on... and a lit. review helps you to do that” (Interview). Therefore, in order to express her ideas through the words of others in the form of a literature review, her “trick” was to read for quotes and then paraphrase the author’s words using her own (e.g., “[P]ulling direct quotes from what I’ve read as starting points, but balancing them with my own paraphrasing and analyses.”). On this point, see also, for example, Bakhtin (1981), Bartholomae (1985/2001), Bazerman (1981, 2004), Casanave (2002), and Prior (1998, 2004).

Similarly, in Course A where students were introduced to kinds of genres and research terms in the field, Esther rejected the opinion of “I was taught,” but regarded that “it’s something I learned by looking at other models”:

I felt in Course A, the way I learned this model is by looking at other models .. like book review, I went and see other models by my own. I don’t think I was taught. I think it’s just something I learned .. through looking at different samples. And then pretty soon I saw *this is the pattern* when they do a quantitative research .. this is how it looks, and that is qualitative. (Esther, Interview).

As described in the previous sections, Dr. Avi (Course A instructor) was depicted by Esther as a professor who “did not provide lots of examples or actual mechanics of how to compose a particular genre in the field.” Nevertheless, Esther also mentioned that Dr. Avi’s approach was to tell the class that “if you’re a good reader, then you’ll be a good writer,” to encourage students to practice extensive reading overall. So, while Esther felt that she was not taught in the course, she nevertheless seemed to be influenced by Dr. Avi’s in-class advice on how to compose in a genre in a field. It also seemed that students were expected to take authority and agency in reading-to-write for their papers,

particularly at the graduate-level. Sharon, for another, also agreed that reading the written works of others became a strategy for her to compose her own:

To me .. I felt each article that I've ever read is a model article. Since at that time I was just beginning to learn to write in the field .. so every time I read something by others, I always tried very hard to see how they do about writing. So when I write, I'd always have those articles ready by my side .. and observe their ways of presentation at the same time I was writing. Those are the things that I'd do. (Sharon, Interview)

Like Esther, Sharon also considered “reading a model article” an important strategy to achieve an ideal written representation (e.g., what academic papers look like) expected by potential readers in a field. In our interviews, Sharon and the other students kept emphasizing that “When you start to read, you'll get a sense of what a piece of good writing looks like, and they become our models of writing.” In addition, Sharon and many other students in this study also expressed that it was a strategy for them to take notes as they read:

After I read a piece, I'd write questions in the margin to help me ponder deeply on what the author is trying to say. I'm very used to do summary when reviewing articles, the key points, and I'd also jot down notes for the class. (Sharon, Interview)

As discussed in the previous sections, one reason that students found difficult in reading was that they thought the language is difficult in a way that they could not “fully grasp the idea” (Esther). Therefore, like Sharon, most students tended to “jot down key points” and “write questions in the margin” in order to track their own thoughts as well as those of the authors in the process of reading-to-write.

Relating Personal Experiences to the Content Area

While the students were not necessarily revealed to appreciate applying personal experiences to writing, through reading the written works of others in the field, they

nevertheless recognized that it was appropriate to relate their personal experiences to academic writing. Since the students were L2 learners themselves, they felt that they were “automatically in this field [TESOL]” (Esther), and that they “had a lot to contribute to the field” (Sharon) in terms of language learning and cultural experiences. Importantly, almost all the students had had academic background in English or Linguistics that trained them in literary analysis to use the third person pronoun. When they read that they could draw on personal experiences when writing in TESOL and use the first person pronoun *I*, all the students realized that they could benefit from this opportunity in their writing.

Esther, for one, recalled that since she previously majored in English, not until she read and observed the written works of others in TESOL, did she start to use the first person pronoun *I* in her writing:

I think when I started to read more research papers in TESOL .. when I observe how other research papers use the first person *I*, did I start to use first person. Since in literary analysis they don't use *I*, they use third person .. when talking about authors you don't use *I*. But I've observed in TESOL papers they would use *I will begin by* .. and I was thinking, oh cool! Research does become personal to me. (Esther, Interview)

In reading and observing the written works of others in TESOL, Esther fondly recognized that it was suitable to blend her own voice, and the first person pronoun *I*, into an academic form to create a formal style of writing acceptable in the field (e.g., “*I will begin by*”). As revealed in Chapter 4, Esther was also found to consider writing in TESOL a personal practice, a way in which she could apply her personal life to academia (“Research does become personal to me.”). Therefore, relating personal experiences to

the content area seemed to automatically become her strategy in navigating her TESOL writing.

However, while not all the students were necessarily revealed to appreciate this approach as Esther did, many of them nevertheless regarded relating personal experiences and knowledge as one effective strategy especially in deciding the topic for a paper.

Thomas, for one, reflected on this idea as follows:

While I took Course A, the instructor gave each of us a theme on a piece of paper, and you need to write a research paper based on that theme. My theme was about English as an international language. Our professor required that we write two essays for this semester, and there should be some connection between these two papers. So based on my theme it just came to me that I want to write about English in Taiwan or something about English and Taiwan. Because everyone knows that English is a very popular language in Taiwan, and everybody wants to learn it. Besides, I think it fits with the theme since we learn English as a foreign language in Taiwan, so English does become an international language. We learn English because we want to communicate with other countries, so English is truly an international language (Thomas, Self-narrative)

As revealed in the previous discussions, Thomas struggled with coming up his own topic for the essays in Course A partly because he was new to this way of learning.

Therefore, in order for him to write based on the topic of his own choosing, he chose something that was relevant to his ethnic and academic background (“it just came to me that I want to write about English in Taiwan or something about English and Taiwan.”).

In choosing his topic this way, Thomas was in a sense transforming his struggle into a strategy which allowed him to think and write like an independent researcher in the field.

Susana, for another, spoke of how she decided on her topic for the lesson plan project in Course B:

This topic [on “politeness strategies”] appeals to me because it sort of delivers culture. Since you’ll find that in American society .. well, at the beginning [of my

lesson plan] I said that my students are immigrants, so they'll need to adapt themselves to a new environment around them. And in American society, since it's a very direct one, unlike the Oriental society, we always use face-saving strategies. So I think there's a difference out there, and I feel that *negative politeness strategy* kind of pull away relationship. Although it's one form of politeness strategies .. but not the best one .. since it creates distance and the friendship won't be established. So that's why I wanted to focus on 'positive politeness,' on close relationship between friends and family members. And I was hoping that this relationship can apply to school, workplace, family, etc. (Susana, Interview)

Susana chose a topic that not only related to her own cultural practice, but also interested her as a language practitioner in the field (e.g., "my students are immigrants so they'll need to adapt themselves to a new [American] environment... so that's why I wanted to focus on positive politeness..."). In order to fulfill the "practical" side of the lesson plan project, Susana went through a thinking process in which she compared the cultural practices on politeness strategies between "American society" and "Oriental society" (e.g., Americans are more direct whereas Orientals tend to use face-saving strategies). In framing her topic this way, Susana seemed to take advantage of her own experiences both as a language learner and a teacher.

Grace, who believed in the "practical" value of English and writing, recalled writing one section of her research project where she incorporated her personal experiences both as an English learner and an English teacher:

Maybe I felt better for the last part [a section on how teachers can help L2 learners improve their speaking] of this project- since I think it's been so useful to me personally- I've experienced it as an English learner myself- one of my previous teachers in China taught us to practice speaking this way- so now that I've become an English teacher myself- I'd like to give the same advice to my students- (Grace, Interview)

While she talked as if she were a reluctant writer, Grace nevertheless pointed out one place that she found most relevant to her both as a student and a teacher. In a pre-

requisite on English structures, students were required to offer their own written comments as an “imagined” English teacher at the end of a student error analysis assignment. In this assignment, there was no place for the writer to use the first person *I* except the section where students were required to provide their own thoughts regarding how to help students improve grammatical errors and other mistakes. Therefore, like Esther, Grace seemed to prefer using personal experiences in such ways that she could have a sense of fulfillment in terms of writing a paper for the course (“I felt better for the last part... since it’s been so useful to me personally”).

These findings echo Prior’s (1991, 1995, 1998) views in which he argues that graduate-level writing is a complex process, one that involves factors “not just textual” (Prior, 1998, as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 92), but non-textual factors beyond the immediate classroom setting, including writers’ personal background, previous experiences, or relationships with others. In conceptualizing graduate writing this way, I would also add for the present study that these strategies, as suggested by the students, seemed to be uniquely tied to the field of TESOL mainly because the academic written Discourse of TESOL was characterized by a range of linguistically and culturally diverse content and people, inviting students to constantly stretch their personal experiences in a way to connect with the theories/concepts that they encountered in various writing situations.

Relying on Outside Resources

The students in this study were revealed to actively rely on a variety of outside resources in order to successfully accomplish a piece of writing. First of all, the students

who had learned English as a foreign language in Taiwan/China particularly expressed how they depended greatly on online resources and considered them to be a helpful tool in assisting them choosing the right word:

They [online resources] are so helpful! For example, when I look up one word, well, the whole process of choosing a word is so annoying! First of all, when I come up with a good word in Chinese, I'll put that in online Chinese-English dictionary to see the whole meaning and usage in its English translation .. so I'll get a big picture of that English word and its usage. And since I can't use the same word over and over, so I'll put that word in the thesaurus to see what other synonyms come up. And then I'll look up those synonyms in the dictionary again to see their whole meaning .. since sometimes a synonym has different meaning and usage. (Sharon, Interview)

While Sharon was not necessarily found to appreciate the work of conducting the search of a good word, she nevertheless seemed to develop a sequence of strategies, making use of online dictionaries and the thesaurus, in order to arrive at the right word. Susana, for another, also spoke of the usefulness of search engines via the Internet when looking for “a particular word in a particular context”:

When a “good word” is flashing through my mind, especially since I haven't used it for a long time, I'd type up the word on *Google* search and see how other people use it. So I don't just know the meaning of one word by dictionary, but also how other people use this particular word in a particular context. (Susana, Interview)

Susana seemed to recognize the primacy of context over text as she articulated that she does not “just know the meaning of one word by dictionary, but also how other people use this particular word in a particular context.”

In addition to word choice, the students also used the Internet to search for relevant materials or possible ideas for their papers. They suggested *Google Scholar* as one of their most-often-used search engines because it provided “reliable sources of scholarly articles which meets our research's purposes” (Sharon, Interview).

The above illustrations seemed to fit with the recent observations of multiliteracies in the 21st Century advanced by several writing scholars (Lunsford, 2011; Pennington, 2003; Sperling & DiPardo, 2008; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Yancey, 2009) as students in the current study indeed incorporated technology as part of their writing processes.

Second, the students were revealed to be responsible for their own editing in the writing process, for example, “too much grammatical errors will not make you look like a graduate student” (Sharon). Many students also felt that they should be accountable for their own proofreading as they perceived that “the instructor would think you should do this by yourself, and not ask them to do this for you” (Sharon). Yet, in making sense of their graduate writing this way, the students were found to rely for proofreading mostly on their friends outside the program. Susana and Grace spoke of their outside Chinese and Chinese American friends whom they turned to for help, for example, “I use my Chinese friends to look at my papers most of the time” (Susana). Sharon, for another, also recognized the importance of seeking help on proofreading from her nonnative counterparts in the program:

I also asked my classmates to look at my grammar, and since one half of my classmates were nonnative speakers .. so a great chance is that I usually had them read my papers and I still found it useful. (Sharon, Interview)

Sharon previously spoke of the importance of collaborating with her peers in the process of writing. Here, she seemed to acknowledge the usefulness of her non-native fellow students and regarded them as equally helpful as her native counterparts. However, she retreated from asking help of native speaker classmates when it came to proofreading a paper:

For native speakers, if they have time I'd ask of them. But most of the time, I don't think I should ask them, especially if you give them the whole thing to read .. I don't think I can do that. And since I'm a very very slow writer .. I read and write in a very slow manner .. if I finished my paper too close to the deadline, I can't ask them of that either since they were all busy with their own works. (Sharon, Interview)

As previously discussed, Sharon perceived that she was slow in the process of accomplishing a piece of writing mainly because she felt she had to read through all the available resources before she could start to write. She further regarded it as a "weird habit" compared with native speakers' writing processes which she assumed to be a norm (i.e., to read and write at the same time). This assumption of perceived power difference seemed to create an asymmetrical relationship between these two groups, and in turn, might have helped explain why many students in the present study expressed that they preferred to draw on their Mandarin-speaking or other non-native friends as outside resources. However, this was not the only reason for their doing so. Students also mentioned that they did not find the Writing Center at the University helpful in assisting them in the process of editing:

I didn't really take advantage of that service [writing center]. I made it one time only. Since if you want your paper to be read by the tutor at the writing center, you'd need to finish your paper much earlier than the deadline .. since you'd need to save some time for appointments and revisions and all that. (Thomas, Interview)

Thomas faced a dilemma which seemed to pose an ongoing struggle that many international students in the present study expressed. That is, on the one hand, the students realized that it was required of them to write quickly in order to have others read their papers ahead of time. On the other hand, they also felt that they should take time to deal with the seemingly intense demands of graduate course work and deadlines. As a result, these students voluntarily turned away from the insiders' resources provided by the

University to those of outsiders such as their personal friends. These observations derived from the current study render fruitful topics for future research in further investigation of how international students access a range of inside and outside resources to assist them in moving toward completing their papers and other assignments.

Summary

In order to understand the students' ideological development through academic writing in the written community of TESOL, this chapter presented the students' struggles and strategies as they spoke of current writing experiences across the TESOL curriculum. First, the students struggled to take on professional identities as scholars and to write with authoritative voices in the field through reading the scholarly written works of others. Second, the students struggled to balance conflicting selves, that is, an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer and the role of student writing papers for various instructors in the program. Third, the students struggled to reconcile competing voices of how one should write, evident as they collaborated with their fellow students in various writing-related activities. This part of the study also revealed that the struggles that the students experienced ultimately could transform into new opportunities for learning in a way that helped them to shape their sense of self as TESOL professionals. In responding to the kinds of struggles that the students spoke of, three kinds of strategies also were seen to reflect these new ways of learning in their program: carefully reading/observing others' written works, liberally relating personal experiences to the academic content area, and relying selectively on outside resources to help them in their field of study.

CHAPTER 6
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONAL
MEMBERSHIP IN TESOL

Introduction

In order to understand what the Mandarin Chinese-speaking newcomer students' academic writing reveals about them as participants and members in their disciplinary community, this chapter analyzed the individual students' writing through cultural-rhetorical and intertextual analyses, interwoven with the students' and the instructors' accounts and other relevant texts to understand how the students' written products and writing processes contributed to their being particular participants and members in TESOL. Two interrelated findings were found, summarized as follows and in Table 6.1.

First, the students practiced diverse ways of writing which contributed to and helped shape their written participation as individual users of academic language in TESOL.

For example, Esther's written participation included the following: an unconfident participant in the written academic context of TESOL yet competent when acting in the roles of a writer, a reader, a researcher, a language practitioner, and a writing tutor. Esther's written participation was also complex since the kinds of writing that she practiced in TESOL encouraged her to explore not only her cultural and linguistic roots, but her own experiences both as a language practitioner and a field researcher.

Like Esther, Sharon was not a particularly confident participant. She reluctantly identified with being a writer and a researcher, though these were evolving for her. She actually preferred to be identified as a learner and a teacher.

Thomas struggled with written language in TESOL, yet was in the process of a transforming member as he worked through his academic language challenges toward a professional identity as a TESOLer.

Susana was not a confident writer, struggling with the language-related aspects of writing. Yet she was a willing learner who attempted to become a language teacher through developing good language competence, creativity, and inspiration.

Grace was a reticent participant who struggled to speak up. Yet she could be a proficient language teacher in the sense of being well-versed in English grammar.

Second, along with their varied difficulties and strengths, the students revealed varied ways of trying to become professional members of the TESOL community.

For example, Esther gained full membership by adeptly practicing writing and other related activities and having her participation validated by the course instructors. She was, in these respects, a high performing member who had developed a certain mastery over the academic written Discourse implied by U.S. academia.

Sharon showed herself to be a developing professional and her participation was recognized by her course instructor. Sharon was, in these respects, a well-accepted member on her way to becoming a fully developed member in the TESOL community. Even so, she and her course instructor held different beliefs regarding what characterizes a member as a good academic writer.

Thomas spoke with mixed feelings and hesitant attitudes about writing. Yet he aimed to gain professional membership as a language teacher through developing good writing skills. In addition, while Thomas and his course instructor regarded critical

reading/writing as important skills that qualify one as a competent writer at the graduate-level, they both recognized these to be the greatest challenge for most newcomers in the field, including Thomas.

Susana tried to write like a TESOLer, but she remained a relatively marginal member as observed by her course instructor. While both she and her course instructor regarded speaking and writing to be fundamental skills for a competent language teacher, they recognized these to be great challenges for Susana.

Though the youngest member with the least academic experience in the TESOL program compared to others in this study, Grace was a capable L2 teacher in English grammar. Yet while she and her course instructor regarded classroom participation to be an important sociocultural practice for potential members to master, they recognized this to be a major obstacle for a new member from Taiwan or China, like Grace, to conquer.

Taken together, the findings revealed in this chapter differ from a body of genre-based research on advanced students learning to write in science, engineering, or social science disciplines (e.g., Braine, 1995; Dudley-Evans, 1995; Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1987, 1990). While prior studies seemed to presume uniform discourse communities in which unambiguous writing tasks, linguistic skills, and/or rhetorical conventions define the disciplines and their students; this study demonstrates the TESOL community a complex and varied one, allowing different kinds of written participation that (re)define the students as they engage in writing and other related activities in their course(s).

Table 6.1

Focal Student Characteristics in the M.A. TESOL program at WAU

	Esther	Sharon	Thomas	Susana	Grace
Student Perspective: Academic Participation ²²	Unconfident yet fully competent when acting as a writer, reader, researcher, language practitioner, and writing tutor	Unconfident yet evolving as a writer and researcher, with perception of self as a learner and teacher	Struggling yet transforming into a TESOLer by working through academic language challenges	Unconfident and struggling, yet willing to learn through developing language competence, creativity, and inspiration	Struggling and reticent, yet well-versed in English grammar
Instructor Perspective: Professional Membership ²³	Successfully gaining full membership by adeptly practicing writing and other related activities	Developing membership	Struggling toward membership, lacking critical reading and writing skills	Struggling toward membership, lacking oral and written language skills	Struggling toward membership, lacking understanding of classroom participation norms

While the primary data for analyzing the students’ written participation in this study came from the writing that they produced across the TESOL curriculum, it also became essential to include their text-based interviews in an attempt to uncover their tacit knowledge of, and motivations for their writing, and the instructors’ interviews, as well as instructor-generated texts such as writing prompts, comments, and course syllabi, in an effort to obtain a fuller picture to examine how the students’ texts came into being (Buell, 2004; Prior, 2004). Questions and prompts that elicited oral data included (1) How did

²² *Academic Participation* revealed through students’ writing, along with their own accounts about language use in their courses.

²³ *Professional Membership* revealed through instructors’ comments about the students’ enculturation into TESOL.

you write this particular paper, or how did you write this particular section of this paper (e.g., from the aspects of content, organization, and use of language)? (2) How did you interpret instructor's feedback (both oral and written) on this assignment? (3) How did you understand the expectations in carrying out this particular assignment? Instructor interview question included (1) What makes a good academic writer in the program? (2) Why did you give this particular feedback (oral or written) on the student(s)' paper(s)? (3) How did you communicate your own expectations/feedback for students' written assignments?

In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the kinds of academic literacy that the students practiced in their M.A. TESOL program, with an aim to providing background information about the academic written contexts in which the students participated.

An Overview of Academic Literacy Practices in an M.A. TESOL Program

The students consistently expressed that they were required to do "a great deal of writing" and that they only had to take a few exams, including in-class, take-home, and the exit comprehensive exam, throughout the whole program. The students varied in their decisions and willingness in choosing and submitting their papers for this study. Esther and Sharon, who had finished the program and who demonstrated an enthusiasm for writing, provided me with more assignments over several courses and spent more time talking about their papers than the other students. In contrast, Susana, who was one semester away toward completing the program, provided me with two assignments that she did in one core course. Thomas, in his second semester, provided me with two assignments that he did in two core courses. Grace, in her first semester, provided me

with two assignments that she did in one required pre-requisite in TESOL. In addition, Esther, Sharon, Susana, and Thomas mentioned that they lost or gave away some of their papers so that they could not give them to me even if they wanted to. This experience with collecting data is the same as what Prior (2004) expressed regarding a key dilemma in collecting and keeping track of students' texts: "In many cases, it is not possible to collect every text produced... some are thrown out or get lost... electronic texts may be deleted...marginal notes on readings are forgotten" (p. 172).

Nevertheless, the students provided me with a total of 11 types of writing that they had produced over six courses, including four core courses (Courses A-D), one pre-approved elective (Course E), and one pre-requisite (Course F). Among these writing samples were drafts written as part of the required assignments, and final copies. While most of these assignments had instructors' written comments on them, a few final projects did not because the students did not get a chance to receive their professors' feedback after they finished the course(s).

I categorized these types of writing into five broad genres of writing that students produced in their M.A. TESOL program at WAU (Table 6.2): (1) *Reflection*: reading reflection, personal reflection, and learning reflection; (2) *Critical Review*: literature review; (3) *Project Description*: lesson plan project, culture project, and error analysis project; (4) *Essay*: conceptual essay, and (5) *Data-based Report*: data report and data commentary.

Tale 6.2

Summary of the Students and their Writing Samples Across the TESOL Curriculum

Student		Esther	Sharon	Thomas	Susana	Grace
Kinds of writing	<i>Reflection</i>	Reflective journals (Course A)	Reflective journals (Course A)	Reflective journals (Course A)	Reading reflection (Course B)	Learning reflection (Course F)
		Personal reflection (Course E)				
	<i>Critical Review</i>		Literature review (Course C)			
	<i>Project Description</i>	Culture project (Course C)	Culture project (Course C)		Lesson plan project (Course B)	Error analysis project (Course F)
		Lesson plan project (Course B)				
	<i>Essay</i>	Essay (Course A)		Essay (Course A)		
	<i>Data-based Report</i>		Data commentary (Course A)	Concept essay (Course D)		
		Data report (Course C)				

Each type of writing required a different form and style and achieved a different purpose as well as expectations according to the writing samples the students submitted. For example, students wrote reflections to keep track of their thoughts on course-related issues and topics. They did secondary- or library-based research papers/essays to practice genres of critical reviews and essays. Students also did primary research and

practiced writing about data-based reports on topics of their own choices for all kinds of project descriptions. The pervasiveness of writing and the diversity of writing genres in their M.A. TESOL program supports what Casanave (2002) described about the kinds of academic literacy that students practiced in their M.A. TESOL at MIIS.

In order to illustrate the main findings presented in the beginning of this chapter, the following sections discuss the individual students' writing through cultural-rhetorical and intertextual analyses, interwoven with participant accounts and other relevant texts to understand how their written products and writing process contribute to their identity formation as particular participants and members in the written Discourse of TESOL²⁴. Finally, I provide a summary and discussion in relation to the main findings at the end of this chapter.

Exploring Esther's Academic Texts

Analyses of Esther's written texts and writing process revealed her to have multiple roles in the TESOL community in which she belonged. Esther is also revealed to be a well-recognized "top-student" in her disciplinary group at WAU.

Esther provided me with quite a few assignments that she had written in 2007 and 2008, including an essay along with several reflective journals from a required introductory course in TESOL (Course A); a lesson plan project from a core course in advanced English structures (Course B); a culture project from a core course in SLA and

²⁴ As described in Chapter 3, I used Marcia Buell's (2004) frameworks of *code-switching in second language writing* (in Bazerman & Prior, 2004) to examine how the students used a mix of codes in their writing (e.g., as manifested in the shifts of rhetorical and cultural structures, as well as intertextual representations, along with their text-based interviews and other relevant data) which entails the display and switching of identity that the writer represented in the text and in the context where such writing was situated. This particular way of examining both the product and the process helped to illuminate issues of participation, negotiation, and identity both at and beyond the textual level.

culture (Course C), and a personal reflection from a lecture-type, pre-approved elective course in sociolinguistics (Course E).

Esther's Use of Written Language: An Unconfident yet Competent Participant with Multiple Roles

An examination of Esther's texts, along with her own account about language use in her courses, reveal her as an unconfident yet competent participant of the TESOL community who simultaneously acted within multiple roles as a writer, a reader, a tutor, a language practitioner and a field researcher, as well as a multilingual Chinese American of Taiwanese origin.

As revealed in Chapter 4, Esther regarded writing in TESOL as a personal endeavor and found most interest in writing reflective journals. These preferences are reflected in her selection of writing samples for the present study. For example, Esther previously recalled her favorite paper, a personal reflection, which she did in Course E. This paper is an assignment from a lecture-type, elective course in sociolinguistics. This assignment asks the students to write a personal reflection on their linguistic heritage. Esther recalled the prompt to be, simply, "Define what you think your language heritage is."

In this paper, readers are oriented to the paper as soon as they read the title: "Mandarin/Hakkanese/English." Linguistically and culturally, the title suggests that Esther might be a multilingual. Being multilingual, she would have multiple influences that affect her language choices and that have shaped her worldview. This is a six-page paper that begins with two introductory paragraphs defining what the writer, Esther, thinks is her language heritage. The paper continues with a body section organized into ten paragraphs where she tells the immigration story of her ancestors, including how her

family's ways of life had mobilized her ways of acquiring, learning, and using those languages in the various contexts of Taiwan and the U.S. Finally, Esther presents a concluding paragraph where she demonstrates positive sentiments and attitudes toward the languages/dialects she speaks and how she might pass them onto her future children. This paper was favored not only by Esther but also by her professor, Dr. Emerson. In the sample, I have included the professor's marginal and in-text comments in boldface and brackets and his underlining:

Mandarin/Hakkanese/English

¹I spent most of my life in the Silicon Valley, an area with a diverse Asian population. ²Thus, it's not uncommon for people to ask me what "specific" ethnicity I am. ³When asked, my most natural and simple answer is "Chinese." ⁴Sometimes people will follow this with "Oh, then do you speak Chinese?" wherein my reply is usually "yes, Mandarin Chinese." ⁵If there is further inquiry on this emphasis, I then proceed to explain the difference between Mandarin and Cantonese. ⁶I refer to things like geography (the region of Canton), entertainment (Hong Kong movies), and tonal features (Cantonese has two more tones than Mandarin) to guide my explanation. ⁷In my experience, I've encountered many "Americans" who weren't aware of a difference; oftentimes, the term "Chinese" is used to represent both languages. ⁸The older I became the more I realized how generic "Chinese" as a label can be, perhaps comparable to the term "Hispanic." ⁹Here in the s [S]tates, however, "Chinese" is always my initial response to questions of ethnicity. ¹⁰Rarely do I expand on what this really means in my situation—being "Chinese" but not from China, speaking "Chinese" but also able to understand the dialect "Hakkanese," which is actually a cultural identification as well.

¹¹I was born in Taiwan, where nearly everyone knows about the "Hakka" heritage (客家—in Chinese characters; kè jiā in pinyin form). ¹²Both my father and my mother's families have retained this cultural heritage, though the dialect has become less apparent within my generation. ¹³The exact origins of the Hakkanese people within China are unclear, though their diaspora have predominantly been in regions of Southern China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. ¹⁴The dialect of "Taiwanese," which many people in Taiwan speak, also originates from the southern region of China (Fujian province). ¹⁵There are other varieties of Hakkanese due to the varying regions of settlement; my mother tells me that the variety we use is of the "xī yēng" kind. ¹⁶Both Hakkanese and Taiwanese are not mutually intelligible to each other nor with Mandarin to the full extent; a few expressions may sound similar but with different tones. ¹⁷As much as I would like to divulge on "Hakkanese culture," [Too

bad! Maybe another time ☺] for the purpose of this paper I will mostly discuss Hakkanese from a language perspective. ¹⁸Furthermore, I consider Mandarin to be my heritage due to my own command of it, and the prevalence it has as the national language of Taiwan as well as worldwide.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.1. An introduction from Esther’s 6-page personal reflection, entitled “Mandarin/Hakkanese/English.”

This introduction is marked by repeated use of the first person pronoun *I*, which points to a personal narrative. However, in Sentences 13 through 18, there are no first person pronouns but a choice of the relatively formal and technical expressions which offer a more expository account of Esther’s Chinese heritage (e.g., *The exact origins of the Hakkanese people within China are unclear...* and *The dialect of Taiwanese... originates from the southern region of China...*). Sentences 16 and 18 are especially informational regarding Esther’s language heritage, with the expressions *Both Hakkanese and Taiwanese are not mutually intelligible...* and *[T]he prevalence it [Mandarin] has as the national language of Taiwan as well as worldwide*, both of which indicate a shift toward an exposition in the more formal language. The phrase, *for the purpose of this paper* (Sentence 17), also signals a possible change in discourse, a possible shift toward a more academic stance than narrative, reflected in a type of thesis statement indicating the point of the paper. This also indicates Esther’s “authorial self,” as she presents her voice as an author of this particular paper in terms of the stance, a choice to focus on Hakkanese (from a language perspective), that she chooses to take (Ivanič, 1998; Prior, 2004).

In the interview, Esther confirmed the way she presented the thesis statements in her written introductions:

It's [Thesis statement is] usually toward the end of the paragraph. Since to me, part of the roadmap [the introduction] involves kind of taking the readers to the sequential .. I mean it doesn't have to be a sequential topic, but you can't just jump into it. To me, I had a hard time just jumping into it. I think thesis either appears at the end of the first paragraph or the end of the second paragraph. (Esther, Interview)

In addition to these discourse shifts, intertextual representations within the text also appear to mark multiple identities for Esther (Ivanič, 1998; Prior, 1991, 1998, 2004). For example, the first introductory paragraph seems to rely on a popular political discourse of identity. That is, in the first three sentences, Esther appears to be appropriating a popular diversity discourse where she positions and expresses her ethnic identity as “Chinese” (e.g., [When asked what specific ethnicity I am,] *my most natural and simple answer is “Chinese.”*). That Esther knows she is appropriating this popular diversity discourse is particularly reflected in the phrase/word of *my most natural and simple answer is...— “Chinese”* is one of the stereotypically easily understood responses to the question of Asian ethnicity. However, she sets up this popular ethnicity discourse to reveal the tension in worldviews between Esther and the political/authoritative discourse in the U.S (e.g., *how generic “Chinese” as a label can be, many “Americans” weren't aware of a difference, and being Chinese but not from China, speaking Chinese but also able to understand the dialect Hakkanese...*).

These phrases, as demonstrated in the parentheses, seem to more indirectly rely on familiar discussions about how U.S. society should classify people, thus reflecting a long-debated issue of social category. In order to position herself in relation to this

controversy, Esther draws explicitly on common knowledge and popular culture by using concepts such as geography (*the region of Canton*), entertainment (*Hong Kong movies*), and tonal features (*Cantonese has two more tones than Mandarin*) to help others see how she wants herself represented within these relevant conversations and ideologies. Thus, the paragraph not only establishes a tension but specifies a debate through explicit and implicit intertextual resources that characterize Esther's discourse and the political/authoritative discourse in the U.S.

Therefore, seen from a Discourse perspective, in terms of a user of academic language in the written Discourse of TESOL, Esther was revealed not only to be an "academic writer," but a U.S. immigrant with an identifiable personal history, with identifying markers and attributes, such as nation (being a Chinese American from Taiwan), ethnicity (being a Chinese and an East Asian), as well as language and culture (a multilingual of Mandarin/Hakkanese/Chinese). This "autobiographical self" (Ivanič, 1998, p. 24), seen in the form of a personal reflection, appears to represent one kind of writer identity, related to Esther's sense of her roots and her own ways of representing life experiences. This observation echoes what Ivanič (1998) found in her study, in which eight native and mature²⁵ undergraduates (in various social science disciplines in a U.K. setting) present themselves as unique persons through their previously acquired discourses in portions of or in particular kinds of their academic essays.

²⁵ Students who return to college over the age of 25.

In fact, blending personal with academic writing seems to meet the course expectations and win the course instructor's favor. As an end comment on this paper, Dr. Emerson wrote:

Excellent paper in every way: historical linguistic contexts in Taiwan, your family members' linguistic experiences during these historical phases, and especially your own linguistic repertoire and your attitudes and emotions concerning your languages and their speakers. Wonderful blend of national, family, and personal experiences and exceptionally well written in a delightful style! (Course E instructor, Dr. Emerson, Written feedback)

In the margins, Dr. Emerson also wrote short comments in a casual tone with a drawing of a smiley face (*Too bad! Maybe another time ☺*) next to Sentence 17, which he had underlined. This kind of feedback not only indicates the instructor's interest in getting to know about a student's culture, but is likely an encouragement for Esther to pursue this line of inquiry (on "Hakkanese culture") in the future. These comments also suggest that Esther, the writer, gave an impression of having values, beliefs, and interests aligned with Dr. Emerson's, the reader of this particular assignment. This match of values between student the writer and instructor the reader further reflects Esther's academic identity as a well-recognized member of her academic community (Casanave, 2002; Ivanič, 1998). An elaboration of various instructors' comments on Esther's written performance will be provided as I discuss her written membership at the end of this section.

The personal reflection does not appear to be the only kind of academic writing mixed with a personal style that Esther produced in Course E. This way of writing can also be seen in Esther's other more "formal" papers. For example, in a required core course in advanced English structures (Course B), Esther chose to create her 11-page

lesson plan project based on her prior English teaching experiences in Taiwan, entitled “Teaching Pragmatics & Lesson Plan.” According to the instructional guide, this is a final project in which students “design teaching materials that address a specific aspect of pragmatics or discourse and which are based on the authentic language data that students have collected.” This paper includes seven sections in which Esther laid out key components that are required in the design of a lesson plan project: “Identification of the Target Language Learners”; “The Pragmatic and Discourse Needs of the Learners”; “Review of the Literature on the Topic”; “Rationale”; “Teaching Goals”; “Unit Plan”; and one sample lesson, followed with a reference list.

The following sample is the first two paragraphs of the section “Rationale,” which Esther claimed to be “my favorite part” of the whole project. Esther wrote a two-pager on this particular section in which she explains the relevance of her topic (on “Discourse Markers”) for her designated group of learners (upper-division college students in Taiwan). In the sample, the bracketed area with three periods indicates ellipsis:

Teaching Pragmatics & Lesson Plan

[A section on “Rationale”] ¹As discussed in the literature review, DMs [Discourse Markers] are worthwhile to explore in TESOL, specifically in raising learners’ awareness about their certain features. ²I will now narrow my focus on TEFL [Teaching English as a Foreign Language] in Taiwan, where I have developed a hypothetical lesson plan on DMs. ³From my own experience, though EFL in Taiwan is both a part of public as well as private education, there are many gaps between what is taught and how learners are then able to communicate. [...]

⁴At the college level, I’ve personally observed the same gaps between what is taught and how learners communicate in English, particularly in verbal communication. ⁵I’ve met English majors who had a wonderful and complex knowledge of vocabulary and literature, but were reluctant to carry on casual conversation in English. ⁶I’ve also worked with Chinese English teachers who knew more about the grammar than I did, but constantly asked questions about common usage and/or expressions. ⁷While I believe that advanced English learners in Taiwan

are overall competent in their understanding of the language, learners themselves may emphasize the need for more communicative practice.⁸ Therefore, raising learners' pragmatic awareness can develop both the discourse and communicative competence which may be lacking in teaching and learning EFL.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.2. A sample from Esther's 11-page lesson plan project, entitled "Teaching Pragmatics & Lesson Plan."

As we see from the sample, while this section is marked by repeated use of the first person pronoun *I*, particularly in the second paragraph, Sentence 1 nevertheless indicates this paper as being academic, referencing another part of the paper ("the Literature Review"). Sentences 3 and 8 show relatively formal and technical discussions of Esther's rationale on teaching this specific topic to college students in Taiwan, with the expressions *there are many gaps [for EFL in Taiwan] between what is taught and how learners are then able to communicate...* and *raising learners' pragmatic awareness can develop both the discourse and communicative competence...*, both of which indicate a shift toward more academic language.

In addition to operating in the TESOL ideology by using field-related language, in making sense of the relevance of her topic for the targeted language learners in Sentences 4 to 7, Esther appears to be relying on her previously acquired discourse as an EFL teacher in Taiwan through extensive use of the first person pronoun *I* (e.g., *I've personally observed many gaps between what is taught and how learners are then able to communicate in English...*), thus marking her other writer identity as a "Chinese native-English-speaking teacher." This "discoursal self" (Ivanič, 1998, p. 25) seems to be co-constructed through the discourse characteristics of a lesson plan project which

characterizes the field of TESOL, which invites Esther to consciously bring her own experiences as an English teacher into this particular written text.

This observation can also be seen elsewhere when Esther reflects her own composing process in Course A: “My own experience teaching English in Taiwan and also being from Taiwan sort of sets the backdrop for a potential topic focusing on Asia” (Reflective journal #2). In another required introductory course in TESOL (Course A), Esther chooses to write her first essay based on the topic of “English as a global language,” out of a list of themes which Dr. Avi set as writing topics for this course. This is a six-page paper that begins with two introductory paragraphs framing what Esther, decides is her focus for this particular topic. The title, “Globalization and English-language Teaching,” suggests Esther, as the author of this paper, might express her stance or opinions on relevant political and academic issues. The paper continues with two main sections, “Globalization and English as a global language” and “The Cultural Context of Singapore,” organized into ten individual paragraphs where Esther synthesizes relevant literature on the topic of ELT in Asia and then focuses on one example of ELT in the multicultural city-state of Singapore. Finally, Esther presents a section on “Globalization and ELT” where she provides opinions on the implications of the topic both in the U.S. and non-U.S. classroom contexts. In the sample, the bracketed area with three periods indicates ellipsis:

Globalization and English-language teaching

Introduction:

¹This paper assumes the current dominant status of English as a global language.

²I am framing my research primarily on how English-language teachers can address

concepts of “globalization” in their profession, particularly in the international scope of ELT (English language teaching).³ Individuals should consider the varying types of international institutions they teach for, and the background and basis supporting these institutions.⁴ I believe that it is important for teachers to analyze the underlying socio-cultural issues of where they teach, in connection to globalization and ELT.⁵ When we examine the presence and practice of English within local contexts, we can deepen our understanding of a region’s current issues.⁶ In recognizing this “ecology” of ELT (especially when teaching abroad), teachers should be aware of the language policies of a nation due to globalizing demands.

⁷I will begin this paper by illustrating some current issues within the theme of English as a global language.⁸ For the purpose of narrowing my research, I am focusing on ELT in Asia, due to my own interests and connections there.⁹ Since immigrating to the U.S. from Taiwan when I was six, I’ve also returned to my country to teach English.¹⁰ In this paper however, I will not be focusing on ELT in Taiwan.¹¹ Instead, I will shift to discuss some current issues in the multicultural city-state of Singapore.¹² My guiding thesis is that in order to become better and more culturally-adaptive teachers, individuals should be aware of the implications of ELT as a growing international market, translated to the local contexts of where they teach. [...]

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.3. An introduction from Esther’s 6-page essay I, entitled “Globalization and English-Language Teaching.”

Seen from this writing sample, while Esther uses expressions indicating self-narration in Sentences 8 and 9 (e.g., *I am focusing on ELT in Asia, due to my own interests and connections there* and *Since immigrating to the U.S. from Taiwan when I was six, I’ve also returned to my country to teach English.*), this introduction is marked by an extensive use of academic discourse. This includes *This paper assumes...* (Sentence 1); *I am framing my research primarily on...* (Sentence 2); *I will begin this paper by...* (Sentence 7); *For the purpose of narrowing my research....* (Sentence 8); *In this paper however, I will not be focusing on ELT in Taiwan...* (Sentence 10); I will shift to discuss current issues in... (Sentence 11); and *My guiding thesis is that...* (Sentence

12). In addition, all of these examples demonstrate that Esther, as the author of this paper, is trying to set up her stance, opinions, and beliefs in order to guide and assist potential readers when reading this particular paper on the topic of globalization and ELT (Bazerman, 1981; Buell, 2004; Casanave, 2002; Ivanič, 1998; Prior, 1998, 2004).

In one reflective journal in which Esther documents her writing process for this course, she reveals her perceptions in choosing this particular topic for her research:

When I first saw the list of themes for this class, *English as a global language* struck me the most. I think there is a book by this exact name. Although all the themes are broad enough to filter into other topics of interest for me, this one is something I'm excited to read more about and to research. *Lingua franca*. I like this term. It's easy for me to have a bias about the English language & its global implications & possibilities. The availability of TESOL programs attest to this very notion of English as a global language, as these programs do not only train "native"-speakers of English, but a range of aspiring teachers with multicultural backgrounds. (Esther, #2 Reflective journal, entitled "English and Globalization," 9/5/2007)

Esther found that content topics in TESOL interested her mainly because these topics resonated with her own experiences as a struggling immigrant in the U.S. Therefore, even though she fondly considered herself a Chinese native-English speaker due to the fact that she had started to speak English as soon as she arrived in the U.S. at the age of six, she seemed to tacitly identify herself as a teacher with multicultural background. This cultural identification appears to further encourage her in pursuing relevant topics related to the theme of "English as a global language":

As I continue to "streamline" my research for the 1st paper, I am becoming interested in other sub-topics as I scan through selected readings. In other words, I am becoming distracted by other (however related) topics. Other topics I've come across in this initial broad research of English and globalization include the *hegemony* of English worldwide, *linguistic imperialism*, *world englishes*, EFL teachers' assumptions about students in certain contexts, and the potential mismatches of such assumptions with the reality of learners' needs (especially in global contexts)... I think that I am just trying to find something which truly resonates in me, yet is

realistic to develop a paper on within this theme of English and globalization. I also think that with globalization as a theme, it can be easy to be pulled into other sub-topics and issues. (Esther, #5 Reflective journal, entitled “Research Topic(s),” 9/27/2007)

As revealed in Chapter 5, Esther and many other students expressed their struggle to turn their initial inquiries into a focused topic within a feasible framework in the field. Seen from her reflective journal above, Esther’s words seemed to further illustrate this point. However, Esther considered this step as “natural”:

I always feel a little ambivalent at this point of a research essay. This point being a little past the beginning phase (having found an overall topic and gotten an idea of resources). It’s like this:

- ⇒ Initial high (*I know what I want to develop my essay on!*)
- ⇒ Confidence (*There are resources out there & my q’s are clear*)
- ⇒ A general “fussy” feeling (*Wow there’s a lot to read...*)
- ☉ Fussy going into fuzzy (*Okay...where’s my focus again?*)
- ↪ Ambivalence

As I’m reading David Crystal’s *English as a global language*, the “theme” of my topic, I’ve been aware of potential sub-topics. I started “seeing” potential sub-topics I could develop for my Course C [on SLA and culture]. At a certain point, I was reading the book “on the lookout” to tie it in with a Course C research topic (which is still being developed). While this is a good sign, I have to focus & narrow in on my initial research idea for Course A. I guess that this feeling of near ambivalence settles in after you’ve more or less felt “guided” by a general topic, and was active in compiling resources...the tasks which follow are now up to the writer/researcher, once this beginning phase has been set up. So perhaps this ambivalence is natural. I know I always feel it at about this turning point. (Esther, #4 Reflective journal, entitled “Research Essays,” 9/22/2007)

In her journal entry, Esther vividly re-constructs and portrays her research process “a little past the beginning phase.” This “turning point” seemed to reflect a cyclic process which involved reading-relating-focusing, though not necessarily in a sequential order (e.g., reading from resources to tie ideas in with a Course C project, yet at the same developing a focused topic for the essay in Course A). This observation resonates with

that revealed in Chapter 4 in which Esther compared her research writing process to the metaphor of “sewing a quilt.” Previously, Esther described this process as one in which she “wove” her perceptions and interpretations as a U.S. immigrant (“the threads”) into her research papers, as if she was doing one big project (“the quilt”) through integrating relevant parts (“the patchwork”) for different classes. This observation further extends that in Ivanič’s (1998) and Prior’s (1998) studies in which they found that advanced level writing is a complex process, one that involves factors “not just textual” (as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 92), but non-textual factors beyond the immediate classroom setting—be it writers’ personal background, previous experiences, or relationships with others—in a way that they “wove these threads into one kind of paper” (as cited in Casanave, 2002, p. 92).

We also recall that Esther claimed that her thesis “either appears at the end of the first paragraph, or the end of the second paragraph” in introductions. However, in this paper, while pointing out her thesis in Sentence 6 (*In recognizing this “ecology” of ELT...*), Esther also added the following opinions on “locating a thesis,” not only for this particular paper, but explicitly in any writing “at this advanced level in TESOL”:

I think my thesis is here— *In recognizing this “ecology” of ELT* [Sentence 6]— but I think sometimes the thesis is more than one sentence, right? By the time I was in the TESOL program, I stopped worrying too much about locating my thesis. My feeling is that if I have a clear intro. and I laid out the map .. and the points are there, and there’s a focus .. now I have a thesis, but I won’t concern if I can highlight the thesis. Actually now I happened to teach a class about what a thesis statement is, but the way I explained to my students is super broad. I told them that it should reveal to your reader the main points of your essay, or other definitions. And I always tell my advanced students not to be bound too much by the sentence, it’s *to be* (laugh). (...) I think also when I started to read more research papers in TESOL, you can’t exactly locate where their thesis is. (...) Now that you’re already here at this advanced level, why do you have to worry about where your thesis is? It’s not about where it is, but

it's about if one can identify what you are talking about in your intro. (Esther, Interview)

Esther's way of composing an introduction is akin to Bazerman's (1981) finding on the relation of a text to its writing context from the discourse community of the social sciences. As illustrated in Esther's and other students' writing, the field of TESOL appears to be characterized by an interdisciplinary knowledge base with divergent frameworks; therefore, "it is up to the writer to direct, urge, and persuade potential readers along the lines of his or her thoughts on a particular kind of paper" (Bazerman, 1981, p. 378).

In our interviews, Esther also repeated to me several times that she sees introductions in general as an important part of an overall essay:

I remember Dr. Avi [Course A instructor] in Course A .. he said that your intro should be like a *roadmap* for your readers, so when they first begin reading they can navigate where you're gonna take them to the rest of the paper. So when I heard this I immediately said to myself that's how I've always done my intro .. and he just said it in a way that I always practice it. And I told you that I like to organize things, right? So, to me in intro., I always organize .. so not just for the readers, but for myself .. so I always started with intro. (Esther, Interview)

Esther also commented that the introductory section of her papers is most representative of her as a writer:

Intro [is the section that most representative of myself as a writer]. Because it's very organized .. because it's like fresh to me .. It's the first thing that I write .. it's the most revealing it does. Because by the time you are in the body, you're synthesizing .. you start to introduce other ideas. And I think intro is also the starting point probably where I start to come up with the ideas and topics .. but then in intro is how I represent it formally .. so definitely the intro. (Esther, Interview)

This point can also be seen in one of Esther's reflective journals in Course A, where she emphasizes the importance of "locating a paper" and compares the process of

composing an introduction to “establishing a territory.” The bracketed areas with three periods again indicate ellipses:

In McKay’s book for this course, she illustrates this idea of establishing a territory in the beginning of a research paper. To add to this, one is basically “locating” the topic within the field for the reader... [...] I have always found it easier and more interesting to “draft” out an introduction to all my academic papers. I like to set the context or *territory* for myself as the writer firsthand, so I can sort of “step back” and consider what I’m “dealing” with and what I have to say... Also, reading student papers at the West Writing Center (WWC)²⁶, I’m aware of how introductions set the tone and give me that first impression of their compositions; so basically, no matter how strong the rest of their paper may continue to be, that introduction is crucial for me as both a reader and a tutor who at this point, has set expectations for them.

[...] What I’m mostly trying to “work out” within this entry is simply how important I perceive introductions and setting the context to be for papers. To me, it’s always been the most natural and best way to start any writing... (Esther, #9 Reflective journal, entitled “‘Locating’ a Paper,” 10/27/2007)

In this reflection, Esther introduces the metaphorical idea of “establishing a territory” from McKay’s book, which students were required to read in Week 9, to illustrate and support her own views on the importance of composing an introduction. Esther seems to simultaneously construct a multiple sense of self (writer/reader/tutor) on the basis of composing an introduction in the process of composing a paper. Because an introduction is the first thing that she writes, she found it essential to “set the context or territory” both for herself as a writer and others as readers for mutual understanding of what a particular paper is about. Being a writing tutor at the WWC, Esther also found it significant for her students to compose a well-established introduction in order to give her a first impression, both as a reader and a tutor, of their compositions. These observations of composing a specific section (i.e., an introduction) of a particular paper also seemed to extend those found in many academic literacy studies in which student

²⁶ The name of the writing center in which Esther worked as a tutor within TESOL is in pseudonym.

writers must consider their reader-audience's anticipation as they write under a particular writing context within or across any given discipline(s) (e.g., Bartholomae, 1985/2001; Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1988; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987).

However, unlike what previous studies have suggested, this study also reveals that conforming to instructor-assessors' expectations did not appear to be a pressure for an interested student like Esther. In generalizing her preference in constructing an introduction to "all my academic papers," she illustrated her personal composing approach for academic writing overall. In another journal entry, entitled "Personal Composing Process," she again emphasized this preference:

I was surprised to hear that both my group members begin composing papers from the "bodies." I was also surprised that starting with the introduction of a paper (as I've always done) is not the norm nor is even recommended! For me, I cannot imagine working on a paper from the body, but I always, always begin in the beginning! For me, the composing process cannot be laid out before I have an opening sentence and a solid introductory paragraph. I wouldn't teach students to write from the body either, mostly because of my own preference and familiarity. I don't know if it's so much the organization of things that causes my feelings, or maybe just how little I've evolved from a traditional outline... hey, maybe it's just psychological and habitual. I started wondering what I might discover if I shifted from this habit, this comfort zone of writing... well, probably not for this class anyways! (Esther, #1 Reflective journal, entitled "Personal Composing Process," 8/28/2007)

This reflection seems to capture the cognitive and perhaps the emotional side of Esther when she writes an introduction. In addition to regarding herself as a writer/reader/tutor, Esther seemed to feel strongly about an introduction partly due to her own personality as "a person who organizes things." Esther previously spoke about how she liked to

organize things in her life. Here she connected this habit to her preference for starting a paper from the beginning.

In what follows, an examination of Esther's course instructors' written comments reveals her written membership as a competent member of the TESOL community and well-recognized "top-student," a topic to which now I turn.

Esther's Written Membership: A Well-Recognized "Top-Student"

Esther was revealed by her course instructors to establish her status as a well-recognized "top-student". Two examples of Esther's performance commented on by two of her course instructors in the TESOL program at WAU demonstrate this perception:

If somebody has not told me that she [Esther] was originally from Taiwan, I wouldn't have noticed she's from Taiwan. I would've thought she's an American-born Chinese .. partly it is you know, because her production is accent-free, I don't notice any grammatical issues .. her spoken English, I don't hear any Taiwanese accent at all .. it sounds American to me. In accent, grammar, vocabulary .. all of it, she is totally native-like. I wouldn't have any .. any second thoughts at all. And her writing was the same. So of the students that I've taught that you're studying, Esther is clearly the most proficient .. all the way to top .. even among the native students. For me, indistinguishable to people who study English as a second language .. I mean she was one of the top students—very very good. (Course B instructor, Dr. Boyd, Interview)

Well, I think Esther .. I don't think she's typical of foreign students coming from Taiwan. She came here very young and I think of her more as a generation 1.5. You know, she's very very .. uh .. not Americanized, but very very acculturated to American culture .. her writing, her speaking .. I mean I wouldn't consider her a foreign student by any means. I would consider her as a U.S. citizen. And actually, she had *beautiful* writing. I never saw any problem at all, you know, little things here and there .. but I never remembered what they were. And she was also very acculturated in terms of her classroom behavior, like asking questions, participating. (Course C instructor, Dr. Ashley, Interview)

Esther obtained a grade of "A" for both of her final projects and for the course in Courses B and C. In the lesson plan project, which she did for Courses B, Esther almost

obtained all positive feedback except for one place where Dr. Boyd suggested an inclusion of extra activity on the “Lesson Plan” section. Some positive comments which appear in the margin include *great summary* and *nice* (on the “Literature Review” section); *excellent!* and *great activity!* (on “Teaching Goals” section). There was also an end comment with the first sentence which reads *A great overall lesson plan, Esther*. The rest of the end comment is an expansion of Dr. Boyd’s suggestion focusing on the “Lesson Plan” section.

These good comments can also be seen in the culture project which Esther did in Course C. In addition, some of the comments which Esther received not only implied the instructor’s approval of her ideas but were conversation-like, as if the instructor were treating Esther as an equal member of this professional community. In the sample I have included the professor’s marginal comments in boldface and brackets at appropriate places in Esther’s text:

[Subsection on “Interpretation” from “Data Report” section] At this point, I believe that the field of contrastive rhetoric research has moved beyond cultural stereotyping, and has evolved into an area which is pertinent and innovative in relation to TESOL, culture, and the teaching of academic writing. **[If you want to do further reading in this area, you might want to look at Ann Johns’ work; she calls her approach a “socioliterate approach”.]**

[Conclusion] Through my own exploration of Kaplan’s original premises and the field of contrastive rhetoric, I’ve become more aware of the issues in ESL/EFL-writing as well as intercultural communications. Teaching writing in the TESOL field is a complex task, also dependent on the context of who, where, and for what purpose one is teaching to. As Silva (1990) illustrates, we have to consider the characteristics and expectations of the L2 writer and L1 reader, in relation to the L2 text’s objectives, aims, and the overall context for writing, whether it’s academically-oriented, business, social, etc. [...] A key point I’ve drawn from this is to not teach rhetorical forms without explaining why they are constructed so, in addition to not teaching such forms as “superior.” It’s possible to focus on particular composition forms, while recognizing style-variations in other cultures as well as genres. **[It seems like what we are moving toward is teaching students more**

about the metalinguistic awareness of genres and audiences and purposes... teaching students how to achieve more executive control over their writing decisions... rather than a little bit of this and that at the text level, it's more cognitive.]

Figure 6.4. A sample from Esther's 11-page culture project, entitled "Current Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric."

For this paper, Esther also received a very positive end comment:

Excellent and very interesting paper! It's also very useful for my own reference when I teach Course G [an elective on the subject of teaching reading and writing]. You have some good sources here that I didn't know about. (Dr. Ashley, Written feedback)

Seen from her written feedback above, Dr. Ashley appeared to regard Esther not only as a student but as a scholar in the professional community of TESOL. Her comments resembled a casual dialogue carried with a professional tone, as if she were having a conversation with a research colleague on a shared topic called "contrastive rhetoric" (e.g., "If you want to further reading this area, you might want to look at..."). Particularly, in a marginal comment toward the end of the paper, Dr. Ashley used first person pronoun *we* instead of "you" to tacitly identify Esther as a writing professional with whom she shared knowledge and practice in the field of teaching L2 writing ("It seems like what *we* are moving toward is teaching students more about the metalinguistic awareness..."). The end comments also suggest Esther has written a good paper not only as a student, but a valuable resource for the instructor ("You have some good sources here that I didn't know about.").

To a significant degree, these instructors considered Esther a competent member in the academic/professional community of TESOL. They perceived Esther's identities as "a U.S. citizen," "an American-born Chinese," and "totally native-like" through

participation in the academic written Discourse's sociocultural practices of TESOL characterized at and beyond the textual level (e.g., using proper word choice and sentence structures, as well as asking questions and participating in class). These writing-related activities, characterizing Esther's high performance as a top-student, seemed to be inseparable from writing and proved to be as equally important as the act of writing itself when obtaining professional membership. This point also echoes that found in several writing studies in which talking and classroom participation could not be disentangled from academic literacy practices that allowed each piece of writing come into being (e.g., Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Casanave, 1995, 2002; Prior, 1991, 1998; Sperling, 1996; Sperling & Freedman, 2001).

In summary, an examination of Esther's texts reveals her multiple and sometimes contradictory senses of self as she wrote across the TESOL curriculum. While Esther previously perceived herself as an "unconfident" participant in the academic written community of TESOL (as revealed in Chapter 5), this chapter reveals Esther as a competent member who simultaneously acted within multiple roles as a writer, a reader, a researcher, a language practitioner and a writing tutor. Esther's identities are also revealed to be complex since the kinds of writing that she practiced in TESOL encouraged her not only to explore her cultural and linguistic roots, but her own experiences both as a language practitioner and a field researcher. This finding also fits with Casanave's (2002) and Morita's (2002) studies in which they found that students draw their own discorsal resources as a language learner/teacher when they participate in a variety of written and oral activities in the field of TESOL. Finally, Esther is

revealed to be successfully gaining full membership by adeptly practicing writing and other related activities and having her participation validated by the course instructors. Esther was in some respects a high-performing member who had mastered the academic written Discourse implied in U.S. academia.

Esther's case as a particular user of academic language in the written Discourse of TESOL parallels the findings in Berkenkotter et al's (1988) case study of Nate, a first year Ph.D. student in the rhetoric program at Carnegie Mellon and in Prior's (1998) of Moira, a fourth year Ph.D. student in the sociology program at a major Midwestern university. In their studies, while both students entered their programs with self-perceptions as unconfident participants, they ultimately succeeded in transforming their identities and practices, recognized by their advisers, so that they developed a sense of belonging to their specialized disciplinary groups. The story of Esther that I recount above resembles greatly those of Nate and Moira in that her emergent identity as an ESL writing scholar was also successfully redefined in her M.A. program, resulting from her continuous participation and negotiation as an interested member in the acts of academic writing and writing-related activities.

Exploring Sharon's Academic Texts

Analyses of Sharon's written texts and writing process reveal her as a TESOLer with developing membership. Sharon is also revealed to be an unconfident yet evolving as a writer and researcher, with perception of self as a learner and teacher in her academic community.

Sharon provided me with partial assignments that she had written in Courses A and C, which she took in 2007, including two learning reflections and a data commentary from Course A (a required introductory course in TESOL), and a literature review, a data report, and a final project from Course C (a core course in SLA and culture).

Sharon's Use of Written Language: A TESOLer with Evolving Professional Roles

Sharon's texts, along with her own account about language use in her courses, reveal her as a TESOLer with evolving professional roles in her academic community. As revealed in Chapters 4 and 5, Sharon considered herself a TESOLer who naturally fits the academic community of TESOL because she had a lot to contribute, given her own status as a nonnative English learner and teacher, as well as a multilingual with a diverse cultural background. These views, representing her own discursal resources, appeared to influence Sharon's choices of research topics for Courses A and C. First of all, Sharon chose to focus on the topic of "Nonnative Teachers in English Teaching" for all parts of her assignments in Course A²⁷. For example, in the data commentary paper, she argued that nonnative English speaker (NNES) teachers are more aware of students' learning needs than native English speaker (NES) teachers through interpreting authentic data from published studies.

This is an eight-page paper with four tables embedded in the body. It begins with one introductory paragraph that orients readers to the topic, follows with two paragraphs that explicate the purpose and location of the data that the writer, Sharon, chose to

²⁷ In Courses A and C taught by Dr. Ashley, students are required to focus on one topic of their own choosing from the beginning of the semester, and then develop it into different kinds of assignments as the semester progresses.

analyze and interpret. The paper continues with five paragraphs in which she discusses and interprets these data. Finally, she presents a concluding paragraph in which she points out the research significance, limitations, and suggestions. In the sample, I have included Dr. Ashley's written comments in boldface and brackets at appropriate places, and a few lines which she had underlined:

Data Commentary

[Introduction] ¹Once, I had been [**was**] one of the members who believe that native speaker teachers are better than non-native speaker teachers in terms of language teaching. ²This belief is also well spread [**widespread**] in Taiwan. ³For example, the number of native English speaker teachers is used as an advertisement for schools, from kindergarten to university, to improve enrollment. ⁴However, after I entered the TESOL program and encountered many non-native speaker teachers, I found that both native and non-native teachers have their merits which can contribute to students in language learning. ⁵No one is always superior to the other, no matter native or non-native teachers. ⁶Therefore, the aim of this data is going to [**commentary is to**] present the evidence that non-native speaker teachers can be more aware of students' learning needs than native speaker teachers via examining their choices of lexical difficulty.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.5. An introduction from Sharon's 8-page "Data Commentary."

I note that this commentary does not have a title that indicates the topic; nonetheless, the reader is oriented to the text at the beginning of this section: *Once, I had been one of the members who believe that native speaker teachers are better than non-native speaker teachers in terms of language teaching* (Sentence 1). Sharon, in setting some kind of the contrast, tells her reader that she used to believe in one thing (that native speaker teachers are better) but now another (that both native and nonnative teachers have their merits, appearing later in Sentence 4). This paragraph is also marked by a few repeated uses of

the first person pronoun *I* (appearing in Sentences 1 and 4), mentioning of the country of origin, *Taiwan*, and an example that relates to it (Sentences 2 and 3), all of which might point to a personal account. However, there is a rhetorical shift that occurs at Sentence 6 with the form *the aim of this data...*, signaling academic exposition. In addition, the rhetorical shift in Sharon's handling of a controversial topic like this (NES vs. NNES) not only indicates a tension in worldviews that Sharon discusses through Sentences 1 to 5, but also signifies the kind of identity she wants to represent (being a nonnative speaker teacher). The style of argument that Sharon chooses to present also appears to signal how a writer decides to locate the text in relation to existing conversations and ideologies, in this case, Sharon's treatment of the long-debated issue on native English speaker (NES) and nonnative English speaker (NNES) teachers in the field of TESOL. The shift from personal to academic also signals the kind of academic and formal tone that represents her as a writer in an academic field.

The shifts between the use of first person pronouns to nouns (as shown in italics), some of them abstract (such as *This belief* is also well spread in...), some of them nominalized verbs (such as the *aim* of this data...), from a personal narrative to academic exposition, became significant features indexing the shifts in rhetorical and cultural codes of identity operating at the textual level (Buell, 2004; Ivanič, 1998). Specifically, in the first three sentences, Sharon seems to be operating within dominant Discourse in the Taiwanese/Chinese schools and the Taiwanese society at large where she implicitly values NES more than NNES. However, in the fourth sentence, Sharon starts to introduce another Discourse, that of TESOL at WAU, one which encourages an open

discussion about NES and NNES. This switch of ideological worldview embedded in the two different Discourses also suggests an identity shift between the first and the last three sentences, illustrating how Sharon negotiated her participation in a new written Discourse as a TESOLer.

As Bazerman (2004) suggests, “a text may rely less explicitly on beliefs, issues, ideas, and statements generally circulated and likely familiar to the readers, whether they would attribute the material to a specific source or would just understand as common knowledge” (p. 87). Seen from this perspective, then, I suggest that the sentences discussed above were being used for the purpose of evoking familiar discourse representations in order to help orient readers, particularly in this introductory paragraph. Specifically, the first part of the text (Sentences 1 to 3) relies on a common belief that native speakers are better English teachers. These sentences seem to invoke a representation of the popular/authoritative discourse in English language teaching of the Taiwanese society. The second part of the text (Sentences 4-5) relies most directly on familiar discussions about how both native speaker and nonnative speaker teachers can better serve as English teachers, as this is part of the academic/authoritative discourse in the field of TESOL. Lastly, the text adds another intertextual context by referring to the data, as evidence, to back up Sharon’s assertion about how non-native speaker teachers can be more aware of students’ learning needs, particularly when it comes to determining the difficulty of the lexicon (Sentence 6).

With her other texts in Courses A and C which I examined, I also found that Sharon followed a similar rhetorical pattern when organizing her introductions. As previously

revealed in Chapter 5, students in the present study found it an empowering strategy to connect their personal experiences with academic writing. Therefore, here within her various writing samples, I also noticed that Sharon tended to use personal analogy to illustrate what she wanted to pursue in her papers. For example, her research questions or topics were more or less extensions from her personal experience. In this case, for example, she compares what she used to believe (Sentences 1-3) to what she now believes (Sentences 4-6) regarding NES and NNES in terms of language teaching. This particular way of organizing an introduction seems to be an “effective” one and undoubtedly meets the expectation of what the instructor, Dr. Ashley, has established for the written assignments for both Courses A and C:

I like the way the intro starts because she’s putting herself and her expectation right in the beginning .. it involves the reader .. and I always tell them that you should orient the reader in the beginning, somehow get them hooked .. and one of the ways to hook them is to talk about, you know, *once I believed in this, and now I believe in something different* .. to present some kind of the contrast (...) so I think that’s a very effective beginning. (Dr. Ashley, Interview)

Drafting an introduction that orients the reader to the topic by drawing on personal experiences appears to be another rhetorically appropriate strategy that Sharon employed as she claimed a writer’s membership as a TESOLer in the U.S. academy.

This characteristic is also apparent in another introduction in an eight-page data report, which Sharon did for her 16-page final project in Course C, a required core course in SLA and culture. This data report was the second assignment that Sharon did on the topic of “Politeness: Methods and Different Cultural Interpretation.” This data report includes one introduction followed by ten body paragraphs explicating the research process, including analysis and interpretation of the data without the presentation of a

final conclusion, as this paper was to be further revised and included in the final project.

In the sample I have included Dr. Ashley's written comments in boldface and brackets and her underlining:

[Introduction] ¹As literature have mentioned, the concept of politeness is crucial to language learning because culture always attach with its language, and there have been different approaches to teach politeness and different interpretations of politeness behaviors in terms of various cultures. ²With regard to that [**since**] some of the research had been done [**was**] more than 10 [**ten**] years ago, it is important to know whether the current language teaching approaches is still as what literature described and whether there is any new methodologies in teaching politeness or not. ³Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine whether and how politeness is presented in class by ESL teachers and what are the different perceptions from language teachers and students. [**good statement of your focus**]

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.6. An introduction from Sharon's 8-page data report, for her 16-page final project, entitled "Politeness: Methods and Different Cultural Interpretation."

Through mentioning an intertextual context in Sentence 1 (*As literature have mentioned...*), this introduction indicates that this paper was a sequential assignment from the same (final) project on the topic of "Politeness." In addition, the first two sentences not only serve to remind the reader of the writer's topic, but also signal a transition from the literature review to the data report. For example, through the expression *With regard to that [since] some of the research had been done [was] more than 10 [ten] years ago...*, Sentence 2 sets up a problem statement in suggesting a need to investigate current issues on teaching politeness (e.g., *[I]t is important to know whether the current language teaching approaches is still as what literature described... in teaching politeness or not.*). With the phrase *the aim of this research is...*, Sentence 3 reflects in a type of thesis statement indicating the point of this paper (*[T]o examine whether and how politeness is*

presented in class...). This way of organizing an introduction fits with the norm of the written discourse of a data report, as seen from Dr. Ashley's marginal comment: "good statement of your focus."

In addition, during our interview when Dr. Ashley read and commented on Sharon's introduction for her data commentary assignment, she particularly noted the difference in composing an introduction for different kinds of papers in the field:

When you told me this is a data commentary introduction, I felt better about this introduction. In the beginning I thought it's a lit. review and I was gonna be a little critical of the last sentence .. because the last sentence already tells us that I already have this claim .. there's no question here .. there's just a claim. So, in a lit. review, I'd think .. I'd want students be a little bit more open .. and maybe present as a researchable question rather than as a claim that you're gonna back up. But then since you told me it's a commentary paper, then I don't have so much problem with this. (Dr. Ashley, Interview)

Dr. Ashley further emphasized this "awareness of genres being different" an important quality that characterizes one as "a good academic writer":

The biggest quality is to be able to have the inquiry skills and to analyze and understand the genres that you are expected to produce, and that would hold true for every field. So an academic writer is somebody who has the inquiry skills to figure out what it is that they are being asked to do, and to understand a little bit about the fact that there are different genres, and to identify the features that they are asked to produce .. to .. have a kind of meta-awareness, I guess. The kinds of things that differ across written genres like the degree to which involve the audience, or the degree to which use formal or informal styles, you know, all those things that go into the genres .. that would help people to recognize that oh, if I were to produce a piece of written work in the field of TESOL, then if this piece of work is called an 'observational work,' well, I want to know what features that are expected in that genres .. and ask the right questions among my professors and my fellow students .. and maybe look at some models .. and I think that's a good academic writer. Now whether you actually produce the forms that are expected is a different matter, but first of all you have to have that awareness of genres being different, and know how to ask questions to figure what is expected. (Dr. Ashley, Interview)

As seen from Dr. Ashley's comments above, Sharon seemed to demonstrate such "awareness" and "inquiry skills" when being asked to produce different kinds of assignments in the field, which suggests an identity as "a good academic writer." In her reflective journal she wrote:

Once I get my assignment, I always read the instruction thoroughly to prevent any misunderstanding or form issues. If I have questions, I will ask classmates or professors for clarification. Then, find out what the goal of this assignment is. For example, to write an annotated bibliography is to collect information which you are interested in for further researches. In this case, I will choose a general topic and collect as much information as I can. On the contrary, if the assignment is a research paper, I will spend more time in finding targeted information and read carefully. Before writing down the paper, I keep all ideas in mind, or I will make a note in my notebook sometimes. This technique helps me review my ideas and organize them in a systematic way. (Sharon, #1 Reflective journal, 03/07/2007)

Sharon's personal composing process seems to fit with Dr. Ashley's description of a good academic writer, for example, reading instructions to prevent misunderstanding of the kinds of genres being asked for, asking questions of her professor and classmates for clarification, and finding out the goal of the assignment. Interestingly, Sharon previously spoke of her struggle to achieve a "native-like" writing standard because she believed this to be an anticipated norm which qualifies one as a good academic writer (Chapter 5). However, here Dr. Ashley seems to emphasize quite different points from these. While different writing beliefs were assumed between the student and her instructor, Sharon nevertheless showed an interest in obtaining an academic identity whose writing values are in line with those of her instructor, as seen from her words above. This observation parallels that in Ivanič's (1998) study in which she found that some student writers worked voluntarily to accommodate to the values of their instructor-readers in order to

own “what they see as the dominant member-of-the-academic-community persona” (p. 251).

To further illustrate Sharon’s composing process for different types of writing, in a literature review that she did for her final project in Course C, she clearly presents a different kind of thesis statement from those of her data commentary and report papers, one that introduces a tentative question rather than a defensible position, at the end of her paper. In the sample I have included the instructor’s marginal comments in boldface and brackets and underlining:

[Introduction] ¹Politeness is one of the keys to decrease the possibility of conflict immersion [**maybe wrong word?**] because showing respects to other people can maintain a friendly atmosphere. ²For language learners who are in the target language (TL) environment or required to interact with target langu[**age**] speakers, the concept of politeness is important. ³By acquiring the concept, [**most people already have concept of politeness. The problem is that it may not be the same as the concept of other language speakers**] interactions between TL speakers and language learners are expected to be smoothly and with fewer conflicts. ⁴On the other hand [**Furthermore**], feeling comfortable in TL environment might also help learners in language acquisition. ⁵Although politeness seems to be a universal idea that everyone understand, it is still abstract for a language learner and requires instructions for clarification. ⁶However, politeness seems to be rarely addressed explicit[**ly**] in class, but implicit[**ly**] and embedded under the cultural norms. ⁷Therefore, I am interested [**in**] how politeness has been addressed in the courses and whether it is a factor for language acquisition or not. ⁸Historical methods in teaching politeness and issues related to politeness in classroom will be examined in the following paragraphs.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.7. An introduction from Sharon’s 4-page literature review for her 16-page final project, entitled “Politeness: Methods and Different Cultural Interpretation.”

In this introduction of a literature review (Sentence 1-6), Sharon offers multiple reasons for choosing to focus on the concept of “Politeness” as a writer, and why this

particular topic interests her as a researcher. With the expressions *Politeness is one of the keys to decrease the possibility of conflict...* and *For language learners... the concept of politeness is important*, Sentences 1 and 2 let the readers know that it is worthwhile from an academic perspective to explore the topic. Through relying on familiar discussions on teaching politeness to L2 learners in the academic community of TESOL, Sentences 3 to 6 continue to explicate reasons for teaching politeness to language learners in an ESL classroom. Yet, with the expression of *I'm interested in how politeness has been addressed...*, Sentence 7 signals a thesis statement suggesting a researchable question rather than a stance, which Sharon, the researcher, wants to pursue on this particular topic. Finally, with the expression *Historical methods in teaching politeness and issues related to politeness in classroom will be examined...*, Sentence 8 further indicates the purpose of a literature review assignment, one that aims to explore relevant information on a researchable topic. This switch of writing style, as reflected in the section of an introduction between a data-based report and a critical review paper, further illustrates Sharon's awareness of genre expectations that her academic literacy practices in the M.A. program anticipated.

During our interviews, Sharon agreed that she saw herself both as a “writer” and a “researcher” in the paper's introduction because this section informs her readers of what and why she was writing this particular paper. However, for the two data papers illustrated in the previous sections, she perceived herself mostly as a “learner” as she found herself simply “following the rules”:

I just wrote what I've seen [during research processes] in these data papers, and not much about myself because it's about what I've found and discovered from

my data collection. I just felt like I'm not that .. the way I collected the data .. I just followed the rules since it's my first try, and I'm not sure if what I've done is able to be considered a valuable research .. so I felt I'm only a learner, and I'm not sure if it's valuable enough to be considered as a research paper in academia. (Sharon, Interview)

Perceiving herself as a learner and not a “legitimate researcher” can also be seen when Sharon commented on her literature review assignment:

In this whole paper [literature review], I read a lot and I kept thinking in this process. This assignment is for myself to learn, but as a writer you have to write something for others .. but this is something for myself 'cause all of the assignments I have to get credit for myself. I believe that the instructor set up all these assignments for us to learn. (...) I think the whole journal is me .. but in lit. review there is no me in there .. but in conclusion section, there is me. 'Cause in journals, you have more freedom .. you can write whatever you want, and you don't have to restrain yourself in a specific format. (Sharon, Interview)

It seems that Sharon not only developed mixed feelings about what she felt about writing a particular assignment, but established multiple and sometimes contradictory senses of self for different assignments—for example, seeing herself as a researcher in research-based papers but not perceiving herself as a valuable researcher; considering herself as a writer when composing a paper, but not regarding herself as a qualified writer who can “write something for others.” This finding supports an observation revealed in Chapter 5, where the students were found to struggle to balance conflicting selves as professionals (who wrote as spontaneous researchers) and as students (who wrote “for credit” and who “followed the rules”). In addition, while Sharon was reluctant to identify herself as a writer or a researcher, she emphasized that she would prefer to be recognized as a “learner” and a “teacher” (e.g., “I would be happier to be seen as a learner and a teacher, 'cause that's more of *me*” [Interview].). These findings extend those of Ivanič's (1998) study in which she found that Rachel, a mature college student who wrote for the

course of Social Work, often felt “a mixture of desire and demand” (p. 213) in identifying discursively with professionals of her field (i.e., being identified as an apprentice social worker) and that she “had a love-hate relationship with the academic community” (p. 156).

In instructing students how to write a conclusion for the final project in Course C, Dr. Ashley specified in her handout that “you will be asked to reflect in the conclusion about how the data collection relates to what you learned in the literature review, and to share your own perspective.” This might help explain why Sharon said that she perceived the concluding section most representative of her as a learner:

I see myself most in conclusion since that’s the part where I present most of my overall feedback and remaining questions. It’s like what I’ve learned overall .. It’s more like my personal overall decision. I certainly feel more of myself in the concluding remarks. (Sharon, Interview)

Below is a sample of Sharon’s conclusion from her final project on the topic of “Politeness.” This conclusion from the final project in Course C is an unedited copy and without the instructor’s comments:

[Conclusion] ¹I star[t]ed my journey when I thought politeness is a universal norm, the differences in different cultures should not be difficult to understand. ²However, when I studied deeper and deeper, I found that there are many subtle differences which I had taken for grant[ed], such as the meaning of nodding head and eye contact, and I should revisit those concepts in order to be a cultural[ly] sensitive teacher. ³In addition, I felt the necessity to learn and teach politeness via introducing examples of impoliteness. ⁴However, as a non-native speaker of the target language, I didn’t have much knowledge about impoliteness. ⁵Therefore, being a language learner and an apprentice teacher, I question myself that how I can learn more and where I can find my resource. ⁶Hence, those two questions will enforce me to keep investigating the topic.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.8. A conclusion from Sharon's 16-page final project, entitled "Politeness: Methods and Different Cultural Interpretation."

In this conclusion, with the expressions *I thought politeness is a universal norm*, *there are many differences which I had taken for granted*, and *I should revisit those concepts in order to be a... teacher* in Sentences 1 and 2, Sharon seems to humbly realize that there is yet a lot for her, as a language learner and a teacher, to learn on the topic of "Politeness." With the use of conjunction *However* in Sentence 2, the first two sentences also present a contrast between what Sharon used to believe before studying this topic and what she believes now after she has investigated the topic. In order to provide her own perspective of what she has learned from exploring this topic, Sentences 3 and 4 draw on her own experience as *a non-native speaker of the target language*, leading to her remaining questions on *how I can learn more and where I can find my resource* in Sentence 5. Finally, Sharon's determination in pursuing this line of inquiry seems to be reflected in her word choice of the somewhat strong verb *enforce* in the last sentence ("those two questions will *enforce* me to keep investigating the topic.").

An excerpt of Sharon's own reflection on how she came to compose this particular conclusion also supports the observations made above:

The instructor had given us instructions on how to write conclusion, so I chose to write the question that I still don't know yet about myself learning this topic. I don't have much cultural knowledge just yet to teach the topic on impoliteness. I can give you an example .. something just happened to me a few days ago. I was hanging out with my friend, and she asked me why I was wearing such a small earring, and I replied that it's because I don't like "bling-bling" stuff; then all of a sudden she was like falling down and laughing hard on the ground. She said to me: "We don't say it that way, do you even know what 'bling-bling' means?" And I was like, why were you laughing? Can't I use this term? And she went "I don't know, it's not referring to jewelry, it's actually a gangster's term." She said that this term first appeared in an African-American rap song, so people get used to it as a gangster term .. and she just

can't believe that this term came out of my mouth. But I don't know at all that it refers to gangster .. So she just thought it's so funny especially coming out of my mouth, and she was like where did you learn it .. (Sharon, Interview)

Although Sharon provided an interesting instance which did not seem to directly relate to the issue of "politeness," this excerpt nevertheless helps to illustrate how important Sharon perceived cultural knowledge both as a language learner and a teacher, which reflected what she wrote in her concluding section.

In what follows, an examination of the instructor's comments as well as Sharon's own perspectives reveals her written membership as a well-developing professional.

Sharon's Written Membership: A Well-Developing Professional

As Bazerman (2004) suggests, the instructor's comments as another kind of intertextual element could be used in understanding the students' appropriation of academic culture as well as their sometimes maintaining of their own, thus marking students as particular participants negotiating written membership in their academic community. Seen from this perspective, I took a close look at Dr. Ashley's written comments in response to Sharon's multiple texts.

As these assignments were graded papers, except for the final project which did not include the instructor's comments/grade (for some reason Sharon did not keep them), Dr. Ashley gave a "B⁺" to the data commentary paper and the overall course (Course A) an "A-" (as this paper is the final assignment for the course); a "B" to the literature review and the data report papers in Course C. In addition, for these texts, Dr. Ashley also included several marginal comments, as illustrated in boldface and brackets in the

previous sections. The instructor also included end comments for these papers, both on the content and the grammatical forms.

As for the content, one recurring comment that Dr. Ashley gave to Sharon's multiple texts in Course C was to ask her to "provide more of a cultural frame" on the discussion of politeness. For example, at the end of the literature review paper, Dr. Ashley wrote:

Try to include some discussion about the arbitrary connection between behavior and meaning. That is, when we talk about politeness, we are talking about specific behaviors (e.g., silence, bowing heads, looking in the eye, etc.). As we learned in the chapter by Nelson et al. (Chapter 5)²⁸, culture attaches meaning to behaviors. There is nothing intrinsic about bowing the head that says it has to always mean politeness and deference. So the fact that different cultures attach different meanings to the same behaviors is part of the learning that students have to do to learn across cultural politeness. (Dr. Ashley, Written feedback)

As demonstrated earlier in her concluding section in the final project, Sharon had intended to see politeness as a universal norm (e.g., *I thought politeness is a universal norm... there are subtle differences which I had taken for grant[ed]* [Sentences 1-2, Figure 6.8.]). This implies that Sharon had explored this topic with an assumption that certain behaviors attaching to politeness are intrinsic (as reflected in the instructor's comments above). In order for Sharon to turn her initial inquiry (*[W]hether and how politeness is presented in class by ESL teachers and what are the different perceptions from language teachers and students* [Sentence 3, Figure 6.6.]) into a feasible framework, Dr. Ashley appeared to direct Sharon to revisit some of the theories/ concepts covered in the class ("Try to include some discussion about the arbitrary connection between behavior and meaning.") so that Sharon could appropriately locate her inquiry in the available cultural frames of the field.

²⁸ The name of the book is in pseudonym as Dr. Ashley is one of the co-authors of this book.

As revealed in Chapter 5, the students wrestled to place their own ideas within those of others in the implementation and presentation of a research topic. This observation is further supported here through the instructor's comments. In addition, this kind of feedback, with the imperative "*Try to include* some discussion about the arbitrary connection between behavior and meaning ...," embodies one kind of expected norm of research-based writing which asks Sharon, who attempts to claim written membership as a TESOLer, to acknowledge and make it her own. This kind of written comments focusing on the content also fits with what Prior (1991) found in a disciplinary group in second language education in which content remained the major focus of the instructor's response to both U.S. and international M.A. and Ph.D. students' papers.

As for the form, at the end of the data commentary paper, Dr. Ashley specifically commented, "your introduction is very good!", changing only three grammatical forms in the introductory section (See Figure 6.5.): "I had been one of the members" to "I *was* one of those" (verb tense), "well spread" to "*widespread*" (word choice), and "this data is going to" to "*this commentary is to*" (logical sentence subject and verb tense). As part of the end comments, Dr. Ashley also wrote: "there are a few errors in word choice (especially reporting verbs), singular plural etc. But nothing very serious—nothing that interferes seriously with communication." Below is one body paragraph from the same paper which further illustrates this comment. In the sample I have included the instructor's in-text comments in boldface and brackets and underlining:

[The 4th paragraph] The data in Table 1 above present [**present that doesn't work. Present is followed directly a noun phrase or noun clause. Here you would be better to use show that, demonstrate that, indicate that...**] that non-native speaker teachers seemed to predict much closer on students' lexical difficulty than

native speaker did. **[punctuation]** both predictions of NNN [non-native speaker novices] and NNE [non-native experts] were highly correlated to the students' actual results. This finding might be the evidence to prove **[prove is too strong. Maybe suggest?]** that non-native speaker teachers are able to notice students' learning needs more than native speaker teachers. [...]

Figure 6.9. A sample from Sharon's 8-page "Data Commentary."

This sample demonstrates one of Sharon's recurring grammatical errors, reporting verbs, when writing a data commentary/report that asks students to practice writing about data. Other types of repeated grammatical errors in Sharon's writing samples also include word choices, morphological endings (e.g., singular vs. plural, adverbial forms, and verb tense), articles, and prepositions. Nevertheless, these "errors" do not seem to impede an L2 student like Sharon from Taiwan trying to contribute to the academic community of TESOL. Below is an illustration of Dr. Ashley's opinions regarding Sharon's language errors in her writing:

Well, the main reason to correct this kind of error .. I mean like word choices, I'd correct it if they give the wrong meaning .. I mean if they really misdirect the reader .. in a way that you don't want the reader to go. So, in other words, if you are not communicating your own intention because of those word choices, that would be a problem .. These are pretty minor, I think .. they don't get in (?a) way of understanding her meaning. And like I said, if there're other problems that are more important, I'd address other problems before I worry about these. (...) Some papers I got they'd be underlined or circled, but not this one. Usually in a case like that, I ask them to come and meet with me, and I'd just focus on a small part of the paper, like one paragraph, and before the student comes in, I'll have a strategy already .. you know, how I am gonna approach this. Because again, even though they are sitting in front of you, you can't go through every little thing with them .. you can't. So I'll have a strategy in mind of how I am gonna try to approach this with the student, and what I am gonna focus on first. (Dr. Ashley, Interview)

As an experienced and native-English speaking professor who does a great amount of teaching second language students, her comments illustrate how a course instructor might effectively negotiate and communicate his or her feedback (either in an oral or

written form) with second language students. From Gee's (1989/2001, 1992) perspective, newcomers like Sharon may acquire apprenticeship into writing practices as an evolving professional through such scaffolding and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse, such as the course instructor, as revealed above.

Casanave's (2002) and Prior's (1998) studies likewise suggested that the instructor's sustained and systematic written response in a graduate seminar helped to integrate international students into their academic communities and, as a result, these students were able to successfully develop and own their identity as a professional.

In addition, while Dr. Ashley stated that international students from Taiwan tend to struggle with three writing-related areas ("the form, the genres, and the classroom participation"), she nevertheless emphasized the positive progress that an international student like Sharon made in trying to obtain access and claim membership in TESOL:

I think although Sharon's more typical .. of foreign students coming from Taiwan, and I think she .. yeah, she struggled with all of those areas that I mentioned—the form, the genres, the classroom participation .. yeah. But she also did *really well*, I mean .. and she's typical of most Taiwanese students in the *I really saw change* .. like from the time she entered into the program to the time she finished, I really saw that she had made a lot of progress .. in her oral language skills, her written language skills in English, and just her comfort in being in the classroom .. I remember noticing changes, she's much better in Course C than in Course A. (Dr. Ashley, Interview)

Dr. Ashley seemed to consider Sharon and other students from Taiwan legitimate members in the TESOL program at WAU, even though they were "foreign students" who used English as their second language. As Dr. Ashley pointed out, it seems that language free of errors does not automatically and necessarily grant a newcomer access to the academic Discourse of TESOL, and this would hold true for both those for whom English

is their native language as well as their second language. Therefore, in order for one to ideologically become a member of TESOL, one needs to do more than produce “error-free” text, but acquire a familiarity with particular ways of participating that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by the members of the particular Discourse. This interpretation resonates with Gee’s (1992) insight that “what is important is not language, and surely not grammar, but saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations” (p. 526). This point further fits with what Prior (1991) found in his study in which he suggested that the professor’s written feedback was not just to respond to the students’ texts in terms of their linguistic choices, but to respond to students in terms of their overall potential as professionals and their progress in completing their degrees.

In the final journal entry that she wrote for Course A, Sharon also considers herself a well-developing professional who “get[s] improved very much”:

Before attending this course, I didn’t know how far I could achieve in academic writing, but I had a great expectation in what I can write after finishing this course. When I read scholars’ paper, I hope that one day I can write as them. After the training from all assignments, I know that I get improved very much. Although there still are distances in front of my writing, I am satisfied with where I got and I will keep working on my writing style.

One thing I want to keep working on is my writing style. I will keep on reading academic papers in the field, I believe that can help develop professional tone, improve my knowledge, and enrich my papers. The first step I will do is to apply for CATESOL membership and keep track on what else other scholars working on. The second step is writing all the time, not only for assignment, but also for self-improvement. I will write some short articles as the notes for what I learned from class. (Sharon, #10 Reflective journal, 05/10/2007)

Sharon’s reflection aligns with Dr. Ashley’s comments about her improvement in writing as she progressed from the beginning to the end of the semester. In seeing herself as a developing professional in TESOL, Sharon also realized the importance of

establishing a network with professional others in the field (“I will... apply for CATESOL membership and keep track on... other scholars....”), as well as to keep reading and writing until she achieves a professional-styled writing (“I hope that one day I can write as them [scholars].”). These “promises,” reflecting appropriate sociocultural practices embedded in the written Discourse of TESOL (Gee, 1992), seem to indicate Sharon’s determination and desire to become a fully developed member in this area.

This finding further echoes that in Casanave’s (2002) study in which the international Japanese students began to try on a professional identity as they progressed along the courses that they took in their M.A. TESOL program. Like Sharon, the students in Casanave’s study were able to see themselves connect with other members in the larger field and to see other possibilities of getting involved in the wider teaching community. Sharon’s successful professional transformation also challenges previous studies focusing on international Taiwanese students learning to write in a discipline. For example, students from Taiwan learning to write in a social science discipline were frequently portrayed as reticent participants who struggled with talking and writing and who seemed to be disconnected with others through literate activities (Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Prior, 1991). This study, however, has revealed that, while struggling with multiple aspects of academic language, a Taiwanese student like Sharon can ultimately take on a well-developing identity as a TESOLer and become a recognized member of her disciplinary group.

In summary, an examination of Sharon’s texts reveals several contradictions contributed to her participation, negotiation, and identity as a user of academic language

in the written Discourse of TESOL. While Sharon perceived herself as a TESOLer who had a lot to contribute in the academic written community of TESOL, she is also revealed to be an unconfident participant who seemed to reluctantly identify her roles both as a writer and a researcher. In addition, while Sharon perceived herself as an evolving professional in the field (e.g., a researcher), she nevertheless preferred to be identified as a learner and a teacher. Furthermore, Sharon and her course instructor were revealed to hold different beliefs regarding what characterizes a good academic writer: Sharon perceived that “well-presented” and “native-like” writing qualifies one as a good academic writer; yet her course instructor emphasized “inquiry skills” and “an awareness of genres being different.” Finally, while Sharon is revealed to be a struggling international student who studied in the content area through a second language, she nevertheless gained her membership as a well-developing professional and had her participation recognized by her course instructor. Sharon is beginning to be a well-accepted member, on her way to becoming a fully developed member of the TESOL community.

Exploring Thomas’ Academic Texts

Analyses of Thomas’ written texts and writing process reveal him struggling yet transforming into a TESOLer by working through academic language challenges. At the same time, Thomas is also revealed to struggling toward membership, lacking critical reading and writing skills.

For this study, Thomas provided me with partial assignments he had written in Courses A and D, which he took in 2008, including one essay and several reflective

journals from Course A (a required introductory course in TESOL), and one concept essay from Course D (a required core course in teaching methods and materials).

Thomas' Use of Written Language: A Struggling yet Transforming TESOLer

Thomas' texts, along with his own account about language use in his courses, reveal him an L2 learner who struggled to write, and did so as he was transforming into a TESOLer, as seen in varied aspects of his writing, including uses of language, style, citation, and critical reading/writing skills.

In the first essay in Course A, in which he focuses on the topic of "History of English Language Policy and English Teaching in Taiwan," Thomas offers his opinions on the history of English influences in Taiwanese society. This paper was the first assignment from a required core course in Introduction to TESOL, mainly designed for first-year MA TESOL students. This assignment asked the students to write an essay on a topic of their own choosing related to a selected theme in the course. The reader is oriented to the paper as soon as s/he reads the title, introducing the academic discourse of written exposition, which intends to inform, explain, describe, or define the writer's subject in the field (that is, the topic of "History of English Language and English Language Policy in Taiwan"). This is a ten-page paper that begins with two introductory paragraphs explaining why the writer, Thomas, decides to focus on this topic. The paper continues with a literature review organized into five paragraphs/ subtopics that compile work that has been conducted on the selected theme. Finally, Thomas presents a concluding paragraph where he reiterates the points he made in the beginning of the paper and follows with a separate reference page. In the sample, I have included Dr.

Avi's (Course A instructor) hand-written comments²⁹ in boldface and brackets and cross-outs:

History of English ~~Language~~ and ~~English Language~~ Policy [**and ELT**] in Taiwan

¹English is a global language, so people in Taiwan want to learn it. ²Taiwanese government made English required foreign language in school[s] in 1968, and during these 40 years, the government [**has**] made [**several**] changes on the English language policy. ³I write about the English policy in Taiwan and some ~~history~~ [**historical**] backgrounds about English [**language teaching?**] in Taiwan in this essay.

⁴English is an international language, and most people in the world want to learn it or use it in their daily life. ⁵English shifts from foreign-language to second-language status for an increasing number of people (Graddol, 1997). ⁶As a result, most countries see English as not only a foreign language, but also a second language. ⁷Especially in some Asian countries where the English language is not used a lot in daily life, there will be more focus on learning English in order to communicate with other foreign countries in different areas[.] [**Besides,**] speaking good English becomes a metaphor for a successful life. ⁸English is a medium of academic pursuit or an academic subject required for pursuing higher education, so various governments in East Asia, including Korea, Japan and Taiwan have recently increased English language education, and try to focus on the oral skills of English (Butler, 2005). ⁹I am from Taiwan, and I know there have been some policy changes on English education recently, so I want to talk about it and try to see the differences between the old policies and the new policies [**ones**]. ¹⁰People who read my paper will have more ideas on history of English in Taiwan before and after KMT [**language?**], the failure of old policy, and what the new English policy in Taiwan focus is after reading my paper.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.10. An introduction from Thomas' 10-page 1st essay, entitled "History of English Language and English Language Policy in Taiwan."

A close look at the form, that is, sentence structures and word choices, of Thomas' introduction reveals his numerous unconventional uses of English, thus marking the text as second language writing and his identity as an L2 writer (Buell, 2004). While almost

²⁹ The instructor's hand-written comments were recreated into typed format by the researcher.

every sentence follows English syntactic rules of word order and are comprehensible, I have observed several second language markers in this introduction³⁰. For example, Sentence 2, “Taiwanese government made English required foreign language in school in 1968, and during these 40 years, the government made changes on the English language policy,” reflects a few errors, first not including a definite article (“*the* Taiwanese government”), then not including an indefinite article (“*a* required foreign language”), second not including a plural morphological ending (“schools”), and finally not including regular use of the present participle (“*has* made changes”). The phrase “history backgrounds” does not display the appropriate adjectival form “*historical* backgrounds” (Sentence 3), and adds “s” to “background,” an unconventional pluralizing of this word. The phrase “their daily life” does not exhibit the proper morphological ending on the noun, which should read “*lives*” (Sentence 4). Sentence 7 is really two sentences run together. The phrase “old policy” does not include a definite article, that is, “*the* old *policy*” (Sentence 9). Although Sentence 9 follows the rule of subject-verb agreement, it is informal in its use of “talk about it and try to see,” rather than the more appropriately formal “*explore*” or “*examine*.” In Sentence 10, the phrase “have more ideas on” also does not demonstrate academic expression (such as “*learn about*”). Since this is a rather formal academic essay, one would assume a formal usage of words that this context calls for. As for other observations regarding the last sentence, “People who read my paper will have more ideas on history of English in Taiwan before and after KMT, the failure of

³⁰ In addition to my own readings of this particular text, I also asked one of my former classmates, a native English speaker and an English professor, to read these two paragraphs and point out the parts that are not native-sounding.

old policy, and what the new English policy in Taiwan focus is after reading my paper,” it is not clear whom the abbreviation *KMT* refers to, although I can understand that Thomas meant a certain political party of Taiwan because KMT is a commonly known phrase in political discussions in Taiwan. However, readers who are not familiar with the political contexts of Taiwan may not be able to extract meaning from it.

This paragraph is marked by three repeated uses of the first person pronoun *I* (appearing in Sentences 3, 9, and 10), seven references to the country of origin and nationality, *Taiwan* and *Taiwanese* (Sentences 1-3; 8-10), two references to geography that relates to Taiwan, *East Asia* and *Asian* (Sentences 7-8), all of which indicate Thomas’ Taiwanese roots. As well, there are many occasions of expository forms of presentation, including the title (as discussed earlier). Within the text, there are two places of noticeable rhetorical shifts (as shown in italics), one at Sentence 3 (“*I write about the English policy in Taiwan and some history backgrounds about English in Taiwan in this essay*”) and the other at Sentence 8 (“*I want to talk about it [policy changes on English education in Taiwan] and try to see the differences between the old policies and the new policies*”), both of which indicate Thomas’ “authorial self” whose purpose for this text is to inform, describe, and explicate the topic of “History of English Language and English Language Policy in Taiwan.”

In addition, the introductory paragraphs might mark another identity, Thomas as a developing TESOLer, through certain language and language forms that represent the words and utterances of others in the field (e.g., Ivanič, 1998; Prior, 1991). First of all, without calling particular attention to the intertext, the opening sentences rely on

familiarity with the concepts of English as a global and international language (see Sentences 1 and 4), concepts that are part of the popular discourse in the subfield of ESL and TESOL and which has become a widely known topic in the field. Less explicitly, the text also centers on the issues of English language policy and English language teaching in Taiwan (for example, Sentences 2-3; 9-10), which are generally circulated and likely familiar to the people in Taiwanese academia. The text also adds another layer of intertextual context for English language teaching in Taiwan: the English language policy movement. This context evokes the political discourse over English as foreign language education, as well as the historical background about English language teaching in Taiwanese society and academia (see Sentences 2-3; 9-10). Thus, the introductory paragraphs evoke popular/authoritative discourses, including those of the academy in both Taiwan and the U.S.

Moreover, by using more explicitly recognizable kinds of indirect quotations of others in the field (specifically, by specifying a source in a parenthesis and then paraphrasing the original in his own words), the way in which Thomas positions his statements (Sentences 1-4; 6-7) in respect to the statements of others (Sentences 5 and 8) becomes significant intertextually, indexing shifts of rhetorical codes of discourses and identities (Buell, 2004). Specifically, Thomas starts his paragraph by stating his own opinion that English is an international language and that most people in the world want to learn it, including the Taiwanese (Sentences 1-4), and then builds his first indirectly quoted statement (by citing *Graddol in 1997*) into supporting his statement that “English shifts from foreign language to second language status for an increasing number of

people (*Graddol, 1997*)” (Sentence 5). Thomas continues his paragraph by narrowing his focus on Asian countries where English becomes a major tool for communication (Sentences 6 and 7). He then builds his second quoted statement (by referring to Butler in 2005) into supporting and exemplifying his statements, “countries such as Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have recently increased English language education (*Butler, 2005*)” (Sentence 8). The shift from personal statements to citing references in the field also suggests a more academic register and formal tone, showing Thomas to be a relevant member in this academic field. That is, this way of starting with his own statement and then building on the authoritative words of his field in supporting his statements seems to grant Thomas access to participation in a new written Discourse as a TESOLer. This observation also fits with that found in existing academic literacy studies in which student writers must learn to speak the language of the university, learn to speak as those in the discipline, and try on the specific ways of knowing that define their academic discourse communities (e.g., Bartholomae, 1985/2001; Bazerman, 1981; Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Casanave, 1995, 2002; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998).

As with his other essay (“Concept Essay-Teacher Beliefs”) in Course D, I found that Thomas followed this pattern of organizing his introductions. In this essay, Dr. Avi asked the students to “write a critical essay explaining what the concept means, what you have learned about it, and how you will make use of it in the classroom.” Below is an excerpt from the “Introduction” section with Dr. Avi’s written comments in boldface and brackets:

Concept Essay- Teacher Beliefs

[Introduction] ¹English right now is an international language, and we have to use this language to communicate with other people. ²“English is now spoken by more people (as a first, second, or foreign language) than any other language and is recognized by more countries as a desirable lingua franca than any other language” (Crystal 1998: **page?**). ³Everybody [**Really?**] wants to learn English or try to know how to teach English as a foreign language. ⁴There are so many ways for teachers to do in order to become a good teacher and make their students to learn a lot in the classroom [...] ⁵I think the beliefs from the teachers may influence them to set up their classroom or their methodologies for the classroom. ⁶As a result, I want to briefly talk about [**discuss?**] the teacher beliefs and what does belief mean.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.11. An introduction from Thomas’ 7-page essay, entitled “Concept Essay-Teacher Beliefs.”

While this introduction is written for a different essay on a different topic, Thomas starts this paper with a similar strategy to his first essay in Course A by relying on a familiar/popular discourse which states that English is an international language and that everybody wants to learn it or teach it (Sentences 1-3). He then builds a directly quoted statement (by citing *Crystal in 1998*) into supporting this idea. The rest of the paragraph indicates two places of rhetorical shifts (as shown in italics), for example, one at Sentence 5 (“*I think* the beliefs from the teachers may influence...””) and the other at Sentence 6 (“*I want to briefly talk about* the teacher beliefs...”), both of which suggest a topical shift from idea of “English is an international language” to “teacher beliefs.” However, this particular way of organizing a text does not appear to be an effective one, not meeting the expectations that the instructor, Dr. Avi, established for the written assignments for Courses A and C, which I will discuss in the next section.

In what follows, an examination of the instructor's written comments as well as Thomas' own perspectives reveals his written membership as a not fully realized participant member.

Thomas' Written Membership: A Struggling Member Lacking Critical Reading and Writing Skills

In addition to the marginal comments presented in the previous sections, Dr. Avi also provided his end comments on Thomas' essays, respectively, in bulleted points (Course A) and in prose (Course C):

Thomas,
-Get your essays proof-read and edited before you submit. I've told you this before.
-The essay is just a collection of information, not a coherent paper.
-Citations did not follow expected norms.
Thomas, please come and see me.
(Dr. Avi's End comments on "1st Essay," Course A)

Thomas, going by your bibliography, there are some good articles that you have looked. However, you don't seem to have made use of your reading well. While I appreciate the first person narrative, this being an academic essay, I expected a more formal style as well as a better treatment of the text you read. You should have summarized the literature well, and critiqued it which can of course include your own experience, etc.
(Dr. Avi's End comments on "Concept Essay," Course D)

The instructor's written comments provided a window to look into Thomas' construction of membership and identity in the written Discourse of TESOL. As seen from Dr. Avi's comments, Thomas did not seem to adeptly demonstrate competence in the areas of language, citation, style, or critical reading/writing skills, all of which exemplify sociocultural practices to be learned by potential members in the field.

First of all, it appears that although Thomas consciously knew that in order to obtain access to his academic community, he needed to rely on its authoritative language and

make it his own, in the end, he had yet to learn the intertextual skills expected by the course instructor (i.e., demonstrating an understanding and interpretation of the field through summarizing and criticizing others' texts from a more coherent perspective rather than "collecting information."). That is, instead of writing to paraphrase or express his opinion of another author's ideas, Thomas appeared to compile information what he read about the literature in his writing. It seems that Thomas was not under the impression that he had to write a *critical essay*, despite some familiarity with what *critique* is:

I also learned one new word (Critique) in Course A and Dr. Avi says it so many times in all his classes. I never learned this word before, so I didn't know what it meant before Dr. Avi said its definition. Critique means both good and bad points. When I write a paper or read a book, I have to know what is good about this paper or author, and what is bad about this paper or author. I have to give a reason to let people know why I like this paper or book. I think this is very important because Dr. Avi says this word so many times in his all classes. I will try to use critique more when I read or write my book review next time, and my other papers in other classes. (Thomas, #4 Reflective journal, Course A)

This understanding of critique, however, did not seem to be reflected in Thomas' written texts, evident in Dr. Avi's comments and the intertextual analysis in earlier sections. In addition, during our interviews, when I asked the question "what do you think about criticizing other's work and provide your own opinion," Thomas replied that "I haven't learned it so far...I think it will be difficult, but I haven't learned it, not in Course A either, the instructor didn't talk about it." Therefore, Thomas appeared to write this reflection, regarding how he learned the new word of critique from his instructor, without fully understanding its meaning and usage. This mismatch of point of view embedded in the instructor's discourse as opposed to Thomas' own discourse seemed to

be related to Thomas' ambivalent perspective when composing a critical essay, indicating him as a relatively novice participant who comprehends writing skills on a surface level.

This breakdown in understanding expectations of a course assignment, illustrated by Thomas' case, parallels what Prior (1991) found in his cases studies of U.S. and international M.A. and Ph.D. students in second language education at a major Midwestern public university. Prior indicated that it was common for student writers not to fully understand the instructor's instruction or anticipation of a particular kind of genre (e.g., "the initial draft"), for there might be a plausible mismatch of the different discourses that the instructor and students had enacted in the process of negotiating and communicating assignment expectations.

In addition, this study further found that reading-to-write a critical essay was a typical challenge for a majority of students who are new to the field of TESOL:

The main thing is reading problem, and beyond that .. and some students might be actually reading, but even in a particular genre .. but then not able to make a connection between what exactly is the knowledge base in a particular discipline .. and what (?has) a particular author or article that you are reading has contributed to that knowledge base. They seem to be missing the big picture in terms of what do we know .. what's the major issue that's been investigated in our field, what're the major questions that's being asked, and what do we know so far about this question .. what is it that we do not know, and what is open for further investigation .. and then when I read this particular author or article, where do I look at in that big picture in terms of the discipline, the knowledge base that we already have. I think many students lack that kind of ability in making connections between a particular piece of writing or the work of a particular author with the overall scholarship of the field .. and I think this is substantial particularly in the graduate level. (Dr. Avi, Interview)

While Dr. Avi considered reading-to-write critically to be an important quality in qualifying as a competent writer at the graduate level, at the same time, he also recognized this ability to be a great challenge for many students. These views supported

those of the students in this study, who regarded reading-to-write a major obstacle that they had to conquer if they wanted to achieve academic success and be recognized as professionals in the field (as discussed in Chapter 5).

As for other observations of the instructor's written feedback, as these were graded essays, the instructor gave a "C" to "1st Essay" and a "B" to "Concept Essay." In 1st Essay, Dr. Avi changed only a few grammatical forms in the introductory paragraphs, such as the word order of the title "History of English Language and English Language Policy in Taiwan" to "*History of English Language Policy and ELT*" (word combination), "history backgrounds" to "historical backgrounds" (morphological ending), "the government made changes" to "the government *has made* changes" (verb tense). In Concept Essay, Dr. Avi changed only one informal usage, "talk about," to a more formal one, "*discuss*," reflecting a more academic expression; and another place he asked for a specific page number for a proper in-text citation (Crystal, 1998: *page?*). As end comments, Dr. Avi also asked Thomas to write in a more formal style, follow standard citation format, and to proof-read and edit his papers before he submitted them. As for Thomas' use of language, interestingly, the instructor did not change as many grammatical points as I observed and pointed out in the previous analyses. When asked about whether or not to correct students' grammatical errors, Dr. Avi provided his rationale regarding L2 students and their writing:

I look at writing and writing instruction in a holistic perspective, and of course I expect my students at graduate level to write without basic grammatical mistakes. Based on my experience, I haven't had any nonnative speaker whose English is so bad .. that I fail them because of their language proficiency .. that hasn't happened. Have I failed them because (?of) they didn't develop a full writing ability? Yes, but not with language, you know, "deficiency." Everybody in my class begins with a

deficiency, whether native speakers or nonnative speakers, in aspects of writing, writing processes, and critical thinking .. and gathering ideas, and bring them together, and writing critically .. all those things. Those are deficient that's why they learn in the class. But everybody has their deficiencies, I don't make distinctions between native speakers and nonnative speakers in that area [language]. (Dr. Avi, Interview)

As an experienced, nonnative-English speaker professor who did a great amount of teaching with both native and nonnative-English speaker students, Dr. Avi considered the two groups as starting out equally in terms of learning to write in academic contexts. This finding thus presents a counter-case to that in Prior's (1991) study in which he observed that the professor described international students as a "special group" (p. 305) in terms of their difficulties with language-related problems, which in turn seemed to further erode their participation, both oral and written, in negotiating written assignments in a classroom setting. While the international students in this study indeed experienced various academic language challenges, they were not necessarily revealed to be a distinct group separate from their native counterparts, as seen by their instructors through Thomas' case.

As discussed, like Dr. Ashley, Dr. Avi suggested that becoming a written member of TESOL involves more than mastering grammar; rather, membership implies "aspects of writing" (e.g., citation, style, use of language) and "writing processes" (e.g., searching for ideas, synthesizing information, and reading/writing critically), which altogether represent an anticipated norm to be recognized and accepted by the members of the Discourse of TESOL (Gee, 1989/2001, 1992).

Lastly, while Thomas is revealed to be an ambivalent participant in his new graduate writing practices, he nevertheless is found also to be an aspiring member who attempted

to gain full membership through repeated writing practices during his time of studying in TESOL at WAU:

After I graduate from this TESOL program and get my master's degree, I hope my writing skill will become better because I may write many essays during my life at WAU, and good writing skills will be very important for being a language teacher. I think I will try to do my best in this writing class since I really want to improve my writing, especially on grammar, maybe because I am not a native speaker of English. So I do not really know how to use correct grammar or words when I am writing. Hopefully, I will become better after practicing a lot writing in this class (Thomas, #1 Reflective journal)

This reflection is the first journal entry that Thomas wrote in his first core course (Course A) in TESOL, a class focusing on developing academic and professional skills as a TESOLer. Being a newcomer in his second semester of the first year, Thomas recognized well the importance of acquiring “good writing skills” which might qualify him as a professional member in the field of language teaching (“[G]ood writing skills will be very important for being a language teacher.”). While Thomas is revealed to be a reluctant learner in all aspects of his literacy practices (as discussed in Chapter 4), here he is found to be a somewhat analytical learner who not only discerned his own weakness in writing (“especially on grammar”), but who demonstrated a commitment to his journey of learning to write in this new field (“I think I will try to do my best in this writing class since I really want to improve my writing....”).

In summary, an examination of Thomas' texts reveals that several contradictions contributed to his participation, negotiation, and identity as a particular user of academic language in the written Discourse of TESOL. While he is revealed to be an L2 learner who struggled with use of written language, he is also revealed to be trying to work through his academic language challenges to produce a professional identity as a

transforming TESOLer. In addition, while Thomas and his course instructor regarded critical reading/writing as important skills that qualify one as a competent graduate-level writer, at the same time, they also recognized these to be the greatest challenge for most new members in this field. Finally, while Thomas is found to be an unwilling writer who spoke with mixed feelings and hesitant attitudes about writing (as discussed in Chapter 4), he is also revealed to be a determined participant who aimed to gain professional membership as a language teacher through developing good writing skills.

Exploring Susana's Academic Texts

Analyses of Susana's written texts and writing process reveal her as an unconfident and struggling participant, yet willing to learn through developing language competence, creativity, and inspiration. At the same time, Susana is revealed to struggle toward membership, lacking oral and written language skills in her academic community.

For this study, Susana provided me with partial assignments she had written in Course B (a required core course in advanced English structures), which she took in 2009, including a reading reflection and a lesson plan project.

Susana's Use of Written Language: A Struggling yet Willing Learner in TESOL

Susana's texts, along with her own account about language use in her courses, reveal her as an unconfident and struggling, yet a willing learner who was not always successful when attempting to write like a TESOLer. The process of creating her own written text based on an initiating text, an instructor-generated prompt, is discussed and illustrated through analyses of Susana's reading reflection in Course B.

This single-page paper is the first reading reflection from a core advanced course on the topics of semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. As the course syllabus points out, the reading reflections serve as a tool to help students to articulate and record their thoughts on course readings; therefore, students are not graded on the basis of either the content or the form of the language. This assignment asks students to respond to an instructor-generated prompt on a selected reading theme from the course, as follows:

Write a response of 250-500 words in which you reflect on the role that pragmatics and discourse play in L2 acquisition and in L2 teaching. What are the challenges of addressing pragmatics and discourse in the curriculum? How important is it for teachers to integrate pragmatics and discourse into their teaching (you might compare it to other aspects of language like grammar) (Writing prompt, Course B)

Reflection #1 / February, 2009

¹As to the definition of pragmatics and discourse, I think it represents the great complexity and plenty of different concepts. ²Pragmatics is defined as the study of how language performed by users, the study of what language communicated between speakers and listeners, the study of language meaning in a particular situation, and so on. ³Because my Bachelor degree is Business Administration, in addition to TOEFL, I also used to prepare for the test of GMAT, which is required for applying MBA. ⁴From that experience, I found that the Critical Reasoning is a very difficult and challenging section in the test, GMAT. ⁵Generally speaking, most of the questions in this section emphasize the importance of logical language use and comprehension. ⁶If testers want to give correct answer in the section of Critical Reasoning, tests should have to analyze and really understand the exact meaning of each sentence in its questions because all the description interpreted may affect the correct answer. ⁷On the other hand, I remember the Reading Comprehension in GMAT is much more difficult than TOEFL to deeply analyze and understand the meaning of many sentences even though I know each vocabulary or phrase in those articles. ⁸I think, moreover, the Structure questions about grammar in TOEFL seem the easiest section to be acquired and instructed. ⁹Language meaning is very essential for the human mind to comprehend, and consequently I believe pragmatics and discourse play the important part in the academic field of second language learning and teaching. ¹⁰I think instructors need to try promoting the interaction with L2 learners by means of using pragmatic approaches. ¹¹Teachers should try their best to effectively communicate discourse and pragmatic components of the second language while teaching. ¹²Rather, a large number of second language curricula and materials about pragmatic concept are quite hard and challenging for

teachers to instruct and for students to learn. ¹³In a word, I consider pragmatics and discourse play a crucial and indispensable role both in instruction and acquisition and second language.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.12. Susana's single-page reading reflection, entitled "Reflection #1."

This paper begins with the formal expressions (as shown in italics) "*As to the definition of pragmatics...*" (Sentence 1) and "*Pragmatics is defined as...*" (Sentence 2). These reflect the writer's choice of the academic convention of defining the terminology that drives the paper. The paper then shifts to a personal account marked exclusively by uses of the first person pronoun *I* (appearing in Sentence 3 through 8), where Susana positions herself as a learner of second language by telling her own story as a former GMAT test taker (Sentences 3-4; 7-8) as well as elaborating on the way the test was given (Sentences 5-6), demonstrating how challenging it can be for a second language learner to acquire and learn about "meaning in context," that is, pragmatics and discourse. Toward the end of the reflection, the paper shifts back again to a more academic tone where Susana positions herself as a teacher of second language learners by commenting on and evaluating (as shown in italics) these pedagogy-related statements: for example, "*I believe* pragmatics and discourse play the important part in the academic field of second language learning and teaching" (Sentence 9); "*I think* instructors need to try promoting the interaction with L2 learners by means of using pragmatic approaches" (Sentence 10); and "*I consider* pragmatics and discourse play a crucial and indispensable role both in instruction and acquisition of second language" (Sentence 13). These switches of register and style also result in shifts between ideologies maintained in the academic Discourse of

TESOL and those in Susana's own discourse which mark Susana's dual role both as a learner and a teacher of second language at the same time.

From a Discourse perspective, while I see the reading reflection as a blend of academic and personal writing, in terms of a user of academic language in the written Discourse of TESOL, Susana is working through her language to produce and project multiple identities (as a reader, a writer, a second language teacher and a learner), as well as maneuvering the text in a way to constantly stay connected to the instructor-generated prompt (Bazerman, 2004; Prior, 2004). This particular text points to the sociocultural practices of the written Discourse of TESOL that Susanna needs to master.

In addition, the sentences discussed above indicate the process of how a classroom assignment leads to a student's text (Bazerman, 2004). Specifically, at the beginning of the text, Susana, the writer, interprets this writing task as a reading reflection by using phrasing such as "*As to the definition of pragmatics...*" and "*Pragmatics is defined as...*" as a strategy that indicates an explicit link to the book title (*Pragmatics*) of the course reading, and a starting point for her writing. In her opening, then, Susana appears to effectively situate her own voice to an academic voice by using language and forms appropriate in carrying out a writing task like this.

The paragraph continues with Susana adding another layer of intertextual context as she introduces a particular test, the *GMAT*. This move evokes the particular social world of L2 acquisition, identifying this test as part of this world. The third through eighth sentences, for example, use language recognizably associated with L2 learners as Susana gradually moves the reader through her personal experiences with the *GMAT*. First of all,

bringing into this essay the topic of GMAT implies Susana's background as an L2 learner who intends to apply for graduate studies at U.S. universities (Sentence 3). Next, Susana specifically describes a section in GMAT (the "Critical Reasoning" part) as difficult and challenging because of the variations of meaning when language is used in different contexts and for different purposes (Sentences 4-7). Then, Susana adds that as an L2 learner, even though she knows each vocabulary word or phrase in a sentence, she still finds it difficult to comprehend the whole meaning of a sentence in a certain context (Sentence 8). As a way to appropriate the academic voice of TESOL, Susana seems to make an effort by exemplifying her story as an L2 learner to enhance her interpretation of the reading that she did on *Pragmatics*.

Toward the end of the reflection, as mentioned in earlier sections, the paper shifts back again to a more academic tone where Susana is in a sense operating in the TESOL ideology by using field-related language. This includes using common and unremarkable kinds of vocabulary/ phrases that are familiar to others in the field, such as *promoting the interaction with L2 learners by means of using pragmatic approaches* (Sentence 10) and *to effectively communicate discourse and pragmatic components of the second language while teaching* (Sentence 11). As Bazerman (2004) suggests, these are simply part of the ordinary way of talking that is very likely familiar to everyone in the field, though the writer, Susana, does not attribute them to a specific source, implying that this is common knowledge to be shared with the readers who are familiar with such discussions. Therefore, as a response to the last part of the instructor-generated prompt, these statements (Sentences 9-13) can be understood as more indirectly relying on common

discussions about the importance to integrate pragmatics and discourse into L2 teaching as well as the challenges of addressing pragmatics and discourse in the L2 curriculum. Susana was positioned by her reading reflection, and in terms of aspiring to be an L2 teacher.

In what follows, an examination of the instructor's comments, as well as Susana's own perspectives, reveals her as a struggling member lacking oral and written language skills.

Susana's Written Membership: A Struggling Member Lacking Oral and Written Language Skills

Since students are not graded on the reading reflection, in Susana's case, the instructor, Dr. Boyd, marked a "√⁺" along with a short comment "Good" at the top of the paper. At the end of the assignment, the instructor highlighted Sentences 10 to 12 and commented as follows:

What can we do to better prepare teachers to address L2 pragmatics in the classroom? What about teachers in EFL settings? (Dr. Boyd, Written feedback)

From my interpretation, Dr. Boyd likely noticed a slight absence of information in Susana's response to the writing prompt and was trying to elicit a more elaborated point, particularly on the pedagogical implications of pragmatics and discourse. Even though this text was written to address questions formulated from the instructor-generated writing prompt, there is a noticeable absence of direct and explicit references to the writing prompt. For example, in the text, Susana seems to assume *pragmatics* is the same as *discourse* (Sentences 1 and 2) throughout the paper. When asked about whether there is a difference between these two terms, Susana stated with a sense of confusion:

I'm not sure .. I assume they're the same? I tried to look up my English-Chinese dictionary and see the difference between these terms, but they seem indistinguishable to me .. I mean, they all talk about *meaning in context*, so I really don't know how they are different .. and since I heard the instructor talked about the term *pragmatics* so many times in class .. I also read this term repeatedly in one of our textbooks .. since my English listening is really bad, a lot of times I don't fully understand the lecture nor did I ever ask .. plus I have difficulty in reading as well .. so even if I preview the content ahead of time, I still can't grasp the idea fully. (Susana, Interview)

As revealed in Chapter 4, Susana regarded herself as incompetent and lacking confidence as a language learner. In particular, she spoke of her deep frustration with her lower English proficiency, here with her various struggles with listening, speaking, and reading, all of which seemed to impede her from fully understanding the writing task, marking her as a relatively struggling participant in the academic Discourse of TESOL. This point fits with that reported in Schneider and Fujishima (1995); they found that language-related struggles commonly characterize an international student like Zhang, a graduate student from Taiwan in International Public Studies, learning to write. In addition to unfamiliarity with the written and spoken discourses derived from the academic literacy practices in his field, Zhang's low English proficiency further held him back.

The comments that Course D instructor, Dr. Boyd, made about Susana's academic performance, particularly her spoken and written participation, support this interpretation:

Susana is one of the people who I think sort of scraped by .. she was just sort of at the .. she's probably right at the border. I don't know what her test scores are, what her experience is, but I think she is right at the borderline. Her spoken production is weaker than a lot of the other students .. she was very slow in formulating thoughts, now when she puts her thoughts together, they come out sentences that are very grammatical, it's just take a long time .. uh .. pronunciation is not too bad, but definitely noticeable, and the production is just really slow .. so in terms of fluency, really slow things down .. so presentations, she's definitely not able to cover the

same amount of materials as other students in a given time frame, even though it's all written down ahead of time .. (?it's) just can't get it out. Her writing is similar if she goes to multiple revisions. She can get to the point where her writing is pretty much free of grammatical issues in which ideas are clarified and expressed in the way I think she intends them to be .. but earlier drafts have constructions that are a bit odd in which the intended meaning is not clear, yeah. So you know, she has told me that her bachelor is in literature or something, and not in teaching English or whatever. So she has told me and try to say this is why .. she has told me that she doesn't feel confident as in the same place as her classmates .. in terms of the language proficiency. But she has been doing some good things to improve that, so she has decided to tape-record the lectures and go listen to, it's a very simple thing, right? But I think it certainly can help her a lot with comprehension, picking things up, and .. I think she's somebody who also has told me is that .. that her father is here, she's got a green card .. she's a permanent resident .. so this is where she plans to stay. And in her case, speaking issue is going to be a real obstacle to finding a work as an English teacher, unless she goes (?it) in a Chinese-speaking community .. so that's sort of my impressions of her speaking and writing. (Dr. Boyd, Interview)

Susana's struggle seems to be understood and legitimized by her course instructor, thus marking Susana a marginalized member. More importantly, her struggles with aspects of writing and writing processes seem to originate from her low English proficiency, as noted both by Susana and Dr. Boyd. To illustrate this point, below are excerpts from Susana's earlier drafts of her lesson plan project with Dr. Boyd's hand-written comments³¹ in boldface and brackets and cross-outs:

[Section on "Rationale"] ¹The second language students might use some sentences [**vague- can you be more specific?**] at the risk of leading to an embarrassing situation. ²The reason that this issue mentioned might happen is the face saving act relevant to both the positive politeness and negative politeness. ³Therefore, it is difficult for L2 learners to identify the difference between positive and negative politeness. ⁴And then, they do not know how to express an appropriate sentence through the appropriate relationship between interlocutors. ⁵In fact, positive politeness can be called as solidarity strategy as well; negative politeness can be called as deference strategy as well.

⁶From this lesson, the various activities and content will help L2 students to acquire the concept and skills of using the target language appropriately. ⁷There might be some threats for the L2 learners to face in the conversation, and it is a little bit

³¹ The instructor's hand-written comments were recreated into typed format by the researcher.

difficult for them to identify the sentences or expressions in a positive or a negative politeness strategy. [**fragments you used, a S.V. relationship**]⁸For instance, what sentences are used to speak with a close friend?⁹When to speak a sentence in a negative politeness form?¹⁰When to speak a sentence in a positive politeness form?¹¹The conversation in English between interlocutors of close friends will be shown to be both [?] relevant to solidarity strategy.¹²However, it might become ~~the~~ [**an**] issues~~z~~ with regarding to the sociopragmatic knowledge of the utterance participants.¹³Solidarity strategy is also an important role in the society of USA because the speakers' positive face seems to have a common and the same purpose.¹⁴Thus, because of this ~~lesson valuable~~ [**valuable lesson**], the L2 students can learn how to differentiate the closeness between speakers and hearers, and acquire how to avoid not resulting in the understanding in interlocutors' utterance [**can you clarify what you mean here?**].

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.13. A sample from Susana's earlier drafts of lesson plan project, entitled "Politeness Strategies in Appropriate Relationship between Speaker and Hearer."

In this sample, Dr. Boyd pointed out several places where Susana's intended meanings are not clear, comments such as "vague" (Sentence 1); "can you be more specific?" (Sentence 1); "can you clarify what you mean here?" (Sentence 14); and a question mark "?" in the middle of a sentence (Sentence 11). In addition, by adding the comment "fragments you used, a S.V. relationship" at the end of Sentence 7, Dr. Boyd seems to help clarify the meaning of this particular sentence, although his comment is not entirely lucid ("fragments you used"). Furthermore, Dr. Boyd changed a few grammatical forms in this section, for example, a definite article ("the") to an indefinite article ("an") (use of article) (Sentence 12); "issues" to "issue" (morphological ending) (Sentence 12), and "lesson valuable" to "*valuable lesson*" (noun and qualifier combination) (Sentence 14). All these comments indicate Susana's struggle in both written form and content as she created her own text as a TESOLer. Nevertheless, regardless of her relative struggles

with constructing and reconciling multiple and sometimes contradictory identities, which she wanted to present through writing, Susana is also revealed to be a willing and positive participant who aimed to improve herself as a would-be teacher in the field, including in language proficiency, creativity, and inspiration:

This lesson plan provides a great deal of opportunities for me to practice challenging not only my English ability but also my creativity of designing a curriculum. Explicitly speaking, it assists me in speaking English too because of the presentation in the class. That individual presentation regarding the lesson plan gave me a great chance to assume that I had been a teacher in the classroom in the future, and try to not be nervous or shy while expressing myself thinking and curriculum. In fact, I have never had any experience with regard to planning a lesson before, thus, I was so nervous in the beginning that I did not have enough idea to design my lesson. Then I found inspiration plays a crucial role when a person wants to write an article. Since I already found myself thinking about all the organization of this article, especially after the beginning, I can create a smoother and smoother writing. (Susana, Self-narrative)

As revealed in Chapter 5, Susana and other students did not take their struggles as final indicators of their writing experiences. On the contrary, they regarded struggles as pathways to becoming TESOL professionals. Here, for Susana, becoming a member means not only to learn how to write in a field but also to practice how to speak English as an L2 TESOLer. In addition, as Susana noted, creativity and inspiration also played roles in composing a paper, and these elements seemed to be relevant in characterizing her writing process in this area of study.

In summary, an examination of Susana's texts reveals several contradictions contributed to her participation, negotiation, and identity as a particular user of academic language in the written Discourse of TESOL. While Susana is revealed to be a struggling participant who negotiated to write like a TESOLer, she remained a relatively marginal member as observed by her course instructor. In addition, while Susana and her course

instructor regarded both speaking and writing to be important skills for a competent language teacher, they also recognized these to be great challenges for an L2 learner like Susana. Finally, while Susana is found to be an unproficient writer who struggled with writing, she is simultaneously found to be a willing participant who attempted to become a language teacher as she went through the process of developing language competence, creativity, and inspiration.

Exploring Grace's Academic Texts

Analyses of Grace's written texts and writing process reveal her as a struggling and reticent participant, yet well-versed in the area of English grammar. At the same time, she is revealed to be a struggling member, lacking understanding of classroom participation norms.

For this study, Grace provided me with partial assignments that she had written in Course F, which she took in 2009, including one learning reflection and one error analysis final project. Course F is an introductory course in English structures mainly designed as a pre-requisite to be satisfied by first-year MA TESOL students.

Grace's Use of Written Language: A Struggling and Reticent Participant in TESOL

Grace's texts, along with her own account about language in her course, reveal her as a struggling and reticent participant in TESOL. This is seen in the learning reflection that she wrote for her first TESOL-related course in the program. I examine her final learning reflection in Course F, an assignment that asked the students to reflect on their learning process over the course as the semester came to an end. The syllabus points out that students would not be graded on the basis of either the content or the form of the

language as long as the reflections were turned in on time. Instruction regarding this particular assignment reads as follows:

As you proceed through the course, you will be asked from time to time to reflect about what you are learning—surprises, insights about your own writing/speaking, etc. (Course F).

Final Journal Entry / May, 2009

¹Even though I always said the classes were not challenging enough, I didn't accomplish the first semester with ease at all. ²I could still remember how panic I was at the very beginning when I found I could not grasp everything the professors said in the class, and not to mention express myself freely whenever I want. ³I was so depressed that I even doubted my decision to come here. ⁴And thanks to the words from my friend who told me that you wouldn't make progress if there was no difficulty at all, I had been able to stop whining and pull myself through.

⁵Compared with the other 2 classes, my experience in Course F has given me more opportunities to get a better understanding about English. ⁶For it was the first time that I got to learn the English grammar from a native professor, and I kind of noted that there are some differences the way English grammar are explained by English and Chinese teachers. ⁷Of course the very obvious reason is that I learned English as a second language in China, so the teacher would apply a very prescriptive grammar, there is one universal rule for each single item of grammar. ⁸However, as the class is designed to native English speakers, the professor tries to keep an open attitude toward some controversial issues, such as whether the preposition is a particle or preposition, or which tense would be more suitable, for some differences don't make big differences for natives. ⁹And it's very hard to judge which way is right or wrong. ¹⁰Because of those ambiguities that exist in English grammar, I found the error analysis a headache. ¹¹For that assignment, I need to interview a non-native English speaker, transcribe the conversation and then analyze the errors that occur in the informant's speech. ¹²My informant is a Japanese man, named Hiro. ¹³After I transcribed our conversation, I found he is such a typical Asian English speaker that the mistakes he made all the time in the conversation are what I used to make. ¹⁴I have chosen three aspects: article, preposition and tense, from which most of the mistakes have been made to continue with the analysis. ¹⁵However, even though I know the grammar well, the analysis turned to be such a challenge to me.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.14. Grace's single-page learning reflection, entitled "Final Journal Entry."

Because the purpose of a learning reflection is to record thoughts about what one learns, as the course syllabus suggests, this paper is marked exclusively by repeated uses of the first person pronoun *I*, which points to a personal narrative. Seen from the discourse(s) perspectives, while I see no shift between the uses of first person pronouns to a formal academic register, I do see shifts in ideological worldviews throughout the text, which appear to mark multiple identities that the writer, Grace, chooses to present. In the first three sentences, Grace appears to be developing her own internal ideologies where she positions herself as a newcomer who expresses her feelings and beliefs (as shown in italics) about learning in a new context, and describes the academic Discourse of TESOL as *challenging* (Sentence 1), bringing *panic* (Sentence 2), and making her *depressed* (Sentence 3). Regardless of the tensions that she experienced between the authoritative discourse of TESOL and her own internal ideologies, Grace ultimately formed her own ideas through coming into contact with the discourse of others (e.g., her friend), claiming that these struggles yield opportunities for her to learn in a new course: *[T]hanks to the words from my friend who told me that you wouldn't make progress if there was no difficulty at all...* (Sentence 4) and *[M]y experience in Course F has given me more opportunities to get a better understanding about English* (Sentence 5).

In the sixth through the ninth sentences, Grace introduces and compares two academic Discourses, that of China and that of TESOL at WAU, by shifting her focus to the differences in the way English grammar was explained by their members (Chinese teachers vs. U.S. native-English-speaking teachers). At the ninth sentence, Grace shifts back again to her internal ideology by expressing her personal evaluation of the

differences she experienced: *it's very hard to judge which way is right or wrong* [on English grammar, e.g., *whether the preposition is a particle or preposition, or which tense would be more suitable...* (Sentences 8-9)]. This switch between ideological worldviews embedded in the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses further results in Grace's struggle when situating her own voice within the academic voice represented in the course of TESOL through Sentences 10 to 15, illustrating again how Grace negotiates her multiple identities—as a graduate student from China and an L2 learner and teacher writing in the U.S.—through interpretation and participation in an assignment, for example, *Because of those ambiguities that exist in English grammar, I found the error analysis a headache* (Sentence 10) and *[E]ven though I know the grammar well, the analysis turned to be such a challenge to me* (Sentence 15). As Gee (1989/2001, 1992) suggests, these multiple identities seemed to be enacted by Grace in a tacit yet deliberate way which qualifies her as members of various secondary Discourses, from Chinese academic Discourse through recently acquired ones (e.g., U.S. academic Discourse, particularly the written Discourse of TESOL).

As with Susana, the sentences discussed above also indicate the process of how a classroom assignment leads to a student's text (Bazerman, 2004). Seen from this perspective, this text interprets, negotiates, and participates in the process of accomplishing an academic task. Because the purpose of this final journal entry is to reflect the student's learning process over the course, Grace comments on and evaluates this process by comparing her former and current English grammar learning experiences in a personal way. Specifically, she uses recognizable statements most likely familiar to

the people associated with TESOL, in this case, the topic of teaching English grammar. For example, she first describes her former experience as an English speaker of other languages: *I learned English as a second language in China*. Then, she briefly states the way English grammar was explained: *the teacher would apply a very prescriptive grammar... and there is one universal rule for each single item of grammar* (Sentence 7). She further compares this experience against the current one: *the [native] professor tries to keep an open attitude toward some controversial issues, such as whether the preposition is a particle or preposition...* (Sentence 8). Grace continues to use language and forms that echo certain ways of communicating among people who might take this course; for example, she exemplifies her current experiences with an assignment called *error analysis* (Sentence 10). She further discusses in detail how she accomplishes this assignment by using technical terms, such as *interview a nonnative English speaker, transcribe the conversation, and analyze the errors in the informant's speech* (Sentence 11). These instances show Grace as an L2 researcher and a competent participant who adeptly drew on multiple layers of intertextual elements to position herself accordingly as a member in this new area of study.

In what follows, an examination of the instructor's comments and Grace's own perspectives reveals Grace's written membership as a proficient participant yet struggling to participate like a TESOLer.

Grace's Written Membership: A Capable English Teacher Struggling to Speak Up

As with other students in this study, Grace was experiencing struggles, particularly with her language in classroom participation; as she states in her reflective journal: *I*

found I could not grasp everything the professors said in the class, and not to mention express myself freely whenever I want (Sentence 2). Below are two illustrations that further elaborate this point:

WAU is a very diverse university, not only can I tell from the composition of its student body, but also from the ethnicity of the course instructors in my three classes (only one of them is a Caucasian). But this doesn't mean at all that learning is easier for international students, at least not for me. Because many TESOL courses are about aspects of language and culture, and this is fairly difficult for non-native students. There is no place for Chinese students who tend to score high in math and science. My weakness in language totally shows in this area. (Grace, Self-narrative)

I can still remember distinctively my classroom experiences in Course F. In the first day of class, the professor had us watch a short film: "The Story of English." It talks about the importance of the development of English in the past few decades in different countries and regions, as well as the evolution and change of American English and so forth. That particular session is my most exhaustive and frustrated class ever since I arrived at WAU. First, even though I was an English major back in China, I still can't understand all the content of the movie and hardly can I follow its rhythm. Secondly, it has to do with the difference of language and culture. I don't know how to use idioms because most of the English that I learned is in the books. Therefore, when my classmates were laughing at what they saw in the movies, I had no idea what happened and I felt like an alien at that moment. (Grace, Self-narrative)

In the process of negotiating her participation in an American academic discourse, Grace struggled to deal with a sense of who she was based on her previous academic experiences, and who she was in her current classroom contexts. The former was a competent self that had been constructed academically in China; as revealed in Chapter 4, Grace was able to succeed in the mainstream schools of China through passing exams and obtaining degrees. It is evident in her narratives and interviews that she was fairly confident about her academic abilities in general.

In contrast, within Course F at WAU, she perceived herself as less competent or less active due to her various language-related struggles, particularly classroom participation.

The course instructor, Dr. Fleming, also confirmed this observation:

Well, they [students from Taiwan and China] know very well about grammar than our native speaker students. Challenge might be to get them to talk in class, to participate in class orally. . I mean she's [Grace's] doing very well, so I don't know. But again, she almost never says anything in class, if she does then she'll come out and ask during break or in office hours. Well, it's a very hard class because some are very familiar with grammar just like her .. and we have mature and highly motivated students while we have others who are not interested, never study grammar before, some undergrad students .. so it's hard to keep everybody entertained. But she's pretty good, so the comments I just made [about being not interested or entertained and never study grammar before] doesn't apply to her. (Dr. Fleming, Interview)

While Dr. Fleming implicitly suggests that classroom participation be an integral aspect of academic practice (“challenge might be to get them to talk in class”), he seemed to have no way to evaluate this in Grace’ performance but through his knowledge of her written work (“she’s doing very well [in grammar]... so I don’t know... she almost never says anything in class...”). This point parallels that in Prior’s (1991) study in which he found that the instructor showed an uncertainty when judging the international students’ written progress partly due to their reticence and nonparticipation in writing-related contexts.

Furthermore, Dr. Fleming extended his comments on how one should “act” in the academic Discourse of TESOL, which includes a good command of academic English and an awareness of cultural difference:

Well, this is not a writing class per se, but we expect students to have a command of academic English, both written and oral. And we expect them to act in ways that are appropriate to polite adults, and recognize cultural differences in norms and cross cultures as to how one does things .. and .. I guess one thing we do expect, and that is different from other cultural norms, is that we expect students to participate actively in class. (Dr. Fleming, Interview)

Seen from the course instructor's comments, as an experienced and native-English-speaking professor who had taught second language students for over two decades in TESOL, it seems that Dr. Fleming understood fairly well about Grace's previous experiences as an English learner and, at the same time, sympathized with her struggle to participate orally in class, marking Grace as a yet-to-be full member in this academic community. More importantly, as illustrated, Dr. Fleming recognized both the strength and weakness of Grace and other students from Taiwan/China. While he understood that to participate orally might have become a major obstacle for students from Taiwan/China, he also noted that these students "know very well about grammar" and are "very familiar with grammar." This finding further extends that in writing studies focusing on East Asian international students learning to write in U.S. academic programs. For example, studies focusing on East Asian international students reported that these students were better prepared at grammar than writing and speaking because English was seen as a subject to be tested in the entrance exam rather than a means of participation (e.g., Lee, 2005; Serverino, 2004; Silva, Reichelt, Chikuma, Duval-Couetil, Mo, Vélez-Rendón, & Wood, 2003). Therefore, these students often had a hard time transitioning into their programs' participation which was often emphasized as a more important practice in a U.S. academic context.

To further illustrate this point, below I present excerpts from Grace's 8-page "Error Analysis Project." This section on "Feedback" asks students to write as an English teacher through providing written feedback based on the three kinds of errors that they identified in their informants' speech:

[Feedback] ¹Overall speaking, you are capable of expressing yourself self in a clear and logical manner. ²The errors in your speech are mainly concerned with the following aspects:

³Firstly, one of the most obvious problems in your speech is that you tend to start every sentence with the conjunction “so”, even though no causal relationship is indicated. ⁴And over use of “so” will effect the coherence of your speech, so try to make sure what kind of relationship you are going to express before making speech, avoid “so” when there is no causal relationship. [...]

⁵Secondly, when it comes to noun phrase, one thing you need to know is that whether it is a classification noun or an identification noun. ⁶If you mention the noun for the first time, it should occur with the classifying article “a”, after that, you need to apply identifying article “the”. [...]

⁷Thirdly, preposition is needed to assist the main verb to accomplish certain function [...]. ⁸So try to memorize the preposition attached with the verb when learning a verb, and master the general function of the prepositions. [...]

⁹Last but not least, keep in mind the time of the things you are talking about. ¹⁰If something happened before you talk about it and has no relevance to you at present, you should use simple present tense, which is Verb-ED1. [...]

[Conclusion] ¹¹I would recommend you to improve your command of the English pattern by retelling stories in your own words. ¹²This oral fluency practice can be enjoyable, and allows you to systematically organize your speech. ¹³And it will be

even more effective if you record your practice, and replay to find the errors you have made in your speech.

(Note superscript numbers were added to the beginning of each sentence for reference in the analysis)

Figure 6.15. A section on “Feedback” from Grace’s 8-page final project, entitled “Error Analysis.”

Through her use of imperative language in this section, Grace demonstrated her confidence and competence as an English teacher. In asking her student to correct the error of use of articles (Sentence 6), helping her student to remember the pattern of prepositions (Sentence 8), explaining the rule of verb tenses to her student (Sentence 10), and in providing concrete suggestions in the concluding paragraph to help her student improve his English speaking (Sentences 11-13), Grace shows relative proficiency in English grammar, showing her to be a capable-enough language teacher.

In summary, while Grace is revealed to be a relatively capable English teacher who negotiated to write like a TESOLer, she remained a new member in terms of participating in the classroom context. In addition, while Grace and her course instructor regarded classroom participation as an important sociocultural practice for potential members to master, they also recognized this to be a major obstacle for a new member from Taiwan or China like Grace. Finally, while Grace is found to be a reticent member who struggled to speak up, she is simultaneously found to be a relatively proficient language teacher, especially in the area of English grammar.

The implications of the findings will be further discussed in the final chapter, Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

This dissertation has uncovered how a group of L2 students, including foreign- and U.S.-educated students, became socialized into American academic discourse through writing at the graduate level in an academic field. The study has focused on one specific language group and academic field, five Mandarin-Chinese speaking graduate students studying in an M.A. TESOL program. The pursuit of this dissertation topic originated, in part, from my own experiences as an L2 graduate student from Taiwan studying in the field of second language education at the graduate level in the U.S. academy. But also, given the dramatically increasing number of diverse students in American universities studying at an advanced level (e.g., Kroll, 2003; Matsuda, 2003), it has become essential to understand who these students are, as newcomers in their chosen field, in terms of their writing perspectives and practices, struggles and strategies, as well as participation and membership negotiation in their U.S. disciplinary communities.

Informed by socio-cultural/historic theories of literacy and literacy learning (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1989/2001, 1992), as well as Peirce's (1995) theory of social identity and investment in L2 learning, this study has conceptualized L2 students as: (1) newcomers coming with different discourse experiences along with differing attitudes and values, and participating in academic writing in different ways; and (2) active participants experiencing struggles and strategies, as well as negotiating multiple identities as a result of claiming membership in various settings associated with the different D/d discourse(s)

that they are part of. Based on these theoretical assumptions, data collection and analysis were conducted in consideration of three specific research questions: (1) What kinds of writing perspectives did the students bring as they entered their new field of study? Specifically, what kinds of D/d discourse(s) along with their attitudes and values did the students reveal as they spoke of past and present literacy practice experiences? (2) How did the students access linguistic resources and negotiate entry into the written Discourse of the academic field of TESOL? Specifically, what kinds of struggles and strategies did they experience in terms of becoming a member of this field? (3) What did the students' academic writing, along with their own and the instructors' accounts, reveal about them as particular participants and members in the Discourse of their field of study?

Data for this study came from the following sources: (1) student interviews (semi-structured and text-based); (2) student self-narratives; (3) student writing; (4) instructor interviews (semi-structured and text-based); (5) instructor-generated texts; and (6) other text data (course syllabi, program description, and class readings and handouts). Analysis of the interview and the self-narrative data followed a content analysis (Huckin, 2004), while the students' writing followed a cultural-rhetorical and intertextual analysis (Bazerman, 2004; Buell, 2004). Both analytic methods involved sorting, coding, relating coded data to recurring themes, and interpreting the findings through the theoretical lenses that I applied for this study.

This dissertation reveals three major themes in relation to the three research questions that I posted, summarized below.

Summary of Findings

Writing Perspectives and Practices—Students as Newcomers in a Graduate Program

Students brought with them, as newcomers in their M.A. TESOL program, three kinds of writing perspectives. First, the students revealed the perspective, seen through their everyday practices, that writing is a social medium. This perspective was found to further shape their academic writing experience both as a personal one and a social one. Second, the students held the view that education and English learning was an investment, developed through their former schooling and teaching experiences in Taiwan/China. This view informed their decisions in pursuing an M.A. in TESOL, and the students regarded academic writing practices mainly as a pragmatic means for professional investment. Third, the students revealed ambivalent views regarding what they thought writing is and their actual writing practices, reflecting sometimes competing perspectives on writing as simply utilitarian and writing as a key and authentic practice.

These findings add to an emerging picture of East Asian international students learning to participate in their new ESL/undergraduate/graduate settings in which, even within one ethnic/language group (e.g., Japanese or Korean), differing perceptions/perspectives reflect the different experiences that students bring to their new learning and living contexts. These differences, in turn, reveal students' varied language/literacy performances, which cannot be predicated on their ethnicities (Lee, 2005; Morita, 2002)

Struggles and Strategies—Students' Ideological Development in a Professional Field

The students struggled to situate their voices to the voices of three kinds of

authoritative or powerful others represented in the field, both written and oral: scholars in the field as represented in their written work, course instructors, and fellow students. Specifically, first, the students struggled to take on a professional identity to write with an authoritative voice in the field through reading the scholarly written works of others in their courses. Second, the students struggled to balance conflicting selves, an evolving sense of professional identity as an authoritative writer on the one hand, and, on the other, the role of a student as they wrote papers for various instructors in the program. Third, the students struggled to reconcile competing voices regarding how to write so that they qualified as good academic writers as they collaborated with their fellow students in various writing-related activities. Last but not the least, the struggles that the students experienced ultimately transformed into new opportunities for learning in a way that helped them to shape their sense of self as TESOL professionals. In responding to the kinds of struggles that the students spoke of, three kinds of strategies were revealed to reflect these new ways of learning in their program: (1) reading/observing the written works of others, (2) relating personal experiences to the content area, and (3) relying on resources outside their field of study.

These findings build on previous research that highlights the importance of understanding struggles as learning opportunities, rather than limitations or problems, in which individuals learn to write in new contexts (Bakhtin, 1981; Delpit, 1995/2001; Rose, 1985; Zamel, 1997).

Students' Academic Participation and Professional Membership in a Disciplinary Community

The students practiced diverse ways of writing, which contributed to and helped

shape their written participation as individual users of academic language in TESOL. Along with their varied difficulties and strengths, the students also revealed varied ways of trying to become professional members of the TESOL community.

These findings extend previous research conducted within a situated approach to disciplinary enculturation which revealed the nonlinear/unpredictable and locally situated nature of written discourse socialization at an advanced level (e.g., Casanave, 1995, 2002; Herrington, 1985; Ivanič, 1998; McCarthy, 1987; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998). This study also supports earlier conceptions of academic discourse which suggests that any given discourse community involves multiple and competing student perspectives and practices, with ambivalence and tensions inherent in their academic literacy practices that signify them as individual participants; and that a community of multiple discourses should be one in which all students can participate (e.g., Bartholomae, 1985/2001; Bizzell, 1986, 1988, 1990; Delpit, 1988, 1995/2001; Rose, 1983/2006, 1985).

Implications

As summarized, this dissertation represents an attempt to document the complex and conflictual process of disciplinary enculturation, as well as to understand the situated nature of L2 learning and writing, through the literacy experiences of a group of Mandarin Chinese-speaking students learning to write in an M.A. TESOL program. This study contributes to theory, educational research, and pedagogy in significant ways. Below I discuss implications and recommendations for the areas of *theory*, *research*, and *teaching* that can be drawn from the findings of this study.

A Theoretical Perspective

On a theoretical level, this study proves the usefulness of Bakhtinian perspectives (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 1989/2001, 1992) to examine issues that are critical to understand academic literacy practices as they manifest themselves in discourse socialization experiences of L2 students in an academic field. These “issues” have been interrelated and recurrent themes in this study, as we have seen, including: struggles with the discourses of others, strategies as ways of learning, as well as written participation and membership negotiation. Therefore, this study lends support to the major insights from a Bakhtinian perspective, as I will discuss below.

Bakhtin’s concepts of ideological becoming, authoritative discourse, and internally persuasive discourse have been helpful in this study since they revealed literacy and literacy practices as social process. According to Bakhtin, learning happens only when individuals interact with one another within a particular environment. What is more, struggles, as a result of coming together with the voices of the different individuals within the environment and their own evolving perspectives within them, are essential to one’s development.

Seen from these views, diverse populations, such as the students in this study, develop strategies as a result of struggling with the varied voices represented in the courses of TESOL (e.g., voices of their course instructors, peers, and scholars represented in the written works of others). In this process, the students make decisions about how much to identify with and negotiate ways of writing in TESOL and ways of being TESOLers that makes meaning of their varied academic participation and professional

membership. At the end, the students seemed to recognize the value of their struggles, and what these struggles could bring to them in terms of learning and personal growth. In this process, at the same time, Gee's capital D Discourse (which also starts from a Bakhtinian perspective), can help individuals to untangle and to understand the kinds of value systems as well as performances that they bring with them to learning, and how those experiences might lead to struggles in a new Discourse.

These theories are valuable particularly in helping us to understand why and how struggles happen as individuals enter a new learning context and interact with the people who participate in it. This theoretical implication echoes that of Freedman and Ball (2004), suggesting that, instead of understanding struggles as something problematic at the present moment, "Bakhtin's theory implies that it is essential to look beyond the moment of miscommunication to the longer-term, ongoing dialogic process if we want to understand the struggles that lead to learning" (p. 6).

A Research Perspective

This study incorporates a blend of research methodologies. It combines the research techniques of a qualitative case study, discourse analysis, text analysis, and ethnographic methods, such as text-based interviewing and self-narrative participant accounts, within a socio-cultural/historic theoretical frame. This dissertation therefore represents a valuable addition to an emerging body of multicultural case studies of academic literacy research that utilizes an interpretive perspective to examine the interrelationships among texts, people, and disciplinary contexts in graduate-level education (e.g., Casanave, 1995, 2002; Prior, 1991, 1995, 1998).

Through an integration of different methods of inquiry, this study has attempted to investigate how students construct ways of being both through their writing processes and written products. At the same time, this study has examined issues of identities, agency, and power relations relevant to literacy practices in a new academic setting. In addition, the use of student interview and self-narrative data in this study has been instrumental in documenting students' personal histories of literacy learning, and in demonstrating that living and learning at one point in time and place is always influenced by what occurred at other times and settings in one's life. These implications build on previous research that highlight the importance of understanding what the students bring with them as individual language users, and how their complex and multiple discourse(s) experiences help influence, transfer to, or (re)shape their newly-formed perspectives and practices in new learning contexts (e.g., Casanave, 2002; Dantas-Whitney, 2003; Ivanič, 1998; Lee, 2005; Morita, 2002; Peirce, 1995; Prior, 1998).

The findings of this study also have resonance for the academic writing experiences of other cultural and language groups in varied fields of study, particularly groups from East Asian countries such as Hong Kong (China), South Korea, and Japan. These different groups seem to share similar sociocultural, historical, and political roots as regards schooling operations (e.g., influences of the Chinese Confucian tradition, Japanese colonization, and the implementation of state exam system) (Fwu & Wang, 2002; Lee, 2005), which all play a role in shaping students' previous and present experiences of English learning and writing in their home countries and in the U.S. For example, because there is a very demanding market for English teachers in East Asia, the

students in this study “invested” in their M.A. TESOL degree in the U.S. and they valued highly this advanced diploma; paradoxically it was this degree-oriented learning attitude that made them hold to competing perspectives and contrasting practices in writing, inside and outside of the classroom.

However, this is in no way to suggest that other language/ethnic groups do not invest in their graduate education through a utilitarian/pragmatic perspective on academic writing. Previous studies have found that different groups in different disciplines, including both native and non-native students, come to study and write at an advanced level with a primary goal of passing grades or obtaining hands-on experiences that contrast with their programs’ academic purposes (e.g., Casanave, 2002; Lunsford, 2011; McCarthy, 1987; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995). In addition, seen from the findings of this study, we know that even within one language group learning to write in a field, there is great variety among the students in terms of their writing perspectives and performances, struggles and strategies, as well as participation norms and membership negotiation.

Therefore, this study renders several areas for future research. First, while this study focused on one language group in one field, future research can investigate different groups of learners involving a larger number of participants in order to examine, as well as to compare and contrast, potential differences in students’ perspectives based on language, culture, gender, age, race/ ethnicity, field of study, or stages in the field of study (Morita, 2002). Moreover, it would be useful to conduct a longer-term, in-depth investigation, perhaps of a smaller number of participants (one or two) to follow over

students' entire graduate program careers (Dantas-Whitney, 2003). A long-term study would be able to offer a more complete understanding of both writing processes and outcomes in terms of literacy learning since the current study only reflected one short period of time (an academic semester). It would also be beneficial to examine how students' experiences change and evolve as they advance in their academic programs, particularly students' language/literacy and professional development in relation to their area of study.

Finally, as the present study helps to point out, learning to write academically involves more than writing itself, but peer collaboration and other relevant literate activities such as reading and speaking. Therefore, it would be useful to consider combining the analysis of participants' accounts and the discourse analysis of classroom interaction, particularly in classrooms that include the participation not only of L2 students from one ethnic group, but also of their course instructors and their fellow L1 and L2 students (Dantas-Whitney, 2003; Morita, 2002). These multiple perspectives would allow continued exploration and better understanding of the complex, dynamic, and interactive nature of academic literacy practices in higher education.

A Practice Perspective

This dissertation advocates explicit instruction and guided participation for students from diverse backgrounds learning to write in a discipline/field and pursuing an advanced degree in a second or foreign language. As revealed in this study, although the students learning to write at the graduate level are expected to take their agency and authority and act like professionals in terms of learning to write, at the same time, they also struggled

with being students who are constantly bound to different course instructors' expectations. What is more, as illustrated, since not all students had experienced the kinds of language/learning/professional environments that prepared them to succeed in their new (U.S.) academic contexts, to varying degrees, they underwent a disempowering learning process because there was not always clear or facilitated guidance from the more experienced members (e.g., their course instructors) in their field of study. In addition, although the students acknowledged struggles, developed strategies to cope, and observed their own personal transformations as they were gradually socialized to the "sociocultural rules" in the learning process, at the same time, the students emphasized their still unfulfilled desires to succeed in the academic contexts of the U.S. For example, while the students regarded classroom participation and critical reading/writing skills as important sociocultural practices in their disciplinary community, they expressed their lacking understanding of participation norms and academic skills. As a result, they were held back from successfully gaining full membership implied by these practices.

Therefore, following Henze (2009)³², this study recommends that the more experienced members (e.g., advisors, course instructors, and administrators)³³ make students aware of *rules of the culture of power*³⁴ (in Delpit's term), first to themselves, then to

³² Drawing on Delpit's (1988) culture of power, Henze (2009) advocates "transparent assessment criteria" (p. 61), in order to make instructors' instruction equitable and to help diverse students succeed in college settings.

³³ While this study acknowledges the important contributions of both faculty members and University/program administrators, this study nevertheless focuses its teaching implications on course instructors as they are most directly related to the teaching and learning of writing suggested by the findings (Chapters 5 and 6).

³⁴ In her article on *The Silenced Dialogue*, Delpit (1988) linked writing and writing instruction to a "culture of power," that is, "there are codes or rules for participating in power;... [for example,] linguistic forms,

students, and to fulfill a critical role by putting the useful notion of *guided participation*³⁵ (in Rogoff's term) into practice as they socialize students to be competent members in an academic field. This study considers its implications to teaching in terms of the teaching and learning of writing in any discipline/professional field in postsecondary settings, to which I discuss below.

First of all, this study illustrates that it is essential for course instructors to come to know who their students are in terms of literacy learning experiences that they bring with them, and how those experiences might have affected their current writing perspectives and learning performances. This could be implemented by having students write a personal reflection at the beginning of the term so that the faculty members could have a better understanding of how to develop teaching and assessment strategies that make instruction accessible and equitable to students who are unfamiliar with the expected norms of a dominant academic Discourse (Heath, 1983; Henze, 2009; Ivanič, 1998; Peirce, 1995).

In addition, it is also of importance for the more experienced members to make explicit the inseparable relationship between reading and writing in a way to encourage the students to read extensively in the content area, and not just course-assigned readings (e.g., Belcher, 1995; Connor & Kramer, 1995). Because of their unfamiliarity with the form and content of the varied voices represented in an academic field, all students in this

communicative strategies, and presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting" (p. 283).

³⁵ Rogoff's (2003) notion of "guided participation" is understood as two-way negotiated interaction between more experienced members and novice learners with a purpose of socializing newcomers in a social setting.

study repeatedly stated that reading has been one major struggle that kept them from writing well. As one recommendation, the course instructors could take an active role in facilitating field-related reading in groups to maximize the students' learning while the students ask questions and discuss what they have read in order to familiarize themselves with the form and content of the kinds of reading in a field. As the students become better prepared with reading in a field, they might find learning to write a less daunting journey to set out on.

Moreover, as the current study demonstrates, a few students in this study described that they lacked confidence of speaking up or understanding of classroom participation norms in their U.S. academic contexts; as a result, they were inhibited from fully engaging in opportunities of speaking and writing. As revealed in this study, since writing and speaking are an intertwined business and contribute greatly to the students' learning of writing (Sperling, 1996; Sperling & Freedman, 2001), it becomes equally important for faculty members to relate these students' experiences in the dialogue that occurs within their classrooms to guide their thinking and speaking processes while students learn the content and form of a particular course reading or written assignment.

Finally, as the study points out, although many students found the written feedback from their course instructors helpful as they were gradually integrated into their professional community, they struggled with understanding the form of such feedback mainly because it did not allow room for face-to-face communication (such as the students' not understanding handwritten feedback, or why a particular question was asked). As a result of this experience, the students seemed to draw back from fully taking

on opportunities of learning as they revised their papers. Therefore, it would be far more valuable in regard to assisting their learning and writing processes if course instructors could offer these students plentiful opportunities for one-on-one or small-group writing conferences, characterized as a useful format of guided participation (Sperling, 1996), which would allow negotiated interaction to take place and individual learning to be fostered.

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APPENDIX

CONVENTIONS FOR PRESENTING EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Below is a key to the symbols used in presenting extracts from interviews

(adapted from Ivanič, 1998, p. 121):

- .. indicates final intonation and/or a pause in places where the syntax of the quotation does not lend itself to conventional punctuation.
- (...) indicates that a part of the interview which is not relevant to the point under discussion is omitted.
- (?word/s) indicates that I am not quite sure if this is the word spoken.
- [word/s] adds words or replaces a proform with words to complete the sense.
- (word/s) adds nonverbal or extralinguistic information on the quotation.
- Word/s* indicates who or what is being referred to.