

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/2379>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**Constructing Conceptualizations of English Academic
Writing within an EFL Context: Streams of Influence
at a Taiwan University**

by

Michael Patrick Geary

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching and
Applied Linguistics

CELTE (Centre of English Language Teacher Education)

University of Warwick

February 2008

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
LIST OF FIGURES	V
LIST OF TABLES	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
DECLARATION	VIII
ABSTRACT	IX
Chapter 1 - Introduction	1
1.1 Perceptions of the context for teaching writing in Taiwan	1
1.2 An overview of the research context	5
1.3 The research design	7
1.4. Endnote: A note on the terms Chinese/Taiwanese	7
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	9
2.1 English-dominant context writing paradigms: An introduction	9
2.1.1 Current traditional paradigm	12
2.1.1.1 The pattern/product approach	14
2.1.2 Learner-centered paradigm	15
2.1.2.1 The personal-expressivists	17
2.1.2.2 The cognitivists	18
2.1.3 Genre approach paradigm	20
2.1.3.1 Contrastive rhetoric	21
2.1.3.2 Discourse analysis	23
2.1.3.3 Findings of discourse analysis	25
2.1.3.4 Discourse community	27
2.1.3.5 English for academic purposes	29
2.1.4 Research in academic writing applicable to this study	32
2.1.4.1 Prior	33
2.1.4.2 Casanave	35
2.1.4.3 You	37
2.1.4.4 Recent studies in EFL contexts	40
2.2 A social constructionist framework of analysis	44
2.2.1 An overview of social construction	45
2.2.2 Origins of social constructionism	47
2.2.2.1 Social constructionism	47
2.2.3 Tenets of social constructionism	48
2.2.4 Ontology / Ontological relativism	51
2.2.4.1 Relativism	51
2.2.5 Social constructionism and the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky	55
2.2.6 Research perspective	58
2.2.7 Conclusion – The relevance of social constructionism	60
2.2.7.1 Endnote: The question of critical inquiries	61
2.2.8 Theories of social constructionism related to this research	62
2.3 Summary	65
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology	67
3.1 Context description	67

3.1.1	National Southern University of Science and Technology	68
3.1.2	Research participants	69
3.1.2.1	students	71
3.1.2.2	teachers	75
3.1.2.3	Administrators	81
3.2	Research questions	81
3.3	The research design	82
3.3.1	Ethnography versus case study	84
3.3.2	Type of case study	89
3.3.3	Issues within qualitative case study research	90
3.3.3.1	Validity	90
3.3.3.2	Dependability and reflexivity	92
3.3.3.3	Generalizability	93
3.3.4	Approach to analysis	96
3.4	The research instruments	100
3.4.1	Interviews	100
3.4.2	Classroom observation	103
3.4.3	Focus group interview	104
3.4.4	Documentation	106
3.5	Research administration	106
3.5.1	Pilot study	106
3.5.2	Teacher interviews	109
3.5.2.1	Overview of teachers interviews	110
3.5.2.2	Teacher interview questions	111
3.5.2.3	Location and equipment	112
3.5.3	Focus group interviews	112
3.5.3.1	Questionnaires as an aid to focus group interviews	112
3.5.3.1.1	Formulating questionnaires	112
3.5.3.1.2	Administration of questionnaires	112
3.5.3.1.3	Selection of students from questionnaires for focus group interviews	113
3.5.3.2	Location of focus group interviews	116
3.5.3.3	Equipment	117
3.5.3.4	Preparing the question guide	118
3.5.3.5	Conducting the focus group interviews	119
3.5.3.6	Conducting follow-up in-depth member interviews	121
3.6	Methodological limitations of the study	122
3.7	Summary	124
3.7.1	Endnote: A note on transcription	124

Chapter 4 – Findings and Analysis **126**

4.1	Introduction: Conceptualizations of English academic writing	126
4.2	Representative components of English academic writing	128
4.2.1	Length	129
4.2.2	Vocabulary	130
4.3	Organizational components of English academic writing	133
4.3.1	Rhetorical patterns	134
4.3.2	Prescriptive elements	142
4.3.3	Rules determine EAW	146
4.4	English academic writing as creative writing	149

4.4.1	EAW as literature	161
4.5	English academic writing as research writing	169
4.5.1	The word of others	173
4.5.2	References	178
4.5.3	Our thinking is not research and (therefore) not EAW	185
4.5.4	Writing skills	188
4.6	The role of textbook in constructing conceptualizations of English academic writing	200
4.6.1	Selecting the textbooks	201
4.6.2	Textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum	204
4.6.3	Teacher use of textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum	211
4.6.3.1	The Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao Case	212
4.6.3.2	The Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun Case	217
4.6.3.3	Supplementing textbook use	226
4.6.4	Teacher's perception of textbook content	228
4.7	Summary	232
Chapter 5 – Discussion		233
5.1	Introduction	233
5.2	Summary and discussion of major points	233
5.2.1	Components of EAW	234
5.2.1.1	Representative components	234
5.2.1.2	Organizational components	236
5.2.2	Confining conceptualizations of EAW	239
5.2.2.1	EAW as creative writing/literature	240
5.2.2.2	EAW as research writing	242
5.2.3	The role of the textbook in constructing conceptualizations of EAW	248
5.3	Future directions	257
5.3.1	Emerging discipline	258
5.3.2	Community of practice	263
5.3.3	Is EAP the way forward?	270
5.4	Summary	274
Chapter 6 – Conclusion		275
6.1	Contributions of the study	275
6.1.1	Limited conceptualizations	275
6.1.2	Inaccurate conceptualizations	277
6.1.3	Conflicting assumptions	278
6.2	Limitations of the study	279
6.3	Future research	280
6.4	Conclusion	281
Bibliography		285
Appendices		299
Appendix 1: Focus Group Participant Profiles		299
Appendix 2: Data Collection Schedule		302
Appendix 3: A Letter to Colleagues		309

Appendix 4: An Email to Colleagues	310
Appendix 5: Teacher Interview Guide	311
Appendix 6: Student Questionnaire	312
Appendix 7: Question Guide for Focus Group Interview	313
Appendix 8: Instructions to the Focus Group Participants	314
Appendix 9: Sample pages from Unit 7 of <i>Composition Practice 4</i> textbook	315

List of Figures

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1 Teacher background in the department of Applied English 80

List of Tables

Chapter 3

Table 3.1	Profiles of teacher in the department of Applied English	77
Table 3.2	Handwritten journal entry during data collection with reflections on new interview questions to pursue	97
Table 3.3	Entry during the coding of interview data with reflections on how an interviewee was interpreting events	98

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this research to my wife, Lilian, whose love, devotion, and support offered light during the many hopeless hours of work. Lil always buoyed me up with her belief in my abilities to complete this thesis when I was full of doubt. Simply put, without her there would be no thesis – I thank you for your selfless faith in me.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for their unending confidence in the worthiness of this research project to my supervisors, Dr. Hilary Nesi and Dr. Keith Richards. Their sharp insights laced with encouragement gave direction to this research when it threatened to boil over into a nebulous mass of inconsequential data. For their generous dedication to the completion of this thesis I am sincerely grateful.

I would like to extend my hearty thanks to all the participants who took part in this research project – the administrators, faculty, and students of the Department. Their active participation in this research through offering their honest and valuable opinions ensured the success of this study.

I would also like to thank my wife's parents for their support. Their reassurances gave security to both my wife and I as we pursued our PhDs so far from home. They have done much to make me feel welcome in their exotic homeland of Taiwan.

Declaration

I, Michael Patrick Geary, am the sole author of this research thesis submitted in completion of the Ph.D. in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE). This is my own work and does not contain work by any other author. I absolutely state that none of the material in this research thesis has ever been published.

I also confirm that neither this thesis, nor any work therein, has ever been submitted for a degree at another university, nor has any of this material been submitted for another degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Patrick Geary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Michael Patrick Geary

Abstract

The thesis draws upon in-depth research into the question of how English Academic Writing (EAW) is conceptualized at a Department of Applied English in a Taiwanese university. A qualitative research approach was taken within a social constructionism framework. Administrators, teachers, and students, were interviewed to explore the impact each of these three streams of influence has on the construction of the *idea* of EAW within this particular EFL context. These influences add to the mixture forming the conceptualization of EAW with a knock on effect to curriculum planning, teaching pedagogy, and the academic texts students produce.

Administrators' design of a writing program and teachers' conceptualizations of EAW have implications for students' experience in learning to write and their own conceptualizations of what EAW is. Excerpts from interviews with teachers across the writing programme reveal how teachers do not share a coherent approach to teaching writing and yet have the understanding that they are conforming to a standardized conception of EAW.

This research has important implications for curriculum design and lesson planning in EAW and EFL teacher training. Administrators need to implement a writing program with clear mutual goals as conceptualizations of EAW in an EFL context may be particularly fragile and lack consistency. Further implications of this research touch upon the training EFL teachers receive in graduate programs abroad which contribute to molding their conceptualizations of EAW. This research also points to the importance for administrators, teachers, and students to share a common language with which to discuss EAW issues.

Chapter One -- Introduction

1.1 Perceptions of the context for teaching writing in Taiwan

Are the conditions inherent in FL teaching so different from those found in native language composition and ESL programs that pedagogical insights developed in the latter are untenable in the former? Or, is it simply a matter of time? Will the present lack of interest change to curiosity, investigation, and adaptation ...? (Heilenman, 1991, p. 273)

Although Heilenman wrote those words seventeen years ago, I believe they are still descriptive of perceptions about teaching English in EFL contexts today. But perhaps the time has come to explore the conditions inherent in FL teaching more closely. I have been teaching academic writing at the university level to English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in Taiwan since moving there with my newly acquired MA/TESOL degree in 1994. During that time, I have come to believe there are factors influencing the acquisition of academic writing skills, and hence the written texts students produce, which seem beyond the scope of current research into the writing ability of English academic writing (EAW) students. The context in which EFL students learn EAW is suffused with elements that influence their acquisition of writing skills. Students majoring in English at a university while living in their native countries are saturated by a context quite different from the English-dominant native speaker context international students experience. The differences flow from many streams contained in the academic writing situation: students' historical writing instruction contexts and present context, administrators' views of academic writing instruction, teachers' influence on students through assumptions held about EAW and actualized through pedagogical choices, and the students' own tentative conceptualizations of what academic writing is; these all

naturally impact the social construction of EAW. Without ample knowledge of the kinds and degree of influence these factors have it is difficult to understand conditions forming the idea of what ‘academic writing’ is in an EFL context. Would the idea of English academic writing, have its own unique representation in this EFL environment? Without ample knowledge of the distinctive character of English academic writing existing within this particular EFL context, it would be difficult to address the conditions constructing it or to decide on the most fitting pedagogical approach.

At the same time, it is necessary for students wishing to become bona fide members of a foreign language discourse community to be studying the discourse used by that community and not some deviant variation which arises due to misconceptions. It is the intention of this research to discover the (mis)conceptualizations of English academic writing existing at the study site and how those conceptualizations are constructed. It is hoped that by understanding, this information will be added to the complex puzzle of students’ foreign language ability so they might better reach their full potential as English academic writers. Without this understanding I have at times felt like I was working with only a part of all that manifests in the classroom even while equipped with the current pedagogy, as if listening only to the brass section of an orchestra.

Students surfacing in the natural language environment of their L1 after their daily plunge into English classes face a tough challenge: to not shake off their enculturation into the English academic writing discourse community. This is the nature of an EFL setting. Let me clarify for the purposes of this discussion the differences between an EFL setting like the site of this research, and an English as a *Second* Language (ESL) setting. The EFL setting is where English is not the common language

of discourse for the vast majority of people. Taiwan is such a place, where both Mandarin and Taiwanese are the languages used by the vast majority of the native population. English is a *foreign* language even though six years of English language education is required in Taiwan as it is learned for test purposes and to converse with foreigners. Taiwanese, like other groups within Asia, are well-known for learning English for six years or more but will literally run away from a foreigner who might ask for directions on the street. This has happened to me many times. An ESL setting is an English-dominant native speaker context where English is the common language of discourse for the vast majority of native people of that country or region. The US and UK would be such ESL environments, where English is learned as a second language by foreigners for communication with the native population. An important point that colors much of the discussion to follow is that learning English in an ESL setting has a far greater immediacy due to the obvious need to communicate with the people of that country. For international students attending university in an ESL setting where English is the dominant language and medium of instruction, learning English is of paramount importance. However, the importance of learning English is constantly being questioned by non-native speakers (NNSs) learning the language, even for English majors in an EFL setting like Taiwan.

The context exerts its force in shaping the relevance of acquired English academic writing skills through social interactions: Administrators wield another force upon the academic writing environment as they (hopefully) focus on the larger picture, determining the nature of academic writing classes and planning (or not) the relationship of academic writing to other classes within their Departments of Applied English

throughout Taiwan. Teachers in an EFL setting through their qualifications, confidence, and interest in teaching the subject of English academic writing exercise a great deal of influence upon the academic writing context. Students themselves are certainly not passive in this scenario, exerting influence through their personalities, individual preferences and expectations for learning English academic writing, and historical educational experiences – they bring their individual rhythms into play. These influences all add to the mix, having influence upon the academic written texts students produce; yet there is insufficient research into these many streams of influence and how they are working to construct conceptualizations of EAW. It is my intention to extend research and theory in these areas by investigating the influences of administrators, teachers, and students within this specific EFL research context on the conceptualizations surrounding the understanding of the term ‘academic writing’ in order to add to the accumulated research to date.

I expect this research will illuminate, define and describe, in rich detail, the manner in which academic writing has come to be socially constructed by the principal participants at this research site. For the vast majority of students whose English-language academic careers terminate with a B.A. degree and whose use of English academic writing skills may be perceived as never going beyond writing emails there is a paucity of case study research into the influence of their EFL contexts in constructing their conceptualizations of EAW. Research into their acquisition of academic writing skills may reveal the conditions for such students to perceive limitations in their writing ability, in their inability to write more like native-writers. Consequences affecting the production of texts can arise from differing conceptualizations of EAW being constructed

in EFL contexts. Inquiry into students' conceptualizations could offer a window into understanding the model of EAW they have constructed. With such research, teachers would be better prepared to address pedagogical problems in the classroom. This study proposes an inquiry into the conceptualizations of EAW at this EFL research site.

I next turn to a more specific overview of the research setting and participants.

1.2 An overview of the research context

This research takes place at a National Science and Technology University in Kaohsiung County Taiwan. I have given this research setting the pseudonym National Southern University of Science and Technology (NSUST). Most technology university students expect to learn skills and knowledge more directly applicable to their future careers than students attending a traditional university. As a result, NSUST offers academic programmes closely linked to the more immediate needs of social and national development. Even an academic programme in a humanities field, such as English, would reflect this influence in the courses it would offer. The very name of the English Department at NSUST reflects its difference from traditional university English departments – it is called the Department of “Applied” English in Mandarin, Taiwan's official language. Borrowing a term used to differentiate Applied Linguistics from the theoretical focus of Linguistics, the English Department is referred to as an “Applied” English Department to denote the Department's focus on teaching English *language* skills as opposed to English *literature*. The Department of Applied English at NSUST offers courses like Business English, English Language Teaching, and English Interpretation to prepare students for the pragmatic needs of their future.

All research participants – students, teachers, and administrators – are from the Department of Applied English at NSUST. Since the focus of this research is the conceptualization of the idea of EAW within this EFL research site, it is important to have a bounded parameter within which to explore the construction. Administrators, faculty, and students within this Department form that parameter, i.e. non-English majors at this university studying English were not participants. Writing classes at NSUST's Department of Applied English are the foci of this research. Writing classes are required courses for all students at each year. The freshman (1st year) and sophomore (2nd year) levels had a total of nearly 120 students. The junior (3rd year) level had a total of 64 students and the senior (4th year) level a total of about 80 students. The total number of students enrolled in academic writing classes was approximately 260 – this reflects the total number of students in the Department.

The specializations of the teachers in this Department focus on but are not limited to the three tracks offered to students in the Department: TESOL, Translation and Interpretation (T&I), and English Literature. As might be imagined, with different tracks available to students, the individual histories of the teachers in the Department are diverse. All teachers in the Department teaching writing during the 2004-5 school year were interviewed, excluding myself. That amounted to ten teachers being interviewed; two were interviewed twice as teachers switched classes following the first semester. The final group of participants, the administrators, consisted of: the newly elected chairperson of the Department, the writing coordinator of the Department, and a former chair who was re-elected to the chairmanship.

1.3 The research design

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach using ethnographic methods to explore the meaning of academic writing as it is constructed in this EFL setting among English-major students whose planned academic future may or may not go beyond the present EFL setting. This research takes a social constructionism view of the nature of reality; qualitative research methods are highly compatible with such an ontological perspective. The research questions for this study aim to reveal the meaning of EAW within this context and how that meaning is socially constructed. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) explain, “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality ... they seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (p. 13 – italics in original). Using qualitative methods aids in answering such research questions because it tries to “provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained by purely quantitative data” (Silverman, 2000, p. 8). In addition, another consideration in the selection of a qualitative approach is that this research is not designed to verify hypotheses generated by current theory but adopts instead an approach in which theorization is grounded in the data.

1.4 Endnote: A note on the terms Chinese/Taiwanese

It should be noted that throughout this thesis the terms ‘Chinese’ and ‘Taiwanese’ are used interchangeably. Within the context of this particular thesis they are meant to be non-politicized, while acknowledging that these terms have become highly politicized within Asia and throughout the world. Chinese is used in this thesis to describe the speakers of a language as well as a culture which defies nationalistic boundaries. Taiwanese is used to describe a people, geographical location, and entities relating to the

island of Taiwan. These two terms are used interchangeably within this thesis as the people of Taiwan do speak the languages of and share a common culture associated with Chinese people in mainland China and throughout the world. As such, it would be appropriate to refer to a university in Taiwan as a Chinese university -- indeed many universities within Taiwan do have the term Chinese as part of their name.

To summarize this first chapter: perceptions within the EFL context have been discussed, a brief overview of the research context and research design has been presented, and a note clarifying the use of the terms Chinese and Taiwanese has been offered. In the next chapter the literature on theories and studies relevant to the focus of this research will be reviewed.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.1 English-dominant context writing paradigms: An introduction

This research intends to examine how English academic writing (EAW) is socially constructed within a foreign context. The purpose of this literature review is to discover whether and in what ways EAW as it is socially constructed in this foreign context (context-2) is differently constructed from EAW as it would be found among native English-speakers within their native contexts (context-1), i.e., English as it is used for writing in the U.K., Australia, Canada, the U.S., etc.

The purpose of this research is to observe and describe EAW as it has been conceptualized in an EFL context. Because EAW as it exists in EFL contexts draws extensively from EAW as it exists in English-dominant countries, it is necessary first to understand assumptions about EAW theories and pedagogical practices as they exist in EFL contexts before turning attention to a non-English-dominant context. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to define assumptions about EAW within English-dominant countries in order to better understand those assumptions as they exist within this particular EFL context. To be able to understand and interpret the answers to the question, What is English academic writing? within the EFL context of this research site it is important to understand the answers to the same question as they may occur within English-dominant / Western / North American contexts.

This thesis takes an American point of view in its review of literature because the American English academic writing is the dominant influence within this research site. EAW in Taiwan has long been influenced by American assumptions of what academic writing is. This continues through the influence of the American educational

environment upon writing instructors as well as materials used in the writing program. The majority of writing instructors in the writing program at this research site were educated in America and the textbook, a central artifact of the writing program, was written by an American writing instructor and reflects American conceptualizations of EAW.

This difference or mismatch between EAW within context 1(EAW-1) and EAW within context 2 (EAW-2) is important because it is problematic for those within the foreign context wishing to write in English to communicate with others. These others may very well be people whose L1 is not English. A Taiwanese employee working at a trading company discussing details of a contract with a Vietnamese supplier would most likely use English when writing the email. Some academic writing students at my university in southern Taiwan have gotten employment at just such Taiwanese trading companies explicitly for their (assumed) ability to write in English. As well, there is of course the need to communicate with people whose L1 is English. Other students within academic writing classes intend to pursue higher education – an MA or PhD – abroad in native English-speaking cultures, at English-medium universities. Because of the problems affecting communication, it is important to understand whether these conceptualizations of EAW in both contexts, EAW-1 and EAW-2, are different and in what ways.

This research examines the social construction of the *idea* of EAW, and therefore is not using the term social construction in the more common way within ESL composition theory where the creation of text, as object, is seen as a social act taking place within a discourse community (Coe, 1987; Swales, 1990). The text is not the focus of this research, but rather the ideas that go into formulating the text, based

on the assumption that a better understanding of the conditions socially constructing the idea of EAW-2 will fundamentally improve texts.

It is necessary to get an understanding of how the idea of EAW-1 is currently viewed in English native-speaking contexts to provide a framework for understanding how it is conceptualized. This will be vital for comparing those views with conceptualizations of EAW-2 to gain an understanding of mismatches leading to problematic conditions. As such, the conceptualization(s) of EAW-1 will form the analytical tool by which to interpret conceptualization(s) of EAW-2, in much the same way that EAW-1 texts form the standard by which EAW texts written by L2 students are interpreted. In order to reveal the idea of EAW-2 as a social construct within a foreign educational culture it is also necessary to explore the theories of social constructionism as a social psychology theory for its role in leading to the theoretical framework of the research methodology used for this present study.

This literature review is divided into two sections to reflect the necessity to establish an analytical tool on the one hand and to give the theoretical background of social constructionism which informs the research methodology on the other hand. The first part (Section 2. of this Literature Review) will give an overview of current EAW-1 conceptualizations of EAW to set the stage for use as an analytical tool during the analysis stage of this research. This section of the literature review will deal with literature in the field of EAW-1 as it pertains to / is relevant to the description / findings of the conceptualizations of EAW-2. This should allow for a clear comparison to be drawn between the two. The second part (Section 3. of this Literature Review) will give background information on the theoretical framework of social constructionism so as to provide a framework for the research methodology.

2.1.1. Current-traditional paradigm

For many writing instructors and students in North America learning EAW is learning the rhetorical patterns of academic essays: the current-traditional rhetorical approach favored by the Traditionalist school of thought. During most of the 20th century, the writing of English for NESs in North American schools centered around responding to literature, usually in the form of essays which incorporated a composition theory that believed in the teaching of “rhetorical modes.” These rhetorical modes — narration, argumentation, exposition, and description — have been referred to as genres, or English department genres (Leki, 2006) with exposition expressed in terms of rhetorical patterns: process analysis, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and so on. Teaching such rhetorical / organizational modes continues today to dominate the teaching of ESL writing in North America (Silva, 1990). This is a form-focused orientation that can be traced to the audiolingual method of language teaching popular in the 1960s (Raimes, 1991), but it also has connections to the teaching of rhetoric stemming from the 1870s (Russell, 2002) in which writing was seen as support for oratory. In the audiolingual method writing served to reinforce oral patterns of the language along with the application of grammatical rules (Rivers, 1968). Emphasis was on creating correct sentence patterns within a controlled essay form so students could master syntactic patterns and employ new vocabulary (Kroll, 1991; Silva, 1990). The classic three-to-five-paragraph essay would be used for compositions generally following a model illustrating the correct usage of the rhetorical pattern (Young, 1978) in order to “provide the student with a form within which he may operate” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 20) to overcome interference from his native language. Kaplan’s (1966) belief that the paragraph-level rhetorical structure of the native language of NNEs interfered with their English writing ability

put further emphasis on the paragraph as the unit of focus. The structure of the paragraph was delineated in terms of topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a conclusion which paralleled the thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion of the essay structure.

Traditionalists following the current-traditional rhetorical approach viewed the learner as being passive, with the teacher the expert in a classroom where “language and textual *forms* are central” (Johns, 1997a, p. 7). The model of instruction followed a routine: the instructor’s introduction of a prescriptive rhetorical pattern, then reading and discussing a short story, poem, or other piece of literature, or perhaps an essay. The instructor would ask students to write an essay commenting on the reading by using the rhetorical principles matched to the purpose of the assignment. After reading the compositions the teacher would perhaps write a few brief comments before marking and returning the paper to students. This instruction cycle would then be repeated for the next writing task. This instruction model came to be known as the “product approach” (Kroll, 1991) or the “traditional paradigm” in American English language education (Hairston, 1982). Features of the current-traditional rhetorical paradigm include:

emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on. (Young, 1978, p. 31)

Within such a paradigm “language is form (al); all other linguistic, psychological, and social factors are secondary, or in some cases ignored” (Johns, 1997a, p. 7). This model was neither well grounded in theory, nor reflected anything but a “perspective in which students’ written products were viewed as static representations of their

knowledge and learning” (Kroll, 1990a, p. 3) and copying examples of correct texts was an accepted way to practice good writing. The processes involved in producing a coherent text were not addressed (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984). Students were asked to write rhetorical patterns/modes without consideration of the functions that these structures serve, for the roles of writer and reader, context, topics, or the many other factors that influence the nature of text processing and production.

A later development along lines similar to the current-traditional rhetorical approach which also focused on the written product was an approach known as the Pattern/Product Approach.

2.1.1.1. The pattern/product approach

In order to meet the need for ESL students to pass written placement examinations to transfer from intensive language programs into universities and be able to handle the written work once attending classes, there was a move to pattern/product, writing-based pedagogical approaches for ESL students that focused on composing (Reid, 1993).

Researchers advocated a writing-based pedagogy involving: writing strategies – problem-solving, idea creation, etc. (Lawrence, 1973); attention to purpose/audience (McKay, 1980). Textbooks in ESL academic writing throughout the 1980s reflected the development of pattern/product pedagogy by being “focused on the concepts of the thesis statement and the topic sentence, paragraph unity, organizational strategies, and development of paragraphs by ‘patterns’ or modes: process, comparison/contrast, cause-effect, classification/partition, definition, etc.” (Reid, 1993, p. 30). Such writing-based pedagogy is still in use today and students are still benefiting from it. In such classes teachers put organization techniques at the center of academic writing (Fazio et al., 1990). “Such classes do sometimes allow for

more current trends in the teaching of academic writing with the inclusion of audience and purpose, but the focus is on the organizational conventions in U.S. academic prose” (Reid, 1993, p. 31). This description does well to capture the way many EAW classes are taught at the research site of this current study with there being an emphasis on the patterns of organization.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) explain that this emphasis is quite common: “One of the most basic topics for writing instruction centers on the set of patterns of organization which underlie much of expository and argument writing” (p. 352). They believe these patterns are important for “logical development” and advanced writers need to go beyond simple recognition of such patterns to manipulating multiple patterns throughout a composition. These patterns of organization can have the effect of being both “efficient yet constrained” for the writer. “The patterns are typically classified as follows: definition ..., description ..., classification, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect, analysis, and synthesis” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 352). The importance of these discussions concerning the views of Reid and Grabe & Kaplan is how they will later reflect data gathered from respondents for this current study.

Most practitioners currently believe that the current-traditional rhetorical theories and pedagogies are not rich enough to provide a complete understanding of the skills involved in writing and advocate a move to a more learner-centered approach.

2.1.2 Learner-centered paradigm

During the 1970s the conceptualization of EAW was transformed as another model for English writing instruction emerged which has had a profound effect on the way students engage in the process of writing. This new model put student writers at

the center of the writing task by focusing attention on the process they go through in different stages of composing; as such it has come to be known as learner-centered and/or a process approach (Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998). Zamel (1982) acknowledges the productive relationship between L1 and L2 composition process strategies when she explains that “ESL writers who are ready to compose and express their ideas use strategies similar to those of native speakers.” Since inexperienced L1 and L2 writers both focus on writing elements like grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, instead of more global features like organization of ideas, coherence, audience, and purpose (Cumming, 1989), models of L2 writing pedagogy within the process writing approach often assume L1 writing pedagogies benefit L2 writing students (Krapels, 1990; Leki, 1991, 1992).

As a reaction against the stiff constraints of Traditionalists, teachers and researchers who understood that “writing is not the straightforward plan – outline – write process that many believe it to be” (Taylor, 1981, pp. 5-6) sought out ways to include the voices of individual writers whose voices had been ignored. This is a writer-focused orientation in which attention is shifted away from a teacher-fronted exposition of writing rules to a recursive process in writing where researchers and teachers seek to understand what writers “actually do as they write” (Raimes, 1991, p. 409). Classroom practices include idea generation strategies, writing multiple drafts with peer-feedback/teacher conferencing between drafts, revising and editing, and leaving grammar until the end (Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998).

In learner-centered classrooms the teacher is “no more than a facilitator who gives students space to voice their own interests in their own discourses” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p. 5). There is no fixed standard of grammatical forms, but rather a range of acceptable variations of language brought by a diverse group of students

(Johns, 1997a). Adherents of this learner-centered approach can be divided into two distinct groups: the Personal-Expressivists and the Cognitivists.

2.1.2.1 The personal-expressivists

EAW as defined by the Personal-Expressivists school of thought became the freedom to write whatever one wanted to write in an attempt to empower the individual. The empowerment of students through the act of writing could be seen as part of the wider cultural personal growth movement of the time. Peter Elbow (1981) was one of the most outspoken proponents of the benefits of using writing to find an inner “voice” to express personal feelings. He wanted students to value and express their own personal feelings in telling their “tale” (Elbow, 1981). The personal writing advocates viewed writing as “an art, a creative act ... the self discovered and expressed” (Berlin, 1988, p. 484). Elbow advocated the use of writing journals as a way for students to “write freely and uncritically” to “get down as many words as possible” (1981, p. 7). Teachers encouraged journals of self-discovery and the development of one’s own unique voice expressed on a variety of topics. Teachers may have read the journals but they were not corrected for errors as the goal was free expression (Peyton, 1989). This reflects the value that Expressivists place on the inner voice as a principle tool for achieving proficiency in writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). Some opponents, however, felt this approach engendered an atmosphere of too much freedom leaving students ill-prepared for necessary future writing goals (Raimes, 1991).

2.1.2.2 The cognitivists

The Cognitivists school defined EAW in terms of the cognitive processes good writers displayed and then attempted to replicate those processes for all writers. Cognitivists have had a more influential impact on writing pedagogy than the Personal-Expressivists because the Cognitivists emphasized critical thinking skills such as planning, drafting, understanding rhetorical problems, and organizing (Flower, 1985, 1989; Hayes & Flower, 1983). They believe the acquisition of academic writing skills should be learner-centered with the individual learner's cognitive development during the process of creating texts being the focus (Johns, 1997a). Cognitivists develop the cognitive processes involved in writing by making overt the strategies for good writing, such as revising texts through different phases of a process (Berlin, 1988; Flower, 1985, 1989). The model incorporating different phases of writing production which reflect cognitive processes of writing is commonly referred to as the Process Approach. The impact of the Process Approach on the teaching of academic writing over the past thirty years cannot be overestimated. It changed the nature of the writing classroom into a "collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes" (Silva, 1990, p. 15). Learners are meant to feel they are part of a small community of peers as their work transforms through the different stages of writing: planning, writing, feedback, revising, and editing. Feedback from both teacher and peers on their writing reinforces the concept of work as taking place among a group of peers collectively struggling with the task (Johns, 1997a).

The use of various strategies by students to complete writing tasks is encouraged in learner-centered academic writing pedagogy. A strategy for increasing vocabulary might employ dictionaries or thesauruses; to generate ideas learners can

diagram web-like mind maps during brainstorming sessions or engage in quick writes to capture spontaneous ideas which later may help begin the writing of their first drafts (Leki, 1992). Metacognitive awareness is important to the learner-centered approach. Teachers try to develop learner's metacognitive awareness of the writing process by overtly and repeatedly describing and performing the stages of text development as this is meant to aid in internalizing the cognitive process.

While it is true that L1 writing pedagogy provided a theoretical framework which L2 writing instructors mapped onto L2 writing pedagogy, research done on L2 writing processes began to emerge in its own right. Research by Cumming (1989) and Zamel (1976, 1982, 1983) on ESL writers proficient in their L1 writing skills indicated that the good writing skills employed in their L1 writing could transfer to their L2 writing, and this contributed much to the understanding of composition practices of L2 writers. However, the contribution research into learner-centered approaches has made to the field of second language writing has been called into question by some writers. Surveys of research into the Process Approach have yielded contradictory findings. Krapels points out that many "research reports surveyed reveal contradictions in second language writing research, which may result from premature generalizing on the part of the researchers" (1990, p. 50). Silva has found evidence that "suggested implications for the classroom [are] not well supported ... and sweeping claims that go way beyond findings in support of a particular popular approach" (1988, p. 6). These criticisms notwithstanding, learner-centered approaches have added much to classroom practices. Theorists and practitioners using such approaches believe that "writing is acquired through individual motivation and meaning-making through processing and revising texts. The students are central to the acquisition process as they make choices, develop and comprehend their chosen texts,

and analyze their strategies for text processing” (Johns, 1997a, p.13). And while it would be difficult to overstate the impact learner-centered approaches have had upon the changing conceptualization of EAW, it is important to bear in mind the continued influence of the current-traditional rhetorical approach which has been re-oriented to include learner-centered pedagogy. With the current-traditional rhetorical approach providing the *what* to teach in EAW classrooms and learner-centered approaches providing the *how* to teach it, the combination of these two paradigms has proven to be extremely popular, which checking the content of any of a number of best-selling English writing textbooks will affirm.

2.1.3 Genre approach paradigm

This section is the third writing paradigm to be examined in this literature review. The term “genre approach” moves into an area where writing is viewed as a socially constructed act taking place within a discourse community that determines particular conventions of a specific text type. This is quite different from the notion of social constructionism as a social theory of knowledge which considers social phenomena and how they develop within particular social contexts. Social constructionism as a social theory forms the theoretical framework of this research and will be discussed in greater detail in the second section of this literature review. The genre approach as a pedagogical and theoretical approach to the teaching of EAW is the subject of this section. As such, the role of contrastive rhetoric will begin the discussion due to its influence upon discourse analysis – the analytical tool essential to the origins of the genre approach – which will follow. Since this orientation focuses on the reader and is founded on the social constructionist idea that writers are part of a discourse community which requires adherence to sanctioned

genres in order to fulfill communication goals (Johns, 1990), a discussion of discourse community follows. Teaching English for Academic Purposes follows on from this.

2.1.3.1 Contrastive rhetoric

Contrastive rhetoric's contribution to the teaching of L2 academic writing is in its examination of discourse in rhetorical traditions other than Anglo-American as they affect L2 writing and text in English. Kaplan's seminal work in 1966 suggested that the discourse patterns of NNSs writing in English reflect discourse patterns of their L1. This helped to understand how the discourse patterns of NNSs writing in English differ from those of NSs of English (Kaplan, 1966).

Kaplan's research prompted research into the rhetorical patterns in languages other than English to understand the effects caused in NNSs written English texts. The writing by NSs of Chinese (Mohan & Lo, 1984; Taylor & Chen, 1991), Thai (Indrasuta, 1988), and Arabic (Ostler, 1987) languages were compared to similar writing of NSs of English. Conner's (1996) comprehensive review of contrastive rhetoric notes the influence of culture upon academic writing, seeing academic writing as a construct embedded in culture.

Discourse analysis of introductions to essays (Scarcella, 1984) and differences among rhetorical modes in writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1988; Reid, 1993) were also researched.

The research done into the ways various texts in different rhetorical traditions are constructed contributed to contrastive rhetoric's relevance to L2 writing pedagogy. This is consistent with Kaplan's claim that the purpose of contrastive rhetoric is to describe the influences of the L1 on the L2 writing process which NNSs of English experience in order to assist them in approximating to the rhetorical paradigms and textual constructs acceptable in English academic writing (Kaplan, 1988).

Studies by Johns (1990, 1997b) extended the research base by employing ethnographic methods to study the L2 writing of NNSs of English. Her research into L2 writers' approaches to academic writing gave insight into different rhetorical modes used within academic disciplines (Swales, 1990), highlighting the role of contrastive rhetoric and contributing to L2 academic writing pedagogy in the areas of both ESP and EAP.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) cite numerous examples of the impact of contrastive rhetoric on L2 academic writing pedagogy. These include rhetorical patterns in text and discourse, strategies of L1 and L2 writing for generating text, morphosyntax and coherence in the target language and the role audience plays in various rhetorical traditions. The authors note how comparative analysis in contrastive rhetoric is primarily concerned with the product and not the process of writing while still acknowledging the importance of cognitive processes used to generate texts. Grabe and Kaplan also caution against moving from a theoretical discussion of contrastive rhetoric to its application in the classroom.

Studies in contrastive rhetoric published in the '70s, '80s, and '90s included detailed comparisons of discourse moves in written text ... and other comparative methods of discourse and text analysis. Although contrastive rhetoric has not dealt directly with L2 teaching or composition instruction, applications of its findings have become a staple of teacher training and L2 composition books, as well as other domains of discourse and text linguistics. (Hinkel, 2002, p.21)

Advances in contrastive rhetoric and related ethnographic studies of L2 influenced pedagogical practices rooted in the research and analysis of rhetorical paradigms and textual features identified in the published academic genre (Carson, 1993; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Friedlander, 1990; Kroll, 1990b; Leki, 1993; Raimes, 1983).

While contrastive rhetoric focuses on L2 writing and how it is influenced by the learner's L1, text linguistics focuses on analyzing L1 writing to understand how and why different features of the text are employed in different texts/genres. This discussion now turns to a review of discourse analysis and text analysis under the title of text linguistics.

It may be viewed that the research reported in this thesis diverges from the path of contrastive rhetoric analysis in the focus on the text as object as a means of understanding how L2 learners negotiate through writing texts in the foreign language. However, this research chooses to locate the focus of analysis on the *ideas* participants have about EAW. While this may not have been explored to a great degree within English-dominant countries (see Prior, 1998 – 2.1.4.1 below for one example of exploration a native language context), this appears vital to understanding the larger landscape of text development within an EFL context.

2.1.3.2 Discourse analysis

Contrastive rhetoric contributed to the development of discourse analysis, which in turn led to corpus analyses also aided by the development of modern computer technology in the 1980s and 1990s (Hinkel, 2002). The effect of discourse analysis on the study of language cannot be overestimated. Discourse analysis discovered that the *purpose* of the text was important in determining the organization, lexis, and grammar as it sought to investigate how, why, and when written and spoken texts were used to communicate a message and convey its intentions. Further challenging the mandate of discourse analysis, the types of text that commonly exist in practically any modern society may be as numerous as the communicative goals of their writers (Olson, 1994).

Researchers turned to identifying characteristics shared by all texts. These shared characteristics of text are those that indicate to the reader the purpose the writer has for communicating. Characteristics such as cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality were identified by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1972/1981) in their study of text linguistics. de Beaugrande and Dressler in addition to identifying these seven “constitutive principles” (p. 11) of textual communication also identified several “regulative principles ... that control textual communication rather than define it” (p. 11). They are *efficiency*, which minimizes communication effort, *effectiveness*, which aids in achieving the communication goal, and *appropriateness of communication*, which balances the purpose and socially acceptable standards of communication.

de Beaugrande (1997) examined “text as a communicative event wherein linguistic, cognitive, and social actions converge” (p. 10) via coherence and for differing functions. He also suggests text creates meaning and reflects created meaning (also see, Bazerman, 1988, 1993; Geisler, 1994; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). As such, cultural assumptions are also perpetuated in the created texts.

Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) analysis of discourse revealed semantic relationships between sections of text and text connectedness, formalizing and defining the linguistic and discoursal functions. They explained that cohesion occurs “when interpretation of some element in discourse is dependent on another” (p. 4). They indicated that linguistic cohesion has three main functional and semantic components: the *ideational* (ideas – content), *interpersonal* (social purposes), and *textual* (linguistically constructing text). Halliday and Hasan formalized how lexical and syntactic elements come together for meaning making in the creation of text.

Coulthard (1992, 1994) attempted to standardize data collection and analysis of discourse to make it more useful and applicable to different contexts. In bringing together both spoken and written discourse he aims to codify data and analysis tools as well as discourse organization in academic and scientific publications.

van Dijk (1985, 1997) combined society and culture with discourse analysis. In his view it is impossible to remove text linguistics from the larger frameworks in which it exists. Together the text and societal frameworks inhabit domains that are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually dependent. Discourse continually moves back and forth between the macro-level and micro-levels in an intertwined whole reflecting the social and political institutions and organizations of everyday life.

From this overview of discourse analysis we can see that many of these key figures connect the development of the text to its social context. The focus of the influence of social factors upon texts is what separates discourse analysis from other traditions. It is to a closer examination of the social impact of discourse analysis upon the text that we now turn.

2.1.3.3 Findings of discourse analysis

Halliday (1978) looked at the function of language and its elements in context to understand how language is used semiotically, to construct meaning, and textual features are used to organize writing at the discourse level. This contributed to the definition of genre through determining ways the function of language and textual features differ from one genre to another. NNSs unfamiliar with such genre distinctions among different academic writing genres are at a disadvantage (Atkinson, 1991; Poole, 1991). Halliday (1978) commented that rhetorical strategies in constructing discourse reflect language use within the social structure. The social construction of discourse creates rhetorical modes and genres to express them. As

such, NNSs, whether they are attending English-medium universities in ESL or EFL contexts, should be made more aware of such genre distinctions as well as the influences of their own social structures upon non-native genres.

In *Genre Analysis* Swales succeeded in finding distinct features of academic discourse. He used “academic discourse community” to differentiate academic discourse from many other types of writing. He noted that within academic discourse different academic genres share many characteristics that are similar, such as sentence length and the prevalence of noun / adverb clauses to relative clauses. The organization of academic discourse across diverse disciplines shared such features as including literature reviews, reviews of relevant research, discussion of the research, and ending with a conclusion.

The impact Swales’ research has had on genre studies, particularly in the academic context, would be hard to overestimate. Much research has followed his lead. Bhatia (1992, 1993) investigated genre-specific elements in academic discourse across disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and law. His research detected subdivisions within larger sections, i.e., introductions, of academic research articles. Bhatia has also advocated applying research findings, like the prevalence of nominal constructions in academic research articles, to pedagogical practices.

Researchers sought a better understanding of discourse organization and the lexicogrammatical elements of academic writing. There has been research into hedges (Hyland, 1999), vagueness (Chanel, 1994), verb tenses (Matthiessen, 1996), hypothetical construction (Bloor, 1996), and interaction between the writer and reader (Myers, 1999). This research investigated textual features in the academic genre to identify the road signs that mark the discourse infrastructure.

2.1.3.4 Discourse community

Perhaps the most enduring influence of the modern rhetorical revival will be the increasing emphasis on discourse communities and the role of social construction in writing, both of which are having a significant impact on theories of writing and writing instruction, particularly in academic and professional contexts. (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, p. 21)

Researchers (Faigley, 1986; Fish, 1980, 1990; Lunsford, 1990) in the 1980s brought more awareness of social factors around the composing processes and how those social factors influence the text. The term “discourse communities” (Faigley, 1985) has now become shorthand for such ideas as: “how cognitive processes function and are conditioned by social and historical forces, and how social circumstances shape the teaching – and the learning – of writing” (Reid, 1993, p. 11). Faigley defines the discourse community as follows:

Within a language community, people acquire special kinds of discourse competence that enables them to participate in specialized groups. Members [of that community] know what is worth communicating, how it can be communicated, what other members of the community are likely to know and believe to be true about certain subjects, how other members can be persuaded, and so on. (Faigley, 1985, p. 235)

An example of the influence of discourse community(ies) on writing would be the different written forms the narrative concerning a car accident would take when written – in the official police report or in a letter to one’s mother by a person involved. Social constructionists believe the importance of the ‘social’ represented by ‘audience’ greatly influences the nature of discourse (Bruffee, 1986; Coe, 1987). Bizzell (1982) and Bruffee (1986) investigating the social construction of knowledge revealed that writing develops in relation to previously written texts (intertextuality) and contexts. As Reid (1993, p. 10) clarifies: “In other words, the writing situation puts social and psychological, as well as rhetorical, constraints on the writer.”

The perception of influence the discourse community exerted on writing was to represent the writing as a socially constructed act. Here the emphasis is on the social construction of the text, the *object* is socially constructed. That is the content of the text, the grammatical, the syntactical and lexical choices of the text (Halliday) are determined by the genre (Swales) suitable for the situation, and here the situation in total would necessarily include purpose and audience (read: discourse community). So when reference is made in EAW discussions to the fact that writing is socially constructed what is meant is that the object, the text, is socially constructed. Much research done on discourse analysis/text linguistics is research on the product/text/*object* and not on the *idea* of what EAW is. The contested theories and debates among rhetoricians, educators, linguists, in English writing have centered on defining/analyzing the product or the cognitive processes used when composing and how best this product/process dichotomy should be rendered for best use in the classroom. Hence, if the question “What is academic writing?” were to be asked in a culture where *English* is automatically understood to be the native language, then the answer would have very different implications because it would be tied to the product as object. However, in a context where EAW is learned as a foreign language it does make sense to enquire about the social construction of the *idea* of EAW because in such a context the idea is distinct from the product/object, though the former influences how the latter is reified. It is this relationship that is explored in this thesis.

Some clarification of terms will assist in understanding the difference between seeing EAW as object and EAW as idea. In my research *context* means an EFL classroom where not only those who read the final text are taken into account, but those others who work to shaping the text, namely peers, teachers, and the EFL institution where EAW is taught. The *intertextuality* refers not only to prior texts

known to those in the discourse community, but to texts and text experiences which influence the product: the teacher's own Ph.D. thesis and the process of its writing which formulate the idea of EAW for the teacher who in turn recycles those notions into a student's textual EAW. For this research the *social constraints* come from the mismatch between the actual conceptualization of EAW as it exists in English-medium contexts among native speakers of English and those social forces which shape the idea of EAW for others: peers and teachers and the institution and culture. This necessarily includes language and the prior native-language reading/writing that influences the conceptualizations of textual patterns, audience expectations, purpose, all of which go into forming and representing the conceptualization of EAW for these EFL students within this context. This mismatch is the underlying cause of innumerable communication breakdowns and misunderstandings, and the first step in rectifying it is to understand that it exists. The aim of this research is to illuminate that existence and explore the nature of the mismatch.

2.1.3.5 English for academic purposes

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) developed in its own time and place, and while it is often subsumed under English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that seems to be a matter of convenience rather than to note a linear genesis. In point of fact, ESP has been most closely associated with English for Science and Technology (EST), such that the development of the two during the 1960s and 70s the two were treated as nearly synonymous (Swales, 1985; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The term EAP arose in the mid-1970s in the UK when it became evident that international students studying at UK universities lacked sufficient English language proficiency to cope with the academic demands being made upon them. An early working definition of EAP was:

EAP is concerned with those communication skills in English which are required for study purposes in formal educational systems.
(ETIC, 1975, in Jordan, 1997)

The importance of study skills soon made them a central component of EAP (Phillips & Shettlesworth, 1978). However, Jordan (1989) argues that additional components should also be included within EAP: “a general academic English register, incorporating a formal, academic style, with proficiency in the language use” (Jordan, 1997, p.228).

Coffey (1984) makes a useful distinction between EAP as “common core” or “subject specific,” terms later described as English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) by Blue (1988). Viewing EAP as a common core of courses is particularly valuable where academic English comprises an essential group of courses studied by English majors in EFL contexts. The academic use of English even within the English departments in EFL contexts may not be consistent, while the use of English outside the English department would most likely range along a continuum from not at all to frequently used depending upon the EFL educational context. These English majors may have no intention of applying their English academic skills to study in an English-dominant country following graduation. Their academic careers may terminate with their bachelor’s degree. Opportunities for these students to use English academic skills in a non-English-dominant context beyond the four years spent at university may not be evident during their university life and in fact may never manifest once they have left the university. This brings to mind the acronym coined by Abbott (1981), TENOR – the Teaching of English for No Obvious Reason. This situation is dramatically different from that in subject-specific EAP or ESAP, where international students studying in English-dominant countries learn English in order to study non-English

subjects at an English-medium university. Academic writing as it is conceptualized under the rubric of EGAP, that is, as part of the common core courses English majors study at an English department within an EFL context, is most relevant to this current research.

Other relevant common concerns of English majors within EFL contexts are the writing skills used in taking material from outside sources for use within research texts. While this is not a distinct perspective, as they are important to the writing of academic research papers they would be relevant to conceptualizations of EAW.

Jordan (1997) offers three important academic writing skills which have received little attention in the literature: paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing.

Campbell (1990) points out these three skills are integral to the writing of academic research papers:

Even the most original academic paper integrates facts, ideas, concepts, and theories from other sources by means of quotations, paraphrases, summaries, and brief references. (p. 211)

In her research, Campbell discovered that students often teetered on the edge of plagiarism by using information without citing the original source due to the fact that the skills required for using background sources are often not explicitly taught but just thought to “develop over time” (p. 211). Often occurring among nonnative students, Campbell found that plagiarism could be greatly diminished by having nonnative students become explicitly aware of the academic writing conventions of English academic research papers and articles by being “given ample opportunity to practice this type of writing in order to train themselves to edit out instances of copying” (p. 225). She also found that while the academic writing done by nonnative students was not as proficient as that of native speakers it was “more academic than in previous

assignments” which suggests the need for more such exercises working with background sources.

According to Johns (1988) teachers often take for granted students’ ability to summarize and pay scant attention to it in academic reading (or writing) classes. Johns suggests using a process for summarizing that “orients students to the underlying text-type” (p. 86) which has students filling in “content slots” for a summary that is closer to the original text than what is usually arrived at by following standard ESL/EFL textbooks. Having students work in pairs as Edge (1983) suggests, allows for a synthesis of interpretation to develop during the act of summarizing which could also aid students with the task of synthesizing material from various sources. Edge has seen students overwhelm themselves believing they need to decipher each word in order to comprehend the overall text. Rather he advocates having intermediate EFL students (in Turkey) engage in a paragraph-by-paragraph approach as a “confidence-boosting stage in the movement away from total comprehension of everything in a text” (p. 98).

2.1.4 Research in academic writing applicable to this study

There is relatively little work exploring the influence of the local context on the nature of academic writing, but three studies in particular are relevant to the approach adopted in this thesis. The following reviews reveal their direct influence upon this present research. The first study by Prior influenced this present study most in its ethnographic approach. Prior explores contextual factors affecting the writing tasks of graduate students at a university in the US. The second study by Casanave occurs within an EFL context – a Japanese university. She describes an English writing course for Japanese students who plan to study abroad. Casanave was herself

influenced by Prior in her methodological approach. The third study by Xiaoye You is a curricular evaluation in the form of an observational report of an English writing program among undergraduate non-English majors at a Chinese university.

2.1.4.1 Prior

In his book *Writing/disciplinarity* (1998) Prior engages in in-depth research containing thick descriptions as he explores the multiplicity of task representations. This situated research takes place in a graduate seminar course in second language education at a major research university in the United States. The course, *Language Research*, was designed to prepare participants for advanced research and scholarship in second/foreign language education. To gather data, Prior observed classes (70% of total) and took fieldnotes, collected papers produced for the class as well as documents supplied to students by the teacher, and administered questionnaires. He also conducted semi-structured interviews as well as text-based interviews with the professor and the 10 students of 15 who volunteered to participate, about half of whom were NNSs of English.

During the course of the research project Prior came to see the writing assignments for the class as historically situated, while also identifying multiple perspectives on the tasks. It is Prior's objective to "explore that multiplicity" in this research project, which when pieced together form a "densely textured totality" (p. 37). Of particular interest to Prior is the multiplicity of task representations that students display, which he attributes to "the history of the course, the instructor's actions, and the particular histories of the students" (p. 36), all playing a part in writing task representations. Prior attempts to extend the cognitive process theory of writing promoted by Flower and Hayes (1981) through his findings on students' multiplicity of task representations, by examining how different task representations

are not solely the result of a particular student's "cognitive repertoire of writing strategies" (p. 36), but are part of the much larger picture of an ever-evolving sociohistorical writing task that "multiplies and fragments along many dimensions ... and for many reasons" (pp. 36-7).

In investigating the sociohistorical, Prior moves beyond the process-product-pedagogy triumvirate to explore layered-dimensions within the educational context surrounding the products students produce that have an impact upon the triumvirate. Hyland's (2002) observation that the methods employed by Prior "cannot describe everything in either the writer's consciousness or the context which might influence composition, and we can never be certain that all critical factors have been accounted for" (p. 33) seems to miss the mark. It is most important to try to understand as much as possible within the educational context critical to the text. Hyland reveals a misunderstanding of Prior's intention, or perhaps believes it lacks value when he says the methodology "fails to move beyond the local context to take a full account of how an evolving text might be a writer's response to a reader's expectations" (p. 33). Situated researchers, such as Prior, aim to discover all manner of factors to illuminate the complexities within the context where a text is produced. Such factors could form a more comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing the data composed of analytical units which better serve an understanding of the texts produced by students.

However, in his effort to go beyond prior cognitive explanations for differences in writing offered for example, by Flower and Hayes (1981), I believe Prior misses an opportunity to include vital information that could illuminate factors contributing to those differences in writing quality or ability, differences that are not or should not be limited to cognitive ability. Prior did not look into the particular differences between NNSs and NSs among student research participants. In so doing,

he seems to have missed the subtlety in the unique perspective NNSs possess that could influence decisions made during writing assignments. As Prior is looking at the multi-perspective dimensions of a piece of writing from a sociohistorical point of view, it seems crucial to understand whether the writer is a NS or NNS. Prior fails to account for these unique differences in his analysis of the writing of nearly half the students in this graduate seminar class.

It is the intention of this research to focus on the educational context of EFL undergraduate students to reveal part of the ‘densely textured totality’ within that context.

2.1.4.2 Casanave

Christine Casanave in her book, *Writing Games* (2002), has a chapter (Chapter 2) exploring academic literacy in an EFL context among undergraduates. She used a case study methodology to examine academic literacy practices and the attitudes surrounding them among English teachers and their students at a private university in Japan. She focused on an Academic Reading and Writing course for undergraduates meant to prepare them for future graduate work in English-medium universities abroad. Using qualitative case studies, she aimed for credibility and relevance as evaluative characteristics rather than the generalizability and validity features of quantitative inquiry. Eschewing objectivity, she acknowledges her own subjectivity, casting herself “openly as a character in” her research (p. 32). She interviewed both students and teachers, who were colleagues of hers. While she used a set of written guideline questions in interviews, she welcomed a natural development during the interview, taking interesting issues into following interviews never quite “sure where one of these conversations would end up” (p. 32).

Not wanting to impose a priori categories upon her inquiry, she allowed repeated issues to assemble and later interpreted them. The issues/questions she found most compelling in this research had as much to do with sociopolitical aspects of writing as they did the writing itself: “What kinds of practices, identities, and transitions do teachers envision for their undergraduate EAP students?” (p. 55) Casanave believes the act of writing is “always embedded in a sociopolitical context” which “requires that writers negotiate a discursal self amidst a wide array of choices about who to align themselves with” (p. 25). Many questions Casanave raised were not necessarily addressed, perhaps because she believed it was enough to raise them, or perhaps they are of a general nature which makes acquiring empirical data difficult.

Her admitted subjective stance, the lack of interview rigor, and her familiar relationship with her colleagues combine to create a tone which makes interpretation of data and analysis difficult. Conclusions drawn from analysis sometimes appear conjectural, speculative, unproven, as she seems to have taken liberties in interpreting and attributing casual effects without supplying sufficient empirical data for support. For example, she states that during a class the “students were getting a sense from this discussion ...” (p. 64), however it is not clear whether this information was attained through interviews, questionnaires, or her own inference. Semi-structured interviews can still allow for intriguing interview questions to be developed from one teacher to another and from teachers to students, but this was not evident. Casanave largely limited students’ understanding of academic literary practices and their attitudes towards them to comments amounting to course evaluations. There is no in-depth understanding of the conceptualizations students have about EAW, mostly remarks that the course is difficult and “makes you think deeply” (p. 75). Conducting research on colleagues, one of whom is also a co-researcher on this same research project, can

create ethical quagmires which Casanave was not able to overcome as discussions with colleagues lack critical judgment. This research strives to bring critical judgment to the research process by grappling with those same difficulties Casanave faced in her own research.

2.1.4.3 You

In the article, “*The choice from no choice*”: *English writing instruction in a Chinese University* (2004), Xiaoye You reports on the writing component in a typical curriculum for non-English majors at a Chinese university. His report explores how English writing is being taught in China following the influx of the writing pedagogies of the 1980’s which he states have “gradually permeated non-English dominant countries and area” (p. 98). For support for the prevalence of such approaches within non-English dominant contexts for the Process Approach, Genre-based Approach, EAP, etc. he cites a chapter by Alister Cumming: *Experienced ESL/EFL writing instructors’ conceptualizations of their teaching: Curriculum options and implications* (2003). Examination of the Cumming chapter by this researcher revealed that only about one-third of the teacher respondents worked in EFL / non-English dominant contexts and as the title suggests, he purposely chose only experienced EFL writing instructors. Cumming states: “They were a selective group of practicing experts in this field, rather than being representative of the general population of ESL/EFL writing instructors in these countries” (p. 73). In addition, some experts in non-English dominant contexts were NSs of English from North America and the UK, not the local native teachers of those countries who comprise the majority of writing instructors in most EFL contexts. Therefore, while the Cumming chapter may provide some kind of a picture of the conceptualization local native teachers have of their EFL teaching experiences, it is a highly selective picture

which would not seem to support the permeation of North American approaches in non-English / EFL contexts. You himself contradicts his claim for the prevalence of such approaches when he later concludes that the picture in China is limited because “English writing is still taught in the current-traditional approach” (p. 108) at the university where he conducted his research. The point is an important one because it would be a mistake to take for granted the extent to which new writing pedagogies have influenced writing instruction in EFL contexts.

It is the aim of this thesis to delve further into this issue. As the research site of this thesis is also at a Chinese university, it will inquire directly into the conceptualization and construction of interpretations of EAW among native Chinese speakers as well as North American expatriates teaching EAW at this research site. In doing so, it is hoped that the degree of permeation of conceptualizations about English writing pedagogies which have emerged from North America during the last two decades might be revealed.

You investigates the question: “How well have the new Western approaches been adapted in the country?” (p. 99). His inquiry recognizes that with the accommodation of Western approaches to writing within an EFL context comes the *acknowledgement* that the modifications being done are to suit local needs and constraints. However, it is the view of this researcher that such accommodation of approaches is different from people constructing conceptualizations and/or possessing constructed conceptualizations of EAW influenced by factors within their particular context. Moreover, it is substantially different when local writing instructors possessing constructs which diverge from constructs in English-dominant countries *do not recognize* their own divergences and do not claim to be engaging in any accommodation. They can be of the opinion that they possess the same construct and

that they are engaged in the process of socially constructing that same construct as exists in English-dominant countries. However, within an EFL context it is practicable that local native writing instructors are contributing to the construction of conceptualizations of EAW which are disparate notions from those that exist in English-dominant countries. While You does offer insight into the adaptation of Western approaches to writing; he does not explore how those approaches are conceptualized.

Another question You approaches is: “What are the facilitating and constraining factors for the local adaptation of these approaches?” (p. 99). He is able to cite test-preparation, heavy teaching loads, and market forces which pressure teachers to work extra hours as constraining factors affecting the adaptation of Western approaches at his research site. In his conclusion he allows for optimism when he says: “there are signs of new Western approaches to writing instruction slowly seeping into college English classrooms” in spite of such constraints (p. 108). His signs are the pre-writing activities or multiple drafts in which students engage and the feedback teachers give. These signs may be merely surface-level indications which do not reveal the conceptualizations teachers and students hold underlying such Western approaches to EAW. You does not inquire into whether the writing instructors who employ Western/North American approaches in the teaching of writing hold conceptualizations of those approaches similar to practitioners in English-dominant countries. He seems to assume that such surface-level indicators substantiate knowledge and understanding of the underlying assumptions about Western /North American pedagogical approaches to EAW. There seems a presumption that the point of orientation of EAW concepts is the Western/North American context. This must surely be true at some point along the line, but for a

local NNS instructor the point of orientation may have been a local university course taught by a non-Western professor with only a rudimentary knowledge of EAW conceptualizations. It seems plausible that local native EAW instructors influenced by ingredients within the local context: language, education, work environment, etc. may have misinterpreted conceptualizations about EAW, thereby transfiguring Western/North American writing theories and pedagogies into a unique conceptualization.

In fact, You's article hints at a possible interpretation of EAW particular to this context. He describes a writing instructor suggesting students memorize all 34 model essays from an exercise booklet in order to pass a standardized writing exam. It would be difficult to imagine today a writing instructor in North America suggesting this to a class of university students preparing for a standardized writing exam, of which there are many. It would also be difficult to imagine an instructor who holds a conceptualization of academic writing as being the memorization of models and not the expression of an individual's thinking as well as writing ability. For You, a native Chinese from mainland China, the practice may be common enough, not to warrant comment. His analysis focuses on the need for preparing for a test as a factor constricting writing instruction and seems to miss the *way* in which test preparation is carried out. This raises the question which this present research seeks to explore: What are the local conceptualizations of EAW within EFL contexts?

2.1.4.4 Recent studies in EFL contexts

Teaching Writing in Hong Kong

In their article assessing the writing of English in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools, Fu and Poon (1995) point out the heavy emphasis on writing as product, in both Chinese and English, with the strictness of Chinese formal writing

processes and habits having a negative knock-on effect on the teaching/learning of English writing. The authors cite the current English writing curriculum dating from 1981 as needing “to be updated and revised” as “its general tone is again one of control and the need to avoid errors” (p. 48). Because the instruction of writing is controlled so tightly through prescriptive topics, specific essay word length, and an emphasis on an error-free product the authors conclude “that writing in English is not really *taught* in Hong Kong primary schools” (p. 48, italics are the authors’).

To give an understanding of their view the authors quote from Poon, Lo, and Kong (1993):

... filling in blanks or answering questions is, strictly speaking, not writing at all. It is only a kind of linguistic exercise which does not allow many chances for pupils to express themselves creatively, to experiment or to take risks ...
(p. 123)

To dispel the dreary situation of the rote learning of English writing combined with a stifling examination culture, Fu and Poon draw attention to the design of more enlightened writing exams by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA). The HKEA seeks to positively affect the teaching of English academic writing by shifting away from memorization of “stock phrases” and “emphasising organization, content and appropriate format in the assessment of the writing task” (Fu & Poon, 1995, p. 49). This indicates a move towards more expression in writing and yet by giving prominence to control over the form and content of the writing still interprets English writing in terms of a restrained exercise. Fu and Poon try to infuse hope in the final paragraph when stating there are “concerned educators and researchers, motivated and articulate students, employers who are attentive to matters of staff development and language improvement” (p. 51). However, this seems to only make the situation more frustrating in light of the contextual educational forces aligned against them.

Teaching Writing in Singapore

Pakir and Ling (1995) explain the complexity of languages which govern the educational environment in Singapore: while Singapore may have one National Language – Malay — it has four Official Languages: Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and English. Singaporeans have come to understand the importance of English education as a way to secure economic prosperity for its four million people. As such, English “is the cornerstone of the country’s bilingual education policy” (p. 103).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) provides teachers with a national English language syllabus which for the English writing component has embraced the cognitively-based Process Approach. In the six years of elementary school and the four years of secondary school the English writing goal is the same: “to use the process approach to produce (and help peers to produce) reasonably polished pieces of written work” (p. 106). Students write a variety of texts, for various purposes, audiences, and situations. In typical Process Approach methodology, students have pre-writing activities, they plan and organize information, and after writing they engage in peer-review feedback as part of the revising and editing process. Pakir and Ling refer to different genres of writing (e.g. description, narration, argumentation, and exposition) and rhetorical patterns (e.g. cause and effect, comparison and contrast, amplification, and illustration) and call functional writing the writing of what others might term genres (e.g. simple notes, messages, letters, notices, reports, and instructions). The English language syllabus takes into account a dizzying array of writing elements in addition to using the Process Approach: format, style, register, tone, sequencing, length, structure, clarity, text genres, language nuances, and creative/imaginative expression. The inclusion of all these writing elements suggests the prescriptive nature of the national syllabus. It is expected then that “the Ministry

of Education tries to advocate strict adherence to the 1991 syllabus as written by its Curriculum Planning Division” (p. 109). Likewise, it should come as no surprise that “some teachers feel there is a gap between theory and practice” (p. 109) because they have to teach at the level of the students rather than follow the prescribed syllabus while handling other constraints: public examinations, class size, limited time, constant appraisals, etc. Nevertheless, Pakir and Ling find “sufficient evidence of success in the effective teaching of writing” as examinations “show annual positive increases” (p. 110).

Teaching Writing in Taiwan

In his description of the teaching of English writing in Taiwan J. K-P. Tse (1995) actually does not go into detail as to how writing is taught; he simply assesses the situation as dismal. Part of his assessment is based on the poorly defined objectives set out by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan which are meant to guide the curriculum used by teachers in junior and senior high schools. The guidelines for teaching English writing during the six years of schooling – junior high school (3 years) and senior high school (3 years) – are non-specific even though there is a standardized English composition exam component to the universal college entrance exam high school seniors take, called the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE). This important matriculation exam decides the tertiary education institutions (and their departments) students will be able to attend. A high JCEE score offers the opportunity to study at some of the top universities in Taiwan. As such, the JCEE score is locally characterized as an indicator of future possibilities for these young people.

The results of the JCEE composition component are another reason Tse assesses the national writing program as in need of something just short of a complete

overhaul. According to Tse, without specific guidelines the quality of teaching English writing is not considered good enough for students after six years of education to do well on the JCEE and their English writing ability “is not particularly great” (Tse, 1995, p. 121). There is a real need for quality teaching in order for students to acquire the necessary English writing skills expected for real-world use. Tse recommends better designed guidelines and materials and more teacher-training programs from educational authorities to remedy the situation, however, he does little to illuminate conceptualizations about the nature of academic writing within the Taiwan educational context. Tse’s study is useful to this present research in providing a perspective of the Taiwan educational environment as it relates to learning to write English. Tse is able to provide a wide overview with the perception of a Taiwanese familiar with the situation for many years.

2.2 A social constructionist framework of analysis

This research has two frameworks for analysis which will be applied to the data. The first framework deals with the *idea* of EAW as it is represented in two contexts: an English-dominant context and a non-English-dominant context. In order to gain a more complete understanding between an ESL context and an EFL context the first section of this literature review has attempted to understand the idea of EAW, i.e. the assumptions underlying theories and approaches concerning EAW in an English-dominant context by representing research and pedagogy of EAW.

The second analytical framework adopts a social constructionism / social constructivist perspective (‘social constructivist’ is also sometimes represented as ‘sociocultural’; the term that will be used in this thesis) in order to reveal streams of cultural influence contributing to the construction of the idea of EAW in this non-

English-dominant context research site. The social constructionism/sociocultural framework will be useful in drawing out influences upon the (re)conceptualization of EAW in this non-English-dominant context as it aids in identifying and describing the streams of influence.

The analysis in this thesis seeks to illuminate contextual influences upon and underlying assumptions about EAW within the non-English-dominant context. To ascertain this it is necessary to describe the streams of influence within the non-English-dominant context which go toward constructing those ideas and assumptions of EAW. This is important in order to render more than a superficial layer of understanding. The social constructionism/sociocultural (SC/SCL) framework of analysis is enlisted with this purpose in mind. That is not to say that by utilizing such a framework all contextual influences upon the social construction of EAW in this foreign context will be exposed. However, it is hoped that a much greater understanding of the contextual influences upon shaping meaning and knowledge will be achieved.

This research seeks to identify factors contributing to the social construction of the idea of EAW within this non-English-dominant context. This thesis aims to determine whether the idea of EAW within this non-English-dominant context is transformed due to its being socially constructed outside of an English-dominant context. The intention is to employ SC/SCL to illuminate contextual factors within this non-English-dominant context, not to draw a cause/effect relation between certain factors in Chinese society and their influence upon the transplanted notion of EAW.

2.2.1 An overview of social construction

In his insightful *The Social Construction of What?* Ian Hacking (1999) offers his view concerning the proliferation of published texts with the phrase “social

construction” in the title. According to Hacking, there is a lot of “bandwagon jumping” onto theories of social construction and he cites as an example a book edited by Cook-Gumperz (1986) whose title, *The Social Construction of Literacy*, he claims is not about social construction at all. Yet Hacking does not go on to give any further explanation of his claim. As Cook-Gumperz’s topic seems related to my own, it is important to explore this further in order to understand how a respected educator such as Cook-Gumperz might appear to misrepresent the conceptualization of social construction.

In *The Social Construction of Literacy* Cook-Gumperz does not examine linguistic entities in society in terms of analyzing how the idea of literacy is one constructed through diverse texts (both spoken and written) stemming from society. In his working definition of a social constructionist examination, Hacking distinguishes examination of texts of the society as being characteristic of social constructionism. Cook-Gumperz focuses on the influence of people, the parents/teachers without a careful analysis of the language of those people. She claims the home life of students contributes to their literacy without examining the linguistic impact of the home life. She attributes literacy to social factors – “negotiated interactional character[istics] of classroom exchanges” (p. 8) – beyond cognition that affect literacy, which she contends “socially construct” literacy. In so doing she is contrasting the cognitive with social construction, whereas social constructionism is most often contrasted with an empirical/positivist ontological world view. As such, she seems to be drawing upon different paradigms without reconciling those differences, as others have sought to do (cf. Bazerman, 1988).

This example is an important one because it demonstrates difficulties in claiming to adopt a social constructionist framework which then opens one up to

criticism due to the various approaches to interpretation under the umbrella of the 'social.' This also highlights problems in getting a clear definition of what social constructionism is (Burr, 2003). There are in fact different strands of social constructionism, thus the crux of the problem Hacking saw in the work of Cook-Gumperz was that she was using the term 'social construction' with its focus on discourse when her orientation would have been considered social *constructivism*, where the focus is on mental processes being influenced by social contexts and social relationships (Gergen, 1999, p. 60). The term 'social constructionism' is a contested one among those using it, some writers insisting on a distinction between this and 'social constructivism' and others using the two interchangeably. If confusion is to be avoided it is therefore important to make one's position clear on this issue.

2.2.2 Origins of social constructionism

This present research adopts a unified concept of social constructionism with distinct strands although, as illustrated above, some would choose to look upon the distinct strands as being separate entities. The two strands of social construction briefly sketched above: social *constructionism* and social *constructivism*, which together can be referred to as *sociocultural theories*, will now be further discussed. First social constructionism will be explicated in more detail. Later, the sociocultural theories of Lev Vygotsky and their relation to this research will be explained.

2.2.2.1 Social constructionism

According to Gergen (1985) the origin of social constructionism stems from competing traditions in the long debate between empiricists and rationalists. However a convenient way to mark the most recent stage in the life of ideas within social constructionism is with the book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the*

Sociology of Knowledge by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966). They frame social constructionism as a sociological theory of knowledge. This was the first book to have the term social construction in the title and is commonly cited as a source of many ideas which continue to hold sway within the area of social constructionism up to the present. Berger and Luckmann cite numerous sources of inspiration, notably Alfred Schutz, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim in assisting them in their conceptualization of the dialectical relationship between society and individual that co-constructs the mind of the individual and the society of which the individual is a member. Their ideas shifted the locus of knowledge construction away from a solely cognitive perspective toward putting more emphasis on social influences through language, the most important social artifact. The construction of knowledge then is something people do together through the shared activity of language. As these ideas matured along with the growing assertion of postmodern and post-structuralist beliefs which questioned established empiricist/positivist doctrines, certain tenets of social constructionism took hold.

2.2.3 Tenets of social constructionism

Social constructionists generally have guiding ideas which inform their work. As the term “social constructionism” is contested, it would not be unexpected that there are multiple interpretations of the tenets of social constructionism. Three will be listed here, drawing on Gergen (1985), Burr (1995, 2003), and Hacking (1999).

Gergen (1985) explains four principles of social constructionism:

Principle #1:

Criticism of the positivists’ doctrine of knowledge calls into question traditional epistemological views. Thus social constructionism questions basic assumptions of

inquiry identified as “objective” knowledge claims which constructionists believe are influenced by historical, cultural, or social contexts.

Principle #2:

The world is made up of individuals within society that as a whole co-create historical, cultural artifacts for understanding which in turn create understandings of society dialectically (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Principle #3:

Mutable social processes take primacy in forming prevailing views as “the rules for ‘what counts as what’ are inherently ambiguous, continuously evolving, and free to vary with the predilections of those who use them” (Gergen, 1985, p. 268).

Principle #4:

How meanings are negotiated is of critical importance because of the influence they bear upon other activities in social life. Meanings form parts of social patterns which “sustain and support certain patterns to the exclusion of others” (Gergen, 1985, p. 268). Any alteration in meanings then favors certain actions to the exclusion of others.

Burr (1995, 2003) delineates three assumptions about social constructionism:

Assumption #1:

Language shapes reality through social action. As social action changes the way language is used then the perception of reality changes in a fluid and dynamic dialectic co-construction.

Assumption #2:

Knowledge is historically and culturally specific as language within social relations reflects distinctive characteristics of a particular time and place.

Assumption #3:

Taken-for-granted knowledge is an essential area for research as the world can not be objectively perceived. By examining the language use within social relations, relevant meanings about the world become known.

In focusing on how social constructionism is critical of the status quo by rejecting the inevitability of events, Hacking (1999) echoes Burr's statement on taken-for-granted knowledge. He lists four axioms of social constructionism in a progressive order:

- (0) In the present state of affairs, *X* is taken for granted; *X* appears to be inevitable.
- (1) *X* need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is, *X*, or *X* as it is at present, is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable.
- (2) *X* is quite bad as it is.
- (3) We would be much better off if *X* were done away with, or at least radically transformed.

(Hacking, 1999, pp. 7-13)

There is much in common within these differing perceptions of social construction tenets and as well enough shading of meanings that specific doctrine continues to be elusive. However by sharing an emphasis on the social influences of language for the construction of knowledge, these interpretations counter the positivists' notion that knowledge is out there waiting to be discovered. Fundamental to all interpretations of social constructionism, and where postmodernism has provided the background for its development during the last four decades, is the rejection of one all encompassing underlying grand theory or structure through which to interpret reality. Thus it involves a rejection of the underlying psychic structures postulated by Freud and Piaget, as well as a rejection of Marx's metanarrative

economic-class structures for understanding the society (Burr, 2003). This is in part the crisis in legitimation to which social constructionism is both a reaction and an agent.

2.2.4 Ontology / Ontological relativism

It is important to discuss issues of ontology within sociology in general and particularly within a social constructionist framework. Those who take on board its tenets are asked to view reality, not as something to be discovered as within an empirical/positivist tradition, but as being socially constructed dialectically through artifacts such as language (as symbol/sign). According to Berger and Luckmann (1966) reality is maintained through language use in the social interaction people engage in:

Language now constructs immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world. Religion, philosophy, art, and science are the historically most important symbol systems of this kind. (p. 55)

Such conceptual entities appear to be an objective reality but are agglomerated within a socially constructed reality that is fluid and dynamic, changing with people over time and from place to place. Such a claim then leads to the idea of relativism, often seen as a pernicious blight upon the ideas of social constructionism that Hacking (1999) refers to as a “wicked troll” (p. 4).

2.2.4.1 Relativism

It is evident that the idea of relativism is a basic tenet of social constructionism, and as such influences the conceptualization of ontology. This causes problems for those who view the world as a quantifiable reality even through the shroud of our senses.

Society often treats as “real” something which is then shown to be a fabrication, and had social elements aligned differently, then a different reality would have been constructed. This is most evident as we look back upon the theories of science which fall out of favor as new discoveries are made. This change in scientific theories is best known by the term “paradigm shift” from the work of Thomas Kuhn.

Social constructionism puts forth the notion that reality is constructed within specific cultural contexts (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and that of the many views of the world that exist no one view is superior to another. All are acceptable and relative (Hacking, 1999). “The absence of an ultimate truth seems to be the foundation upon which the theoretical framework of social constructionism is built” (Burr, 2003, p. 81). Such an ultimate truth would be contained in a world view which allowed for a “unified picture of reality” (O’Grady, 2002, p. 11) where scientific method reveals facts of the world. However, social constructionists reject such a picture in favor of one which does not contain absolutes, but is relativistic. In the social constructionist point of view truth and reality are dependent upon malleable answers coming from different perspectives in language through social interaction contained in discourse. The perception of the viewer determines a situated, culturally and historically relevant reality.

Problems of relativism

When different localized constructions of reality cannot be judged by some comparison to a universal theory the consequence, according to Ian Hacking (1999, p. 4), is that there “is the notion that any opinion is as good as any other; if so won’t relativism license anything at all?” This makes asserting the preference for one construction over another problematic.

If language is understood as a self-referential system, and language is the symbolic system we use to construct the world as well as assert preference for one theoretical position among many constructions then the question arises: How is the discourse that we engage in relative to the material world which lies outside discourse? When Foucault (1972) explains how discourse actually reifies objects of reality he appears to be denying that reality exists outside of discourse. This is not the case. As Mills (1997) points out, no one would deny obvious elements of the real world. That the black clouds overhead are the source of the rain falling to the ground at this very moment is not in doubt. But how the event of the rain is constructed depends upon how it is viewed within discourse. Social constructionists do not deny a material world outside the discursive field, but rather emphasize the impact of the constitutive nature of language. As Berger and Luckmann have explained, generations of human beings through their use of language as a symbolic system and through social interaction continually construct a world, which in turn appears to become the objective reality to them. This seemingly objective reality then can be seen as relative: “What is ‘real’ to a Tibetan monk may not be ‘real’ to an American businessman” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 15). Social constructionists are concerned with ontology in so far as how language constitutes reality. For Berger and Luckmann see the relationship between the individual (as a source of language) and society (as the constitution of the material) as a dialectical one.

Several social constructionists (Liebrucks, 2001; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002) try to resolve the issue of relativism by reframing the debate in terms of a balance between the individual constructing the world through language and the power of the natural world. Here the ability of language to encapsulate the entirety of the natural world is questioned.

Differing positions on relativism highlight the philosophical / metaphysical character of the debate. And yet it seems possible to question relativism as an ontological position while recognizing the force of relativism in providing an account of things in the natural world. In that this research attempts to answer empirical questions about the way understanding is constructed within a specific context, and not philosophical / metaphysical questions issues of relativity would be peripheral. The issue of relativity is diminished as the intent is not to draw wider conclusions from the data, but to look at both the different ways in which EAW is constructed while examining consequences and implications of the construction itself.

A separate notion of relativism

A separate notion of relativism should be applied to the concept of EAW as it is viewed from the discourse of a foreign context. The key to creating EAW is in the ability of the foreign writer of EAW to reflect the ability of the successful native writer of EAW (with the understanding that not all native writers of EAW are successful themselves in the task). In such a case, EAW2 is relative to EAW1. It is dependent upon EAW1 in all senses of criteria to be assessed successful. When a native reader of English comes across EAW created in the foreign EAW2 context, the text will be deciphered by using a native English reading ability which has been constructed through a lifetime of reading native English. This will be the criteria for assessing the success in the text of delivering its message.

In the light of this, what is asked for in an EFL context is the construction of a better or the best conditions relative to that specific EFL context for learning EAW. This present study aims to critique conditions within this context, to ask: Is this the situation/condition we want to encourage? As EAW2 is relative to EAW1, but the

EAW2 context is not the same as the EAW1 context (although the goal is to make EAW the same in both contexts) what can be done relative to the EAW2 constructed contextual matrix to achieve more successful EAW? This does not involve seeking a universally sanctioned pedagogical approach to EAW, but a specific, relative approach that works for this specific context. It does not necessarily subscribe to pedagogy from another place or another era, but to create a pedagogy which takes full advantage of all that is known so that the best choices can be made for this particular context at this time. On the basis of what this research reveals, it will be argued that it is important to create an organic pedagogical approach to suit a specific context of learning.

2.2.5 Social constructionism and the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky

The work of Lev Vygotsky supports the idea that since context influences learning, and contexts are culturally determined, different cultural contexts influence learning differently. Culture does influence conceptualizations in very real terms which go beyond language. Learning is not only a matter of cognition – the student struggles with EAW not only due to intellectual capacity but also because of the influences of culture. Vygotsky's emphasis on the social construction of learning with regard not only to participants in instructional events, but also with regard to what 'counts as' necessary or desirable learning, thus committing researchers to an examination of classroom events and practices, and the ways in which particular children participate in these, as situated in larger, concentric circles of context (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Toohey, 2000). Western psychology tends to see individual development in terms independent of social relations. However, for Soviet theorists, the social world was constitutive of humans, as well as constituted by humans, not

just a surrounding context for them. This basic idea of the reflexivity of individuals and their social worlds is derived from Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1991). Vygotsky's observation that mental processes of children are constructed through relationships with others (often adults) provides a basis for his interest in the social formation of individuals. He observed and called attention to mental processes in children evident in relationships with others. This goes directly to the influence teachers have upon students as they attempt to solve problems:

Such analysis is incomplete unless it also considers the societal basis of the shared problem-solving — the nature of the problem the partners seek to solve, the values involved in determining the appropriate goals and means, the intellectual tools available (e.g. the language and number systems, literacy, and mnemonic devices), and the institutional structures of the interaction (e.g. schooling and political and economic systems). (Rogoff *et al.*, 1993, p. 232)

As these authors pointed out, the social world presents itself universally, not only in the fact that more than one person is usually involved in observable instructional events, but also in tools, such as textbooks, as students try to solve problems.

The teaching approach as part of the culture manifests itself within problem-solving situations that arise in the classroom between teacher and student: Should I allow students to copy the work of expert researchers? And internally within the teacher herself: Should I approach teaching writing in terms of the teaching of grammar because it is something that is known to me? Should I approach teaching writing the teaching of EAW as research because this has elements with which I am familiar? Should I avoid teaching writing elements such as coherence – and the more subtle complicated intratextual relationships which are something I do not feel comfortable teaching?

Even in what gets defined as 'skilled performance', the intellectual tools (e.g. language choices), and the situation itself are as permeated with sociality, as are the interactants. These are the *mediated* tools which shape the society and which society uses to shape meaning (cf. Lantolf, 1996). This perspective enjoins observers to examine the social construction of learning not only with respect to the interactants but also with respect to the social milieu in which those interactants are situated, with respect to the tools they use, the problems with which they engage, and so on. (Toohey, 2000)

The sociology of science enlarges the scope of the application of social constructionism from the discourse community influencing the text to the relationship between research and the representation of the research in a text. This is a sociocultural orientation that Charles Bazerman (1988, 1993) draws upon along with the ideas of Vygotsky. Through assimilating Vygotsky's ideas he understands the importance of the sociocultural and identifies the impact of the immediate culture surrounding the research of science upon the creation of the text. Bazerman recognizes how the immediate culture impacts upon the text itself, how the text represents a different experience from the one the scientist went through. The other scientists in the field while not in the room did have some impact upon the text which was meant to represent the experiments but did not represent them as such. The representation of the experiments in the text was a combination of many different influences outside the text. The social therefore does have an influence upon the text, in the representation of knowledge. The text as a representation of knowledge does not reflect the process the scientist went through in his experiments; rather a much more complicated picture emerges. Such sociocultural issues are an important connection to this present research in showing that the context surrounding the

creation of texts is due to many different reasons which influence the idea of what EAW is.

2.2.6 Research perspective

Social constructionism makes assumptions about reality and knowledge which can be exemplified in many strands of research but which are often qualitative in nature and generally lead to a range of analyses generally called discourse analysis. The importance of social constructionism in viewing the meaning of language within a social context (the kind of language Saussure separated from the code) is to construct a social meaning to reveal heretofore unknown implications and meanings.

As Vivian Burr (2003) points out:

It would be a mistake to suggest that there are particular research methods that are intrinsically social constructionist; social constructionist research simply makes different assumptions about its aims and about the nature and status of the data collected. (p. 24)

The approaches to discourse analysis explained by Burr are conversation analysis, discursive psychology, interpretive repertoires, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. These terms do not adequately describe the research methodology used in this study which seeks to use social constructionism as a framework within which to perform content analysis of interview data in this non-English-dominant context. Reflecting Burr's more general description of social constructionist research methodology, this research embraces the assumptions of a social constructionist approach:

- the objectivity of the researcher is not taken for granted within the social constructionism framework, but rather the researcher acknowledges being embedded within his own perspective which informs his assumptions during the course of the study

- a more democratic relationship between the researcher and the researched where the voice of the researched is validated by coming through the data and elevated to be on par with the researcher
- incorporating reflexivity into the study to acknowledge multiple truths and accounts of truths surrounding the study itself along with personal and/or political values brought to the study by the researcher
- positivist notions of validity and reliability are redefined when traditional research goals of identifying objective facts or making truth claims are abandoned for an historically/culturally specific interpretation of knowledge

(adapted from Burr, 2003, pp. 151-9)

The intention of this research is to adopt an enlarged meaning of the use of social construction within applied linguistics. The aim is to include the construction of ideas of EAW within EFL contexts. In this way it closely resembles the approach taken in the work of Charles Bazerman within the sociology of science. This research attempts to expand the scope of the social construction of texts by regarding as socially constructed, not only elements of written texts, but also *ideas* about the texts themselves. This fact would probably go uncontested and ultimately be of little significance or interest within a native-English context, but in a non-native-English context it has considerable significance, both practically and conceptually.

Social constructionist theory is often cast in the role of critiquing the mainstream and as not being able to generate its own theory from research. In this research study an attempt is made to build up an understanding and awareness of the influence of the context on the ideas that are being learned. This will show how the context does indeed influence the learning of ideas and will demonstrate the complexity in the task of learning EAW in an EFL context. The desired outcome is to

gain a better understanding of the factors in an EFL context relevant to improving the learning of EAW.

The purpose in the application of a social constructionist framework for this research is to:

- define the alignment of EAW2 with EAW1;
- acknowledge a mismatch in alignment;
- better understand whether it is possible to ascertain contributing conditions /factors / elements and if so to what degree;
- better understand the EFL context so teaching methods more suitable for the particular setting are employed instead of adopting methods from ESL contexts willy nilly which might not suit the historical/cultural/linguistic environment and in fact may exacerbate the conditions under which EAW is learned.

The intent is also to better understand that the concept of EAW as taught in an EFL context is a *decontextualized* concept, and as such suffers from the same problems afflicting decontextualized data acquired within positivist/empirical research. Without a coherent background context within which to situate the concept, there is no frame of reference upon which to base assumptions about the concept (cf. Quine, 1960).

Teachers teaching EAW in such conditions face a hit-or-miss proposition in the application of ideas integral to the concept itself.

2.2.7 Conclusion – The relevance of social constructionism

Questions are raised as to the relevance of socially constructed accounts of the world which seem local, historical, and socially relative. The aim of social constructionism is in describing the relation between things, but not for the purpose of

knowing those relationships but in order to *see* those relations in a new light. “This relies not on necessary and sufficient conditions for claims [to be made] but on fruitful analogies and new perspectives” (Hacking, 1999). In short, the aim is to raise consciousness. Seeing changes in relations and raising consciousness about local claims points to multiple choices of possible alternatives of thought or orientation towards our focus. Then we have the opportunity for choosing the best of available choices that we are able to ascertain at any moment, and it *is* quite possible to select among a multiplicity of possibilities without excluding others. Just as it is possible in physics to maintain the wave-particle duality because of the present inadequacy of conventional conceptions, social constructionism/sociocultural theories support a position that argues for the benefits of flexibility stemming from an acceptance of the multiplicity of views and not only one single view of truth (Gergen, 1999).

2.2.7.1 Endnote: The question of critical inquiries

While there are certainly approaches within social constructionism critical of power within taken-for-granted relationships, Foucault being the most well-known of these, one criticism of social constructionism is that the approach offers criticism without remedies (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1999; Hacking, 1999). However, it does not seem appropriate from the point of view of this researcher to adopt an overtly critical stance in this case. As a foreigner doing research within a foreign context taking a critical approach toward the power relationships seems to open this research to censure for unfavorably judging one culture by the standards of another – a distasteful form of cultural hegemony. In addition, as relationships within any culture are complex I would think it prudent to leave critical approaches commenting upon issues of power to those within the culture more able to discern nuances beyond the perception of this researcher.

2.2.8 Theories of social constructionism related to this research

I have been teaching academic writing at a university in Taiwan since 1994. During that time, I have come to believe there are factors influencing students' acquisition of academic writing skills that are very complicated to grasp. I have taught some hard working and very bright students and yet they still continually struggled to resolve the problems with their EAW. I came to believe that there were issues within this context that affected their writing that were not being addressed. In order to discover what these issues were, a social constructionist model of knowledge acquisition was adopted because it takes in the larger frame of the context in trying to understand how learning takes place. This social model of learning offered the possibility to account for a variety of influences occurring within the education culture. What is meant when the theory of social constructionism is applied to EAW in an EFL context? Using social constructionist theories to understand how:

- 1.) students conceptualize the idea of English academic writing (EAW) – EAW as a foreign concept locally conceptualized;
- 2) EAW is taught in this context – thus focusing on the pedagogy; and
- 3) the curriculum for the writing program has developed and issues around how that writing program is constructed.

My intention, therefore, was not to use the term social construction in the more common sense within ESL composition theory where the creation of text is seen as a social act taking place within a discourse community (Coe, 1987; Swales, 1990), because the text is not the focus of my research. As such my study does not involve

the area of genre studies directly. The purpose of this research is to reveal the idea of EAW as a social construct, and not the text that is a product of a social act. The intent is to study the educational culture in which the text is embedded, not the text itself.

I investigated by asking the question: “What is academic writing?” The question was asked to get into the research, to see what would be revealed by the respondents just by asking this basic question. The intention was to ask some fundamental questions about the idea of EAW from both novices and seasoned practitioners now teaching those novices. My intention was not to describe a foreign academic culture, but rather to understand the building of the idea of what EAW is *within* a foreign academic culture.

There are a large number of students studying EAW in EFL contexts and yet there is a dearth of case study research on the rhetorical context that shapes the acquisition of academic writing skills for these students. This research is designed to contribute to current research in situated EFL settings.

The foundation of the theoretical framework of social constructionism seems to be that there is no ultimate objective truth (Burr, 1995, 2003), that individuals’ perception of reality comes from meanings constructed from experiences. For social constructionism, then, meaning is constructed from experiences. Transferring this to an educational setting, teachers and students both build personal meaning from the learning situation as they interpret what others mean. In an educational setting: teachers and students both build personal meaning from the learning situation and each other; knowledge is both socially and culturally constructed as the social and the culture cannot be separated; students and teachers are co-constructors in the construction of knowledge, and though student experiences may be more limited they are no less valuable.

When teachers and students both create meaning from interpretations of experiences and interpretations with each other within their environment then knowledge becomes both socially and culturally constructed because the social and the cultural can not be separated. As teachers and students are co-constructors then the experiences of both are important to the interplay in the construction of knowledge; the experiences of students may be more limited but no less valuable. Because the SC model puts emphasis on the relationship between teacher and student in the learning practice, it is important to bring them both into the process of the research. Within this research both students and teachers become equal participants.

The idea of how the idea of EAW is affected by different contexts can be summarized as follows:

- 1) In EAW1 context where English is the native language: academic writing constitutes a social act within a social construct in the *native* context and that construct reflects deeply embedded cultural and rhetorical assumptions of the *native* context.
- 2) The same holds true for EAW2 contexts where English is the foreign language: academic writing constitutes a social act within a social construct in the *foreign* context and that construct reflects deeply embedded cultural and rhetorical assumptions of the *foreign* context.

There is the notion that by making one idea relative to its context this makes all ideas relative to their contexts and therefore equally the same. But in this situation the idea of EAW2 will always be judged by its relation to EAW1 and not the other way around because EAW1 sets the standard for EAW2. In fact, if it can be agreed

that ideas are culturally relative, the interesting thing with this particular idea is that EAW2 is relative to ideas within another culture. There is a particular relationship between these contexts complicating matters because the standard/construct of one is held to be the goal of the other. Fundamentally, the reason it is important for the two forms – native-language form and foreign-culture form – to be the same is that the goal of teachers where English is learned as a foreign language, in an EFL context, is simply to make it comply to the standards of EAW1. EAW1 in the native-language context is the standard to which all EAW is held. If native speakers hold the presumption at all that both versions of EAW (EAW1 and EAW2) are the same this might be a web of our own self-centeredness if we believe the concepts we hold are immune to the influence of culture once transplanted to another culture. As patterns of what EAW2 is within this research setting emerge, fractured images coming from different institutionalized perspectives and understandings are to be expected. For even within one site the conceptualizations will vary, just as the individual experiences of students are fed from different streams. There are probably many conceptualizations of EAW2 within this culture and within other cultures and the challenge to the researcher is to find the most effective means of identifying and understanding these. This depends on developing an appropriate research methodology.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature relevant to this research in two areas: English-dominant context writing paradigms and a social constructionism framework of analysis. This chapter has also examined how theories of writing paradigms and social constructionism will be applied in this research study.

The next chapter, research methodology, will discuss in depth the procedures and means of this research study.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

The purpose of this research is to examine the conceptualization of the idea of EAW as it exists within those streams of influence which work to construct it: administrators, teachers, and students. This chapter describes the context, research questions, research design, research instruments, the research administration and the limitations of the study, explaining the details of how this research was carried out the ten-month data collection period, from September 2004 to June 2005.

3.1 Context description

This research takes place at a National Technology University in Kaohsiung County, Taiwan. The Taiwan National University system is a two-tier system with National Universities occupying the top tier and National Technology Universities occupying the tier just below. All National Universities are subsidized by the government, and as such have lower tuition fees, and more money to support faculty research. These factors in turn attract the best and brightest students as well as faculty from all over the country. While there are a few good private universities in Taiwan, the National Universities are the goal of every college-bound student taking the annual national entrance examinations in July. National Universities are commonly referred to as “traditional” universities because they have the typical humanities and science departments associated with prestigious universities throughout the industrialized world. Conversely, National Technology Universities, most of which have been established over the last decade, are an effort by the government to create first-rate technological and vocational universities geared to the immediate needs of growing industries.

3.1.1 National Southern University of Science and Technology

This research was conducted at a university in southern Taiwan which will be given the pseudonym National Southern University of Science and Technology (NSUST). The founding principles of NSUST, established in 1995, are similar to the mandate of National Technology Universities throughout Taiwan. The University aims to:

1. Advocate the practical teaching of applied knowledge and skills to maintain an open dialogue between industry and academia.
2. Promote the integration of science and technology to prepare students for the upgrading of industry.
3. Emphasize applied research and provide services for industry, fulfilling the social role of a university.

Most technology university students expect to learn skills and knowledge more directly applicable to their future careers than students attending a traditional university. As a result, NSUST offers academic programmes closely linked to the more immediate needs of social and national development. Even an academic programme in a humanities field, such as English, would reflect this influence in the courses it would offer. In fact, the very name of the English Department at NSUST reflects its difference from traditional university English departments – it is called the Department of “Applied” English in Mandarin, Taiwan’s official language. Borrowing a term used to differentiate Applied Linguistics from Linguistics with a theoretical focus, the English Department is referred to as an “Applied” English Department to denote the Department’s focus on teaching English *language* skills as opposed to English *literature*. English departments in traditional universities offer classes concentrating on English literature with usually fewer classes offered in the

acquisition of English language skills. The Department of Applied English at NSUST offers courses like Business English, English Language Teaching, and English Interpretation to prepare students for the pragmatic needs of their future. NSUST's Department of Applied English also requires all English majors to take core classes from other university departments, such as Introduction to Business Administration, or Computer Website Design, in order to fulfill graduation requirements. Similarly, all students at NSUST, and at most other National Technology Universities throughout Taiwan, not majoring in English must fulfill English language requirements to graduate to ensure Taiwan's future workforce is able to compete on a global scale. This English language requirement does not usually apply to the student body at traditional universities.

3.1.2 Research participants

All research participants are from the Department of Applied English at NSUST. Only students from the same Department of the same university were used as research participants to suit the aim of this research. Since the focus of this research is the conceptualization of the idea of EAW within this EFL research site, it is important to have a bounded parameter within which to explore the construction. Students, faculty, and administrators within this Department form that parameter, i.e. non-English majors at this university studying English were not participants.

Relationships between research participants have forged the contextual climate within which this research has been conducted. Pragmatic realities create tensions among research participants that reverberate and influence much within the educational culture and naturally include the context of this thesis. Therefore background to those pragmatic realities will be explained so that as details emerge in the light of data in later chapters they will be better understood. Administrators

germane to this discussion include the chairperson and the writing coordinator. The chair of the Department changing every two years – three chairpersons were interviewed during the four-plus years of this research project – breeds a milieu where a lack of continuity is the norm. As each chairperson operates from a position that enables him/her to influence policy, that is, policy as it extends *outside* the Department at the college and university levels, such policy can be greatly influenced by the perspective of the current chairperson. However, the authority of the chairperson to influence policy *inside* the Department itself is mitigated by faculty. Authority within the classroom is the reserve of the course teacher as full-time university professors enjoy a great deal of classroom autonomy. The administration affects policy for the writing program through the appointed role of the writing coordinator. The writing coordinator's duties are limited to being responsible for selecting textbooks and materials, the scoring policy for the writing courses, and holding program-wide meetings during the semester to discuss teaching issues. This may appear to be significant exertion by the administration on the writing program. However, due to the autonomy enjoyed by university teachers in general and writing instructors in particular the administration cannot compel instructors to follow its policy. Writing instructors experience a particularly wide berth of autonomy because quite simply it is difficult to get teachers to teach writing classes. Due to this, writing instructors may decide not to use the required course textbook, or to heavily supplement it. Writing instructors may not follow the scoring policy or attend scheduled meetings (or if they do attend meetings, not say anything). The writing coordinator is thus constrained in being able to carry out the duties of his role. In addition, teaching English academic writing within an individualistic rather than collegiate milieu does not encourage discussions concerning the advantages of

one textbook over another, much less one approach to teaching writing over another because they cannot have a meaningful outcome in terms of influence or action. It is within such a climate that students are exposed to widely varying constructions of the idea of EAW and within which this research project has taken place in order to understand the construction of the conceptualizations of EAW.

3.1.2.1 Students

The Department of Applied English at NSUST is bifurcated into a two-year upper-division (third and fourth year students) program and a newly formed four-year (first through fourth year) program. The two-year upper-division program was established in 1997 – a time when there were many junior colleges in Taiwan – to admit students from junior colleges working toward the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree. The four-year program was established six years later, in 2003 – when the junior college system in Taiwan was in turmoil. The unease was the result of changes to the Taiwanese educational system brought about by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The MOE means to greatly reduce or entirely phase out (the final decision is still being debated) the junior college system in Taiwan, which is basically a vocational college system. It is such junior colleges that feed the students into the two-year upper-division program at NSUST and all other upper-division programs at both private and public universities throughout Taiwan. With a limited junior college system there would not be enough future junior college students admitted to NSUST from the remaining junior colleges throughout Taiwan to warrant the Department's continued existence. It was an instinct for survival that led to the creation of the four-year program.

The newly created four-year program was in its second year during the time

of this study (September '04 - June '05) and therefore had only the first two years of students. When put together with the upper-division program, the Department of Applied English then had students at all four undergraduate levels (freshman – first year, sophomore – second year, junior – third year, and senior – fourth year) for the first time in its history. An overwhelming majority of four-year program students come to NSUST from vocational high schools due to its emphasis on technology and the sciences as a Science and Technology University. It is the recent feeding of vocational high school students into four-year programs at National Science and Technology Universities that make it possible for them to continue to exist following the elimination of the former junior college system. In the past, vocational high school students would not continue on to a university education, but would end their education with a vocational high school degree. A small minority of students come to the four-year program from regular/traditional high schools (also translated from Mandarin as “senior” high schools).

Two salient differences between vocational and senior high school students often repeated around the departmental meeting table are that senior high school students did not major in any particular subject in senior high school but rather studied a wide range of subjects. Relevant to this research that means they most likely did not have any classes specifically in English writing before entering NSUST. The second difference is that senior high school students' academic level is higher, i.e. generally their English ability is better. It would seem that since vocational high school students majored in English their ability would surpass the English ability of senior high school students whose concentration was spread among many different subjects with English being only one. But it is the perception among many educators that the education level of vocational high school students

cannot compare to that of senior high school students. This is borne out in many anecdotal comparisons. There have been many vocational high school students in class who majored in English for three years and cannot speak a word of English. The very thought of speaking English terrifies them. I have also had senior high school students in the same class who speak English fluently with almost no trace of an accent, who welcome the opportunity to speak English with a foreigner. Generally, senior high school students are more fluent than vocational high school students. The difference between these two groups is marked. They have experienced different educational histories before coming to NSUST; with respect to learning English writing, they have vastly different levels even within their respective high schools.

There are also marked differences in the English ability of junior college students entering the two-year, upper-division program due to variances in the quality of education throughout the junior college system. Junior colleges in Taiwan produce a wide range of language competencies among students even though many have majored in English during their five-year junior college experience. That they have majored in English is generally not a marker of their English ability. Some students who did not major in English can have a greater English ability than those who did major in English. One possible reason for this is the *bushiban* – private schools where students study supplementary subjects at night and weekends. *Bushibans* teaching English abound in Taiwan. It is highly possible that students have studied English for years at *bushibans* while majoring in another subject altogether in a vocational high school, or junior college, or while taking a breadth of subjects at a traditional senior high school. *Bushibans* also instruct students on how to pass the university entrance exams (the reason *bushiban* is usually translated into English as “cram school”).

A diligent student cramming for a university entrance exam can pass and be admitted into this Department of Applied English with scant English speaking, listening, or writing ability – skills that are not tested by a university entrance examination which focuses on reading, vocabulary, and grammar. Pedagogical choices following the desires of students to pass the entrance examination favor learning vocabulary, usually through translation for reading and explicating grammatical sentence patterns. Native English speakers unskilled in TESOL theory and pedagogy, but nevertheless employed by some vocational high schools and junior colleges may do little to bolster speaking, listening, or writing skills of Chinese students. Students completely lacking in speaking, listening, or writing skills, while infrequent, do exist within the Department. Such students are easy to spot in classes where instructors use only English. Their glazed eyes stare out the window, the English words sailing over their heads like soap bubbles. Fortunately, these students do not make up the majority of the students within the Department; there were students with sufficient English language ability to make data collection using only English possible.

Writing classes at NSUST's Department of Applied English are the foci of this research. The freshman and sophomore years each have two sections of academic writing with approximately thirty students in each section for a total of nearly 120 students in the first two years. The junior year has four sections of academic writing with seventeen students enrolled in each section for a total of 64 students in the junior year. The final year, the senior year, also has four sections of academic writing, but with each section having approximately twenty students for a total of about 80 students. The total number of academic writing sections for all four years is therefore twelve. The total number of students enrolled in academic writing

classes is approximately 260. And as writing classes were required at all four levels of the undergraduate program at the time of this study, all students in the Department comprised the student participants for this research except for the two sections of academic writing classes being taught by this researcher. In the fall of 2004, at the beginning of the data collection phase of this research project, the Department scheduled me to teach two sections of academic writing in one semester – a junior class and a senior class. The students in the junior and senior sections of academic writing were not participants in this research. While it is rare for a writing instructor to teach two sections of academic writing, it is not unheard of. A part-time teacher was asked to teach two sections of academic writing in one semester while this research project was in progress. These rather exceptional cases in having two teachers double-up on teaching academic writing classes may point to the shortage of qualified teachers for academic writing courses in the Department.

3.1.2.2 Teachers

Due to the influx of students caused by the creation of the new four-year program, the faculty of NSUST's Department of Applied English doubled in the year preceding the onset of this research. In August of 2003, when this researcher left to study the first year of this M.Phil./Ph.D. postgraduate program, there were eight full-time faculty members on staff. One month later four teachers were hired for the 2003-4 school year. The same occurred the following year – four new teachers were hired for the 2004-5 school year. When this researcher returned to teaching duties in September of 2004, planning to begin the data collection phase for this research project, eight of the sixteen full-time teachers of the Department of Applied English were unknown to me. I had neither seen nor met half the Department faculty at the university where I had been working during the previous seven years. I felt a bit

alien in one of the few comfortable quarters of this society I had carved out for myself.

The specializations of the teachers in our Department focus on the three tracks offered to students in our Department of Applied English: TESOL, Translation and Interpretation (T&I), and English Literature. As might be imagined, with different tracks available to students, the individual histories of the teachers in our Department are diverse.

For the purposes of the study all teachers in the Department teaching writing during the 2004-5 school year were interviewed, excluding myself. That amounted to twelve interviews as two of the ten classes engaged in this research changed teachers between the fall and spring semesters. However, only ten teachers were interviewed as two were interviewed twice being teachers of different classes which switched their teachers following the first semester.

Table 3.1 and below have the profiles of the ten teachers who participated in this research project.

Name/ Gender	Nationality/ Age	Education Background	NSUST Employment History	Notes
Mr. Brown/ male	American (Native English Speaker) / mid-fifties	MA in TESOL Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics	full-time assistant professor since the fall of 1999	one of three (all male), other than myself, teaching academic writing this school year.
Mr. Sun/ male	Taiwanese/ late-forties	MA in Creative Writing Ph.D. in Comparative Literature	full-time associate professor since the fall of 1997	was interviewed twice: As the teacher of a senior class and as the teacher of a junior class
Ms. Han/ female	Taiwanese/ late-thirties	M.A. in Educational Technology Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics	full-time associate professor since the fall of 2004	never taught academic writing at a university, but had experience

				teaching writing at a junior college.
Ms. Tai/ female	Taiwanese/ mid-thirties	Ph.D. in Comparative Literature	full-time assistant professor since the fall of 2004	never taught academic writing at a university before, but taught grammar at the science and technology college in Macau, Hong Kong.
Mr. Johnson/ male	American (Native English Speaker) / mid-forties	BA in Criminology and J.D Ph.D. in American/British Literature	part-time lecturer in NSUST for three years, became a full-time lecturer since the fall of 2004	has been a practicing lawyer for over a decade.
Mr. Chu/ male	Taiwanese/ late-thirties	MA in TESOL Ph.D. in Linguistics	full-time associate professor since the fall of 1999.	
Mr. Mao/ male	Taiwanese/ early-fifties	M.A. in English Literature	part-time lecturer since the fall of 2002	was interviewed twice: as the teacher of a freshman class and as the teacher of a sophomore class
Mr. Knightly/ male	British/ early-sixties	B.A. in English Literature M.A. in American/British Literature	part-time lecturer since the fall of 2004	never taught academic writing at a university before
Ms. Lin/ female	Taiwanese/ early-thirties	MA in Translation Studies Ph.D. in Translation	full-time assistant professor since the fall of 2003.	never taught academic writing at a university before
Ms. Pai/ female	Taiwanese/ early-thirties	Ph.D. in English Literature.	full-time assistant professor since the fall of 2004	never taught academic writing at a university before

Table 3.1 Profiles of teacher in the department of Applied English

Teacher one – Mr. Brown: is an American man in his mid-fifties with an M A in

TESOL and a doctorate in Applied Linguistics from the University of Illinois. He is a

native-speaker of English, one of three (all male), other than myself, teaching academic writing this school year. He learned Mandarin as a Mormon missionary in his youth and later taught Mandarin at Brigham Young University in Utah. He has been living in Taiwan for seven years, five of which were spent as a full-time assistant professor on the faculty of NSUST.

Teacher two – Mr. Sun: is a Taiwanese man in his late forties with an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Iowa and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Texas, Austin. He has been with the Department as a full-time associate professor since its inception in 1997. Teacher two was interviewed twice: first, as the academic writing teacher of a senior class during the first semester, and second, as the academic writing teacher of a junior class in the second semester.

Teacher three – Ms. Han: is a Taiwanese woman in her late thirties with an M.A. in Educational Technology and a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Texas, Austin. She began working in our Department as a full-time associate professor in the fall of 2004, one year after completing her doctorate. She had never taught academic writing at a university before this year, but had experience teaching writing at a junior college for several years.

Teacher four – Ms. Tai: is a Taiwanese woman in her mid-thirties with a doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of Warwick. She has lived in Hong Kong and taught at a science and technology college in Macau for one year following her doctoral graduation before beginning at our university as a full-time assistant professor in the fall of 2004. She had never taught academic writing at a university before, but taught grammar at the science and technology college in Macau.

Teacher five – Mr. Johnson: is an American man in his mid-forties, has been a

practicing lawyer for over a decade. He has a BA in Criminology and J.D. from the University of Missouri's School of Law. He taught various classes as a part-time lecturer in NSUST's Department of Applied English for three years. In September of 2004 he became a full-time member of the faculty as a lecturer when he began his Ph.D. studies in American/British Literature at a local Taiwan university.

Teacher six – Mr. Chu: is a Taiwanese man in his late thirties with a MA in TESOL from the University of Kansas and a doctorate in Linguistics from the University of Hawaii. He was hired as a full-time associate professor to teach in our Department in 1999.

Teacher seven – Mr. Mao: is a part-time teacher in the Department. In his early fifties, he is a retired Lt. Col. in the Taiwanese Air Force. He received his M.A. in English Literature from a local Taiwan university in 2002 and has been a part-time lecturer at NSUST for a few years. Teacher seven was interviewed twice: our initial interview took place in the second semester as he was the academic writing teacher of a newly acquired freshman class, and second, as the academic writing teacher of the sophomore class he taught for both semesters. Both interviews took place in the second semester eight weeks apart from each other.

Teacher eight – Mr. Knightly: is a part-time teacher in the Department. He is sixty years old and a native English speaker from the UK, but has called Taiwan his home since arriving twenty one years ago at the age of thirty eight. He received his B.A. degree in English Literature from Mohawk College in Canada. He was awarded an M.A. degree in 1995 in American/British Literature through the Internet from Berkley University Online while living in Taiwan. The fall of 2004 was the first time he was hired by our Department as a part-time lecturer. He had never taught academic writing at a university before.

Teacher nine – Ms. Lin: is a native Taiwanese in her early thirties who received her MA in Translation Studies from the University of Warwick and her doctorate from the University of London in Translation. She was hired as a full-time assistant professor in the fall of 2003. She had never taught academic writing at a university before.

Teacher ten – Ms. Pai: is a native Taiwanese in her early thirties who received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas, Dallas in English Literature the year she was hired as a full-time assistant professor in the fall of 2004. She had never taught academic writing at a university before.

Five of the ten teachers were newly hired (3, 4, 5, 8, and 10). Three of the new teachers had gotten their doctoral degrees within a year of being hired (3, 4, and 10). The other newly hired is a part-time teacher who received his M.A. degree in Literature from an online university (8). Five of the ten teachers (3, 4, 8, 9, and 10) had never taught academic writing at a university before the fall semester of 2004. Five of the ten teachers teaching academic writing have Literature degrees (2, 4, 7, 8, and 10); two have TESOL degrees (3 and 6); one has a degree in Translation (9); one has a degree in Applied Linguistics (1); one has a law degree (5) – see Figure 3.1 below.

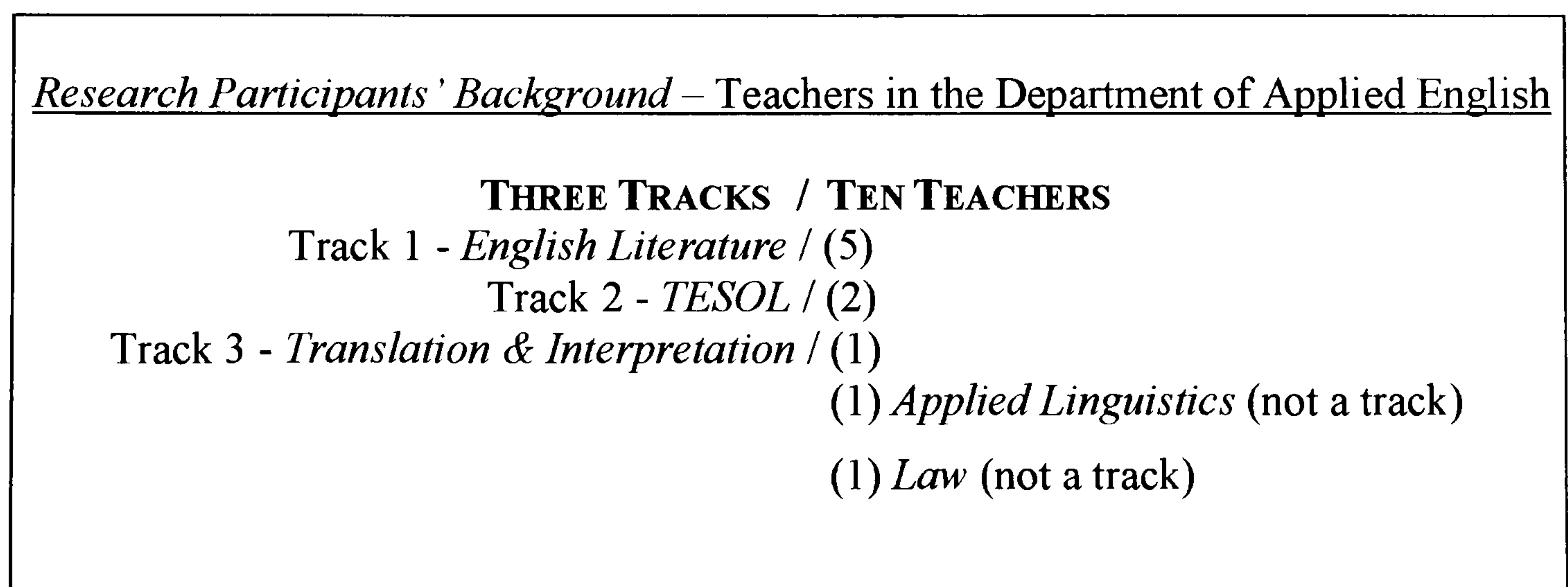


Figure 3.1 Teacher background in the department of Applied English

3.1.2.3 Administrators

This research had three administrators as participants: Ms. Liang the newly elected chairperson of the Department, Mr. Ho the writing coordinator of the Department, and Mr. Chu a former chair who was re-elected to the chairmanship the year following the year-long data collection phase.

Administrator one – Ms. Liang: Became the new chairperson of the Department in August, 2004 at the start of the data collection phase of this research project. She is a Taiwanese woman in her forties who, as a founding member of the Department, has been a full-time associate professor at NSUST before the actual Department existed. She conducted English classes for non-English majors at the university before the Department was founded in 1997. She received her Ph.D. in Foreign Language Teaching from the University of Texas, Austin in 1996.

Administrator two – Mr. Ho: is the writing coordinator of the Department. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Indiana in Pennsylvania in TESOL and Rhetoric in 2002. He was hired as a full-time assistant professor in 2003.

Administrator three – Mr. Chu (the same as Teacher six above): was the chairperson of the Department twice: the first time was for two years (2000-2002) prior to the year-long data collection phase (fall 2004 – summer 2005); the second time was for one year during the academic year 2005-06, which immediately followed the year-long data collection phase. As a former and then returned chairperson at the time of his chairperson interview, June 2006, he was asked interview questions and responded from the position of a former/current chairperson.

3.2 Research questions

In order to have a better understanding of the construction of the idea of

EAW within this EFL research site, the following research questions are addressed:

1. How is the idea of EAW defined within this EFL research context?
2. Do contextual conditions within this EFL research context influence the construction of the idea of EAW?
3. If contextual conditions do influence the construction of the idea of EAW within this EFL research context, can those contextual conditions be identified?
4. If contextual conditions do influence the construction of the idea of EAW within this EFL research context, how do those contextual conditions influence the construction of the idea of EAW?

3.3 The research design

This research takes a qualitative approach due to several considerations. One consideration is its ontological positioning. As discussed in the literature review chapter of this study, this research takes a social constructionism view of the nature of reality, and as such seeks to gain a greater “understanding of this construction and the multiple perspectives it implies” (Richards, 2003, p. 38). Qualitative research methods are highly compatible with such an ontological perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and researchers within that paradigm “will choose to carry out the study using qualitative methods so that they can gain an understanding of the constructions held by people in that context” (Mertens, 1998, p. 161).

Another consideration for adopting a qualitative approach is the nature of the research questions. The research questions for this study aim to reveal the meaning of EAW within this context and how that meaning is socially constructed. As Denzin

and Lincoln (2003) explain, “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality ... they seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (p. 13 – italics in original). Using qualitative methods aids in answering such research questions because it tries to “provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained by purely quantitative data” (Silverman, 2000, p. 8). As the research questions for this study seek a deep understanding of conceptualizations of EAW among the people within the context, a qualitative approach seems the appropriate choice for what Richards refers to as “a person-centred enterprise” (p. 9) which entails being in the field to discover what people are thinking. In addition, another consideration in the selection of a qualitative approach is that this research is not designed to verify hypotheses generated by current theory but adopts instead an approach in which theorization is grounded in the data. This research began without *a priori* assumptions with the intention to carry out qualitative analysis to generate theory emerging from the data – such a theory generating approach is commonly referred to as grounded theory, an approach to qualitative research data developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss contrasted grounded theory with logico-deductive theory which they describe as “dubiously related to the area of behavior it purports to explain, since it was merely thought up on the basis of a priori assumption” (p. 29). Conversely, this study is intimately connected to the action at the center of the research making a qualitative approach an especially suitable fit. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a grounded theory approach to the qualitative analysis of data and generation of theory systematically induces theory “likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action” (p. 12). Therefore, this research takes a qualitative approach because its aim is to generate theory with

those goals. In the next section these considerations will be used to inform a discussion of the most suitable type of qualitative research for this study.

3.3.1 Ethnography versus case study

It is my intention to argue that this research is not ethnography, or an ethnographic case study; rather this research is a case study. The case being studied is the social construction of the idea of EAW within an EFL context. It is important to delineate this as clearly as possible because ethnographic research would necessarily have different intended outcomes from that of a case study. Perhaps this issue could be dismissed as others have (see for example Bassey, 1999; Stenhouse, 1988) by stating that ethnography is the domain of anthropology and sociology and not of education. Yet education is a branch of the social sciences and others (see Hammersley, 1993; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995) have taken an ethnographic approach to studying the educational cultures of schools. The border between ethnography and case study is fuzzy; nevertheless an attempt will be made to clarify those differences. For within the domain of this research in particular, there are several components which could point to it being ethnography, or an ethnographic case study. It is therefore important to explain why it is not.

One element this case study would share with an ethnographic interpretation of this research is that the location is in the field, doing fieldwork at a university within a culture foreign to the researcher. As Spradley declares: “ethnography is the work of describing a culture” (1980, p. 3). And Spencer says of ethnographers, “our first priority is to render intelligible the ideas and actions of people in another culture” (2001, p. 448). This research does share the sentiments of those ethnographers aiming to reveal the particularity of the ethnographic experience within a foreign culture; however, the foreign culture is not the focus.

The researcher having participant observer status within the context of the research is another marker of ethnography. The term participant observer is one that implies an ethnographic study. As this researcher is a participant within the educational context being observed, defining the researcher as participant observer in the classic anthropological ethnographic sense *may* seem natural. In addition, participant observer is a label used within differing facets of research not only ethnography – although anthropologists (Spradley, 1980) equate the term participant observer with ethnography, other social scientists view the term more broadly, applying it to many fields within social science qualitative research (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Stake (1995) counts participant observer as one of several roles case researchers assume during the casework. And as Corsaro (1980; cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) points out the value in being a participant observer is that it:

... not only helps to diminish the obtrusiveness of the investigator but also provides a baseline of cultural accommodation and informational orientation that will be invaluable in increasing both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the formal work. (p. 251)

Arksey and Knight, (1999) point out that there are advantages to being or appearing to be of similar status and of having knowledge of the field for a participant researcher who could have access to information denied to a complete outsider. However, the description above does not suit the role of participant observer for this researcher because this researcher had been a member of the faculty of the Department that constitutes the research site of this study for seven years prior to the beginning of the data collection phase. As such, this researcher would have to be considered an insider who had attained advantages participant observers strive for: ‘cultural accommodation and informational orientation,’ similar status, knowledge of the field, access to information. The prolonged exposure to and insider knowledge of this context would determine that the participant observer perspective is

inappropriate.

While the term ‘teacher-as-researcher’ might initially seem more appropriate, such researchers generally participate in research known as action research; teachers investigate their own classroom practice taking action to revise their practice while noting any changes that occur. This has also been labeled ‘practitioner ethnography’ (Hammersley, 1993). This research project does not have as its aim the investigation of practices within the researcher’s own class. So the label teacher-research is not a fitting one for this study.

The use of ‘thick description’ as a means of analysis has been common to ethnography since Geertz (1973) in an essay of the same name explicated the term which he had borrowed from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle. Geertz believes “thick description” – the description of context as well as the behavior taking place within the context – is “the object of ethnography” (p. 6). Or as Spencer (2001, p. 445) echoes, “ethnography is an interpretive exercise in ‘thick description.’” However, this is not to argue that all thick description is by definition ethnographic. As Wolcott (1990) explains, it is quite possible for ethnographic techniques, such as thick description, to be used by a variety of researchers without them engaging in ethnography. This research could be viewed as an example of just that – using ethnographic techniques without being classified as an ethnographic study.

In addition to the components similar to both ethnography and case study lies the question Yin raises regarding the *a priori* theoretical development of case studies. According to Yin (2003), case study requires theory development prior to any data collection which “is one point of difference between case studies and related methods such as ethnography and ‘grounded theory’” (Yin, 2003, p. 28). Van Maanen (1988) seems to concur as he offers his opinion that sociologists enter the

field less frequently than anthropologists and when they do sociologists are “social theorists who build broad conceptual models for others to test and modify in humble social settings. These models are supposed to predict and explain patterns of thought and action across cultural domains” (p. 20). This implies an *a priori* theoretical position similar to Yin. However, Donmoyer (1990) points out that while *a priori* theories may provide a focus for social scientists it is, in fact, never possible to “escape the influence of *a priori* theories or paradigms, because even the most rudimentary acts of perception are influenced by latent *a priori* assumptions about the way the world is and ought to be” (p. 179). Then it might be possible to view case studies in terms of the degree of influence by theories. Even as Yin argues a strong *a priori* position he allows for case studies to also develop theory: “For case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is essential, whether the ensuing case study’s purpose is to develop theory or test theory” (Yin, 2003, p. 28). So it would seem that the lack of an *a priori* position and the theory generating intention of this research is still in keeping with Yin’s notion of a case study.

Moving away from the similarities this research has with elements of an ethnographic study, one main distinction of this research study is that it lacks the sociocultural aspects crucial to ethnography. It is the sociocultural aspect of ethnography which differentiates it from case study. Merriam (1988) describes the ethnographic case study as follows: “It is the sociocultural analysis of the unit of study. Concern with the cultural context is what sets this type of study apart” (p. 23). Its focus is on cultural context: “the ethnographic focus on sociocultural context, time and space will therefore be crucial” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 320). This research does not have the sociocultural context as its focus. Rather the emphasis is on the idea of EAW within an EFL context, with the aim of understanding the

construction of the idea of EAW and to trace that construction through the different streams of influence at this site. Attention is not centered upon the impact of Chinese culture upon the idea of EAW. The distinction is an important one which is at the crux of the ethnographic /case study question because it reflects the intended outcome of this research. The defining questions here are: Does this research seek to identify aspects of *Chinese culture* upon the idea of EAW; or does it seek to identify influences upon the social construction of the idea of EAW as that idea moves between administrators, teachers, and students? This study's aim is not to answer the former outcome but to respond to the latter: to identify influences upon the social construction of the idea of EAW as that idea moves among practitioners at this research site. Therefore the intended outcome is essential to determining this research is not ethnography or an ethnographic case study.

The framing of this research as being a case study necessarily goes beyond intended outcomes and the use of a qualitative approach. For as Stake (2000) reminds us, while case studies are generally seen as being synonymous with qualitative research, making the decision to do a case study "is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 435). Directing attention then to the choice of research focus crystallizes this research as a case study for from the onset this study has had at its core the issue of the conceptualization of EAW within this EFL site. Therefore, the case under study is: how the idea of EAW is socially constructed within this foreign context. Yin (2003) advises that the aim to answer a "how" question will likely lead to a case study approach.

Classifying this research as a case study makes methodological sense for several additional reasons. The concentration of this study, i.e. the case as delineated above, has specific boundaries. The site of the research is one Department within one

university; the course, English academic writing, is also one course among many within the Department; within all the aspects which make up that course it is the single idea of what is being engaged in by being in the course; and it is the conceptualization of EAW as constructed by only those participants enmeshed within the course that is the focus of this research. Merriam (1998) highlights the importance of the bounded nature of the case as being a vital characteristic of case study. In terms of the focus of the case, this research seeks to examine real world events as they occur, to observe phenomena relevant to this particular case with the least intrusion. As Yin (2003) tells us, case study allows for the exploration of “contemporary phenomena within its real-life context” (p. 13). That is, the study of relevant contextual conditions. Looking at the directed intent of this research, a case study approach is suitable because this research seeks to generate theory which may alter perceptions of current pedagogical choices and possibly lead to change. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) point out that within education “case studies can be of particular value where the research aims to provide practitioners with better or alternative ways of doing things” (p. 322). Features pointing to this research being a case study may aid in the classification of the type of case study. It is to the type of case study that we now turn.

3.3.2 Type of case study

Pinning down the type of any case study from several descriptions offered in the literature requires prioritizing one element, a differentiating feature, of the case over other elements common to many case studies. Emphasizing the theory-generating aspect of this research as its differentiating feature aids in categorizing this study. With the focus on this Eckstein (in Mitchell, 2000, pp. 172-4) would classify this study as a *heuristic* case study because it was “deliberately chosen in

order to develop theory” (p. 173). Merriam (1998) also calls *heuristic* case studies those which seek to “illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” bringing “about the discovery of new meaning” (p. 30). The phenomenon specific to this case is the construction of EAW. However, Stake (2000) would classify this research as *instrumental* because “a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue” (p. 437) with, again, that issue being the construction of EAW. Bassegy (1999) would label this research *theory-seeking* case study to make clear that the theoretical intention of the study “is the issue rather than the case as such” (p. 62). And finally Yin (2003) uses the term *exploratory* case study to identify case studies with “the goal being to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions” (p. 6). The classifications in the literature: heuristic, instrumental, theory-seeking, and exploratory all define this case study in terms of its theory generating aspect. Now that the type of case study has been delineated this paper turn to issues important within qualitative case studies: validity, reliability, and generalizability.

3.3.3 Issues within qualitative case study research

3.3.3.1 Validity

In so far as the validity of a qualitative study seeks to represent “a true and accurate picture of what is claimed is being described” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 105), this study relies upon interpretations of the term validity which differ from quantitative interpretations in order to achieve just that. The social constructionism position of this research has been stated earlier, and such a position rejects realist terminology in relation to the issue of validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that as “‘reality’ is now a multiple set of mental constructions” (p. 295) it is the duty

of qualitative (they prefer the term “naturalistic”) researchers to present those constructions in a credible manner in order to achieve reconstructed validity. They suggest several ways which are useful to this study to achieve this: (1) *prolonged engagement* which exposes the researcher to “multiple influences – the mutual shapers and contextual factors – that impinge upon the phenomenon being studied” (p. 304). In this regard, the role of this researcher with insider status at this research site has allowed for prolonged exposure and insider knowledge of the context. Such a prolonged exposure to the research participants and site enabled better understanding and representation of multiple influences. They also suggest (2) *persistent observation* – identifying features within the borders of the research “most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail” (p. 304). The issue of validity is also taken up in sections specific to the research instruments, however, at this point it should be noted that to uncover relevant issues interview questions were first tested in a pilot study as well as further honed during the interview process. The use of the software NVivo to form links and code data was also used to identify dominant features through the coding process as well as enabling this researcher to explore those dominant features in depth.

Silverman (2000) offers two responses to the question of validity in qualitative research that appear frequently in the literature: triangulation and respondent validation. Triangulation attempts to represent issues from different positions by obtaining information from different data sources. Different data sources were used in this study: interviews, classroom observation, focus group interviews, and documentation. The rationales for them are detailed in the next section (3.4 Research Instruments). Respondent validation, also referred to as member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), allows research participants to respond to

and verify the portrayal of the positions they have taken in the study. For this study, respondents were asked to check interview transcripts and make comments (this point is discussed further in section 3.4.1 Interview Methodology Rationale).

However, Silverman believes these are “fallible paths to validity” (p. 177) and offers *the refutability principle* as a further solution. The refutability principle asks researchers to seek to question their own assumptions during the research process. Attempts to achieve refutability in this research were made throughout the process as interview data were checked against assumptions and then checked against data from other sources or other interview data.

3.3.3.2 Dependability and reflexivity

Dependability is the term Lincoln and Guba (1985) use within naturalistic or qualitative inquiry instead of the term reliability. Within a social constructionism paradigm of ever transforming constructions of reality, the “postpositivist notion of stability is not appropriate” (Mertens, 1998, p. 290). The social scientist working within a social constructionism paradigm then seeks to expose experiences during the process of research which may have influenced thinking or decisions. It is the aim of this research through detailed description of the research process to have the degree of transparency of the process to achieve dependability.

The notion of dependability with its emphasis on full disclosure of the research process leads naturally to the concept of reflexivity. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explain that reflexivity “requires explicit recognition of the fact that the social researcher, and the research act itself, are part and parcel of the social world under investigation” (p. 234). That is to say, the researcher admits to being engaged in constructing an object, while nevertheless working to represent a situation that is idiosyncratic and foreign. Just as the phenomenon under inquiry is a

social construction, so the research produced is also social construction. Spencer suggests the role the researcher plays and the language used are all part of the phenomenon being investigated (2001, p. 450). And Mertens (1998) counts the researcher as one of the instruments used in the collection of data (p. 175). Then both dependability and reflexivity are ways qualitative researchers aim at greater credibility within a qualitative research paradigm. It is to the issue of generalizability that we turn to next.

3.3.3.3 Generalizability

Social scientists are dealing with human endeavors and behaviors that are constructed and do not neatly follow cause-effect properties found in the natural sciences. Such complexities may not yield neat generalizations (Cronbach, 1982; Donmoyer, 1990). However, Yin (2003) seems to believe it *is* possible for qualitative case studies to aim for analytical generalization, i.e. “to expand and generalize theories ... the goal is to do a ‘generalizing’ and not a ‘particularizing’ analysis” (p.10-1). Conversely, Richards (2003) expresses the opposite when he says, “in seeking the reassurance of the general, we miss the eloquence of the particular” (p. 289). Stake (2000) mirrors Richards’s sentiments when he says, “case study method has been too little honored as the intrinsic study of a valued particular ... generalization should not be emphasized in all research” (p. 439). Richards proposes taking into account the sample, the use of thick description, and making connections to other relevant research as three ways of rethinking generalizability within qualitative inquiry. This points to the importance of conceptualizing generalizability in qualitative research differently from quantitative research. Because, after all, qualitative inquiry has not had the rich history of experience to work out theories and build up a language for speaking about generalizability that quantitative research has

had (Donmoyer, 1990; Hitchcock & Hughes 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researchers in this tradition have therefore attempted to solve these problems by changing the language used for conceptualizing generalizability within the qualitative paradigm.

Stake (1978) talks about “naturalistic generalizations” which “develop with a person as a product of experience” and accumulate from lived experience, naturally informing decisions which follow “in other places with which this person is familiar” (p.22). In much the same way Stake talks about naturalistic generalizations, Donmoyer (1990) speaks about generalizability in terms of changing cognitive structures through experiential learning.

Working from within the naturalistic paradigm, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose an alternative to nomic generalizations, which they say should not be “the be-all and end-all of inquiry” in science (p. 110). Borrowing from Cronbach (1975) the idea that generalizations, for the most part, are working hypotheses, they believe it is possible to *transfer* a working hypothesis from one context to another if the contexts are similar enough:

We suggest that the answer to that question must be empirical: the degree of *transferability* is a direct function of the *similarity* between the two contexts, what we shall call ‘*fittingness*’. (p. 124, emphasis in the original)

This attempt to mediate between generalizability at one end and idiosyncratic relativism at the other falls short, according to Donmoyer (1990). He believes it does not shake up the notion of generalizability in qualitative case studies enough.

Donmoyer (1990) makes a convincing argument for a re-conceptualization of generalizability in terms of the cognitive structures in schema theory where:

the role of the research is not primarily to find the correct interpretation [of data] ... the purpose of research is simply to expand the range of interpretations ... when this is our goal... uniqueness is an asset rather than a

liability. (p. 194)

Donmoyer's intuition suggests that generalizability comes naturally from one's experiential learning cognitively filtered into tacit knowledge. He builds upon Stake's (1978, 1980) idea of tacit knowledge deriving from the vicarious experience we have when reading case studies by offering three advantages case studies have over direct experience: (1) accessibility, (2) a researcher's intimate point of view, and (3) decreased defensiveness. Accessibility expands the range of settings and the people who inhabit them beyond personal direct experience, thus offering the possibility for enriched conceptions. Learning through the eyes of a researcher allows for expanding the reader's cognitive structures by viewing not only the perspective of the researcher, but also theories employed by the researcher which add depth to theoretical understanding. The removal from direct experience might allow enough distance for readers to drop a defensive stance and lessen their resistance to learning.

By themselves these points are compelling; the push to claim they are advantages over direct experience seems unnecessary. There is no need to compete with direct experience: they can simply add to it. In a sense, to overstate the assertion weakens the argument for generalizability to be recast in terms of the unique qualitative single-case study adding to the range of available interpretations rather than representing the one correct interpretation. To some degree, Donmoyer may have fallen victim to the desire to package his claims too neatly.

As Stake (2000) notes, what matters is that a desire for generalisation should not be allowed to distract attention from the value of the case in itself:

Even intrinsic case study can be seen as a small step toward grand generalization, especially in the case that runs counter to the existing rule. Damage occurs when the commitment to generalize or to theorize runs so

strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself. (p. 439)

This leads on to a consideration of the approach to analysis within this qualitative case study.

3.3.4 Approach to analysis

Taking data on what people say about the context around them and forming that data into an understanding of the construction of conceptualizations held within that context has been the aim of the data analysis of this research. The process of data analysis did not proceed once the data collection phase was completed; analysis was simultaneous with data collection. During this research the analysis of the teacher interview transcripts informed the classroom observation, and both in turn directed questions of the focus group interviews with students from that class – the streams and multiple sources of data guided subsequent data collection. As Merriam (1998), points out: “Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research. Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read” (p. 151).

Data can arise from sources at unexpected times. I tried to be open to such possibilities at faculty meetings, in emails, and even while walking down the hallway. Table 3.1 below is an example during the data collection phase of this study of information outside the scheduled data stream informing subsequent data collection. The journal entry with notes for interview questions to pursue in light of newly discovered information follows Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) advice to researchers to incorporate new information into subsequent data collection sessions. This bit of data was collected in the hallway outside teachers' offices as Ms. Pai was on her way to class and I was returning. Being open to the chance of spontaneous data recalls

Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) observation that data can come from anywhere at any time within the research context.

14 March, 2005 "NEWS FLASH"

Ms. Pai tells me on the way to her class that she is now teaching the senior writing class that Mr. Sun taught last semester. Switching from Jr. Writing to Sen. Bus Writing. She said she liked it because "I don't have to get up in the morning. The Senior Bus. Writing class is in the afternoon."

This means I'll have to go back + interview Mr. Sun as the current Jr. writing teacher, as well as Ms. Pai as the former T. – This I think will add to my research.

Q's to ask [teachers]: [must keep to a.w. (academic writing) topic]

Do you think your ideas about a.w. differ from the other?

What factors contributed to this decision?

It hasn't been done – why this time?

Did you co-ordinate your teaching of a.w.?

Were Ss asked their opinions? – What were Ss told?

How might your diff be accounted for in the classroom?

Q's for Ss:

Do the Ts have diff. views of a.w.? How diff/same?

Are you satisfied w/switch? Do you prefer one to the other?

Were you asked? – Why do you think Ts did it?

How has this affected your feelings towards a. writing?

Have the Ts accounted for diff. in their ideas about a.w.?

Table 3.2 Handwritten journal entry during data collection with reflections on new interview questions to pursue.

Keeping a journal for data gathering/analyzing was an important analytic tool.

The journal contained notes which not only influenced data collection, but also ways the data was being conceptualized throughout the process. Journal reflections allowed me to monitor my own assumptions and biases (Mertens, 1998) and created a space for microanalysis to examine the details and specifics in the data, to understand how interviewees are interpreting events, to ask questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Table 3.3 below represents another window into the data analysis; it is an example of an entry generated during the coding of interview data. This entry focuses on a point in the data where one writing instructor, Ms. Han, began to change her conceptualization of EAW during the interview.

'Teacher_Interview_03_Ms. Han_Transcrip'

sec: 1, para: 58

She seems to begin to contradict herself. As we know with Ms. Han, she will make the most abrupt change of any of the interviewees as she goes on to question all her previous answers and definition of AW.

Here is the first inkling of her ideas about AW changing. What caused that change? What is she changing to?

She is saying that these basic needs are part of AW when at the beginning of the interview she said AW was writing a research paper.

Quite a shift.

5/6/2006 - 4:35:38 PM

Table 3.3 Entry during the coding of interview data with reflections on how an interviewee was interpreting events.

This particular analytical note on the data drew attention to Ms. Han's response where a possible initial shift in her thinking was occurring; Ms. Han had begun to contradict herself, to question herself, and later in the interview she verbalized her shift in representation. Such reflections led to the construction of coding categories, in this case the category 'contradictions.' The process of coding raw interview data was accomplished using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo. Constructing categories through the coding process allows for analytic distance, quite different from the detailed focus of specifics through microanalysis. The movement between microanalysis of the data and analytic distance which lays theories and concepts on top of the data is vital to the analytic process. The categories that are constructed through this process go through theoretical comparisons which allows for variations between categories to be identified, thus leading to a refinement of properties of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The classification of data into categories should be focused, reflecting the research topic generally and research questions specifically. The following examples

are offered to give insight into the coding of interview data into categories.

For example, during the process of category construction there were in vivo conceptualized categories such as 'rules' and 'form.' After working out what I believed was the conceptualization respondents were attempting to express, the in vivo labels were grouped under a higher order category: 'organization.' This seemed like an appropriate, more encompassing label to reflect different respondents' conceptualization of EAW in terms of the *purpose* 'rules' and 'form' were meant to serve in the text.

Another analytical category 'textbook' reflects the suggestion by Silverman (1993) for arriving at a multi-factorial explanation for phenomenon by "focusing upon the processes through which the relations between elements are articulated" (p. 208). The label of the category was formed when through the course of category analysis procedures surrounding the use of the academic writing textbook were examined. This analysis revealed several contextual factors influencing the conceptualization of academic writing: status of the textbook as a quasi-syllabus curriculum for the writing program, teacher autonomy within the department leading to conflict with administrators, teacher belief in the textbook acting as a unifying artifact, teacher belief that faculty share assumptions about EAW with each other when assumptions differ, and so on. Once assembled, the category 'textbook' was then reconfigured into the specific perspectives shaped by individual streams of influence: teachers, students, and administrators.

Analytical building of such categories as 'organization' and 'textbook' were in part directed by guidelines offered by Guba and Lincoln (1981) for ways to develop categories, that is, reasons some categories are considered above others: frequency, significance to respondents, uniqueness, and insight into new areas. To

ensure a high degree of analysis requires attending to all of the evidence offered (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Yin, 2003) which I found necessary to balance with making decisions about those categories more fitting of detailed analysis in order to serve the data. Guba and Lincoln's suggestions guided the selection of categories to be developed while simultaneously my own insider knowledge of the context was used to determine what was meant by 'significant' or 'unique' in this situation. When engaged in case study research, Stake (1995) reminds us that another element to consider in developing categories is their relevance to understanding the case: "Keeping in mind that it is *the case* we are trying to understand ... We are trying to understand behavior, issues, and contexts with regard to our particular case" (p. 78 emphasis in original). It is this focus on understanding the case from the different points of view of sources within the case while keeping key issues central which separates case study analysis from other forms of qualitative analysis. With this in mind, we now turn the description to the research instruments.

3.4 The research instruments

3.4.1 Interviews

The intention to use interviewing as a primary research tool for this study grew out of the purpose of this research. Interviewing suited the purpose coming from my research question concerned with how the idea of academic writing was being constructed within a particular EFL context. Interviewing seems best able to get at constructionist's interpretation of meaning as being constructed when "particular actors, in particular places, at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged complex processes of social interaction" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Interviewing allows for the actors themselves to use their

own words to express their ideas about phenomena occurring in their complex world.

I saw interviewing as best suited to the challenge of having respondents revealing their own personal perspective of their understanding of what academic writing means to them, revealing their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and personal history in depth. Interviewing allows respondents to reveal a richness of information needed to understand the complex nuances of my research questions. During interviews questions can be clarified for greater understanding. This is especially important when asking questions of non-native speakers conversing in a foreign language. Meaning can be negotiated and better understood. As my research question centers on the definition of the term academic writing, it was extremely important to clarify the elements that respondents believe comprise the definition of academic writing. With interviews a dialogue is able to emerge which allowed me to probe into even the most common labels arising during the interview dialogue. It is always a concern when speaking to make certain the strawberry in my mind is not an apple in the mind of my conversant. In addition, interviews may be used to probe for specific and particular circumstances that may not have otherwise occurred to the respondents to reveal. During the interview when questions were asked it is possible that these questions had never occurred to the informants: research interviews are characterised by such meaning construction (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 34).

Just as qualitative interviewing seemed to suit the purpose of my research questions as a way to best get at their answers, interviewing also seemed to suit the site and my relation to the informants participating in the research. If the aim of the qualitative interview is, as Richards says,

not merely to accumulate information but to deepen understanding, and in order to do this the interviewer must be responsive to nuance and opportunity as the interview progresses ... the focus in any interview must always be on the person not the programme (2003, p. 64-5).

I saw my position as a teacher within the site where the research has been taking place as an advantage in this regard. Working for seven years at the university prior to the start of my data collection enabled me to begin with some understanding of interpersonal dynamics already in play. I could then be aware of the nuances during the interview and know the opportunities when they appeared. I was in a good starting place to deepen my understanding of the context from its participants. A few of the participants I have known for the entire time I have been at the university, but the majority were strangers to me. And yet my position within the department gave me the opportunity to have access to them during the entire data collection phase on many levels. In this way, I was able to focus on them for an extended period of time. This level of access and my unique position within the department might raise the question of my level of objectivity/subjectivity to the situation. I do not view my own subjectivity as a problem to be overcome as I obligingly side with Denzin (1997), Casanave (2002), and others in the postmodern camp who feel comfortable with the admission of subjectivity and question the possibility of objectivity. I view validity as more of an issue than subjectivity, i.e., the honesty, openness, and trust of the interview informants.

To best handle the issues raised by the question of validity I incorporated elements designed to enhance the validity of the research. I sought to build rapport with colleagues and students alike that I believe helped give them the openness to express their feelings and opinions. During the interview I paused at key moments and/or prompted respondents in order to give space for them to further clarify their points by adding details or illustrations. I conducted interviews in a pleasant homelike atmosphere and allowed enough time for interviews so as to give

informants the opportunity to exhaust their ideas and opinions on the topic without feeling rushed or overly manipulated. I created a set of interview guides that covered the research question as fully as was possible given the restraints of any interview. And finally, I collected data from the widest possible sample of participants available: all of the teachers and students in our department involved with writing courses – nearly 250 people in all were involved with some stage of data collection (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 52). Questions of validity are always of concern, as they should be. I do not believe the measures I have taken erased this concern but every effort was made to address the relevant concerns.

3.4.2 Classroom observation

Classroom observation, like other forms of data collection in research, straddles the divide between quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Schools of thought from both sides bend the instrument in an effort to gain acceptable data to suit their framework. In its initial use, classroom observation was in a highly structured quantitative context, even when used for descriptive purposes, as was the case with Rothfarb (1970, also see Allwright, 1988 for an historical overview). However, since then the use of classroom observation in qualitative research has grown enormously as some researchers have come to reject the imposition of an “observer’s rational pre-suppositions on to events in a systematic way, rather than seeing them through the eyes of those being observed” (Wragg, 1994, p. 53).

My classroom observation was practiced firmly within the qualitative paradigm. I viewed my own classroom observation as being conducted in a naturalistic setting with no interaction between me as researcher/observer and either the students or teacher. I was a non-participant observer. I observed, took notes of what I observed, and also interviewed both teacher and students in an effort to see

how the idea of ‘academic writing’ was being constructed by the participants in the classroom. I combined classroom observation with interviews to go beyond the observable in an attempt to get a full picture of the classroom as a culture instead of as an experimental laboratory (Breen, 1985).

3.4.3 Focus group interview

Focus group research became a widely used research instrument following the publication of Robert Merton’s paper (Merton & Kendall, 1946) and book (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956) on the methodology he first employed analyzing radio audiences’ responses. Today most group interviews consist of 8 to 12 respondents being guided through a discussion on a limited range of related topics. During the length of a typical session lasting one to two hours or even longer, a moderator ensures the discussion remains focused. However, it is one of the advantages of focus group interviews that a trained moderator is able to adjust the level of focus and structure to suit the researcher’s intent, the temperament of the group, and responses occurring during the interview (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Skilled moderators strive to create a “permissive environment” where focus group respondents are encouraged to participate and share their views without pressure which in turn aids the successful outcome of the interview (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 4).

While focus group interviews may have had their greatest use at the beginning within the marketing research community, social scientists rediscovered their worth during the 1980’s. The benefit of being able to access information otherwise unobtainable in individual interviews, by observation, and through surveys became apparent (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pp. 160-1). Focus group research is particularly useful for getting different perspectives on the same topic from a number

of different participants, gaining information about participants' perceptions on a topic, and understanding participants' shared understandings of everyday use of something (Litoselliti, 2003, p. 18). Advantages of focus group interviews over other forms of data collection is that one is able to obtain a larger amount of data from a group of respondents than would be possible from individual interviews and focus groups provide opportunities for the moderator/researcher to probe for detailed answers to complex questions in the presence of others who in turn are able to build upon those responses with their own (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 16).

The typical number of participants was borne out of experience showing smaller groups dominated by a few individuals and larger groups being difficult to achieve full participation by all members (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). My first focus group experience with nine participants proved to be too large as it was impossible to expect members to volunteer information and exasperating to get all members to participate through direct questioning. I learned that a smaller group of 4 to 6 participants enabled me to get fuller responses to my questions while still allowing for moderator-stimulated interaction. As direct respondent interaction was extremely rare within all my focus groups, moderator-stimulated interaction was used. Even though Asian students can be reluctant to openly interact in a small group interview, by listening to each other and with a moderator's prodding, the interviewees were able to interact indirectly. Smaller groups also allow for detailed responses to complex questions while still offering opportunities for all members to feel engaged and contribute (Litoselliti, 2003, p. 3). I believe the definition Smith (1954, p.59, cited in Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p.10) used half a century ago works well here: "The term group interviewing will be limited to those situations where the assembled group is small enough to permit genuine discussion among all

its members.”

3.4.4 Documentation

In qualitative case studies, the conventional method for gathering data from documentation is through content analysis (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Merriam, 1998). Analysis of documents in this research was essentially secondary to the human sources that provided the core data. There were difficulties which arose with the documents in this research: accessibility and authenticity. This research made use of documents supplied by teachers; however, some teachers were not willing to make documents available. Of those instructors who did, some were found not to be trustworthy documents – the documents did not reflect the genuine conceptualizations of the teacher but were copied from another source, such as the class syllabus being from previous teachers and posted on the internet webpage to fulfill an official department requirement. As this was the case, the human sources were the principal sources used in this study.

Having discussed the research instruments, we now turn to the administration of those instruments.

3.5 Research administration

3.5.1 Pilot study

Two sets of questions were piloted. The first set was questions prepared for the written questionnaire which was administered to all student participants of this research; the second set was questions prepared for the teacher interview guide which was used in all teacher interviews. Two sets of questions were not piloted: student interview questions and administrator interview questions.

Student interview questions were not piloted. It was believed focus group

interview questions would arise from answers contained in the written questionnaires, or in the case of individual student interviews, in the answers given during the focus group interviews themselves. To be sure, focus group interview questions were follow-up questions to the topics of questionnaire answers (please see Appendix 1: focus group participant profiles). However, answers contained in the first set of questionnaires had a knock on effect and inspired other questions, questions which exerted a strong influence upon the student focus group interview guide which made it quite different from questions on the questionnaire. Once that precedent was established with the first focus group interview guide, the same interview guide was used for all the remaining focus group interviews. Questions for individual student interviews could not have been anticipated and therefore I was unable to pilot these questions, which were follow-up questions to responses in the focus group interviews.

Administrator interview questions were not piloted because it was believed at the time of piloting that for the most part teacher interview questions would be used for interviews with administrators. It was expected that unforeseen administrative issues would arise during interviews with teachers; those issues would then become additional administrator interview questions to be addressed. What was not anticipated was that the administrative issues which arose during teacher interviews would dominate the interview guide used for administrators. In the end, the administrator interview guide questions became substantially different from those questions on the teacher interview guide due to the issues raised during teacher interviews.

The pilot test of questions was conducted during the spring term of 2004 at the University of Warwick. Having the pilot study at that time allowed for feedback

from supervisors prior to the data collection phase of this research in the fall of 2004. The participants of the pilot study were seven native Chinese speakers from Taiwan enrolled at the University of Warwick, Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE) during the spring term of 2004. All participants had graduated from universities in Taiwan, most had been English majors. Five participants were newly graduated students enrolled in the MA program. Two participants enrolled in the PhD/EdD program had been academic writing teachers at Taiwan universities prior to the time of the pilot study. Both groups of participants are similar to the participants used in this research. The five MA participants piloted the questions prepared for the student written questionnaire. The two Taiwan academic writing teachers piloted the questions prepared for the teacher interview guide. Following the recommended pilot test steps of Mertens (1998, p. 117-8) who advises using the procedures for administering questions that are planned for the study, the two participants piloting the teacher interview questions were interviewed and the five participants piloting the student written questionnaire questions wrote answers to their questions. Both groups of pilot participants, students and teachers, were asked about the clarity of the language of the questions, which were written in English, and asked to make recommendations as to how the questions might be revised for further clarity. The fact that the native language of the researcher is different from the participants during the pilot study (and the research case study itself; please see section 3.5.2. onwards) was not an issue. The English language ability of the participants was high enough for them to express their ideas. Moreover, it was believed that were their native Chinese language to have been used it would have added an unnecessary layer of complexity to the communication process as translation would have been required.

All questions were analyzed and feedback from both participants and supervisors resulted in revision of both sets of questions. Questions were eliminated due to answers not generating relevant data for the research topic. Other questions were broad in scope and abstract in nature and elicited responses which reflected their lack of specificity. More specific questions replaced them; still other questions were eliminated because of redundancy as they generated similar responses.

3.5.2 Teacher interviews

Data collection in the main study took place from September 2004 to June 2005. The four steps taken in the data collection followed this order, with the possibility of a fifth step: 1.) interview the teacher, 2.) observe the teacher's academic writing classroom instruction, 3.) administer questionnaires to the students in that class, 4.) conduct a focus group interview with some of the students in the class, and finally 5.) conduct an in-depth interview with a student from the class (please see Appendix 2 for a detailed data collection research schedule). I conducted five in-depth student interviews: one for each of the four-year levels with seniors being the notable exception, having two in-depth student interviews.

It might seem more appropriate to interview the teacher once the class has been observed so that the teacher can be questioned about phenomena observed in the class. However, in this situation the interview preceded the observation to help the teachers feel comfortable by knowing the focus of the research and thereby encouraging them to agree to the observation. It was my hope that they would understand my aim was not to judge their pedagogy, but to observe the display of their ideas about academic writing in their natural setting, to witness their ideas merging with students to form a concept of academic writing. The classroom observation was still a hard sell at times, but this strategy seems to have been

successful as only one teacher refused to allow the classroom observation, although another teacher did express uneasiness with the notion of his classroom being observed. In the end he relented and allowed it to take place only to sit this researcher in front of a blank computer monitor for the duration of the observation while his students wrote quietly.

3.5.2.1 Overview of teacher interviews

Since many of my colleagues were actually unknown to me, and I to them, either because they were newly hired full-time teachers or they were part-time teachers who moved in a different circle within our department, I sent a letter to them introducing myself to them (please see Appendix 3).

I thought it best to start with the teacher interviews because the teacher can be a dominant force in shaping the construction of the idea of academic writing in the classroom. The step following the teacher interview would be the classroom observation. The interview could provide a means to better understand and interpret the elements relevant to the classroom observation. I wanted to get a feel for the teacher's ideas on academic writing. Through the interview I hoped to get a prism to view the classroom observation and a direction to follow in the semi-structured student focus group interviews. However, interviewing the teacher before the classroom observation might influence the teacher to intentionally include interview content in the class I would observe, which otherwise might not occur. The interview questions themselves could affect the class I observed. The teacher might be influenced to try to give more continuity between the interview and the observation, but less authenticity to the observed classroom data. It is certainly possible that the substance of the classroom observations may have been changed to align in part with the teacher interviews, and yet there were observable mismatches between both sets

of data. Nevertheless, I do believe the classes I observed were influenced by my very presence, as one teacher commented to students: “You’re very quiet. Why aren’t you answering my questions? Is it because Michael is here? ”

Teachers were either sent an email requesting an interview (please see Appendix 4) or paid a personal visit to request an interview. Some of the Taiwanese teachers expressed concern about the questions they would be asked and requested the interview questions beforehand so they could be better prepared. I refrained from giving teachers this as I did not want something put into a proper, carefully worked out written form. I wanted to have more spontaneous responses which I believe would be more authentic than pre-worked ideas. My goal was for spontaneous responses to their ideas concerning academic writing in order to better understand what they might bring to the classroom environment. To ease those who seemed concerned I sent my carefully worded email, which I hoped would give an overview of the interview scope without specific reference to the questions themselves.

3.5.2.2 Teacher interview questions

The teacher interview questions were created during the pilot phase of the research with several preliminary drafts of questions designed before the final interview question guide was completed (please see Appendix 5). I thought it important to use an interview guide during the semi-structured interviews so as to have some pre-established questions to draw from. Acknowledging that this could create descriptive categories, first, I made the effort to frame the questions to the interviewees in a broad enough scope in order to allow for a wide range of answers so as not to constrain respondents’ replies. Second, I certainly allowed for purposeful wanderings from all questions as I did not want to influence the formation of analytic

categories on to the interview data. This amounted to a delicate balancing act, to be sure, but I felt if I was able to maintain a thoughtful course whilst allowing myself to fish around in the circle of inquiry I could net unpredictable responses. This in turn would allow categories to emerge from the depth of the data and not be mapped on to it.

3.5.2.3 Location and equipment

The interview was usually conducted in the teacher's office, if the teacher was a full-time faculty member. If the teacher was a part-time member of the faculty the interview took place in my office. All the interviews were recorded by a MP3 recorder for transcriptions.

3.5.3 Focus group interviews

3.5.3.1 Questionnaires as an aid to focus group interviews

Following the teacher interview and the classroom observation, I administered questionnaires (please see Appendix 6) to the same students in the teacher's writing class I had observed before. The questionnaires were used to select the participants for the focus group as well as to gather information that would inform the questions asked during the focus group interview the following week.

3.5.3.1.1 Formulating questionnaires

Like the teacher interview questions, the student questionnaires were created during the pilot phase of the research with several preliminary drafts of questions designed before the final student questionnaire was completed.

3.5.3.1.2 Administration of questionnaires

After distributing the questionnaires to the foreign language students, I read the questions to them to clarify the meaning. I also asked them if they comprehended

the questions and if they had any questions about the questions. Rarely would they have any questions. For the lower level classes (the first two years) I had my graduate assistant, a Taiwanese native Mandarin speaker, present in case of questions. She was rarely asked to further explain any information.

I began by telling participants the information would be confidential but not anonymous. I then contrasted ‘confidential’ and ‘anonymous’ by explaining that I would know who they were but that no one other than myself would ever read their responses. The questionnaires would be used only for research purposes, so I hoped they could be as honest as possible when answering.

My review of the questionnaires, the questions on the questionnaires, and the answers were all conducted in English. My research assistant was not present for the 3rd and 4th year students and only rarely needed to answer questions for the 1st and 2nd year students.

I asked respondents to sit apart from their classmates and not to speak to them while they were answering the questionnaires. If they had a question or a problem I would be happy to help them, but if they asked classmates I was concerned that their answers might actually be too similar and not really reflect their own personal feelings. They were extremely compliant. I might even say most appeared to be genuinely interested in answering the questions as sincerely as possible. At the end of the fifty-minute period the teachers gave over from their usual class time for this purpose, there were always some students who were still enthusiastically answering the questionnaires.

3.5.3.1.3 Selection of students from questionnaires for focus group interviews

Selection for the focus group began before any of the questionnaires were actually filled out. I took note of the students who attended class on time when I

observed the class the week before. Those who were attentive in class, asked questions, or were able to readily answer questions attracted attention as well. I only took note; I never eliminated students in this way, but only looked for those that might be the most promising, the most vocal in a focus group. Some of the students, approximately half, I knew from other classes I had taught or was teaching at the time of the questionnaire. This gave me a decided advantage in selecting the ones whom I thought would make good focus group interviewees. I certainly used that advantage when I could. But I also took chances; I intentionally selected students who went against my better judgment to test my intuition. I was sometimes pleasantly surprised when my instinct was totally wrong and a focus group participant I thought would not give much overflowed with data. On the other hand, sometimes my instinct was disappointingly accurate. Of course the opposite was also true. Annoyingly, plenty were the students I was assured had all the necessary gifts to make an outstanding source of information who dried up and withered in their seat yielding only stale support to their classmates. And surprisingly few were the ones I thought would be interview stars that truly shined in the focus group. In the end, I had to attribute the selection of students for the interview to part skill, part luck, and all guess. The one true instrument I felt I could lean on to select focus group participants was the questionnaire.

I usually looked over the questionnaires to select the focus group participants during the weekend following. I paid particular attention to several questions in the questionnaires as well as the information I already knew about the students.

Questions for the questionnaires were arranged in a certain chronological order. That is, I began by asking them about their past experience with learning academic writing. This took up the first few questions before getting to the questions

I usually used to select participants – questions in the middle of the questionnaire: #4, and #5. These asked about academic writing specifically: Whether the student thought the teacher was teaching academic writing or some other kind of writing, and what the difference was between academic writing and non-academic writing. The answers to these questions gave me enough information to begin the focus group interview. That is where I would begin the actual focus group interview. The questions 4 and 5 were gleaned to see how they compared to other answers to questions 4 and 5 given on the written questionnaire, and also to look for diverse answers to those questions, with the chance of getting something unexpected. For example, the student who saw academic writing as writing literature, or the one person who thought EAW was not being taught in class.

The number of students who participated in the focus groups changed over time as I learned more about conducting focus groups and out of necessity. I began with nine students, which for the type of focus group interview I was conducting was far too many. The focus groups I conducted were not rapid-fire affairs and to keep students lingering for long periods of time as I pursued a line of questioning with some other students proved distracting. The second group was cut by a third to six and yet I still felt this was on the edge of being too many. The ideal number for my purposes where I felt comfortable asking every student a sufficient amount of information and all were contributing as much as possible was between four and five students. Having a group of four or having a group of six did seem to make a significant change in the ‘atmosphere’ of the room. The smaller group allowed for a tighter focus and more close attention being paid by the participants than even a slightly larger group. I gauged this by a lack of side talking during the interview along with less need to repeat questions to interviewees. But nevertheless it was still

necessary to have a group of six students because more were asked to participate than were needed due to attrition of students on the day of the interview. Like snacks at a party, it is always better to have too much than not enough.

3.5.3.2 Location of focus group interviews

The location for all the focus group interviews was my office. While several neutral locations were considered, were in fact preferred, my office proved to be the best location. Neutral locations such as classrooms or department meeting rooms were not easily available due to scheduling problems concerning the focus group interviews. Students in our Department of Applied English take, on average, twenty-five hours of classes per week. This makes it quite difficult to schedule interviews with a group of four to six students. The situation was made much easier when the writing course instructors excused students from class to participate in the focus group interviews. However, since writing classes are held at different times it was not possible to find a secure neutral location available. When teachers would not allow students to participate in the focus group interviews during class time, the situation was made infinitely more complex. Not allowing students to participate in a research interview for an hour during class time was even more vexing when I noticed that routinely thirty to fifty percent of the enrolled students would not bother to attend their writing class. In such cases, usually the only free time available for the focus group interviews was during the hour-and-a-half provided for lunch. Especially under these circumstances locating the interviews in my office was essential to ensure not only availability but also solitude and quiet since classrooms and meeting rooms are the gathering places for people to eat their lunch.

Upon first arriving in my office, students will often comment that they think it looks like my “home.” This is because it has a comfortable sofa with side chairs

arranged around a small coffee table to form an easy conversation circle as you enter. There are bookcases along the walls. A television sits on one of the bookcases. Beside the bookcases are a small refrigerator and airpot with cups at the ready to offer a cup of tea or a cold drink from the refrigerator. There are several large plants spilling over from bookcases or standing in the corners. Fabrics covering many of the hard surfaces along with three area rugs soften the impression of it being a university instructor's office. The only clue as to the room's intended purpose is my desk with computer tucked into a corner. I hoped that as a non-neutral location the atmosphere of this office would go a long way to relax the interviewees, to put them at ease, to create a comfortable environment where the stiffness of academic research might be assuaged.

3.5.3.3 Equipment

Both a video camera and a MP3 recorder were used to record data during focus group interviews. Both proved to be essential. The sensitivity level of the MP3 player was needed to record the voices of even the most soft-spoken students. The video camera, providing aural as well as a visual pictures, was able to record the complete landscape of the focus group tableau. However, the video camera was set across the room to achieve a wide enough angle to capture the entire group in one shot. This did affect its ability to pick up some sounds; as such the video recording was primarily used as a backup to the MP3 recording during the transcription phase. The MP3 recorder was positioned directly in front of interviewees. Nevertheless, the video camera was vital in establishing the speaker among the group of interviewees when voices proved indistinguishable. There were also periods of silence when students did not respond at all or responded only with a nod of their heads for yes and a shake for no. While the video recorder was mostly intended as a back up to the

MP3 recorder, it proved vital for catching the metalinguistic communication which at crucial times took the place of spoken communication. Therefore, each piece of equipment worked well as a check against the other and both were used extensively, often one followed by the other, during the transcription phase.

Because of the use of this equipment, which once flipped on was trouble-free; I was free to focus on asking questions without being encumbered by operating equipment or taking notes. My full attention was aimed at the focus group interviewees.

3.5.3.4 Preparing the question guide

Formulated from answers to the questionnaire, the question guide (please see Appendix 7) was intended to expand on those initial questions. The question guide became more refined over time as I reflected on the data from previous focus groups. I wanted to be able to further explore the themes that were emerging from the previous focus group interviews as well as be open to new unexpected insights. These insights might be found in the answers to the questionnaires or they might come out of the actual interview itself. They would then be incorporated into subsequent interviews.

The sequence of questions asked was arranged so that later questions could build upon the answers of earlier ones. The beginning questions were linked to the central questions in the questionnaire, which were not at the beginning of the questionnaire but sandwiched in the middle of the eight open-ended questions. The central questionnaire question and the opening gambit of the focus group interview was nearly always the same: the kind of writing they thought they were learning in their current English writing class. By using the questionnaire as a warm-up to the interview, in addition to a means to select focus group participants, this broad

question was able to both immediately get to the essence of my research and also lead on to more specific, detailed, follow-up questions. I believe that by using the questionnaire to prepare participants for the focus group interview I saved time during the interview by not having to ask early questions which “are often of minimal importance and may get limited attention in analysis (or sometimes are even set aside)” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 129). This allowed for time later on during the interview to ask questions off the interview question guide with the hopes of exploring relevant new areas that could in turn be added to the question guide for following focus group interviews.

3.5.3.5 Conducting the focus group interviews

Prior to conducting the focus group interview I would create a participant profile containing the answers to the questions on the questionnaires in summary form (please see Appendix 1 for an example). I felt this would help to familiarize me more with the participants’ answers so I could refer to them during the interview without having to stop the interview to read them. The layout of the participant profile also allowed me to notice differences in their answers at a glance.

All interviews began in the same manner. I had a short introduction (please see Appendix 8) where I informed participants the information would be used strictly for research purposes; I reminded participants the interview would be confidential in that those with access to the information would not repeat anything said during the focus group interview; however, it would not be anonymous because we would be well aware of the source of information and therefore some level of trust would be needed. I noted that the interview would be restricted to a minimum of people: those actually participating in the focus group itself, me as the moderator/researcher, and my research assistant. For the lower two levels of classes (the first-year and second-

year students) I had my graduate assistant, a Taiwanese native Mandarin speaker, present during the focus group interviews as a translator should the need arise. I took it as a fortunate occurrence that she was only rarely asked to further explain or translate information. Except for those rare occasions, the interviews were conducted exclusively in English, although participants would sometimes ask each other to translate a word, concept or phrase here and there. Likewise, ten years of teaching experience in Taiwan during which necessity has moved me to become quite sensitive to speaking English at the appropriate level of non-native listeners proved invaluable in allowing the entire interview to be conducted fairly smoothly in English.

Mainly to put participants at ease, I followed advice cautioned in the literature (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 109) and did not open by inviting respondents to ask questions. I took the lead by beginning, as mentioned above, with the central question from the questionnaire. I thought if participants could immediately frame my expectations of them during the interview in terms of the questionnaire questions with which they were already familiar then they might be able to feel more comfortable. Then the questionnaire prior to the focus group interview not only offered a way into the interview as a warm-up, but I hoped could serve as a way to inform participants of the content of the interview and what my likely expectations would be. In this way it could perhaps assist with the affective elements always present when foreign language students discuss a topic with a native speaker.

Interaction among focus group interview respondents is often cited as an important reason for conducting focus group interviews. Interaction among respondents, seen as an advantage, is discussed in much of the literature on conducting focus group interviews. Interaction in focus group interviews is often

viewed as a relation between moderator and respondents or among respondents (Bloor *et. al.* 2001; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Litoselliti, 2003; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). With these points in mind, I tried to lessen my impact upon the group of students participating in the group interview. However, the undeniable fact that I am a teacher in the same university department as them, that I could be *their* teacher in the future, or for some of the students I *am* presently their teacher (although not their academic writing teacher – for obvious reasons I intentionally excluded my own two sections of academic writing classes from this study) I have to acknowledge may have had an impact. Well aware of this possible influence on the group, I did my best to minimize it.

3.5.3.6 Conducting follow-up in-depth member interviews

The follow-up in-depth interviews with members of the focus group were conducted individually with students from each university level. Based on focus group interview performance, one student each from the freshman, sophomore, and junior levels, and two senior students were selected to participate in individual in-depth interviews. In-depth interview students were chosen for their attitude toward the interview process: a willingness to be open, allowing their thoughts to be accessible, for listening and considering a question before giving a response. Respondents who were inhibited during the focus group interview – those who exhibited a quiet, reserved, uncommunicative demeanor – were thought to be poor candidates for the follow-up in-depth interviews. This was the only consideration in selecting respondents. The position or representation of events made during the focus group interview was not a consideration.

The aim of the in-depth student interviews was to further explore issues that arose during the focus group, to probe deeper, to obtain more detailed data. For

example, this type of interview allowed time to explore personal academic writing experiences and histories as well as details into their conceptualizations of academic writing. With only one student being interviewed there was time and privacy of space to allow for disclosure of information which they might be guarded against in front of their classroom peers, such as opinions about previous/present teachers or distress they may have faced in learning EAW.

3.6 Methodological limitations of the study

The limitations of this study in terms of methodology appear to be the generalizability of findings and my role as an instructor within the Department. While the topic of generalizability has already been mentioned (see section 3.3.3.3 above) there is much concern in the literature over this important research issue, especially as it pertains to case studies, and so it merits further consideration. Donmoyer (1990) reminds us that naturalistic inquiry deals with individual human beings, not collective statistical data and thereby its nature is tentative. This points to positive aspects of case studies as all qualitative inquiry is tentative and therefore difficult to interpret in terms of generalizations. This being said and bearing in mind that I would not want to breach Stake's (2000) assertion and let the impulse for generalization distract from the particulars of this case, I wish to highlight the typicality of this case. By describing the typicality of the research site – a Department of Applied English at a National University of Science and Technology (NUST) – I hope to suggest the transferability of findings. A simple survey of the websites of science and technology universities throughout Taiwan reveals twenty three such universities: eight national and fifteen private universities. Most of the students attending these universities come from vocational high schools or junior

colleges and were able to matriculate by passing a joint college entrance examination. The faculty at this Department reflects the variety of mixed teacher backgrounds found in similar departments at most National Universities of Science and Technology: TESOL, Literature, Translation, Education, Comparative Literature, and so on. The variation in teacher backgrounds may be a function of the relatively recent development of NUSTs beginning in the mid-1990s and continuing to the present. The compulsory courses taught at these NUST Departments of Applied English (DAE) being approximately similar in their emphasis on the four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening, would mean that there are more than twenty five DAEs in Taiwan teaching academic writing in some form. As the components of DAEs (students, teachers, and courses) are similar, the findings at this specific DAE might very likely also be similar and therefore transferable due to their 'fittingness,' to quote Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The second limitation, my position of teacher within the Department, certainly may have caused distortions in the responses I received from both colleagues and students. While the strictest confidentiality was followed, faculty and students may not have wished to disclose information due to reticence, viewing me as someone intimately involved in this educational context. I might also have suffered from a myopia which perhaps led to taking some aspects of the context for granted. The scope of this study, the range of my data collection (with all faculty, administrators, and students across the entire writing program participating in this research), may have helped to mitigate such limitations. Additionally, the richness of the extensive interview data itself may also have lessened the impact my personal position had on the study.

3.7 Summary

This chapter began with a description of the context at a National University of Science and Technology in southern Taiwan. Next, the research questions and design focused the issues of this study on the construction of the conceptualization of English academic writing and the qualitative case study methods used to approach those issues. Following, the research instruments were explicated and the research administration explained to show the application of those instruments. Finally, the question of limitations was addressed. Before proceeding to the next chapter, Findings and Analysis, a brief note on the transcription of the interview data will conclude this chapter.

3.7.1 Endnote: A note on transcription

In transcribing the data from the voice files recorded on the MP3 recorder, or with assistance from the video camera in the case of the focus group interviews, I faced a choice. I had already made the choice to make an audio recording and not to depend on interview notes, thereby freeing me to more ably focus on the interview process. It was also decided that the data be limited to the linguistic content of the interview to glean the meaning of what had been said as opposed to the level of detail required for linguistic or discourse analysis purposes. The decision I needed to make concerning the transcript itself, the choice between partial and full transcription presented itself. I decided a full transcription was critical since themes were generated from interviews with later interviews influenced by preceding ones as well as influencing the analysis of earlier ones. I didn't want a theme from a later interview to emerge and not have the full transcript of an earlier interview as reference for that emergent theme.

I transcribed the first ten (of thirty) interviews myself, wanting to get a feel for the data through the intense process of transcription. Other transcriptions were made with the help of a research assistant – a graduate student provided to teachers by the department for research purposes. All transcriptions made by research assistants (three research assistants in total were used during the school-year length of this study) were checked for accuracy by me. I chose to check the first draft of the transcripts against the recordings instead of simply revising the errors in the typed transcription draft. The ability of the Taiwan graduate students was exceptional, however it was still necessary to spend between two to six hours listening to and revising the approximately hour-long interviews.

Chapter Four – Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction: Conceptualizations of English academic writing

In this section and throughout this paper the term ‘conceptualization’ will be used to refer to the understanding of ideas, especially those ideas concerning English academic writing. A conceptualization would refer to the idea of what a teacher understood was being taught in the English academic writing class, such as the conceptualization that ‘creative writing’ or ‘basic writing’ was being taught and not academic writing. The streams of influence which contribute to the forming of those conceptualizations is what is signified by the term ‘construction’ – throughout this is the usage of construction as related to that which is being conceptualized. There is also the difference between conceptualization and ‘perception’ which is distinguished by degrees: the term perception indicates a broad mental image of concepts. In this way, perception would be used to refer to how the teaching of EAW might be viewed in Taiwan, or how an administrator perceived the workings of the entire writing program within a Department. The distinction between conceptualization and perception is germane to the discussion which follows.

There is one key research question in this study: What is the conceptualization(s) of EAW within this EFL context? From this essential question other questions flow: How might these conceptualizations differ from conceptualizations in a native-English speaking context? – What are the implications of such conceptualizations? – etc.

One strength of this study is its focus across an entire EAW program at a university: four levels (freshmen – seniors), ten classes, twelve teachers, over one-hundred and sixty students, three administrators (two of them chairpersons of the

Applied English Department, the other the writing program coordinator). This strength of breadth strives for depth in range. Looking through the richness in data across the spectrum of perceptions of EAW held at this institution among all the participants of this research one fact becomes apparently clear – people have a lot of different ideas about what EAW is.

The findings and analysis of the data in this chapter present conceptualizations of EAW and influences upon the construction of those conceptualizations within this EFL context. Or as it was put more simply during interviews: What is English academic writing (to you)? Answering this question would in itself be complex in any context: EFL, ESL, or English native-speaker. To manage effective, productive communication during the interview it was necessary to break down the question into discernable parts. One line of inquiry that repeatedly surfaced from the data was the *component parts* that make up the idea of EAW. These components surfaced as conceptualizations that answer: What does EAW *have*? For example, it has a certain length, uses a type of vocabulary, and has a particular organizational form. Another line of inquiry revealed conceptualizations that answer: What *is* EAW? For example: EAW is creative writing. Or it is research writing. Respondents conceptualizing EAW in terms of these qualities during interviews required extensive probing to try to pin down a more exacting meaning of what is meant by EAW being ‘creative’ and what is the nature of the ‘research’ in research writing. These two lines of inquiry are taken up in the first four sections of this chapter.

The final section of this chapter attempts to pull together the construction of conceptualizations about EAW as they instantiate around the use of the textbook in the writing program of the Department. The section is concerned with broader swaths of inquiry running through the data. The data revealed strong impressions about the

importance of making connections throughout the program: the connection between teachers and students concerning a shared conceptualization of EAW; the connection of continuity among teachers which would benefit students in making connections as they move up through the levels of the writing program; the connection students make conceptually as they move from school to school and through their coursework accumulating knowledge during their entire English writing education from junior high school onward; the connections administrators view in the writing program curriculum which connect it to other courses in the department thus facilitating content-based EAW. The contradictions and confusion are rather broad in scope, ranging from interviewees contradicting themselves during the interview to the confusion caused by two teachers conceptualizing EAW differently to the same students.

The analysis that follows reveals an interesting dynamic at the heart of EAW teaching in this institution. Throughout, the textbook appears to exert centripetal force upon the conceptualization of EAW as it attempts to unify the notion and ameliorate contradictions in its role as a quasi-syllabus within classrooms throughout the Department, while at the same time centrifugal forces in and beyond the classroom create confusing conceptualizations in the complex exertion of influence upon the construction of EAW for students – resulting in fragmented and disjointed notions of what EAW is.

4.2 Representative components of English academic writing

Representative components of EAW refers to elements within academic writing identified by respondents as being representative markers of what academic writing should have to be considered academic. The two representative components

discussed in this section are: (1) length, and (2) vocabulary. These necessary conditions fulfill respondents' expectations for academic writing.

4.2.1 Length

One condition of EAW was length, i.e. the length of the piece of writing. For some respondents, this was an essential condition for EAW. Mr. Brown thought the writing needed to be longer than a paragraph/page in order to be considered EAW.

I have a class of first-year graduate students and they write me a page on something, and that's it, it's not so long and it's not particularly academic ... Often times the shorter articles that appear in academic journals are not particularly academic. They are mere reports, they are anecdotal, often they are very personal. And they tend to be less academic writing. But you will find them in academic-type journals.

Mr. Knightly considers writing fiction such as short stories to be EAW if the length is enough: "No, [two pages are] not long enough. To me a fiction has to be, you know five or ten pages anyway."

Student Beth:

Because I think academic writing is about paper, is a long pages ... Maybe it is including five pages or six pages but the writing homework I handed on is about three pages ... I don't know academic writing is how long pages, but I think it's more than three pages ...

It is interesting to note that the length of a composition being a criterion for EAW is not, to my knowledge, discussed in current literature on second language writing, and yet two teachers and a student during this study refer to it. This idea arose organically in the three interviews and was not pursued in other interviews, yet is perhaps shared by more than these three respondents. This is one of those concepts regarding EAW that I did not imagine people held and had not come across in literature. It is included here to show the wide variety of criteria believed to constitute EAW which may not

be exemplified in current discussions of EAW. Also of interest is that the two teachers who share the importance of length as a criterion for EAW are both NSs with quite different educational backgrounds. Mr. Brown has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics; Mr. Knightly received his Master's degree in Literature from an online university in Canada while living in Taiwan.

4.2.2 Vocabulary

Different vocabulary being used in EAW developed as a tangent of inquiry in the conversation of one focus group with freshmen as Student Yvonne stated “high level vocabulary” was a condition of EAW on her questionnaire. She thought the writing she did in her class with Mr. Knightly was not academic writing because “English academic writing has high-level word vocabulary.” When asked to clarify, Yvonne said: “Some word like ‘good’ is not high-level vocabulary but ... it’s ... I consider like ‘gorgeous,’ or ‘acquire’ are high-level vocabularies.” Others in the focus group quickly agreed. Student Franny cited the articles in the reading section of the TOEFL exam as an example of “professional” writing she considered to be academic with high-level vocabulary. Student Joan who had also taken the TOEFL exam concurred: “Yes, the article use some very difficult words, some vocabularies that I don’t understand.” So it seems to Joan that part of what makes EAW academic is that the vocabulary exceeds her comprehension, perhaps challenging her to learn. Student Cindy’s opinion coincided with the rest of the group:

Yeah. So you guys mean that we have to use the tough words into the article so that is the academic writing, is that right? ... Use the difficult words, yes. I think it’s a good way to learn academic writing.

The issue of vocabulary came up in the in-depth interview with Cindy when she further defined what she meant by academic writing being “formal.” One aspect of the

formalness of EAW entailed not using “weird words ... like gettem” as an abbreviation of ‘get them.’ In another in-depth interview, Student William, a senior, seemed in accord with Cindy in the formality of EAW vocabulary: “... you have to find out some... you know... formal words, formal expressions, which means longer word ...” I believe I intuitively understand what is meant by William’s “longer word” although I am left wondering how long is long enough.

Interestingly, most teachers did not mention vocabulary during the interview on academic writing. The four teachers out of ten teachers who did mention it fall into two groups: NSs who thought it needed attention in the writing course but didn’t believe the level of vocabulary was a criterion for defining a piece of writing as EAW; and NNSs who thought the level of vocabulary was an important characteristic of EAW.

In fact the NSs both clearly stated it was not a component of EAW. Mr. Brown believes students need to learn to make the right choice in vocabulary when writing: however he classified choosing the correct vocabulary a “basic skill ... These are writing skills. I would not classify them as academic writing.” Mr. Johnson seems to agree with Mr. Brown when he expresses students’ need to improve vocabulary however did not see vocabulary instruction as part of EAW instruction “just because you teach spelling does not mean you are teaching academic writing. If you’re teaching building blocks of writing in general it does not equate to a specific style of writing.”

The NNSs who believed the level of vocabulary was a criterion for EAW seem to view English vocabulary as being bifurcated into spoken/written lines. As Mr. Chu expressed it:

The words we use in academic writing might not frequently or often be used in our conversation. That means we need to have some words or *vocabulary* items for writing essays, academic essays. For example, we'd say you have the "obligation" to go to school everyday, I don't think we would use "obligation" in the conversation, I think we would use "duty" or it's your "job" to go to school, but in writing, we'll use it. (emphasis added)

This is a sentiment I have heard often here in Taiwan which reflects the usage of Chinese vocabulary and is often mapped onto the formal/informal divide of English, inaccurately so, I believe. Ms. Han echoed Mr. Chu's essential dichotomy when she explained how students' academic writing was not good because "their vocabulary was the words that we use in daily conversation" and not the words used in academic writing. It is intriguing that Ms. Han used the term "daily conversation" – I have often heard it referred to as "daily-life conversation," which is a term seemingly manufactured for consumption by the English-learning public within Taiwan. "Daily conversation" refers to dialogues found in basic English conversation textbooks on such topics as the weather, how to use transportation, one's hobbies, etc. Ms. Han then is explaining that such vocabulary would not be considered appropriate for EAW. Such interpretations might be mistakenly mapped onto the informal/formal divide of English. The informal/formal usage of language is influenced by many factors other than just spoken/written: audience, speaker/writer relationship with audience, public/private context and purpose, and so on. Such factors would be taken into account when deciding whether to use the complex sentence structure, avoidance of colloquial/slang language in favor of learned vocabulary characteristic of formal English or the less complex sentence structure and colloquial/slang language characteristic of informal English (para. 1, "Formal/Informal Language", n.d.)

However the examples cited by these respondents point to a conceptualization along a simpler divide without sensitivity to the many factors involved in usage.

4.3 Organizational components of English academic writing

The arrangement of information into an ordered whole would be an applicable meaning for the term *organization* in connection with teaching EAW. Often organization is used in American academic writing pedagogy to refer to an *organizational pattern* used to arrange the information in an academic essay into a coherent whole. Examples of such patterns (also called ‘modes’) are argumentation/persuasion, analysis, or expository organizational patterns: classification, narration, description, cause-effect, compare-contrast, and the like. These are also referred to as rhetorical patterns and the teaching of them is known as the current-traditional rhetorical method in the content of EAW courses in native English environments like American high schools and universities as well as abroad. Teaching rhetorical patterns to the exclusion of the academic writing genres students must produce in content classes outside of EAW classes, such as the science lab report, or the marketing survey has been a point of contention among academic composition teachers (see Leki, 2006, and Johns 1995a, 1995b, 1997a for example) in native English environments during the last two decades. Nevertheless, such rhetorical patterns as mentioned above still dominate the content of EAW courses taught both in native English environments (Silva, 1990) and in foreign EFL environments.

Perhaps it is worthwhile to remember that any one teacher’s conceptualization of organization as the idea of EAW can certainly contribute to the construction of the concept for students; however, it is by no means the only source. There are many streams of influence upon student and teacher alike. The following sections illustrate how various streams of influence form students’ concept of organization in terms of rhetorical patterns, prescriptive elements, and rules.

4.3.1 Rhetorical patterns

The term *rhetorical patterns* is contested in American academic writing circles as it represents the heart of a traditional rhetorical method of teaching academic writing dominant in American education for over a century. The current-traditional rhetorical method has been criticized, mainly by advocates of a genre approach to teaching academic writing, for not meeting the practical needs of students in classes outside the academic writing classroom. This has been discussed at length in the Literature Review of this study and will not be further delineated here. However, it is important to note for the purposes of this study that it is also a contested term in this EFL environment. Although the disputes occur in more subtle ways and for different reasons, there are nevertheless many questions about the place of rhetorical patterns in the understanding of what academic writing is. One of the odd occurrences in this EFL environment is that the actual term rhetorical patterns is rarely spoken although such patterns are usually mentioned in reference to English writing in general and academic writing in particular. The current-traditional rhetorical method appears to be also the dominant, if not exclusive, method employed to teach EAW in EFL environments where American English is dominant. The textbook used in class is *Composition Practice*, a typical ESL academic composition textbook written by an American academic, Linda Lonon Blanton. Each chapter of the text focuses on a traditional rhetorical pattern, referred to as *composition focus* by the author, such as, narration, process description, comparison and contrast, etc. Questions surrounding rhetorical patterns are not raised as to whether the needs of students are met in learning them. This was never voiced during the entirety of this research study. A much more basic issue arose which would never be disputed in the American environment where the teaching of rhetorical patterns has been synonymous with

academic writing for more than a hundred years. The question was: When learning rhetorical patterns is one learning academic writing or something else?

Student 5, a junior in Mr. Johnson's class, believes that the rules teachers give signify that the writing is academic: this is what distinguishes writing as *academic writing*, and those rules are about rhetorical patterns.

ST5

I think in the writing class the academic writing means that the teacher gives us the rules. Something that we have to follow, like chronological, or process.

This view would be more consistent with students at an American college where EAW instruction follows the dominant current-traditional rhetorical method.

Agreement among students in Mr. Johnson's class would to some degree successfully approximate the target EAW through a consistent definition and conceptualization of EAW. However, a classmate, Student 2, forcefully disagrees that rhetorical patterns are markers of academic writing: "No. I think that [the rhetorical pattern] is just the writing skills. The way we write; not academic writing." This conceptualization of EAW is not the employment of rhetorical patterns, rhetorical patterns are "just writing skills." Student 2 echoes Mr. Johnson's own opinion when explaining the kind of writing done in this academic writing class. Student 2 states: "I think all we do is creative writing. I don't think we do academic writing." This strand of conceptualization of EAW confuses the creative writing of poetry, drama, etc. with the academic writing of reports, essays, and the like (as explored further in section 4.4).

Donna, a senior student who participated in an in-depth interview, aligns with Student 5's conceptualization of EAW. When asked what makes writing different topics academic writing, her reply was:

Donna

I guess each kind of topic can be an academic writing but it should follow the form. For example, the narration, the argumentation, or others regarding to the form.

By prioritizing the position of rhetorical patterns in her conceptualization, Donna recognizes the importance placed upon rhetorical patterns in the current-traditional rhetorical method of learning EAW – the method that is supported by the textbook, the *Composition Practice* series used by all classes that took part in this research study. She demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the organization or form a piece of writing has to the conceptualization of academic writing which would align with assumptions about EAW found in native English contexts. Such an understanding is absent from a conceptualization which views using rhetorical patterns as producing “creative writing.”

Teacher Ms. Lin, an assistant professor with a degree in Translation Theory from a university in the UK, believes that academic writing is a genre within writing as a whole which employs mutually exclusive rhetorical patterns separate from other writing genres:

Ms. Lin

I do have a specific idea from academic writing. For me academic writing is to present your ideas in a systematic way and in a specific genre. That's academic writing. That's a special genre. And students should be trained to be able to argue, to present their ideas, and to do some data analysis, and to survey the previous research. That's all included in academic writing. But writing class is another case because you don't need to teach academic writing in a writing class. Academic writing is just a part of writing. And for students they have to learn how to write some basic writing first such as to describe a place, such as to tell a story [narration]. They are all different types of writing.

The rhetorical organizational patterns *description* and *narration* are used in the early stages of learning academic writing in the current-traditional method as these are patterns students might find familiar and employ in everyday life. Approaching the

rigor of academic writing through familiar modes of expression allows students to more easily adapt to the exactness required of academic writing. By using commonly recognized patterns students can, hopefully, gain an appreciation for the clarity achieved when applying familiar rhetorical patterns in a rigorously precise manner. Description and narration are rhetorical patterns used in an array of genres including academic research writing. In this excerpt, Ms. Lin presents a bifurcated view of writing: there is the genre of academic writing, and there is the writing class where students learn “some basic writing” and “they are all different types of writing.” Such compartmentalization of writing reveals, again, a misconnection in the application of the rhetorical patterns description and narration which in Ms. Lin’s conceptualization are not patterns used in academic research writing. Ms. Lin conceptualizes academic writing as research writing where academic writers perform “data analysis” and “survey the previous research” and “students should be trained to be able to argue.” For her, the rhetorical pattern argumentation is an academic writing pattern and description and narration are “different types of writing,” they are “basic writing.”

That academic writing uses a repertoire of patterns no matter the genre (see Reid, 1993, for example) is absent from this conceptualization. A synthesis of the current-traditional rhetorical method with a genre approach to teaching academic writing has been the occupation of several ESL writing experts (see Johns, 1997a for example). However, such a synthesized approach is still at the penumbra and does not seem to be the approach advocated by Ms. Lin here in this EFL environment where the traditional rhetorical approach dominates. It is not the purpose of this research study to advocate any one approach, its purpose, to mention the point again, is to understand the construction of the conceptualization of the term “academic writing” in this EFL environment. That being said, conceptualizations of academic writing and

the way in which EAW is taught do flow into each other. In her conceptualization of academic writing, Ms. Lin has exposed a strict construction of genres of academic writing, which she does not always acknowledge as academic writing, with no signs of integrating some rhetorical patterns within those genres.

In the only other faculty interviews where genre was mentioned, the respondents who used the expression *genre* used it as an equivalent for rhetorical patterns. This is different from the meaning that Ms. Lin employed. Mr. Chu, the former chairperson of the department and current EAW instructor, and Mr. Ho, the writing coordinator of the department, used genre to refer to cause/effect or description rhetorical patterns, while Ms. Lin used it less specifically to refer to academic writing as a genre. Mr. Chu spoke of genres/rhetorical patterns as being synonymous with EAW. When asked what he meant by the term genre, his complete two-word answer was “academic writing.” In his definition of academic writing, Mr. Ho moves quite easily to the teaching/learning of genres/rhetorical patterns, the one naturally flowing into the other:

Interviewer

What is your definition of academic writing?

Mr. Ho

I would say students have to go through all the 5 or 6 different kinds of genres. They could be doing cause and effects and description in their first year writing, and they could be repeating the same thing in the second year. And the way I try to differentiate our first three years’ writing and the last academic writing will be pretty much we don’t really ask the students to write a research paper in the first three years. We might ask them to do it in the last year. This is the way I see the differences.

Interviewer

Are all four years academic writing?

Mr. Ho

Yes, personally, I would say so.

Perhaps because Mr. Ho received his Ph.D. at an American university in a program entitled Composition and TESOL, or perhaps because of his current role as writing coordinator, Mr. Ho explains the definition of academic writing in terms of his own vision for the design of a writing program. His conceptualization is consistent with a program in a native English environment dominated by the current-traditional rhetorical method with familiar rhetorical patterns leading to the writing of an academic research paper. In this way his conceptualization differs from that of Ms. Lin, who doesn't think teaching the rhetorical patterns description and narration is teaching academic writing. Mr. Ho delineates a progression in the program of his design where genres/rhetorical patterns are learned in support of the academic research paper written in the final year of undergraduate EAW study where they would incorporate previous knowledge when writing an academic research paper. Mr. Ho also aligns with a native English environment conceptualization of academic writing because for him the teaching of rhetorical patterns at any level *is* academic writing.

In her conceptualization of academic writing, Teacher Ms. Pai, an assistant professor with a Ph.D. in Literature from an American university, discloses the construction of a hierarchy of rhetorical patterns extending up to academic writing. Ms. Pai equates academic research writing with academic writing which she reveals is “a very holy term” to her. The rhetorical pattern *narration* is “definitely not part of academic writing” because it is “quite superficial” and is only “a warm-up activity for student to get into the writing.” The rhetorical pattern *definition* is considered academic writing because “when we do academic research, we sometimes define the term, right? And then put in our academic paper, right? So I would call it academic.”

When the rhetorical pattern definition is used by the writer in service to research writing then it is academic. The research element is vital for the writing to be academic.

Interviewer

If somebody writes a definition essay, and the purpose is not to be a part of a research, would that still be academic writing?

Ms. Pai

I don't think so.

Writing research papers is not the provision of the junior academic writing class Ms. Pai teaches, therefore it is probable students in her class are not engaged in academic writing even as they employ rhetorical patterns which are "part of academic writing."

Interviewer

When you taught the students to write a definition essay, were you teaching them academic writing?

Ms. Pai

I think the structure is very academic ... The structure we follow you know the structure of academic writing but for the content I don't think it's very academic because like I said they use personal experience and those things are not concrete. ... Because I didn't ask them to do research or to incorporate other people's work. So the content they use are their personal experiences.

Content prevails over structure/rhetorical pattern in determining whether a piece of writing is indeed academic writing or not. The "holy term" academic writing is vitiated by content based on personal experience that is termed "not concrete." This is another example of an academic writing instructor within this local educational environment dismissing the use of "the personal" in academic writing. A writing instructor with such a position displays the influence of the local learning environment to construct EAW in a manner usually not mentioned in contrastive rhetoric literature. Ms. Pai continues by claiming that her instruction of academic

writing rhetorical patterns does not result in students producing academic writing. The structure is academic but the writing is not because it contains students' personal ideas. Her ideas connect to points made in several sections below (in sections 4.5.1, 4.5.3, and 4.5.4.) where strands of her construct are parsed and examined: the claim that when students use their own ideas and not the ideas of others they are not composing academic writing but composing something inferior; using rhetorical patterns and other academic writing skills does not produce academic writing unless writers are engaged in research. In the excerpt that follows, Ms. Pai admitted that her conceptualization of academic writing is nearly unattainable such that she herself is unable to achieve the level of writing worthy of the "holy term" academic.

Interviewer

You can teach academic writing, but your students do not produce academic writing?

Ms. Pai

Yeah, I don't think so, I think at that level it can't be called academic writing, it's just writing. I do my best to let them know the structure is very important, you have to have this kind of structure, but they just don't have enough experience to produce it.

Interviewer

If I write an essay ... but those parts are not done well, then that can not be called academic writing?

Ms. Pai

Yeah, I don't think so. It's not academic writing. It's just a lousy bad paper. It cannot say it's academic writing. To me academic writing is a very holy term. You know when you are able to develop academic writing skill you have to write not just readable but very well-structured, your logic can be followed, you can show your witty ideas for the reader. Sometimes they are humorous that people can enjoy the experience ... Yeah, well written, also witty but I don't think I am capable doing achieving the level for those greatest essayists can achieve that level. Yeah, it's a very holy term for me. Not everyone can do academic writing, you know.

The impact on students' self-esteem of having an academic writing teacher whose expectations are that "not everyone can do academic writing" would not seem hopeful. To a great deal, students orient their learning to the teacher, as one source through whom they construct the subject they are learning. That outlook may appear bleak when the teacher herself puts the term academic writing within such an ivory tower that it seems unapproachable.

The inconsistency in the interpretation of whether rhetorical patterns are or are not a defining characteristic of EAW is the prevailing impression from the points of view of respondents in this section. That such inconsistency should surround the notion of rhetorical patterns within one local EFL environment raises questions concerning the development and construction of EAW within other EFL environments. Rhetorical patterns have been a rather common element of academic writing within native English environments; the twisting of meaning of rhetorical patterns in this EFL environment demonstrates the influence of the local environment in shaping ideas foreign to it.

4.3.2 Prescriptive elements

A junior student in Mr. Chu's class clearly expresses that the form of the writing marks it as academic writing. When Student 2 was asked why she indicated on the questionnaire that the writing done for the course was called academic writing she replied:

ST2

I think academic writing has its own form, like we have to write introduction, body paragraphs and finally make a conclusion. I think it's a kind of academic writing ... the ideas have to be well organized. You can't write what you think and do that immediately.

Student 2 says EAW has a form that is its own, that is to say, different from the forms of other types of writing, and it is this form that marks it as academic. Using those forms of EAW, the writing produced becomes “a kind of academic writing.” She offers a few general elements of the form that organize the ideas contained in the writing and concludes with the embedded notion that EAW is not natural stream-of-consciousness writing – it is a deliberate act requiring ideas to be organized according to the form.

Several times during the interview, her teacher Mr. Chu emphasized the importance that organization has in his writing class, stating his goal for the class as: “To write, to organize their essay, to well organize their essay, and to avoid making too many grammatical mistakes.” When he described the academic writing he learned from his own teachers as a junior at university, he recounted similar writing elements as Student 2 from his current class: “I think we were encouraged to have five-paragraphs essay and in the introductory paragraph, we students are encouraged to have a thesis statement, and there are three paragraphs in the body ... and then you’ll have a concluding paragraph to summarize, to conclude the essay.” This is nearly identical to Student 2’s explanation of organization in Mr. Chu’s own class two decades later. This highlights the influence of the current-traditional rhetorical method on teaching academic writing in Taiwan and the influence teachers have upon students who in turn become writing teachers influencing their own students.

A sophomore student in Mr. Mao’s class echoes Mr. Chu and his student above while corroborating the importance of form in distinguishing writing from academic writing while also commenting on the impact the teacher has upon students’ construction of the conceptualization of EAW:

ST3

I don't know what is the meaning of academic writing, so I think the academic writing should have certain forms and you have...for example, Mr. Mao told us we have to write five paragraphs, and include the topic, body paragraph and conclusion, and so I think because it has certain forms, we have to follow and grammar, such details to notice so, I think it's academic writing.

When such prescriptive elements of EAW are presented and learned by students without the use of the elemental phrase “academic writing” EFL students may not make the connection that they are indeed learning academic writing. A senior, Student 2, from Ms. Tai's class was previously taught prescriptive elements but in retrospect did not believe that what she had learned was academic writing:

ST2

[Former writing instructors] just taught us to write a topic sentence and supporting idea and conclusion that's all. They just taught us the format of the essay that's all ... I'm not sure if that belong to academic writing. We only know that academic writing from what our teacher this year told us what is academic writing ...

Here in this excerpt we learn that previous teachers did not use the term academic writing. Even though elements of EAW were taught, because the teachers did not declare it to be academic writing it was not conceptualized as that. The influence of the teacher's use of the word “academic” as a marker reveals how impressionable students are to the impact of labels / markers / vocabulary teachers use to explain concepts. When instructors have taught the elements of EAW and called it something else or not given it a specific name students were very likely not to understand the conceptualization. Without understanding students are limited in their use of concepts. This year their teacher Ms. Tai called their writing “academic,” perhaps influenced by the use of the term written in part of the course textbook. With this student then, learning elements of academic writing did not make it academic writing until the teacher used the specific term and by having called the writing ‘academic’ influences the construction of that conceptualization for the student.

Mr. Sun also influenced the construction of the idea of EAW by marking these prescriptive elements as being academic writing. Strictness in the inclusion of prescriptive elements of EAW in Mr. Sun's class led his students to further conceptualize them as rules. Mr. Sun, the native Taiwanese with an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Iowa and a PhD in Comparative Literature, ran a highly prescriptive shop when it came to academic writing as his students attested to:

ST2

Actually, last semester I don't know what is academic writing. I just think I learn the normal writing in Professor Pai's class. And I think it's more interesting for me because it's not so many rules to say what we have to do, but in Professor Sun's class, I have to follow the rules, because it's called academic writing. I have to write it clearly, logically to the readers.

Following the rules which control "what we have to do" manifests in the conceptualization that this writing is academic whereas before the writing in Ms. Pai's class was "normal writing." Mr. Sun elaborates upon his prescriptive "requirements" as he likens the organization of EAW to a "scientific project."

Mr. Sun

Specific forms as I tell you, you need to have... like in the introductory paragraph... what are those requirements... like the topic sentence. And also what is the topic sentence and how is the topic sentence constructed... okay, ... In the introduction, you have to first make a thesis statement. It's like an umbrella. And then in which you have to mention, you know, subtopics that would be followed and also would be explained in the following-up paragraphs ... And then the following-up paragraph, it starts from second paragraph you have to closely related to what you have mentioned in the introductory paragraph. I mean the logical development the connections and it's very similar to the scientific project.

Student 2 continues ...

ST2

He ruled us how to follow the rules we can have in our own writing skills. Like he ruled us your first sentence must be your thesis statement, you should include three ideas and in the second sentence, you must say, you must write the bridge sentence, and third, you must include supporting details and supporting details two and then the summaries with detail supporting

One can almost feel the hairs on the back of the neck rising as this student lists the rules they are meant to follow. During the focus group interview Mr. Sun's students conclude by stating how the inclusion of more prescriptive organizational rules in Mr. Sun's class than in Ms. Pai's "normal writing" class the previous semester signifies to them that this is EAW. For these students the formula seems clear: academic writing has more prescriptive organizational rules than normal writing does – that's what makes it EAW.

There is a feeling of the rigidity of the prescriptive elements of EAW. Absent from this discussion of organization is an understanding of how such prescriptive elements are used as guides in the development of ideas within the essay. The teaching and learning of the organizational patterns of EAW seem the end goal rather than a means to an end. However, it is just this lack of "freedom" imposed by rules which signal to Chinese EFL students that this writing is academic writing.

4.3.3 Rules determine EAW

Student 4 is a student of Mr. Mao, a retired major from the Taiwanese Air Force and part-time teacher with an MA degree in English Literature from a university in Taiwan. Student 4, in the freshman EAW class, answered the questionnaire by saying, "I think it's academic writing because it's not free. We have some rules to follow, and we are not allowed to change the form. Teacher takes it seriously ..." Student 4 believes expressing ideas in a form Mr. Mao dictates instead of a more free form molds the ideas into an academic form. The rules dictate the kind of writing with the seriousness of this being conveyed by the teacher and supported in the grade:

ST4

I take it seriously too because it is related to my score. Because all writing ... [if] I write my composition in my own form or idea, it's not allowed by Mr. Mao and I think I don't like. I want to write in our own words. Because Mr. Mao said, for example, he tell us how to summarize and he said first topic sentence should be according to blah ... blah ... blah ... so if we don't write these sentence it's kind of ... I think too formal and too academic. I don't like.

Concluding her forceful opinion using “too formal” and “too academic,” Student 4 indicates her dissatisfaction with the *degree* of academic writing Mr. Mao requires of his students. Mr. Mao's strong belief in following rules is repeated in his response when asked, “Can you explain what academic writing is?”

Mr. Mao

Academic writing, okay, usually an academic should follow some kind of rule or form which means... for instance, if you want to classify something, you have to, first, you have to choose a standard, or principle ... I always ask my students to follow the rules first then ... which means you should have form, focus on form first and then contents.

Mr. Mao connects the notions of rules with form, that is, the rules are about the form, a form that makes the writing academic. Perhaps Mr. Mao's military background provides a backdrop to a greater understanding for the appeal of rules in his class. Mr. Mao addresses this concern of his when asked more in-depth questions about the form:

Mr. Mao

The form... my idea comes from the word process, Microsoft Office. If you punch the grammar check, there is a way of checking to tell you how much points do you have. It tells me writing has a rule, because writing can be checked by the computer and the computer is running by the program, and to write the program, you have some formula, some rule, some such and such. [For example] in a paragraph, if you use too many simple sentences, your score will be low. So you have to use simple, complex, compound, then computer will give you higher score.

He uses a computer program to interpret the importance of rules in writing and teaching those rules and students following those rules. The computer becomes the authority. Under the conditions of being asked these questions while participating in a research study, a rare event, there is a degree of self-satisfaction in explaining his

reliance upon something scientific like a computer as the basis for his writing rules. The rules also offer a clear system in approaching rhetorical patterns and objectivity when grading. For Mr. Mao the “how to write a classification essay” becomes a “theory” which is supposed to be followed in an essay or “reading” – and the “reading which is following the theory, I think is better than the reading, which is not following the theory.” Following the theory then becomes his criteria, his objective way of evaluating student academic writing, thus removing subjective influences: “That’s also my way of evaluation [of student writing], because it becomes more objective, more harder to... what I mean ...you have some rules to follow, it’s better than no rule or no form.” This of course is an ideal in the Chinese culture that relies heavily upon objective testing as a means to remove subjective factors which can be liable to corruption – remove the subjective because the subjective is tainted by human weaknesses. Mr. Mao looks for the rules in order to be objective and fair, which makes him a good teacher in his eyes. As a teacher with an MA in Literature, Mr. Mao was asked if there exists *any* writing “that are not academic, that don’t have rules, that don’t have forms.”

Mr. Mao

No, not necessary. Like if you write a good story, you need to have a good plot, good character, good theme and also good language as well. If you look into a literature, Shakespeare, it’s following all the rules. But in some of the story, you see even they use very easier words but still it’s a good story because it follows the rule ... in teaching you should have some rules.

All writing has rules. All writing has forms to follow. Unfortunately, the kinds of rules he is referring to are not clarified – does he mean grammar rules? Perhaps the point really is that from spelling to grammar and on up in the complexity scale language has rules and it is the job of the teachers to know and disperse the rules to

their students. This is something Mr. Mao as a military man would be comfortable with: Rules as synonymous with orders to follow.

EFL academic writing students and instructors alike seem to derive some level of comfort from the immutability of EAW forms. Anxiety arises when interpreting the foreign concept in the absence of rules. Returning to Ms. Han, who seemed to be comfortable with rules because “once you know the rules you can just follow them,” it seems apparent she does not feel comfortable when ambiguity arises.

Ms. Han

I feel more comfortable in teaching the graduate students because I think I know the rules quite well ... Teaching the sophomores the writing style differ according to the topic and the proficiency level of the students. In general writing you can write whatever way you want and there doesn't seem to be any general rules for what is the best for students. So I am still unclear about what I should give them.

At the higher level of graduate student the rules are better known to Ms. Han because she is teaching them academic research writing. However, when she teaches sophomores the academic writing styles (Ms. Han refers to rhetorical patterns as “styles”) in a class she terms “general writing” there is ambiguity. Ms. Han does not connect the rules she employs in teaching academic research writing to graduate students to the rhetorical patterns she teaches to sophomores. To Ms. Han the academic research paper is a clear, rule-based writing endeavor, while the rhetorical patterns taught to sophomores have no rules and are therefore not conceptualized as academic writing.

4.4 English academic writing as creative writing

The notion of academic writing being thought of as *creative* writing was a strikingly different conceptualization. The idea first presented itself in the interview with a teacher, Mr. Johnson, the American middle-aged lawyer who has been a

member of the faculty since pursuing a doctorate in English Literature at a Taiwan university in 2003. He believed he was teaching creative writing not academic writing because: 1) students express personal opinions in their writing; 2) the level of students make the writing creative; and 3) he had difficulty with grading assignments.

As mentioned in section 4.3.1. above, the *Composition Practice* textbook focuses on traditional rhetorical patterns in each chapter from which students are meant to compose an academic essay. Mr. Johnson states that the types of essays his students write for class are not academic writing but are “creative” writing:

Mr. Johnson

This type of essay is what I would term, personally, as creative writing. It's an essay which, whatever style you're using, whether it's narration or whatever, you're putting together paragraphs that basically come from yourself ... you're writing something that has to do with a personal interest, or comparison and contrast, or something where you create the material just out of thin air - creative writing ... your own opinions, in some way without necessarily using any other sources other than your own experience ... that is original and has no foundation other than their own thoughts and their own opinions.

It seems here that Mr. Johnson used the word “creative” to mean the writer is the sole source of content – it is the creating the content “out of thin air” without use of other sources. He contrasted this with academic writing which required research (an issue explored further in section 4.5 below): “If I'm doing academic writing I am doing writing that requires sources, technical language, referencing other materials, bringing other materials into your own work.” As such, Mr. Johnson does not believe that he has ever taught academic writing at this university: “I can't say that I have taught academic writing here at this school. Again, I am saying I am teaching creative writing ... this is not an academic writing class.” Mr. Johnson separated the kind of writing students do by whether the source of content comes from the writer or from

sources other than the writer to differentiate creative writing from academic writing no matter the use of traditional rhetorical patterns commonly associated with EAW.

He continued by explaining how teaching current-traditional rhetorical patterns, which he termed “style,” was not teaching academic writing because he was teaching them to be creative and the writing they were learning in his writing class actually will not benefit their academic writing:

Mr. Johnson

I do not feel I am teaching academic writing simply because I am using a style which may be used in academic writing, okay. I am teaching my students to be more creative in their writing. Do I really feel it’s gonna help them in a research paper? I don’t think so. Not gigantically ... as far as the tools for academic writing this style of writing is different and so it is not highly beneficial in their academic writing career ... I do not feel that [*Composition Practice*] or the material that I have taught in the past are what I would term academic writing. There is always an overlap in all forms of writing, okay.

He did not seem to believe there was a place for creativity in academic writing nor that teaching traditional rhetorical patterns used in academic writing benefited students’ academic writing or research papers. At the end of this excerpt Mr. Johnson wavered in his stance when he explained that the forms of writing overlapped. This creates a blur between his previously neat bifurcation of creative and academic writing.

A necessary question arises: Is “creative” meant to represent “original,” (as Mr. Johnson seemed to mean in the first excerpt where the writing came from the students) meaning: not a copy, or does the meaning of the adjective “creative” represent “imaginative” as in, a literary creation?

During an in-depth interview with one of Mr. Johnson’s students, Sally, concerning the meaning of creative used in class she explained:

Sally

... [Mr. Johnson] just tells us, reminds us that when we are writing some composition about personal opinions, he will remind us to be creative and put creativeness into your composition.

From this excerpt, it is clear that students in the classroom have come to understand creative to mean ‘using creativity to be original’ when composing as opposed to aiming to produce a piece of literary writing. When pressed further to clarify the term creative writing, Mr. Johnson’s response was ‘all over the map’ as he veered from a letter, to research papers, to writing novels and fictional stories:

Interviewer

Do you see any difference between literature and the writing that you are teaching that you’re calling creative writing?

Mr. Johnson

Well, um, anything, a letter can be called literature. So I mean you can put literature on almost anything. You could even extend it to the academic field as far as research papers. If someone in my class is writing a novel, and making up everything, is it any different from when they are talking about their experiences in their weekend in Kenting? One may be factual, one may be fictional, but at the same time the writing style they’re telling a story a narration like that and so is there a difference between this and that? I mean you can find differences and such like this but you could find similarities to where you could argue back and forth about this type of writing that I’m teaching or reading is very similar to literature in many ways ...

The overgeneralization of literature to the point where “you can put literature on almost anything” did not clarify the distinction between creative as “original” or “imaginative” and did not distinguish creative writing from academic writing. The distinction is an important one when considering elements of EAW such as: audience, purpose, and organization. These elements for a detective novel would seem quite different from an essay arguing for stricter gun control laws. When distinctions between genres do not seem to exist and all writing is “overlapping,” students could construct fuzzy notions about the writing they are learning.

Some students in the focus group with Mr. Johnson's class thought they were learning both academic writing and creative writing while others believed they were learning only creative writing. Student 5 reported that the writing they did in Mr. Johnson's class was both academic and creative writing; creative writing in that "you can just use your own opinions your own thinking to write whatever you want. To make a story or talk about yourself ... creative writing is random, you can just say whatever you want." However, according to the same student when academic writing was being done in the class it had "a form ... you still have to follow the rule, the chronological form, but in creative writing you can change the topic in any paragraph." When writing a class assignment using a traditional rhetorical pattern, such as, chronological order, this class writing was considered academic writing because "there is a form we have to follow," while creative writing was one's own opinion and "random." Would it be possible to have both kinds of writing in the same essay? "No. No. Different essays." Then how did the notion of creative writing manifest in an academic writing class?

ST5

Because I think, I wrote this stuff; it is my idea. Maybe not all the people would have the same thing ... Because I think academic writing is something you want to persuade, like I said, you want to persuade the reader to believe your opinions. Creative writing is your own opinion, but you don't need to prove whether what you say is correct or not ... It's just my ideas, my opinion about something.

The line between creative writing and academic writing now becomes a bit blurry. Creative writing is unsubstantiated opinions. Academic writing does seem to express a personal opinion, however with support for the soundness of your opinion. The power of one's argument then would lie in the ability to have it corroborated or it would become no more than an exercise in creative expression. One's opinion alone could not persuade.

Another student agreed:

ST4

Um. I think that academic writing should search lots of information ... a book reference or the Internet reference. For example when I am writing about the rate of divorce I have to search the Internet. And see the rate and I think that is a little kind of academic writing. All what we are writing now is just like [Student 5] said, creative writing. Because it is all our own opinion and we didn't search lots of information we just write it by ourselves. What we think and we write it down in chronological.

Student 4 echoed what Mr. Johnson said: academic writing used outside sources, when giving “our own opinion” without outside sources, “we just write it by ourselves” the text produced is creative writing even though the expository rhetorical pattern chronological order was used. Mr. Johnson has influenced the construction of his students’ conceptualization of EAW. Student 2 also echoed Mr. Johnson for when asked if they do any creative writing in the academic writing class Student 2 concurred: “I think all we do is creative writing. I don’t think we do academic writing.”

During his interview, Mr. Johnson referred to the dichotomy of academic versus creative when he explained the grading system used for students at different levels:

Mr. Johnson

In an academic paper I can be much more brutal in the way that I grade. I can grade harder but it is easier for me to grade because I have criteria that are much more rigid. I can take an academic paper and I can easily say this is a good paper or this is a poor paper ... [creative writing] is the kind of writing that is not in any way challenging to grade okay. None whatsoever. You can sit down and do thirty papers in thirty minutes and still have time to drink a cup of coffee. So I am separating my terminology by level of student.

Absent from his discussion is the constructive feedback given to students’ academic writing in order for them to improve. With his “creative” writing students Mr.

Johnson struggled with his ability to grade their papers because, as he admitted, the writing requires that he be objective, and flexible when marking.

Mr. Johnson

I think from my own experiences that it would be much easier for me to grade an academic paper because I can mark it so much more harshly than a creative writing paper ... Creative writing is more difficult because creative writing for the teacher the teacher must be much more flexible ... So if a student turns in a paper in this class to me I have to be much more flexible in how I read it. So even though she has a style, she writes a way that I don't particularly care for, I still have to be very objective in my grading. Very objective in the way I mark her paper, etcetera and such like this.

The discussion of marking a creative writing paper is also void of specific criteria offered to students in feedback. Then during the interview Mr. Johnson did explain something about giving students feedback on their creative writing.

Interviewer

I'm a little confused because I thought you said earlier that you did not have criteria. But if you have a feedback session and you give them a critique then you must have some criteria by which you are looking at their essay.

Mr. Johnson

Oh yeah, sure. And of course this goes somewhat into the grade and such. But at the same time, the critique and such like this is just trying to help them see different ways of doing things. So even though I say you could do this better or you could expound on that a little bit more. It doesn't mean that I am going to mark their paper down based on the fact that I think they could put in another sentence here, or I think they could do this, or I think they could do that. You know if they make clear errors and their organization is wrong like they write a sentence that does not support their topic sentence, if they write a sentence that is misplaced, if they write a sentence that I consider, or anyone would objectively consider is disconnected, or a sentence fragment or form or something like that, their entire paragraph is too weak I can mark it down or something like that.

This passage points to Mr. Johnson's inability to give feedback so that students learn to develop their ideas to appropriately communicate those ideas. When he labeled writing 'academic' he seemed to feel confident and able to grade the paper easily.

When labeling the writing 'creative' he seemed able to absolve himself of the

responsibility to give specific feedback to develop their ideas for coherent communication. It was the creative writing which forces him to be “more flexible.”

Mr. Johnson

It may be simply to entertain in creative writing and so you have to be much more flexible and such ... but you see, that is the problem with it. How can you gauge improvement in a writing class outside of form? Writing can be broken up into form and content. Form can be taught and I can see progression. Content, I assume you can try to teach with word choice, with length, with expansion with support etcetera like that. Form is the basics, you've got your grammar, your spelling, your sentence structure, etcetera. I can correct that very easily. I can see the progress in that very easily. Usually it's very difficult to see any improvements in their writing content. I can see them not making the mistakes that they made grammatically, spelling-wise, you know they are more careful in their writing but can I say that they are better writers outside of form? I don't know.

The bifurcation of all writing into “form and content” is strikingly similar to his views of academic writing as writing performed by low-level students and creative writing as writing performed by higher-level students. In his grappling with how to give feedback he may have revealed how his conceptualization of writing as creative was actually connected to his difficulty in helping students improve their writing. By acknowledging his inability to improve the content of students' writing, he also uncovered his inability to provide feedback to the higher-level students in his current writing class. This seemed to be why he did not think the academic writing his students did in this class will improve their research papers. However, writing skills practiced within academic essays could assist students when producing academic research writing. There is a difference between not choosing to critically mark student papers as propounded by the Expressivists and lacking the ability to do so.

Conceptualizing academic writing as creative writing prohibited opportunities to clarify to students important elements of academic writing to improve their academic writing. Producing academic writing involves making clear judgments from having

learned parameters of the genre through lucid feedback from instructors. By labeling the writing of academic essays ‘creative writing’ will students be able to construct workable conceptualizations of English academic writing? Returning to Sally’s interview for insight into this:

Interviewer

Okay. If you’re being original and creative, do you consider that good writing?

Sally

Yes, because since it’s a creative writing, it’s full of personal ideas and opinions, then it can not be judged it’s good or bad. But for the author, it’s a good writing. Because it’s full of personal experiences, no matter the others think it’s good or bad but it is how the author feels about this issue, feels about this thing. So I will think it’s a good writing.

Academic essays can contain a personal point of view without being considered creative writing. By Sally writing academic essays but calling them creative writing because they contain her personal point of view, she is echoing the absolution of responsibility to understand the quality of the writing Mr. Johnson expressed. Lacking an ability to judge good writing from bad writing has left the student susceptible to potential criticism about her academic writing which she believed acceptable as it fulfilled her criterion of being “full of personal experiences.” Sally has been left groping for answers as to what is “good writing.”

Mr. Johnson was not the only writing instructor to view the essays written in an academic writing class in terms of a literary context. Ms. Pai, an assistant professor with a degree in English Literature, viewed the narrative essay as the literary product of a creative writer offering a story to the reader.

Ms. Pai

For narrative essay... sometimes like creative writer they just offer you a story. You the reader you have the responsibility to think deeply for the story that you have been reading. What you will learn a certain a lesson from reading a

story. So it's reader's responsibility to think deeply but for the writer they just create a story for you. They just talk about yourself but for the thinking part, it's the reader's job, not the writers', you know? You know what I mean?

Ms. Pai expressed an Asian cultural point of view of the reader/writer role when she explained how it is the *reader's* responsibility to "think deeply." The interview continued by asking for clarity about the inclusion of narration in a research study such as this present one:

Interviewer

So if narration is part of my research, then when you teach narration in your class, would that also be [teaching] academic writing?

Ms. Pai

I think it's different because you are doing a research, right? You can say narration writing is one type of essay. After you narrate a story or someone's description or whatever you have to analyze to tell the reader the significance of your narration when you write your [thesis], right? So I think that's academic and you probably use other people's ideas to support your own ideas, right? But for the students, when they do the narrative essay, they probably not very sensitive about the readers. So they just give a story, and most of the creative writers they leave the whole things to the reader. So I don't think the way the students do narrative writing can be called academic writing. But like this book [points to the course textbook *Composition Practice*], it uses the term narrative essay, and when I read the sample essay in this book, they are just telling a story, and then in the conclusion they just tell reader what they have learned from this certain experience. But they still call it an essay, but I don't think it's an essay, if we don't have the conclusion, what we have here it's just a story.

For Ms. Pai the writer signaled the particular genre to the reader through the textual context in which the narrative content occurred. The writer has a greater responsibility with academic/research writing "to tell the reader the significance of [the] narration" than when creating a story where "they leave the whole things up to the reader." Evidence of the writer's responsibility to the reader to make clear the significance of the text was for Ms. Pai the determinant of whether the writing was academic or creative. From her point of view, she believed the academic essay in the course text was in fact "just a story" and not an essay because the conclusion did not

have sufficient content analysis from a capable reader-responsible writer. Including the analysis in the conclusion, in which the writer reflected on the meaning of the narrative experience, should have signaled to Ms. Pai that the essay was a piece of academic writing by telling “the reader the significance of [the] narration.” Labeling an academic essay a literary piece of writing (“just a story”) even as it fulfilled the criteria for academic writing she had just spoken about could indicate Ms. Pai’s background in English Literature influenced her construction of the conceptualization of EAW. This in turn could influence the construction of students’ conceptualization of EAW.

Ms. Pai’s students were not asked about this issue; at the time of their focus group interview Ms. Pai’s students were with another teacher. She and another academic writing instructor, Mr. Sun, switched their classes. Other issues surfaced during the interview with her former students which are discussed in greater detail in section 4.6.3.2, “The Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun Case,” below.

However, during a second interview with Mr. Sun, as the current academic writing instructor of the students formerly with Ms. Pai, issues relating to creative writing versus academic writing did indeed surface. The first semester of the school year Ms. Pai instructed students to include a “hook” in their writing to grab the attention of the readers at the beginning of their essay. When students went to Mr. Sun’s class, they included the “hook” in their writing and Mr. Sun instructed them not to include the “hook” in their writing. When asked about this situation, Mr. Sun responded:

Mr. Sun

I told my students this is the writing on some specific subject. And the way we are going to write is you are doing expository writing. If you want to do something like creative to attract readers’ attention, I graduated from Iowa Writer’s Workshop [a prestigious American creative writing MFA graduate

program]; I know how to do creative writing. So definitely I separated this from the idea of creative writing. Some students say this would be good. For example, they would start like this, one word and period or with an exclamation mark. I told them you are not writing a novel ... they said I am going to catch the readers' attention. I told them not until you are in the creative writing ... I don't think that's suitable in this kind of class. Creative writing is a special category. And this [class] is more like on the expository writing side.

Mr. Sun, the only faculty member who is also a published poet, expressed a firm belief in the separation of literary creative writing from academic expository writing. He continued with an explanation of the difference between 'creative' as applied to a literary piece and 'creative' in the sense of 'original.'

Mr. Sun

You could be creative in generating your perspectives. That could be very creative. You are a genius. You look at things from different angles. That's creative. Your point of view could be creative, but not the language or the style. For example, like what I just told you, only one word and then exclamation mark to begin. You probably don't accept that for this kind of writing. But if you were in the creative writing class, well feel free to do this. Different types. So we have to divide writing into different types ... So I think creative should be in the sense of offering perspectives into the subject or the topic you are working on, not the writing.

He saw a clear division in the meaning of a creative perspective in an approach to a piece of writing, and in the term creative writing. He summed up his view nicely in the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer

So if Professor Pai is teaching this idea of hook, it sounds like you are interpreting it as being creative writing.

Mr. Sun

Yes, I would say that. I mean with only the language style. But of course, you have to be creative in coming up, figuring out some perspectives to look at things from different angles. If you are a genius, you may have a very penetrating insight. That's your creative. But with the language style, that's the part I discourage students to do with this type of training. Clearly, no confusion.

This issue of the hook will not be delved into further at this point as it is revisited and expounded upon in section 4.6.3.2 when it is compared to the writing element Mr. Sun introduced to his students – the “bridge.”

4.4.1 EAW as literature

The conceptualization of EAW as literature has similarities with EAW conceptualized as creative writing while having its own distinct parameters. Six of the ten teachers participating in this research study have their degrees in literature and are considered to be ‘literature’ people in the Department. It is not always the case that the majority of literature teachers are engaged in teaching academic writing as the instructors of the academic writing classes change each school year (or even each semester). Nevertheless, the use of literature teachers as instructors of academic writing is common within this and other Departments of Applied English and Foreign Language (English) Departments at universities in Taiwan. The influence of literature professors upon academic writing classes is significant as the analysis below highlights. To clarify: the use of the word ‘literature’ in this section is in line with the definition used by literature teachers, i.e., a piece of imaginative or creative writing having artistic value, such as a poem, short story, fairy tale, novel, etc. and is not used to mean the body of work one might find in any field, such as the scientific literature one would find in the Literature Review of an academic journal paper.

Mr. Johnson saw a connection between literature and what he taught in his academic writing class, which as we have seen in the section above he referred to as “creative writing.” Mr. Johnson saw a connection between literature and writing letters, literature and writing research papers, and even literature and the practice of law, in fact he said “you can put literature on almost anything.”

Interviewer

Do you see any difference between literature and the writing that you are teaching that you're calling creative writing?

Mr. Johnson

In [*Composition Practice*] right now we are moving through the different styles of writing from narration to contrast. These are the different styles, the different methods, the ways of writing. If I were to move to a class that I were to consider to be writing literature, or well, not even creative writing, cause even the creative writing textbooks, books like this one right here [points to the course academic writing textbook, *Composition Practice*], this reader, reading / writing, is still going through the different styles of writing. ... If you're going to move into literature writing you're going to concentrate more on style and more on the content and word choices and such like this, first person, second person, third person, and things like that ... If I am writing a novel I am still overlapping somewhere in style with other forms of writing. Now, if I teach someone to write one style, which is used in another style, anyone can argue that you are teaching the other type of writing ... This type of writing that I'm teaching or reading is very similar to literature in many ways ... Literature is a subject that I'm very interested in. And it's very close to law. Simply because when you're writing literature, writing law when you're studying or researching law or researching literature the connection is very close in many ways. In fact, the dissertation [thesis] I'm writing is "Literature and Law" so there is an interdisciplinary connection there that I recognized and I do recognize and so yeah I have an earnest interest in law and I have an earnest interest in literature and I think the two can be connected very well.

In his interview, Mr. Johnson did not seem to distinguish between different genres of writing necessary to clarify features for students requiring essential critical thinking skills such as analyzing, summarizing, comparing, persuading, and so on. By Mr. Johnson not discerning features of texts, or seeing important differences, such as between fact and fiction, he might be unable to inculcate students in the fundamental principles of academic writing. During the focus group interview with Mr. Johnson's junior students the issue of literature presented itself as creative writing was being discussed. Students believed they saw similarities between literature and the writing they did in class because both have "personal information, and personal opinions in the writing." Discriminating between personal information and opinions in support of

factual evidence not fictional is important in academic writing. Missing this idea could lead students to include support not deemed appropriate within their academic writing and fundamentally shift the point of view from fact to fiction. When assuming the role of narrator in her writing, one student commented that she believed she was a character within her own writing.

Interviewer:

If I read something that is literature it has characters in it. Do you have characters in the writing for Mr. Johnson's class?

ST1:

I consider myself to be the narrator and the narrator is a character

Others in this focus group interview with Mr. Johnson's students agreed with Student 1's point.

A student from another focus group interview with Mr. Knightly's freshman students, Cindy, also considered literature to be academic writing ...

Cindy

... because it's formal and ... uh... academic... well I think academic is something like... is deeper and it's more specific. It is quite something more about ... I don't how to explain that ... It is just not the shallow things, but this kind of deep composition it can make you think or it will impress you.

However, when asked if literature followed the structure she had previously learned as academic writing Cindy seemed unable to identify differences between the structure of academic writing and literature:

Cindy

But they don't put the supporting idea, conclusion idea, or ... topic sentence, idea, supporting ideas, and the conclusion in each paragraph [in academic writing], but they do the topic paragraph, supporting paragraph and conclusion in those kind of literature, or story.

Other freshmen from the focus group with Mr. Knightly's class echoed Cindy's beliefs when they said they considered literature, such as *Rip Van Winkle* by Washington Irving, to be academic writing. The reason it was considered to be academic writing was, "that is more difficult and not everybody can do that." This seemed to indicate that academic writing is not something everyone can master because it is difficult. This distinction seems to be reflected in another interesting point that arose during this focus group interview: that students regarded some examples of literature as academic writing (*Rip Van Winkle*) while the fairy tale *Snow White* was not academic writing.

Another literature teacher, Mr. Mao, also pointed out something similar. At one point in the interview, Mr. Mao said that stories were not necessarily academic writing. For to him academic writing should be something "persuasive" and "argumentative." However, a few moments later in the interview Mr. Mao contradicted this:

Interviewer

Okay. It's interesting, you seem to keep going back to literature, so can I try to clarify this, is literature academic writing to you?

Mr. Mao

Yes. Because it is foreign language to me, I didn't take literature as easy reading or easy book to read. So from the bottom of my heart, it is academic, I have to check all the words and see the character, remember a lot ... Yes, because we are in Taiwan, the all the novels or all the stories in English are a kind of hard to read, so in a sense, it is academic.

He made an interesting point here, one that might have been lost upon NNSs studying in an ESL environment. The inconsistency though does make it hard to get a grip on his understanding of whether he considers literature to be academic writing or not, though he makes a strong case at the end for literature to be viewed as academic

in the sense that it is a subject in the academy. His considering literature to be a kind of academic writing because it is “kind of hard to read” echoed the comments of Cindy who believed literature was academic because it is “formal” and a “deep composition” and the comments of Mr. Knightly’s focus group who believed literature like *Rip Van Winkle* is difficult because not many are able to produce it.

The appropriation of one genre of writing, e.g. literature, by a non-native culture that uses or perceives it in their own way is one of the core issues arising from this research. The Translation and Interpretation professor, Ms. Lin, makes comments that go to the heart of the matter:

Ms. Lin

George Orwell, he write many novels and he write a famous essay entitled, “How to Learn English” or something, anyway, it’s an essay about how to learn English and how to use English as well. And I think it’s one of his literary work but many people now take it as an academic writing.

By citing the British novelist, essayist, and critic, George Orwell, Ms. Lin gave a fascinating example because he is nearly as well-known as an essayist as he is a novelist. She has asked the question: Are the essays of George Orwell literature or academic writing? This emphasizes how intertwined the writer’s purpose can be viewed: a text might be classified one way due to tradition by native speakers of the writer’s own language, while the purpose a piece of writing can be put to by foreign cultures is quite different, such that a piece of literary work could be called academic writing because it is an academic piece of writing in a foreign language they must study. Such reappropriation could blur the line between fact and fiction for EFL students when they are asked to write an academic essay.

As a literature professor, Mr. Sun explained how the poetry of Robert Frost could be considered the same as the academic writing rhetorical pattern, comparison and contrast, in his junior academic writing class.

Mr. Sun

But I think in their writing, they also have comparison and contrast. For example, Robert Frost, his poem, *New Hampshire*. He wrote *New Hampshire*, he uses California, uses Vermont, uses some other states and landscape to write. Usually, you see the contrasts and comparisons there.

Interviewer

Do you see any difference between [Robert Frost's poetry using] contrast and comparison and the one you teach in class?

Mr. Sun

As far as the method is concerned, I don't see the difference. He is applying this method to his writing of *New Hampshire*.

It is particularly unexpected that a literature professor, and published poet himself, would not distinguish "the method" applied to comparing and contrasting such different genres as: items on a shopping list, candidates for public office in an editorial in the *Times*, or the pastoral imagery evoked in a Robert Frost poem (to say nothing of the rhythm and rhyme of the poetry itself). He seemed to be viewing different genres in a superficial manner. It would be important for an academic instructor to parse features of creative writing from academic writing in order for students to clearly know which elements to include within the domain of each. Mr. Sun continued by explaining that he would not use literature in his academic writing class. He informed me and that the academic writing course textbook, *Composition Practice*, used with his juniors focused on expository writing and made clear that expository writing was *not* academic writing:

Mr. Sun

To me, all these examples included in [*Composition Practice*] are in the category of expository writing.

Interviewer

Is expository academic writing?

Mr. Sun

No. In general, no. So I don't even have that kind of idea to teach them any kind of academic writing in this class. That's what I think. As I told you, writing, to go this way is fine, and to go this way is fine with me as well. With some subjects, there's no such thing called absolute truth in writing. As long as you choose this way, you cannot choose that way. Some people enjoy sweet and sour soup, but some people will enjoy clam chowder that kind of soup. East and West, they don't conflict as long as they are in the category of food. They are both accepted.

Several interesting issues arose in this interview exchange. The first was that Mr. Sun did not consider expository writing to be academic writing even though he understood the course textbook, which is an academic writing textbook, contained expository writing. Therefore, to Mr. Sun the inclusion of rhetorical patterns in the course textbook did not signal to him that it was an academic writing textbook. Another issue is that even while instructing students in expository writing he did not understand that he was teaching students academic writing while using such a textbook. The final explanation about the "absolute truth in writing" mirrored comments by Mr. Johnson in the way he accepted both ways to write without demonstrating an ability to distinguish features of academic writing.

It is important to mention that there are also some academic writing teachers, like Ms. Han, whose background is in English Language Teaching, who clearly defined academic writing as non-literature:

Ms. Han

In the broadest possible sense I would say academic writing is defined as the writing that's not like literature or like free writing. It is the writing you do for your courses like research ... So in that way you couldn't just write whatever you want to write.

It seems possible to conclude from comparing the backgrounds and conceptualizations of the instructors that the educational background a teacher has may explain different interpretations they have of whether literature is academic writing or not.

A final note must be added here regarding the issue of EAW as literature. During the freshman focus group with Mr. Knightly's class a topic arose and was pursued in relation to EAW as literature: whether or not *fairy tales* would be considered academic writing. *Snow White* was mentioned by one of the students as an example of a fairy tale which indicated they understood the difference between literature in general and fairy tales specifically. The issue arose because the teacher gave writing a fairy tale as one of the assignments in their academic writing class. The instructor assigning the writing of a fairy tale to university freshmen as an exercise in an academic writing class could influence EFL students within that class to interpret fairy tales as academic writing. When asked in what way a fairy tale could be considered academic writing Student 5 responded:

ST5:

Because you still have to find something or do some research for your fairy tale. And people can learn or enjoy ... if people can enjoy your story then I think it's academic writing.

Here we witness again the recurring idea that researching done for a piece of writing moves it into an academic writing conceptualization; an idea that is returned to throughout this study. The aberration here seems to be the point made about enjoyment of a story as a criterion for writing being academic. While we may all wish that were true, it is not often that we come across this idea. When asked, Student 3 concurred with Student 5:

ST3:

Yes, but it depends on the topic it chose. Like [Student 5] said if the readers can learn something or enjoy your story it can be kind of academic writing.

Except for the caveat concerning the topic, which is interesting as fairy tales seem not to have a wide range of topics, Student 3 agreed with Student 5, as did all but one – Student 4. Asked why fairy tales were not academic writing Student 4 replied:

ST4:

Because fairy tale is only telling a story, you can tell the story and she can tell the story, everyone can tell a story it's not professional, not high level ... I think professional means only some group of people can do the job.

For this student then it is the high level of professionalism being displayed by the writer which is the discerning factor in determining whether a piece of writing is academic or not. Presumably then gifted, award-winning writers of all sorts of text could be producing writing suitable for study and therefore academic writing.

4.5 English academic writing as research writing

English academic writing (EAW) has a broad continuum in the United States. As explained in earlier sections, the perception of EAW in Taiwan is being viewed through the prism of the American teaching approach and conceptualizations of academic writing (both L1 and L2 because of their relationship) because English academic writing education in Taiwan follows an American model. One indication that this is the case is that American accents are a requirement as a condition of employment in schools which is made clear through hiring notices for instructors. America is also the destination of choice for the majority of students receiving TESOL graduate degrees abroad. This is reflected in the ratio of UK to US university graduates among faculty at the Department of Applied English where this research was conducted: TESOL practitioners – UK-0, US-7; and among all faculty UK-2, US-

13. This is also true of university English departments throughout Taiwan. This can be evidenced not only in the educational background of the writing instructors and administrators in this study – of the ten instructors and two administrators participating in this research who influence the construction of EAW only two have graduate degrees from the UK – but also in the choice of US textbooks /curriculum for the EAW program. Therefore, this research focuses on the comparison of conceptualizations between the US and Taiwan to draw meaningful comparisons between the conceptualization in the originating English environment and the construction of those same conceptualizations within the target community in the target EFL environment.

The broad continuum along which US notions of academic writing are conceptualized and constructed would begin at one end with anything written in an academic environment. This would move on to compositions written in university composition classes, of which the obligatory English Composition 101 is the quintessential example. During such a course students would be expected to write the classic American 5-paragraph academic essay: one introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph, which would have them practicing the traditional rhetorical patterns such as; narration, definition, cause-effect, comparison and contrast, argumentation/persuasion, and so on. The continuum might terminate among a cluster of specific representations of academic genres, i.e., science lab reports, business marketing profiles, engineering surveys, etc. Among those academic genres would be the ‘academic research paper.’

Although the academic research paper is certainly a mixed breed as different teachers have differing requirements, as with many academic genres, there are similar elements generic to all academic research papers. A list of such elements would

include introductory paragraph, thesis, support for your thesis, body of the research paper, and conclusion. Paragraphs would have topic sentences that are themselves supported by information in the paragraph. These elements are similar to the prescriptive model of the classic 5-paragraph academic essay. There has been a vibrant dialogue on the issue of changing this prescriptive model among university academics to a more genre-based approach to academic writing (it is not the purpose of this research to engage in this dialogue, but simply to acknowledge it; see Leki, 2006 and Johns, 1997a for further discussion of this). However, although this genre-based approach has made headway toward replacing the academic essay, the pace of change is slow and for many academic writing students an expository or argumentative academic essay is still the dominant model employed in all levels of academic writing education. The dramatic changes in the academic writing classroom during the past two decades have not centered on the material but rather on the pedagogy employed with that material. The impact of the Process Approach upon EAW instruction can not be overestimated (please see section 2.1.2 above for a more complete discussion of this approach).

That the 5-paragraph academic essay and the academic research paper are similar is meant to be a pedagogical aid to teachers and a conceptualization tool for students. The academic essay is the acorn from which the mighty oak of academic research writing springs; the academic research paper is an *intentional* outgrowth of the classic academic essay. As such the entire continuum from the writing of the academic essay to the writing of the academic research paper is all viewed as academic writing in the US. However, this is not the understanding at this Taiwan university research site, as has been demonstrated in previous sections of this chapter. This has been particularly evident in the revelations surrounding the conceptualization

of EAW within the narrow parameter of being only academic research writing. This view is not only held among Taiwanese instructors teaching EAW, but is also shared by two American writing instructors who also participated as informants in this research. Perhaps one explanation for this is that they were not trained to teach EAW and had no experience teaching EAW prior to teaching in Taiwan. Paradoxically, both are themselves products of an American university education system which classifies both the academic essay and academic research paper as EAW.

The main point of this section is the narrow interpretation of the term ‘academic writing.’ At this research site the textbooks and curriculum and the pedagogical approach of instructors during the past decade since the inception of the University’s Department of Applied English has been an interpretation of that “current-traditional rhetorical method” utilized at American universities for most of the 20th and on into the 21st century. However the result has been different. Instead of a broad interpretation of the term ‘academic writing’ as is held in the EAW context of American education, the term has a narrow focus. The focus is narrow to the point where ‘academic writing’ and academic research writing are seen as being synonymous. To the point that academic writing is *only* academic research writing, as the Taiwan instructor Ms. Tai signifies:

Ms. Tai

You mean whether writing research paper is part of academic writing? Is that your question? Yes, of course. Don’t you think so? I mean, I just find your question is a little strange. I mean, I don’t know the distinction between these two actually, writing a research paper or writing an academic essay or an academic paper.

Perhaps Ms. Tai has a problem making this distinction because of the Chinese term for the English word ‘academic’ *is*, in fact, synonymous with the concept of research.

The distinction and range for interpreting what constitutes EAW became an important issue during this research study because of its implications for the construction of the idea of EAW. Such a narrow interpretation opens up possibilities for negative, unproductive divergences from the teaching of EAW as it occurs in a native English-medium environment. The cultural isolation from an English-dominant environment while attempting to replicate the EAW of native writers at an English-medium university environment can cause ‘spores’ of alien EAW to arise which are capable of developing into singular interpretations of EAW. Such interpretation can be dissimilar to and inconsistent with the EAW of the English-dominant environment.

4.5.1 The words of others

An example of the idea of EAW being constructed, how the knowledge of EAW is acquired and transferred and reacquired, the social construction journey of part of the idea of EAW might look something like the situation explicated in this section. Ms. Tai is a Taiwanese writing instructor with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from a university in the UK. Directly above she stated: “I don’t know the distinction between ... writing a research paper or writing an academic essay.” Below she discussed the writing of her thesis in the UK.

Ms. Tai

I remember that when I wrote the first job of my introduction for my doctoral thesis ... and then [my supervisor] said my chapter was too subjective. And I remember at that time, I didn’t agree with her and I said *actually that’s my own opinion*. And everything is subjective, while in other academic writing as well ... I remember that was what I said. And my supervisor answer ‘yes, you’re right. But the point I mean you got to *appear objective*; even your opinion is subjective.’ So I remember this very clearly. [emphasis in original]

Ms. Tai demonstrated belief in the validity of her own opinion clearly while learning that expressing her own subjective opinion was not an acceptable rhetorical convention. The supervisor made the point that she was to “appear objective” when writing a Ph.D. thesis. Several years after her Ph.D. experience this point is strongly reinforced by Ms. Tai during our interview when she explained academic writing rules taught to students in her class:

Ms. Tai

To sound objective, because there're all kind of evidence, examples, probably other people's opinions. And then to support your point and opinion, your writing sounds to be more objective. So this is the basic rule for academic writing.

This is the “basic rule” for your writing to be academic it must be *supported* so your writing sounds more objective. At this point, Ms. Tai seemed to believe the purpose was to have your own point but to make it sound more objective through support:

“And then to support your point and opinion.” During our interview Ms. Tai carefully explained how she wanted to make certain she taught this essential point of academic writing to students in her academic writing class as she was taught by her postgraduate research supervisor in the UK.

Following this point through during the focus group interview with her students a significant repositioning took place. The following excerpt seems to indicate one student's understanding of the importance of having his opinion supported by “other people's opinion” in order for his own opinion to sound objective.

Moderator

Okay. So do you think your class now is academic writing?

ST4

Yes, definitely. Because what I write in this semester is totally different from I wrote in the past. Because, just what [classmates] say just now, I can

not just express my own opinion. I have to write other guy's opinion to support my idea and besides to modify my opinion as an objective idea.

Here the student *seems* to grasp the teacher's concept: one has a subjective opinion but putting forth ideas in academic writing using support from outside references will reshape ("modify") the idea into a more acceptably objective idea. However, at a point a few minutes further along in the focus group interview the same student clarifies his understanding of the his term "modify."

Moderator

If you [write] all personal experience is that academic writing?

ST4

Well if I just write my own opinion without any other evidence it would not be academic writing.

Moderator

What would it be?

[the other respondents all say, "journal."]

Moderator

A journal, okay. So if you only use personal experience is that okay?

ST4

Definitely not. That's why I adapt other's article and to modify my own opinion so that I agree with their opinion.

This is a different claim from what the teacher intended students to learn and use in their academic writing. The student shifted in his thinking from the initial interpretation of supporting his idea with the opinion of others in order to sound objective to "modify my own opinion so that I agree with their opinion." His opinion went beyond modification to being reshaped around the ideas of others to be acceptable.

In the final excerpt from the same student still a bit further along in the focus group interview the teacher's concept of getting support from outside resources to support one's opinion in order to sound objective was further transformed.

ST4

I think you should put [statistical information] because, umm, specific information and be objective is the necessary fact to make an academic writing. So you can't just say we all know. How do you know we all know? We can't prove.

More worryingly here, the student referred to using resources to be objective as necessary for academic writing without a statement about having one's opinions being supported. The connection to supporting one's opinions was absent. The student seemed to be saying here that by getting information the writing will appear objective. The use of outside resources did not seem to be in support of an opinion being put forth, a personal point of view, but instead was *the way to be objective* and thereby create English academic writing. The view of the academic writer himself was not expressed. To get further clarification another student was asked:

Moderator

So your teacher this semester said academic writing equals other people's ideas? Is that correct?

ST2

At the beginning of the class she always remind us this point. Our personal opinion is *very weak*, I mean it's *really, really weak* to try to persuade others. We really need to find out some other materials to support. [emphasis in original]

It seems clear then that Ms. Tai's explanation to support one's opinion in order to appear objective has now been reconstructed into *not* using one's opinion because it is "really, really weak."

Students may be wondering if the voices of others are meant to support their own opinions or to subsume them. At times they seemed to understand fully the

teacher's intent and were able to follow her guidance; at other moments it was less clear whether they understood the position of their own voices in the creation of academic writing. The message the teacher brought from her own academic writing learning experience of having been criticized for being too subjective becomes muted. It was replaced by the students' idea to be *all* objective, to present objective information without marshaling it in support of their own opinions.

Students did not seem to grasp the concept that it was in the service of supporting *their own* ideas that outside resources came into play and objectivity was achieved. The necessity to "appear objective," which Ms. Tai learned from her supervisor, is interpreted in relation to the subjective stance of one's own point of view. In the absence of an understanding of the original idea, appearing objective became the goal instead of supporting one's opinions using references. The distinction is important because without it academic writing lacks the critical voice of a writer able to filter the alternative and sometimes conflicting views of others through one's own point of view.

The alarm in this is that students may believe that the objective representation of the ideas of others is itself the lively exchange of critical ideas of a public discourse. Certainly this would not have been the intention of the teacher of this class at the onset of instruction. Nevertheless, students seemed to be constructing significantly different ideas of academic writing than the teacher indicated during the in-depth interview for this study.

Several weeks after the in-depth interview, this topic arose again when discussing documentation for this research with Ms. Tai. At that time I brought this issue from the focus group interview – the issue of students' voice in academic writing – to her attention. She responded with her beliefs about students' voice:

Ms. Tai

Students have no opinions. I ask them to write their opinions and they write one sentence. I have to send them to the library to get opinions.

It seems natural, that the job of an academic writing instructor is to develop the ability of students to explore their own opinions and once explored to support the opinions students express. However, one of the underlying assumptions from Ms. Tai in this context that makes it different from other teachers in other contexts is that: “students have no opinions” – they must go to the library to get opinions.

In native English-medium environments it is hoped that the opinions that are read get “filtered through students own thinking” – their analytical thinking, that critical thinking skills get developed by showing students how to develop their own ideas. This is taken to be a general tenet of EAW in native English-medium environments (not to say that it is achieved), that is, developing the inner voice, and not strictly in the Expressivists sense, but in terms of critical thinking and analysis of the work of others, the ability to critique. It seems important in native English-medium environments for students to learn to develop their own interpretations of a text and not to simply copy the ideas of others when going to the library, because learning to express one’s opinion is a fundamental necessity to be a writer of EAW text, and being an educated person.

4.5.2 References

A common expression of the narrow idea that EAW is only academic research writing came through when student and teacher respondents used the word “references” to tag writing which must include the ideas of others in order for it to be “academic.” Following is an excerpt expressing this concept. One student in Mr.

Brown's senior EAW focus group summed it up nicely when asked to define academic writing:

ST8:

My opinion is similar with Student 7's – when I am writing an academic writing – and as Student 4 said, we have to add references. Now we have to add references in but only in our articles, but I think if I am writing academic writing we have to add a copy of all the references.

Here the student explained that at present adding only references in the text, the “article,” did not make it authentic academic writing, which would include “all the references,” an allusion to a list of references, or bibliography with the text.

Student 8's writing instructor, Mr. Brown, himself thought the necessity of including references to qualify a piece of writing as academic was paramount because it moved the writing from an “anecdotal, personal viewpoint” to text “an academic community expects.”

Mr. Brown

Anecdotal, personal viewpoint I generally think of as being non-academic. Because I don't think that's what an academic community expects when you write something. They expect dozens of references at the end of the chapter. If you had an article that had two references you probably wouldn't consider that academic. These may not be technically the definition of academic writing, but if you gave it to someone academic and they thumbed through it and they noticed only two references and you asked them their opinion they would probably say it wasn't too good because they hadn't read anything and they don't know anything.

Mr. Brown went so far as to quantify the number of references required for it to be academic writing at something more than two, with a guessed audience expectation of “dozens.” The quantifying of references to the exclusion of other elements in the text as a means of classification seems a superficial determinate of a text unexpected from a native academic writer with a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. That the context for this research interview was not on writing journal articles for an academic community but rather on EFL students learning to write academic writing in his class at this

Department of Applied English points to the reach he made during the discussion to bring to mind the appropriate context for an academic piece of writing. His definition of academic writing as research writing done for academic journal articles (and not necessarily all of them) underscores the chasm between writing done by his senior-level students which he believed “is in no way, shape or form academic writing” and what would need to be written by them in order for it to be considered academic writing. Perhaps one reason for not sharing a more conventional American conceptualization of EAW and its instruction is that while earning his MA in TESOL Mr. Brown did not take a course on teaching EAW, nor did he teach EAW in an American English-medium environment. When asked what determined his course content, he explained his over-reliance upon textbooks rather than an awareness of writing pedagogical theories in his reply: “I am a firm believer in making use of any textbook that I choose.”

Not all instructors of EAW find it difficult to grasp aspects of a conventional American conceptualization of EAW while teaching academic writing to EFL students in Taiwan. One teacher, who did not participate in this research because she did not teach any EAW classes the year data was collected, seemed able to pass on aspects of her American conceptualization to her students as was indicated by the response of one of her students as the student spoke about her previous EAW instructor. The teacher is a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in TESOL from an American university and a full-time member of the faculty of this Department of Applied English. Student 1 was plainly influenced by her when the teacher was her teacher the previous academic year. From the student’s point of view, the teacher seemed to adhere to a methodology for teaching and interpretation of EAW as it exists in the American English-medium environment when the teacher explained how *not*

having a bibliography, i.e. references, does not exclude the written text from being academic.

ST 1:

Because last semester we did not write a bibliography, our teacher last semester taught us to think. And we might write according to our past experience not to read other people's article but we still can write academic writing.

Beautifully put – the teacher made a point of going beyond the superficial marker of a reference and taught students to think – to use their “past experience” as a basis for writing an academic paper. Then such an interpretation can be brought to an EFL environment, but indications from this research are that it is not done often by instructors for students to construct important aspects of a native conceptualization of EAW.

The limited interpretation of academic writing as being only that which includes research that has the sources cited is an opinion echoed by another Taiwan instructor, Ms. Pai. She believes writing without research is not academic, but rather “hearsay.”

Ms. Pai

To me academic writing you use other people's examples ... Yeah, and that's not written down on the paper black and white on a piece of paper I don't think that is academic writing it's just a personal experience ... Yeah, I don't see it as academic. My definition of academic is that we are writing a thesis or dissertation we have ... we quote others' saying and we have to write down the original source, so I think that kind of writing is academic writing because there is something concrete there for you to use and these things are ... exist I know it's there it's concrete I can touch it ... but for the student who write and they use other people's experience it's that the hearsay. I don't know whether it exist or not. They are probably something students make up in order to write the essay, so I don't think it's academic.

Ms. Pai's definition was narrower than Ms. Tai's understanding of academic writing and echoed the idea that academic writing and academic research writing are synonymous. The academic writing Ms. Pai conceptualized was strictly for an

academic degree. When “we quote others’ saying” the academic writing had weight, it was “concrete,” it was actual, not imaginary. Research that used the “other people’s examples” was so important for Ms. Pai that without it she believed the writing is “probably something students make up,” and is not considered academic but “just a personal experience.” That writing without research would be conceptualized as a brand of fiction students conjure up to complete an academic essay assignment was a striking point of view. Where was the mention of the academic writing skills acquired during the process of developing an expository academic essay? Ms. Pai’s view of the nature of academic writing, where supporting evidence was a defining characteristic, limits the pedagogical context of the academic research paper to a closed set, to a self-referential construct, and in so doing nullifies the value of teaching rudimentary elements of academic writing in one swipe. Excerpts from Ms. Pai and Ms. Tai suggest these writing instructors do not possess a clear understanding of the way learning/teaching basic academic writing skills where students use personal ideas and experience would be beneficial to the writing of academic research papers. Having both grown up and been educated in an EFL environments where most likely such connections were not made for them, their own experience is being perpetuated when they are not able to make such connections clear to their students.

Teachers exposed to EAW in a foreign context could be expected to construct EAW as it has existed for them within their context. The social constructionist point of view is that one constructs reality from within the local society or context. This necessarily differs from an English-dominant, native language context, constructing EAW not as it is in the native language context but as they take it to be in the foreign language context. As time goes on they become further and further embedded with more time invested in their version of EAW as it has existed within their local social

context to the point that they may not see or understand the difference between EAW as it exists in the native context and as it exists in the EFL context. It is not that teachers can not learn aspects of native context conceptualizations of EAW; it is that they *do not* learn them. They then are convinced that what they learn is what it is in the native language context and pass this along to their students. The same could be true for the NS instructors, as Mr. Brown exemplifies. NS instructors within their local context could also learn to construct EAW as that which only has research elements. The three NS participants in this research have expressed conceptualizations of EAW different from each other and operate embedded within those constructions. When writing instructors hold narrow interpretations of the writing of texts, students may be led to fixate on superficial elements to the detriment of larger reasons for engaging in communication through the writing of academic essays, as for example, putting forth a compelling argument.

One of Ms. Tai's students reflected such a narrow interpretation when she explained that the title for an academic piece of writing must be "scholarly" or it would not be academic writing:

Donna

... the instructor Ms. Tai, she told us, about the title, academic writing should be regarding to the scholarly not an usual one so, "We Can Learn How to Make a Dumpling" in Mr. Brown's class, this kind of title is not suitable for academic writing, I guess. But in this class, Ms. Tai told us an academic writing title should be regarded as scholarly... I guess Ms. Tai is right, because academic writing is for academic purposes not a free-writing style. An academic writing should be related to certain kind of research, like we may read a lot of books to write an essay, not only write according to our own opinion ... [the teacher from the previous year] gave us handouts and it said if you would like to write something about "Go Fishing" you can not just have a title about "Go Fishing" and it should be regarding the environment about water pollution so it will be called academic writing.

Here Donna made a distinction between EAW as research and EAW as rhetorical organizational patterns – the "process" in Mr. Brown's "How to Make a Dumpling"

assignment. She saw the content as a determinant of the kind of writing. She limited her view of EAW to research which she later explained came directly from the influence of her teacher Ms. Tai.

It has long been a practice in universities within native English contexts to have students write essays to develop their academic writing skills and an appreciation for the value of their own voice in expository, argumentative, and analytical essays prior to taking on the authority required to conduct research. The research which applies here would be a reference to the work of others in support of one's position. The next research level up would have academic writing students conducting primary research where writers gather their own data from surveys, observations, interviews, etc. This progression seems logical as the increasingly challenging writing tasks make use of skills previously learned. Those skills may be organized into the syllabus of one academic writing class or over the curriculum of an entire academic writing program. One of those skills at an advanced EAW level would necessarily be the development of 'voice' through the interpretation and analysis of data. However, this has not been exhibited by the data collected at this research site in Taiwan. Participants in this research have not reported the development of their own voice; participants have consistently commented that a text would not be academic unless it has aspects of research writing.

The importance of having EFL students develop and express their own opinions clearly in a written form *before* they take on the task of integrating the thoughts of others in research has not been much valued by the writing instructors of these participants. The effect is that these students place little value on their own opinions. The expression of clear thoughts in a written form has been devalued to a "basic" writing level.

Student respondents in this research clearly believe that the academic writing of essays by them with their own opinions is not academic writing because it does not contain the ideas of others. That is, when writing an academic essay concerning their own opinions they are not engaging in academic writing because it is only their opinions: it is only when they incorporate the writing of others that writing becomes academic writing. This is a devaluing of their ideas to something other than academic writing. This topic is the focus of the section which follows.

4.5.3 Our thinking is not research and (therefore) not EAW

Student respondents in this research study believe that when the writing they were engaged in did not express their opinions, their “thinkings,” but rather mouths the ideas of others then it was academic writing. The devalued effect of this was conveyed in the following excerpt where the sophomore student concluded by uttering her own opinion:

ST3:

Last semester Mr. Ho asked us to write about: “What the Changes in the 20th Century” and for that topic we need to write very official and very academic. Except that one essay most of our essays were not academic, not academic they are all from our thinkings ... I wrote about something technology and that is just not related to my life. My life is not related to technology so I think that is far from my thinking. I can not explain anything like that so I try to find many materials from the Internet to write that topic so I think that topic is an academic topic. My thinking is not professional. They are just stupid. Just like children’s word, stupid.

The expression was clear: this is a topic far from what I am capable of thinking about so therefore it is elevated to being termed “academic” as my own thoughts are “stupid.”

Student 3’s views would seem to contrast with those of EAW teachers within native English-dominant contexts who tend to believe that research is not meant to

take place at the expense of the value of one's own ideas but in support of them. Repeating information without comprehension is not intended to pass for research. Acknowledging and developing the ideas and opinions of early academic writers leads to the incorporation of the ideas of others in support of those ideas rather than as a replacement.

Without validating the ideas of students during the process of learning to produce academic writing, the underlying skills necessary for proper research to take place don't develop. Instead the focus for what is EAW shifts to surface level indicators, leading for example to the belief that "the source of ideas" makes writing academic.

Academic writing takes place during the process of developing academic writing skills regardless of the source of ideas. Developing academic writing skills such as logical delineation of a point of argumentation, analysis, or information (expository) is an important step in the learning of academic writing. In the absence of a clear understanding of this, one must ask what is passing for the learning of academic writing. And the answer in this research study is that the narrow, limited view of academic writing is that it entails mouthing the ideas of others. This is the view expressed by teachers and students alike in the course of this research project. This is the interpretation. Teachers who have not grow up in a culture that values independent thinking and the validation of their ideas may not possess a model of academic writing that fits the model found in English-dominant native contexts.

While respondents have equated EAW with writing academic research papers, not all students have been as strict in the elimination of their own voice from writing research as Student 3 above. Two students – Students 4 and 5 – from the focus group interview with Mr. Chu's junior academic writing students, have conceptualized their

writing in terms of their own ideas needing to be supported by others: however they also believed the process of developing their own ideas in a written form is not EAW because EAW must include research. In this way the development of their own ideas was not valued, but was delegated to a lesser more basic level where they *just* learned how to develop their ideas.

Student 5 says: “In my opinion, I think academic writing requires some research, you have to go out and find some information to construct an academic writing.” Student 4 adds: “Because I think academic writing you have your own theory, and you want to prove your theory, so you need a lot of proof, and you need a lot of research and.... prove your ideas... Now in our class our teacher *just* teaches us how to make up your ideas and how to write, how to improve, or, how to prove your ideas.” The word “just” here was a signifier for the devaluation of their ideas.

Moderator:

What turns the writing you learn when your teacher is just you said: “how to make up your ideas and how to write how to improve or how to prove your ideas” into academic writing?

ST4:

Just like you need to do a survey, analyze the points, or you need to find a lot of books that write about your theory.

ST5:

You have to find lots of books, and prove your hypothesis. In this writing I don't think we have some hypothesis. We just think it in my way and I just explain why I think movies are popular.

The view that the conceptualized definition of academic writing is limited to academic *research* writing was not only propounded by students. Here by academic research writing the meaning was that the writing excluded or limited ideas generated by the academic student writer, who rather mouths the ideas of expert others. The

source for the construction of EAW as described above would naturally come from the cycle of learning that has existed and into which students are inculcated.

To understand the cycle of learning constructed at this research site, the focus shifts to ideas held by instructors and administrators. Teacher Ms. Han touched upon issues described above when she explained that EAW is “narrow” and limits “personal feelings,” –it should be pointed out that the line between feelings and opinions in a Chinese context is not impermeable but porous, allowing for easy passage between the two.

Ms. Han

I probably take a narrow view of academic writing. You take a course and write a research paper or research project for the course, something like that. You don't write your personal feelings too much ... I don't think we would put personal feelings into our research papers ... I thought before this conversation that academic writing and research writing were the same but now I have a broader view. In a research papers though I would not put my feelings. I tend to write in a more objective way. Researchers need to be cautious not to put personal comments or personal feelings into their papers even if their papers are written from a more human point of view.

It is interesting that here Ms. Han struggled with her change to a broader view, but still repeatedly explained how research should not include “personal comments or personal feelings.” For Ms. Han comments, feelings, and opinions are overlapping conceptualizations; this reflects the sentiments of Ms. Tai above: the writing of others should be the text of academic writing not the opinions of students.

4.5.4 Writing skills

The narrow conceptualization of EAW as only being academic research writing led to the question: If academic writing classes and the skills meant to be learned during them are not viewed as being connected to the research paper, then what do teachers perceive to be the purpose of EAW classes? Respondents reported

that they believed the writing students did which used academic writing skills was actually *not* academic writing unless they were doing research. Writing academic essays in an academic writing class as a means of practicing traditional rhetorical patterns and prescriptive elements of the current-traditional method often do not include the ideas of expert others. Such essays which rely upon the opinions and experiences of the writer then would become unsuitable models in this EFL context for what is conceptualized as academic writing. Student 4 from Mr. Johnson's junior EAW focus group asserted that EAW had to include the words of expert others and that writing his own opinions was not EAW but rather creative writing – even as they were engaged in learning the expository rhetorical pattern of describing in chronological order.

ST4

Um. I think that academic writing should search lots of information. Like I write [on the questionnaire for this research] a book reference or the Internet reference ... All what we are writing now is just like Student 5 said, creative writing, because it is all our own opinion and we didn't search lots of information. We just write it by ourselves, what we think, and we write it down in chronological [order].

A student in Mr. Brown's senior academic writing class concurred that learning such academic writing skills was not writing EAW:

Moderator

Student 1 do you agree with Student 5, that you are learning academic writing skills here but you are not writing academic writing?

ST1

Yes, because in my opinion I think academic writing should be research papers. That means you have to put the reference in the final part in your academic writing and in this class we write the *regular normal English writing*. [emphasis added]

A student from Mr. Sun's junior academic writing class echoed these sentiments:

ST5

Yes, I think academic writing needs to do some maybe data collection, but if that's not academic writing, that means you just ... express your own opinion, you don't need to do much research and you can write down ... they are just your opinion but if you write academic writing, because you have to do some data research, so maybe your data research will support your academic writing so when people read your academic writing, they will think the things you write is right or wrong.

Moderator:

okay. So if you were learning those skills to write academic ... if you were learning those skills, is that academic writing?

ST5:

I don't think so. I don't think it's academic writing.

The subtle tone of devaluation toward their own written opinions in the use of the word “just” in these excerpts is a bit disquieting when combined with this narrow interpretation of EAW utilizing the words of expert others. If an EFL instructor conveys an interpretation which is overly narrow then writing elements learned in pre-research academic writing courses where students are learning to shape their writing ability through academic essays may in fact not be applied to the writing of academic research writing. When the connections are not specifically drawn between the application of academic essay writing elements to academic research writing then it may be all too easy for EFL students to not make those connections themselves. Numerous students have been overheard compartmentalizing academic writing as “Teacher A’s” writing or “Teacher B’s” writing rather than academic writing, as in the example: “Which writing do you do in James’s class? Are you writing the way Michael taught us last year or doing it the way James teaches us now?”

Interpretations by teachers of writing skills being a part of academic writing needs to be analyzed. The first instructor who reported on the issue of whether composing writing assignments in which academic writing skills used to write

academic research papers was actually producing academic writing was the American teacher Mr. Johnson, the practicing lawyer / foreign language instructor / English Literature graduate student. At first, Mr. Johnson declared that the material in the course textbook was not related to writing academic research papers, but then seemed confused on the issue. He stated his belief that academic writing skills acquired in the writing of academic essays are “too small” to assist in the writing of “large” academic research papers.

Mr. Johnson

The [assigned course textbook, *Composition Practice*] in no way teaches them skills they use to write research papers ... um yeah in some ways it gives them the idea of style. Argumentation is, of course, a part of [the assigned course textbook] and it is, of course, also a part of academic research papers ... If I teach someone to use a skill in a way that is the simplified version of the skill to write five paragraphs in an argumentative way about this topic and I term it as creative writing and they write that five paragraphs then later I ask them to write an argumentative research paper of twelve pages the skills that they learned for the five-paragraph essay is not going to aid them greatly in a ten-to-twelve-page research paper because of what they did in one or two paragraphs. Arguing one point is too small, in my opinion, too small a connection to a large research paper or an academic paper that uses other resources.

He, not unlike Mr. Brown, shared his concern over quantity as he questioned the applicability of what students learned in his class by writing a five-paragraph essay to the eventual writing of a much longer argumentative text. Mr. Johnson believed “arguing one point is too small” to be of much value to students writing longer research papers. One can’t help but wonder if there are an inversely related number of points which might be considered “too big.” To be sure, the point has been made by advocates of teaching writing genres (see Swales, 1990, and Johns, 1997a, for example) that writing a generic argumentative essay may have questionable value when students are asked to compose specific academic research with a purpose for a real-world audience. However, the point Mr. Johnson made was not based upon the

benefits of teaching discourse moves for generic texts learned through discourse analysis research, but upon his superficially quantified amount.

The next teacher, Ms. Lin, is a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Translation from a university in the UK. Ms. Lin did address the relationship between generic academic essays and the teaching of specific genres. Her conceptualization of academic writing and the teaching of writing skills reflected fusion of disparate ideas. She mixed a restricted view of academic writing being only academic research writing with a wholly contemporary view of teaching specific academic genres. The teaching of specific academic genres has been debated in America during the past decade and has gained currency with some university English departments.

Ms. Lin

In my narrow sense of academic writing, you can teach different parts of academic writing in the class, including the argument as a unit and description as a unit or some other things as a unit, and they can be used in different kinds of genre, but only when they are put together in a special way in the academic writing way, they can be called as an academic writing. But in a writing class, it is impossible for teachers to teach students all the writing skills together in the class, we take steps by steps, one by one, and in the end of the semester, if the teacher would like to teach students how to write academic writing, how to use all they learned in this academic year and put all of them together in a special way with all the generic features and generic kind of discourses then I would say it's a kind of academic writing whether it is published or it would be discussed or not. But what they practiced is academic writing. So I'm trying to say that in the writing class, we do not put many skills together at least in my writing class, in the freshman writing class, I do not ask them to put different kinds of writing skills together and organize them in a special genre. So it's no way that they can be called as academic writing, even they are writing a kind of argument, a kind of text, that's are not academic writing because they are just part of it ... in my narrow sense of academic writing, I mean university students don't need to acquire the knowledge or the skills of doing research. Not all of them will use that in the future. I think academic writing is for post-graduate students.

There seemed to be continuity between Ms. Lin and student excerpts from other classes when she said “what they practiced *is* academic writing” but what was produced “no way that they can be called as academic writing.” Ms. Lin cast light

upon the experience of English majors within this Department of Applied English when she explained how university students would not need research skills. This may be true because few courses ask students to write academic research papers. Other kinds of academic genres: lab reports or marketing surveys are usually not required of English majors within EFL contexts, who write in English only within the English Department. However, they could certainly be required should English majors plan to study at the graduate level in an English-dominant context. Ms. Lin's limited view of research seems restricted to the research she has been familiar with as opposed to research conducted and written by science or business majors in an English-dominant context.

Another teacher, Mr. Sun, a native Taiwanese with an MFA in Creative Writing and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, both from American universities, explained how the textbook he was currently using for his junior academic writing class was not an academic composition textbook though students were writing academic essays using rhetorical patterns. He explained how the senior academic writing textbook "mentions academic writing" in two chapters which indicated to him that it was an academic writing textbook. When asked to clarify why he believed the junior textbook was not academic he said:

Mr. Sun

This is general, very basic to prepare the students, to pave the way for them. Those are general rules involved in writing. I would regard them as setting up a foundation. A base for them. If in the future they want to work on no matter what kind of subject, academic or commercial or whatever, these I think are basic rules to follow ... The one I am using for juniors is simple and not so complicated and detailed. The [senior academic writing textbook] is more detailed and also especially it mentions academic writing ... starts from chapter four "Introduction to Academic Research" and chapter five "Academic Written Response." Chapter four and chapter five are specially designed for academic writing, but in this book for juniors, this book doesn't specially point out academic or commercial ... so at the same time, this book

in this [junior] class, I don't have any intention to teach them academic, whereas last semester, for the senior class, I taught them how to do bibliography, MLA ... And that for the senior ones, I would even require them to include some references. I want them to search for some books on that subject. And they have to include some of references. That's part of academic, like a research paper ... But for juniors, they haven't reached that stage yet.

Mr. Sun compared the junior and senior textbooks. He noted that the junior academic writing textbook was not academic, the textbook is "general" and "very basic." This is not the description given by the author, Blanton, in the introduction (Blanton, 2001). Blanton explicitly states the textbook is for academic and professional purposes; the textbook the junior students are using instructs them on expository rhetorical patterns, as Mr. Sun has mentioned previously. It was the senior textbook, with the word academic in the title of two chapters that Mr. Sun believed was the academic text. As a NNS of English himself, Mr. Sun seemed influenced by this when he determined the senior textbook was "designed for academic writing." He did not connect the expository content of the junior book with the content in the senior book but relied on surface-level signs like the words in the title of the chapters to signal whether a textbook was academic or not. When teachers fail to make connections between relevant textbooks, students may also construct mirror conceptualizations and fail to make conceptual connections. This situation would seem further pronounced when teacher and student share a common cultural schema.

Ms. Liang, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in TESOL from an American university, was the chairperson of this Department of Applied English at the time of this interview and as such represented an administrative point of view. However, the interview went beyond administrative duties when she was asked about teaching academic writing. Ms. Liang confided that she was "not as confident [teaching academic writing] as with [her] other classes" because the student evaluation for the sole writing class she had taught was "the lowest in [her] teaching career ... because I

didn't have any previous experience in teaching writing." When she expressed her views on students acquiring academic writing skills they aligned with other faculty in the department.

Ms. Liang

In the freshman Basic Writing class they are learning basic writing skills: like describing the person's appearance, what an office is like, describe your family, what the weather is like in their country, etc. I think these will lead to academic writing. It is like preparation. When I say academic writing my idea will usually involve research in different ways. You read different articles and you summarize and contrast their different points. That is my idea of academic writing because academic writing to me is very complicated. When you do research you read a lot of articles and you summarize those ideas so this will be considered one of the academic writing skills. So if you really want to distinguish academic writing from general [writing] to me academic writing includes a lot of things but it has to have the research component. The skill of summarizing is an academic writing skill but what they create will not be academic writing because it does not lead to another [research] project; it is practice of that skill.

Ms. Liang's last sentence encapsulated her conceptualization nicely: even as students engaged in academic writing skills they are not producing academic writing, which must have a "research component." Following Ms. Liang's notion that summarizing without a research component is not producing academic writing calls into question what is produced when one summarizes an academic lecture, for example. The definition of the term "research" is also important. Often the nature of the act of summarizing would necessarily require exposure to the work of another without conducting empirical research. Would summarizing the research of others to write a literature review article also only be a practice of the skill unless empirical research is included? This narrow, locally constructed conceptualization of EAW being equated with academic research writing might have fewer implications were it not for EFL students living in an age where they must engage in EAW on a world stage. When EAW from the English environment they seek to mirror is not in accord with local

conceptualizations of EAW, the danger is of course that different resonating conceptualizations produce texts inconsistent with each other.

Inconsistency existing under such conditions in an EFL environment within the EAW conceptualization of a Taiwanese native teacher with a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from an American university was exhibited in this exchange with Mr. Chu. After an explanation of how the course academic writing textbook taught “basic writing” and that organization was definitely a part of academic writing, the interview continued:

Interviewer

So, if [the course academic writing textbook] teaches organization and organization is part of academic writing, wouldn't the teaching of organization be academic writing?

Mr. Chu

Similar but it's not the same. For academic writing you write a research paper; you need to have a thesis statement. But for basic writing class I feel students have topic sentences, thesis statement, three or five paragraphs.

The use of the term “thesis statement” twice for different classifications of writing, the first a “research paper” and the second “basic writing,” indicated Mr. Chu believed these two classifications share a common point. That they are not the same due to basic writing including “topic sentences” and having a length of “three or five paragraphs” shifts the focus toward a misconnection he seemed to suggest – a research paper might not have topic sentences and required a length of more than five paragraphs – again relying on surface-level criteria as a determinant as did Mr. Sun. This also reflected the common view expressed by both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Brown before him that the *length* of writing matters; writing a short piece is substantially different from writing longer ones. They seem to indicate that when the academic writing class content moves to students writing longer pieces the rules of the game

change. Such conclusions would have students producing academic writing inconsistent with EAW as it exists in an English environment.

Another consideration is that when EAW is seen as only writing a research paper then the connection is not being made of how to utilize information learned in earlier classes termed “basic writing.” Teachers seem to conceptualize earlier “basic writing” classes as fundamentally different from academic writing, in much the same way as they differentiate short from long pieces of writing. From this, problems connecting what students learn in the second year to what they learn in the fourth year occur. While students learn how to cite sources in the senior year academic research writing course, they may not develop a well-organized paragraph (e.g. lack a clear topic sentence) because they focus on how to cite sources correctly without understanding that developing a well-organized paragraph and citing sources correctly are both important for academic research writing.

When instructors of EAW do not make connections between academic writing skills learned at different levels it becomes more unlikely students will make such connections. Ms. Han, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in TESOL from an American university, struggled with making such connections throughout the interview conducted for this research. She began the interview with views in harmony with other respondents:

Ms. Han

Last week I asked my sophomores to write a description of a place. So they practiced the skills of writing the descriptive style essay. I don't think that's similar to how you write a research paper. So I don't think that's academic writing ... Probably not a lot of description in writing research papers. Maybe qualitative research. I have to say the studies I have done are quantitative. My sense is that I don't use a lot of description. I used description when I wrote about the methods. Something like that. But if I write the literature review I would need to probably use argumentative style. I will probably teach argumentative style to my sophomores next semester. I guess probably yes I would consider that academic.

As others have also expressed, Ms. Han did not believe she was teaching EAW when she taught students to write descriptive essays. She said she didn't "use a lot of description" when writing her own quantitative research, and then explained how she used description rhetorical patterns when writing up her own research methods. Her answer made her question whether there is a connection between descriptive essay writing and the descriptive writing used in research. Perhaps without such a connection, descriptive writing in research papers might be curtailed, to the possible detriment of the paper, because it has been deemed nonacademic. Without a grasp of how writing descriptive essays could lead to writing clearer descriptions in research papers, Ms. Han might inadvertently be creating opportunities for discordant versions of EAW to be constructed in this local EFL environment among her students.

Ms. Han's hesitant concession at the end of the passage that the argumentation rhetorical pattern would be used in writing a literature review, and therefore prompts her to "probably ... consider that academic," indicated a reevaluation. As the interview continued, her struggle to reconcile previous assumptions with new perceptions led to a repositioning of her EAW definition:

Ms. Han

I still have a fuzzy idea about what academic writing is. Before I came in here today I just thought that writing research papers would be academic writing you wrote for an academic audience. Your questions today have made me reconsider this because now I think some techniques required for writing non-research papers are also required for writing research papers. That's why I've kind of changed my definition of what academic writing is, because there are some techniques that are in common. So I would have to say that in terms of some common techniques I would then say I am teaching academic writing to my students this semester.

The questioning process during the interview caused Ms. Han to transform her conceptualization of EAW, to *reconstruct* her conceptualization of EAW to align with assumptions about the current-traditional rhetorical approach to teaching academic

writing so prominent in American academic writing pedagogy. In this excerpt she questioned her own notion of academic writing skills being separate from the writing of research papers which use those same academic writing skills. She concluded this excerpt with her ascertained belief that she was, in fact, currently teaching academic writing to her students as she had taught them the academic writing skills they would use when writing an academic research paper. This realignment of her position moves her conceptualization of EAW closer to that of the current-traditional rhetoric. And what about her students? Will Ms. Han's recently reconstructed conceptualization of EAW influence students to also reconstruct their conceptualizations?

Teachers influence students; but in what ways and to what degree is an intensely intricate puzzle. One factor could be the point in time that a teacher arrives in a student's academic career. The junior and senior students in this research study spent five years in a junior college prior to matriculating into this university. Students in a Taiwan junior college range in age from 14 to 19 years old. Many students reported that their impression of academic writing was influenced by their junior college academic writing teachers during the early stages of learning to write academic texts in English. Then what shape would that influence take? The following excerpt, where a student was asked point blank for her position of the origin of her conceptualization of EAW, demonstrates how subtle a teacher's influence can be – while indirect it may permeate a student's construction of EAW:

Moderator

Where do you get these ideas? Who says to you that academic writing is with data, with research? What makes you think this way? Did your teacher tell you this?

ST5

I don't remember that my teacher has mentioned that. But because every time when we write, we need to do the research, and the topic it seems like the

professional topic, so I need to do the research so I will think they will make me feel the kind of writing is academic writing. But I don't think my teacher had told me that, if you have to do the research, then your writing is academic writing.

From this we can understand to some degree that the term “academic writing” need not be mentioned at all by instructors (or remembered by students), nor the association with research. However, when research is all that is done within an academic writing class any other conclusion would be less likely to be arrived at by a student. When an obvious model is established, but not stated, then the obvious becomes nearly unnoticed. It is the aim of this study to try to illuminate streams of influence within the construction of EAW at this research site which have previously been undetected.

4.6 The role of textbook in constructing conceptualizations of English academic writing

This section aims to discuss the impact of the textbook on the conceptualization and construction of EAW. The textbook series is the *Composition Practice* series by Linda Lonon Blanton [please see Appendix 9 for an excerpt]. The textbook reflects Learner-centered approaches with a strong mix of the current-traditional rhetorical approach to teaching academic writing. The textbook asks students to express their individual view and to work in a community of writers to develop multiple drafts of their compositions. All the while, units are organized around central rhetorical patterns – called *composition focus* by the author – with students being asked to write definition, narration, cause and effect, argumentation essays and so on. And there are a fair amount of sentence-pattern/grammar exercises with focus on writing form as well as content. The section begins with an analysis of how the textbook was chosen.

4.6.1 Selecting the textbook

A teacher within the Department of Applied English is asked by the chairperson to assume the duties of the writing coordinator for the department. This researcher was the first writing coordinator of this Department of Applied English. The post lasted five years and might have gone on indefinitely had the opportunity to study for a Ph.D. abroad not arisen. The writing coordinator at the time of this research was a native Taiwanese teacher, Mr. Ho, with a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and TESOL from an American university. Mr. Ho became the writing coordinator at the beginning of his first year as a member of the faculty. The data gathering phase of this research took place during his second year as writing coordinator. The chairperson was Ms. Liang, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in TESOL from an American university, one of the founding members of the department with seven years' experience in the Department prior to her becoming chairperson the year this research commenced. According to Ms. Liang the duties of the writing coordinator are: "to coordinate the consistency of the classes plus to decide the teaching materials, the scoring policy, and to hold meetings to talk about the teaching issues." The following year the next chairperson, Mr. Chu, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from an American university, was also asked about the selection of the textbook. He echoed Ms. Liang's position: "I think in our department, we have a teacher [the writing coordinator] who is responsible for ... selecting textbooks for the teachers." When asked whether he checks the selection of textbooks, Mr. Chu responded, "I think in term of textbook selection, I trust the [writing] coordinator." The positions of the department chairs on who selects the textbook were unambiguous – it is the writing coordinator. Mr. Ho took an opposing position – it is the writing instructors – as he revealed the process for selecting the textbook.

Mr. Ho

Basically, it's like the publishers [publisher/distributor] will always give us a lot of sample books, and I collect as many as possible. Then we have a meeting at the beginning of a semester because I was pretty new when I first got this job ... So basically I provided all the textbooks to all the teachers who are going to teach writing. And then, they will choose. We will sit down at a meeting and eventually go through all the textbooks. So it's more like they chose the textbook and I am more like a provider that collects everything.

Whichever representation of the selection of textbook one favors – the chairpersons' representation that the selection of the textbook is part of the role of the writing coordinator or Mr. Ho's representation that the teachers select, there are numerous ways the writing coordinator could influence the selection of the textbook and could benefit from such influence as the person responsible for ordering the writing textbooks from the publisher/distributor. This is not the situation one would hope for in choosing important material for the academic writing classroom. Others have noticed and commented upon questionable relationships between faculty members and financial entities, such as publishers. One example was an email distributed to all faculty by a subsequent chair of the Department warning of the impropriety of such relationships and suggesting they desist.

When Mr. Ho was asked to comment on his own role as writing coordinator he further confused the issue by contradicting himself as he explained he viewed his role from “two angles:” designing the curriculum and choosing the textbook.

Mr. Ho

I think it's more from the curriculum design kind of side to approach this role. I mean as a coordinator. And the other thing is that from the choice of materials and textbooks. I think us, the coordinator, especially in this university, in our department, I think probably my way of understanding is, the way I see this role is, probably have to be very clear and super certain about the choice of textbooks and our curriculum design. I am more approaching from these two angles.

From this excerpt we can see that Mr. Ho did view selecting the textbook as essential to his role as writing coordinator along with designing the curriculum. Curriculum design will be discussed in the following section. However, it was now possible to pursue the matter of selecting the textbook further with Mr. Ho within his role as coordinator in terms of selecting the materials and textbooks as he discussed the criteria for selecting the textbook.

Mr. Ho

I think the number one criterion is that a lot of teachers say that our students really compete against each other so they try to choose one book that is going to be used within the same year, and every class will be using the same one. We try not to label the classes depending on their proficiency level. And the other one is that a lot of them want to have some sample essays within each unit so they can have chances to get the students to use them as a model. I think these are two main concerns. And I guess the next criterion would be for some reason our teachers, not all of them, half of them, they want the sample essays to be easier and for some reason, they don't really want to scare our writers, students who just come into our program. They want to make writing look easier. So this is one way that we are trying to choose a text that is quite easy, but maybe we will talk about the problems later about the textbook. Basically this will be the main criterion that we really had on our mind at the beginning of the semester. The next criterion is pretty much influenced by our curriculum design ... and our curriculum says that we need to have eight semesters of writing, especially for the four-year program. So it seems to me that we have to find a consistent or a long series of textbooks that carry over four years, which is quite impossible. Things that give us a very consistent way and we have a continuity in the use of textbook. That's another criterion.

In short, the criteria for selecting the textbook were: (1) select only one textbook to be used by all students within the same year to mask different writing proficiency levels among students of the same year; (2) the textbook should contain sample essays to be used as models; (3) those sample essays should be easy so as not to "scare our writers" and; (4) the textbook series should have four levels as the Department has a four-year writing program. This pragmatic line of reasoning was devoid of any theoretical approach toward teaching EAW to students. Students were considered when selecting the textbook in terms of projecting a falsely homogenous student

proficiency level which would not seem to meet their genuine needs by having sample essays below their proficiency level “to make writing look easier.” There was no discussion of textbook criteria interrelated with curriculum objectives in the writing program. Curriculum objectives were interpreted as supplying a textbook with the same amount of book levels as years of the writing program. Mr. Ho did not discuss guiding students through a program with a sound foundation in learning to write English academically or for any other purpose.

The series of books selected for the writing program, the *Composition Practice* books 1-4 by Blanton, has been used by the department since Mr. Ho became the writing coordinator in 2003. The selection of the textbook is important because it forms a central element around which the writing program is constructed. In the absence of any coherent curriculum the textbook is the only unifying element of the writing program with quasi-syllabus/curriculum status, and yet although it functions as a quasi-curriculum/syllabus, decisions regarding the textbook do not acknowledge this status by, for example, discussing which elements from the textbook would comprise the course material.

In addition, the textbook is of primary importance to the definition of the program because it is the academic purpose of the textbook which defines the program as an *academic* writing program along with the kind of English writing done within the program. It is to the role of the textbook as a quasi-syllabus/curriculum that this research turns next.

4.6.2 Textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum

To address the role of the textbook as a quasi-syllabus/curriculum in the Department’s writing program it is necessary to understand that a writing curriculum for this program does not exist. The “curriculum” is, as defined by Mr. Ho above and

again below, having a textbook with enough levels to cover the length of the writing program, which in this case is a four-year program. Four years of writing, four levels of the textbook series.

Mr. Ho

Four-year program, we will have writing in each semester and for four years, so we are looking at eight semesters of writing.

Interviewer

What's your definition of curriculum?

Mr. Ho

I would say by looking at the writing course from the beginning to the end. I am talking about the number of courses basically.

For Mr. Ho then the scope of his curriculum design amounts to counting the semesters of the writing program and furnishing a textbook series that offers enough levels "from the beginning to the end." Mr. Ho continued by explaining the writing needs assessment of the students within the Department:

Mr. Ho

I think the original design for this curriculum for our department would be thinking about the needs of students whose background are pretty much from vocational high. It's probably the reason they want them to have a lot of writing from the beginning to the end.

The writing needs of the students extend no further than giving them "a lot of writing from the beginning to the end." Pressing on a bit further, Mr. Ho responded to inquiry into the existence of an actual curriculum as it would be commonly defined by TESOL professionals as a group of related courses often within a special field of study, such as a writing program curriculum.

Interviewer

Okay so as the writing coordinator, even though you are looking at your role as writing coordinator, as primarily curriculum designer, you have never really seen the writing curriculum for our program.

Mr. Ho

No.

Interviewer

And you are not even sure if that exists.

Mr. Ho

Yes.

Interviewer

And nobody has tried to show that to you.

Mr. Ho

No.

Interviewer

Has any teacher asked you to see the curriculum?

Mr. Ho

No. Basically, a lot of them just follow the textbook.

Ms. Liang, the chairperson, echoed his “follow the textbook” comment as the way to guide not only teachers but students through the writing program.

Ms. Liang

We have no criteria for the differences between these classes. The only way we can ensure is using the textbooks to discern the different levels. We are using different levels of textbooks to determine whether this is basic or intermediate or advanced.

Since the textbook is operating as a quasi-syllabus/curriculum, Ms. Liang stressed the importance of ensuring continuity in the program by explaining that the writing coordinator spoke to each teacher concerning the use of the selected textbook or using a different textbook or material. Ms. Liang asked Mr. Ho to “make it very clear that

this is the policy of the department that choosing another textbook is not permissible.”

For Mr. Ho, making the policy known to teachers may not necessarily mean that teachers follow this policy. Mr. Ho’s explanation below contradicted Ms. Liang’s perception of control and continuity:

Mr. Ho

So somehow teachers’ autonomy is controlled at a certain level, but basically we are pretty much flexible. Teachers can do anything they want.

Interviewer

[The teacher’s autonomy] is controlled how? Through the textbook?

Mr. Ho

Only the textbook ... This year, it’s getting worse. They are still ordering new books. They just stopped calling me or contact me. I have no idea what they have been doing ... For the first year, some teachers were quite polite. When they wanted to order a new textbook, they would write me an email. But in the passing year, no. Something like this never happened.

According to Ms. Liang it was the responsibility of the chairperson to deal with a teacher who wouldn’t adhere to Departmental policy by refusing to use the textbook or by not teaching the components of the textbook.

Ms. Liang

In Taiwan’s educational context, if a teacher was not using the recommended textbook then the chairperson would have to do something. But it is good for the coordinator to make sure that the teacher knows at the beginning the right textbook to use. Using another textbook is not negotiable. If the teacher refused to use the textbook I would talk to the teacher. I am pretty sure after talking with the teacher the teacher would use the recommended textbook. I am sure that the teachers in our department would not have a problem with this. But if the teacher refused to use the recommended textbook then the next step would be to understand why he refuses. Is there a good reason? Is there anything that we have overlooked? And after these steps have been followed and if the teacher still refused then I would take certain steps like not having the teacher teach writing. Another thing is that the teacher uses the book but doesn’t really teach the components of the book. Some first year students came to me and say his writing teacher doesn’t teach any of the basic concepts of writing like a topic sentence. So I want to talk to the teacher. The student says the teacher uses the book but he doesn’t go over things in the book. So the students complain about this.

The teacher who refused to use the textbook is Mr. Knightly, the sixty-year-old instructor from the UK with a master's degree in Literature from an online university in Canada. Mr. Knightly says he carried the textbook around "for fun" but doesn't use it because it is "too boring."

Mr. Knightly

I use something from the textbook but to follow the textbook right to the letter is too boring for most people, and I say books are for reading for yourself. They are all able to read; they're able to learn something themselves from that book. I prefer to use mostly from my brain and I go, according to their needs and what they are doing wrong. Everybody is an individual. You can't find one book in this world that is gonna make everybody happy.

During the observation of Mr. Knightly's class his position on the relevance of the textbook to the teaching of EAW came into greater focus. The classroom observation took place in May, in the week following the interview with Mr. Knightly. During the observation, he was witnessed going "mostly from my brain." He began the class by holding up a local English language newspaper and pointed to a photo of Bill Gates on the front page: "Does anyone know the person on the cover?" There was no response from students. He continued, "A CD with 45,000 gigabytes. 45,000 gigabytes. He's your friend isn't he? Does it make you angry that you use everything by him?" Students look unfazed. A few students chatted quietly to the person sitting next to them. Mr. Knightly's energy sputtered. He unfolded the newspaper distributing pages to different students. He said, "I was going to talk to you about many different things today but my motorcycle broke down and all the ideas went right out of my head," to no one in particular. He reached into a leather saddlebag to retrieve a pile of papers. He returned writing assignments to students giving feedback individually to them while others found interest in a classmate or simply put their

heads down to snooze. There was no discernable lesson. There was no semblance of order or purpose.

The following week, during the focus group interview with his students, they were asked about Mr. Knightly's use of the textbook:

Moderator

Does Mr. Knightly use the textbook?

All

No.

Moderator

Never?

ST4

Not never. Twice.

ST3

At the beginning of last semester.

Moderator

Two times at the very beginning of the school year in September? After that, he has not used it.

All

Yes.

Mr. Knightly used the textbook twice in nine months. The students complained to the chairperson about this teacher hoping for a change of instructor the second semester. Nothing happened. Despite the claim by the chairperson to the contrary, Mr. Knightly was retained as a part-time instructor "teaching" the same group of students during the second semester. Mr. Knightly was never dismissed for not using the textbook, however during the final weeks of the school year Ms. Liang was forced to dismiss

him from his position for an infraction against a student – nothing related to his pedagogical practices in the classroom.

The plight of the Department in the case of Mr. Knightly points to a sense of powerlessness on the part of the administration regarding control of the writing program content through the suggested use of a textbook. The relationship balance between the authority of the administration and the autonomy of the instructors is tipped in favor of teachers simply because writing teachers are hard to come by in EFL environments, such as this one. The frustration was felt through Mr. Ho's sense of powerlessness as he explained how difficult it was to get instructors to teach academic writing.

Mr. Ho

This kind of relationship will affect a very tricky thing. Because writing has always been considered as a very hard or bad job among part-time teachers or even full-time teachers. *If they feel they are not being respected or they are harassed, they might choose not to teach writing.* And somehow it's going to give me a very hard time next time if I am going to ask or invite them to teach writing. I think this is the relationship between me and other teachers who like to teach or don't quite like to teach writing. Seriously, a lot of teachers are still trying to avoid teaching writing. [emphasis added]

Mr. Ho perceived the lack of control over what went on in the classroom as a problem, and yet he understood that to rein in the autonomy of teachers jeopardized the fragile position the administration is in needing qualified teachers or even just a 'warm body' to stand in front of students. However, others within the Department did not interpret teacher autonomy as a problem to the continuity of the writing program. The chairperson Mr. Chu's position was that it was not a problem for teachers to have autonomous goals separate from the Department as long as students "think" they are learning something. He believed the textbook was not a quasi-syllabus/curriculum but only "a supplement that writing teacher can use in class." He actually viewed having a curriculum as a *disadvantage* because:

Mr. Chu

I mean teachers have their preferred way of teaching and it's really not an easy way to force teachers what to do ... Because of they just have their perspective of how to teach writing ... Yeah, you have the goal but teacher have different ways of reaching the goal.

Interviewer

So if the teacher reaches his or her own syllabus goals, does that match the goals of the department?

Mr. Chu

Well, I don't know it's really hard to say. I never thought about this question ... I think teachers have the right to do what he or she feel comfortable teaching writing. I think we don't have the syllabus for all the teachers to follow, we don't, maybe just a reference or maybe just a suggestion, and teacher can do whatever they would like to do or whatever they believe would benefit his or her students ... No, it is not a problem for me ... I really don't know whether we can set up a list of goals for writing teachers to follow ... because there're so many things to cover in the writing class and I believe students won't improve their writing skills in such a short time, maybe for example, one semester or two semesters. And teachers, our writing teachers, just guide our students to know what their problems are in terms of writing ... what can I say ... I mean what are you going to measure student's progress in terms of what? In terms of a piece of writing? As long as students think they are making progress, then that's fine with the department.

Mr. Chu's position was a significant departure from that of Mr. Ho and Ms. Liang. He was comfortable with his hands-off approach which allowed teachers to "do whatever they would like to do." He delegated the textbook to a subordinated role as a supplement for teachers to make use of. Mr. Chu's position could be seen as bordering on irresponsibility to his role as chairperson. And yet, it is an understandable position to take when writing teachers have their autonomy and are in short supply.

4.6.3 Teacher use of textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum

In spite of the views expressed by the chairperson Mr. Chu, teachers have recognized the need to have some continuity as students move from teacher to teacher through the writing program. And teachers have relied on the textbook to act as a

quasi-syllabus/curriculum for both students and teachers alike. Teachers recognized that this need is most acute when teachers change in the midst of the school year between the fall and spring semesters. Two examples of such a mid-year teacher switch took place during the data collection phase of this research study in the 2004-5 school year. Such mid-year changes in teachers afforded the opportunity to view in microcosm the effect of the change in teachers from year to year upon students, and how well the textbook performed in the role of quasi-syllabus/curriculum.

4.6.3.1 The Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao Case

There are several causes for teachers to leave a class after only one semester. Mr. Ho reasoned that personality conflicts can mar the learning dynamic, and this he attributed to luck: “sometimes teachers have bad luck, you have a bad course, and you have bad students and you can’t really get along, and I think it’s better to separate the teacher away from the students.” However, that was not the situation in two cases that took place during the course of this research. The first case was with a freshman class; Ms. Lin, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Translation Studies from a university in the UK, was the teacher the first semester, and Mr. Mao, the retired Air Force lieutenant colonel with an MA in Literature from a local Taiwan university, was the teacher the second semester. This will be referred to as the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class. The Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class teacher switch took place because Ms. Lin’s workload increased substantially the second semester because she was assigned an administrative post:

Ms. Lin

Just administrative reason. Cause I got another administrative job, so I can’t take as many teaching hours as what I’ve done in the first semester so I decided to get rid of the writing class because it takes me a lot of efforts and time to check the compositions.

Most writing teachers could understand alleviating the heavy workload administrative duties require by choosing not to teach a writing class on top of those duties. The coordination of such a switch however could do much to smooth over difficulties students might encounter trying to adjust to differing views of EAW. The coordination of the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class was not handled with any of this in mind.

Firstly, the switch was completely unknown to the writing coordinator. No one contacted Mr. Ho who seemed genuinely surprised when asked about it during the interview: “I had no idea. If you didn’t mention that to me, I would never know for the rest of my life.” Mr. Ho believed it was important that he, as the writing coordinator of the Department, know about teachers switching classes, “especially in the middle” of the school year, so that he could assist them in discussing class content. In the absence of discussions about class content concerning possible different conceptualizations of EAW the textbook has become the locus of shared constructions of EAW. The teachers of the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class considered the textbook vital to the continuity of the course. Although Ms. Lin admitted she did not have a chance to speak to Mr. Mao about the class, she felt confident that relying on the textbook would be enough:

Ms. Lin

No, we don’t have a chance [to speak to each other]. But that’s one of the advantages of using the same textbook because I’ve taught students from unit one to unit five or six, I don’t remember, and the teacher can pick up from where I left and he will know what I taught students, and he can do something different. Teach a different unit from me.

The cavalier expression of the advantage of using the same textbook was vacant of the idea that conceptualizations of EAW expand beyond the pages of the textbook and teacher conceptualizations of EAW could be different enough to require a meeting between two teachers. During his interview, Mr. Mao confounded Ms. Lin’s position

by saying he did meet with Ms. Lin. Perhaps the meeting was so insignificant and devoid of substance as to slip Ms. Lin's mind. Mr. Mao did agree with Ms. Lin's belief that the textbook had the ability to unite the class as it acts as syllabus/curriculum; and yet he too did not recognize the possibility that their conceptualizations of EAW could be different, thus further stressing the intentionality of the textbook beyond its purpose to act as a means of unifying their differing conceptualizations of EAW.

Mr. Mao

Yes. I met her once, and I ask, first I ask for the textbook from the teacher and I asked some of the teaching methods or the teaching activity in the last semester class. And she told me a little. Mostly, she said she teach following the procedure of the textbook ... not much I think. It take ten minutes, I guess. Mostly she teach following the textbook like that ... I cared about the textbook because most students focus on textbooks. I like to follow the order, students need something clear to follow up so it's good. We just teach everything go by the book. And I always teach follow, my teaching is always following the textbook and along with some of my supplement or some of my way of teaching.

The last sentence revealed the importance of teachers discussing textbook use, especially in a department without a curriculum to guide the course. Immediately following Mr. Mao saying his "teaching is always following the textbook" he contradicted himself by admitting "along with some of my supplement or ... teaching." Supplementing the textbook would mean re-conceptualizing the textbook to align with one's individual conceptualization of EAW. Ms. Lin and Mr. Mao have vastly different histories; that such differing personal and educational histories would not affect their own conceptualizations of EAW and constructions of EAW for students seems unlikely. This difference in ideations of EAW was put to Ms. Lin during the interview:

Interviewer

Do you think your ideas about academic writing that inform your ideas of writing, are different than the ideas that Mr. Mao has about what writing is, do you think that will cause confusion in the students?

Ms. Lin

Yes. Because I think writing is a kind of time-consuming process, and students would need someone to guide them in a consistent way, to learn the most basic idea about English writing, and help them to recognize the difference between Chinese and English writing in the first place. Set up their basis for future development. If teachers do not have the same ideas, then it's like you can't construct a strong base and maybe you construct two bases that's not in the same level, I don't know, I don't think it's a good thing to change teacher in the half of term ... But that's my ideal and sometimes ideal can't go with reality ... I can't insist on my ideal in the writing class for the freshman writing class.

Ms. Lin acknowledged that teachers may not have the same ideas about EAW, but did not choose to explore the ramifications of different conceptualizations or the need to ameliorate such differences for the benefit of students. Ms. Lin was correct though – the students were confused. Students constructed different conceptualizations of EAW according to individual interpretations of different teachers who used the same textbook. To the students, Ms. Lin's class was *not* academic writing but rather “freewriting” because they could write their own ideas. Mr. Mao's class *was* academic writing because he focused heavily on the format.

ST3

I think they focus on different ways, for example, Ms. Lin, she focus on the ideas that we wrote and Mr. Mao focuses on the format about we wrote the composition.

ST4

Yes. Because Ms. Lin tell us a good writing don't... the most important thing is our ideas, and we don't have to write a lot of words. But Mr. Mao say a good composition should include at least five paragraphs ... I will think a good composition should write more or write less?

ST6

When I'm in Ms. Lin's class, I think this is English writing, so maybe I don't think that would have so much rules to follow until I go to Mr. Mao's class.

ST5

I think a little bit because this semester when I'm writing the composition, I don't know what do I write, because I don't know what kind of style or idea he want, so I just write down my own idea.

ST2

Because our teacher in high school, she just forced us focus on our grammar, and she didn't very care our thought or idea, just let our grammar go high. So when I went to the university first time, I think oh okay, this is the style of writing in the university. But this semester change again so I think very confusing.

The conceptualization of EAW was constructed differently for these students by teachers with their own individual conceptualizations of EAW. Certainly it would be difficult to attain a one-to-one correspondence between a teacher-student conceptualization, however these teachers' conceptualizations manifested in very different areas of focus in the teaching of EAW to their joint students. Students then reflected different conceptualizations of what they were learning in the different classes using the same textbook. Ms. Lin was teaching "freewriting" and Mr. Mao was teaching "academic writing." Ms. Lin focused on the ideas that they were writing and Mr. Mao focused on the format that they were following. This close examination of switching classes exposed teacher reliance on the textbook to act as a panacea to patch the gaps in continuity and to bridge differences in EAW conceptualizations, which of course no textbook can achieve. These teachers took for granted that their conceptualizations of EAW were aligned, that their assumptions about the nature of EAW were attuned, which of course they were not. These teachers, unaware such differences existed, expected the continuation of the textbook was all that was needed for an uninterrupted connection between them, which of course underestimated the complexity of the situation.

4.6.3.2 The Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun Case

There were two reasons why Ms. Pai, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Literature from an American university, did not continue with her junior academic writing class. The first reason was she had the opportunity to teach a Business Writing class because Mr. Sun, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from an American university, did not want to teach it. (In the second semester of the senior year students are given the option to continue with academic writing by taking an Academic Research Writing course or to take a Business Writing course if they prefer. Senior academic writing teachers are then re-assigned accordingly to teach either Academic Research Writing or Business Writing depending upon the number of students choosing either course. Mr. Sun was re-assigned to teach a Business Writing course.) The second reason Ms. Pai chose not to continue with her junior academic writing class was that the class was scheduled at 8:10.

Interviewer

You were already teaching [your junior academic writing] class, why didn't you just refuse to teach the [Business Writing] class and stay with your students now?

Ms. Pai

Because [the Business Writing is an] afternoon class, and I don't want to come in the morning [to the junior academic writing class]. There are two reasons. Mr. Sun didn't want to teach [Business Writing] and asked me if I can teach it, and they say that the class would be in the afternoon, so I say I okay I would accept it. I don't want to come in the morning because you know the traffic, I can't get up very early to drive here.

Switching one's academic writing class with another teacher because you decide to teach a course at a more desirable time seems to unnecessarily burden students with

the adjustment to another teacher's conceptualization of EAW. That Ms. Pai had never previously taught a Business Writing class did not seem to be a consideration.

As with the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class there is confusion with the Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun class about whether the teachers spoke to each other about their conceptualizations of EAW and how that might have affected the content of the class. For these classes, though, Mr. Ho was fully aware of the switching and claimed Ms. Pai and Mr. Sun spoke for two hours while he was present. Ms. Pai contradicted this: said she never spoke to Mr. Sun. Mr. Sun said they did speak but did not have a thorough discussion; however both teachers say discussing class issues would have been a good idea had they not been "too busy."

Interviewer

So when your [junior academic writing] students transferred to another teacher, did you talk to [Mr. Sun] about your ideas about how you taught your students?

Ms. Pai

No, he didn't ask me, and I didn't tell him.

Interviewer

Did anybody in the department suggest to you that you and Mr. Sun sit down and discuss your similarities?

Ms. Pai

No, probably we are just too busy. Yeah, but I think we should, Mr. Sun and I should talk about that before the semester began.

Ms. Pai owned that they did not meet and that they should, but she did not reveal an understanding of *why* a meeting should take place nor how such a meeting could benefit students. Mr. Sun admitted he and Ms. Pai "haven't had a thorough discussion as to details" but fully believed the textbook would seamlessly fuse his academic

writing class with hers because “I continued from where Ms. Pai stopped” in the textbook:

Mr. Sun

Basically, this class I continued from where Ms. Pai stopped, so we are using the same textbook. I haven't had a thorough discussion as to details what she did in that class, but basically she told me that we use this textbook. And the textbook, each unit has its specific target, specific grammatical rule to follow and specific method for writing ... As long as Ms. Pai followed that book, the main structure will be the same in terms of the methods involved in writing.

Mr. Sun relied on the repetitive elements built into units within the textbook for continuity between different teachers' “methods involved in writing” – a catchall term that seemed to encompass a wide range of writing pedagogy from syllabus/curriculum design to a theoretical foundation of academic writing. A concern about whether he and Ms. Pai share parallel “methods involved in writing” never surfaced. Aligning with Mr. Mao, both Ms. Pai and Mr. Sun fail to recognize that possibly different notions of EAW exist which would be an important reason for a meeting between teachers to take place. They did not grasp that they held differing conceptualizations of EAW, and so a meeting did not warrant a change in their busy schedules. When the topic of differing conceptualizations of EAW is pursued, Mr. Sun shifted responsibility to the writing coordinator:

Interviewer

When you took the students from Professor Pai, did you exchange your ideas about what academic writing is?

Mr. Sun

No, we haven't exchanged the idea of that.

Interviewer

Do you think that would be helpful?

Mr. Sun

I think this is part of the responsibility of our [writing] coordinator. At the very beginning, the coordinator may need to hold a meeting for all these teachers, but technically speaking, most of our teachers are very busy, so sometimes, they might not be able to get together at one specific moment to discuss what is academic writing and what is general writing. I think we should have done that.

Interviewer

So do you think it would help the students if professors from one semester to another semester or from one year to another year were to explain to each other their ideas of academic writing so that the students would have more consistency and continuity between semester to semester or from year to year?

Mr. Sun

I think we should do it in the future. To have a basic agreement or understanding what are the basics for writing at a certain level from those teachers, that will be good. So I think this is very important to have coordination. It is because our teachers have been too busy.

In the three years since this interview data was gathered formal meetings between teachers to discuss differences in conceptualizations of academic writing continue to be uncommon events, occurring perhaps once or twice a semester if at all. Most teachers still do not view a discussion of different conceptualizations of EAW as important, or else they simply believe themselves to be far too busy to hold such meetings.

Ms. Pai appeared to be more concerned with the time of her class than she was in leaving her own writing students to teach another class which she had neither taught before nor had the qualifications to teach. It was not surprising that she supported switching teachers after only one semester. She represented the switch as serving the students' best interest.

Interviewer

Do you think that staying with the junior class would have been more beneficial to them than to switch their teacher?

Ms. Pai

I think switch their teacher is more beneficial. Because you know each teacher has a different teaching style and I think what I can offer I keep emphasizing the structure. This is the thing I think important so I keep telling them you have to learn the structure. But Mr. Sun have a different way of teaching academic writing, and the students came to me and told me his teaching style is very very different from my teaching style. So I think that's a good thing, they can learn a different way of writing academic writing. This is not a bad thing, right? So I just encourage them you should get used to it and I think they are lucky.

Ms. Pai certainly had a point in explaining benefits to students of different pedagogical approaches to similar material. However, Ms. Pai appeared to miss the distinction between teachers who share similar or even complimentary conceptualizations of EAW while presenting their material using dissimilar pedagogical approaches and offering different conceptualizations which contradict each other and confuse students.

Interviewer

Do they like it?

Ms. Pai

I don't know. I don't ask them. They are just ... they didn't say they like it or not, they just told me that sometimes they feel confused especially right now. Mr. Sun has been telling them they must write bridge sentence they call it bridge sentence. And I've never heard of it. What is bridge sentence? So they say, when they came to me they told me they have to write bridge sentence it is the most difficult sentence they have to write. And sometimes it's hard for them. I just encourage students to try. If you don't understand go talk to Mr. Sun, he will explain it to you. And if you really don't know how to write a bridge sentence, just like you do thesis just keep practicing it. I think at the end you really can write a sentence that can be called a bridge sentence.

Ms. Pai had discovered an element of academic writing Mr. Sun taught but of which she was totally unaware: "What is a bridge sentence?" She herself did not understand what a bridge sentence was, and had not discussed this with Mr. Sun even though this discovery could have been a gateway into understanding their different conceptualizations.

Interviewer

So is that a little bit more than style? In other words, I guess what I'm saying is: Is the difference between your teaching and Mr. Sun's teaching, is it more than just style? Is it quite different rather than you are teaching the same thing, but just a different style.

Ms. Pai

I think we're teaching the same thing, but they just use different terms I guess because I never heard of bridge sentence so I don't know what is that. But when the students tell me when I teach students, the structure I just told you earlier probably I just didn't mention the position or location of the bridge sentence. I didn't tell them exactly, the place of the bridge sentence in the paragraph. But Mr. Sun seems to emphasize this bridge sentence a lot. I want to emphasize thesis a lot when students write something. So probably we just have different emphasis here. I think thesis is very important but Mr. Sun think bridge sentence is very important.

She was clear in her belief: she and Mr. Sun had the same conceptualizations of EAW although he taught a bridge sentence that she "has never heard of."

As with the bridge sentence that Mr. Sun taught, Ms. Pai taught a writing element she calls a "hook." Both the bridge and the hook came from material supplemented by the teachers and were not elements within the assigned textbook, *Composition Practice*. When students wrote the hook in their essays, Mr. Sun explained that this hook element was a part of creative writing and not meant to be used in expository writing. As a graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop he is quite familiar with elements and techniques used in creative writing.

Interviewer

And it seems that Ms. Pai asks her students to include [the hook in their writing]. When students went to your class, they included it, and you advised them not to put that in there. And so they were a little confused.

Mr. Sun

I told my students this is the writing on some specific subject. And the way we are going to write is you are doing expository writing. If you want to do something like creative to attract readers' attention, I graduated from Iowa Writer's Workshop. I know how to do creative writing. So definitely I separated this from the idea of creative writing. Some students say this would

be good. For example, they would start like this, one word and period or with an exclamation mark. I told them you are not writing a novel.

Interviewer

Did they say to you that this was a hook?

Mr. Sun

Yes, they said I am going to catch the readers' attention. I told them not until you are in the creative writing.

Interviewer

Did you know that was an idea they had gotten from Ms. Pai?

Mr. Sun

No, I didn't know that, but I changed that. I don't think that's suitable in this kind of class. Creative writing is a special category. And this is more like on the expository writing side.

Mr. Sun identified an elemental difference between his conceptualization of EAW and Ms. Pai's. She included an element he defined as being part of creative writing with which Ms. Pai as a Literature teacher would be most familiar. Mr. Sun used his familiarity with creative writing and Literature to distinguish this element as not being part of the expository writing of academic essays.

Turning to the students' position on this we can better understand the place of the hook within different genres of writing.

Moderator

Some of you have mentioned [in the pre-interview questionnaire] that Ms. Pai has this idea called a hook and you put the word hook in quotes. What is this hook?

ST4:

Maybe a question or some interesting story or something.

ST3:

Draw your attention or arouse your curiosity to see the...to read this composition.

Moderator

Is that part of academic writing? To have a hook?

ST2:

I write the hook in the Mr. Sun's class, he said no, you can't write this on it, so I think maybe it's not a part of academic writing ... he said you can use this in the novel but not academic writing. You can use that to make your composition more interesting but not in an academic writing.

Moderator

Okay. Again, what was Ms. Pai's class? Was that academic writing? She's teaching you the structure, that makes her class ... Do you think her class was academic writing?

ST5:

I'm not very sure but in Ms. Pai's class, we still do some research, data collection but it's because I'm not sure is that academic writing focus on the structure? I think the Ms. Pai's writing class is also focus the structure and we are also do the data collection or research, but maybe the topic is not so... not so professional or serious. So if I compare Ms. Pai's writing class and Mr. Sun's writing class, I was thinking Ms. Pai's writing class is not the academic class.

Moderator

And Mr. Sun's is?

ST5:

Yes, more like the academic writing class.

Moderator

Since you have had two kinds of classes in a very short period of time, Ms. Pai and Mr. Sun are quite different, are you confused about how to write your compositions? Ms. Pai says put in the hook, Mr. Sun says take out that hook, Mr. Sun says put in the bridge, Ms. Pai never says anything about the bridge ... and so is this confusing to you?

ST5:

Yes. I think so. Because when I first took Mr. Sun's class, I think it's totally different from the Ms. Pai told us and yes... we cannot use the hook anymore and when I put my hook in the first sentence, Mr. Sun will consider is this hook topic sentence? But it is not a topic sentence. And the structure, I think

the Ms. Pai doesn't so specific about the structure, because Mr. Sun in the introduction, he wants us to have the thesis statement, supporting ideas, controlling ideas, bridge, summary and concluding sentence. But I don't think I have... I don't think the Ms. Pai asked me to do the same thing in her writing class, so I will feel confused.

ST4:

I think the difference, I think the structure is similar, is that the hook and the bridge and in Ms. Pai's class, she just mentioned, just give us the suggestion about the whole article but about Mr. Sun, he will focus between sentence and sentence, and sentence some logic of sentence.

ST3:

Yes. Of course [I was confused]. And Mr. Sun has too many rules, and he would say my writing is very strange, he will think my logic is not quite good, so he will eliminate my sentence but I think what I write is not so bad, so I think he is so subjective.

ST2:

Actually I thought I don't know Ms. Pai's writing is called the academic writing so I don't feel confused. Because I think it's different writing class. So maybe Mr. Sun's class, you have to follow the rules because it's academic writing but Ms. Pai is not so serious about the writing, and I have freedom to write my composition in Ms. Pai's class. But in Mr. Sun's I think I just follow these rules.

ST1:

In the beginning in Mr. Sun's class, I feel confused. But now I feel better, I think I learned a lot about academic writing, because he asked us strictly but he also gave us how to ...how to think and how to express more details or more skills. I mean in Ms. Pai's class, I just write up whatever I thought, I think I want to talk about and I never organize it well. But in this...in Mr. Sun's class, I think I trained myself more logical and just follow his rules, and I can write the composition quickly.

As in the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao class the manifestation of the conceptualizations of EAW in the writing class led teachers to focus on different elements and the focus on the different elements revealed conceptualizations of EAW not only different from each other but different from conceptualizations of EAW in the English environment classroom. Mr. Sun, like Mr. Mao, focused on the research elements and he defined EAW as research writing. Ms. Pai like Ms. Lin seemed to focus on students getting

down their ideas freely. Essentially the difference stems from the hook/bridge confusion. Ms. Pai, the English Literature Ph.D., asked students to include an element which Mr. Sun, a Comparative Literature Ph.D., took as a creative writing element which did not belong in an EAW classroom. This demonstrates how teachers assumed the textbook smoothed over differences in conceptualizations whereas in fact those differences led to confusion and contradictions with students constructing their own conceptualization of EAW.

By acting as the quasi-syllabus/curriculum of the writing program, the textbook acquires significance beyond that originally intended. As we have seen in the cases of the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao and Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun switching of classes, issues regarding teachers' conceptualizations of EAW come into view when exploring the use of the textbook. Two issues which we will turn to at this time are the use of the textbook: teachers supplementing material to augment the textbook; and teachers' interpretations of what the textbook teaches – whether the content of the textbook is academic writing or some other form of writing.

4.6.3.3 Supplementing textbook use

Teachers claimed they follow the textbook but in fact they supplemented the textbook to align with individual conceptualizations of EAW. Ms. Han, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in TESOL from an American university, asserted, “I basically follow the topics in the textbook so I hope by the time they leave my class they will be able to write whatever topics the textbook provides.” However, during the class observation it was discovered that she had supplemented the textbook material with business material and students were writing business letters. Mr. Johnson, the American lawyer working on his Ph.D. in English Literature at a local Taiwan university, had the textbook “down pat” but chose to get “completely away from” the

textbook because it was “too simple ... it doesn’t challenge them ... one of the things I am teaching them how to do is to do MLA citations, etcetera like that.” Mr. Sun also supplemented the textbook with bibliographic material like Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Sun

Last semester, for the senior class, I taught them academic in a very heavy amount and even do something more than this book *The Process of Composition* has included. I taught them how to do bibliography, MLA, Modern Language Association style bibliography also the Indiana style of the so-call Comparative Literature. Chinese-English this kind of cross-language bibliography. And the students know, they learn these two types, but they also knew these two things are very complicated and heavy to them.

Mr. Mao’s intention was also to challenge students. When asked if the textbook was enough, he adamantly replied: “No never enough.” He wanted “to add some deeper or profound to satisfy [some students] or to make my teaching activity more alive.”

Ms. Pai supplemented the textbook with *Great Essays*, a literary book from her previous academic writing teaching assignment. She believed the model essays in the textbook “can’t be called an essay.” So she selected essays that resembled the essay genre with which she was familiar.

As all these teachers supplement the textbook they are specifying and aligning the textbook with their individual notions of EAW. Sometimes their conceptualizations of EAW become illuminated through their choice of supplementary materials as when choosing bibliographic materials to reinforce academic writing as academic research writing. Sometimes the supplementary material obscured the ideas of EAW as when a contrasting genre, such as business letters, was introduced into the academic writing class.

4.6.4 Teacher's perception of textbook content

Mr. Ho believed the textbook covered “all the major rhetoric formats” or traditional rhetorical patterns which he included in his definition of what academic writing was. He also believed that academic writing which encompassed those traditional rhetorical patterns was taught in all four years of the writing program.

Ms. Tai used the senior textbook – *The Process of Composition* – which actually uses the term “academic” in several of the chapters. She seemed to rely on this as an indicator of the content of the textbook.

Ms. Tai

Yeah ... I'll tell them what is an academic essay, like ... Just like we talked. Actually, just the thing in the textbook, it's about academic writing. Basically, just the thing in textbook.

Mr. Sun who taught seniors the first semester and then switched to juniors the second semester concurred with Ms. Tai about the senior textbook.

Mr. Sun

The Process of Composition [used for seniors] and *Composition Practice*, the one I am using for juniors, is simple and not so complicated and detailed. *The Process of Composition* is more detailed. And also especially [*The Process of Composition*] mentions academic writing. In one of the chapters, it says academic writing. Starts from chapter four, Introduction to Academic Research, and chapter five, Academic Written Response. Chapter four and chapter five are specially designed for academic writing. But in *Composition Practice* this book for juniors, this book doesn't specially point out academic or commercial. It's general because they are only junior students. They are not seniors.

These teachers, themselves EFL learners, relied on surface-level indicators to define the content of the textbook. *The Process of Composition* “mentions academic writing” so therefore it is an academic writing textbook. Mr. Sun did not connect the content of *The Process of Composition* with the content of *Composition Practice* to understand that both contain the traditional rhetorical patterns associated with teaching EAW in

native English environments. Both textbooks are considered academic writing textbooks in native English environments. Not seeing the connection between the content would mean that he did not explain connections to his students who themselves may not see the connections.

Interviewer

If the writer of the book doesn't use academic writing, then you don't think it's an academic writing book. Is that correct?

Mr. Sun

It is partly correct, but it also has to depend on what year students do you teach, right? If for the junior ones, this book *Composition Practice* is adequate, but if for the senior students, when they are thinking of going to graduate programs, then they are nearer to the academic world so this book *The Process of Composition* will be more suitable for them. That's why we choose different books, different books for different levels of students ... The one I taught last semester, it was a senior class. [The junior class] is general, very basic to prepare the students, to pave the way for them. Those are general rules involved in writing. I would regard them as setting up a foundation. A base for them. If in the future they want to work on no matter what kind of subject, academic or commercial or whatever, these I think are basic rules to follow.

Others share Mr. Sun's definition of *Composition Practice* being a "basic" textbook rather than an academic writing textbook because to them the definition of academic writing is academic *research* writing. Another teacher of junior students using the same level of *Composition Practice* as Mr. Sun is Mr. Chu, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from an American university. Mr. Chu believed *Composition Practice* was not an academic writing textbook: "I think it is basic writing. You know basic writing for students to improve their writing skill. That's all ... basic writing just basic writing." Ms. Pai, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in English Literature from an American university, taught the same junior class as Mr. Sun in the first semester. Ms. Pai focused on the quality of the essay to determine whether the textbook was an academic writing textbook. She didn't consider the model academic essays in *Composition Practice* to be academic:

Ms. Pai

Yeah. I don't think that kind of essay writing is academic ... I don't think this can be called essay because sometimes they are just ... certain articles I can not find a clear thesis. I also ask students to help me find where the thesis is because we know ... my belief is that a good essay must have a concrete clear thesis, but if sometimes I can not find a thesis, I don't think it's a well-written essay, so I don't think the article here [in *Composition Practice*] can be called essays, they are just readable articles that's all.

When the essay did not conform to her notion of an academic essay, which required a “concrete clear thesis,” then the essays were not academic. Mr. Johnson was another writing teacher of junior students who did not believe *Composition Practice* was an academic writing textbook. In an earlier section, Mr. Johnson's conceptualization that academic writing was academic *research* writing and what he was teaching to his junior students was *creative* writing was explored. His notion that *Composition Practice* was a creative writing textbook aligns with this.

Mr. Johnson

I do not feel that [the assigned course textbook *Composition Practice*] or the material that I have taught in the past are what I would term academic writing ... creative writing textbooks books like this one right here [points to the assigned course textbook *Composition Practice*] this reader, reading / writing is still going through the different styles of writing. ... The textbook in no way teaches them skills they use to write research papers. Um yeah in some ways, it gives them the idea of style [traditional rhetorical patterns] ... Argumentation is, of course, a part of [the assigned course textbook *Composition Practice*] and it is, of course, also a part of academic research papers ... But again, you know building towards something is not something. Okay. So yes of course creative writing, of course going through the grammar rules, of course learning how to spell, all builds into making a good research paper. However, you can not teach spelling and call it academic writing.

Mr. Johnson is adamant about his point: even as he conceded that *Composition Practice* has elements used in academic research papers he believed the textbook was not an academic writing textbook, but rather a *creative* writing textbook.

Ms. Lin, a native Taiwanese with a Ph.D. in Translation Studies from a university in the UK, believed that the textbook contained exercises to practice elements of academic writing. However, “that is not academic writing, because ... it’s for academic purpose but the purpose is for teaching ... academic writing can only be useful for academic research, not for teaching, not for practicing.” Within this she declared her conceptualization of EAW as academic research writing.

When asked if the textbook, *Composition Practice*, was teaching academic writing Mr. Mao moved away from calling it academic. “No, it is just a composition for students taking English as a second language.” He was also taking a literal clue from the title of the book in the use of the word “composition,” just as Mr. Sun and Ms. Tai focused on the word “academic” in the chapter titles of the senior textbook *Process of Composition*. If the book did not explicitly say “academic” in the chapter titles then the teachers, second-language learners themselves, might not have arrived at the literal meaning of words used in the text. With insufficient background in EAW it would be difficult for second-language-learner teachers to understand the subtleties of the textbook in explaining EAW to students. Hence, two different teachers could have two different interpretations of the same textbook used with the same students. The difference between teachers in the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao case was further highlighted in their personal interpretation of the textbook content. Teachers with different backgrounds may have different interpretations of what the textbook was all about, and these in turn influenced constructions of EAW for their students.

This section has revealed how the textbook serves as quasi-syllabus/curriculum, the variations of that in the actual use of the textbook, and how this use exposed different conceptualizations among teachers. Those conceptualizations then led to contradictory constructions of EAW among students.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings and analysis of the data beginning first with components of EAW – the conceptualization of what EAW *has* as it was revealed in the data. Conceptualizations of what EAW *is* followed in the sections explicating the conceptualization of EAW as ‘creative writing’ and as ‘research writing.’ The final section attempted to pull several strands of inquiry together by focusing on the role the textbook plays in constructing conceptualizations of EAW.

Chapter Five – Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the meaning and significance of the analysis in the preceding chapter, Findings and Analysis. This chapter begins with a summary of the major points mentioned in the Findings and Analysis which demonstrates variations in the conceptualizations of English academic writing (EAW) constructed at this research site – a National Science and Technology University in southern Taiwan. Those points will be contrasted with similarities and differences in the assumptions about EAW within English-dominant native contexts.

The meaning and significance of the variations between the conceptualizations of EAW at this EFL context and in NS contexts will be discussed along with reasons particular to this case study for the wide variation of contradictory and confusing conceptualizations. Lastly, a possible resolution for this EFL context will be offered.

5.2 Summary and discussion of major points

There were several major findings which emerged from the data and analyzed in the previous chapter. The first exposure was that participants in this research conceptualized EAW in terms of components, or parts, of English academic writing. Those components were categorized into two groups, representative components and organizational components. The next finding disclosed by research participants was a conceptualization which confined EAW to being synonymous with specific forms of writing: creative writing/literature and research writing. The final finding discussed in this chapter is the presentation of the role of the textbook the in construction of conceptualizations of EAW. Each of these points will now be discussed in further detail.

5.2.1 Components of EAW

The Findings and Analysis chapter sought to present the conceptualizations of EAW (English academic writing) and influences upon the construction of those conceptualizations within the EFL context of this research site, a National Technology and Science University in southern Taiwan. To reveal those conceptualizations participants of this research were asked the fundamental question: What is English academic writing (to you)? One strand of inquiry which emerged from this concerned the *components* which research participants believed were essential to a piece of writing being EAW. These components surface as conceptualizations that answer: What does EAW *have*? Two types of components were discussed in relation to this – representative components: length and vocabulary; and organizational components: rhetorical patterns, prescriptive elements, and rules.

5.2.1.1 Representative components

Length was one condition for EAW; for some respondents, the length of the text was a necessary condition for a piece of writing to be EAW. While the length of a composition being a criterion for EAW is not, to my knowledge, discussed in current literature on second language writing, two teachers and a student during this study refer to it. For example, the writing instructor Mr. Brown thought the writing needed to be longer than a paragraph/page in order to be considered EAW. So then for Mr. Brown the content, such as the topic or the academic genre, or that the text would cite references would not classify a text as academic if the length were insufficient. Specific vocabulary as an essential element for EAW developed as a tangent of inquiry in the conversation of one focus group with freshmen students. Student Yvonne stated “high-level vocabulary” was a condition of EAW on her questionnaire. She thought the writing she did in her class with the instructor Mr. Knightly was not

academic writing because “English academic writing has high-level word vocabulary.” When asked to clarify, Yvonne said: “Some word like ‘good’ is not high-level vocabulary but ... it’s ... I consider like ‘gorgeous,’ or ‘acquire’ are high-level vocabularies.” Two NNS writing instructors also expressed how the type or level of vocabulary was an essential consideration in determining whether English writing was academic or not. They believed English vocabulary is divided into either spoken vocabulary, or written, as Mr. Chu explained: “For example, we’d say you have the “obligation” to go to school everyday, I don’t think we would use “obligation” in the conversation, I think we would use “duty” or it’s your “job” to go to school, but in writing, we’ll use it.” The interpretation by both the student Yvonne and Mr. Chu seems to miss the complexity of English vocabulary usage; they reflect a point of view often expressed within this Department of English by NNSs: difficult, multi-syllabic words that are not commonly known are used in the text of academic writing. This interpretation might be mistakenly mapped onto the informal/formal divide of English. The informal/formal usage of language is influenced by many factors other than just spoken/written: audience, speaker/writer relationship with audience, public/private context and purpose, and so on. Such factors would be taken into account when deciding whether to use the complex sentence structure, avoidance of colloquial/slang language in favor of learned vocabulary characteristic of formal English or the less complex sentence structure and colloquial/slang language characteristic of informal English. However the examples cited by these respondents point to a conceptualization along a simpler divide without sensitivity to the many factors involved in usage. The word ‘good’ could be used in the text of an informal academic essay depending upon the context, the level of writer/reader, etc.; while the word ‘obligation’ could certainly be used during a conversation.

5.2.1.2 Organizational components

Components of organization, such as the organizational patterns of EAW became an important identifier of what EAW ‘represents’ for some respondents of this research. Expository rhetorical patterns used as pedagogical tools extensively in American academic writing classrooms, such as narration, description, and chronological order were synonymous with what academic writing is for some, but not all, respondents at this research site. This conceptualization was not expressed uniformly. Some respondents believed while implementing rhetorical patterns the text produced was ‘creative writing’ – a proposition reviewed below. Ms. Lin stated that the expository rhetorical patterns description and narration were “basic writing” and not academic writing; and Ms. Pai’s position is that narration is not academic writing because it is “quite superficial” and as such is merely “a warm-up activity.” The rhetorical patterns description and narration are considered academic writing according to the current-traditional rhetorical method which has classified “discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument” (Young, 1978, p. 31).

Organization can mean many things, as became evident when further clarification was provided. The clarification led to an interpretation with a wide scope, an amorphous understanding of ‘organization.’ In addition to rhetorical patterns, this notion of organization was also represented as incorporating such prescriptive elements of the pattern/product approach of teaching EAW as: introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs placed at the beginning, middle, and end of an essay, respectively; thesis statement as typically the last sentence of the introduction paragraph; topic sentences as the first sentences of the body paragraphs followed by sentences with ideas supporting the main idea of the topic sentence. Contrastive rhetoric research with its focus on different cultural rhetorical patterns suggests

implications for second language writing pedagogy similar to that of schema theory. A natural outcome of schemata differences would necessarily include cultural rhetorical variations and as such EAW teachers should be aware of how those variations affect second language students' analysis and composition of English academic texts. Therefore, EAW instructors need to make second language students aware of EAW rhetorical structures and the expectations of the English academic discourse community (Horowitz, 1986; Silva, 1990; Swales, 1990).

Students had formerly learned these prescriptive elements of academic writing but did not conceptualize them as "academic writing" until their present teacher marked them as being academic writing elements, thus influencing the construction of academic writing. The meaning of academic writing was negotiated between students and their current teachers using information obtained from previous teachers. This in turn affects the use of the prescriptive elements when engaged in academic writing tasks. The revised meaning of academic writing has become part of their new social patterns. This new meaning resonates to "sustain and support certain patterns to the exclusion of others" (Gergen, 1985, p. 268). When meanings are altered the alteration will accommodate certain action to the exclusion of others. The present teachers of these students have influenced the act of writing academic texts by co-constructing with them a new meaning of academic writing.

Prescriptive elements of the current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches, interpreted as 'rules' by Chinese EFL students, marked a particular text as academic writing. Precisely because such elements are prescriptive, the interviews of this study reveal that they are often interpreted by EFL teachers and learners alike as *rules* which govern academic writing. Writing a thesis statement in the introductory paragraph is a rule, a topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph becomes

another rule, and so on. Research participants viewed prescriptive rules governing elements within a text in much the same way grammar rules govern words within a sentence. Prescriptive elements being taken for rules underscores the misunderstanding that the learning of such elements becomes the objective when actually they are meant to be used as a guide in the service of developing ideas for communicative purposes within the text. Writing “should reflect the ultimate goal of enabling students to write whole texts which form connected, contextualized, and appropriate pieces of communication” (Hedge, 1988, p. 8.). This goal of communication is minimized with a conceptualization of prescriptive elements that stresses the ‘rules’ to be learned by EFL students who are most likely underexposed to variations in the application of prescriptive elements.

A corollary to *the presence of rules equals academic writing* would be *the absence of rules means that the writing is not academic*. This also emerged from the data when Ms. Han differentiated her graduate students’ academic research writing from her sophomore academic writing class. The graduate students conducted research which required following rules, and as she said: “I think I know the rules quite well.” On the other hand, the writing of her sophomore class she called “general writing.” She defined general writing as being able to “write whatever way you want and there doesn’t seem to be any general rules” which led her to be “unclear about what [she] should give [her sophomore students].” Ms. Han represented what she taught to sophomores as general writing absent of rules and therefore not academic writing. Another sophomore writing instructor, Mr. Mao, using the same textbook, believed he was teaching academic writing. He stated: “academic writing, okay, usually an academic should follow some kind of rule or form” and that he always asked his “students to follow the rules first.” His pedagogical approach is rule-bound

and form-focused (Raimes, 1991) which more closely aligns with the current-traditional rhetorical approach where “language and textual forms are central” (Johns, 1997a, p. 7). Ms. Han’s representation exemplifies her disconnect to the American current-traditional rhetorical approach. Mr. Mao’s representation of the writing he is teaching, which aligns more closely with the American current-traditional rhetorical approach, exemplifies his disconnect to Ms. Han his Taiwanese colleague teaching the same course to the same level of student using the same textbook. These two points of view exemplify the variance in the conceptualization of EAW within this Department. This is a theme which repeatedly emerged from the data: dissonance among colleagues as some instructors more closely align with native conceptualizations while others do not. One interesting revelation from this study was in the conceptualization by some teachers and students that the organization of information for a piece of EAW was more important than the content; organization trumped content in determining whether or not a text was EAW. As Mr. Mao stated: “focus on form first and then contents.” Here Mr. Mao echoed Reid when discussing characteristics of the pattern/product approach, “the focus is on the organizational conventions in U.S. academic prose” (1993, p. 31).

5.2.2 Confining conceptualizations of EAW

The Findings and Analysis chapter also presented another strand of inquiry which emerged from participants being asked the fundamental question: What is English academic writing (to you)? That strand suggested conceptualizations which confined EAW to being synonymous with specific forms of writing. Two types were disclosed – EAW as creative writing/literature and EAW as research writing.

5.2.2.1 EAW as creative writing/literature

The notion that the teaching academic writing rhetorical patterns and prescriptive elements was not academic but *creative* writing arose during the interview with a teacher, Mr. Johnson, an American, middle-aged lawyer and member of the faculty since pursuing a doctorate in English Literature at a local Taiwan university in 2003. In focus group interviews some of his students echoed the thought that the class was a creative writing class while others did not; for them it was an academic writing class. This section in the Findings and Analysis chapter which explained the perception that EAW was synonymous with creative writing raised several interesting issues:

Writing instructors interpreted the teaching of English academic essays using current-traditional method rhetorical patterns and prescriptive elements as teaching creative writing not academic writing. Mr. Johnson was teaching academic essays where students practiced rhetorical patterns like narration and comparison/contrast. He believed this was creative writing not academic writing because “whether it’s narration or whatever ... you’re writing something that has to do with a personal interest, or comparison and contrast, or something where you create the material just out of thin air. Creative writing.” The use of the personal recalls the view of writing as “an art, a creative act ... the self discovered and expressed” (Berlin, 1988, p. 484) suggestive of the Personal-Expressivists movement within the Learner-Centered paradigm of academic writing. However, when Elbow (1981) propounded the benefits of expressing personal feelings it was in conjunction with the freedom to write on any topic students chose in order to find and value their inner “voice” thus empowering the individual. By contrast, Mr. Johnson did not speak about empowering the individual, but explained that as the writing came from students alone it lacked

references from outside sources so he determined the writing as non-academic. Since students created “material just out of thin air” it was creative, not academic. As he revealed his criteria for good writing, he did not seem to value the personal but rather displayed a lack of credence for the creative not in keeping with tenets of the Personal-Expressivists movement. When grading academic writing Mr. Johnson said he had “criteria that are much more rigid,” but creative writing “is the kind of writing that is not in any way challenging to grade okay. None whatsoever. You can sit down and do thirty papers in thirty minutes and still have time to drink a cup of coffee.” Mr. Johnson was not the only writing instructor to view the essays written in an academic writing class in terms of a literary context. Ms. Pai, an assistant professor with a degree in English Literature who several paragraphs above had said narration was not an EAW rhetorical pattern, also claimed the narrative essay was the literary product of a creative writer offering a story to the reader. The conceptualizations of these two teachers, one a native-speaker of English and the other a non-native speaker, expose their misalignment with assumptions about conceptualizations of EAW as they exist in the native context they are attempting to inculcate in their students. They do not hold with assumptions of the current-traditional paradigm or the Personal-Expressivists movement of the learner-centered paradigm, while misappropriating elements of both. This indicates a deficiency in clarity of the understanding of fundamental assumptions about EAW as it is conceptualized in the native English context.

Writing instructors with fuzzy conceptualizations of EAW influence the construction of confusing conceptualizations of EAW for students by not clearly distinguishing the elements of academic versus creative writing. Conceptualizing academic writing as literary creative writing because it contains personal points of

view prohibits opportunities to clarify to students important elements of academic writing to improve their academic writing. Producing academic writing involves making clear judgments from having learned parameters of the genre through lucid feedback from instructors. It is vital for an academic instructor to parse features of creative writing from academic writing in order for students to clearly know which elements to include within the domain of each. The choice of language is important because, according to Burr's (2003) assumption of social constructionism, language shapes reality through social action. The dialectic between the language the instructor uses to explain students' writing and then how the action the instructor takes when forming and modeling the writing changes the perception of reality of that writing. Academic writing is no longer academic, but creative: the language and action dialectically co-constructed this misperception of their writing. Sally, one of Mr. Johnson's students, believed that as her creative writing was "it's full of personal ideas and opinions" there was no need to give feedback: "it can not be judged it's good or bad." Therefore it is not subject to criticism because "no matter the others think it's good or bad but it is how the author feels about this issue." It is exactly the lack of the ability to judge good from bad writing that has left the student exposed to criticism. Academic essays do contain a personal point of view which is then support with cogent points to persuade their audience. However, with Sally's notion that the author's feeling is the only standard she is left groping for answers as to what is "good writing."

5.2.2.2 EAW as research writing

The approaches to writing that have been most nearly demonstrated at this research site when participants defined their conceptualization of EAW have been the current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches. These approaches

typically manifest in the writing of a five-paragraph academic essay where students practice the elements of the approaches; and this has also been mentioned by research participants as an example of academic writing. The five-paragraph academic essay often leads into the production of an academic research paper. In that way, the five-paragraph academic essay may be interpreted as a pedagogical tool for the academic research paper.

These approaches have been criticized by advocates of the genre approach for limiting the types of academic writing dealt with in English composition classes to these two forms: the academic essay and the academic research paper. However, at this research site an even further limiting conceptualization was exposed: interpretation that academic writing is *only* research writing. This conceptualization does not align with the current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches and is in diametric contradiction to the tenets of the genre approach. And yet the construction of English academic writing as being synonymous with academic *research* writing repeatedly emerged throughout the data at this research site. There have been prior demonstrations of this interwoven in issues stated above. This section offers a more in-depth analysis of the matter. There were several issues surrounding the conceptualization of EAW equaling research writing. One issue was that writing the views and research of others is what makes EAW academic. The notion that without the views and research of others the writing is not academic means EAW does not become academic writing unless it conforms to a conceptualization of research writing with opinions of others, others who are experts in the topic under discussion. The alarm in this, as evidenced by interview data, was that students construct a different conceptualization, one in which the words of others are not taken in support of their own voice, but subsume their own voice. Such social practices

deprive the student of developing the authorial identity necessary to establish a point of view to refute established ideas. The importance in the development of such a voice in EFL contexts where cultural values diminish the emergence of voice has become an issue in second language writing during the last decade (Matsuda, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). From the idea that the authoritative opinions of others take precedence over the views of individual writers stems the belief, as expressed by one writing instructor, that students' ideas alone could not form the basis of an academic paper – students *must* engage in research in order for the paper to be academic because “students have no opinions.”

Another issue that arose was that without references a piece of writing is not academic. This second issue, regarding the use of references, points to the interpretation by respondents that they needed to cite references, to include parenthetical citations, for writing to be considered English academic writing. Without references it was not academic writing. Citing references within the text is a sign, a signal one receives by skimming the writing that it is academic. This is a surface-level textual feature by which unpracticed instructors or students find alleviation from the uncertainty of determining whether or not a text is academic. Mr. Brown went so far as to quantify the number of references necessary to identify a text as academic – more than two. Ms. Pai thought if there weren't references in the text that the writing was “probably something students make up.” Absent from these conceptualizations was the development of students' own ideas for communication purposes before taking on the integration of ideas from outside sources. As one Taiwanese second language learner put it in an article (Silva et al, 2003) where she explained a typical writing experience in Taiwan: “English writing was not for

students to develop their ideas or express themselves, but to provide them another opportunity to put together what they had learned in class” (pp. 100-1).

Another issue existing at this research site was expressed by students and teachers alike: a devalued belief in the opinions of students. What became clear was the idea that students believe that since the thinking they engage in is different from doing research, writing up their own thinking, their own ideas, would somehow remove their ideas from being considered academic writing. The message is: Our thinking is not research and therefore not academic writing. The implications of students not giving proper value to their own opinions is of course that they do not develop their own point of view which is so vital for the progress of the public research dialogue. This position of devaluing their own ideas kept arising even though they explained that they needed to have some ideas of their own to support. Yet the having of their own ideas did not make the text academic unless it included research. This contributes to the notion that one’s thinking alone is not valid. If one’s ideas are not valid then how far would a writer allow thinking to veer from already accepted research findings? Where do students in this academic writing program learn to originate their own ideas and support those ideas through the force of their logic without depending on the ideas of others? Where do they struggle with the expression of their ideas in order to acquire confidence in those ideas, to reach a point where the ideas of others are used in support of their own ideas? Their ideas alone do not make their writing EAW. For them, writing only becomes “academic” when the ideas of those whose opinions have been validated by society are included. They may believe that what they are learning now is preparing them for writing EAW but it is not EAW itself until they include research; it is, as one student in Ms. Han’s sophomore class pointed out, only “thinkings ... They are just stupid. Just like children’s word,

stupid.” The student’s teacher Ms. Han also discussed the inclusion of personal opinions or feelings of the writer in academic writing – it should be pointed out that the terms ‘feelings’ and ‘opinions’ in a Chinese context when discussing a writer’s expression can be synonymous. Ms. Han declared: “I probably take a narrow view of academic writing ... You don’t write your personal feelings too much ... [writers] need to be cautious not to put personal comments or personal feelings into their papers.” For Ms. Han comments, feelings, and opinions are overlapping notions and all should be excluded from academic writing, which she equates with writing research papers. The devaluing of an individual’s opinion in writing is a persistent stereotype of Chinese culture which appears here in the form of students not believing their ideas are EAW. Li (1996) asked both American and Chinese teachers about their criteria for “good writing.” One factor of good writing that teachers from these different cultures regarded with opposing views was concerning the inclusion of students’ own opinions in their writing. American teachers thought the inclusion of a writer’s unique perspective was exhibited in good writing; Chinese teachers did not express nor seemed to grasp the idea of a writer’s unique perspective in relation to what constituted good writing.

The final issue concerning the narrow conceptualization of EAW as only being research writing is the belief that the writing students are engaged in, which employs the academic writing skills learned/taught in their academic writing class, is not academic writing. The writing only became academic when students wrote academic research papers. Mr. Johnson believed writing skills learned in a five-paragraph essay were “too small” to be of much value in writing longer research texts. Ms. Lin acknowledged students were practicing academic writing skills but the writing produced “no way ... can be called as academic writing” as she believed the

writing done in an academic writing class was “just part of it ... in my narrow sense of academic writing, I mean university students don’t need to acquire the knowledge or the skills of doing research.” Because students did not proceed along the continuum toward research writing they were not producing academic writing. And Ms. Han thought students practicing writing skills such as the rhetorical pattern description in their academic essays was not a part of the academic writing pedagogy since it did not pertain to research writing.

This research argues that the conceptualization of the American current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches and their assumptions about academic writing at this EFL site do not align with those found within the American native English context. Mr. Johnson’s, Ms. Lin’s and Ms. Han’s positions that writing the five-paragraph essay format or the rhetorical patterns, such as description and narration, used to compose academic essays – features of the current-traditional rhetoric – is *not* academic writing, that academic writing is viewed as being narrowly limited to research writing, is one clear example of this misalignment with assumptions within the American native English context. To repeat an earlier caveat, it is not the purpose of this study to join in the debate of current-traditional rhetoric versus a genre-based approach to teaching academic writing. The purpose here is to draw attention to the construction of conceptualizations about EAW in this EFL context based on local assumptions about writing which differ from those in the American native English context. The American current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches have been the pedagogical choice for teaching academic writing at this EFL site since the inception of the Department of Applied English at this university in 1997.

That practicing writing skills is not doing academic writing is antithetical to the purpose of the context of an American writing class. Writing skills are practiced through the act of writing. As Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state: writing is “a set of skills which must be practiced and learned through experience” (p. 6), which comes through the writing of academic essays and is not conceptualized as discrete decontextualized skills which instantiate as academic writing when employed to write academic research papers. “Writing skills cannot emerge by dint of practice alone... the ability to compose in L1 or L2 cannot develop without a knowledge of the forms, patterns, and purposes of written language” (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998, p. 35). That knowledge is constructed when being socially engaged in the act of writing itself. Necessary connections between academic writing skills learned in pre-research academic writing courses may in fact not be applied to the writing of academic research writing; the application of academic *essay* writing elements to academic *research* writing may need to be overtly demonstrated for EFL students to make those connections for themselves. In the absence of such overt connections, students may not be utilizing the writing skills they have already acquired (Leki, 2006).

5.2.3 The role of the textbook in constructing conceptualizations of EAW

Conceptualizations of textbook material, such as whether employing the academic writing skills within the textbook yield academic writing, have been commingled throughout this discussion. This section identifies and further explores more thoroughly the findings and analysis from the previous chapter regarding issues surrounding the use and communication of the textbook material. There have been a number of conceptualizations which construct ideas of how English academic writing is viewed with regard to the textbook.

The selection of the academic writing textbook series used in the Department, the *Composition Practice* series by Linda Lonon Blanton, is itself a point of contention among administrators. Several chairpersons of the department – Ms. Liang and Mr. Chu, current and former respectively – stated that it was the obligation of the writing coordinator, Mr. Ho, to select the textbook. Mr. Ho divested himself of sole responsibility for selecting the textbook, choosing to frame it as a mutual selection between him and the writing instructors. He then abruptly contradicted himself when explaining what he believed were his most important functions as writing coordinator: “I think it’s more from the curriculum design kind of side to approach this role. I mean as a coordinator. And the other thing is that from the choice of materials and textbooks.” To further complicate selection of the textbook, Mr. Ho has detailed on several occasions how writing instructors complain about using the *Composition Practice* textbook. Theoretical underpinnings of the writing pedagogy within the textbook seem to be odds with the purpose and use writing instructors at the Department have for the textbook.

For her part, Blanton (1992) has argued for content-based, whole language teaching of language skills where content is primary and skills are secondary. This would enable reading-writing course content to “fit linguistically and content-wise into English for varied academic purposes” (p. 288). Her writing series textbook, *Composition Practice*, reflects this with each chapter focusing on a topic, such as ‘medicines derived from tropical plants’ with skills exercises arising from and in support of the reading model and writing assignment students encounter. The writing assignments for each chapter are built around practicing a single rhetorical pattern, called *composition focus* in the textbook, such as narration, process description, comparison and contrast, etc. Her belief is that “the whole language approach allows

students to become knowledgeable about something; and as their knowledge grows, vocabulary and linguistic forms grow with it ... as content expands, a context for weaving together the knowledge and insights from different sources develops” (p. 292). However, her intention may not be met by teachers and students comfortable with the current-traditional rhetorical and pattern/product approaches that focus on teaching skills. Teachers often complained to Mr. Ho that it was difficult to find the thesis statements and topic sentences in the reading models, while they found the grammar exercises useful and the familiar rhetorical patterns helpful for practicing writing skills. Previous sections of this research exposed the interpretation by teachers and students alike that EAW is equated with such prescriptive elements and rhetorical patterns.

Problems surrounding selection of the textbook led to a wide range of concerns: textbook selection criteria, the lack of any writing curriculum for the writing program, administrators and students being disgruntled over instructors not using the textbook, and instructors not understanding and not communicating different conceptualizations they held regarding the textbook. These concerns will now be discussed in turn.

The criteria Mr. Ho had for selecting the textbook was: (1) “try to choose one book that is going to be used within the same year;” (2) “[teachers] want the sample essays to be easier” to use as models so as not to “scare writers” – however, Blanton specifically presents an opposing view in *Composition Practice, Book 4* (2001, p. xi): “The readings are not presented as models for student writers to imitate,”; and(3) “we have to find a consistent or a long series of textbooks that carry over four years.” This line of reasoning for the criteria of the textbook, while pragmatic, is devoid of any theoretical approach toward teaching EAW. Students are considered when selecting

the textbook in terms of projecting a falsely homogenous student proficiency level and having easy sample essays to copy which were not meant to be copied. Before evaluating English writing textbooks, teachers should take into consideration students' educational background, expectations, and writing needs, as well as the writing program goals/objectives as laid out in the curriculum statement/syllabus and the suitability of the textbook for the particular writing program: "Equally important is a consideration of a textbook's appropriateness for use in a particular academic program or educational institution ... effective textbook selection should start with an accurate profile of the learner population and institutional requirements" (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998, pp. 86-7). In the cases where the textbook is selected for an EFL context it is often difficult to find materials and textbooks developed and designed specifically for that particular EFL context, let alone resources for evaluating EFL materials. The reality is that most (if not nearly all) materials used in EFL contexts are adapted ESL materials as the amount and quality of ESL materials far exceeds appropriate materials for a specific EFL context. Local EFL writing materials that do exist in Taiwan are usually Chinese/English translation texts of poor quality. While textbook selection in EFL contexts is challenging, Mr. Ho could have discussed factoring into the selection of the textbook the syllabus/curriculum objectives. In the absence of those objectives his textbook criteria seem to lack depth. There was no reference to the content-based, whole language approach Blanton spoke about. When asked specifically for his definition of the writing curriculum, Mr. Ho answered: "I would say by looking at the writing course from the beginning to the end. I am talking about the number of courses basically." Curriculum objectives are supplying a textbook with the same amount of levels as years of the writing program. In his

writing curriculum Mr. Ho did not discuss learning to write English for an academic purpose or any other purpose.

The selection of the textbook is extremely important due to the quasi-syllabus/curriculum status the textbook has. It is the academic purpose of this textbook in its role as quasi-syllabus/curriculum which defines the writing program as an *academic* writing program. The textbook is so vital in setting the syllabus for academic writing classes because, in fact, no curriculum for the writing program exists at this Department. As Mr. Ho revealed when asked if writing instructors inquired about the writing curriculum in the Department: “No. Basically, a lot of them just follow the textbook.” A syllabus would supply a clear direction in the course for teachers to assume responsibility and accountability (Cross, 1991; Richards, 1990). The absence of such a syllabus or curriculum that could provide teachers with a clear set of classroom objectives sets up a tension in the Department between administrators and teachers, and even among administrators. Administrators believe it is important for writing instructors to “follow the textbook” for the writing program to have a semblance of continuity and cohesion, while evidence points to teachers certainly *not* following the textbook as a syllabus because they have a high level of autonomy. When discussing teacher autonomy, Mr. Ho pointed out, “Teachers can do anything they want.” Another administrator, a former chairperson of the Department, Mr. Chu, did not believe teachers with separate autonomous goals presented a problem even as he admitted it was not feasible to expect the administration to control teacher autonomy: “it’s really not an easy way to force teachers what to do.” Mr. Chu’s position was that the textbook should not play a central role in the writing program; it should be looked upon as merely a supplement for teachers. He was comfortable with the resulting hodgepodge of approaches as he echoed Mr. Ho’s comment when he

stated that the “teacher can do whatever they would like to do.” This tension between the administration’s edict to teachers to “follow the textbook” and teacher autonomy naturally affected the students in the classroom. For as Grabe and Kaplan point out: “Responsibility for what happens in the classroom must be shared with the institution within which the teacher functions and the system is embedded” (1996, p. 255). This system did not work to fulfill the needs of the students. Students did not agree with Mr. Chu’s notion that it was fine for teachers to whirl in autonomous worlds of their own making with no awareness of students’ previous academic writing instruction.

Among teachers there were reports of contradictory use of the textbook; some teachers followed the textbook but heavily supplemented it while others refused to make use of it. Data revealed the complexity of textbook use as teachers themselves tacitly disagreed with Mr. Chu through their overdependence on the textbook to act as a unifying force when they switched students in the middle of the school year. And yet these same teachers supplemented the textbook to conform to characteristically individual conceptualizations of EAW thus fragmenting its conceptualization to confused students. To better understand the complexity of the situation and the role the textbook played in constructing conceptualizations of EAW, the positions of instructors and students in two cases were examined: the Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao Case and the Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun Case [please refer to sections 4.6.3.1 and 4.6.3.2 for more details]. In both cases, the students of the academic writing class switched teachers in the middle of the school year. This is not unheard of, but certainly is not the norm. Both cases provided an opportunity to view up close the transition from one teacher to another which usually occurs between school years and not semesters. In both cases there was little to no communication between teachers.

Teachers should embrace the opportunity to discuss different conceptualizations of EAW for the betterment of students' comprehension of elements within EAW. Such coordination however would necessarily require sensitivity to possible different conceptualizations between teachers which could in turn affect students. Having teachers discuss their conceptualizations of EAW and how those conceptualizations affect their approach to teaching EAW prior to the switch would be one way to display sensitivity to such issues. Rather, these instructors relied upon the textbook to communicate their conceptualizations about EAW to the teacher who followed. As Mr. Sun clearly explained: "I continued from where Ms. Pai stopped, so we are using the same textbook ... As long as Ms. Pai followed that book, the main structure will be the same in terms of the methods involved in writing." This did not take place. Ms. Pai supplemented the textbook by teaching an element of writing called a "hook." Mr. Sun supplemented the textbook when he taught students to write something he called a "bridge." Students reported they were rather confused by the whole thing. As one student commented: "I write the hook in the Mr. Sun's class, he said no, you can't write this on it, so I think maybe it's not a part of academic writing."

Teachers had the impression that they shared the same conceptualization of EAW. They viewed the textbook as a cultural artifact containing the native-English conceptualizations of EAW necessary for students to learn in order to write EAW; and they believed their analogous conceptualizations were translated seamlessly to the next teacher through the textbook. The Ms. Lin>Mr. Mao Case and the Ms. Pai>Mr. Sun Case have demonstrated that teachers do not recognize and therefore do not acknowledge conceptualizations of EAW they hold which vary from each other and are divergent strands of EAW that differ from conceptualizations in native-English

contexts. These cases are meant to bring together within the context of this particular EFL site the practices of the writing program with a sense of the participants who influence the co-construction of conceptualizations of EAW for students.

This divergence of co-constructing was examined further by inquiring into how instructors viewed the material in the textbook. Mr. Johnson believes the textbook material is creative writing. Mr. Sun calls the same material basic writing. Mr. Chu concurs with Mr. Sun while Ms. Pai simply believes it is not academic because it does not conform to her ideas of academic writing. Ms. Lin believes that the purpose of the textbook is academic, however, because it is used as a pedagogical tool it is not academic writing: “academic writing can only be useful for academic research, not for teaching, not for practicing.” Mr. Mao, who believes second language students should be using the same material as NSs, did not think it was an academic writing textbook: “No, it is just a composition for students taking English as a second language.” The conclusion from what these writing instructors have said and what has emerged from this study is that at this research site there exists a wide variance in conceptualizations of EAW. Findings from across the writing program indicate that teachers do not share a coherent approach to teaching writing and yet have the understanding that they are conforming to a standardized conception of EAW, which influences the construction of fragmented notions of EAW for students. Reid sums up nicely the need to integrate elements of the entire writing program into a clear conceptualization that should be communicated to students.

If the ESL writing class is one of a series in a writing program, it is necessary to know not only the performance objectives for the single course but also the overall goals for the writing program and the objectives for the other classes. ... Such an overview allows the teacher a clear vision and direction; the teacher must then communicate that vision and direction to the students. (1993, p. 73)

This section of the Discussion and Conclusion chapter has summarized major points mentioned in the Findings and Analysis chapter which demonstrated variations in the conceptualizations of English academic writing constructed at this research site. Those points were contrasted with similarities and differences in the assumptions about EAW within English-dominant native contexts. A wide range of the EAW conceptualizations constructed were revealed to exist at this research site indicating a lack of a unified, coherent set of assumptions about EAW. The meaning and significance of this variation between the conceptualizations of EAW in this EFL context and those in NS contexts is that it is taken for granted that EAW as constructed in EFL contexts would reflect similar assumptions about EAW as those constructed in NS contexts. One common misconception often expressed at this research site is that it is expected that anyone who has a PhD has a sound conceptualization of EAW by virtue of having completed the writing of their thesis. Evidence from this study indicates that this is not the case within this EFL research context. Burr (2003) notes that as knowledge is socially constructed and not static information waiting to be revealed, that the world can not be perceived objectively, then taken-for-granted knowledge is an essential area for research. It is through examining the language used within social relations that relevant meanings about the world become known.

As this research has revealed, the relevant meaning of the lack of an understanding about different conceptualizations of EAW not being acknowledged at this research site is that what *is* constructed at this EFL context seem to be contradictory and confusing conceptualizations of EAW. While in English-dominant native contexts the assumptions are not wholly unified, there is at least the opportunity for an understanding as to what is being disagreed upon. At this research

site the assumption is that all instructors reflect mutual conceptualizations and those conceptualizations mirror the English-dominant native context assumptions.

Indications from this study point to this not being the case because students in this context have found it difficult to construct conceptualizations of EAW that reflect the assumptions about EAW constructed in English-dominant native contexts. Students have found it difficult to construct a consistent conceptualization within this site whether or not that conceptualization reflected native EAW conceptualization. The impact and implications of this are that students demonstrate a lack of understanding as they construct fragmented and fractured conceptualizations of EAW which hinder their attempts to comprehend and produce EAW. By inheriting misconceptions of EAW, students become part of a self-perpetuating cycle which includes teachers who have returned from graduate programs abroad still having fuzzy conceptualizations of EAW. In fact, some of the problems affecting EFL learners may actually arise in ESL contexts while graduate students are earning their advanced degrees. When graduate students are learning the field of English Language Teaching, either in MA or PhD programs, they often are not given enough feedback on their writing to improve it. When they return from abroad to teach EAW in their native country they may not be equipped to teach EAW or conduct research in English. This research has thus highlighted practical issues as well as the more abstract issues of EAW as constructed in an EFL context being a social construct different from EAW as constructed in a native context.

5.3 Future directions

This Discussion section now turns to possible future directions applicable to this specific research site. Firstly, in order to understand the future direction, an analysis of one perspective of how this Department might be viewed will be offered.

Secondly, the need to establish a genuine thriving ‘community of practice’ (CofP) at this local EFL context as an aid to ameliorate disconnections and misconceptions among members of this CofP within this EFL environment is explored. Finally, a consideration of the question as to whether or not EAP is the appropriate fit for this particular EFL context.

5.3.1 Emerging discipline

An explanation for the wide range of contradictory and confusing conceptualizations of EAW within the Department is its representation of an emerging discipline. This Department is called a Department of *Applied* English (DAE), a name perhaps unique to Taiwan but certainly reflecting practices shared with EFL English departments globally. The idea of Applied English as an emerging discipline led to the use of ideas in *Academic Tribes and Territories* by Becher and Trowler (2001), as a framework to explore what it means to become a discipline. This study has explored the conceptualizations and understandings surrounding EAW (as part of the discipline of EAP) as conceptualized by students, teachers, and administrators at this Department by asking the question “What is EAW?” Through this examination, ruptures have surfaced within the EAW program which reveal the very nature of the Department itself. At this point it would serve to give some background as to the specific nature of this Department and its creation and how it might be viewed as an emerging discipline.

The Department that has been the site of this study being a Department of *Applied* English and departments similarly named at the vocational high school level were created during the past decade with the concurrent formation of National Science & Technology Universities (NSTU). The DAE that was the focus of this research was formed in 1997 with its two-year junior college student program, with

the four-year vocational student program beginning in 2003. The creation of DAE has given vocational high school students the opportunity to attend universities. Because of standards set by and applied through the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) vocational high school students previously would only rarely attain examination scores high enough to be accepted into national or private universities (collectively referred to as “traditional” universities). That the Ministry of Education (MOE) chose not to create new DAEs at *traditional* universities but rather at National *Technology* Universities is indicative of the status of Applied English as a discipline (Becher & Trowler, 2001). English departments at traditional universities enjoy a higher status because their students receive much higher scores on the JCEE (as did their professors years before) in order to be admitted. English *literature*, which enjoys higher status at many universities worldwide, is the focus of English departments at traditional universities, not English *language* skills which are paid scant attention.

It was in response to what Becher and Trowler (2001) conceive of as ‘the wider context,’ in this case market demand, that the powerful MOE stepped in and created a second-tier national university system – the newly formed National Science and Technology Universities – as the home of these new “Applied” English departments. And the MOE tapped the underused human resource of vocational high school and junior college students to populate desks at NSTUs to fill a language gap. Market forces drove the decision to create DAEs into a separate discipline with their emphasis on English language skills due to disciplines becoming increasingly tied to the economy (Henkel, 1987) and the Departments of English at traditional universities were not meeting the language needs of students entering the workforce in Taiwan.

Creating Departments of Applied English fits what Clark (1996) believes is an important indicator of growth in higher education in the last decade: the restructuring

of disciplines into sub-disciplines. The formation of DAEs can be seen as a sub-division not of the English departments at traditional universities but of the notion of “English.” It could be viewed that there are now two sub-disciplines of English: the literature-based brand of English found in English departments at traditional universities and the newly formed language-based English found in Applied English departments at NSTUs. The cleaving of Applied English from English to form two sub-disciplines of English could be viewed in much the same way the African elephant and the Asian elephant are both sub-species of the “elephant.” However, it may not necessarily be all there is to the matter. Creating a new discipline may “depend on the extent to which leading academic institutions recognize the hiving off in terms of their organizational structures” (Becher & Trowler, 2001 p. 41). By creating a new tier of technology universities, the MOE seems to have ensured the recognition of DAEs by removing them from the organizational structure of traditional universities and housing them within their own separate university system. This in effect creates a new organizational structure at a lower level so that the prestige of English departments at traditional universities is unaffected by a DAE whose formation might have been resisted. And yet while the uniqueness of DAEs is that they emerged from literature-based English departments to become departments in their own right, “it does not follow that every department represents a discipline” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 41).

Forming a DAE from the curriculum of a traditional literature-based English Department creates a vacuum which if the right ingredients exist could grow to represent a discipline. To fill the vacuum, language skills courses and TESOL/ELT courses are usually part of the curriculum at DAEs but the curriculum is by no means standardized at DAEs throughout Taiwan. At this particular moment, the ever fluid

curriculum within the DAE which has been the site of this research aligns with several different disciplines. Some of the language skills classes at this DAE have content which reflects academic purposes and as such are reflective of EAP courses; the writing program is one. However, other language skills classes are not academically driven but have as their objective to develop language skills for general purposes. In addition to the foundational language skills courses required for all students, there are three tracks of which students choose one as their focus: TESOL/ELT, English Literature, and Translation & Interpretation. With all this variation in the curriculum this Department of Applied English is an amalgamation of prefabricated approaches for what it means to teach English to NNS students in their home context: the teaching of some language skills are grounded in EAP approaches, some not; the tracks represent three different disciplines, some which may very well be career choices for students, and some which are definitely not.

Becher and Trowler (2001 p.41) list four criteria for determining whether a department may be considered a discipline: “international currency is an important criterion, as is a general though not sharply defined set of notions of academic credibility, intellectual substance, and appropriateness of subject matter.” According to these criteria the Department of Applied English at this research site should not be considered a fully-fledged academic discipline. Rather the wide variances in curriculum content could signal the early stages of an *emerging* discipline. And specific to the writing program, the wide range of EAW conceptualizations – whether the course content is academic writing or ‘basic’ writing or ‘creative’ writing or some other form of English writing - suggests interpretations reflecting the variety of faculty necessary in a department with such a wide and varied curriculum. The writing program itself has had a clear focus as an *academic* writing program. From

the creation of this Department the writing program has been developed along the lines of writing programs for university ESL students in the US. This has been reinforced through the selection of textbooks which have all been American writing textbooks for ESL students commonly found at North American university language centers/institutes. By and large, writing assignments within the writing program of this DAE have focused on the English academic essays which are also common to North American university language centers/institutes. So then, the course content, the textbook, the assignments, taken together constitute an academic writing program the content of which would be at home at most university language centers/institutes on campuses throughout North America. As such the writing program aligns with an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing program.

This study has had as its focus the current configuration of writing courses within the writing program, i.e., an academic approach to English writing, since dominant indicators at this research site point to an attempt to recreate at this EFL location an EAP program similar to those found within ESL institutes, centers, and university courses found on the campuses of many North American universities. However, this research shows this goal had not been achieved. Aligning the writing program in this EFL context through its EAP curriculum with the international discipline of EAP would assist this Department within this still emerging discipline toward a more solid direction in terms of EAW, and toward meeting Becher and Trowler's criteria for a full-fledged discipline. Applied English could be on the road toward becoming a fully-fledged discipline in its own right through such an alignment – and the term 'alignment' is key. Applied English is aligned with, but not subsumed by the EAP academic community. Applied English needs to develop organically in relation to the landscape of its context. However, through their

relationship with EAP, the practitioners within this DAE writing program can marry their unique requirements to an international academic community of practice. The benefits to this DAE and its writing program of connecting to EAP's international academic community of practice is to foster within the writing program a more coherent set of assumptions about EAW that would reflect those of NS contexts. The content of the writing program indicates that this is its present goal. However, this research has revealed that a confusing and contradictory set of assumptions exist in reality. It is to the concept of Community of Practice (CofP) that we next turn to better understand how aligning with an EAP CofP can assist this writing program in its goal.

5.3.2 Community of practice

A further view of the wide range of contradictory and confusing conceptualizations of EAW in this DAE reveals that the discipline of EAP as it currently exists at this research site does not show evidence of having developed a CofP. Such a CofP could work to codify foundational conceptualizations of EAP and guide local EFL assumptions about EAW toward those similar to those which exist in NS contexts.

Firstly, it is important to review the origin of the term "Community of Practice" to give some focus to the discussion. CofP is a concept conceived first by Lave & Wenger (1991) and then further developed by Wenger (1998) as a tool for better understanding traditional models of learning. The conceptual framework of CofP was applied to a model of learning very much like an apprenticeship. For Wenger (1998, p. 76) there are three important elements of a CofP: mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise, and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time. These elements reveal an origin from a learning

model based on apprenticeship. However, the value in the concept of CofP is in its applicability to other fields.

Mutual engagement occurs within the EAP academic CofP on many levels: in the classroom with students, informal collegial discussions over a cup of coffee, presenting papers at international conferences, publishing in peer-reviewed international journals. Mutual engagement in an international discipline like EAP requires such engagements to be carried out contemporaneously and continually. The *enterprise* of EAP is naturally the ways in which to teach academic English. The *joint negotiation* is carried out through the mutual engagement with colleagues and also one would imagine within the mind of the teacher navigating through a lesson. The *shared resources* EAP practitioners draw upon are the knowledge from years of experience which add to the cumulative knowledge within the field, benefiting the academic community and adding to one's reputation.

A common example of mutual engagement occurring within a CofP in linguistics are the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) found within language teaching organizations. In particular, both IATEFL and TESOL have ESP SIGs where professionals get together to talk about issues concerning English learning for specific purposes. The IATEFL ESP SIG seems to be quite well established and it has created its own website to provide information to its members. On this website, it further explains that the IATEFL ESP SIG's aim is: "To encourage professional development and the exchange of ideas among ESP Practitioners of all kinds throughout the ELT world" (para. 2, "ESP SIG," n.d.). The website also explains members have such benefits as a newsletter, an annual conference and symposium, and so on. All these suggest excellent ways for professionals in the field to communicate with each other to share their expertise and ideas. As the TESOL ESP website explains quite well,

some examples of primary goals of ESP SIG are to “encourage the sharing of expertise and specialized curricula among ESP practitioners,” and “foster communication between ESP researchers and practitioners” (para. 3, “TESOL ESP,” n.d.). In the UK there is The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) founded in 1972. Organizations like BALEAP provide substantial support for language teachers to gather ideas on developing an English curriculum of higher quality to suit students’ needs. Such organizations offer much in the way of published resources.

Two examples of published resources are the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* whose website explains that “*The Journal of English for Academic Purposes* provides a forum for the dissemination of information and views which enables practitioners of and researchers in EAP to keep current with developments in their field and to contribute to its continued updating” (para. 5, “Journal of EAP,” n.d.); and the journal *English for Specific Purposes*. According to the website description, “*English For Specific Purposes* is an international peer-reviewed journal that welcomes submissions from across the world. Authors are encouraged to submit articles and research/discussion notes on topics relevant to the teaching and learning of discourse for specific communities: academic, occupational, or otherwise specialized” (para. 11, “ESP,” n.d.). Such journals are certainly beneficial to practitioners to cumulate knowledge and expertise within the field.

By contrast the DAE which has been the site of this research does not display these elements critical to a CofP. To explore possible causes for this situation, some degree of analysis of the character of the DAE is required. As the character of any academic department is to a large part determined by the cultural context in which it exists, it is first necessary to have an understanding of what it means to be a member

of the faculty at a national university within the Chinese context. The position of professor within this culturally Chinese context carries certain expectations. First and foremost is job security; a professorship at a National University in Taiwan from the very first day of employment is a job-for-life position providing an “iron rice bowl” for the length of employment and a comfortable pension for life. As such, professors at this NSTU have a degree of autonomy that may be envied by most professors in the West. Their motivation is in large part driven by their own ambition, not prodded by administrative evaluation committees. There are no peer review committees evaluating teacher productivity, vested with the power to significantly influence teachers. Therefore, researching and publishing pressure is minimal. As Becher and Trowler (2001) point out: for the fundamental academic work of accumulating and disseminating knowledge and to receive acknowledgment in terms of one’s reputation “communication is central to the academic enterprise” (p. 104).

Within this Department of Applied English, in the decade since its founding in 1997 not one member of the faculty has been promoted. Several founding members who reached the associate professor level by receiving their PhDs over a decade earlier have not met the academic requirements – publishing in international peer-reviewed journals, and presenting papers at international conferences – necessary to move on to a full professorship. They have chosen to remain in a state of stasis, comfortable as they are at the associate professor level. This would indicate they have little ambition to conduct research or be promoted to the next level, that of full professor. Without the ambition to conduct research, present papers, and publish at the international level, either stemming from internal desires or to satisfy external exigencies, it is difficult for an academic to participate in an academic community’s public discourse. This would naturally affect the emerging of the discipline which

also depends “on the degree to which a free-standing international community has emerged, with its own professional associations and specialist journals” (Becher & Trowler, 2001 p.41). The academic community of EAP has international credibility, professional associations and journals. However, members of this faculty have chosen not to become part of any international, national, or local professional organizations which would be sign of belonging to an academic community of practice. At this DAE there is no accountability, there is no surveillance, there is only teacher autonomy; there is no academic community which discusses teaching theories and methodology, there are only individuals. There is no *mutual engagement*, no intellectual exchange about EAP to unify the academic community within this Department since the autonomy allowed through job security supports an environment where responsibility becomes a fluid and individually negotiable act.

The writing coordinator, Mr. Ho, was asked if he was able to arrange meetings with teachers: “We tried to as a whole group. But every time, if I ask teachers to go into a meeting, I get a lot of disappointments. Part time teachers hardly show up. Full time teachers might not come as well.” When asked if he was aware of the textbook teachers used he explained how writing instructors do not inform him of classroom material: “This year, it’s getting worse. They are still ordering new books. They just stopped calling me or contact me. I have no idea what they have been doing.” And when he tried to contact previous teachers about the material they had used with his current students he replied with utter frustration:

Mr. Ho

Basically you are preparing your courses based on your own idea. You don’t really know what other people would be doing ... Take the writing class I am going to teach next year, I would be so happy to know what their teachers previously have been using with their textbooks. So I might want to talk to the teachers ... the teacher may order another textbook that is not the required one.

So I would be so happy to see what other kinds of format or genres they have been writing so I try not to repeat the same thing. But so far, we don't have this kind of coordination.

For the writing coordinator to concede the lack of coordination between teachers like himself who earnestly try to engage with others to find information vital to the functioning of their course and other instructors who will not is disturbing.

In addition to job security, another factor in the character of this particular DAE which applies centrifugal force to the formation of a CofP is one that has been suggested previously: the diversity of the fields within this Department. The research that is conducted by some younger faculty wishing to advance from assistant to associate professor is often done in their own field, spheres far more familiar to them than the discipline of EAP. Their own field of interest is an important factor that influences the disciplinary socialization process of faculty and the place they construct within their academic community (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Within the DAE faculty members who teach EAW come from a variety of fields: Applied Linguistics, TESOL, English Literature, Comparative Literature, Translation Theory, and Law. They would find it difficult to share a set of assumptions about EAW indicative of a coherent community of practice without a strong unifying force within the Department. With teachers having a great deal of autonomy, that force simply does not exist within this Department. The *joint negotiated enterprise* for teaching EAW courses provides opportunities for sharing conceptualizations about the EAP discipline but these opportunities are missed. Individual territories are reflective of individual interests marked by the boundaries of the subjects teachers studied for their PhDs and the classes they currently teach. Faculty have little motivation to go beyond their private boundaries to seek pedagogical practices or current research concerning EAW when they don the hat of writing instructor other than through the writing

textbook itself. With so many fields represented across the Department it seems difficult for there to be a *shared repertoire of negotiated resources* upon which to focus the joint enterprise. And the diversity within the Department could extend to include part-time teachers working as writing instructors in the writing program. Part-time instructors may not participate in the academic community of practice because they only work part-time as instructors – lecturers with MA degrees. Part-time faculty usually survive by cobbling together several positions at different academic institutions. Under such working conditions there is often little time and less motivation to participate in an academic community of practice through conducting research, unless one wishes to advance to a permanent full-time position.

This research has demonstrated that there is a need to work towards this DAE becoming an academic CofP in order to conceptualize and construct a unified and coherent set of assumptions about EAW that reflects the assumptions of NS contexts (if that is the objective). Ruptures in the current writing program which create confusing and contradictory constructions of EAW for students should be seen to be unacceptable. Once the situation has been clarified for the faculty within this DAE, who take pride in doing the utmost to educate the student body, the ambition to grapple with the ruptures in conceptualizations of EAW within the writing program should be ignited. The way forward entails becoming part of an academic community of practice. Such a community of practitioners – as a professional organization – must be engaged in a discourse concerning a shared set of assumptions about EAW to give coherence to the conceptualizations in the writing program. This professional organization could guide this nascent discipline of ‘Applied English’ as it currently exists in Taiwan through its emerging stages as it strives to develop to better meet the needs of practitioners and novices within this unique EFL context.

5.3.3 Is EAP the way forward?

An altogether different but compelling impetus to the formation of an academic community of practice could be an understanding that there is a unique opportunity here to realign the current configuration of the writing program along wholly different lines. A closer examination of the mandate of the university upon which this emergent newly formed sub-discipline of Applied English rests indicates that perhaps there is the need to go back to the drawing board.

That the writing program for students, most of whom end their academic careers with a BA degree, should be set up as an EAP program does not seem to fit neatly into the mandate of a technology university. Science and technology universities were founded on the idea of better preparing students for entering the workforce as opposed to continuing their education at a graduate program – a more suitable route from such an EAP writing program. Nor does it fit specifically into the more immediate needs of students to fulfill academic writing requirements for other courses within the Department itself. None of the courses require written assignments in line with the traditional rhetorical method that is the focus of the textbooks and subsequent assignments within the EAP writing classes. That is not to say skills learned in the writing courses do not apply to writing assignments in other courses. Teachers in other courses do require students to keep journals for varying purposes and emphases. One teacher has students use writing skills learned in EAP writing classes, such as summarizing. However, she actually re-teaches this skill to her specifications, not understanding that students have already learned the skill in previous classes. Another teacher does require students to write short academic research papers.

This Department can model itself on the EAP curriculum it seems to have made an effort to follow, at least in its writing program, or it can create a new model with a curriculum reflecting the local needs of its student body and this geographic context (however that might be politically defined). However, that is not to say the transition would be a smooth one. Two issues arise: (1) the ability of any curriculum within this Department to exert a centripetal force in the understanding of a curriculum as the embodiment of shared goals for EAW, and (2) tensions among members of the faculty of the Department as to how this Department of Applied English should be defined.

The issue of the writing program curriculum within this Department has previously been delineated in this thesis (please see sections 4.6.1, 4.6.2, and 4.6.3), however this should be discussed further as it is vital for the future of this Department to have shared goals and conceptualizations of EAW represented within a unified curriculum. Previously, the lack of any writing curriculum within this writing program; the role of the textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum in lieu of a curriculum; the discordance among faculty in their interpretation and use of the textbook as quasi-syllabus/curriculum; the difficulty members of the administration have had in achieving writing program continuity through use of the textbook; and disagreement by members of the administration on the need and value of even having a writing program curriculum all point to the interpretation of a curriculum within this writing program being problematic. Conditions within this Department exert a centrifugal force on the interpretation of the curriculum as an expression of shared goals and shared conceptualizations of English academic writing. As a curriculum is a fundamental part of any writing program, the primary step forward for this writing program would be for all members to understand the importance of having a

curriculum and then to select members of a committee to formulate the curriculum. With participants of the writing program having a shared understanding of the essential need of a curriculum, the pedagogical decisions concerning EAW could naturally follow in accordance with the newly formulated curriculum.

The second issue regarding the future of the Department in terms of modeling itself as an EAP Department of Applied English or a local needs model concerns resistance within the Department itself. There are reactionary elements among literature specialists in the faculty wishing to align this Department along the lines of traditional universities that have a literature-based English Department. Those faculty may not find being in a Department of *Applied* English dominated by ELT/TESOL professionals desirable. They may want to seek a higher status for this Department (and themselves) by fashioning it along the lines of a seemingly more prestigious traditional literature-based Department of English. Nevertheless, the positioning of this DAE at a NSTU and not a traditional university means there is a different mandate for it to follow. Therefore the questions remain: Should this Department model itself along the lines of the EAP discipline and join its international community of practice, i.e. should this writing program attempt to become a full-fledged EAP writing program and as such have a faculty desirous of becoming members of the international EAP community of practice, or should this Department invent something distinctive within the area of an EFL discipline through its curriculum to meet the needs of its local context?

The choice of what should be the focus of a DAE writing program at a Technology University goes beyond the scope of this present study. Whether this discipline should be conceived of as an emerging EFL strand of the EAP discipline or some hybrid for EFL students is the larger question EFL departments globally must

address. Are EFL departments in NNS contexts meant to be extensions of ESL departments in NS contexts, or should they create a curriculum specifically designed to the needs of the vast majority of students in EFL English departments who do not plan to continue with a graduate degree in English-medium departments (whether abroad or at home)?

Grabe and Kaplan indicate how the confusion of students may be a result of approaches which are not effective in EFL contexts: “local contexts of instruction often determine the effectiveness of instructional approaches. Sometimes an approach which is appropriate in the context of an English-speaking country may be less effective in other contexts if for no other reasons than those deriving from misperceptions by students” (1996, p. 253). The consequences of not addressing this issue have emerged within the course of this study.

The new direction for the curriculum could take up issues such as: the mode of correspondence – email messages v. hand-written letters; differences between written and spoken language; differences in register and appropriateness for different audiences, etc. This curriculum would therefore be designed along a more Hallidayan sociolinguistic line. Such a curriculum may not be too dissimilar from the curriculum of the Sydney School, as it is known.

Instead of this DAE being a confluence of different possible approaches to English — academic and non-academic; TESOL/ELT, English Literature, and Translation & Interpretation — this DAE could seize a unique opportunity to define a unified approach that suits the character of this distinctive site. The excitement of such an opportunity lies in being able to bring a new interpretation to the learning of English as a foreign language that is authentic to this context and which serves the organic needs of its student population. At the present moment that opportunity is not

being seen. It is the hope of this research that the conceptualizations of EAW and their constructions as they have been revealed will demonstrate the need of such a unified approach.

5.4 Summary

To conclude, this chapter has presented a discussion of findings which emerged from the data collected. Key issues, such as the components of EAW, the conceptualizations of EAW, and the role of the textbook were examined in-depth with relevant literature support. The second part of this chapter offered an interpretation of this present situation as an emerging discipline and the need to develop a community of practice as a possible future direction for this Department of Applied English. At the end, questions were raised as to whether the needs of this Department should be viewed in terms of EAP.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This research set out to explore streams of influence constructing conceptualizations of EAW within an EFL context; to study the contribution of administrators, teachers, and students to the notion of EAW as a transported foreign idea; to see how that idea is conceptualized when it is conceived in an alien context; to understand the life given to this idea by participants; to see how that idea in this EFL context reflects (or misdirects) assumptions held about EAW in its native context. Through thick description of the context and deep investigation of participants leading to analysis and interpretation this research has fulfilled its goal. I now turn to delineating the contribution this research makes, the limitations of this study, and future research areas.

6.1 Contributions of the study

6.1.1 Limited conceptualizations

Describing the contribution requires recounting findings along with their significance. One exposure of this study was the limited nature of the conceptualization of EAW and its construction. Representative and organizational components identified: length, vocabulary, rhetorical patterns, prescriptive elements, and so on, reveal a tendency to diminish academic writing and the task of producing it in scope and complexity, to restrict the use to which such writing elements can be put. Learning the ‘rules’ of academic writing like using rhetorical patterns or placing prescriptive elements in the text does not allow for the complex intricate nature of language. To treat the components of academic writing as ‘rules’ is not a conceptualization I share but once explained it did appear to have its own logic. Understanding this gives clues to the

writing instructor; it demonstrates the necessity to approach the subject in a way as to reveal the knotty complexity of the writing task and not to narrow the conceptualization. Within an EFL environment the conceptualizations are fragile, requiring students to receive even more explicit information. However, it seems where conceptualizations are most vulnerable is also where they are least clarified, where they are oversimplified. Lacking this clarification can result in limited, simplified conceptualizations of these complicated ideas of what EAW is. A limited conceptualization of the writing task restricts writers and denies them a full repertoire of skills to be learned and made available. While it is a pedagogical necessity to limit complex ideas, for students learning EAW within an EFL context lacking the native linguistic reservoir to draw from, then these prescriptive rules are all that become known.

Not recognizing the potentiality of EAW due to confined conceptualizations leads to not understanding the appropriateness of the written language. Conceptualizations of EAW seem to be either *overstated* in that prescriptive elements/rhetorical patterns ‘are’ EAW, or *understated* when instructors refer to EAW as ‘basic writing,’ ‘superficial,’ ‘warm-up activity,’ and not actually academic writing. When engaged in writing a qualitative research study, such as this present one, writers with an insufficient repertoire do not see the potential for how to use rhetorical patterns, such as narration or description. With potentiality stifled, non-native like writing is produced. Knowing the existence of such misconceptions and how those misconceptions influence the construction of conceptualizations for students, writing teachers can become more aware and work to make available a more comprehensive conceptualization of EAW along EAP lines. Or they might construct a more fitting writing program organic to this research site, which

raises very important conceptual questions about the nature of EAW, EAP, etc. and their relevance to the international discourse community that represents them. This research has revealed such issues.

6.1.2 Inaccurate conceptualizations

Another exposure revealed during this research is that from limited views an inaccurate picture of EAW emerges. There is importance in understanding these conceptualizations, the misconceptions of EAW, the misalignment of these conceptions to conceptualizations of EAW as they exist in English-dominant native contexts. EAW is not rhetorical patterns; rhetorical patterns are part of the writing skills used to organize academic writing. The view that EAW is restricted to being academic research writing is limited, this limitation leads to inaccuracies. One of the more troubling revelations of this research extends from this limited notion: a devaluation of the individual voice of students in academic writing. Only when writing contains the views and research of others was it considered academic; the views of others are more highly valued than the ideas of the writer. The discovery of the occurrence of this conceptualization of EAW at this EFL context points to the need to inform students and faculty of the importance in developing the student voice and why the voice needs to be developed. There is importance in informing students and teachers that when they are writing something in their own voice this is not something non-academic but rather this is the development of a vibrant research discourse community marketplace where ideas are offered and challenged.

That EAW is creative writing is also inaccurate. Creative writing/literature is commonly understood to be non-academic writing. Creative writing pushes the

boundaries of style and structure placing demands on the imagination of the writer. Creative writing programs in English-dominant native contexts are generally programs separate from academic writing programs with instructors specializing in the field usually holding a fine arts diploma. Creative writing is commonly seen in opposition to academic writing, not being meant to argue a point in logic but to be innovative and venturesome. When teachers state this representation of EAW they can influence the construction of what EAW is. Students echoing this view use the term creative writing in the non-academic sense while writing academic essays. The significance lies in teachers having misconceptions about the subject they teach and students construct similar misconceptions affecting their production of EAW.

6.1.3 Conflicting assumptions

The final exposure to be discussed is the role of the textbook in the construction of conceptualizations of EAW. Contradictory use of the textbook which has as a quasi-syllabus/curriculum status in this Department revealed ruptures occurring in the conceptualization of EAW. Teachers take for granted that they share the same conceptualizations with each other and those that are contained in the textbook. Through the use of the textbook they assume their conceptualizations mirror conceptualizations of EAW in English-dominant native contexts; however this study exposed those conceptualizations to be refractions. Teachers do not share a coherent approach. What are being constructed are contradictory and confusing conceptualizations of EAW that construct fractured and fragmented ideas of EAW. This suggests the delicate nature of the construction and the need for greater attention being paid. However, because discussions of conceptualizations do not take place these instructors were unaware of their lack of a

unified coherent approach to teaching EAW. The impact on students who do not construct a consistent conceptualization is that their attempts to produce EAW could be hindered. This is part of a perpetuating cycle of teacher to student, who then becomes a teacher, and so on. This also has implications for international students studying advanced degrees abroad and the instruction they receive at the MA/PhD level. Insights opened to view through this study, such as these issues of conflicting and taken for granted assumptions about conceptualizations of EAW held at this research site have not been adequately addressed within other EFL contexts. This study highlights this issue which should be given greater consideration in the area of second language writing.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this thesis can be delineated along two lines: (1) as a case study these findings cannot be generalized, and (2) the insider status of the researcher. The typicality of this university to others of its type was previously discussed (please see section 3.6). It is believed that these findings go beyond the isolated context of a single department as factors contributing to these findings exist at other universities throughout Taiwan. Combining Departments of Applied English at Science and Technology Universities with traditional English Departments specializing in English Literature which necessarily also have academic writing classes, produces nearly sixty departments in Taiwan teaching EAW in some form. The probability of this being an isolated case is therefore unlikely. Issues identified within this research would most likely occur within departments at other universities; such departments would benefit from insights emerging from this research. Perhaps other parts of Asia have similar concerns; the condition of

conflicting definitions of EAW may be found to have global implications for other EFL contexts. In addition, qualitative research in general and case studies in particular are being recognized as for their collective contributions (for example see Donmoyer, 1990; Merriam, 1998) to the field of research. A fully articulated case study which includes a broad scope and thick description can offer insights that quantifiable methods such as surveys and experimental designs may not. This case might generate similar case studies (please see section 6.3, Future Research, below) by which to compare the findings and in that way break new ground in this area and serve to generate further theory. This case opens a valuable window onto previously unfamiliar territory.

The insider status of this researcher may have affected the analytic distance to the data. Being a member of the community under inquiry presented familiar conditions which even through careful microanalysis were myopically compromised. However, this being a case study and not ethnography makes the insider status not especially relevant as the focus was not on an understanding of a foreign culture. With focus on specifics of a case particular to a foreign culture, the familiarity with the foreign context gave me a greater understanding of the issues raised by participants, such as the degree of teacher autonomy. In addition, the consideration of data distortion due to insider relationships would have been minimized by the research design that drew upon both individual and group interviews with access to a wide range of students and academics.

6.3 Future research

Future research opportunities stemming from this present study could proceed along the following lines. Similar case studies at other Departments of Applied English at

universities within Taiwan could follow the research design and procedures developed in this study. Doing so would test the typicality of the findings in this case and offer another rich set of data with which to compare results. The findings of this research might also provide the basis for the development of a questionnaire to be used in a survey of institutions across Taiwan. Results would indicate the extent of practices and assumptions about EAW within an EFL context similar to this locale and what forms those take. EFL contexts beyond the borders of Taiwan could also develop research along similar strands. This flow of research could gauge the degree to which conceptualizations of EAW are constructed and align, or not, to conceptualizations in English-dominant native contexts.

Conversely, instead of developing widening circles of analysis outward, findings from this study could be used in more specific research designs. Findings could inform questions in specific surveys on individual genres of academic writing. Questions surrounding EFL students' knowledge of the array of academic genres used in the academy have hardly been addressed. Such research could be influential to studies of conceptualizations EFL students have when attending universities in English-dominant native speaker contexts (Leki, 2007). An understanding of the knowledge EFL students have of academic genres could be invaluable for informing the design of ESL writing programs.

6.4 Conclusion

This research is important because it deals with students' ability and competence to communicate through writing. For English majors studying in EFL contexts, writing often offers the gateway to a career either directly out of college with an undergraduate

degree or through advanced study in English native speaker contexts. The necessity to write competently in English ranges from daily emails to academic research papers and beyond and is ever growing.

That EFL students struggle with how to write points to the underlying struggle with the nature of writing. This struggle is not one of choosing the right word which all writers in any language struggle with but is taking place on a more fundamental level, a *conceptual* level. The misrepresentations of EAW at this research site offer insights into the construction of those misrepresentations. Raising the awareness that such a misrepresentation is being constructed at a conceptual level has been the objective of this research. This is the “something missing” mentioned in the introductory chapter, the underlying ideas that seemed to block students from grasping what I was teaching. I believe this research provides insight into its occurrence, raising awareness of this, and points the way toward further research that could provide even greater understanding of misrepresentations of EAW at a conceptual level.

It has broader implications for understanding the transformation of conceptualizations as they are conveyed across national boundaries and cultures, how misconceptions are perpetuated through learning cycles and for what could be done to mitigate against misconceptions being perpetuated. At one time it must have been envisioned that having international students study English in an English-dominant native speaker context and not an EFL context would have ameliorated problems with language skills. To be sure to some degree this must be the case, but to what degree. And when the language subject has the degree of difficulty academic writing has the conditions become ever more complex. That many of the teachers in this research study schooled at US

universities where they earned their PhD degrees returned feeling insufficiently prepared to write research in English or to teach EAW is certainly a condemnation of those programs.

In such a light this research is significant to syllabus / curriculum designers for their understanding of students both in EFL contexts and English-dominant native contexts at the undergraduate and advanced degree levels. Implications for supervisors in Master's degree and PhD programs in English-dominant native contexts concerning acceptable levels of academic writing ability and the preparation of international graduates of such programs to conduct research in English upon returning to their native countries. For English Language Teaching/TESOL programs for international students the findings reveal the necessity for practitioners to be able to teach academic writing in order to end the perpetuating cycle of EAW misconceptions being constructed.

Conceiving of teaching academic writing from a conceptual point of view takes into account the conceptualizations students bring with them to the classroom. Perhaps the reason students are getting lost in the EAW class is that we are using the wrong map to explain it. This research reveals to instructors how students conceptualize EAW. Knowing students' conceptualizations gives us more than a window into their thinking; it gives us a way to address that thinking. Pedagogical approaches to EAW address language issues, not conceptual issues. The different language orientation second language students have should not obstruct the necessity to consider their conceptual orientation. There is a need to develop the conceptual orientation of EAW students along with their language competence. This research offers a view of EFL students' conceptualizations of EAW so that they may be better aided in developing their language.

By discovering and addressing students' misconceptions of EAW, there may be the opportunity for them to grasp the underlying conceptualization of EAW instead of memorizing the 'rules' without comprehension.

Bibliography

- Abbot, G. (1981). Encouraging communication in English: A paradox. *ELT Journal*, 35(3), 228-230.
- Allwright, D. (1988). *Observation in the language classroom*. London: Longman.
- Arksey, H., & Knight P., (1999). *Interviewing for social scientists: An introductory resource with examples*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Atkinson, D. (1991). Discourse analysis and written discourse conventions. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 11, 57-76.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Bazerman, C. (1988). *Shaping written knowledge*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bazerman, C. (1993) *Constructing experience*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Becher, T. & Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic tribes and territories* (2nd Ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.
- Berlin, J. (1988). Rhetoric and ideology in the writing class. *College English*, 50, 477-494.
- Bhatia V.K. (1992). Pragmatics of the use of nominals in academic and professional genres. In L.F. Bouton & Y. Kachru (Eds.), *Pragmatics and language learning*, Monograph Series Volume 3 (pp. 217-30). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.
- Bhatia V.K. (1993). *Analysing genre – language use in professional settings*. London: Longman, Applied Linguistics and Language Study Series.
- Bizzel, P. (1982). Cognition, convention, and certainty: What we need to know about writing. *PRE/TEXT*, 3, 213-243.
- Blanton, L.L. (1992). A holistic approach to college ESL: Integrating language and content. *ELT Journal*, 46(3), 285-293.

- Blanton, L.L. (2001). *Composition practice* (3rd Ed., books 1-4). Boston : Heinle & Heinle
- Bloor, M. (1996). Academic writing in computer science: A comparison of genres. In E. Ventola & A. Mauranene (Eds.), *Academic writing* (pp.59-88). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001). *Focus group in social research*. London: Sage.
- Blue, G. (1988). "Individualising academic writing tuition." In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Academic writing: process and product. ELT documents 129*.
- Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (2nd Ed.). Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon.
- Breen, M. P. (1985). The social context for language learning: A neglected situation? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 7, 135-158.
- Bruffee, K. (1986). Social construction, language, and the authority of knowledge: A bibliographic essay. *College English*, 48 (8), 773-790.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to social constructionism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd Ed.) London and New York: Routledge.
- Campbell, C. (1990). Writing with others' words: Using background reading text in academic compositions. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research issues for the classroom* (pp.211-230). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Carson, J. (1993). Reading for writing: Cognitive perspective. In Carson, J. & I. Leki (Eds.), *Reading in the composition classroom* (pp. 85-104). Boston: Heinle & Heinle
- Casanave, C.P. (2002). *Writing games: Multicultural case studies of academic literacy practices in higher education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Channell, J. (1994). *Vague language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clark, B.R. (1996). 'Substantive growth and innovative organization: New categories for higher education research', *Higher Education* 32(4), 417-430.
- Coe, R. M. (1987). An apology for form; or, who took the form out of the process? *College English*, 49, 13-28.

- Coffey, B. (1984). ESP: English for specific purposes. *Language Teaching*, 17 (1), 2-16.
- Conner, U. (1996). *Contrastive rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook-Gumperz, J. (Ed.). (1986). *The social construction of literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1993). Introduction: How a genre approach to literacy can transform the way writing is taught. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *The powers of literacy: A genre approach to teaching literacy*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Corsaro, W. (1980). *Something old and something new: The importance of prior ethnography in the collection and analysis of audio-visual data*. Unpublished manuscript, Indiana: Indiana University.
- Coulthard, M. (1992). *Advances in spoken discourse analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Coulthard, M. (1994). *Advances in written text analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1975). Beyond the two disciplines of scientific psychology. *American Psychologist*, 31 (2), p.116-127.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1982). Prudent aspirations for social inquiry. In W Kruskal (Ed.), *The social sciences: Their nature and uses* (pp. 61-82). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cross, D. (1991). *Practical handbook of language teaching*. London: Cassell, Villers House.
- Cumming, A. (1989). Writing expertise and second language proficiency. *Language Learning*, 39, 81-141.
- Cumming, A. (2003). Experienced ESL/EFL writing instructors' conceptualizations of their teaching: Curriculum options and implications. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 71-92). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- de Beaugrande, R. (1997). *New foundations for a science of text and discourse*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- de Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W.U. (1981). *Introduction to text linguistics*. London: Longman. (Original work published 1972).
- Denzin, N.K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. London: Sage.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 1– 46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Donmoyer, R. (1990). Generalizability and the single-case study. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (pp. 175-200). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Edge, J. (1983). Reading to take notes and to summarise: A classroom procedure. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 1* (2), 93-98.
- Elbow, P. (1981). *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ESP. (n.d.) Retrieved February 8, 2008, from http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/682/description#description.
- ESP SIG. (n.d.) Retrieved February 8, 2008, from <http://www.unav.es/espSig/espsig.html>.
- ETIC. (1975). *English for academic study: Problems and perspectives*. ETIC Occasional Paper. London: The British Council.
- Faigley, L. (1985). Non-academic writing: The social perspective. In L. Odell & D. Goswami (Eds.), *Writing in a non-academic settings* (pp.231-248). New York and London: Guilford Press.
- Faigley, L. (1986). Competing theories of process: A critique and a proposal. *College English, 48*, 527-542.
- Fathman A. & Whalley E. (1990). Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fazio, G., Pearce, J., Lear, P., & Rowley, G. (1990). *Practicing paragraphs*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Ferris, D. & Hedgcock, J. (1998). *Teaching ESL composition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fish, S. (1990). The common touch or one size fits all or just say yes. Paper presented at the Wyoming Conference on English, Laramie, WY, US (July).

- Flower, L. (1985). *Problem-solving strategies for writing* (2nd Ed.). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Flower, L. (1989). *Problem solving strategies for writing* (3rd Ed.) San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Flower, L. & Hayes, J. (1981) A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (4): 365-387.
- Formal/Informal Language. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2008, from <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/SESSL/EngLang/LILT/forminf.htm>.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- Friedlander, A. (1990). Composing in English: Effects of a first language on the writing in English as a second language. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 109-125). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Fu, G. S., & Poon, E. Y. W. (1995). The teaching of writing in Hong Kong: Quality assured or inferior product? *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 1(2), 45-54.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture. *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (pp. 3-30). New-York: Basic Books.
- Geisler, C. (1994). *Academic literacy and the nature of expertise: Reading, writing, and knowing in academic philosophy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gergen, K.J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40, 266-275.
- Gergen, K.J. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. London: Sage.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.
- Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1989). Writing in a second language: Contrastive rhetoric. In D. Johnson & D. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in writing* (pp. 263-283). New York: Longman.
- Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1996). *Theory and practice of writing*. London: Longman.
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Hairston, M. (1982). The winds of change: Thomas Kuhn and the revolution in the teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 33(1), 76-88.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hammersley, M. (Ed.) (1993). *Controversies in classroom research* (2nd Ed.). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Routledge.
- Hayes, J. R. & Flower, L. S. (1983). Uncovering cognitive processes in writing: An introduction to protocol analysis. In P. Mosenthal, L. Tamor, & S. A. Walmsley (Eds.), *Research on writing* (pp. 207-220). New York: Longman.
- Hedge, T. (1988). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heilenman, L.K. (1991). Writing in foreign language classrooms: process and reality. In J.D. Alatis (Ed.), *Georgetown university round table on languages and linguistics 1991: Linguistics and language pedagogy: The state of the art*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Henkel, M. (1987). The discipline: still the dominant force in higher education? Mimeo, Dalara 1987 International Conference, Swedish National Board of Universities and Colleges, Research on Higher Education Program.
- Hinkel, E. (2002). *Second language writer's text*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1995). *Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research*. London: Routledge.
- Horowitz, D. (1986). Process not product: Less than meets the eye. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20 (1), 141-144.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Hyland, K. (1999). Disciplinary discourses: Writer stance in research articles. In C. Candlin & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Writing: text, processes and practices* (pp.99-121). Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.

- Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and researching writing*. London: Longman.
- Indrasuta, C. (1988). Narrative styles in the writing of Thai and American students. *Writing across languages and cultures: Issues in contrastive rhetoric*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.
- Johns, A.M. (1988). Reading for summarizing: An approach to text orientation and processing. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 4 (2), 79-90.
- Johns, A. M. (1990). L1 composition theories: Implications for developing theories of L2 composition. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 24-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johns, A. M. (1995a). Genre and pedagogical purposes. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4 (2), 181-190.
- Johns, A. M. (1995b). Teaching classroom and authentic genres: Initiating students into academic cultures and discourses. In D. Belcher & G. Braine (Eds.), *Academic writing in a second language: Essays on research and pedagogy* (pp.277-291). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Johns, A.M. (1997a). *Text, role, and context: Developing academic literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Johns, A. M. (1997b). Opening our doors: Applying socioliterate approaches to language minority classrooms. In L. Harklau, K.M. Losey, & M. Siegal (Eds.), *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S. Educated Learners of ESL* (pp. 159 – 171). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Journal of EAP. (n.d.) Retrieved February 8, 2008, from http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/622440/description#description
- Jordan, R.R. (1989). English for academic purposes (EAP). *Language Teaching: The International Abstracting Journal for Language Teachers and Applied Linguistics*, 22 (3), 150-164.
- Jordan, R.R. (1997). *English for academic purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaplan, R.B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning*, 16 (1), 1-20.

- Kaplan, R.B. (1988). Contrastive rhetoric and second language learning: Notes toward a theory of contrastive rhetoric. In A. Purves (Ed.), *Writing across languages and cultures: Issues in contrastive rhetoric* (pp. 275-303). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Knoblauch, C.H. & Brannon, L. (1984). *Rhetorical traditions and the teaching of writing*. Upper Montclair, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Krapels, A. R. (1990). An overview of second language writing process research. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 37-56). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kroll, B. (Ed.) (1990a). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kroll, B. (1990b). The rhetoric-syntax split: Designing a curriculum for ESL students. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 9 (1), 40-55.
- Kroll, B. (1991). Teaching writing in the ESL context. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign Language* (2nd Ed., pp.245-263). New York: Newbury House/Harper Collins.
- Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Lantolf, J.P. (1996). Second language theory building: Letting all the flowers bloom! *Language Learning*, 46, 713-739.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Lawrence, M. (1973). Enquiry method and problem solving in the ESL classroom. *TESL Reporter*, 6 (1), 1-2, 12.
- Leki, I. (1991). The preferences of ESL students for error correction in college-level writing classes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 203-218.
- Leki, I. (1992). *Understanding ESL writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann/Boynton-Cook.
- Leki, I. (1993). Reciprocal themes in ESL reading and writing. *Reading in the composition classroom*. In J. Carson & I. Leki (Eds.) *Reading in the composition classroom* (pp. 9-32). Boston: Heinle & Heinle
- Leki, I. (2006). The legacy of first-year composition. In P. K. Matsuda, C. Ortmeier-Hooper, & X. You (Eds.), *The politics of second language writing: In search of the promised land* (pp. 59-74). West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press.

- Leki, I. (2007). Expanding genre repertoires: L2 graduates and undergraduates negotiating new genre networks. Paper presented at the Symposium on second language writing: Second language writing in the pacific rim. Nagoya, Japan (September).
- Li, X. (1996). *“Good writing” in cross cultural context*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Liebrucks, A. (2001). The concept of social construction. *Theory and Psychology*, 11(3), 363-391.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Litoselliti, L. (2003). *Using focus groups in research*. New York: Continuum.
- Lunsford, A. (1990). Composing ourselves: Politics, commitment, and the teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 41 (1), 71-82.
- Matsuda, P.K. (2001). Reexamining audiolingualism: On the genesis of reading and writing in L2 studies. In D. Belcher & A. Hirvela (Eds.), *Linking literacies: Perspective on L2 reading/writing connections* (pp.84-105). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Matthiessen, C. (1996). Tense in English seen through systemic-functional theory. In M. Berry, C.S. Butler, R.P. Fawcett & G. Huang (Eds.), *Meaning and form: Systemic functional interpretations* (pp. 431-99). Norwood, NJ: Ablex..
- McKay, S. (1980). *Writing for a specific purpose*. Englewood Cliffs, NH: Prentice-Hall.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mertens, D. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merton, R.K. & Kendall, P.L. (1946). The focused interview. *American Journal of Sociology*, 51, 541-557.
- Merton, R.K., Fiske, M, & Kendall, P.L. (1956). *The focused interview*. New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research.
- Mills, S. (1997). *Discourse*. London: Routledge.

- Mitchell, J. C. (2000). Case and situation analysis. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster (Eds.), *Case study method* (pp. 165-186). London: Sage.
- Mohan, B.A. & Lo, W. A. (1984). Academic writing and Chinese students: Transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (3), 515-534.
- Myers, G. (1999). Interaction in writing: principles and problems. In C. Candlin & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Writing: text, process, and practice* (pp. 41-61). London: Longman.
- Nightingale, D.J. & Cromby, J. (2002). Social constructionism as ontology: Exposition and example. *Theory and Psychology*, 12 (5), 701-713.
- O'Grady, P. (2002). *Relativism*. Chesham: Acumen.
- Olson, D. (1994). *The world on paper*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostler, S. (1987). English in parallels: A comparison of English and Arabic prose. *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Pakir, A. & Ling, L.E. (1995). The teaching of writing in Singapore. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 1(2), 103-116.
- Peyton, J.K. (1989). Dialogue journal writing and the acquisition of English grammatical morphology. In J. K. Peyton (Ed.), *Students and teachers writing together: Perspectives on journal writing*, (pp. 67-97). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- Phillips, M. K. & Shettlesworth, C.C. (1978). How to ARM your students: a consideration of two approaches to providing materials for ESP. In R.A. Hawkey, (Ed.). *English for specific purposes*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House
- Poole, D. (1991). Discourse analysis in ethnographic research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 11.
- Poon, L., Lo, A. & Kong, S. (1993). Developing learner responsibility in the early stages of writing. *Institute of Language in Education Journal* 10, 121-36.
- Prior, P. (1998). *Writing/Disciplinarity: a sociohistorical account of literate activity in the academy*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Quine, W.V. (1960). *Word and objects*. Cambridge, MA: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raimes, A. (1991). Out of the woods: Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25 (3), 407-430.

- Ramanathan, V., & Atkinson, D. (1999). Individualism, academic writing, and ESL writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8* (1), 45-75.
- Reid, J. (1993). *Teaching ESL writing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Richards, J.C. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rivers, W. (1968). *Teaching foreign language skills*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rogoff, B., Mistry, J.J., Göncü, A., & Mosier, C. (1993). Guided participation in cultural activity by toddlers and caregivers. *Monographs of the society for research in child development, 58* (7, Serial No. 236).
- Rothfarb, S. H. (1970). Teacher-pupil interaction in the FLES class. *Hispania, 53*, 256-263.
- Russell, D. R. (2002). Institutionalizing English: Rhetoric on the boundaries. In D. Shumway & C. Dionne (Eds.), *Disciplining English: Alternative histories, critical perspectives* (pp.39-58). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Scarcella, R. (1984). How writers orient their readers in expository essays: A comparative study of native and non-native English writers. *TESOL Quarterly, 18* (4), 671-688.
- Schwandt, T.A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.119-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Silva, T. (1988). Research on the composing processes of college-level ESL writers: A critical review. Paper presented at the 39th Annual CCC Convention, St. Louis Missouri, US (March).
- Silva, T. (1990). Second language composition instruction: Developments, issues, and directions in ESL. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 11-23). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silva, T., Reichelt, M., Chikuma, Y., Duval-Couetil, N., Mo, R-P J., Velez-Rendon G., & Wood, S. (2003). Second language writing up close and personal: Some success stories. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 93-114). New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Spencer, J. (2001). Ethnography after postmodernism. In P. Atkinson et al., (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 443-452). London: Sage.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Stake, R.E. (1978). The case-study method in social inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 7, 5-8.
- Stake, R.E. (1980). *Generalizations*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, US (April).
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case studies. In N. K. Denizen & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed., pp.435-454). London: Sage.
- Stenhouse, L. (1988). Case study methods. In J. P. Keeves (Ed.), *Educational research, methodology, and measurement: An international handbook* (1st Ed., pp. 49-53). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Stewart, D.W. & Shamdasani, P.N. (1990). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. London: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Swales, J.M. (1985). *Episodes in English for specific purposes*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, B. (1981). Content and written form: A two-way street. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 5-13.
- Taylor, G. & Chen, T. (1991). Linguistic, cultural, and subcultural issues in contrastive discourse analysis: Anglo-American and Chinese scientific texts. *Applied Linguistics*, 12 (3), 319-336.

TESOL ESP. (n.d.) Retrieved February 8, 2008, from <http://www2.tesol.org/communities/espis/rules.html>.

Toohy, K. (2000). *Learning English in school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Tse, J. K-P. (1995). The teaching of writing in Taiwan. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 1(2), 117-124.

van Dijk, T. (Ed.) (1985). *Handbook of discourse analysis* (4 vols.). London: Academic Press.

van Dijk, T. (Ed.) (1997). *Discourse as structure and process* (2 vols.). London: Sage.

van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Wolcott, H.F. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wragg, E.C., (1999). *An introduction to classroom observation* (2nd Ed.). London: Routledge.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

You, X. (2004). The choice made from no choice: English writing instruction in a Chinese university. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13(2), 97-110.

Young, R. (1978). Paradigms and problems: Needed research in rhetorical invention. In C. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.), *Research on composing: Points of view* (pp. 29-47). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Zamel V. (1976). Teaching composition in the ESL classroom: What can we learn from research in the teaching of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10, 67-76.

Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: The process of discovering meaning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16 (1), 195-210.

Zamel V. (1983). The composing processes of advanced ESL students: Six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17 (2), 165-187.

Appendix 1
(Focus Group Participant Profiles)

WENNIE:

- 1. Thought before learning**
Translate from Chinese to English
- 2. Actually learned**
Didn't take seriously before. Now has learned form, style, and sharpen observation
- 3. Learning in this class**
Narrative, contrast, judgment, etc. format of MLA
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
Class a joke to her.
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. careful thinking process, consult topics; non- made by writer's free will, not well organized
- 6. Most useful**
critical thinking; logical ability
- 7. Writing changed to now**
writing goes backwards, T. wastes her time
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
opinion not changed since (this?) T. not "give her anything"

MAUREEN:

- 1. Thought before learning**
beautiful, elegant vocabulary, well-organized
- 2. Actually learned**
topic sentence, organization of the composition
- 3. Learning in this class**
topic sentence focused on in this class very much
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
applied English – write life exp., stories, or dreams
it is ordinary and informal
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. more formal, no faults, accurate, authentic
- 6. Most useful**
one main idea in one work, revising
- 7. Writing changed to now**
now thinks about the reader's opinion
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
realize the difference between Chinese and English writing is more than translating ideas into another language

SELENA:

- 1. Thought before learning**
"really" write in Eng. instead of translating from Chinese
- 2. Actually learned**
word choice, peer review, logical thinking, critical thinking, organizing supporting ideas
- 3. Learning in this class**
bibliography, footnotes, endnotes, format of a. w., interlibrary loan
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
non-academic writing like comparison & contrast, process, description, etc.
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. more formal, sentences are more complicated, follow format
- 6. Most useful**
(same as Q2)
- 7. Writing changed to now**
notices vocabulary more, dic. is important tool
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
Y & N. still translates but consults authority (ref. book, teacher)

EVELYN:

- 1. Thought before learning**
write smoothly, organizing par., grammar
- 2. Actually learned**
topic sentence, organizing whole essay
- 3. Learning in this class**
MLA format
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
NOT academic writing – “comparison and story type” which are very “*lively*”
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. more formal, write “many pieces of paper”, follow many rules, like MLA
- 6. Most useful**
organize thoughts and express opinions in English, feedback is useful
- 7. Writing changed to now**
now can express thoughts in the whole article
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
Yes, before didn’t like English writing but now can accept any kind of writing

CAROL:

- 1. Thought before learning**
English writing is similar to Chinese writing
- 2. Actually learned**
topic sentence, supporting ideas
- 3. Learning in this class**
topic sentences, bridge sentences, supporting ideas, bibliography
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
IS learning a. w. because learning format of bibliography
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. more formal: words, sentence structure writing formats, format of bibliography important
- 6. Most useful**
“think from the reader’s side” – to write for the reader
- 7. Writing changed to now**
not to write whatever “jumped into” her mind, must be organized
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
Yes, paragraph should have topic sentence and supporting ideas, and

MAGGIE CHANG:

- 1. Thought before learning**
correct skills, grammar, organization
- 2. Actually learned**
how to express opinions; usage of words; organization
- 3. Learning in this class**
basic knowledge to the deeper writing skills, for example to give main idea and supporting points; comparative “article”
- 4. Now learning what kind of English**
wants to call it “Intro to a. w. since they strengthen the basic writing skills.
- 5. Diff. between a. w. & non**
a. w. teacher teaches deeper writing skills and strengthen the basic writing skills – non-a. w. is writing w/o specifying the writing field
- 6. Most useful**
I can write my true feeling about any topic so that the audience can understand and be impressed
- 7. Writing changed to now**
now I can easily write down feelings and ideas; also know how to use special way to arouse reader’s attention; most important, is not afraid of writing now
- 8. Opinion of writing changed to now**
before thought it was learning basic skills; now, must consider many elements; it is very lively expressing writer’s ideas

ANA:

1. Thought before learning

learn techniques to avoid writing English like Chinese

2. Actually learned

writing techniques – organization; choose right words, judge good from bad articles

3. Learning in *this* class

references; organizing

4. Now learning what *kind* of English

IS a. w. because learning ref and Ss read academic articles

5. Diff. between a. w. & non

a. w. is relevant to educational purposes OR research papers; non- do not focus on these, maybe they are more practical

6. Most useful

organization and choosing the right word

7. Writing changed to now

NO, what learned before is taught repeatedly, but some Ts do focus on details

8. Opinion of writing changed to now

Yes, in some ways has changed because what she expected to learn is still the same

Appendix 2 (Data Collection Schedule)

A list of abbreviations:

- FG** stands for Focus group
- T_Int** stands for Teacher interview
- Obs** stands for Observation
- Q** stands for Questionnaire Administration
- FG-Int** stands for Focus group interview
- FG_Rw_Tr** stands for focus group review transcript
- S_Int** stands for student interview
- A_Int** stands for administrator interview

	FG_1	FG_2	FG_3	FG_4	FG_5	FG_6	FG_7	FG_8	FG_9	FG_10	others
Sep. 2004											
	13:00- 14:00										
24	Mr. Brown T_Int										
Oct. 2004											
			15:00- 16:00								
11			Ms. Han T-Int								
Nov. 2004											
	10:00- 11:00										
4	Mr. Brown Obs										
24		10:30- 11:30									

			Mr. Sun T_Int																
25	10:00- 11:00 Mr. Brown Q			09:00- 11:00 Ms. Han Obs															
30		16:30- 17:20 Mr. Sun Obs																	
Dec. 2004																			
1	15:30- 16:30 Mr. Brown FG_Int																		
7		16:30- 17:20 Mr. Sun Q																	
9	15:30- 16:30 Mr. Brown FG_Rw_ Tr			9:00- 10:00 Ms. Han Q															
14		10:00- 11:00 Mr. Sun FG_Int								14:00- 15:00 Ms. Tai T_Int									

16			11:00- 12:00 Ms. Han FG_Int																		
21		10:00- 11:00 Mr. Sun FG_Rw Tr		16:30- 17:30 Ms. Tai Q																	
28			11:00- 12:00 Ms.Han FG_Rw_ Tr	16:30- 17:30 Ms. Tai FG_Int																	
Jan. 2005																					
6																				14:00- 17:30 Ms. Liang A_Int	
11				11:00- 12:00 Ms. Tai FG_Rw_ Tr																	
Mar. 2005																					
7					10:30- 11:30 Mr. Johnson T-Int															13:30- 14:30	

8								Mr. Johnson Obs		15:30- 16:30 Mr. Chu T_Int												
14							12:30- 13:30 Mr. Johnson Q															
16									09:00- 10:00 Mr. Chu Obs	11:00- 12:00 William S_Int Senior												
								10:00- 11:00 Mr. Chu Q														
21							13:30- 15:00 Mr. Johnson FG_Int															
23									11:00- 12:00 Mr. Chu FG_Int													
Apr. 2005																						
7							13:30- 14:30 Mr. Johnson														14:30- 15:30 Mr. Mao T_Int	

18										14:30- 15:30 Mr. Mao FG_Rw_ Tr	16:30- 17:30 Mr. Knightly Q	09:00- 10:00 Mr. Sun Q									
19										14:30- 15:30 Mr. Knightly FG_Int	13:30- 14:30 Ms. Pai T_Int										
23																					18:30- 19:30 Vera S_Int Sophomore
24										14:30- 15:30 Mr. Knightly FG_Rw_ Tr											09:15- 10:00 Cindy S_Int Fresh- man
25												09:00- 10:00 Mr. Sun FG_Int									
26												15:00- 16:00 Mr. Sun T_Int									

											(The Second Time)		
Jun. 2005													
1												10:00- 11:00 Mr. Mao Obs	
												11:00- 12:00 Mr. Mao Q	
8												12:00- 13:00 Mr. Mao FG_Int	13:30- 14:30 Mr. Ho A_Int
21											11:30- 12:30 Mr. Sun FG_Rw_ Tr		
2 4												12:00- 13:00 Mr. Mao FG_Rw_ Tr	
Jun. 2006													
6													16:00- 17:00 Mr. Chu A_Int

Appendix 3 (A Letter to Colleagues)

Dear Colleagues,

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated for assisting me in my research. My name is Michael Geary. I have been a lecturer here at NKFUST for seven years, including the last year when I've been in the U. K. pursuing a Ph.D. degree. In spite of this, I may be a stranger to many of you because our department has gone through an amazing growth spurt within this short time and the faculty has doubled in size. Please allow me to tell you something about myself.

I've taught academic writing classes since I began teaching here in 1997. During that time I have seen the struggle students (and I) have gone through attempting to master the very important skill of learning to write academic English. I decided to pursue a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching in order to conduct research into academic writing with the hope of learning how to make the process of learning academic writing a more rewarding experience.

I would like to better understand the needs of our present (and future) students by learning your ideas on academic writing from your unique perspective. You have gained and displayed knowledge from the experiences you went through with academic writing, first as a novice student, then as a practitioner when getting your graduate degrees, and now as a teacher of academic writing. You have gone through the entire range of participating in your own unique engagement with academic writing.

I am interested in the personal experiences that have shaped your ideas of what academic writing is to you. You have your own unique academic life story to tell about learning and using English writing. I would like to interview you to find out your story. For that interview I am asking for about 45 minutes of your time. None of the information collected during my research is intended to be used for evaluative purposes. My purpose is not to evaluate, it is rather to understand your unique impressions and ideas about what academic writing is from your point of view.

Of course, during my research there will be strict adherence to measures to ensure complete confidentiality. Only I, as researcher, will have access to tapes made during interviews. In all written documents pseudonyms will be used to keep the identity of the informants anonymous. Every effort will be made to build rigorous safeguards into the research design to guarantee full confidentiality.

I hope participating in this research will benefit you professionally by allowing you the opportunity to reflect upon your past academic writing experiences. Perhaps recalling your own personal acquisition of English academic writing skills will bring you a bit closer to the experience your students are having in your own classroom now. I will, of course be very happy to share with you any insights into the process of academic writing my research generates.

Thank you again for your cooperation. Any questions regarding this research project can be directed to me, by email: mpgeary@ccms.nkfust.edu.tw , or at my office: ext. 5114, or at home: (07) 558-5647.

Sincerely, Michael P. Geary

Appendix 4 (An Email to Colleagues)

Dear _____,

I'm just writing to remind you of our scheduled interview this week on _____ (day) the _____ (date) at _____ (time) - I hope that time is still good for you. If not please let me know and we can reschedule.

Also, I'd like to refresh your memory about my research focus as my interview questions will be centered around this.

I would like to know about your English academic writing experiences as a student, practitioner, and now as a teacher, i.e., your range of English academic writing experiences. I am interested in the personal experiences that have shaped your ideas of what academic writing is to you. Your ideas about what English academic writing is, is the essence of my research. As a part of my research, my interview questions will be trying to understand your ideas from several different perspectives.

Please let me say again that all information discussed during the interview will be handled in the strictest way possible to ensure complete confidentiality.

I am really looking forward to our interview. Please don't hesitate to email me if you have any questions or concerns at all.

See you _____ (day).

All the best,

Michael

Appendix 5 (Teacher Interview Guide)

1. How would you describe academic writing?
2. Are you teaching academic writing to your students now?
3. Describe your previous English academic writing experience. How were you taught English academic writing? Did your previous English academic writing teachers teach academic writing in ways similar to each other? If not, in what ways were they different? Do you teach using a style similar to your previous teachers? How is your teaching style different or similar to theirs?
4. How long have you been teaching writing?
5. What would you say is the focus when you teach writing? Can you give a further explanation of this?
6. What would you like your students to have learned by the time they leave your class?
7. What do you think are students' primary learning needs?
8. Do you have a typical routine for conducting your writing class? Could you describe it?
9. What topics have you asked students to write about in class? Would you describe these topics as academic writing topics? What are the differences between academic writing topics and non-academic writing topics?
10. Do you believe your students' English writing is improving? How do you know?
11. What are the most important aspects of English writing / academic writing? Can you further explain what you mean by ... ?
12. Do you use model writing examples in your class? If so, in what ways did you use model writing examples?
13. What are some characteristics of writing that is *not* academic writing?
14. Do you feel the writing skills you teach in class will be useful to your students in situations outside your class? If so, in what ways?
15. Can you describe your ideal academic writing student/class – one you would enjoy teaching.
16. If at the end of the school term you were to overhear a student discussing your class with another student, what would you most like to hear that student saying was learned in your class?
17. In the broadest possible sense, what would you say academic writing is?

Appendix 6 (Student Questionnaire)

NAME:(Chinese / English) _____ STUDENT NUMBER: _____

Dear Writing Students:

Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire. Please write at least *three lines* for a complete answer. If you need, you may write more on the back.

1. Before ever taking any English writing class, what did you *think* you would learn in an English writing class?

2. What kinds of things you have *actually* been learning in your English writing classes?

3. What have you been learning in *this* particular English writing class?

4. What *kind* of English writing are you learning in this class? Would you call it English *academic* writing or another kind of English writing? Please tell why.

5. In your opinion, what is the difference between English *academic* writing and *other kinds* of English writing that you think are non-academic?

6. What has been the most useful thing you've ever learned in any English writing class?

7. How has your English *writing* changed from your first English writing class until now?

8. Has your *opinion* of English writing changed from your first English writing class until now?

If so, please tell in what ways your opinion has changed.

Appendix 7 (Question Guide for Focus Group Interview)

Is this an academic writing class?

Does **your teacher call this an English writing class** / English **academic** writing class?
Does he give it a name?

If this is not an academic writing class **what kind of class** would it be?
Can you explain more about what academic writing is NOT?

What **kinds of writing** would you do in an English academic writing class? **What is taught** in an academic writing class?

Have you ever taken an English academic writing class?

If you think an English **academic writing class is harder**, how would it be harder?
Why do you think it should be hard(er)?

What did you think English writing **would be like before** you ever took an English writing class?

What was your **very first English writing** class like? What kinds of writing did you do?

How have your English writing **classes changed over time**?

There is a **difference between time – now and before now** – what did you think you would learn before other classes and then before this class?

Have your **teachers influenced** the way you think about academic writing over time?

Have the **ways other teachers taught you writing** given you different impressions about English writing? Can you give examples?

If teachers teach English writing differently how does that affect your thoughts about the way it is taught? If two teachers teach English writing differently which one do you follow?

Do you think your **writing teacher likes teaching writing**?

Does the teacher's **confidence / ability** affect your opinion of English writing?

Appendix 8 (Instructions to the Focus Group Participants)

I selected you to participate in this focus group because I am interested in your ideas about English writing.

I would like to learn more about the ideas you wrote about in the questionnaire I gave you last week.

By listening to you, I hope to learn more about what students think about English writing. By learning more about the way students think I hope we can improve the way we teach you.

During the interview, let me just ask you to please listen closely to each other's comments because I might ask you to say something about what another person has said. I might ask you if you agree with what she said, or do you disagree with what she said. So please listen carefully to each other.

My research assistant is here to help with any language problems you may have. If you do not understand what I ask, or if you need to use Chinese to answer a question, my research assistant can help you with that.

I would also like to remind you that the interview information is confidential, which means no one will talk about what we say here to anyone else. Your teacher and other students won't know what we say here. This is very private. The only people who will know about what we say are the people who are here in the room now. Please do not repeat any information you hear today to anyone else. This is confidential, but it is not anonymous because we all know who is talking. It is important for this to be private and confidential so you can feel comfortable and be honest in what you say.

Unit
7

Describing a Process

The eruption in 1980 of Mt. St. Helens,
in the northwestern United States

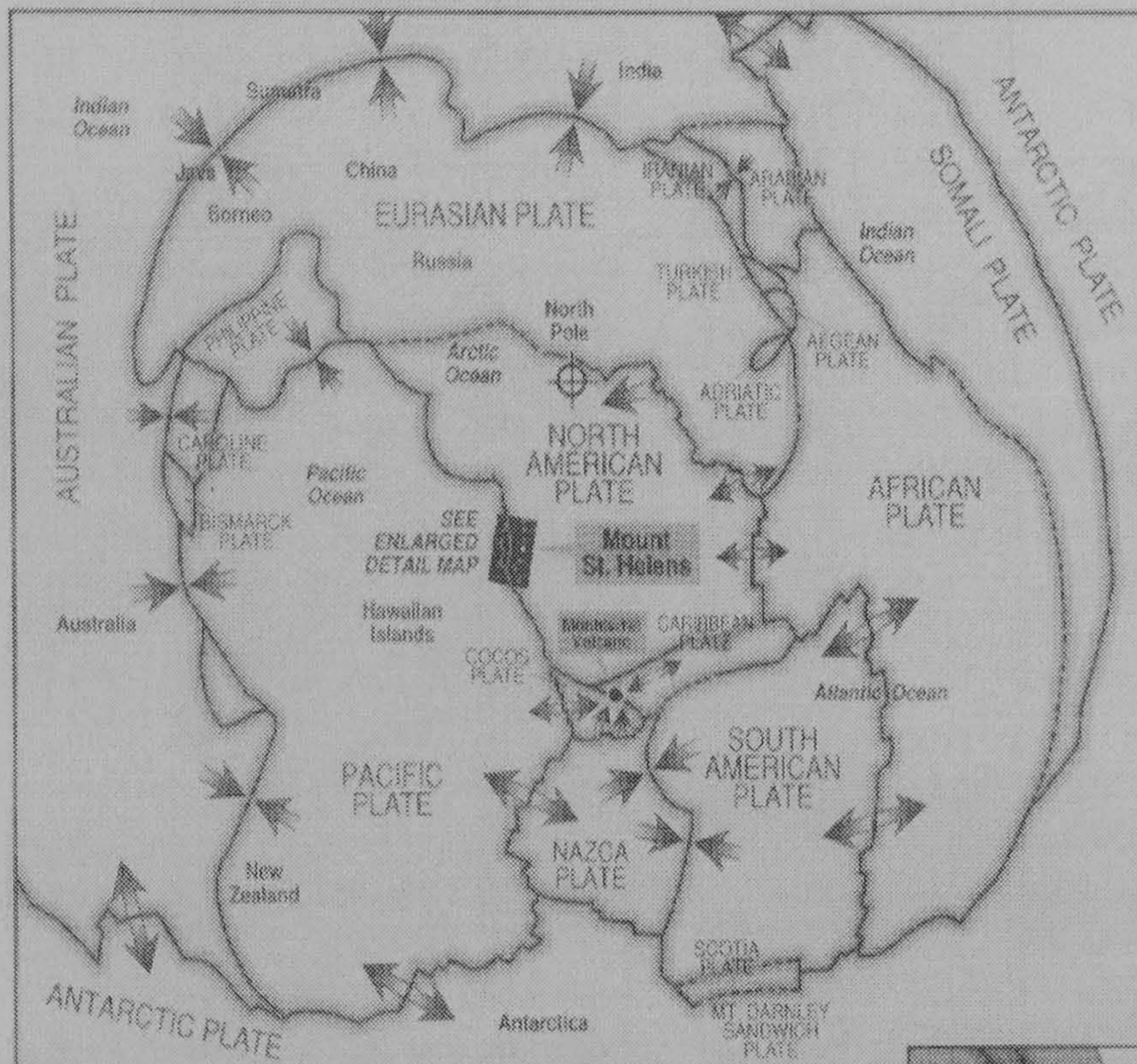
The destruction of Pompeii, Italy,
in A.D. 79 by Mt. Vesuvius



- Composition Focus: Process Description
- Organizational Focus: Chronological Order
- Grammatical Focus: Passive Voice

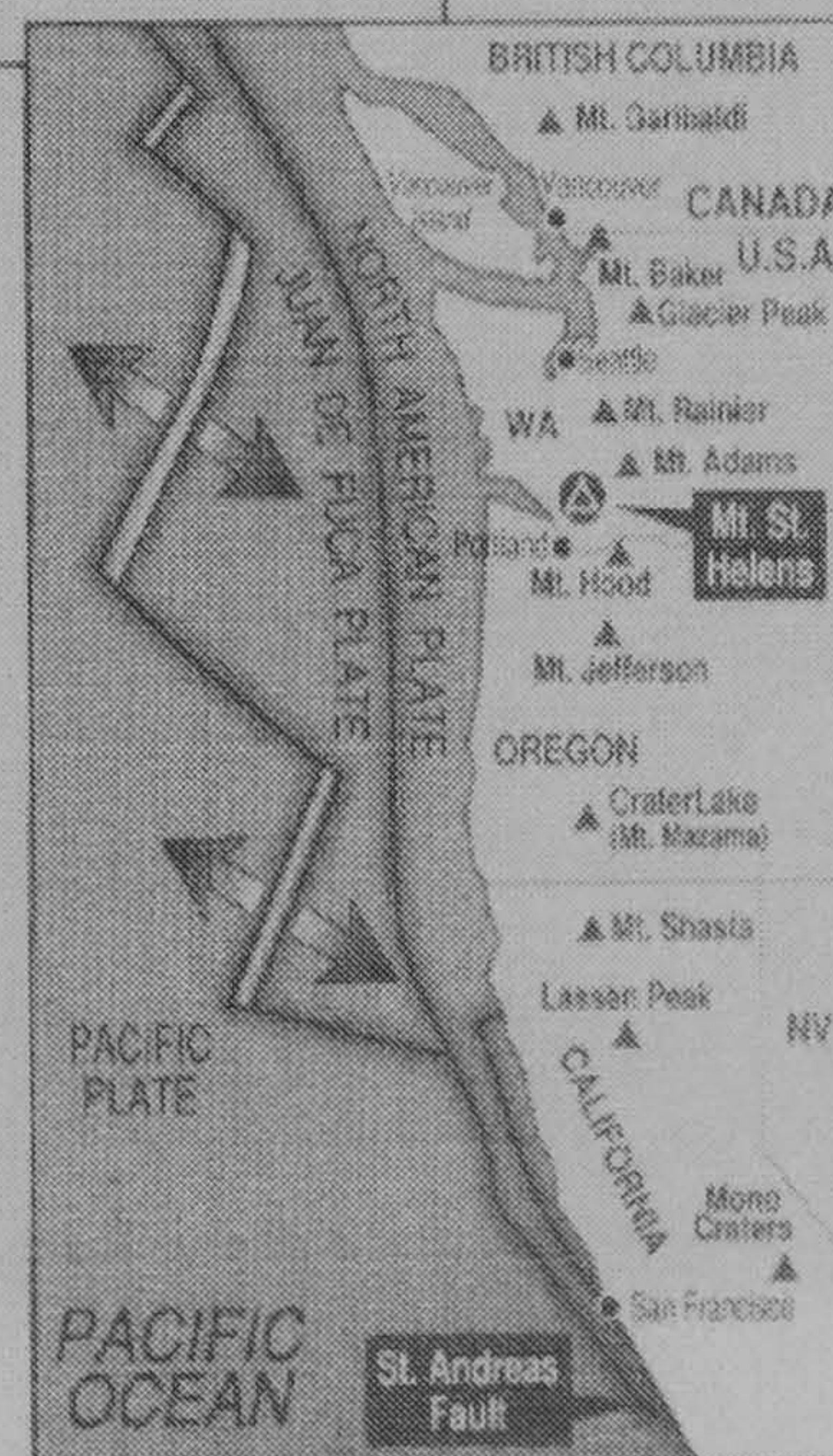
Look at the pictures and study the diagrams.

- What does diagram A show?
- What is a "plate"?
- What are these plates? How do they fit together? How quickly do they move?
- How does diagram B relate to diagram A?
- What has created the volcanoes in the northwestern United States?
- In general, how are volcanoes created?



A. Shifting Plates Cause Volcanic Eruptions
 The earth's surface is fragmented into plates. The plates pull apart, grind past each other, or slide beneath one another. This happens at a rate of about 8 inches, or 20 cm., each year.

B. Enlargement of the Northwestern United States
 The Juan de Fuca plate is sliding under the North American plate. As it slips and slides, it melts rock into pockets of magma far below the earth's surface.



Reading 7



When Mountains Roar

- (1) The eruption of a volcano is one of the earth's most spectacular shows of energy. The Soufrière Hills Volcano on the island of Montserrat in the Caribbean began to erupt in July, 2000. It had been inactive on this British island in the West Indies for nearly 1000 years. Suddenly, on August 21, it released steam and a cloud of ash over 7,000 feet into the air. The nearby capital city, Plymouth, was covered with darkness for half an hour from the cloud.
- (2) More than 300 active volcanoes are located around the Pacific Ocean alone, from Chile to Alaska, to Japan, and to New Zealand. Volcanoes are continuing to form islands such as the Hawaiian Islands, the Mariana Islands in the western Pacific, and islands in the Caribbean. Eleven major active volcanoes form the Cascade Range in the northwestern United States. When these land volcanoes erupt, as Mt. St. Helens in the Cascades did in 1980, it is the result of the plates of the earth slipping and sliding. As they move, these huge plates create pressure far below the earth's surface.
- (3) Deep inside the earth, hot molten rock mixes with gas to create *magma*. Magma collects in chambers, which are spaces between rocks inside the earth. Gradually, the magma begins to rise as it is pressed by the rocks. It rises through an opening, or shaft, in the weakened rock above. As the magma gets near the surface, gas is released and sends magma, dust, and rock out of the crater, or top of the volcano. This stream of volcanic matter is the actual eruption.
- (4) Most volcanoes erupt straight up through the top. Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano in Italy that destroyed the city of Pompeii in A.D. 79, erupted this way. However, some volcanoes, such as Mt. St. Helens, erupt laterally or through side vents. Lateral eruptions are very destructive because large areas of mountain are blown away. (See the diagram that follows.) Either way, underground water spills out and creates raging streams. Magma reaches the surface and is now called *lava*. Waves flow down the slopes, burying the surrounding valleys.
- (5) It takes millions of years for volcanoes to form. It takes hundreds more for them to build up to an eruption. Yet, in a matter of seconds, a volcano can blow apart in an angry roar of incredible destruction.

Notes and Questions on Reading 7

Let your teacher guide you through the following notes and questions.

1. A process is a connected series of actions, or steps, that leads to an end. You do X and Y in order to get to Z: you pour boiling water on a teabag and let it steep in order to have a cup of tea (a most complex procedure!). That is a *how-to-do-it* process. It is written to instruct. The writer expects the reader to take some action.

There is another kind of process as well, a *how-it-is-done* or *how-it-happens* process. It is written to inform, not to instruct. The writer expects no action from the reader. Certain topics can be developed either way: how to make a bookcase, or how a bookcase is made. (You can see how each approach can require different grammar.) Other topics, usually natural, mechanical, and scientific processes, are described according to the second approach.

Example: How does a tadpole change into a frog? How does a carburetor work? What happens in photosynthesis?

2. Most operational process descriptions follow a simple chronological (time) order. (*First...*, *Then...*, *Next...*, *Finally...*) Steps usually occur one after the other. Sometimes, however, one or two steps may occur at the same time.

Look back at Reading 7. Decide which steps in the volcanic process occur one after the other (sequential steps) and which occur at the same time (simultaneous steps).

In Unit 2 (Notes and Questions), you will find a list of time words and phrases that can also be used in process description.

3. The order of steps is very important to the description. If the steps are unclear, the description will be unclear. A writer also needs to add details about the process in order to make it clear. Pick out one step in the eruption of a volcano (Reading 7) and identify the supporting details that go with it.

4. As you can see in Reading 7, a lot of the information can be included at the beginning and at the end of a process description.

Look at the introduction to Reading 7. How does the writer try to get you interested in the topic? In other words, how does the writer try to make the topic more dramatic?

Look at the last two paragraphs. They are more than a summary of the process. New information is included. What is the relationship between the new information and the process?

Before going on to the exercises in Unit 7, tell your classmates if there are volcanoes any place you have lived. If so, when did one last erupt. Also, brainstorm about other natural processes. Make a list. Which ones are long-term, such as a volcano building up to an eruption, and which are short-term, such as a kettle reaching the boiling point?



Exercise A: Practicing the Passive

Complete the sentences below with either *present* or *past passive* constructions. Each sentence below is in the present unless a time expression or the meaning of the sentence clearly marks it as past. Remember that the present (simple) and past (simple) passives look like this:

Simple present passive:

am
is + past participle
are

Simple past passive:

was
were + past participle

Example: Power (*release*) is released at the top of a volcano.

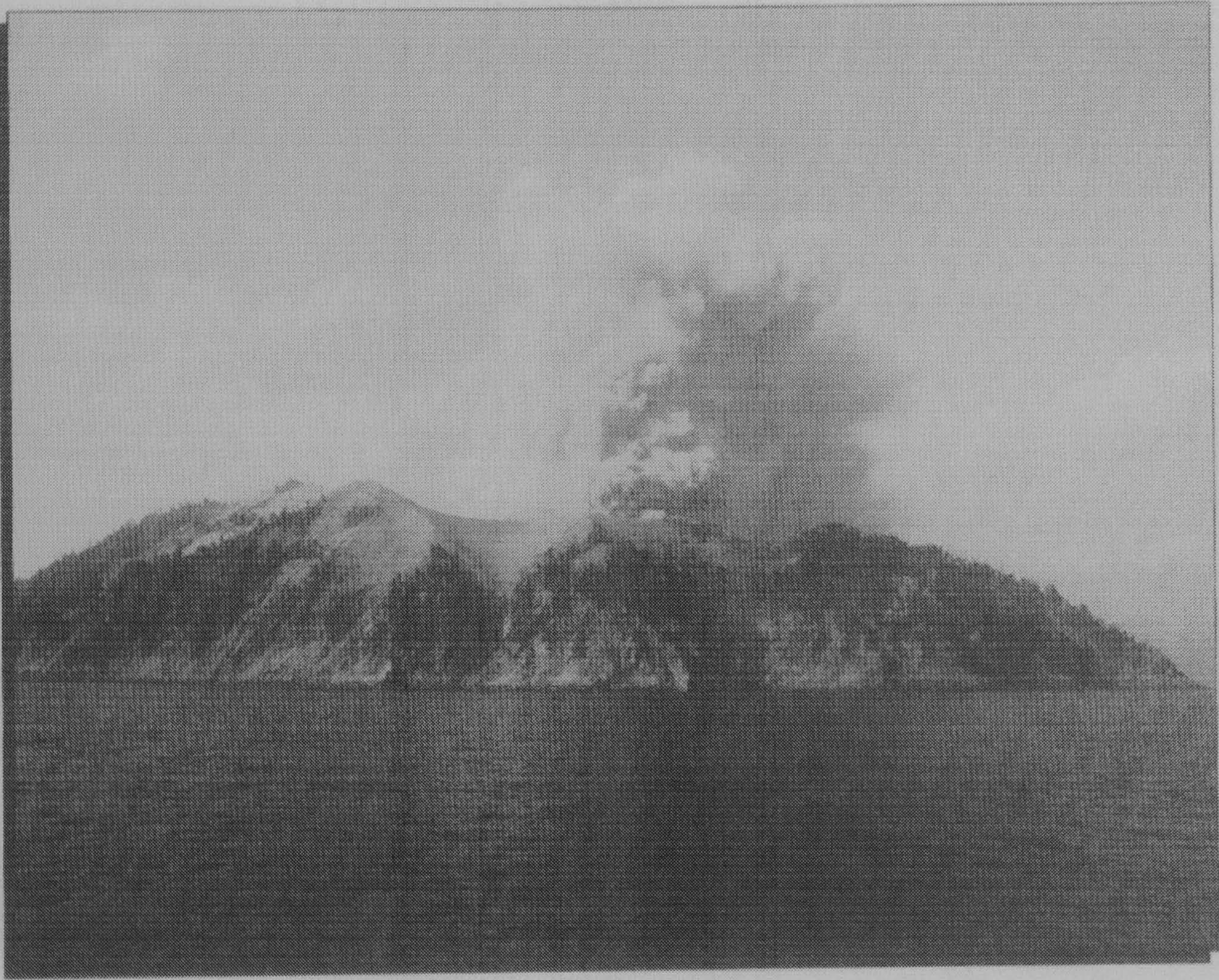
1. The power released by a volcano (*create*) _____ far below the earth's surface.
2. Magma (*produce*) _____ by hot molten rock mixing with gas.
3. Gas (*release*) _____ as the magma gets near the surface.
4. The actual eruption of a volcano (*cause*) _____ by gas sending out volcanic matter from the top of the volcano.
5. Some molten rock and dust (*release*) _____ through side vents.
6. Many volcanoes (*locate*) _____ around the Pacific Ocean.
7. When Mt. St. Helens erupted in the spring of 1980, a large piece of the mountain (*tear*) _____ away.

8. As a result of the eruption, Mt. St. Helens (*reduce*)

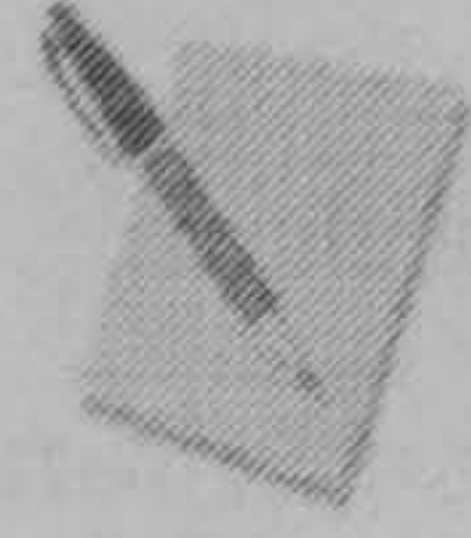
_____ from the fifth-tallest mountain in the state of Washington to the thirtieth-tallest.

9. In 1902, the city of Plymouth (*cover*) _____ with a dark cloud of steam and ash from Mt. Pelée.

10. Pompeii (*destroy*) _____ by an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79.



The actual eruption of a volcano is caused by gas spewing volcanic matter out of the top of the volcano.



Exercise B: Identifying Parenthetically

You often need to give extra information to help your reader stay on track. Often this extra information identifies who or what you are talking about. Since you don't want the minor information to become the focus, you can often reduce it by inserting it in a sentence about something else. This extra information is *parenthetical*.

In the exercise below, add the second sentence of each pair to the first sentence. Reduce it as much as possible and set it off with commas if it is in the middle of the sentence. If it goes at the end, a comma comes before it and a period comes after it.

Example: Mt. Vesuvius erupted straight up through its central vent.
(Mt. Vesuvius was the volcano that destroyed Pompeii in A.D. 79.)
Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano that destroyed Pompeii in A.D. 79, erupted straight up through a central vent.

1. The eruption of Mount Pinatubo is an example of nature's awesome power.
(Mount Pinatubo is a volcano in the Philippines that erupted in June of 1991.)

2. Reforestation is the only way to maintain the world's supply of wood.
(Reforestation is the process of planting new trees to replace older ones that have been cut down or destroyed.)

3. Dynamite was invented in 1867 by Alfred Nobel.
(Dynamite is a powerful explosive.)

4. *Pavlov* studied stimulus-response behavior.
(*Pavlov* was a Russian physiologist.)

5. Caterpillars become butterflies through *metamorphosis*.
(*Metamorphosis* is a process of physical transformation.)

6. Much of the human body's genetic information is stored in *DNA*.
(*DNA* is the master chemical of heredity.)

7. Green plants make their own food through the process of *photosynthesis*.
(*Photosynthesis* is the process of using light to change carbon dioxide and water into food.)

8. One of the immediate causes of heart disease is *arteriosclerosis*.
(*Arteriosclerosis* is the process by which the major blood vessels become hard.)



Exercise C: Writing Chronologically

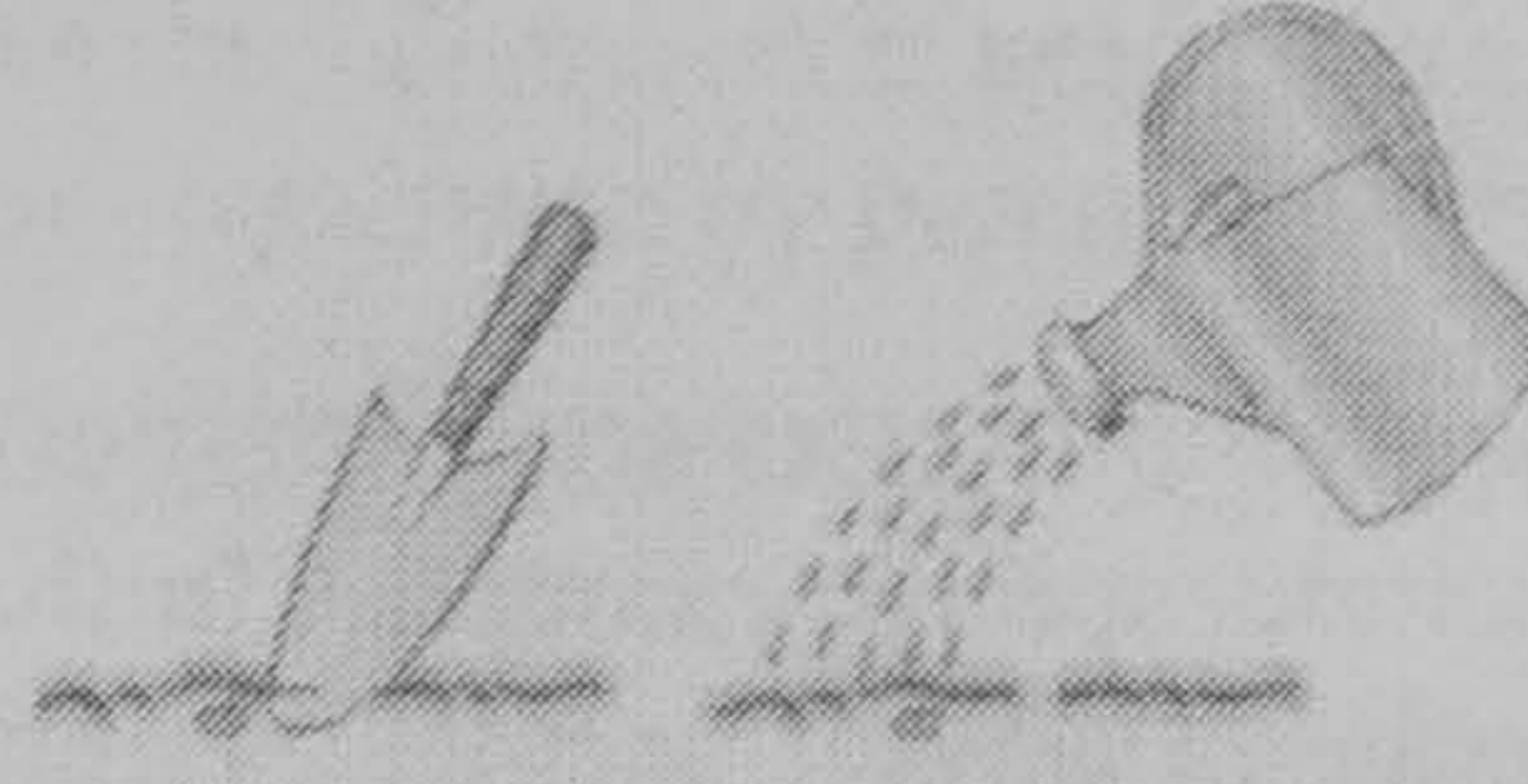
Use the following words to write seven or eight sentences about the *life cycle of a plant*:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>first</i> | <i>subsequently</i> |
| <i>then</i> | <i>later</i> |
| <i>at this point</i> | <i>finally</i> |
| <i>afterwards</i> | |

Try to include all of the information from the chart on page 123.
 Combine some of the stages if you wish. Write in paragraph form.
 All of your sentences together will describe the life cycle of a plant.

The life cycle of a plant

STAGE 1 seed is planted



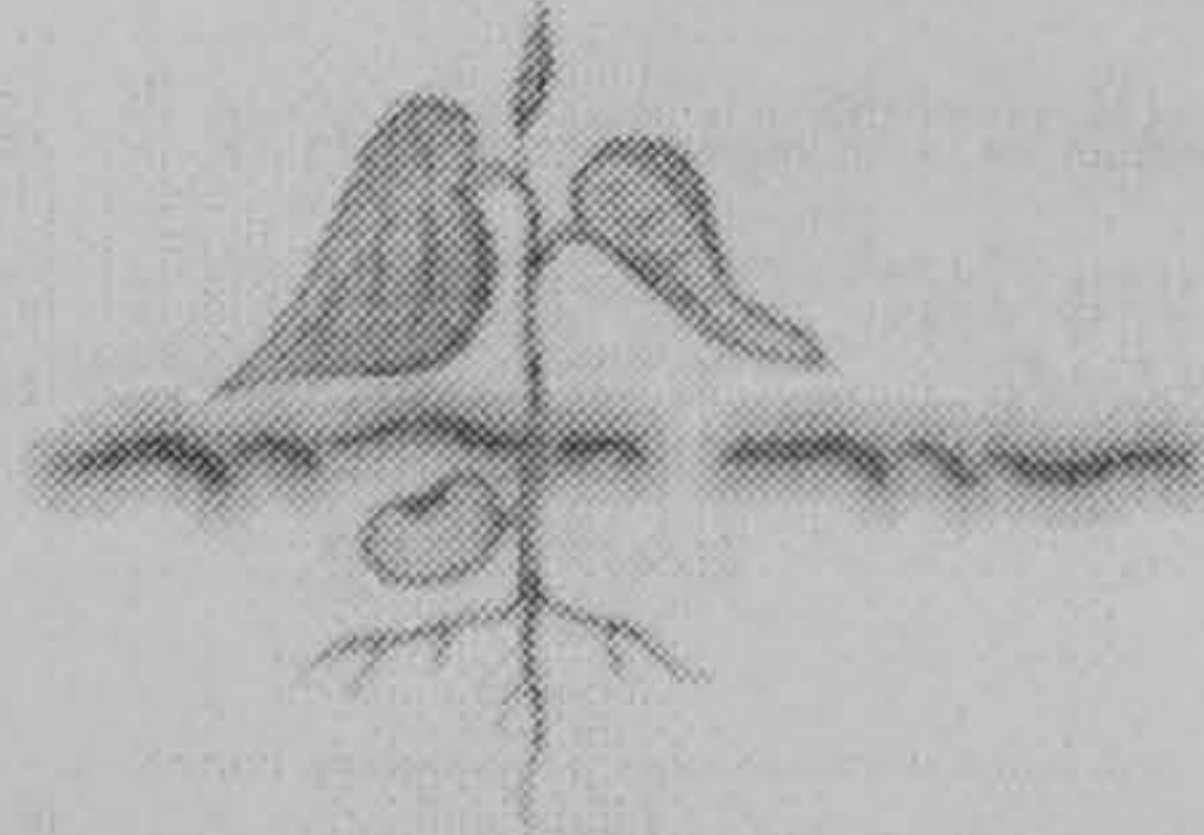
Condition: seed is properly watered

STAGE 2 seed begins to expand



(germination has begun)

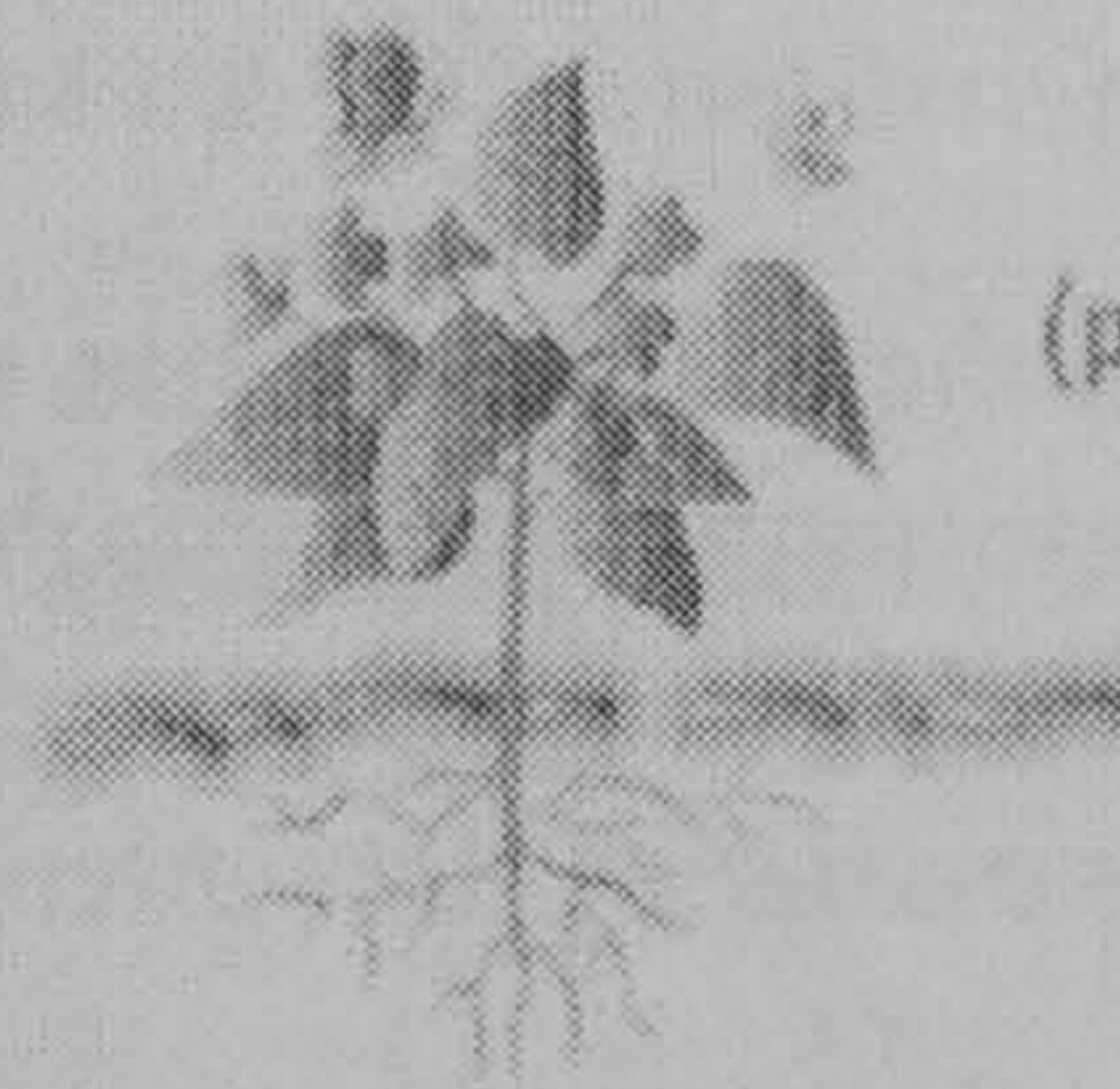
STAGE 3 roots and leaves develop



STAGE 4 flowers appear



STAGE 5 pistils of flowers receive pollen

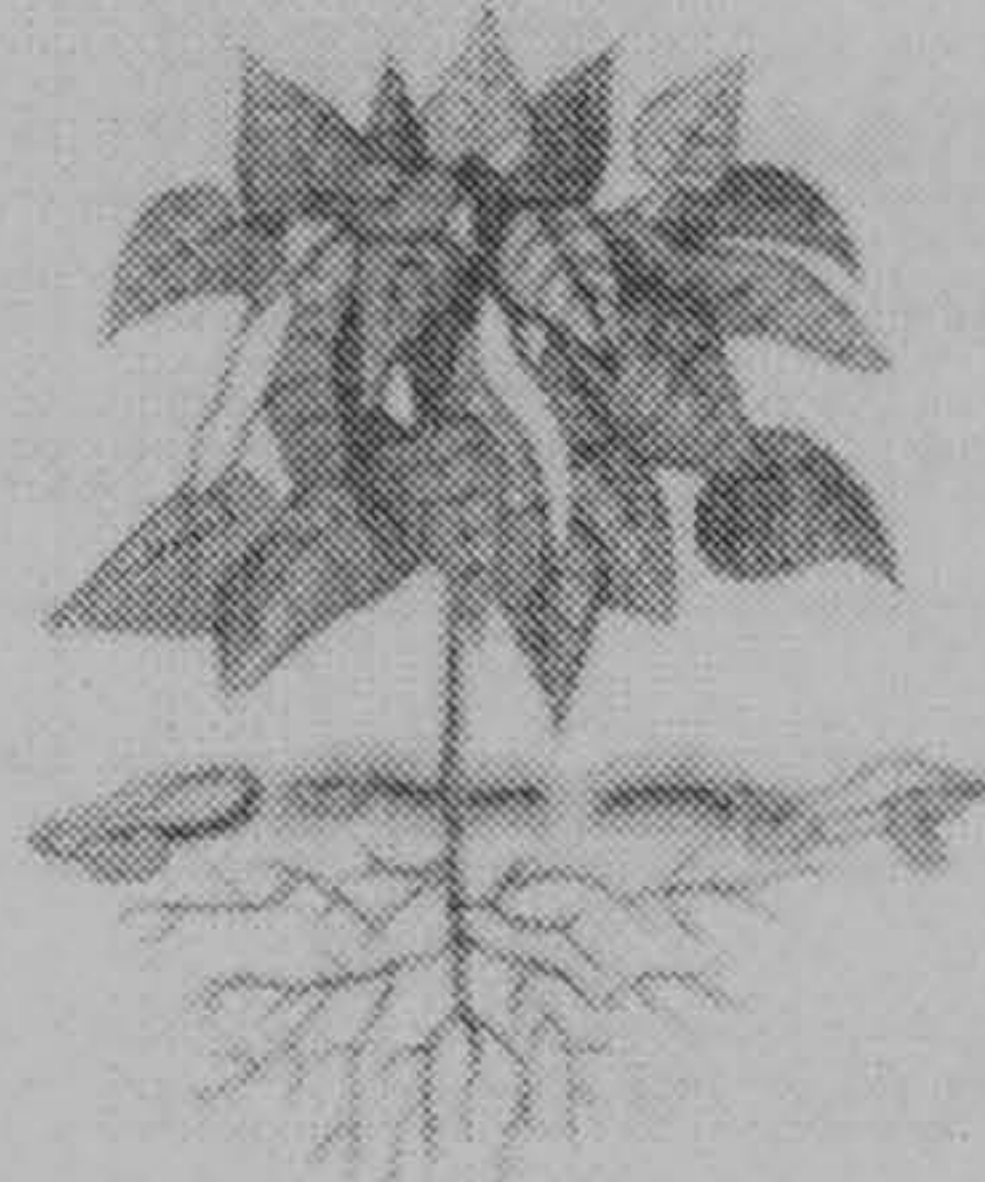


(process of pollination)

STAGE 6 fruit forms



STAGE 7 seeds fall



STAGE 8 plant dies and decomposes





Exercise E: Stating the Controlling Idea

One of the most important transitions in a composition is the movement from the general topic to a controlling idea. Generally, the introduction narrows to a controlling idea, which then flows into the body.

Introduction:

GENERAL TOPIC

controlling idea

Body:

In the exercise below, complete each introduction by writing one or two sentences stating a controlling idea. Part of the body is included to let you know how the composition would continue.

Example: **The Eruption of Volcanoes**

The eruption of a volcano is one of the earth's most spectacular shows of energy. It often releases enough energy to send millions of tons of volcanic dust into the air.

The power released at the top of a volcano is generated far below the earth's surface.

Fifty to a hundred miles beneath the surface, hot molten rock mixes with gas to create magma, which collects in a chamber. Gradually, ...

NOTE: The writer begins with the general powerfulness of a volcano, then moves to the action of releasing the power, and finally gets to the real point—the process of generating that power. As a reader, you understand the controlling point after you see the direction in which the writer is developing the body.