

RESEARCH WRITING IN AN EFL CONTEXT:

A CASE STUDY IN TAIWAN

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education in Applied Linguistics and TESOL**

School of Education

University of Leicester

2002

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a qualitative case study of a research writing project at undergraduate level in a Taiwanese university. The general purpose of this thesis is to study the whole process of research writing at undergraduate level, while the more specific focus of the study is to investigate the students' learning experiences in the project and the teacher-student interaction in the learning process, such as in writing conferences and the revision stage.

The study involved one American instructor and seven Chinese students majoring in English. It traced a research writing project, carried out as part of the writing curriculum, from start to finish. The project was examined from both the instructor's and the students' perspectives. Data for the study come from interviews, student writing drafts, and teacher-student conference transcripts.

The findings indicate that the research writing project was perceived by both the students and the instructor as an integrated part of the composition curriculum. Investigations of writing conferences show that organization, documentation, and the mechanics of student papers were some of the focuses of the conferences. A detailed analysis of two students' multiple drafts suggests that writing conferences had a strong impact on the students' revision of their papers. Also emerging from this study is the cultural confrontation between the American instructor and the Chinese students. The impact of this on the acquisition of research writing is explored. It is found that both the instructor and the students attributed certain writing problems to the influence of culture.

A preliminary model of the research writing process is proposed based on the findings of the study. It shows the interaction between the research writing project and variables such as the teacher, the textbook, external factors, academic culture and students' indigenous culture. Practical implications and directions for further research are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The preparation of this thesis has inevitably depended upon assistance and support from various sources. I would like first and foremost to thank my supervisor Dr. Peter Martin for many patient hours of invaluable guidance.

I would also wish to record my gratitude to Dr. Daniel Robertson for his enlightening feedback during the data collection stage, as well as to Dr. Marlene Morrison for help given in the area of methodology.

Mention should also be made of Dr. Ying-Huei Chen for his support and encouragement, as well as the many other friends, colleagues and research participants, whose patience and kindness has been instrumental in the completion of this work.

Finally, I would like to say a warm “thank you” to my parents for their generous love and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENESIS OF STUDY

Ten years ago when I was in my junior year in the department of English at an old university in Taiwan, the research paper served as a final destination in the three-year composition curriculum. At the beginning of the three years, I started from writing a paragraph of 150 to 200 words. By the end of the three years, I was expected to embark on a piece of research on my chosen topic. We were guided through various stages of research, such as searching in the library for available sources, making bibliography index cards and note cards. After all these years, I can still remember that I felt a sense of achievement after I completed the research paper.

Two years ago, I went to a department of English at a newly-founded university in Taiwan to visit my former supervisor. I made acquaintance and exchanged ideas with two composition instructors there. One of them, Mr. James (pseudonym), mentioned that he would shortly begin a research writing project with his class. The memory of my own experience with research writing came back to me, from the first library research in my junior year in college to the more recent empirical research carried out as part of my doctoral study. Writing a research paper seems to have been an unquestioned practice in English departments of many universities in Taiwan. On a personal level, I was eager to find out if the research writing project in question would be different from the one that I had experienced. On a broader level, I was looking forward to investigating the context and the process of how the genre of research writing was taught and learned in departments of English in Taiwan.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In terms of writing, the training of English majors in the university in Taiwan often culminates in the research paper. The purpose of the research assignment generally falls into three areas: first, to improve writing, particularly writing of considerable length (as opposed to short essays that are often assigned in the writing class); secondly, to cultivate independent and critical thinking; and thirdly, to introduce library research skills. This kind of research assignment usually takes students from several weeks up to a whole semester to complete. The time and the

effort that students invest in this single assignment are considerable. However, it is also reported that most students see the research assignment as a formidable task for several reasons (Mo, 1997). First, students do not always understand the nature of and the skills required in research writing. Secondly, not enough supervision is provided. Thirdly, apart from reading textbooks and preparing for exams, students seldom have time for writing. Fourthly, library resources are seldom systematically introduced to students. Therefore, many students have difficulty searching for and analysing useful information for their research topics. In light of these findings, there seems to be a need to conduct research on the teaching and learning of research writing so that students can benefit from the research assignment.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis concerns a single case study of a research writing project at the undergraduate level in a Taiwanese university. The general purpose of this thesis is to study the whole process of research writing at the undergraduate level, while the more specific focus of the study is to investigate the students' learning experiences in the project and the teacher-student interaction in the learning process, such as in writing conferences and the revision stage.

This study was driven by data. I began approaching the subjects with as few preconceptions as possible. However, at the same time, I was conscious that my background would play a dual role in my perception and interpretation of the case studied. Firstly, as was revealed in the opening paragraph of this thesis, I also undertook a similar research writing project when I was a college student, which means that I had some knowledge of what the process entailed. Secondly, as a doctoral student, I have written several research papers and am therefore familiar with this process. I regard this aforementioned background as a strength because I can certainly use this "insider" view to make more sense of the project and of the student writers at work. On the other hand, as the study progressed, I gained increasing insights into the composition class and the research participants. Using these new insights, I drew on the knowledge obtained during the process of the study in order to refine my research questions. Towards the end of the data collection process, five research questions were formulated with the view to guiding my analysis and report of the case. These research questions are:

1. How is the research writing project implemented, i.e., What are the main stages of the project and what are the important features of these stages?
2. How do the students and the instructor perceive the project?
3. What features can be found in the outcome of the project, i.e., the students' research papers?
4. What important features can be found in the project as a whole?
5. What implications do the answers to these questions have for the implementation of a research writing project?

While the thesis, adopting a case study approach, focuses on a small group of students and their instructor, its broader aim is to contribute to our understanding of student research writing in a foreign language.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

There is a body of research that approaches second language writing from different angles, such as the writing process (e.g., Zamel, 1982; Raimes, 1985), contrastive rhetoric (e.g., Connor, 1996; Kubota, 1998), and revision process (e.g., Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986). However, less research has been carried out to investigate the whole process of a particular writing event, such as a research writing project.

In the current study, I traced the project in question from start to finish in order to learn and make sense of the learning process of research writing in an undergraduate EFL programme. Various fields of composition study are drawn upon, such as contrastive rhetoric, writing process research, and revision process research. It is noted, however, that the literature review chapter of this thesis is relatively short. This is because it is a main intention of this thesis that emphasis has been placed on the analysis and interpretation of the data in order to achieve an understanding of the project in its context. The feature of the study is, therefore, to draw a picture of the whole research writing process without ignoring the experiences and the perceptions of individual research participants. Towards the end of the study, a model of the research writing process is presented. This model summarises the whole project while also showing some causal and temporal relationships among variables.

The findings of this study are pertinent to the field of English teaching in Taiwan. Furthermore, the study may also provide important implications for other EFL contexts where academic writing, or more specifically, research writing is taught and learned.

1.5 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis contains eleven chapters. Except for the first and the final chapters, all the other chapters are grouped into three parts. The reason for adopting the “part” system in this thesis is that while most of the issues deserve a separate chapter to deal with, they are better grouped into several parts to help the reader recognize their functions in the thesis. For example, the chapters in Part 3 serve the function of reporting the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 1 introduces the study and the research questions. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 are combined into Part 1, where contextual background of the study is provided and writing research selectively reviewed. Chapter 2 gives a brief introduction to Taiwan, where the case study was carried out. In addition to its history and geography, the chapter reports on the educational context in general and the English language education in detail. The purpose of the chapter is to set the current study in its broad context and facilitate the understanding of discussion and interpretation. Chapter 3 reviews the literature of academic writing research. It also considers more specific facets of writing instruction, such as writing conferences, and contrastive rhetoric of Chinese and English.

Part 2 consists of two chapters. Chapter 4 details the methodological considerations of the study and argues for the case study approach adopted in this study. It also considers the ethical issues pertaining to this research. Chapter 5 provides the immediate context of the study and lays out the research design. The procedures of data collection are the focus of the final section.

Entitled “Learning in the Research Writing Project,” Part 3 reports on the results of the data analysis. Five chapters are contained in this part. The first three chapters deal with the consecutive stages of the research writing project. Chapter 6 describes the students’ activities during the planning stage. Chapter 7 investigates writing conferences held in the writing stage. It is argued that these conferences are one of the most influential events in the project. Chapter 8 examines the students’

revisions of their drafts. It attempts to identify the focal points of revisions, which were motivated either by the instructor's written and oral feedback or by the students' own concerns.

Chapters 9 and 10 continue the exploration of the case. Chapter 9 deals with the issue of culture. It emphasizes the impact of culture on the writing practices and the participants' perceptions towards the writing task. Chapter 10 reports on the instructor's and the students' overall impression of the research writing project. It also summarises the difficulties encountered by the students when undertaking the writing task.

Chapter 11 draws together the threads of the research and reaches a number of general conclusions. A section is devoted to explaining the model of the research writing process, which is developed from the case study. This chapter also provides several recommendations for the implementation of a research writing project and suggests directions for future research.

PART 1

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of Part 1 is to provide important background and contextual information for the study. This part consists of two chapters. Chapter 2 gives a brief introduction to Taiwan, where the study was carried out. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on academic writing research. It evaluates different approaches to ESL¹ writing pedagogy. It also considers more specific facets of writing instruction, such as writing conferences, and contrastive rhetoric of Chinese and English.

¹ The researcher acknowledges that differences exist between ESL and EFL contexts. This review chapter, however, discusses ESL literature almost exclusively, because of the relative lack of literature dealing with EFL writing contexts.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND – ENGLISH EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

This chapter sets out to provide the larger social context surrounding the case studied – a research writing project in a Taiwanese college classroom, while the more immediate context, such as the composition classroom, will be detailed in Chapter 5. The first section of this chapter gives some factual information of Taiwan. A brief history of the country follows in the second section. Section 2.3 examines the use of native languages and foreign languages in Taiwan. Finally, the educational system in Taiwan is explained and special attention is given to English education in the different educational levels in Taiwan.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF TAIWAN

Taiwan, formerly known as Formosa (the Beautiful Island), is an island country off the south-east coast of China. The island is 370 km long and 130 km wide, with a population of 22 million in 1999 (Government Information Office, 2001). The population consists mainly of four ethnic groups: the Taiwanese or Minnanren (Southern Min People), the Mainlanders, the Hakka and the aborigines.

Taiwan used to be an agricultural society. Since the 1960s, however, Taiwan has undergone enormous change and has rapidly become an industrialized country. Its prosperity is based on its exports of textiles, electronic goods, and information technology mainly to the United States. With limited natural resources, Taiwan has sought to promote international trade. Currently, it is the world's 14th largest trading nation (Government Information Office, 2001).

2.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF TAIWAN

The history of Taiwan can be characterized as an immigrants' story. Little was known of the history of Taiwan before 1600, apart from the fact that people of Malay-Polynesian descent came to settle on this island about 8000 years ago. In the early seventeenth century, the Dutch merchants came to establish a fortress on the south-western coast of the island and opened the page of the modern history of

Taiwan. In 1683, Taiwan became officially a part of China after the Qing Dynasty (1664-1911) took over the island and set up a government. In the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, Taiwan was ceded to Japan after China was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War. For fifty years, Taiwan stayed a Japanese colony until it was returned to China at the close of the Second World War in 1945.

Amid the turmoil of the civil war following World War II, the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) was forced to give up Mainland China to the Communist Party and retreated to Taiwan. Since then, with the military support of the United States, Taiwan has stayed independent from communist China for over fifty years. During this period, Taiwan has experienced industrialization, urbanization as well as constitutional reforms. In March 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected the tenth President, after the Kuomintang had held the presidency for 50 years in Taiwan. The smooth and peaceful transition showed that Taiwan has become a full democracy.

2.3 THE LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

The complex historical past of Taiwan has resulted in a diverse language situation on the island. The official language in Taiwan is called *guo-yu* (National Language), or “Mandarin Chinese” in English. It is the primary language used in schools, the government, the media, and most business offices. Southern Min (often referred to as Taiwanese) and Hakka are two major dialects², which serve as the medium of daily interactions in many parts of Taiwan. These languages, all belonging to the Chinese language family, are different from Indo-European languages in their monosyllabic phonological system, the use of tones to distinguish different meanings, a syntax that depends on word order, and a lack of inflection, grammatical gender, and pluralization (Government Information Office, 2001).

The most commonly used foreign language in Taiwan is English, which is also one of the subjects learned in all levels of schools. Two national daily newspapers are published in English. One English radio broadcasting station, ICRT (International Community Radio Taipei), and several imported television stations on cable can be heard or watched nation-wide.

² Southern Min, Hakka, and Mandarin are mutually unintelligible, though the first two languages are habitually referred to as dialects.

2.4 EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

Education in Taiwan is highly valued as a key to self-fulfilment and career promotion. All the citizens of Taiwan are entitled to nine years of elementary and junior high school education. After the compulsory curriculum, the majority of students enter one of three types of institutions through local examinations: senior high schools, senior vocational schools and junior colleges. If students wish to pursue further study, the options are varied. Senior high school graduates usually enter universities through the selection of the Joint University Entrance Examinations (JUEE). Junior college graduates can either take a transfer test offered by individual universities or they can take an examination in order to be admitted into one of the newly established two-year programmes of technological universities. Table 2-1 illustrates the mainstream educational system in Taiwan.

Age	Educational institutions			
4-6	Kindergarten			
7-12	Elementary school			
13-15	Junior high school			
16	Senior high school	Senior vocational school	Junior college	
17				
18				
19	University	Technical college		
20				
21		Technological university		
22				
23 +	Graduate school			

Table 2-1 The Educational System in Taiwan

The medium of instruction in all levels of schools is Mandarin Chinese, although dialects such as Southern Min may be heard in the daily interaction, either among students or between students and teachers.

2.5 ENGLISH EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

Up until recently, English education was only available from secondary level.

However, English has long been included in the language curriculum of secondary schools and universities in Taiwan. According to Tsao (1999), English is important as it provides “information access to the world of technology and science which Taiwan needs for social modernization and economic growth” (p. 352). In the first three years of secondary education, all students are required to learn English four or five hours a week. If they continue to climb the educational ladder, they will be required to take English courses until the first year of university.

Though rarely used in either public occasions or private lives, the ability to speak English is respected as a skill of importance and usefulness, particularly in the business world. In recent years, Taiwan has aspired to gain a status in international trade and business. As a global language, English has become even more important in Taiwan. Its growing status can be demonstrated by the burgeoning of private language schools on the island. Some of these language schools are exam-oriented, while others cater to adults’ need to learn the language, mostly for the purpose of career advancement. In addition, the prosperous business of children’s English schools reflects the parents’ mental association of success with acquiring the English language. After being introduced into the fifth and the sixth grades of the primary curriculum in 2001, English is enjoying an ever more prominent place in education in Taiwan.

2.5.1 English Education in Secondary Schools

As in most of the Asian countries, such as Japan and Korea, English education in the Taiwanese secondary curriculum is examination-oriented. The language is seldom taught as a communicative skill. Class time in secondary school is spent on intensive reading of a dozen short texts per semester. Vocabulary expansion and grammar practice are the major focus of English lessons (Tse, 1987, quoted in Tsao, 1999). Oral communication in the target language is rare. Writing activities are limited to drills of sentence combining and translation. Under this kind of instruction, successful students build up a big vocabulary and strong grammar knowledge, though whether they can use them for communication in speaking or writing is another question.

2.5.2 English Education in Junior Colleges

After graduating from junior high school, students in Taiwan can choose to go to academically-oriented senior high schools to prepare for the JUEE. Alternatively, they can choose to go to five-year junior colleges and major in “practical” subjects, such as engineering and business. Though junior colleges are more vocationally-oriented, students are required to study English in the first four years. English education in junior colleges is more difficult to predict or to summarise, because normally college teachers have some freedom in choosing textbooks and deciding on the content and the modes of instruction, without the constraint of the JUEE. In other words, some of the teachers might continue intensive reading instruction, with which students have been familiar since junior high school. Other teachers might like to spend more time on oral skills. However, the instruction is often unsuccessful, partly because of students’ low motivation and partly because of the practicalities of big class teaching.

In recent years, more and more junior colleges have established applied English departments to cultivate proficient English speakers to meet the needs of the worlds of business, science, or information technology. Many of the colleges employ English native speakers to teach Conversation classes, which means that students of these English programmes have a bigger chance to use this foreign language in genuine communication. Apart from the basic four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, students in these programmes are offered optional courses such as Tourism English, Business English, English Language Teaching to Young Children, Translation, and English for Science and Technology.

2.5.3 English Composition Education in University

Every university student in Taiwan is required to take a one year English course. The focus of the English course used to be intensive reading. However, in recent years, most universities have begun to offer various types of English courses for students to choose from, such as Reading, Business English, English Conversation or Journalism English.

As for the English majors in the universities, they are offered a variety of English courses. Apart from the training of the basic language skills, literature is highlighted in most of the English departments, although courses of more pragmatic orientation,

such as Business English and Tourism English, are gaining importance gradually.

Composition courses are normally offered to English majors only. Because composition among the four skills is seldom highlighted in the secondary curriculum, it is seen as one of the English majors' weaknesses and needs more attention than the other language skills. Therefore, most of the English departments offer three years' composition courses, during which English majors are guided through paragraph writing and short essay writing. These courses often culminate in writing a research paper.

The requirement of the research paper has been incorporated in the composition curriculum of many English departments in universities in Taiwan, though the degree of implementation varies. Some instructors limit themselves to the introduction of research and writing skills, such as library research and documentation styles, without assigning real practice. Some instructors might assign several readings and ask students to compose an essay to incorporate the readings and to demonstrate their abilities to reference them properly. Still some other lecturers designate four or five topics for students to choose from, while some instructors give students total freedom in choosing their topics according to their own interests.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the history, the linguistic and the educational contexts of Taiwan have been provided. In particular, the status of English and the situation of English education in Taiwan have been discussed in the belief that the case reported and analysed in this thesis can be better understood and evaluated with the social and educational contexts provided.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON WRITING IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aims of language teaching courses are commonly defined in terms of four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Among them, writing is often the last of the skills taught to language learners. However, writing is by no means the least important skill. Moreover, it is reasonable to claim that writing, particularly academic writing, is the skill that students need to master in order to demonstrate their ability and to participate in the academic community.

There has been a huge body of research carried out in the field of academic writing. The research has been conducted along distinct but interacting dimensions such as education, linguistics and rhetoric (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 18). Moreover, the shifting focus from the writing product to the writing process to the English for Academic Purposes orientation has also been reflected in the studies carried out in the recent years. On the other hand, due to an ever increasing demand of international students studying in English-speaking countries, ESL writing researchers, influenced by L1 composition theories (Silva, 1990), have also started to carry out studies on second language situations. Due to space constraint, these studies will be selectively reviewed.

Since most of the international students in English-speaking countries study at the tertiary level, ESL academic writing deserves and has received special attention from writing researchers. To fulfil course requirements in different disciplines, students need to write assignments or reports based on library or field research. Through research writing they demonstrate their knowledge of the subjects and participate in the academic world. Therefore, studies have been conducted to understand the process and the context of research writing in order to inform the instructional practices.

Although not all the research outcomes are reflected in classroom teaching practices, they often exert a certain influence on instructional methods. Conferencing is such a method that has been used widely in different levels of writing classrooms. Conferencing was lauded in a US national survey to be the most

effective means of responding to student writing (Bowen, 1993), because it supports the writing process and provides an opportunity for students to seek personal assistance from skilled readers (their writing teachers, in most cases). Therefore, it constitutes a very important feature in the process writing classroom.

In second language writing classrooms, cultural factors are also worthy of discussion. Different cultural traditions dictate differing concepts of writing. Cultural conflicts emerging from the interaction of students and the target culture may have an impact on the process of learning second language writing. This issue will be addressed towards the end of the chapter.

In order to examine the current case, I will begin with a review of selective literature on ESL academic writing research. This is followed by discussion of the specific genre of research paper in undergraduate programmes. The last two sections will discuss the practices of writing conferences and the cultural issue.

3.2 APPROACHES TO ESL WRITING INSTRUCTION

3.2.1 Product Approaches

The research on ESL writing has been influenced by evolving trends in various fields such as linguistics and psychology. In the 1960s, when the audio-lingual teaching method was dominant, speech was believed to be foremost and primary; writing was consequently allotted a subordinate status, only to fulfil the purpose of “reinforc[ing] oral patterns of the language” (Raimes, 1991, p. 408). Echoing the contemporary attitudes to writing, the controlled composition approach focused on formal accuracy and correctness. Learning to write in a second language was regarded as “an exercise in habit formation” (Silva, 1990, p. 13), the aim of which was to avoid errors caused by first language interference and to reinforce appropriate second language behaviour. Sentence drills, such as substitutions, transformations, and completions, were employed as the main activities in the writing classroom.

In controlled composition, writing was largely limited to a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items. There was a growing awareness, however, that writing was more than building grammatical sentences. On the basis of his study of contrastive rhetoric, Kaplan (1967) suggests that the teaching of composition should extend beyond the syntactic level to the rhetorical level, through imposing “a series of models that are imitated and by way of a movement from absolute control to relative

de-control” (p. 15). This position gave rise to “the ESL version of current-traditional rhetoric” (Silva, 1990, p. 13), in which writing is basically “a matter of arrangement, of fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns” (ibid, p. 14). Students would learn to outline and to write three- or five-paragraph essays based on four major rhetorical modes – description, narration, exposition, and argumentation (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). However, composition teachers became disillusioned with the current-traditional approach, primarily because its linearity and prescriptivism fails to foster creative thinking and writing in students (Silva, 1990). Furthermore, it was criticized for ignoring issues like the purpose, the audience and the writing process. Consequently, in the 1970s teachers and researchers began to look for a change in the way writing was taught.

3.2.2 Process Approaches

Emig’s (1971) study on the composing process has been regarded as marking the paradigm shift from product to process in the study of composition. Instead of more traditional experimental designs, she adopted a case study approach and gathered data from eight US high school students through the use of “composing-aloud” technique and interviewing. By looking closely at what students were actually doing when they were writing, she discovered the nonlinear nature of the writing process and suggested that it should be taught and studied. In this sense, Emig’s study provided not only a new methodology but also an agenda for writing research.

Inspired by Emig (1971) and other L1 composition studies, many L2 researchers began to investigate the composing process of ESL students and the strategies they used when dealing with writing tasks. For example, after interviewing ESL students about their writing experiences and behaviours, Zamel (1982) suggests that, among other things, students should be taught to use pre-writing and other informal idea-generating strategies and that they should be taught the fact that writing is a “process of discovering meaning” (p. 195) through multiple drafts and massive revision.

Addressing similar questions concerning idea generation, development and revision, Zamel’s (1983) study on advanced ESL students (students who had completed two semesters of freshman composition) shows that they only attend to linguistic details after exploring and clarifying their ideas. In other words, instead of

being obstructed by language-related difficulties, these skilled students view writing primarily as an activity of “making and communicating meaning” (p. 180).

On the other hand, Raimes’ (1985) study of eight unskilled writers (students who were taking a developmental ESL composition course) shows that these students did not dwell on error and editing. Instead, they went back in the composing process to read the texts produced so far and to “let an idea gel and find its form and voice” (p. 247). Thus, Raimes comes to a similar conclusion to Zamel (1983) and suggests that unskilled ESL writers can also be engaged in discovery of meaning, if they are provided with “context, preparation, feedback, and opportunities for revision” (p. 250).

On the basis of these empirical studies, the process approach to teaching writing encourages:

- Self-discovery and authorial ‘voice’;
- Meaningful writing on topics of importance to the writer;
- The need to plan out writing as a goal-oriented, contextualized activity;
- Invention and pre-writing tasks, and multiple drafting with feedback between drafts;
- A variety of feedback options from real audiences, such as peers and teachers, through conferencing or other formative evaluation;
- Free writing and journal writing as alternative means of generating writing and developing written expression, overcoming writer’s block;
- Content information and personal expression as more important than final product grammar and usage;
- The idea that writing is multiply recursive rather than linear; and
- Students’ awareness of the writing process and of notions such as audience, voice, plans, etc. (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996)

While it is impossible to elaborate on every one of the bullet points due to the space constraints, suffice it to say that in the process approach writing is seen as a purposeful activity, in which students are encouraged to express themselves and to improve their writing with feedback from their teachers and peers.

At the same time, Flower and Hayes (1981) further contribute to the process approach by developing a theoretical framework to illustrate the generating nature of

the composing process. Based on their previous empirical work, Flower and Hayes identified in their cognitive process model three major elements: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes. The task environment includes the rhetorical problem, such as the audience and the topic, as well as the text produced up to the current moment. The writer's long-term memory stores the knowledge of the topic, the audience and the writing plans and strategies. The writing processes themselves consist of planning, translating ("putting ideas into visible language") and reviewing. It is worth noting that these cognitive processes are recursive in nature. In other words, instead of proceeding linearly through the three processes, a writer can invoke any strategies at any stage. For example, when they are editing, they can still call upon translating strategies to organize ideas into a linear piece of writing. This framework has since been regarded as useful in explaining a writer's mental activities when communicating ideas and consequently, composition textbooks in both L1 and ESL fields have been written based on it (Spack, 1988).

Nevertheless, several researchers have revealed the biggest problem with Flower and Hayes' (1981) model, and more generally, with the process approach, namely, the scope of application is limited to only one kind of writing – literary or personal essays. According to MacDonald (1987), the kind of essay which Flower and Hayes (1981) based their research on is composed "with an undefined problem, with the writer forced to create a problem for him- or herself" (p. 328). In other words, unlike in the sciences and social sciences, where problems are clearly defined and generally agreed upon, problems in literary interpretation and the kind of essays students are made to write in the composition classroom are relatively "less regularized or conventionalised" (p. 319). MacDonald suggests that the distinction between the two types of problem-solving is likely to alter the nature of the composing process. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted to see if Flower and Hayes' model can be applied to various kinds of writing.

Furthermore, Bizzell (1982) points out that Flower and Hayes' model only illustrates "how" writers go about their writing tasks, but does not show "why" they make certain decisions in certain situations (p. 84). More importantly, she argues that writing processes such as planning and translating should be understood as conditioned by social context (p. 86). For example, poor writers' difficulty with goal-setting may result more from their unfamiliarity with the academic discourse,

than from their lack of cognitive abilities. It would appear that Bizzell's criticism of Flower and Hayes is in line with cognitive researchers in general, which is, their focus on writers' mental activities overlooks the interactions that individuals have with the social or the cultural context.

On the other hand, it has been argued that process theorists or practitioners do not take the reality of students' writing tasks into consideration (Horowitz, 1986). Firstly, the process approach in composition instruction does not prepare students for essay examination writing. Secondly, the process approach does not suit all the students and all the academic writing tasks. Thirdly, students do not always have the freedom to choose to work on the topics they are interested in. Lastly, it does a disservice to students when they realize that university writing is not always evaluated according to the criteria acclaimed by the process approach. Horowitz's arguments are further supported by Leki and Carson's (1997) comparative study of university writing in ESL writing classes and other academic courses. The findings of their study show that the kind of non-text-responsible writing usually assigned in academic writing classes was rarely found in other disciplinary courses across the curriculum. In other words, expressive writing commonly employed in the process approach to teaching writing can not adequately address students' writing problems or prepare them for various disciplinary writing tasks. Arguments like these contribute to renewed interest in examining students' academic writing needs as well as the discourse community that students seek to enter from a social constructionist perspective.

3.2.3 The Social Constructionist View

The social constructionist view holds a particularly significant position in the study of academic writing. A social constructionist argues that knowledge is "created, maintained, and altered through an individual's interaction with and within his or her 'discourse community'" (Petraglia, 1991, p. 38). As text and process, writing is shaped by the discourse community and, at the same time, reinforces and reinterprets the world views shared by members of the community. In short, writing is both "context constrained" and "context creating" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 162). In the next section, the academic discourse community as the broad context of student writing in the university will be discussed.

3.2.3.1 Discourse Community

A discourse community is, briefly, a “sociohistorical” network, formed to work towards common goals, with particular genres that are used in the communicative furtherance of its aims (Swales, 1990). These genres represent a set of discursive expectations, which involve “appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discursive elements, and the roles texts play in the operation of the discourse community” (ibid, p. 26). An outsider is expected to familiarize themselves with these discursive conventions in order to be accepted as a member of the community. Likewise, students writing in the university have to learn “the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing” (Bartholomae, 1985, p. 134) that define the discourses of the academic community. At the same time, writing serves the function of introducing students to “what it means to think and act in various disciplinary forums” (Herrington, 1985).

3.2.3.2 Students Learning Academic Writing

Most undergraduate and postgraduate study is assessed by written assignments, so writing has become one of the most important skills for students to master in order to fully participate in academic society. Examining writing in the university, Bartholomae (1985) argues that students have to “invent the university” when they sit down to write. They need to pretend to be a member of the discourse community and try to mimic the academic language, a privileged language that students are aware of but can not yet control. In the act of writing, Bartholomae observes, students walk away from their “primary discourse” and towards the “standard” discourse by acquiring “a special vocabulary, a special system of presentation, and an interpretive scheme” (p. 137). If students seek to establish their authority as author, they have to place themselves both within and against a discourse, or competing discourses, and build up their own interpretive perspective in order to be granted a right to speak.

Obviously, this acquisition process of academic language is a task overwhelming even for native-speaking students. Lillis (1997) documents the recurring questions where students need help when constructing an academic essay. These questions, ranging from global structure, content and the use of sources, language and wordings, clarifying the voices in the text to being explicit in an academic text, illustrate the difficulties experienced by student-writers when they try to master the discourse

conventions in order to be recognized as a member. It is no surprise that second language writers with inherent language and cultural barriers will need more assistance in academic writing.

Growing out of the need to train ESL students in technical contexts, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) researchers have investigated the features of written scientific and technological English to enhance the effectiveness of language teaching. Verb tenses and lexical choice, among others, have been thoroughly examined (e.g., Malcolm, 1987; Pickard, 1995). However, mere knowledge of linguistic conventions can not adequately address the problem encountered by students. At the same time, researchers have begun to realize the complex nature of disciplinary enculturation and the significance of the context in which texts are produced (e.g., Herrington, 1985; Prior, 1995). Consequently, studies were undertaken to probe the relationship between written genres and the context.

Among these studies, Swales' (1990) research on the genre of research articles (RAs) is particularly influential. He contends that the writing of RAs is not a straightforward task even for seasoned members of discourse community (p. 127). His Create a Research Space (CARS) model contains three moves, Establishing a territory, Establishing a niche and Occupying the niche, in RA introductions. The model not only illustrates the product format but also captures the social and the rhetorical needs of researchers working in academic discourse community, namely,

the need to re-establish in the eyes of the discourse community the significance of the research field itself; the need to "situate" the actual research in terms of that significance; and the need to show how this niche in the wider ecosystem will be occupied and defended. (p. 142)

In other words, the linguistic forms of research articles, or on a wider scale, any genre types, are not arbitrary. Rather, they are shaped by the discourse community to respond to diverse communicative events.

Similarly, Myers' (1990) study into the negotiating process of two biologists is another good illustration of the relationship between the writer and the working context. In this account of the sociology of scientific knowledge, Myers shows that writing of scientists for publication is not simply a matter of reporting the findings. Instead, it requires of the scientists, among others, proper citation of previous literature and rigorous interpretation of the results to make the findings worthy of the attention of the discourse community and, eventually, to establish themselves in that

community. This line of research into the social context of writing further establishes the importance of locating the written product in the process and the accompanying social interaction.

Turning from established members to students at the gate of their disciplinary communities, the immediate writing context of students, apart from the relatively abstract academic discourse community, includes the class, the teacher, the peers, and the particular discipline beyond the classroom. Studies have shown that “different disciplines, different classes within a discipline, and even a single professor responding to different students or tasks may have different expectations, reflected in varying criteria for evaluating student work” (Prior, 1995, p. 49). Furthermore, it is argued that these factors have more direct impact on students’ interpretation of writing tasks and their acquisition of discoursal conventions. Therefore, there is a need to conduct detailed investigations into the process and the interactions involved when students are composing within their disciplines.

Herrington (1985), for example, observes two college chemical engineering classes with the same participating students and faculty (Laboratory and Chemical Process Design) and maintains that teachers can provide an occasion in which students acquire, through writing, the rhetorical and the social conventions of a given community. The assumption of the study is that “each classroom represents a community in its own right, situated at once in two larger communities: a school and a disciplinary community” (p. 333). His analysis of the Lab and Design reports shows differences in terms of the issues addressed, writer and reader roles assumed, and social purposes served by writing (p. 340). Furthermore, the differences are believed to stem from the influence of the class teachers who, through “the role they assume and the expectations they project as audience” (p. 356), successfully create a community in the class.

In a more unconventional discipline, Bloor’s (1996) research on academic writing in Computer Science looks at three types of student writing, the first-year report, the final-year project, and the newsgroup. Her analysis demonstrates some characteristics of writing specific to the field, such as sparse reference to the literature and extensive use of metaphorical language in reports, widespread electronic communication such as the newsgroup interaction as a way of preparing students for their roles in a networked community. Again, this study reveals that the discourse of a given discipline is shaped and constructed by the communicative needs of the

community members. Moreover, through the apprenticeship in the discipline, students gradually mature and become part of a discourse community.

Teaching in the L2 context, Spack (1997) extends her research of academic writing from English classrooms to the field of political science. In this three-year study, she looks into a Japanese student's reading and writing strategies in a second-language context while taking into account her acquisition of academic literacy in her first language. The interview and observation data together with the student's writing sample over the whole period of study contributes to the researcher's interpretation of the cross-cultural literacy acquisition process. In a sociology doctoral programme, Casanave's (1995) investigation into the "local" and "concrete" influences coming from professors, teaching assistants, peers, the system of training and the writing task reveals the students' diverse approaches in response to various aspects of disciplinary traditions.

In an examination of the idea of expertise in writing, Carter (1990) distinguishes between local and general knowledge. Local knowledge refers to knowledge that is domain-specific, while general expertise refers to "knowledge that allows writers to perform effectively when they have no appropriate local knowledge to depend on or when the local knowledge they possess is not effective" (p. 280). Carter argues that a pluralistic theory of expertise should be adopted in the teaching of writing. In other words, both general and local knowledge should be included in the composition curriculum to provide students of different levels the kind of knowledge they need for various writing tasks. For example, the knowledge in writing needed by undergraduates may be more general in nature, while postgraduate students are more likely to be ready for taking up more domain-specific knowledge.

Similarly, contending that writing teachers can not and need not teach students what they can only learn through actively engaging in their disciplines, Spack (1988) advocates a writing curriculum that places its focus on general principles of inquiry and rhetoric, with emphasis on writing from sources.

Spack's (1988) argument is particularly valid in the case of research writing instruction in the writing classroom. In the writing classroom, the purpose of research writing instruction is usually the mastery of research and writing skills, because neither does the writing instructor necessarily possess the subject knowledge nor does he/she see the mastery of content knowledge as the goal of the research writing training. This peculiar context will be illustrated in Section 3.3 with the

example of the research paper requirement in the US university freshman composition programme.

3.2.4 Summary

The different approaches reviewed in the previous sections focus in turn on the text, the writer and the writing context. There are, however, no reasons that these approaches to studying composition should be mutually exclusive. Instead, I would argue that they should be seen as being capable of complementing each other in the attempt to facilitate the learning of a particular group of students in a certain context. For example, the study of the writing process may reveal a writer's strategies in approaching a writing task. An investigation of the context facilitates an understanding of the immediate environment, (i.e. context of the class and the assignment), and the larger social-cultural traditions, from which a writer draws his/her resources to communicate the intended meaning. The information obtained by the above methods may be confirmed or further expanded by looking at and analysing the actual text or texts that a writer produces. A writing event can thus be examined on different levels and from different angles.

3.3 THE RESEARCH PAPER

Instead of content mastery and appropriation of discoursal conventions in a particular disciplinary community, research writing instruction in the writing classroom seems to focus more on general research skills and writing skills. The US freshman composition programme serves as an example.

3.3.1 Research Writing Instruction in the US Freshman Composition Classroom

According to a survey conducted in the 1980s, about four fifth of the English departments in the US universities and colleges require a research paper in their freshman composition programmes (Ford & Perry, 1982). Among all the English-speaking countries, the United States is probably the only country where all the university students, regardless of their subjects, are required to take at least one year's composition course. However, whether the research paper should or can be taught in the English department has been hotly debated.

In Ford and Perry's (1982) survey, they reveal several folds of controversy over the matter of research paper instruction. First, should the faculty in the English department serve the needs of other departments by preparing students to write for various subjects? Secondly, is there such a thing as a research paper and does the instruction improve students' writing abilities? Thirdly, can the research paper be taught after all? These questions even led to proposals to discard the research paper from the undergraduate curriculum.

On a more conceptual level, Larson (1982) argues against the contemporary practice of teaching the generic "research paper" in English departments on the grounds that when the research paper is taught as a separate activity, writing instructors "signal to their students that there is a kind of writing that incorporates the results of research, and there are (by implication) many kinds of writing that do not and need not do so" (p. 814). Therefore, Larson contends that writing instructors should encourage students to take responsibility and engage in "research" for all their writing.

Notwithstanding these doubts raised by the English faculty, extensive implementation of the research assignment in college or high school education seems to indicate its potential values.

3.3.2 The Values of the Research Paper

It is widely believed that writing the research paper can assist students in various ways (Stotsky, 1991). Apart from preparing students for academic research and writing in other disciplines, self-directed reading and writing activities involved in researching can foster critical thinking. Corbin and Corbin (1978) suggest that the research assignment helps students learn how to explore and become knowledgeable about a topic, to select proper tools of research, to develop critical and logical thinking, and to organize and report the research results in a form acceptable to the academic discourse community. Furthermore, in the process of writing the research paper, critical ethical values can be nurtured (Stotsky, 1991). Students can learn to become responsible writers in "seek[ing] information on all points of view about a question, evaluat[ing] the quality of the information that is gathered, support[ing] their generalizations with reasonable evidence, and present[ing] the results of their research clearly" (p. 195). More specifically, there are some pedagogical goals that are

usually associated with the teaching of research writing. These goals will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.3 The Pedagogical Goals of the Research Assignment

The main pedagogical goals of the research assignment are to master content, to develop library research skills and to improve writing skills (Lutzker, 1988). However, in case of the research paper assigned in composition classes, content is mostly ignored for various reasons. First, composition instructors do not feel adequate in dealing with subjects beyond their knowledge domains. Secondly, composition instructors do not see content mastery as part of the responsibility of writing courses. Therefore, library research skills and writing skills are most emphasized in the teaching of the research paper.

Undeniably, library research distinguishes the research paper from other essays that students write to fulfil the requirements of the writing class. A detailed though not exhaustive list indicates the extent of the specific library skills that students should familiarize themselves with in order to undertake solid research:

Know what is included in the library catalogue;

Be able to use the catalogue efficiently, which involves a knowledge of key word searching;

Know the appropriate indexing or abstracting services for the subject;

Locate relevant citations using the appropriate indexes;

Be able to ascertain if the university library owns the journal needed, what format it is in, and where it is located;

Know how to obtain books and articles that are not in the home library;

Know the function of various tools such as citation indexes and indexes to proceedings;

Know what newspapers are available in the library and how to use the available newspaper indexes;

Know how to locate and evaluate relevant statistics;

Know how to locate government documents;

Know how to locate and use subject encyclopaedias and handbooks in order

to get overviews of the field;

Know how to locate biographical information and names and addresses;

Know the important reference books in a specific subject area;

Be able to evaluate sources

(adapted from Lutzker, 1988, pp. 5-6).

Writing in a particular subject may use some library research skills more than others. For example, a research paper in population study may need statistics while a literature paper may not.

In many countries, including Taiwan, computer facilities and the Internet have been introduced widely to all levels of schools. Many of the library resources are computerized. Therefore, it is an inevitable trend to acquaint students with the role of the new technology in research.

In addition to content mastery and library skill training, the improvement of writing skills is a self-evident pedagogical goal in the teaching of the research paper. A full discussion of the writing skills is beyond the scope of the review here. However, several important points will be raised for illustration. The writing skills emphasized in the research writing instruction contain general writing skills such as logical organization, audience expectations, cultural and disciplinary assumptions, and proper presentation, which includes attention to the mechanics such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Moreover, the “analysis, synthesis and interpretation of information” are important elements expected in academic writing, particularly when working with multiple resources (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 344).

These complex skills, as Grabe & Kaplan (1996) point out, are usually achieved through “direct supervision, guidance, and support” (p. 345) in the writing course. In a process writing classroom, teacher feedback in the form of conferencing is, apparently, one of the ways through which students can access support in the building of their writing skills.

3.4 WRITING CONFERENCES

In school contexts, teachers are often the sole reader of students’ essays. More often than not, students rely on teachers’ feedback and evaluation to revise and

improve their essays (Leki, 1990). Teachers' feedback can be presented in many ways, such as, a score at the end of student essays, written comments on the margin of the pages or at the end of the texts. The effectiveness of such written feedback has been investigated (e.g., Cardelle & Corno, 1981; Ferris, 1995, 1997). Though studies like Ferris (1997) show that teacher comments can lead to substantive revision on the students' part, other research demonstrates the futility of direct correction of surface error (Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986). Furthermore, students experience difficulty understanding teachers' feedback because of the unintelligibility of teachers' handwriting, the unfamiliarity of symbols and grammar terms used by teachers, and confusing comments such as "too general" or "too specific" (Ferris, 1995). Sometimes students lack the ability to execute the revision when they understand teachers' comments. This mismatch explains why many L1 writing teachers in Freedman's (1987) survey see written feedback as the least useful response to student writing, except when it is supplemented by the conference method.

3.4.1 Theoretical Background of Conferencing

A writing conference refers to a "private conversation between teacher and student about the student's writing or writing processes" (Sperling, 1991, p. 132). One way to explain the function of conferencing is through Vygotsky's concept of "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" and "scaffolding." Although Vygotsky's theory was usually applied to early childhood education, it has been found to be relevant to young adults' writing classrooms. For example, Patthey-Chavez & Ferris (1997) point out that conferencing presents a classic example of a teacher-led Zone of Proximal Development, the "discrepancy" between what children can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 187). In other words, the "actual developmental level" refers to all the functions and activities that a child or a learner can perform on his/her own, independently without the help of anyone else. On the other hand, the zone of proximal development includes all the functions and activities that a child or a learner can perform only with the assistance of someone else. The notion of the ZPD indicates two features of human development. Firstly, "learning with assistance or instruction is a normal, common and important feature of human mental development." Secondly, "the limits of a person's learning or problem-solving ability can be expanded by providing

the right kind of cognitive support” (Mercer, 1993, p. 102). Furthermore, this support, which can only be provided by more knowledgeable persons around children, is where the notion of “scaffolding” comes in. Scaffolding is “help given in the pursuit of a specific learning activity, one which has finite goals” (Maybin, Mercer, & Stierer, 1992, quoted in Mercer, 1993, p. 97). With reference to “the quality of teacher intervention in learning” (Mercer, 1993, p. 96), it is a metaphor particularly useful in educational settings. For example, in a writing conference, usually held between the preliminary and the final drafts, teachers step in during the writing process and help students articulate their needs within a specified focus – the writing task or the written text at hand.

At the same time, writing conferences also contribute to the socialization of novice writers into the academic discourse community (Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997). In order to be accepted into the academic discourse community, novice writers need to learn the languages and the conventions used in the community that they aspire to enter. In a writing conference, teachers can serve as a mentor and help students acquire both explicit and implicit conventions observed in the discourse community.

3.4.2 Advantages of Conferencing

Rose (1982) contends that in a writing conference the teacher can push the students to “think aloud” beyond abstract ideas and more deeply into their own arguments. By showing puzzlement as a genuine reader, the teacher can help students perceive the real need to explain and to get their messages across. The teacher, as a reader and a critic, also benefits from conferences in the sense that he or she can understand what the students really have to say and thus offer more useful feedback.

Notwithstanding its many advantages, conferencing does not guarantee success in improving student writing, unless it is carried out in an effective way. Bowen (1993) suggests four features for conferences to be effective. To begin with, effective conferences are characterized by “reversible role relationships” (p. 191). Unlike most classroom discourse, both teachers and students in a writing conference are granted the right to initiate a cycle of talk, such as to introduce a new topic or to ask questions. Furthermore, both process and product are discussed in effective

conferences. While written comments focus almost exclusively on text, conferences provide an opportunity for students to talk about and reflect on their writing process and their interpretation of the writing task. Thirdly, in an effective conference teachers provide “carefully attuned support” (ibid.) in an attempt to develop eventual independence in learners. Lastly, effective conferences proceed with a predictable structure so that students know what to prepare for and what to expect from them.

Most of the research on conferencing adopts case study approach to ascertain its quality and to evaluate its effectiveness. Sperling (1991) analyses the conference talk between a high school teacher and three students and argues that productive talk in a writing conference need not be extended. Students’ performance in conferences varies in accordance to their differing perception of a student’s role and their experiences in conducting a conversation with an authority figure (p. 155). Therefore, Sperling suggests that the teacher should not seek to promote a preferred mode of conversation in the conference; rather, variety in individuals and social contexts should be taken into consideration.

Granted that the biggest advantage of conferencing is to avoid confusion through face-to-face communication, the doubts as to whether the conference method is as effective as generally believed were raised in Evans’ (1994) study. Interviews with teachers and students after conferences reveal differences in interpretations on both the teachers’ and the students’ parts. These differences involve not only students’ failure to get a teacher’s point, but also “a broader range of beliefs, assumptions, motives, and goals” (p. 3). Some of the differences are:

unknown to the teacher, the student did not understand something the teacher said;

unknown to the student, the teacher did not understand why the student did something in her draft;

the student and the teacher did not have a mutual understanding of what the other one wanted to accomplish, either in a particular conference or through conferencing in general.

(adapted from Evans, 1994, p. 3)

Evans (1994) warns us that the misinterpretation arising from conferences may

cause problems that have potential long-term consequences. Therefore, care should be taken to identify the differences in interpretation in the hope that more understanding may eventually result in more effective conferencing.

Most of the research in conferencing reviewed above involves English-native-speaking students. There are good reasons to suspect that conferences with ESL students might exhibit differences that result from students' (in)ability to express themselves and discrepant cultural expectations. Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), for example, analyse copies of student drafts as well as transcriptions of conference talks to ascertain the relationship between conferences and subsequent revisions and the role that students' language background and writing ability play in them. Results show that students revise their essays to make their text more acceptable academic discourse and these revisions reflect the teachers' suggestions. In addition, no cultural difference was found in terms of students' performance in conferences and their written texts, presumably because the ESL students involved in this study show sufficient knowledge of the English language and culture to function effectively in a writing conference. However, whether students with differing degrees of language proficiency or in a different context will exhibit the same pattern remains to be investigated.

In general, the research on conferencing argues for its advantages of reducing confusion and promoting student-teacher communication. It also points to the relation of conferencing with improvement in writing. However, research (e.g., Evans, 1994) portraying misunderstanding arising from conferences suggests that more studies of different learning contexts need to be carried out to make sure that such misinterpretation be limited to the minimum.

In the next section, the cultural issue will be brought to focus, as it is believed that in the context of second language writing, culture is an implicit, if not necessarily explicit, factor that contributes to both teachers' and students' interpretation and realization of writing tasks.

3.5 CULTURAL DIMENSION

Researchers in applied linguistics have come to realize the complex nature of writing (e.g., Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Investigations into academic activities in ESL contexts can not avoid taking students' native cultures into consideration. As

Kramsch (1998) points out, the use of written language is shaped and socialized through culture, which dictates whether it is proper to write to whom in what circumstances using which text genres. Furthermore, in the case of learning to write in a foreign language, the impact of culture not only presents itself in the attitudes and expectations of learners but also in the logic and the organization of texts. Hinkel (1999) contends that different cultures might not share the same notions about “[w]hat represents a logical progression of text and how the text should be constructed to communicate the writer's purpose” (p. 71). These differences can be better understood through the study of contrastive rhetoric. In the next sections, Kaplan's contribution to the study of contrastive rhetoric will be examined, followed by a brief discussion of the Chinese rhetoric traditions as well as a review of research on the contrastive studies of Chinese and English writing.

3.5.1 Kaplan and Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan's study, “Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education” (1966) can be regarded as a milestone in the development of contrastive rhetoric. In the teaching of reading and composition to ESL students, Kaplan asserts, cultural differences in rhetoric should play a key role. Out of six hundred ESL student writing samples together with some English translation works of various languages, he identifies several distinct ways of organizing paragraphs. For example, paragraph development in Arabic writing is based on consecutive parallel coordinate clauses. Chinese and Korean writing is characterized with an indirect approach, where the development of the paragraph is like “turning in a widening gyre” (p. 10) and the subject is never addressed directly. Kaplan eventually produced diagrams to illustrate the cross-cultural differences in paragraph organization. Studies (Cmejrkova, 1996; Duszak, 1998; Cai, 1999) have since been carried out to discover or uncover the preferred rhetorical styles in various cultures and to compare them to English in an attempt to understand the source of the problems encountered by foreign students writing in English.

However, Kaplan's work on contrastive rhetoric has been criticized in several ways. First, his ethnocentric comparison of languages focuses on English and cast the other languages in a more negative light. Second, many teachers and students have come to believe that rhetorical patterns are equal to thought patterns, while the

rhetorical tradition of a culture is historically and socially constructed, instead of innate or universal (Panetta, 2001). Thirdly, Kaplan's limited approach to rhetoric concerns only the arrangement, or the organization, while leaving out other important elements of Aristotelean rhetoric, such as invention, style and delivery (Liebman, 1992, cited in Connor, 1996). Despite these flaws, it is argued that Kaplan made two important contributions. His study expands contrastive studies from the level of the sentence to the level of the organization. In addition, the diagrams he produced, though simplistic, serve a good starting point for more comprehensive study on the potential cultural differences as represented in writing.

Focusing on four Asian languages, Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Thai, Hinds (1990) argues that the writing in these languages can not be adequately described by the dichotomy of deductive and inductive writing in English. He used the term "quasi-inductive" to sum up the rhetorical styles where "delayed introduction of purpose" is often employed. The purpose of quasi-inductive writing is to get readers "to think for themselves, to consider the observations made, and to draw their own conclusions" (p. 100). Therefore, it is not the writer's task to give reasons and to back up conclusions with evidence. When English readers expect to read in this kind of writing the closely-knitted arguments and conclusions as are common in a piece of inductive writing, they are often disappointed and confounded. However, the quasi-inductive writing can be perfectly coherent and comprehensible to people with a different set of expectations. Hinds' study indirectly supports Kaplan's observations of cross-cultural differences in rhetorical styles, and suggests the influence of a person's first language and culture on his or her English writing. In the next section, I will elaborate on the Chinese rhetoric traditions and review several important studies on the comparison of English and Chinese.

3.5.2 Chinese Rhetoric Traditions

There is a rich tradition in the Chinese written language. In this section, I will focus on *ba-gu-wen* and *qi-cheng-jun-he*, two rhetorical traditions that have dominated Chinese scholarship for hundreds of years and continued to impact on modern Chinese writing practices.

3.5.2.1 *ba-gu-wen*

To explain the indirectness he observes in Chinese students' writing, Kaplan (1972, cited in Conner, 1996, p. 37) advanced the impact of the Chinese "eight-legged essay." The eight-legged essay, *ba-gu-wen* in Chinese, originated in the 15th century. It was used in the Chinese civil service examination, *keju*, for recruiting local and central government officials (Cai, 1999). The topic of the eight-legged essay was invariably drawn from the Chinese classics, *the Four Books* and *the Five Classics*. It was divided into eight parts, with rhyming couplets in the middle. The eight-legged essay was later dismissed as unnatural and fossilized (Chen, 1999) and finally fell out of fashion with the abolition of *keju* in 1905. It might be difficult to ascertain the impact of the eight-legged essay on Chinese writing in contemporary Taiwan, China, Hong Kong or Singapore. For one thing, virtually no one has studied the text pattern since its abolition nearly a century ago. In addition, the term "*ba-gu*" has even acquired a derogatory connotation as equal to hollowness, rigidity, and cliché. The four-part organizational pattern, *qi-cheng-jun-he*, however, presents a different story.

3.5.2.2 *qi-cheng-jun-he*

The concept of *qi-cheng-jun-he* has dominated Chinese rhetoric for several centuries. In the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1370), for example, poetry was analysed with the four-part organizational pattern, where *qi* introduces the topic, *cheng* elaborates on the topic, *jun* turns to a seemingly unrelated subject, and *he* sums up the essay (Cai, 1999). However, it should be noticed that the *qi* part does not necessarily have the same function as the topic sentence or the thesis statement in the English writing does (Tsao, 1983). Rather, it is "a general comment on the *implied* theme of the paragraph" (Cai, 1999, p. 290). Instead of turning to a genuinely unrelated subject, *jun* was usually interpreted as providing a seemingly opposing opinion, only to lend support to one's own argument. The pattern can be applied in all the different modes of writing, such as narrative, expressive or argumentative essays. Consequently, it has been taught to Chinese students in most of the writing classrooms and regarded as a formula for successful writing.

Apart from *qi-cheng-jun-he*, certain features of the Chinese rhetorical tradition can be seen in today's writing. First, *yin-jing-ju-dian* (quoting the classics and referring to the past) was highly valued. The Chinese like to quote, though

sometimes without specifying the origin of the quotes, in the introductory and the concluding parts. Dotting the text with allusions to ancient literature is another common practice. This heavy use of quotations and allusions is not regarded as lack of creativity as it might be in the English-speaking world. Instead, the writers are praised as well-educated people, who are willing to show respect to authorities and to accept traditional values, social norms, and group ideologies (Tsao, 1983; Cai, 1999). Secondly, the Chinese like to suggest, rather than state directly their opinions (Matalene, 1985; Connor, 1996). Tsao (1983) suggests that the Chinese place emphasis on *jun* (a change of some kind) because they do not like directness in the writing. Related to this is another feature in Chinese writing: reader responsibility. Chinese writers do not want to spoil the fun of the readers by explicitly stating their intentions. Rather, they require the readers to infer the meaning and reach conclusions. These characteristics are certainly contrary to the expectations of the English readers.

3.5.3 Contrastive Rhetoric of Chinese and English

Since Kaplan's initial observation, there have appeared many studies concerning the rhetorical differences between Chinese and English. Armed with her personal experience teaching composition in China, Matalene (1985) argues that rhetoric is about relationships among "speaker, subject matter, purpose, and audience" and different cultures "define and value different relationships" (p. 789). For example, Anglo-American readers expect to be provided with premises, tightly-knitted arguments, and conclusions. On the other hand, in Chinese writing the priority given to group views leads to heavy reliance of tradition and accepted patterns of expression. In conclusion, Matalene calls for the recognition of the relativity of "the Western rhetoric" and the appreciation of a different value system.

In a biographical account of learning English composition, Shen (1989) relates the discrepancy exhibited in the rhetoric of Chinese and English with contrastive life styles of the Anglo-American and the Chinese societies. The structure of English composition, where a topic sentence in the very beginning aims to inform the reader the main idea of the text, embodies "the values of a busy people in an industrialized society, rushing to get things done, hoping to attract and satisfy the busy reader very quickly." On the other hand, Chinese composition seems to "embody the rules of a

leisurely paced rural society whose inhabitants have the time to chew and taste a topic slowly” (p. 128).

While most of the researchers attribute the organizational problems of ESL students writing in English to negative transfer of their first languages, Mohan and Lo (1985) is an exception. Using sources from Chinese Classics and modern texts on composition, they demonstrate that the Chinese also value direct presentation of topics in writing. Furthermore, L1 studies such as Schuy (1981) and Brown (1981, cited in Mohan & Lo, 1985) suggest that competence in organizing sustained written discourse develops late and it can benefit enormously from proper instruction. The result of their investigation shows that Hong Kong teachers and students focus more on sentence-level skills such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar, instead of the overall organization. This being the case, they claim that the organizational problem present in Chinese students’ composition is better understood in terms of developmental factors than negative transfer of first language.

When ESL students take up the writing tasks in an unfamiliar context, it is not surprising that they will try to apply the strategies in their repertoire and the rhetorical styles of their native cultures to the new tasks. Very often, they find that their familiar strategies or rhetorical styles fare badly in the new writing situation. While it does not necessarily mean that their native rhetorical styles are inferior, certainly it is slightly impractical to demand that the academy change to adapt to the many cultures that students represent, as Bizzell (1987) suggests. Rather, teachers should act as “cultural informants” and “surrogate audiences” (Reid, 1994) and remind their students of the expectations of the discourse community that they are going to operate in by making writing conventions explicit (Panetta, 2001).

3.6 SUMMARY

In the above sections, I have discussed ESL writing research, the research paper as a pedagogical assignment, theories and practices of conferencing, as well as contrastive rhetoric of Chinese and English. The literature that has been reviewed constitutes an important component in situating the current research. It not only provides a foundation of knowledge upon which I have analysed and interpreted my data, but also serves as a starting point for the construction of a model which is unique to the EFL context that I am investigating.

PART 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Every social researcher is faced with a variety of choices of research strategies when he/she begins an investigation. The choice is not simply a matter of deciding upon what tools to use in the investigation, but also one of stating his/her epistemological assumptions about the world that he/she is investigating. In addition, when a method is chosen for its strengths, its weaknesses have to be taken into consideration when evaluating the results of the study. Moreover, a good piece of research has to not only make reasonable choices but also make them explicit as part of the report (Denscombe, 1998, p. 3).

This part of the thesis is to address the issue of research design and methodology. Part 2 consists of two chapters. Chapter 4 considers the methodological stance of the study, i.e., that of qualitative research. It also discusses the strengths and the weaknesses of the particular method and the main investigatory tool adopted in this study. Chapter 5 details the context of the study as well as the procedures of data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of the present study. It begins with an exploration of the epistemological framework used to guide the research and follows with a discussion of the particular method adopted to generate the data, namely, case study approach. The main tool of investigation in this study, interviewing, is evaluated, while the significance of triangulation is considered.

4.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Choosing between quantitative and qualitative paradigms is not simply a matter of deciding on one or several methods to approach a set of research questions. Rather, it is a matter of assuming a distinctive world view and taking a stand. On the ontological level, the quantitative researcher regards reality as “objective,” “out there,” and independent of the researcher (Creswell, 1994). Human behaviour can therefore be measured with an objective instrument, such as a questionnaire. On the epistemological level, the quantitative paradigm maintains that the researcher should remain detached and independent of those being researched. At the same time, the researcher seeks to establish the “truth” by controlling for bias and manipulating variables, and to reach objective conclusions, which can be used to explain and predict human behaviour. However, the concept of “objectivity” has been questioned. Can the researcher come to his or her project without values and preconceptions? Can the society be reduced to the laboratory conditions for experimenting, and do human beings merely “react” to the changes in the environment without “free will”? Furthermore, when the researcher strives to restrict and control variables in their scientific experimentation to reduce the effect of the context, what is there left in the research to interest people and contribute to human understanding of the complex society we live in? Questions like these led people to look for an alternative to the quantitative paradigm.

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

Unlike in the quantitative research, qualitative researchers do not always agree on a set of standards for data collection, analysis or reporting. However, several

common characteristics can still be found across the qualitative schools. Merriam (1988), for example, listed six recurring features of qualitative research:

1. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process, rather than products or outcomes.
2. Qualitative researchers aim to find meaning; that is, how people see their lives, experiences and their perceptions of the world around them.
3. Qualitative researchers are themselves the instrument of data collection and analysis. They do not depend on questionnaires or machines as measurement of reality
4. Qualitative researchers prefer to conduct their research in a naturalistic setting, instead of a tightly manipulated and controlled environment.
5. Qualitative research is descriptive in essence because researchers attempt to make sense of reality through words of interpretation.
6. Qualitative research is inductive. Instead of basing their research on existing theories, researchers aim to build concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details. (pp. 19-20)

The major criticisms of qualitative research lie in three areas: reliability, anecdotalism and validity. While some qualitative researchers dismiss the concern with reliability and validity as existing only in the quantitative research tradition, there is still a need to demonstrate that the methods employed are reliable, through which valid conclusions can be drawn.

The qualitative position is selected as the most appropriate framework for addressing the research questions under study. As stated in Chapter 1, the focus of the study is to investigate the students' learning experience in the research writing project and the teacher-student interaction in the learning process. A qualitative inquiry is strong in addressing process in its natural setting. In addition, it allows the researcher to embrace the research participants' viewpoints and to interpret their experience. The interpretation may not be claimed as completely free of personal bias. Since the researcher may exercise control over his/her normal beliefs and "suspend judgements on social issues" temporarily (Denscombe, 1998, p. 208),

his/her ways of interpreting the world under investigation are subject to personal experience. More importantly, the present study aims to reflect both the instructor's and the students' opinions and beliefs in learning research writing. A qualitative inquiry is thus chosen for its capacity to bring out the multiplicities and complexities of the research participants' worlds.

Having considered the methodological stance of the study, I will continue to discuss the particular method adopted to generate the data, namely, the case study method.

4.1.2 Case Study Method

The case study method is a confusing picture to look at. The term is used as widely in professions such as law, medicine and social work as in the research context. Furthermore, it employs such a variety of data collection methods that it comes to mean different things to different people (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 317). However, the application of the case study approach in educational contexts can be summarised by Cohen and Manion's (1994) statement:

Unlike the experimenter who manipulates variables to determine their causal significance or the surveyor who asks standardized questions of large, representative samples of individuals, the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs (pp. 106-7).

In contrast to statistical methods, a qualitative case study is particularly appropriate to answer "how" and "why" research questions. It is also argued to be the most suitable to school-based research (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Instead of controlling and manipulating variables as in quantitative research, a case study is conducted in a naturalistic setting; therefore, it requires little control over factors, which is particularly suitable for researchers working in school institutions, where control over factors such as teaching methods may be judged as impractical and/or unethical. In addition, its concerns with individuals instead of "aggregates" render it, above all, suitable in educational research.

Among qualitative research, a case study approach features "distinct boundaries" (Denscombe, 1998), and thereby a researcher can identify what is contained within

and what is outside the case. A case study is holistic, rather than looking at some factors while controlling others. Concentrating on one or a few instances, case study is able to deal in depth with complex social situations. This attention to an identified case enables the researcher to investigate the subtleties and the complex relationships between the researched and the context. Furthermore, the case study approach allows the use of multiple methods and multiple sources, through which the validity of data can be enhanced. The rationale for this strategy, as Denzin (1970) points out, is that “the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies” (Quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 69).

Qualitative researchers have attempted to categorize different types of case study. Yin (1993) distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory case studies. With some overlapping, Merriam (1988) also identifies three different types of case study: descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative. Stake (1994) classifies case studies according to their different purposes: intrinsic and instrumental. It is worth pointing out that these classifications are best seen “as a continuum in which the researcher can draw on more than one model” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 322), because sometimes it is difficult to allocate a case study to a particular category. Nevertheless, these researchers’ categories indicate an impulse to bring the vast literature of case studies into order. At the same time, it also implies the flexibility of the method to serve various purposes.

Of the categories mentioned in the last paragraph, an intrinsic case study will be given particular attention here. An intrinsic case study is undertaken “because one wants [a] better understanding of [a] particular case” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). Unlike most of the other types of case studies, an intrinsic case study does not serve as an instrument to test a theory or to illustrate a particular trait or problem. Nor does it aim to build a theory. Rather, the case is investigated on its own merit, for the purpose of either evaluation or understanding. Uniqueness becomes the emphasis of an intrinsic case study, where representativeness is no longer the primary concern. However, this standing was rejected by some researchers as they criticised intrinsic study as “isolated one-off affairs” which can not develop into more general frameworks (Atkinson & Delamont, 1986). This argument brings us to the problem of generalization.

A number of qualitative researchers have addressed the problem of

generalization with very different viewpoints. What is common among case study researchers is their argument for a different concept of generalization from that in statistical and quantitative literature. Schofield (1990) proposes to increase generalization through thoughtful selection of cases to optimise the potential of generalizing study findings. Yin and Heald (1975, quoted in Schofield, 1990) devised a case survey method to bring several case studies under scrutiny and search for patterns on which generalization can be based. These are only some of the examples showing an interest in the field to increase the generalizability of qualitative case study.

More radically, other researchers simply reject the idea of generalization, which is already ridden with quantitative implications. Instead, they have sought to reconceptualize generalizability to make it more meaningful and appropriate for qualitative work. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1979) suggest replacing the concept of generalizability with Cronbach's (1975) "working hypothesis". Cronbach argues that every researcher has to take into consideration any uniqueness found in each new situation, and when local conditions are given proper weight, "any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion" (p. 125).

In a similar vein, Stake (1978) puts forward the concept of "naturalistic generalization", which is achieved by "recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings" (p. 22). Moreover, arguing that single cases weakly represents the whole population, he maintains that the emphasis of case study should be optimising understanding of the case, instead of generalizing the findings. The responsibility of a case study researcher is to describe the case "in sufficient descriptive narrative" to allow the readers to "vicariously" experience the happenings, and to "draw their own conclusions" (Stake, 1994, p. 243).

While using the case study method, it is worth watching out for its limitations. First, generalization from a single case may be problematic, though it might be overcome by demonstrating the similarities or the contrasts of the case under investigation with other cases. Secondly, setting boundaries of a case can be tricky in view of the possibility that a researcher may unwittingly exclude factors that are outside the boundaries but that have an impact on the subjects and activities within the case study (Denscombe, 1998, p. 39). Thirdly, although a case study approach can produce rich data, it has been suspected of lacking in rigour. A researcher should

thus take care to apply systematically his/her method of collection and analysis for a certain degree of reliability. Lastly, researchers should be aware of “the observer effect” in the sense that the subjects may behave differently from their usual selves, being conscious that an observer is present and keeping a record through certain means.

While it has its limitations and weaknesses, the case study method was adopted to generate the data in the current study, because I believe that the intricacies of learning can be captured only through intensive and multifarious examination of the particular phenomenon under investigation. Nevertheless, I kept in mind the inherent weaknesses of the approach while I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data.

Having discussed the strengths and the limitations of case study, the next section will explore the interviewing method, which is employed in many case studies including the current one.

4.1.3 Interviewing

Interviewing is commonly employed in small-scale research because it can collect a wide range of data, such as factual information, statements of opinions, and narration of experiences (Drever, 1995). More importantly, interviews can be used to gather data “in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96). Furthermore, interviewing is a crucial way to probe into people’s feelings, thoughts, and intentions. It is also necessary to find out things that can not be directly observed such as behaviours that took place beyond the time of research or where the presence of an observer is precluded (Patton, 1980, quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 72).

The types of research interviews range from questionnaire-like structured interviews to minimally-controlled unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are mostly used in social surveys where a considerable number of data from a wide range of respondents are collected. The wording and the order of the questions in structured interviews are tightly controlled to facilitate the analysis of data (Denscombe, 1998). On the other hand, semi-structured and unstructured interviews allow the interviewees to “use their own words and develop their own thoughts” (ibid., p. 113). They aim to “discover” the interviewees’ feelings, thoughts and perceptions,

and are, therefore, particularly suitable for qualitative explorations of complex issues.

Interviewing has its limitations, however. Research on interviewing has concluded that people respond differently according to how they perceive the interviewers (Denscombe, 1998). Personal attributes of the interviewers such as the sex, the age, and the social status have a potential impact on the interviewees, particularly on sensitive issues or personal matters. Respondents might feel awkward and avoid giving a full answer. Or they might become defensive and try to present themselves in a better light. In some cases, respondents are known to give the answers that they assume are expected in order to please the interviewers. A researcher should consider the interviewer effect and give it due attention when analysing the data.

The present study adopted semi-structured interviewing as its principal tool of inquiry. The rationale for adopting this method is that it can ensure that important issues on the researcher's agenda are covered, while at the same time, it is flexible enough to allow the interviewees to develop ideas and even bring about significant issues that are previously overlooked by the researcher.

4.1.4 Triangulation

Every research method has its strengths and its weaknesses. A researcher should try to examine which method works best with a particular research question and in a particular setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Using multi-methods can produce more data and allow the researcher to see things from different perspectives (Denscombe, 1998). More significantly, the chance to corroborate data produced with different methods can enhance the validity of the study. Therefore, it is common practice for qualitative researchers to use multi-methods to generate rich data and to cross-reference the findings.

One of the advantages of the case study method is that it allows the use of multiple methods and multiple sources, through which the validity of data can be enhanced. In the present case study three different types of data – interview transcripts, conference transcripts, and student research papers - were collected and analysed to examine students' learning experience from different angles. In so doing, the researcher hopes to construct a picture that would reveal the richness contained in the student-instructor-assignment interactions.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues can occur at any stage of research practice, but informed consent as a basic principle should be the first rule to abide by. Diener & Crandall (1978) defined informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of fact that would be likely to influence their decisions” (quoted in Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 350). Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that four elements are involved in this definition: competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension. Although sometimes it is impractical to follow the guidelines to the full, a researcher can claim to have considered participants’ rights when all the four elements are present to a reasonable degree. Apart from obtaining informed consent from participants, there are some more issues to be considered, such as anonymity, confidentiality, and reciprocity.

4.2.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The dilemma between the individual “right to privacy” and the public “right to know” has been repeatedly pointed out (e.g., Cohen & Manion, 1994). In a piece of qualitative research, where the researcher usually sustains a prolonged contact with and obtains intimate knowledge of his/her subjects, the issue of privacy is particularly significant. Though informed consent can be obtained as to the uses of the records containing personal data (Silverman, 1999), principles of anonymity and confidentiality should be abided by to protect participants.

In my first contact with participants, while I stated explicitly the purposes of the study and the type of involvement I would need from them, I also assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. I promised that their real names would not appear in any form of publication, and that the contents of the interviews would not be disclosed to either their classmates or their instructor. Consequently, the names appearing in this thesis have been changed to protect the participants’ real identities.

4.2.2 Reciprocity

Another important issue to be addressed is the researcher’s awareness of reciprocity principle (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 90). The researcher needs to keep in mind that the participants are doing him/her a favour by adjusting their

routines, devoting their time, or even simply tolerating the researcher's presence. Therefore, certain forms of feedback appropriate to the context should be offered as an indication of gratitude.

I stated in my first contact with the student participants that feedback as far as the results of the study were concerned would not be available until at least one year later. However, I would like to offer what was within my capacity as a gesture of gratitude. For example, I offered to share with them my experiences of learning English as a foreign language, and of studying abroad as a postgraduate student. I also pointed out that they might benefit from participating in the study in two ways. First, they would be provided with the chance to reflect on and to become more aware of their learning, and hopefully they would benefit from their own reflection. Secondly, students would see and experience what was involved in a research project in the field of education, an understanding that was more pertinent to those who planned to pursue a higher degree in social sciences.

During and after the period of data collection, I was pleased to be informed by some of the student participants that they found it helpful to be involved in this study; that they benefited from talking to me about their own writing, a chance they were rarely offered. It indicates that the students cherished feedback concerning their writing activities. Psychologically, they also enjoyed interaction with either peers or more knowledgeable persons. At the same time, their positive comments of the experience of being involved in this study assures me of my immediate contribution to them.

Having laid out the epistemological framework of this research and discussed the specific method and tool of investigation used in this study, in the next chapter I will report the context of the study as well as the procedures of data collection and management.

CHAPTER 5

DATA COLLECTION

This chapter details the context of the study, which includes the access to the research site, the research participants and the writing assignment – the research paper. The role of the researcher in the qualitative study is also considered. Procedures of data collection and management are described.

5.1 CONTEXT OF THE INQUIRY

The current study was conducted in a university in southern Taiwan during May and June of the Year 2000.

5.1.1 Motivation for the Study

Having briefly talked about the genesis of the current study in Section 1.1, I will give a more detailed account of the motivation for this study in this section. Having worked as an English teacher in Taiwan, I was often approached by individual students from my home country for advice on writing research assignments and dissertations. They shared with me the difficulties and the confusions they felt when writing for their postgraduate studies in English, a language they were quite far from being masters of. Apart from linguistic barriers, they also suffered from a lack of knowledge of the conventions and the forms of academic writing. They were also ill informed of the expectations and the standards of evaluation in Western academic culture as discussed in Section 3.2.3.2. Having encountered a few such examples, I began to wonder if college English education in Taiwan had ever prepared the students for academic writing tasks such as research writing. If yes, how do teachers structure research assignments? How do teachers convey the academic conventions? What are students' experiences of learning research writing? Is what they have learned reflected in their writing? These queries formed my initial research questions when I went back to Taiwan for further investigation.

5.1.2 Negotiation of Access to the Research Site

Before undertaking the study, I was conscious of my limited time and resources. In response to the constraints and the initial research questions that I had formulated, I

decided to adopt a case study approach in order to make an in-depth exploratory inquiry about academic writing activities. In April 2000, I approached my former supervisor in my MA study years. He was, at that time, the Head of the English Department at a newly founded university of technology in southern Taiwan. As an English literature professor, he was not unaware of the difficulties students faced when doing their research writing in English. He introduced me to two composition lecturers in the department and promised to give full support when needed. Talking individually with the lecturers, I became interested in Mr. James³ and his plan of a research writing project starting two weeks later. Subsequently, I explained to Mr. James my research interest and asked permission to conduct research on his research writing project, which he instantly granted. Before the project started in May, I considered the resources available and drew up a working design to cover my research questions. This research design included interviews with the instructor and some students, observation and tape-recording of writing conferences between teacher and student, and collection of student research papers.

I asked Mr. James to grant me a chance to introduce myself to his class and recruit volunteering students to participate in the study. He suggested that I go and meet his students during the last half hour of the first session of the project in early May. I talked to the class about my study, my role as a researcher, what was involved in their being involved in the study, and, importantly, the contributions my study can make. Fortunately for me, the students did not need much persuasion. More than 10 students raised their hands to volunteer for participation. I invited the first seven students to stay behind and set up the next appointment for interviews with them. It should be noted that these seven students were neither the best nor the worst in the class. Furthermore, there was reason to believe that their English proficiency level was similar, because they were admitted to this English department by a common entrance exam, in which English was a major subject.

We agreed to meet for initial interviews on campus at a time when they were free from lessons. All subsequent interviews were also held on campus, at the students' convenience. Further information about these interviews will be provided in Section 5.2.1.

Next, I approached Mr. James for his permission to observe his writing

³ Throughout the thesis, names have been changed to protect the participants' identity.

conferences with the student participants. He refused my request on the grounds that my presence in writing conferences would distract students or make them uncomfortable. Instead, he suggested that he tape-record the tutorial sessions with the participating students on my behalf. I accepted the offer with gratitude and brought him cassette tapes at our next meeting. At the same time, I also took care to secure permission from the students to tape-record their individual writing conference sessions.

5.1.3 The University and the English Department

The university where the students attended had only been in existence for five years. It was a government-funded technological university, located in the south of Taiwan. A technological university aims to teach applied sciences courses and cultivate a workforce with high-level technical or managerial skills. Its English programme distinguishes itself from those in traditional universities by emphasizing language skills and professional development, rather than literature. However, the elements of literature could still be seen to occupy a significant part of the curriculum, possibly because some of the teaching staff came from older universities, thereby bringing in more traditional approaches.

The English departments in most technological universities operate on a two-year system. Students in this programme come from two sources. Some of them have previously studied in five-year junior colleges, while the others have completed a three-year vocational secondary school education, followed by a two-year technical college programme. The admittance of students is decided by an entrance exam. To prepare for the exam, a large number of students go to private supplementary schools geared towards the specific goal of helping students succeed in the exam. Reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills are emphasized in these supplementary courses. Occasionally, writing skills are also taught.

The students in this English department had a busy schedule. To fulfil the graduation requirement, they had to take at least 76 credits (approximately 40 courses) in the four semesters of the two study years. Four compulsory composition courses were designed and taken by students, one in each semester. Specific titles of the composition courses were “Applied Research Methods and Survey” for the first semester, “Professional and Technical Writing” for the second, “Professional Report

Writing” for the third, and “Writing for Marketing and Public Relations” for the last. However, these titles were apparently for reference only. The actual contents of instruction did not always match the titles. For example, the instructor in my study reported that he taught the students to write a single paragraph and then a short essay of five paragraphs in the first semester. No “applied research methods” or “survey” was ever touched on.

It was likely that the teachers in the department had to adjust the level and the contents of the courses to meet the students’ practical needs. Some of the students in my study, for instance, had never taken any composition courses prior to registering in this department. Therefore, it seemed necessary for writing instructors to start from scratch and teach the basics of academic writing for the initiation of these students.

5.1.4 The Composition Class and the Research Writing Project

The students were taking the second composition course at the time of the study. Three consecutive class hours were allotted each week. In the course of the first year, students were expected to extend their writing ability from writing a paragraph to composing a well-argued essay of two to three pages. The research writing project towards the end of the first year was supposed to provide students with opportunities to use everything they had learned during the year and to develop a full paper of 6 to 8 pages.

The total time set for the research writing project was 8 weeks (in May and June), beginning after the mid-term exam and continuing to the end of the academic year. In the first few weeks the instructor led the class through important chapters in a research-writing textbook *Form and Style* (Slade, Campbell, & Ballou, 1994), such as finding a topic, locating source information, and outlining. The students were required to submit a first draft in the fifth week. In the last three weeks the instructor held three one-on-one tutorials (conferences) with each of the students. The focus of the conferences was to discuss individual problems that surfaced in students’ papers. Then the students revised their papers according to the instructor’s suggestions. A second draft was submitted before the second conference, which occurred in the following week. Similarly, a revised third draft was submitted before the third conference. Students were given another two days to make the final revision. The research writing project concluded with students submitting the final drafts for

assessment.

5.1.5 The Instructor

The instructor participating in this study, Mr. James, came from the United States. He holds a master's degree in TESOL. He taught English as a second language for one year in San Francisco before he came to Taiwan. Since arriving at Taiwan, he had been teaching English as a foreign language for five and a half years. The courses he offered were mainly speaking and listening, writing and general English for university students. This was the third year he had taught English composition in universities in Taiwan.

Mr. James did not read or speak Chinese. However, he seemed to possess a fair knowledge of Chinese students and Chinese cultures. I inferred from our conversation that one of his sources of knowledge about the Chinese people and language came from his Taiwanese wife. In addition, his five years of interactions with Taiwanese students must have contributed to this understanding. As a matter of fact, he claimed in the interview that his experience as a teacher here was the most important source of influence on his teaching.

5.1.6 The Students

As mentioned in Section 5.1.2, participants were selected using the strategy of convenience and accessibility. Fortunately, the participants came from a range of different study backgrounds, which allowed me the possibility of investigating different viewpoints.

The students, all in their early twenties, were in their first year of a two-year English programme. Though in their first year, the students were usually counted as juniors, because their previous college education had lasted for two more years than that of average high school graduates. The backgrounds of the students were varied. Before they entered this English programme, some of the students had studied English as their major in a five-year junior college. Others had majored in business or engineering in their previous colleges (see Table 5-1). It is usually assumed that students with an English major background have a higher proficiency in English than those who do not, but the assumption can not be verified. However, it is worth noting that the students, coming from diverse study backgrounds, may have had

different perceptions towards English learning in general, and composition instruction in particular. For example, all the students who had majored English in their previous colleges took at least two years' formal composition training, while the others did not.

Name and abbreviation when appearing in the extracts	Sex	Previous study	Title of research paper
Kevin (K)	M	Chemical engineering	(Budget travelling in Tokyo)
Jack (J)	M	English	How the great pyramid at Giza is constructed
Bob (B)	M	Accounting	Democratic Progressive Party's military policy will affect the status quo in Taiwan strait.
Toby (T)	M	Electronics	Disadvantages of cohabitation
Helen (H)	F	English	The riddle of Stonehenge's construction and purpose
Cathy (C)	F	International Trade	Risk factors for osteoporosis
Sylvie (S)	F	English	How to build confidence in children toward their studying

Table 5-1: Student Profile

This table displays information on the students' names (pseudonyms), sex, subjects of previous study as well as the titles⁴ of their papers in this research writing project.

⁴ I entered the title of Kevin's research paper in parentheses, because no specific title can be found on his drafts. For the ease of discussion I formulated a title according to the contents of his paper.

5.1.7 My Role as a Researcher

In a piece of qualitative research, the researcher has to decide the degree of participation. The role as a researcher can be a full participant, a complete observer or, more commonly, a mix along the continuum (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). A researcher will have to take his/her own research purpose and the participants' welfare into consideration. For example, a classroom researcher may want to act as a helper for full participation and better understanding in the classroom activities. However, it is likely that children see the researcher as a helper in a particular way and act differently (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 88). Role choices of a researcher have important implications for the outcome of the research, so they should be made discreetly and sensibly.

In the present study, I defined my role more as an observer than a participant. I opted for in-depth interviews with the instructor and the student volunteers as my main tool of inquiry. For two reasons I refrained from intruding into the classroom routines. Firstly, out of respect for the students who did not volunteer to participate in my study, I did not take part in any classroom observation. Secondly, I hoped to collect writing occurring in a naturalistic environment, so I tried to limit my presence as much as possible so as not to "change the situation in any way that might affect the data" (Bogdan, 1972, p. 21). On the other hand, I was conscious that I was putting the students under the spotlight by the very act of talking to them about their writing, tape-recording their writing conferences with the instructor and collecting their papers for analysis. Nevertheless, I did my best to reduce the impact, while bearing these conditions in mind when analysing the data.

In addition, during the data collection period I took a nonjudgmental stance towards the participants and their writing project. To the instructor, I played my role as a researcher who came to the research site as a learner aspiring to discover the experiences of both the instructor and the students who were involved in the writing project. To the students, I assumed an identity of a senior, who was willing to interact with them on equal standing and give advice when asked. For example, when students asked me during the interviews about my opinions of their interpretations of the writing assignments, I tried to answer their questions with the most sincerity and to the best of my knowledge. Above all, I took care not to undermine Mr. James' instruction.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND ANALYSIS

In the present study, the researcher collected three sets of data, which will be elaborated on in detail in the following sections. Table 5-2 shows data collection procedures juxtaposed with the activities of the writing classroom during the implementation of the research-writing project.

	Classroom activities	Data collection procedures
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction ● Choosing a topic ● Preparing a working bibliography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation of the session ● Recruiting student volunteers ● 1st interview with the instructor (May 10) ● 1st interview with the students (May 12)
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collecting information ● Working bibliography ● APA format 	
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outlining the paper 	
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outline conference 	
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submission of the 1st drafts (June 7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd interview with the instructor (June 7) ● 2nd interview with the students (June 8) ● Collecting 1st drafts
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st draft conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The instructor recording conference sessions
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd draft conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The instructor recording conference sessions ● Collecting 2nd drafts and 1st drafts (with the instructor's comments)
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3rd draft conference (June 27 & 28) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The instructor recording conference sessions ● 3rd interview with the instructor (June 28) ● 3rd interview with the students (June 28) ● Collecting 3rd drafts ● Collecting conference tape-recordings

Table 5-2: Class Activities for the Research Writing Project and the Researcher's Data Collection Procedures

As can be seen in the table, data collection mainly occurred in the first and the last four weeks. I did not observe the classroom activities in Weeks 2, 3, and 4 for reasons laid out in Section 5.1.7. However, information on the three weeks' activities was collected in subsequent interviews with the instructor and the students.

5.2.1 Interview Transcripts

Three interviews were conducted with the instructor and each of the seven student participants. The first interview was conducted soon after the first lesson of the writing project; the second after students submitted their first drafts; the third one day before students submitted their final drafts. Each interview had its focus of investigation. The three interviews with the students constituted the base on which their experiences were traced and interpreted. With the instructor, questions in the three interviews were designed to address the instructor's perception of the students' learning.

It is worth elaborating on the process of formulating the questions in the interview schedules. Questions in the first interviews with the instructor and the students were formulated using both my personal experience and the information gathered from a conversation with the instructor. First, my academic background is similar to the students'. In addition, I also worked on a research writing project when I was an undergraduate. This experience gave me an "insider" position. At the same time, I had obtained some rudimentary project information from an informal conversation with the instructor. Both positions helped in the formulation of the first interview questions.

In the process of the study, I gained more and more insight into the composition class and the participants. These knowledge resources were used in the second and the third interview schedules to generate more questions that were pertinent to the respondents and the context. Furthermore, the technique of cross-referencing was also employed to increase the validity of the study. For example, some of the issues raised by the students were put to the instructor both to verify them and to get a different perspective.

The purpose of the first interview was to understand students' general language learning experiences, previous composition and research-writing instruction, the status of writing in English in their daily life, and their expectation of the current research-writing project. The purpose of the second interview was to investigate students' experiences of conducting research, writing and revising. The purpose of the third interview was to elicit their response to the instructor's feedback and their perceptions of their research papers and the research writing project as a whole. Probing questions based on the earlier drafts were also included to compare the actual

written products with their perception of the writing process. A copy of the interview schedule is provided in Appendix C.

The interviews with the student participants were conducted in a small meeting room in the university. These interviews were conducted on the same days, because I intended to capture the students' perceptions at specific timings during the process of the research writing project. The students had a very busy schedule, but it was possible to find a time when they were all available.

For these semi-structured interviews, schedules were drafted in both English and Chinese. They were presented to the students before the interviews so as to prepare them for what was going to be covered in the session. Options were given to students as to which language (either English or Chinese) was to be used in the interviews. In the first interviews, all participants except one (Jack) chose Chinese as the medium of interviewing. Chinese was used exclusively in the subsequent interviews.

The interviews with the instructor were conducted in his office. Interview schedules (Appendix D) were drafted in English and presented to the instructor before interviewing started. The questions put to the instructor covered his teaching experience, his expectations of Chinese students, and his evaluation of students' writing.

All these interviews were taped-recorded and transcribed verbatim, as soon as possible, after each had been completed. The interview data in Chinese were then translated into English to prepare for analysis. It should be noted that, inevitably, some interpretation was necessary in the translation process. However, utmost care was taken to render the translation as close to the intended meaning as possible.

5.2.2 Conference Transcripts

Starting from Week 5, writing conferences (tutorials held between the instructor and individual students) were held regularly after students submitted each of their drafts. These conferences, lasting between five to twenty minutes, focused on revision of student papers. In total, twenty-one conference sessions held between the instructor and the seven students who participated in the study were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed.

As mentioned in Section 5.1.2, these recordings were made by the instructor,

without the presence of the researcher. My request to observe and tape-record the conference sessions was denied. Based on research ethics, I refrained from intruding in the writing conferences and left the recording be done by the instructor instead. Admittedly, when I reconstructed the scenes by listening to the recordings, much data such as body language could be lost in the transcripts. Another pitfall was that the voice of the students was sometimes inaudible. However, due to the nature of the conferences, where the instructor dominated the scene, the loss was not so great as to cause trouble in the interpretation.

5.2.3 Student Research Papers

Student research papers were collected for the purpose of examining the relations of students' perception of their writing experiences with their actual products. I asked the students to supply me a copy of each of their drafts with the instructor's written comments on the margin. In addition, copies of the outlines and the final drafts were provided by the students.

5.2.4 Data Management and Analysis

In this research, all the tape-recorded data were transcribed. In the case of interviews conducted in Chinese, they were initially transcribed in Chinese and later translated into English. Naturally, extra effort was required to carry out this process. However, I believe that implicit meanings can sometimes be overlooked in translation, which is a loss that qualitative analysis can not afford. Therefore, I decided to translate the transcripts in full and arrange the two versions side by side so as to facilitate the analysis. During the analysis, I had then simultaneous access to transcripts in both languages.

The conferences between the instructor and individual students were recorded in a consistent format, whereby both the interlocutors and the time of the dialogues were shown. The instructor is represented as "I", the researcher "R". Students are represented using the first letter of their pseudonym; for example, "K" refers to Kevin (student). The remaining student names and their profiles can be seen in Table 5-1. In addition, the second conference between the instructor (I) and Kevin (K) will, for example, be entered as I/K/2. Similarly, this system has been applied to the examples drawn from the interview data. R/I/3, thus, represents the third interview

that the researcher (R) conducted with the instructor (I). A complete list of the transcription conventions adopted in this research is provided in Appendix B.

The three distinct sets of research data (interview, conference, and student research papers) contribute to different parts of the analysis and discussion of the case studied. For example, the reconstruction of the research writing process was based on the interviews with both instructor and students. The conference data were mostly used in the analysis of the conference sessions in the writing class, along with some interview data which presented the instructor's and the students' views. An exploration of the revisions made between drafts in Chapter 8 was based on the students' research papers. However, the conference data were also referred to since these revisions were influenced by feedback from the teacher in the conference sessions.

As mentioned above, the three sets of data in the research are different in nature. Therefore, they were usually coded and analysed separately, though sometimes two or three sets of data were brought together to interpret a key event or concept. The process of analysis for the three sets of data was similar. Three steps taken in the analysis of the interview data are given as an example:

1. The transcripts were read through.
2. Coding was made according to two principles. First, the guiding interview questions subdivided the transcripts into several sections, such as the students' learning background, the students' and the instructor's experience of writing instruction, and the process of the research writing project. Secondly, key phrases which indicate the interviewees' attitudes concerning writing and cultural difference were singled out.
3. Links were made between various categories and memoranda were written both to reveal and to elaborate on the underlying assumptions of the interviewees.

Likewise, great care was taken to prepare conference data and student writing sample for later analysis.

5.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the immediate context of the case studied, and laid out the research design. Procedures of data collection, management, and analysis have also been reported. A detailed analysis of my data based on the principles and

methodology proposed here will be presented in Part 3, which is composed of Chapters 6 to 10.

PART 3

LEARNING IN THE RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

This part, consisting of Chapters 6 to 10, presents the main research findings from the analysis of the interview, writing conference, and student essay data. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 will discuss the consecutive stages of the research writing project. Chapter 6 deals with the planning stage. Chapter 7 concentrates on the writing conferences held between the instructor and the students in the writing and editing stages, while Chapter 8 explores the types of revisions made between the first and the subsequent drafts. Chapters 9 and 10 investigate two aspects of the research writing project as a whole. Chapter 9 addresses cultural issues emerging from the interaction between the American instructor and the Chinese students. It also examines the difference between Chinese and English writing as perceived by the instructor and the students. Chapter 10 explores the instructor's and the students' perceptions of the project. It is believed that the important facets of the research writing project will be fully covered in these chapters.

The immediate context of the research writing project, i.e., the writing classroom, has been given in Section 5.1. In Section 5.1.4, I have also explained how the research writing project was carried out. However, to remind the reader, I will briefly review the implementation process of the project. This research writing project spanned eight weeks. In the introductory week, the students chose their topics through brainstorming and group discussion. In Week 2, they collected information and selected some tentative sources. In Week 3, they learned outline formats in class. In Week 4, they brought their outlines to class for discussion with the instructor. In Week 5, they went to the instructor with their first drafts for writing conferences. In Weeks 6 and 7, their second and third drafts were reviewed in writing conferences. In Week 8, they prepared the final drafts for assessment.

In the following discussion, I have divided the whole process into three stages: planning, writing and editing. The planning stage contained activities covered in the first four weeks, which included choosing a topic, collecting information, and outlining. The writing stage, intertwined with the editing stage, covered the final four weeks of the project, where writing and revising were the main activities. I acknowledge that it is arbitrary to draw a line among these consecutive stages, but it is felt that this might make the analysis and discussion more reader friendly.

CHAPTER 6

AN EXPLORATION OF THE PLANNING STAGE OF THE RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an account of the planning stage of the research writing project. The first section discusses the writing model on which the class based their shorter essays. The next three sections describe the students' activities in the first half of the research writing project. Though the three activities are discussed in separate sections in chronological order, it should be noted that drawing a clear line to indicate the beginning and the end of the different activities can be misleading. These activities blend into each other. The students might work at different rates and use different strategies. Some of them might revert to an earlier activity when they encountered difficulties at later stages. However, for the benefit of the reader, it was decided that the activities were discussed in the order as prescribed in the course syllabus⁵.

6.2 THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY AND THE "TBER" FORMULA

Though the research writing project had a clear boundary, an adequate discussion of it should go beyond the boundary and trace back to the class' earlier writing. The students did not enter the project as blank sheets; rather, they had already learned the basics of academic writing, such as the five-paragraph essay, in the first three-quarters of the academic year. In other words, the research writing project should not be understood as independent and self-contained. Rather, it should be seen in the context of the whole writing class, which included the essays that the students had written earlier in the year.

In the first three quarters of the academic year, the students had learned to write the five-paragraph essay, with the first paragraph as the introduction, the middle three the body and the last the conclusion. For students, this model represented English writing, which many of them learned systematically for the first time. For example, one student stated:

⁵ The research paper syllabus is shown as Appendix A.

Extract 6-1

We have to write the introduction from general to specific. For the body, we've got to have three paragraphs, each with three examples, so there will be 9 examples in total. We've got to have the conclusion, where we should write from the specific to the general. With this format, I know I can write a presentable piece of academic writing, if I follow the rules. (R/H/1)

Though the format was imposed on her, the student seemed to feel secure and in control, knowing that she could accomplish something respectable by applying this formula.

Related to the five-paragraph essay, TBER (paragraph structure consisting of a topic sentence⁶, a bridge sentence, examples and restatement) was another concept that stood out as a rule that was taught and expected to be followed. Though the instructor claimed that he did not see it as the only way to write a paper, its legitimacy was rigorously defended in Extract 6-2.

Extract 6-2

TBER is a broad enough way that it can be applied to many different styles of writing. The T just means that there is a topic sentence. The bridge just means that there is a second sentence that helps to lead from the opening statement into their examples. And then every paragraph has examples of some kind to support the main idea. And the restatement, the restatement is nice, because it reflects the same structure of five-paragraph essays, which is introduction, body and conclusion. So the restatement is like a conclusion to that paragraph. So hopefully students can understand that many principles of English writing use the element of embedding, not only grammatical term with their sentences, but on the organization level with their essays and even the paragraphs within the essays. [...] In fact, this whole research paper is simply the same construction as a simple paragraph. (R/I/3)

Here the instructor was referring to the research paper, though he also made a point that there was a lot in common between a one-paragraph essay and a paper of some eight pages, a point that he hoped the students would come to realize in the year's writing course.

Viewing the research writing task from this perspective, it is not difficult to see

⁶ A topic sentence refers to a sentence that introduces the main idea of a paragraph. Although topic sentences may appear anywhere in a paragraph, in academic writing they usually appear at the beginning.

why the instructor insisted that it was a continuation of what they had been doing in the year. While the organization remained the same, his students were introduced some other elements which would eventually lead to the actual writing of the research paper. These preparatory steps were choosing a topic, collecting information and outlining.

6.3 CHOOSING A TOPIC

According to Horowitz (1989), teachers of research writing at the undergraduate level disagree on whether to assign a topic for the research assignment. Those who give students freedom in choosing their topics do so in the hope that students might be more motivated towards the assignment. They also argue that choosing and narrowing a topic is an indispensable process that research entails and in which students may learn a valuable lesson. On the other hand, some teachers advance strong arguments for a designated topic. Firstly, undergraduate students usually have to write on prescribed topics for their assignments in the other subject courses. Secondly, students can be given more opportunities to help and support each other when they work on the same topic. Thirdly, teachers may assign a topic within their specialties to avoid inconveniences arising from a lack of subject knowledge. They can thus concentrate on helping students with conceptual problems in the research/writing process.

In the current study, the students were given complete freedom in choosing their topics. The instructor explained the form of research that he expected from his students:

Extract 6-3

I want them to think of a question, something they're interested in finding out the answers, that has enough depth to it, to be answered in a 6-8 page paper. And then they go out, trying to find out the answers to their questions. (R/I/2)

Apparently, the instructor hoped to motivate the students by encouraging them to investigate topics of their own choice. It turned out that the students were interested in different areas of study, such as archaeological finds, military policy, and relationships. However, after choosing a subject area, the students usually had difficulties specifying a title for investigation, as the instructor perceived at the

beginning of the project:

Extract 6-4

Their difficulty would be their level of specificity. They will choose a topic that's too big for a small paper. Rarely they will choose a topic that's too small. So the problem is they spend most of the paper trying to get to say something specific, and not enough time in the paper exploring the details of the ideas they're talking about. (R/I/1)

To deal with this problem, the instructor devoted the first three-hour session of the project to help the students identify a topic at the proper level of specificity. He divided the students into groups of three according to the areas of research. As a prompt, he wrote down on the blackboard two questions, "what do you think might be the answers? Where can you find the sources?" Students asked their group mates the two questions to help each other focus and think about the source of information. Towards the end of the session, the students were requested to make oral reports on the specific topics they had decided upon and on the possible sources where they might find their answers.

The students were then sent to the library to search for information. However, most of the students experienced a period of uncertainty before they could finalize the topic. Out of the seven participating students, Toby was the only one who displayed full confidence in the feasibility of his topic, which he had actually worked on in his previous university. The other six spent various amounts of time pondering on the possibility of switching to another topic or making some sort of adjustment. Their deliberation was influenced by three constraining factors: availability of sources, familiarity with the topic, and the "academic" quality of the topic. These factors will be elaborated on in the following sections.

6.3.1 Availability of Sources

Availability of sources was one of the most influential constraints on decision-making. Jack decided to write about Egyptian pyramids that interested and mystified him and he expected to learn something during the research process. Instead of handling a broad topic such as pyramids, he realized that he had to find a more specific focus, something more manageable. Therefore, he developed a strategy:

Extract 6-5

After I got the sources, I would read them first in order to find a more manageable issue. If you stick to a particular issue, when it comes to actual writing, you might find you don't have enough information for it, and you will have a hard time. So I think you should make sure that your topic fits the information you've got. (R/J/2)

He decided to play it safe and adapted his topic to the sources he could manage to find and read. Another student, Cathy, adopted the same strategy:

Extract 6-6

Actually, I think it is better to choose a topic that has more sources. If there is very little information on something I'm really interested in, I still won't choose to focus on it. (R/C/2)

Luckily for Cathy, she was satisfied with the information that she had collected. Otherwise, she was fully prepared to sacrifice her interest to work on anything with more accessible sources.

As a matter of fact, most students would have to learn to compromise with the reality that they could not possibly obtain all the related material or read everything in their hands, given the constraints of time and availability. This point will be further discussed in the next section concerning collecting information.

6.3.2 Familiarity with the Topic

As mentioned above, the topics these students chose displayed a wide variety. Interestingly, none of them chose to write about literature, which was on their department curriculum. In other words, they were working on topics on which they did not have expert knowledge. Some of them, therefore, chose to write about topics of general interest. Others based their research on topics of their outside reading, from which they could draw some basic knowledge to begin their enquiry. Bob, for example, claimed to have no difficulty locating the information he needed, because "[he] read this kind of stuff all the time" (R/B/2).

At one stage, Bob entertained the idea of switching to another topic when he was in doubt about his original topic, as he recalled:

Extract 6-7

The other topics seemed to be more difficult to manage. Once I

considered writing about the impact of El Nino, but I found it difficult, because I'm not familiar with it. There are a handful of sources, but I gave it up because it was rather a new subject to me. (R/B/2)

He decided to stick to his original topic, rather than working on a new subject, in which he did not possess much basic knowledge.

6.3.3 “Academic” Quality of the Topic

As mentioned above, the students were given complete freedom in choosing their areas of study. Both Kevin and Helen chose to write about budget travel, a popular topic of conversation among college students in Taiwan. The instructor tried not to interfere with the students' choice of a topic, yet a trace of censure could be detected when it came to one such as “travelling in Tokyo,” as shown in Extract 6-8.

Extract 6-8

Now, I've given you a lot of freedom to be able to pick any topic you want. You want to pick travelling in Tokyo, OK. That's not, that's not, how can I say, that's not the best kind of research topic you can choose, right? (I/K/2)

Kevin did not worry too much about the instructor's comment and went on working on it. Helen was another case, however. She constantly consulted the instructor in different phases of research/writing. It can be seen that the instructor's advice played an influential part in Helen's decision to switch her topic. Helen recounted how she reached the decision to change her topic:

Extract 6-9

My original topic was how to travel economically in England. But when I was searching for information, I realized that I could only find some figures. My paper would look like a product advert, instead of a research paper, though I did spend time on searching for information. Therefore, I decided to switch my topic to Stonehenge. (R/H/2)

Helen's switch from “budget travel” to “archaeological finds” reflected the judgment of the instructor as well as her eagerness to identify with the value represented by academic writing.

From the above discussion, we can see that most students did spend some time choosing a suitable topic to work on. It was usually a difficult and tricky process in which they exhausted their resources, exercised their thinking abilities, and consulted the expert (the instructor in this case). The instructor might give them advice, which

swayed their final decision to a certain degree (as in Helen's case). However, in the end, they still needed to make their own choice based on their best knowledge. Some students had a particularly difficult time making the decision at a great risk of missing the deadline for submission. One of the students in the class, for example, kept changing the topic. He fell seriously behind the schedule and could not complete the first draft in time. However, most of the students managed to find a workable topic and learned a valuable lesson from the topic selection process.

6.4 COLLECTING INFORMATION

Though officially a topic was chosen in the first session, it is clear from the above discussion that the process could have extended into the following weeks. Usually when the students were collecting information, they were tempted to make adjustments to their topics based on the availability of sources. Therefore, the process of collecting information was often inseparable from that of choosing a topic. In this section I will focus on the sources available to these students and discuss the significance of this factor in the research writing project.

6.4.1 Types of Sources

Papers appearing in major journals are regarded by academia as more authoritative because it is usually more difficult to publish an article in major journals than in books. Moreover, journal articles usually have the advantage of being more up-to-date on the subject than books (Berry, 1994).

However, most sources that the students collected in printed forms were books and sections of encyclopaedias. Occasionally journal articles were cited in references, but they only accounted for a relatively small percentage of the sources. The reasons why information in the periodical form was seldom used can be explained in two ways. First, the students were not aware of or did not care about the significance of the continuing progression of knowledge, which is best represented in the latest journal articles. Secondly, even when they noticed some journal articles pertinent to their research, these articles were not necessarily included in the university library collection and available to the students.

6.4.2 Limited Resources in the University Library

The university in the current case was only recently established, so it was not surprising that the library collection was rather small. Students had to travel to more established universities in the neighbouring counties to search for information.

6.4.3 The Use of the Internet

The use of the Internet has become a part of the daily life among college students in Taiwan. Exchanging electronic messages with their peers and participating in the on-line discussion are nothing more than normal. Most of the students have a fairly good idea of the various resources on the Internet. When it came to research, it was not surprising that they would turn to the Internet for potential sources. Most of the students reported that they searched the Internet for information. As a matter of fact, the situation was so universal that the instructor had to lay down a rule on limited use of the Internet sources, as Jack pointed out:

Extract 6-10

Mr. James told us not to use too much information on the Internet. After all, the information on the Internet was not published, so it might not be as accurate as a book. So, we were only allowed to use the Internet as half of the sources, at most. The others had to be books or journals. (R/J/2)

Though the instructor had explained to the students why the use of the Internet sources should be moderated, it might have been even more beneficial if students had been taught how to distinguish reliable from less credible sources on the Internet.

Students also used the Internet for other research purposes. For example, Sylvie searched electronic databases for related journal articles and narrowed down her topic based on the findings. Helen checked catalogues in the neighbouring universities through inter-library catalogue service before she actually went over for the books. These electronic research skills would certainly continue to be valuable in their future research undertakings.

6.4.4 Sources in Chinese

Writing a research paper in English in the Chinese environment can be a problem in itself. The collection of city libraries was overwhelmingly in Chinese, though reading material in other languages can be found in university libraries. Jack

addressed the difficulty of the situation:

Extract 6-11

We had another difficulty when collecting information. The sources we can find here are mostly in Chinese. That's what you can find in most of the libraries in Taiwan. It can be very difficult to find sources written in other languages. (R/J/2)

Why would sources in Chinese constitute a problem? When they used sources in Chinese, though it would save them a considerable time reading for the information they needed, they would have to transfer the arguments into English. It not only required a double effort but also gave doubt to the accuracy of the translation, as Sylvie observed:

Extract 6-12

Most of our sources were in Chinese, so we had to do some translation. But I'm not sure if I have given the original text a faithful interpretation. (R/S/1)

Taking both the advantages and disadvantages that were unique to the local environment, the students spent one or two weeks locating the sources and producing a working bibliography. Most of the students separated collecting information and reading. In other words, they started reading after they had obtained all the information they needed. Or rather, they did not seek to find more sources to fill in potential gaps in their reading. The situation was understandable, given the limited time that the students were allowed. However, as Horowitz (1989) warns, students might thus fail to see "the large picture, the research/writing process as a whole" (p. 348). They might not learn to see the relationship between research and writing as an endless cycle, with questions leading to research, which in turn raises new questions to be answered by more research.

Two exceptions are worth mentioning, though. Bob, for example, was writing about the nation's defence system. In my second interview with him, which was conducted after the submission of the first draft, Bob mentioned that he would continue his literature search to fill in a gap in his research:

Extract 6-13

B: I'll be writing and searching at the same time. If I can find something

better, I'll use it in my paper, of course.

R: So you'll use the latest information?

B: I suppose so. I think this kind of information is constantly updating. What I'm writing is about current affairs. I can't write something outdated, can I? (R/B/2)

Bob regarded literature updates as necessary for research concerning current affairs, though he was fully aware that the instructor might fail to notice his efforts on incorporating the latest information.

Similarly, Helen was also going to look for more information in the fifth week, even though she had produced enough words to meet the required 8 pages:

Extract 6-14

I think I might find something new if I keep searching. Then I might revise my paper more. I want to play it safe. (R/H/2)

Helen was not working on a topic of current affairs as Bob was, but still she tried her best to retrieve as many sources as she could, in the belief that she could produce a better research paper in this way.

6.5 OUTLINING

The main activity in the planning stage, "making a skeleton outline" or "outlining", can be regarded as a bridge between the pre-writing and the writing stages. It is often seen as the most important stage, where the writing takes shape. A research project handbook describes "outlining" as:

... the most intellectually exacting part of the whole process. Order must be imposed upon chaos, and it is at this precise point that the forces of chaos and order meet. (Berry, 1994, p. 39)

In other words, in producing an outline, the writer has to bring the vast collection of information into a certain order, so that an argument can be presented clearly.

Reid (1985) has pointed out that different writers may have different approaches to composing. In terms of planning, some may produce an outline with all the headings organized in a linear way. Others may prefer creating a concept map, on which they jot down ideas that spring to their mind and figure out ways of relating them. Still others may plunge into writing just to get words and ideas on paper.

Students are often advised to experiment with different ways of organizing essays before deciding on one that suits them best (Creme & Lea, 1997). Nevertheless, outlining has often been imposed on students in writing classrooms. Mr. James' class is an example.

In the current study, two class sessions of the research project were devoted to outlining. In the third week, the students learned how to write an outline, with a thesis statement and all the proper headings and subheadings. They were required to submit an outline in the fourth week. The instructor looked at the students' outlines and discussions concerning the organization were made during class individually with the students. Students might need to revise their outlines, which were to be included in the portfolio for assessment. Furthermore, their papers were expected to follow the "approved" outlines.

I asked the instructor when he thought the students needed his help the most during the research/writing process. He did not hesitate before he pointed out that the students needed the most help "at the very beginning, when they try to write their outline and organize their research paper" (R/I/2). In an outline, the students began to form their ideas, structured the papers, and answered the questions that they put forward. In a sense, the outline was the point where the instructor could begin to intervene in the students' composing process and monitor their works actively, as he pointed out:

Extract 6-15

I can see that they're not organizing it well in their outline, and they're not including information to answer the question. (R/I/2)

The instructor could thus help by demanding an adequate answer from the students and checking the organization to make sure that they did not go off track.

For students, outlining was, no doubt, the beginning of making sense of the information that they had found. They would then have to develop their arguments and select a few themes to support the central idea (Creme & Lea, 1997). Working out an outline was a tough task in itself, while fleshing out the structure was no less difficult. Cathy observed in retrospect:

Extract 6-16

I thought writing was a piece of cake after I got the outline ready. But it

didn't seem to be true. (R/C/2)

Cathy realized that she would have to overcome more obstacles after the outline was approved, though it was a foundation stone on which she could build up her paper.

After they began to write the first draft, the students did make good use of the outline that they had made efforts to put together. They could concentrate on the themes listed in their outlines and skip other irrelevant details. Sylvie's report serves as a proper illustration of the strategy. When Sylvie first started reading, she was overwhelmed and intimidated by the vast literature. After she worked out the outline, she developed a strategy, which was to note down the page numbers on her outline sheet whenever she came across something related to her research paper. By dissecting the literature into manageable units, she could thus sift through the sources and prepare for her writing. Therefore, she fully appreciated the advantage of an outline, which had helped her structure not only her writing, but also her research process and her thought:

Extract 6-17

I do think it's better to write an outline. When I know what I'm looking for, I can readily use it when I come across anything that matches my outline. (R/S/2)

Although it has been acknowledged that not every writer has the same planning strategies (Reid, 1985), outlining is often introduced into composition classrooms as a sensible way of planning and organizing essays. In the current case, the instructor asked the students to write an outline so that he could give suggestions concerning the organization and help the students before they even started writing the drafts. While meeting the requirement, the students also appeared to have benefited from it.

6.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has looked at the planning stage of the research writing project. It has discussed the factors that affected the students' decision in choosing a topic for their research papers. It has also addressed issues that emerged in the process of collecting information. In addition, the significance of outlining in the project has been argued. The outlining process has been found to be an important point where the students needed assistance from the instructor. At the same time, outlining has also been shown to be a beneficial activity that helped the students begin to make

sense of the information that they had collected for their research papers. Overall, the activities in the planning stage were carefully planned and monitored by the instructor, though external factors such as limited time and library resources still posed a big challenge to the completion of the project.

After their outlines were approved by the instructor, the students began the writing and the editing stages, during which they would write and revise their papers. I argue that conferencing was one of the most important class activities at these two stages, because teacher feedback in these conferences exerted a great influence on the students' revisions and contributed to their perception of the research paper as an academic genre. In the next chapter, the contents of and the teacher-student interaction in the conferences will be examined.

CHAPTER 7

AN EXPLORATION OF THE WRITING CONFERENCES IN THE RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

This chapter will focus on the conferences in the research writing project. As noted earlier, conferences refer to private conversations between teacher and student about the student's writing or writing processes (Sperling, 1991). These conferences played an important role in the students' acquisition of research writing. This chapter will thus examine the contents of and the teacher-student interaction in these conferences to see how they contribute to the overall writing process.

The introductory section of the chapter will elaborate on the context of the writing conferences. Section 7.2 will give an account of the structure of the conferences. The contents of the conferences will be analysed in the following section. Emphasis will be given to the types of questions or issues raised by the instructor or the students. Section 7.4 will address the teacher-student interaction in the conferences.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I reported on the planning stage of the research writing project. Under the instructor's guidance, the students had learned how to choose a topic that was sufficiently specific, to collect information, and to write an outline. These steps had taken the students a total of four weeks. In the remaining four weeks, the students were expected to submit three drafts. For each of the drafts, an individual conference was held to discuss the organization, the ideas, or whatever the instructor and the students wished to address. No whole class teaching was given during the remaining four weeks. In other words, these one-to-one conferences were the students' principal, if not the only, sources of instruction in the latter half of the research writing project. In addition, conferencing was not a one-off event in Mr. James' class. Throughout the whole academic year it had been constantly used by the instructor to provide assistance for individual students. On the other hand, the students usually made revisions according to the instructor's feedback during these conferences. Therefore, there are good reasons to assume that the conferences

during the process of writing would become part of the process and exert influence on final written products.

An investigation into the conferences serves several functions. Firstly, since conferencing was an integral part of the writing course, the instructor and the students observed in this natural setting provide genuine data to facilitate our understanding of the conference discourse and its possible impact on students' writing. Secondly, the conference data can be triangulated with the interview data and the student papers. A complete picture may be drawn as to how research writing was taught and learned and how knowledge and conventions were passed over to the students.

Before the contents and the interaction of the conferences are explored, their general structure will first be examined in the following section.

7.2 THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCES

Bowen (1993) suggests that effective conferences proceed with a predictable structure so that students know what to prepare for and to expect from them. Observations show that conferences between the instructor and the students did have a predictable structure, though variety existed between the first two and the third conferences. Therefore, the first two and the third conferences will be separately discussed.

7.2.1 The First Two Conferences

In the first interview with the researcher, Mr. James revealed, in an enthusiastic tone, how he planned to conduct the conferences. He decided to let the students take the initiative and ask questions. He gave his reason in the following statement:

Extract 7-1

[The students] need to recognize they're having problems and where they're having their problems. [...] I'll look for areas to guide the students, but I really want them to ask the questions. (R/I/2)

Apparently, the idea was that the students should be involved in more active learning by diagnosing their own problems and seeking to remedy them. However, after the students submitted their first drafts, the instructor, against his original design, made comments on their drafts:

Extract 7-2

Actually I really wanted not to make comments on any of their drafts. I wanted it all to be questions to me. But when I read their drafts, I just couldn't stop myself from writing comments about it. So I did that for the first draft. And then the second draft, I said I wouldn't do it. Then I read their second draft, I did it again. (R/I/3)

The instructor wrote comments on the first two of the student drafts. As a result, he could not avoid going through those comments in the first two conferences. Consequently, in these conferences two agendas can be seen to compete against each other. On the one hand, the instructor demanded questions from the students as in his design; on the other hand, he felt obliged to go through the comments that he had made on students' drafts.

The analysis of the conference structure shows the presence of the two competing agendas as follows:

1. The instructor inviting questions from the students
2. The instructor answering the questions
3. The instructor going through written comments on the drafts
4. The instructor bringing out his agenda
5. The instructor bringing it to a conclusion and giving instruction for the next step

The question-inviting part was present in almost all the conferences, because the instructor made it a rule that the students should prepare several questions for each conference. Only once did the instructor go straight into discussion about the problem parts in the draft. In most of the situations, the instructor answered the questions when they were raised. However, in four out of the 14 conference sessions, the answering part was missed out because the students did not prepare any questions. The instructor would then go through the notes that he had made on the drafts. Occasionally, he would bring a particular problem to the attention of all the students, such as plagiarism. As a conclusion, he would summarise some of the important points while giving instruction as to what the student should accomplish before the next conference. Such was the general structure of the first two conferences, though variation existed in different conferences with different students.

An extract from Sylvie's first conference is provided below as an example of the conference structure.

Extract 7-3

I: Sylvie, do you have any questions?

S: Yes. Firstly, I would like to ask if I could use direct quotation in the research paper.

I: Yes, of course you can use direct quotation. (lines 1-4)

[...]

I: OK, so, here, this could be an example, this could be an example, this could be an example. (lines 35-6)

[...]

I: I think your organization is fine. I just have problems with your topic sentences. (lines 93-4)

[...]

I: You have no other questions for me?

S: Er... So far...

I: So far no? OK. (lines 129-31, I/S/1)

This conference exemplifies the structure that I have presented earlier. It begins with the instructor inviting and answering questions (lines 1-4). The instructor then goes through the comments that he has made on Sylvie's draft (lines 35-6). This part is followed by the discussion of Sylvie's use of "topic sentences" (lines 93-4). Finally, the instructor concludes the conference after making sure that the student has no more questions for him.

7.2.2 The Third Conferences

The third conferences were a different story. The instructor stopped writing notes when it came to the third drafts. The main concerns of the instructor, such as the organization, had been addressed. Therefore, the students were allowed to choose the content and the direction of the third conferences without having to compete with the instructor's agenda. The structure of the third conferences can thus be represented as follows:

1. The instructor inviting questions from the students
2. The instructor answering the questions
3. The conference brought to an end when the students confirmed that there were no more questions

Having examined the general structure, in the next section I describe some

important issues pursued by either the instructor or the students in the conferences.

7.3 THE CONTENTS OF THE CONFERENCES

I have not attempted to make a quantitative inquiry into the frequency of the types of questions addressed in the conferences. Rather, the purpose is to understand the scope of the informants' concerns in this research writing project.

Generally speaking, the questions and the issues that were raised by the instructor and the students were more product-oriented than process-oriented. In other words, they were concerned more about what was written on the papers than about how the papers were written. The focus of the conferences includes the organization, the documentation, the mechanics (the grammar, the vocabulary, and the layout), academic conventions, and plagiarism. These issues were chosen for discussion because they were observed to be brought up in the conferences the most frequently by either the instructor or the students. Examples for each category will be given in the following sections.

7.3.1 Organization

The organization was the most common feature of discussion in these conferences. It was also the only topic that was brought up in each of the conferences, either by the instructor or by the students. According to the instructor, the organization had always been the main concern of the writing class throughout the academic year. Although they were working on the research paper, the organization was still recognized as being of very great significance. In the first interview with the researcher, the instructor, in response to a question about the weight of relative importance of writing skills and research skills in research writing, did not hesitate to give precedence to writing skills:

Extract 7-4

I would say that if they don't have writing skills, no matter how good their research skills are, nobody can read their paper. So it doesn't matter how good their sources are, or how good they are in finding information. But absolutely it's very important to have the proper sources to support their ideas. That's no doubt. But that is part of writing this kind of paper. But the writing skills always have to take priority. Because without the writing skills, no matter how good their research skills are, nobody can understand their writing. (R/I/1)

The instructor's belief in the priority of writing skills presented itself in his teaching approach and contributed to the dominance of the organization issues in the conferences. The issue of the organization will be discussed further in two parts: the TBER model and the sub-introduction.

7.3.1.1 The TBER Model

As discussed in Chapter 6, the TBER model (paragraph structure consisting of a topic sentence, a bridge sentence, examples and restatement) had always been the focus of Mr. James' writing class. In the instructor's view, the TBER model could be and should be applied to different styles of writing, including the five-paragraph essay and the research paper. Nevertheless, when it came to the research paper, the students did not seem to know that they were expected to use the same model. Therefore, it was found that at least half of the student informants raised questions such as the following:

Extract 7-5

Do I need to write TBER in the research paper? (I/H/1)

Sometimes the instructor was irritated by the question. Apparently, he thought that the students had learned the model during the year and should have known to apply it:

Extract 7-6

Of course, why have we spent, you know, the whole year learning TBER and forget it in the research paper? That doesn't make sense. (I/J/1)

Apparently, the instructor was disappointed that the students should forget the model and lapse into bad organization or no organization at all. Nevertheless, some of the students had a different story to tell. Kevin, for example, did not consider using TBER in his research paper at all, as an extract taken from the interview right after the submission of the first draft shows:

Extract 7-7

Actually none of us knows how to write a research paper. I guess what you need to do is to search for information and rephrase it as you wish. It's something like rewriting with your own ideas. You can't use things like TBER or examples in this kind of paper. No one can write a research

paper with the format. (R/K/2)

In other words, contrary to the instructor's assumption, the students did not "automatically" know that the TBER model could be applied to a research paper. As a result, much time was spent on discussing the application of the organizational model.

7.3.1.2 Sub-Introduction

In addition to TBER, the instructor introduced, in the first few weeks of the project, a new organizational element to the research paper: the sub-introduction. To explain the concept of the sub-introduction, I quote the instructor's words in a conference with Toby:

Extract 7-8

So, here, right above here, you have a, well I'd like to call, sub-introductory paragraph to this section. I call it sub-introductory, because you have an introductory paragraph to the whole paper, but now I want you to have a smaller paragraph that is an introduction to the section, and this would be your main idea. [...] In this paragraph, I want you to do, just as what we do in the introduction of your paper, which is to have a little background information. (I/T/1)

Simply speaking, the sub-introduction is a variation on an essay introduction, on which the students would have practiced for a year. However, all the student informants raised questions concerning the sub-introduction throughout their three conferences with the instructor. Toby, for example, said in the very beginning of the first conference:

Extract 7-9

My biggest question is how to write sub-intro. (I/T/1)

In the second conference, Toby started the conference in similar vein:

Extract 7-10

How do you feel about my sub-intro? (I/T/2)

Helen was another one who was seeking approval from the instructor to make sure that she had written her sub-introduction properly:

Extract 7-11

I want you to see my if my sub-introduction is OK [...] (I/H/3)

These persistent questions and requests indicate the uncertainty that the students felt when introduced to a new element of the organization. In addition, they suggest that the organization had become the main concern of not only the instructor but also the students.

7.3.2 Documentation

While the organization had been the focus of the composition class for the entire academic year, documentation was a relatively new field. In their previous essays, the students had learned to quote directly from books. They were advised by their composition textbook, *Mosaic* (Blass & Pike-Baky, 1996), to introduce these quotations with the set phrase “according to whom in which book.” Many of them applied what they had learned to the research paper. Sylvie, for example, had a sentence like this in her first draft:

Extract 7-12

According to Rinker Buck in the article, “Teaching Kids To Be More Self-confident” on the web site, “Find out what your child is good at...and encourage it. Nothing breeds self-confidence better than success.” (Sylvie, draft 1)

However, they soon learned that they had to adopt a different kind of documentation for the research paper. Now they were expected to “forget the *Mosaic*” (I/S/1) and use parenthetical references advised by a textbook of research writing, *Form and Style*. The students did not appear to pay too much attention to the purposes of referencing, which are to acknowledge indebtedness and establish the validity of evidence, among others (Slade, Campbell, & Ballou, 1994, p. 137). Rather, during the conferences most of the discussion concerning documentation centred on the mechanics. The students would seek help from the instructor when they were not sure how to reference a particular source. In some of the cases, the instructor would refer them to *Form and Style*:

Extract 7-13

C: I write about, quote from the newspaper, I write the name of the newspaper or the author?

I: Where's that in your book [*Form and Style*]? (I/C/2)

In this extract, the instructor refused to answer Cathy's question because he was sure that *Form and Style* had an example of how to reference newspaper articles.

Nevertheless, the book, *Form and Style*, also makes it clear that it is impossible to cover every conceivable example and that the users should make their own inference and figure out a way to deal with what is not listed in it. Acknowledging the limitation of the textbook in this aspect, the instructor took it as his responsibility to help the students with more complicated cases of documentation style:

Extract 7-14

So for [the students] to sort of figure out the required logic of how to do a new reference was hard. Anyway, the students just asked me. And I just told them. And we just kind of figured it out together. And I say, "oh, let's see, blah, blah, blah." And we just did it that way, and I wrote them in my book, so that I remember what we said. (R/I/3)

To illustrate the situation, one of the cases was when a student needed to quote from a book that was translated into Chinese from Japanese. To complicate the case even further, in order to use the source, the student would need to translate the quotation from Chinese into English and to cite it in his bibliography. The research handbook did not have an example of how to do that, so the instructor helped the student with the problem during conferencing. As such, with individual students, the instructor spent some conference time working out the reference style of more unusual works with students.

7.3.3 Mechanics

The term "mechanics" refers to elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and the layout. A number of sources in the literature point out that writing teachers tend to focus more on surface errors than on errors at the organizational level (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Zamel, 1985; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986). Such a practice may give students the impression that correct grammatical expression is valued more than the overall expression of ideas.

In these conferences, most of the mechanics-related questions were raised by the instructor. However, far from overemphasizing the mechanics, he held the opinion that good organization was more important than good grammar.

Extract 7-15

The grammar is, of course, always a problem. But if the grammar is good, and the organization is bad, their paper can't be understood. So, since so much work has been done on the grammar, I want [the students] to use my class to focus on the organization of the paper. (R/I/1)

The instructor's emphasis on the organization did not prevent him from dealing with the mechanics of students' papers. However, they would normally be tackled briefly and in passing. In most of the situations, the instructor would quickly point out surface errors on the papers when he was going through the notes that he had made on students' drafts. For example, when he was looking at Sylvie's first draft, he stopped to make a comment on a collocational mistake:

Extract 7-16

This needs more details. Do the same thing there. Sub-intro. Don't do that. This is wrong. "responsibilities to hold"? "In order to let children have self-confidence, parents or teachers can give them responsibilities to hold." You don't HOLD responsibilities. (I/S/1)

Once the mistake was dealt with, the instructor immediately went back to discussion of the organization, which was a priority of his class.

7.3.4 Academic Conventions

By academic conventions, I refer to the explicit and implicit rules followed by the members of the academic discourse community in terms of good writing or research practices. For example, Johns (1997) summarises the nature and the practices of expository academic prose, in which texts should be explicit, writers should provide "signposts" for the readers, and the language of texts should appear objective, among others. In terms of research practices, sources need to be cited, for example.

Students can obtain knowledge of academic conventions from reading a research writing handbook, such as *Form and Style*. However, discussion of the conventions during a conference may further highlight their significance. In a writing conference, the instructor spoke to Sylvie about the use of key words in the research paper:

Extract 7-17

"Help" obviously is a key word. [...] Specifically refer to "help". Let the

reader know this is one of your examples. [...] In this kind of paper, especially this kind of paper, it's better if people can read it quickly. If you're doing a research paper that has a lot of important details, it's not as easy to read it very quickly. But people will need to make the key words CLUES to the reader, to allow them to read as fast as possible. When they read fast, they need to understand quickly what you're trying to say. (I/S/2)

In this example, the instructor spoke about the desirability of key words, a convention that is expected of all the research papers.

In another example, the instructor showed Toby how to defend his argument against possible questioning from the reader. Mr. James suggested that Toby might add a discussion of the potential harm of cohabitation to men to balance his argument. However, Toby did not find any literature on the particular issue, so he brought the question to the conference. Here is how Mr. James helped Toby with the problem:

Extract 7-18

You should say, it seems that there should be some information about how cohabitation is perilous to men, but there is not much written about it. So again, you just tell the reader, acknowledge to the reader that you're thinking about men, but that, for some reasons, there's no information about this, whether it's just unavailable here, or whatever. (I/T/1)

The instructor went on and explained why there should be such an acknowledgement in the paper:

Extract 7-19

Well, you put it in your conclusion because you really can't find any information, but you also need to include that there, because the reader might be thinking, hey, where is this stuff? So you acknowledge that to the reader, you say, Reader, I know you're thinking this. I was thinking this too. But this is the reality. (I/T/1)

It can be seen that the instructor was teaching Toby, in a simple and colloquial language, to pre-empt an attack that might be struck by a discerning reader. At the same time, he effectively transmitted a convention that was often employed in the writing of academic essays.

7.3.5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism has been a big concern in the Western academic community. The minimum punishment on campus for plagiarism is usually an F (fail) in the course and

the maximum, expulsion from the university (Howard, 1995). Some students pleaded “lack of time” for plagiarizing (LoCastro & Masuko, 1997), while others claim an ignorance of citation conventions. McCormick (1989) argues that plagiarism should be seen as a pedagogical rather than a moral issue. Therefore, teachers should be urged to demonstrate to students how to use secondary materials responsibly.

The issue of plagiarism was brought up frequently by the instructor during the conferences and taken as a legal issue. The accusation of the “crime” surfaced in five of the conferences, in which the instructor made it clear to the students that plagiarism was a concern. The instructor associated the behaviour with negative words such as “jail,” “illegal” and “steal.”

Extract 7-20

You’re stealing their order of writing. (I/J/1)

Extract 7-21

That’s illegal. That’s plagiarism. (I/J/1)

Extract 7-22

They’ll put you to jail for that. OK. So, that’s a concern. (I/H/1)

In the case of ESL writing, copying words or phrases is the most common form of plagiarism. Not surprisingly, copying could be clearly identified by a native speaker, as the instructor said to Cathy:

Extract 7-23

And when I come across something like that, this is SO native-like English that I won’t say it’s not your word, but I will ask you, are they your words? It’s just SO something that an American would say. I’m not saying that you don’t have the ability to write like that. But I do have the right to question whether those are your words or not. (I/C/2)

The instructor maintained that plagiarism was not limited to copying words without proper acknowledgement. Repeated use of ideas from the same source was another form of plagiarism. In an instance, the instructor pointed out that one student cited the same author so often that it looked like the author was writing the paper for him.

7.3.6 Summary

As argued above, these writing conferences focused more on the written products than on the writing process. This might be explained in several ways. Firstly, it appeared that both the instructor and the students were constrained by the drafts that they were looking at. Secondly, both the parties might see conferencing as merely an opportunity for correcting and improving the papers, instead of an occasion for the instructor to help the students develop their own ideas to a greater degree. Thirdly, the instructor's emphasis on the organization dominated the conferences and left little time for other types of discussion. As a result, these conferences tended to be more product-oriented.

7.4 INTERACTION IN THE CONFERENCES

Having examined the contents of the conferences, this section will address the mode of the student-teacher interaction in them. Two significant observations will be advanced, namely, the dominance of teacher discourse and the students' contribution in the conferences.

7.4.1 The Dominance of Teacher Discourse

As indicated in the previous section, these conferences were meant to be student-centred in the sense that the students were expected to take the initiative and ask questions in these conferences. However, the instructor was often observed to dominate the discourse. This outcome might be expected when the conditions of the conferences are taken into consideration. For example, the student's language competence might not be able to sustain prolonged discussion. Or, the instructor might unconsciously lapse into the pattern of classroom discourse, where teachers dominate the talk. An example is given below for illustration:

Extract 7-24

I: Do you have any questions for me today?

J: Sure. A lot. I don't understand what is this.

I: OK. A thesis statement. A big T and S. OK. This is about the site that they chose. Right? But you don't have, here, I think this is your thesis statement. Is that correct?

J: Maybe not.

I: OK. Then that's a problem, because your thesis statement is trying to tell the reader what's coming up. Right? So this is about the site that they chose, and that is not listed here. So...

J: So I have to write a new thesis statement? (I/J/1)

These are the first few exchanges of the conference, in which the instructor invited questions and Jack asked the first out of "a lot" of questions. Jack's question was about an abbreviation that the instructor wrote on his draft. However, after giving the straightforward answer, the instructor felt obliged to explain the comment further. Consequently, he went on discussing the function of a thesis statement, which led on to another point that the instructor wished to make. Eventually, Jack did not have an opportunity to ask any other questions throughout the conference. In other words, the instructor completely took over the floor and Jack was thus forced to assume a passive role (cf. Appendix E).

7.4.2 Student Participation

Having touched on the instructor's discourse in the previous section, I would like to consider the mode of student participation in these conferences. As argued above, these conferences were dominated by teacher discourse, which left the students limited chances to participate in discussion. In this section the students' conference discourse will be discussed in two parts: passive responses and active participation.

7.4.2.1 Passive Responses

Most of the student responses in the conferences tended to be passive and served one of the following three functions. Firstly, they provided background information that the instructor needed for decision-making and further instruction:

Extract 7-25

I: Attack Missile and standoff attack missile, are they the same, or different?

B: Attack Missile is just one of, Standoff Missile is just one of the attack missiles.

I: OK. Then you need to explain what it means, or else, it's very hard for the reader to follow. (I/B/1)

Secondly, they confirmed understanding or signalled the lack of it.

Extract 7-26

I: Basically your summary should have concluding remark.

J: Concluding remark?

I: Concluding remark. Summarizing the main idea of your paper. (I/J/2)

Thirdly, they served to explain the students' decision in writing. These were usually the most prolonged remarks that the students made throughout the conferences.

Extract 7-27

S: But first of all, I would like to divide this paragraph into two parts. First one is for parents and the other one is for teachers.

I: Why?

S: Because in the thesis statement, I just like to describe how teachers and parents build confidence for children. (I/S/1)

7.4.2.2 Active Participation

Though many of the students' responses in the conferences can be best described as a response to the instructor's initiations, the students were also observed to have participated in discussion actively for various purposes. Most frequently, they asked questions for clarification:

Extract 7-28

I: Here you say encouragement, and now you give me an example. "Adults can encourage children to give a compliment to peers and children will have feedback from their peers." Give me more information about this.

S: You mean, how the peers give back the compliments to him? Or peer simply means classmates?

I: Well, it means people of their own age and background.

S: So I just add background information about peers? (I/S/2)

When Sylvie was not sure of what type of information the instructor expected from her, she made an assumption and sought verification from the instructor. This type

of follow-up question was often the most useful indicator of active student participation.

In addition, students also participated actively by collaborating on revision. For example, when the instructor pointed out a collocational mistake, Sylvie was quick to try out a different verb.

Extract 7-29

I: You don't HOLD responsibilities.

S: Take over? (I/S/1)

Such an effort on the student's part showed her willingness to contribute to the discussion and the improvement of her texts.

7.4.3 Summary

The above discussion leads to several conclusions. Firstly, a large part of the conference discourse was still dominated by the instructor, while the students assumed a more passive stance. Secondly, the students, though in a more passive position, benefited from the face-to-face interaction with the instructor. Unclear parts of written comments on their papers could be satisfactorily clarified. Thirdly, when the students were ready and willing, they were offered the chance to take a more active role in conferencing. In other words, through rigorous contribution, the students were in a good stance to decide the direction of the interaction, and to make the conferences serve their real needs.

7.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed the structure and the contents of the conferences. The teacher-student interaction in them has also been addressed. Overall, it can be claimed that these conferences have fulfilled some of the functions that they were supposed to meet. On the one hand, the conferences provided an opportunity for the instructor to understand better the student writers and their writing. Proper instruction could thus be given to cater for individual students' needs. On the other hand, through the personal assistance of the instructor, the students could make the conferences work for them and become the centre of attention.

Notwithstanding, it can be argued that conferencing may become less effective

when teachers' agendas override students' intentions in writing. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers who wish to introduce conferencing into their composition courses should remind themselves to strike a balance between their own agendas and the students' voices. In addition, the purposes of writing conferences should be made clear to the students, so that they realize that "the discourse and the teacher-student relationship can vary greatly between a conference and classroom" (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990, p. 457). Finally, when more time is permitted, teachers can encourage learners to talk about their reflections on their writing process. In so doing, instead of limiting themselves to merely correcting mistakes in the written products, students can examine their attitudes and beliefs towards writing, so as to develop a fuller understanding of the writing tasks at hand.

In the next chapter, I will consider the effect of these conferences. How were the messages sent out by the instructor in the conferences received by the students? Did the students revise their papers accordingly? Were the instructor's concerns realized in the students' papers? These will be the issues addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE REVISIONS MADE BETWEEN DRAFTS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the writing conferences were product-oriented; in other words, they focused almost exclusively on student drafts. The purpose of this chapter is to consider another set of questions: Did the students revise their papers based on the advice they received in the conferences? Were their revisions successful? To answer these questions, two student papers with their four drafts were chosen for close analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to discover various types of revision in the students' research papers. These changes will be compared with the written and the oral teacher feedback provided either on the papers or in the writing conferences to see the pattern of the revisions made by the students. Several questions will be addressed. First, what types of revision did the students focus on? Second, how did the students respond to the teacher feedback? Third, did the students make revision where no teacher comments were provided either on the paper or in the conferences? Fourth, was there any difference between the changes made between the first and the second drafts and between the second and the third drafts? Therefore, revisions made between different drafts will be examined. Student drafts as well as the conference data will be drawn on in the analysis. Special attention will be paid to distinguishing the revisions that the students made under the direct influence of the writing conferences and those they made independently. It is believed that the answers to the questions will contribute to an understanding of the students' learning of research writing in the editing stage.

In this chapter I chose to examine a small sample (two students' papers) because I believe that, with the space constraints, only a very close examination of a small sample can reveal the subtleties of the revision change in the students' papers. As one of the focuses of this analysis is to examine if the students made revisions without explicit teacher feedback, I chose to examine Kevin's and Cathy's papers, which received, respectively, the least and the most teacher feedback in the form of written comments on the papers.

It should be noted that I chose to analyse the revision changes in their own right,

instead of using a specific taxonomy, such as the one developed by Faigley and Witte (1981). Their taxonomy has been widely adopted for analysing revision in various studies (e.g. Al-Hazmi, 1998), mostly quantitatively. However, their taxonomy does not cover the types of changes that are common in the case of students learning research writing, such as referencing. Therefore, it was decided that the student papers should be approached and analysed in their own right to see if there is a common pattern of revision between consecutive drafts.

Throughout this chapter, extracts from the student drafts will be presented to illustrate the analysis. In addition, the revisions made between drafts will be highlighted by italicising key phrases and juxtaposing two versions of the selected sentences or paragraphs to facilitate reading and understanding.

8.2 CASE ONE - KEVIN

The first part of the chapter examines Kevin's papers, which received the least teacher comments among all the student participants. Kevin's paper was about budget travelling in Tokyo (See Appendices F – I).

8.2.1 From Draft 1 to Draft 2

The instructor made only a few, to be exact, seven, written comments on Kevin's first draft. These comments focused on the organization and the referencing. It is found that all the instructor's comments were responded to in Kevin's second draft. The writing conference on the first draft was short, compared to those of the other students. Most of the conference time was spent by the instructor on going through the comments on the draft. The length of Kevin's paper increased from 1717 words in the first draft to 2112 in the second. Most of the increase did not come from the addition of information as might be expected from a research paper, but from the addition of signposting. In the following sub-sections, a comparison between the first and the second drafts will be made to identify Kevin's revisions. These revisions will be discussed in terms of organization, referencing, and detail.

8.2.1.1 Organization

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the focus of the writing classroom in my study was on the organization of the writing. A thesis statement, a good

introduction as well as suitable sub-introductions were required by the instructor of all his students. For example, beside the opening paragraph of Kevin's paper, the instructor wrote, "Better Intro, tell reader what to expect," to indicate that the introductory paragraph needs reworking so that the reader knows what to expect. The introductions of Kevin's first and second drafts read⁷:

Extract 8-1

Tokyo,known to its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area,has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer.Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard especially its high commodity price;therefore,how to travel this wonderful paradise is the main points of this paper and in fact,there are many ways to save some exoense in some aspects. (lines 5-9, 1st draft, Kevin)

Tokyo,known to its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area,has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer.Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard especially its high commodity price.How to travel this wonderful paradise more economically is the main points of this paper . In fact,there are many ways to save some expense in some aspects.*The travellers can focus on low-cost airline tickets,low-cost lodging,low-cost food,and low-cost transportation in Tokyo.* (lines 5-11, 2nd draft, Kevin, italics added)

Compared to the first draft, the introduction of the second draft was rewritten and signposting was added at the end of the paragraph. By adding the last sentence, Kevin fulfilled a writer's obligation to inform the reader of the items that would be discussed in his paper, that is, low-cost air tickets, lodging, food and transportation. In other words, he not only told the reader the thesis of the paper but also specified the points of discussion as a way of signposting. In this way, the second paragraph of

⁷ Sentences and paragraphs quoted from the writing sample are virtually unchanged, in order to preserve the characteristics of the students' works, including misspelling and absence of spaces between punctuation marks. This has led to rather awkward gaps appearing in the word-processed text.

his essay about airline tickets would not come unexpected.

Similarly, Kevin arranged the remaining paragraphs so that the reader was fully prepared for what was to come next. For example, in his second paragraph of the first draft, Kevin went straight to explain how a travel agency might help reduce travel expense by providing cheap air tickets. In the second draft, the second paragraph was divided into two, with the first half functioning as a sub-introduction and the second half elaborating on the subject matter of travel agencies.

Extract 8-2

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of ur travelling expense. Travel agency is a good way to go. In it, they provide a lower price to customers especially when one buys the round tickets. (lines 10-14, 1st draft, Kevin)

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of ur travelling expense. There are two main places, travel agency and airline company, for travellers to purchase the airline tickets. Travellers can obtain some benefits or discounts from these two places.

Travel agency is a good way to go for saving money. There are some economical ways offered by the travel agency. "In it, they provide a lower price to customers especially when one purchases the round tickets. (lines 12-19, 2nd draft, Kevin, italics added)

The sub-introduction in the second draft, as indicated by italics, not only announces the topic of air tickets but also specifies that travel agencies and airline companies are the two venues where discounted air tickets might be obtained. The reader may then expect discussion of the two venues in the next two paragraphs.

8.2.1.2 Referencing

Another focus of Kevin's revision was references. Kevin did not provide any references in the first draft. Such an omission was not only made by Kevin, but by most of the students. As revealed in Chapter 6, the students had duly searched in the library for reading materials pertinent to their research topics, read articles or book chapters and made note cards as required by the instructor, and organized the information taken from the materials to argue their thesis. Nevertheless, most of them, including Kevin, neglected to reference the source materials in their first drafts.

After the first conference, a total of twenty quotes and parenthetical references were added in Kevin's second draft, though, interestingly, the quotes usually contained exactly the same words as in the first draft. For example, in the first draft a sentence might read like the student's own conclusion to the paragraph about staying in a youth hostel in Tokyo, while in the second draft, this conclusion was attributed to a source, with another sentence added to complete the paragraph:

Extract 8-3

We can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom. (lines 59-62, 1st draft, Kevin)

"We can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom,too"(Hwang, 1997).Thus,the International Youth Hostel plays a important part in an economical trip. (lines 78-82, 2nd draft, Kevin)

Such transformations were scattered over the whole paper and suggest that Kevin was copying from sources verbatim before he was told that the practice was inappropriate in research writing. According to Kevin, these copying practices were quite common among his peers. He related an anecdote about some of his colleagues working on a literature paper (R/K/3). He found his colleagues copy directly from a website a whole paragraph without a single quotation mark or any trace of attribution. Kevin commented that those sentences were too beautiful for

their teachers not to detect the sources. However, apparently, his colleagues were unaware that they were plagiarising. Only after Kevin pointed it out, they began to panic. This anecdote suggests that these college students had not received proper training in referencing.

Based on her studies on Taiwanese postgraduates, Yao (1993) points out that Taiwanese academics seem to have a slightly lower consciousness of plagiarism. I suspect that this toleration of plagiarizing may be related to the practice of *yin-jing-ju-dian* (quoting the classics and referring to the past), as discussed in Section 3.5.2.2. Nevertheless, for English writing to be accepted in today's international academic communities, both Taiwanese teachers and students need to take note of citation conventions.

8.2.1.3 Details

According to the instructor, the writing of his students was, more often than not, too general. Therefore, he had to remind the students to be more specific, to explain more, and to provide more details. However, one of the comments that Mr. James gave Kevin was to remove details that "the reader doesn't need to know" (I/K/1). For example, while Kevin was introducing the rail system in Tokyo, he itemised the eighteen stops on one of the lines. These details were a rare example where deletion was made in the second draft.

8.2.1.4 Self-Motivated Revisions

As explained above, Mr. James did not make any comments on the surface errors of Kevin's papers. The organization and the referencing seemed to be the instructor's sole focus when he was looking at Kevin's draft. It can be seen that Kevin must have spent a significant amount of time revising the paper in response to the instructor's feedback. My observation was that, apart from the organization and the referencing, Kevin's first draft still had much to work on. However, although there were numerous spelling mistakes and grammar problems, he made only two minor corrections.

8.2.2 From Draft 2 to Draft 3

After the submission of the second draft, another writing conference with the

instructor was held to provide support for Kevin. Accordingly, the student had to revise the paper and prepare for a third draft. Compared to the revisions made between the first and the second drafts, those made between the second and the third drafts followed approximately the same route. The organization and the referencing still needed to be worked on. The only difference was that the instructor asked Kevin to use the spell-check function of the word-processor and to refrain from language that was deemed as improper in academic writing. These points will be elaborated on in the following section.

8.2.2.1 Organization

As pointed out in the previous section, Kevin had made the most effort in reworking the paragraphs so that they provided better signposting for the reader. Still, the instructor was not satisfied with Kevin's work. For the third draft, he wanted Kevin to "write a short sentence or phrase" (I/K/2) about each of the themes that he had introduced in the sub-introduction. The function of this sentence, or phrase, was to "give a little bit more information to the reader so that he (sic) knows that more information about that is coming" (I/K/2). In other words, something more had to be said in the sub-introduction for the reader's benefit. As a result, the sub-introductory paragraph in Extract 8-2 was further expanded in Kevin's third draft:

Extract 8-4

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of your travelling expense. There are two main places, travel agency and airline company, for travellers to purchase the airline tickets. Travellers can obtain some benefits or discounts from these two places. *Travel agencies often offer some low-cost tickets especailly like round tickets and "group tour tickets". For airline companies, their ticket fares might vary according to the "light" or the "boom" season or the period of their promotion for air tickets.* (lines 7-14, 3rd draft, Kevin, italics added)

The last two sentences were added to summarise the bargains that can be found in travel agencies and airline companies, which would be elaborated on in his next paragraph. Similar additions were made throughout the whole paper.

8.2.2.2 Referencing

Again, the proper way of referencing was a common theme in all the conferences. After Kevin added parenthetical references in the second draft, Mr. James found a serious problem that could not be overlooked. That is, Kevin used the same source more than twice in a row. The instructor said to Kevin in the conference:

Extract 8-5

Anyway, you were copying this guy's outline. You're following his book exactly. You can't do that. So I made a rule (LAUGH) for a paper that you can only use two in a row, not three in a row. (I/K/2)

"Plagiarism," as the instructor pointed out, was not limited to copying other people's words without acknowledgement. What Kevin, as well as most of his peers, did was to use too much information from a single source so that it appeared that the author of the source was writing the paper, instead of Kevin. Obviously, this was not the principle of a piece of research writing, as Mr. James explained to Kevin:

Extract 8-6

Your research paper is supposed to give, to have some idea, and you get different people's information about that idea. (I/K/2)

Kevin's dependence on a single source was, according to the instructor, the worst among his peers. Many of his paragraphs were entirely taken from a single source. A paragraph taken from Kevin's second draft illustrates the problem. In this paragraph, Kevin used two quotes in a row from a book published by Zhangyang House. Though it did not exceed the instructor's "not three in a row" rule, the paragraph apparently relied heavily on the book by Zhangyang House. This paragraph was transformed in the third draft:

Extract 8-7

Going directly to airline company seems to be not a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. "Make sure not to pick the time during

Going directly to airline company seems to not be a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. "Make sure not to pick the time during

winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad with more frequency than other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of ur travelling expenses"(Zhangyang House, 1996, p35). "And at the "light season" moment ,some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its orginally offered price"(Zhangyang House, 1996, p35). It's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo. (lines 32-42, 2nd draft, Kevin)

winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad with more frequency than other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of ur travelling expenses"(Chou, 1999, p 200). "And at the "light season" moment ,some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its orginally offered price"(Zhangyang House, 1996, p 35). It's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo. (lines 30-40, 3rd draft, Kevin)

At first look, the paragraph has improved in the sense that two different sources were referred to, which seems to indicate that research had been done and different opinions consulted. However, a closer examination will reveal that the student had an inadequate understanding of the purpose of referencing. Though the first quote in this paragraph appeared to come from another source than the original "Zhangyang House," it actually contained exactly the same contents and wording. In other words, he replaced the original reference information with another source while leaving the contents of quotation intact. I tentatively put forward speculations for this intriguing behaviour. It was possible that Kevin did not go back to his sources for more perspectives either because he did not have sufficient time or because he thought the instructor would not notice. Another explanation is that Kevin was not convinced that he should honour the original author by proper referencing because, he claimed, the authors of his sources probably also copied from each other. Kevin thus justified his behaviour in an interview:

Extract 8-8

Most of my sources are tour guides. The advantage is that they have similar contents. There's nothing much that needs to be changed. I seem to be a bit of an opportunist. (LAUGH) It could be that those who wrote the tour guides copied from a same person. The five or six books I found were similar to one another. In the last conference [Mr. James] demanded different sources. I didn't make any substantial change. I simply replaced with a similar source and altered it a bit. Then it would look like I was using some other source. (R/K/3)

Kevin found that most of the guidebooks that he referred to contained similar information, which implied that the authors of these sources might have copied from each other, instead of doing their own research. Therefore, he felt justified that he did not have to bother checking out a different source. This instance calls into question the practice of referencing in the research writing project, and suggests that some students might be observing the convention of referencing only in appearance.

8.2.2.3 Editing at the Surface Level

Mr. James did not comment on any of Kevin's language in the first draft, though it was apparent that Kevin needed to improve in this aspect. Among Kevin's misuse of language, the improper adoption of abbreviations used on the Internet, such as "u" for "you" and "ur" for "your", was the most conspicuous. This coupled with many spelling mistakes rendered his paper sloppy. The instructor was tolerant of these problems in the first draft, in the belief that Kevin was capable of dealing with these minor imperfections. However, Kevin's second draft did not show any improvement in this aspect. The persistence of the sloppiness prompted Mr. James to point out the mistakes to Kevin, who was advised to make good use of the spell-check function in the word-processor and to refrain from adopting Internet languages in a research paper. This advice, however, was taken only partially. While some of the language mistakes had been corrected, others remained in the third draft, as illustrated in the following sentence:

Extract 8-9

If *u* only *foucus* on two of eighteen spots ,it's a economical way to purchase it. (lines 166-7, 3rd draft, Kevin, italics added)

In addition to spelling mistakes and inappropriate abbreviations, Mr. James commented on some other language problems. For example, he pointed out an improper use of colloquial language:

Extract 8-10

For those traveller,the high price on food is *a pain on their neck* because the high price also takes up large proportion on their travelling expense . (lines 95-7, 2nd draft, Kevin, italics added)

For those traveller,the high price on food is *very painful* for them because the high price also takes the large proportion on their travelling expense . (lines 95-7, 3rd draft, Kevin, italics added)

Kevin's use of "a pain on their neck" – incorrect usage in its own right – was denounced as informal, unsuitable even for a topic that was "not very academic" (I/K/2). Accordingly, this colloquial usage was replaced with a more neutral phrase, "very painful," in the third draft.

8.2.2.4 Contents

The instructor made very few comments about the contents of the papers. The only exception was his objection to one of Kevin's statements concerning the transport in Tokyo:

Extract 8-11

If the traveller pay a visit to Tokyo,they can't move a little bit without taking transportation . (lines 128-9, 2nd draft, Kevin)

If the traveller pay a visit to Tokyo,*it would be much easier and more convenient for them to take transportation* . (lines 136-7, 3rd draft, Kevin, italics added)

Both in written feedback and in the writing conference, Mr. James voiced his disagreement by advancing the possibility of "walking around in Tokyo." However, the instructor was careful not to dismiss Kevin's opinions altogether. Instead, he asked Kevin to reconsider his language and avoid inappropriate exaggerations:

Extract 8-12

I did not think Tokyo was like that. OK? If Tokyo is like that, then, that's fine. But I'm just asking you, if it's not like that, if it's possible to walk around parts of Tokyo, then don't write that. "They can't move a little bit"? That's pretty strong. (I/K/2)

In the third draft, Kevin rewrote the sentence and made a more cautious statement (as shown in italics).

8.2.2.5 Self-Motivated Revisions

Kevin made efforts to revise where the instructor commented. The rest of the paper was hardly changed, except for two grammar corrections and one added detail. Yet, these revisions can be claimed to be successful. For example, while discussing low-cost eating in Tokyo, Kevin recommended convenience stores, in which the bread cost less than in a bakery.

Extract 8-13

The food offered in the convenient store is just slightly more expensive than the convenient store in Taiwan. But basically, it won't cost the travellers too much money. For example, the bread offered by the convenient store such as 7-11 is much lower than other bakery in Tokyo (Lin, 1998). (lines 112-6, 2nd draft, Kevin)

In the third draft, Kevin decided that his research would be more complete if rice-consuming travellers were also considered. Thus, he added one more detail at the end of the paragraph:

Extract 8-14

Those who prefer rice can go to Family Mart. because "the lunch box served by Family Mart. is also offered an economical cost for the customers from time to time" (Gostelow, 1996, p 66) (lines 119-21, 3rd draft, Kevin)

8.2.3 From Draft 3 to the Final Draft

After the students submitted the third draft, they had another conference with the instructor. The third-draft conferences tended to be short. The written comments on the third drafts were also scarce. In addition, the students were allowed only two days to revise before they had to submit final drafts for assessment. Therefore, the changes between the third and the final draft were minimal.

8.2.3.1 Teacher-Motivated Revisions

The only advice that the instructor gave Kevin in the conference, with demonstrations, concerned punctuation and spaces in parenthetical references. In

this aspect, Kevin made thorough revisions throughout the whole paper.

8.2.3.2 Self-Motivated revisions

For his final draft, Kevin made a few more revisions concerning the mechanics as well as the contents. Some of the grammatical mistakes were corrected. Extract 8-15 provides an example. In the final draft, two local corrections (as indicated in italics) were made in these sentences:

Extract 8-15

There are two common and economical ways that most experienced travellers take. They usually leave it for a certain tour bus or take the economical tip to rail system around Tokyo to save some expenses more efficiently. (lines 140-2, 3rd draft, Kevin, italics added)

There are two common and economical ways that most experienced travellers *use*. They usually leave it for a certain tour bus or take the economical trip *by* rail system around Tokyo to save some expenses more efficiently. (lines 142-4, final draft, Kevin, italics added)

Another fragment in the third draft was detected by the student himself and successfully transformed into a meaningful sentence in the final draft:

Extract 8-16

Therefore, making best use of the surrounding source during their lodging. (lines 108-9, 3rd draft, Kevin)

Therefore, making best use of the surrounding source during their lodging is the tip to save extra money. (lines 109-10, final draft, Kevin)

8.2.4 Summary

Kevin's revisions centred on the organization and the referencing in both the second and the third drafts. Only minor problems were worked on in the final draft. In addition, there were still many errors which could have been corrected. Overall, the contents of the revisions mirrored the focus of the writing conferences and suggests that the instructor's feedback during the conferences had a strong influence

at the students' editing stage.

8.3 CASE TWO - CATHY

Cathy's paper was chosen for detailed analysis because it received the most written comments, in contrast to Kevin's. These comments ranged from grammar corrections to suggestions at a macrostructure level. The title of Cathy's paper is "Risk factors for osteoporosis" (See Appendices J – M).

8.3.1 From Draft 1 to Draft 2

Cathy made a big revision from the first to the second draft. The introductory paragraph was rewritten. New paragraphs and new concepts were introduced. At the same time, she also made corrections at the local level. Some of these revisions were inspired by the instructor's comments on the paper or in the writing conference, while others seemed to be made without teacher influence.

8.3.1.1 Revision at a Macrostructure Level

Cathy chose to discuss the risk factors of osteoporosis for her research paper. She tried to categorize the risk factors into two types – "preventable" and "non-preventable" (later changed into "controllable" and "non-controllable"). In her first draft, Cathy allocated genetics, maternity, and hormonal changes to the camp of non-controllable factors, while contracting diseases and lifestyles were subsumed under controllable factors. The instructor did not agree with her categorization, however. He pointed out that diseases like diabetes were not controllable, and moved the factor of contracting diseases to "non-controllable." It was a change at a macrostructure level, though Cathy did not seem to have trouble making the revision.

8.3.1.2 Introduction Amended

The introduction of Cathy's first draft was overhauled in the second draft. The original introduction explained what osteoporosis was and presented the statistics as to how many people in the United States had the condition, followed by a brief signpost indicating that two types of risk factors would be considered in the paper. However, in the second draft, all the passages relating to the cause of osteoporosis were removed, as can be seen from the following two extracts.

Extract 8-17

Constructed from protein called “collagen” and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones keep a renewing process continually that attain a peak bone mass when one is at the age of 25 to 30 (Trisha Macnair, 2000, p. 1). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one’s bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, and which may easily develop into osteoporosis or porous bone. “Osteoporosis, characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue is the most common type of metabolic bone disease, leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost the entire skeleton (National Institute of Health). According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, eight million American women and two million men has osteoporosis, and 18 millions more have low bone mass. A statistics by Center for Osteoporosis and Rheumatology Education also indicates that in the U.S. today, one in two women and one in eight men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Because porous bone occurs without any evident symptoms, it is often called a hidden disease. People may not notice that they get osteoporosis until their bones become so delicate that they may not withstand a sudden strain, bump, or fall, and quite possibly which may result in serious fractures or collapsed vertebra. Therefore, it is important to get to know some risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis. *Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the non-preventable and the preventable* (Li, 1998, p. 59). (lines 5-25, 1st draft, Cathy, italics added)

Extract 8-18

In most countries, the number of people who suffer from osteoporosis or porous bone keeps growing. The disease becomes so prevalent that it has already posed a threat to the public health (Chang, 1995). While the disease is often neglected by most people, “in the U.S. today, 10 million individuals already have osteoporosis, and 18 million more have low bone mass, placing them at increased risk for osteoporosis” (National Institute of Health). The appalling figures reflect the seriousness of the problem. Besides, the cruel fact that “one in two postmenopausal women and one in eight men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their life time” (National Institute of Health) also conveys an important message-- It is important for the public to get to know something about the disease including what osteoporosis is and who’s at a high risk of developing low bone mass. *Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the “non-controllable” and the “controllable”* (Li, 1998). Non-controllable factors for osteoporosis refer to the circumstance in which low bone mass and debilitating bone density are inevitable or one has inherent tendency to develop porous bone. The controllable, on the contrary, are “environmental” which can trigger osteoporosis. (lines 5-20, 2nd draft, Cathy, italics added)

Basically, the thesis statement (italicised in the extracts) of the new introduction

remains the same, while the statistics serves to alert people and to provide the rationale for the paper. Overall, the focus of the paragraph was clearer. In addition, two more sentences were added in the end as signposts to help the reader anticipate the information which would follow in the rest of the paper.

8.3.1.3 A New Paragraph Added

Another dramatic change in Cathy's second draft was the addition of a paragraph about "remodeling". However, on closer examination, most of the sentences in this paragraph came from the introduction of the first draft. In this "remodelling" paragraph, it seemed that Cathy tried to explain the cause of osteoporosis, as related to bone remodeling. In Extract 8-19, italics are added to show where sentences were moved from the old introduction:

Extract 8-19

The occurrence of osteoporosis has a relation with bone remodeling (Chao, 1998). *"Characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, osteoporosis is the most common type of metabolic bone disease leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost to the entire skeleton" (National Institute of Health). Constructed from protein called "collagen" and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones attain a peak bone mass from the age of 25 to 30 (Macnair, 2000). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, because the "remodeling process" is accelerated. "Bone remodeling" involves a continuous breakdown and reconstruction of bones (Li, 1998). The "breakdown" is carried out by "osteoclasts," a cell in the bone that continually erodes the surface of bones (Li, 1998). On the other hand, osteoblast, a "bone forming cell," is responsible for restoring bone density, said Li. However, as one passes peak bone mass, here comes the big problem: "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). This accounts for the formation of osteoporosis and the occurrence of various bone fractures. "People may not notice that they get osteoporosis until their bones become so delicate that they may not withstand a sudden strain, bump, or fall, and quite possibly which may result in serious fractures or collapsed vertebra (International Osteoporosis Foundation).* (lines 21-40, 2nd draft, Cathy, italics added)

The inclusion of the remodeling paragraph was largely successful in the sense that it provided background knowledge that could not be contained in the introduction but was important for an understanding of the disease. As established above, the removal of some of the details has contributed to the clearer focus of the new

introduction. However, Cathy's attempt to recycle those trimmed passages was obvious, which resulted in indiscriminate inclusion of information. The Macnair quote succinctly explained human bone structure and its deterioration, while the last quote conveyed the warning that people needed to be aware of the "hidden" disease before it caused serious results. Therefore, these two quotes seemed to be appropriate to be included here. However, the beginning quote of the paragraph appeared out of place and redundant. The reader expectation developed in the introduction of a new element in the first sentence – bone remodeling – is thus thwarted by the transplanted sentence dealing with the seriousness of the disease.

8.3.1.4 Restatement Added

As noted earlier, TBER (topic sentence, bridge sentence, example, and restatement) had always been a model that Mr. James' students were required to follow, either in the essays preceding the research paper or in the research paper itself. Most of the students needed to be reminded that the TBER model should be used in this long paper. Cathy was an exception. In the second draft, she even added restatements at the end of every paragraph, though some of them were contrived or redundant. One example will suffice, the paragraph on "contracting diseases." After explaining the relationship of osteoporosis with diseases like diabetes, endocrine disease, and gastrointestinal disease, Cathy felt obliged to supply a sentence, in the second draft, as a conclusion to the paragraph:

Extract 8-20

Some diseases have indirect connection with osteoporosis. (lines 126-7, 2nd draft, Cathy)

Though it appears to serve as the restatement of the TBER model, this sentence read feebly and seemed to fit more appropriately as an introduction than as a conclusion of a paragraph.

8.3.1.5 Development of Quotations

One of the problems that the students had when writing a research paper was how to quote appropriately. It has been observed that Kevin and some other students incorporated quotes only to meet the instructor's demand. Whether the quotes were

really necessary or appropriate in the context seemed not to be their concern. Another student, Sylvie, talked to me about the difficulty of finding a quote to use in her paper:

Extract 8-21

[Mr. James] asked us to provide 5 quotations. I inserted a few, but still, one more quote is needed. I don't know where I can insert another quotation. I've got an idea where quotes can be inserted, but I can't find an additional one to use. (R/S/2)

It was obvious that Sylvie did not really understand the function of quotations in a research paper. She struggled to incorporate quotes in her paper only because they were demanded by the instructor, a part of homework that needed to be executed.

A close analysis of Kevin's and Cathy's papers shows that many of the quotes were not used properly. For example, when discussing the controllable risk factors of osteoporosis, Cathy argued that dietary supplement did not always present a good option to prevent the disease:

Extract 8-22

Nowadays, there are lots of dietary supplement on the market featuring calcium plus iron. This kind of products seems to be a perfect choice for modern people in terms of health orientation and economical concepts. However, the fact is totally different. "Taking high dose of calcium and iron at the same time will lead to suppressive absorption between the two substance in the body and trigger preliminary bone loss" (Chao, 1998). (lines 103-8, 1st draft, Cathy)

After this passage, Cathy went straight into discussion of another controllable risk factor – exercise. It appeared that she was hoping that the quote would explain itself. However, it has been a convention in academic writing that a quote needs to be commented on so that it can serve the writer's purpose of arguing. This convention was pointed out by the instructor in the conference:

Extract 8-23

You have this very interesting quote. My recommendation is, after this interesting quote, you restate the information in your own words, where you kind of comment on it. (I/C/2)

In the second draft, Cathy faithfully added a comment after the quote:

Extract 8-24

However, the fact is totally different. “Taking high dose of calcium and iron at the same time will lead to suppressive absorption between the two substance in the body and trigger preliminary bone loss,” said Dr. Chao *and which implies that it is better to take dietary supplements according to doctors.* (lines 146-9, 2nd draft, Cathy, italics added)

Italics were added to highlight the comment that Cathy attached to the quote. The interpretation of the quote was satisfactory in itself, though the form of presentation was awkward.

8.3.1.6 Conclusion Rewritten

In her first draft, Cathy wrote a conclusion which briefly summarised her thesis. Yet, it also left the reader with a question, “then what?”

Extract 8-25

The information about some risk factors including the non-preventable and the preventable can help people know about the disease and thereby, take some precaution measures to avoid the occurrence of the disease. Since osteoporosis is a silent disease, people usually are not aware that they have been attacked by the porous bone until serious bone injury or fractures taking place. The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk. (lines 146-51, 1st draft, Cathy)

It has been a convention in academic writing that a conclusion should bring “a sense of completion” without merely repeating the introduction (Crème & Lea, 1997). It should point to a direction that the reader can pursue. The problem with Cathy’s conclusion was that the reader might leave the paper with a question in mind: “Now we have known which group of people are at the high risk of contracting osteoporosis. But what do we benefit from this knowledge? Can we do anything about it?” At least, this was the question that the instructor, as the reader of the paper, asked in the conference:

Extract 8-26

“The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk.” Then what? What do they do with this risk? Here you can talk a little bit in your conclusion about some precaution. (I/C/1)

Cathy came out with a slightly longer conclusion in the second draft:

Extract 8-27

Non-controllable and controllable factors are two major causes of osteoporosis. *Except one's genotype that is prone to low bone mass, for non-controllable factors like sex hormone deficiency, or bone loss during pregnancy, people still can take some measures to prevent the condition from deteriorating. Controllable factors exhibit an important fact that having a healthy lifestyle is the best precaution.* Since osteoporosis is a silent disease, people usually are not aware that they have this condition until serious bone injury or fractures taking place. The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk *and arouse the publics' awareness of osteoporosis.* (lines 171-9, 2nd draft, Cathy, italics added)

The italic part of the paragraph was Cathy's answer to the reader, i.e., the instructor.

8.3.1.7 The Mechanics

As I have explained above, the reason that Cathy's paper was chosen for discussion was that she received the most teacher comments on her draft. Many of the comments could be described as surface corrections. As a matter of fact, it was unusual for Mr. James to correct grammatical mistakes in student papers. As pointed out in the previous chapter, he did not want his class to become a grammar class. Therefore, he would normally play down the importance of grammar intentionally when he gave students comments.

Cathy made grammar corrections based on Mr. James' comments. Some of the jobs had already been done by the instructor, so what Cathy needed to do was to make the changes on her Word document. For example, two incorrect usages of verb aspect were marked and corrected by Mr. James on Cathy's draft. Her job was to change them in her later draft, as the italic parts in Extract 8-28 shows:

Extract 8-28

For men, testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone density; however, as men's getting older, the volume of testosterone secretion is declining and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (lines 82-5, 1st draft, Cathy)

For men, testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone density; however, as men *get* older, the volume of testosterone secretion *declines* and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (lines 98-101, 2nd draft, Cathy, italics added)

However, some corrections needed Cathy's own contributions. For example, the instructor merely commented, "say something else", on the latter half of Extract 8-29. Though this problem point was also mentioned in the conference, the instructor merely explained that the sentence needed to be rewritten. Cathy came up with a shorter but much better version in the second draft:

Extract 8-29

The relationship between hormonal changes and porous bone can be discussed according to different genders—males and females (International Osteoporosis Foundation). (lines 69-71, 1st draft, Cathy)

Hormonal changes in males and females are associated with osteoporosis. (line 87, 2nd draft, Cathy)

8.3.2 From Draft 2 to Draft 3

As can be seen from the discussion above, Cathy produced a second draft very different from her first draft. In contrast to the dramatic revisions made in the second draft, she made fewer corrections in her third draft. The organization having been approved by the instructor, Cathy focused on polishing her paper at the surface level. Mr. James did not make further corrections on Cathy's second draft. However, Cathy's third draft shows several local corrections and indicates that she was trying to improve her paper by careful proof-reading. Most of the finer points dealt with in the third draft concerned the grammar. While some of the corrections were unsuccessful, others were satisfactory and added to the readability of the paper. Examples of successful and unsuccessful corrections will be given below.

8.3.2.1 Successful Corrections

Several corrections seemed to result from straightforward proofreading. In Extract 8-30, the word "time", missing from the second draft, was added in the third draft, presumably from later proofreading.

Extract 8-30

The controllable risk factors for osteoporosis are determined by one's lifestyle such as diet, the amount of *time* spending on exercise, and habits. (lines 127-8, 3rd draft, Cathy, italics added)

In another passage, Cathy's revision focused on punctuation. She removed several quotation marks from a few medical terms:

Extract 8-31

Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, because the "remodeling process" is accelerated. "Bone remodeling" involves a continuous breakdown and reconstruction of bones (Li, 1998). The "breakdown" is carried out by "osteoclasts," a cell in the bone that continually erodes the surface of bones (Li, 1998). (lines 27-32, 2nd draft, Cathy)

In the third draft, Cathy kept only the first pair of quotation marks to distinguish "remodeling process", a medical term that was mentioned for the first time in the paper. The rest of the quotation marks were appropriately removed, because the other terms did not need to be marked out as special or unusual.

8.3.2.2 Unsuccessful Corrections

In discussing the relationship of "bone remodeling" and osteoporosis, Cathy decided to make a small change in a passage of the second draft:

Extract 8-32

However, as one passes peak bone mass, here comes the big problem: "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). (lines 33-6, 2nd draft, Cathy)

However, as one passes peak bone mass, "*bone remodeling*" *can become a troublemaker*, because "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). (lines 33-6, 3rd draft, Cathy, italics added)

It seemed that Cathy was trying to re-establish the relationship of "bone remodeling" with osteoporosis in this passage. However, by dubbing the remodeling process as a "troublemaker" did not seem to help the reader register the complex concept in their minds. One would suspect that this clause might as well be removed altogether to maintain conciseness of the sentence.

8.3.3 From Draft 3 to the Final Draft

Cathy did not make any revisions in her final draft. Mr. James did not make any notes on her third draft. In addition, Cathy and the instructor did not discuss the paper itself in the third draft conference. It seems that both Cathy and Mr. James were already satisfied with her performance in the third draft. Consequently, Cathy did not see the reason to tamper with the draft.

8.3.4 Summary

Among her peers, Cathy received the most teacher comments on her first draft. Many of these comments were corrections at the surface level. However, Cathy's revision in her second draft was dramatic in the sense that the introduction, the categorization and the conclusion were adjusted. Though the gist of the paper remained largely the same, the scope of the revision is considered to be big.

In contrast to the second draft, the focal point of the third draft was more on the mechanics. However, these corrections were mostly based on Cathy's own discretion. Cathy did not make any more revisions in the final draft because it appeared that both the instructor and she were satisfied with the paper.

8.4 DISCUSSION

Though Kevin's and Cathy's cases can not be generalized to the whole group of students, I would like to put forward a few tentative observations.

First, the studies of the two papers, Kevin's and Cathy's, show that the students had some similar focuses when revising their papers. For example, they both spent the most time on the organization. This focus reflects the instructor's belief that writing skills "always have to take priority" (R/I/1), no matter whether it is a five-paragraph essay or a 2000-word research paper.

Next in line on the students' revision list was referencing. A formal research paper together with the referencing is a brand new experience for them. It is also clear from the above observation that the students still had problems with correct ways of referencing. For example, they did not understand when or why to use a direct or indirect quote. They may have learned to avoid using the same sources in a single paragraph; however, they may not have realized why. The instruction that they needed was not more lectures on referencing, but more practices of research

writing, so that they could learn from doing it.

It is also noticed that these conferences had a strong impact on the students' revision. What had been repeatedly discussed in the conferences was invariably reflected in the students' revised papers. The finding here diverges from that of Goldstein and Conrad (1990), in which the researchers reached conclusions that conferences do not necessarily result in revision, and revision after a conference is not always successful. The reason for the divergence can only be speculated. It is possible that the students in this writing classroom were happy to deal with their problems in writing after sufficiently explicit instruction in the conferences. It is also possible that the students felt obliged to make the revision accordingly so as not to displease the instructor.

While the students managed to revise their papers in the aspects of organization and referencing based on the instructor's advice, their self-motivated revisions centred on the mechanics. There might be three possibilities for this. It could be that they could only handle the mechanics problems independently, with their mediocre language proficiency and writing ability. Another suggestion is that the students were pushed by time and pressure from other assignments so that they chose to make the most straightforward type of revisions – the mechanics. Last but not least, the students might perceive editing as error correction. Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (1996) also report that foreign language learners believe that "form should precede, and have priority over, expression of meaning, concepts, or original ideas" (p. 297). If their finding can be applied to the current study, I suspect that the perception may stem from the L2 writing instruction that the students had received, as Mohan & Lo (1985) argue in their study.

Overall, the analysis of the students' revision indicates that writing conferences were effective in the sense that the students revised their papers based on the instruction that they received in the conferences. More significantly, the inclusion of the writing conferences in the curriculum forced the students to hold more responsibility for their writing and to make revision where appropriate.

Having discussed the consecutive stages of the research writing project, I will continue the investigation in the next chapter with the specific focus on cultural factors in the project.

CHAPTER 9

AN EXPLORATION OF CULTURAL FACTORS IN THE RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

Having examined the different stages of the research writing project in the previous chapters, I would like to consider cultural factors in the acquisition process of research writing. A separate chapter on “culture” does not imply that cultural elements are independent of the other factors that influence the teaching and learning of English writing. Rather, culture is recognized as inseparable from the whole process of learning to write. However, I feel it appropriate to add such a chapter to highlight the significance of the role of culture in the research writing project.

Beyond the introductory section, the backgrounds of the informants will be discussed in Section 9.2 to show the diversity of personal experiences in terms of language learning. The following section will compare Chinese and English writing from the perspectives of the informants. In Section 9.4 I will give an account of the informants’ encounter with another culture and consider the impact of cultural conflicts on Chinese students’ learning of English writing. I will consider several factors that might have influenced the informants’ perceptions of the differences of Chinese and English rhetoric. Overall, I would like to argue that different and sometimes contrastive views of writing from both sides of teaching and learning can be largely attributed to the influence of their respective cultural traditions, though it is also acknowledged that factors like learning experiences and personality might play a role.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture has long been recognized as an influential factor in the contexts of language learning. For example, Kramsch (1998) contends that the use of language is “shaped and socialized through culture” (p. 6). There have been several studies researching the meeting of two cultures in the classroom. Some of them deal with international students studying in English-speaking countries. Ballard (1996), for example, investigates the influence of culture on approaches to learning and makes suggestions as to how to help foreign students overcome misunderstanding resulting from different cultural norms. Still others examine expatriate teachers teaching

English in a non-English-speaking country. Holliday (1996), for example, compares the teaching of expatriate and Egyptian teachers in an Egyptian university and calls for a rationalised yet traditional approach that takes the local culture into consideration. These studies share the same interest, which is to acknowledge the relationship of language learning and culture as well as to examine the scope of the relationship. Based on the same assumption, this chapter will consider cultural factors in the writing classroom in focus, in an attempt to understand the learning-to-write activity in a more extensive way.

9.2 THE BACKGROUND OF THE INFORMANTS

To remind the reader of the context of the study, I would like to give an account of the participants' backgrounds. One American teacher, Mr. James, and seven Taiwanese students participated the study. The instructor was about thirty years old. He held a master degree in TESOL. He taught English as a second language for one year in San Francisco before he came to Taiwan. Since coming to Taiwan, he had been teaching English as a foreign language for five and a half years. The courses he offered were mainly speaking and listening, writing and general English for university students. This was the third year he had taught English composition in Taiwan's universities. Mr. James did not read or speak Chinese. Apparently, he acquired his knowledge of Chinese culture through his Taiwanese wife, his own observation of the society and his Taiwanese students, as well as his reading of related materials in English.

The seven student informants of the study were all Taiwanese in their early twenties. They were at the time of the study enrolled in a two-year programme in a Department of Applied English at a Taiwanese university. The students in the programme were required to take two years' composition courses. The first year's composition course was designed to guide them through the process of developing one paragraph to an essay of 6 to 8 pages. The second year's composition course was divided into two parts. In the first semester, they practiced different modes of writing, such as narrative, argumentation, cause and effect, while the second semester was dominated by business-oriented writing. At the beginning of the study, these students were in the latter half of the first year, when they were about to embark on a project of research writing.

Having looked at the students' current learning situation in a collective way, it is worth noting that their past learning experiences were varied. The most obvious difference among them was their study subjects in previous colleges. Before enrolment in the current programme, they went through different routes of the academic ladder. Three of them graduated from an English department of a junior college, while the other four studied various subjects as their majors, such as accounting and electronics. Though the difference did not necessarily imply that the former had a higher command of English than the latter, it is reasonable to assume that the English majors had more contacts with language learning environments than the others. For example, almost all these English majors had encountered "foreigner" teachers in their previous programmes, where they had all taken composition courses for at least two years. On the other hand, the non-English-majors learned how to write for exam purposes, if they had taken any composition courses at all. Having made the basic distinction, I would like to point out that though it was always possible to categorize the students, every one of them had his or her own unique language learning experiences. Two examples will be presented in the following paragraphs to illustrate the diversity within the student informants. The source of the students' background information comes from the interview data.

Bob started to learn English in the kindergarten. He continued his English lessons at a children's English school, when he was a primary school pupil. During his junior high school years, he took compulsory English lessons as required. He studied accounting in a junior college. Bob did not pay much attention to English lessons in the first two of his college years. However, the turning point came when he went to New Zealand to visit his friend during a vacation. He felt that he became a dumb person in this English-speaking country. It dawned on him that "English was very important", so he determined to master the language. Thereafter, he began to seek opportunities to improve his English. He took extra English lessons in a university language centre. During another school vacation he went to the United States for a one month's language course. In the final junior college year, he took a year's exam-oriented course in a supplementary school to prepare for the entrance exam to the current English programme. Despite his various language learning experiences, Mr. James' composition class was the first time that Bob learned to write in English.

Toby started to learn English in a children's English school when he was ten years old. After the compulsory three-year education in a junior high school, he enrolled himself in a vocational high school, studying electronics. In this three years' programme, students are only required to take English lessons for the first two years. It is also generally known that English, seen as an unimportant subject in a vocational school, is often taught and learned in a perfunctory way. After the vocational high school, Toby went on to a two-year programme in a junior college, where he took a one year required English course, in addition to his electronics specialist subjects. After graduating from the programme, he took an exam and was admitted to a Department of Applied English at a university, where, for the first time, he studied English "full time". However, Toby was not satisfied with that department, so he resat the exam and was admitted to the current university. Having taken the same English programme in two different universities, Toby was in a good position to compare the composition courses that they offered. For example, he pointed out that the writing teacher in the previous university would give comments like "You don't have a main idea in the introductory paragraph", without explaining what a main idea was. On the other hand, he liked Mr. James' explanations, which were "good and clear", while the textbook they used provided them with "rules to follow".

Bob's and Toby's stories of language learning serve as an example to illustrate the diverse backgrounds from which the student informants came from. With this diversity within the Chinese tradition coupled with the Anglo-American tradition where the instructor came from, it is highly likely that certain conflicts in terms of interpretations and expectations of academic writing tasks would surface. Based mainly on the interview and the conference data, this chapter will continue with an analysis of the instructor's and the students' perception of Chinese culture as an influential factor in students' writing.

9.3 CULTURES OF WRITING

The analysis of the interview and the conference data shows that the instructor and the students made a contrast between English and Chinese writing in three aspects. Firstly, English writing requires specific examples or evidence while Chinese writing often omits details. Secondly, English writing is featured by tight organization while

the Chinese writer jumps from one idea to another without seeming logic. Thirdly, English writing is more writer-responsible while Chinese writing is more reader-responsible. These three points will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

9.3.1 Detail

One of the comments that the students received from the instructor about their essays was “this needs more details” or “be more specific”. This request for supporting details for arguments was repeated so often throughout the academic year that “be more specific” had become a catch-phrase in the class. Furthermore, the instructor characterized English writing as possessing the quality of “being specific” and contrasted it with Chinese writing, which did not often provide enough detail for the reader to understand its point. In one of the writing conferences, for instance, the instructor was dealing with some ambiguous terms in Bob’s writing, where Bob did not seem to be able to produce a clear definition for the terms that he used in the paper. Upon knowing that Bob’s sources were written in Chinese, the instructor gave Bob a piece of advice:

Extract 9-1

So, you have to understand that, when you read something in Chinese and you go to write it, put it in your English research paper, you need much more information than they will give you. (I/B/3)

The instructor proceeded to illustrate his point with a comparison between Chinese and English newspapers. He claimed that he would have to read the English newspapers to know all the details that he wanted to know about a specific incident, which his Taiwanese wife could not obtain from the Chinese newspapers. His interpretation was that the Chinese newspapers did not provide detail because it was not demanded by the Chinese reader.

Extract 9-2

My English newspaper gives me much more detail than [my wife’s] Chinese newspaper. Why? Because the reader of English demands much more detail. The reader of Chinese is OK not knowing this detail. (I/B/3)

Why is the reader of Chinese “OK not knowing this detail”? Or, is it true that the Chinese reader does not care about detail? Helen provided one of the possible

explanations to that, while she was talking about the instructor's expectation of their research papers.

Extract 9-3

H: [Research papers] mustn't be *fu*, like in Chinese writing. They have to be specific.

R: What do you mean by the word "*fu*"?

H: It's like in Chinese writing. We won't probe in and give detailed description when we have understood the *yi-jing* (conception) of the sentence. (R/H/2)

The Chinese word "fu" literally means "floating on water." Therefore, it implies dwelling on the surface of incidents, instead of going into deep description. Helen's choice of the word might have been influenced by the instructor's rather negative opinion of Chinese writing. However, she soon pointed out that it was the understanding of the *yi-jing* (artistic conception) that mattered, rather than the detail. In other words, Chinese writing does not dwell on detail, not because the Chinese reader does not need it, but because he/she has already obtained the essence from the text and the context so that the elaboration of detail is not only unnecessary and redundant but seen as a stylistic fault.

9.3.2 Organization

Another difference that the instructor noticed between Chinese and English writing concerns the organization. The instructor often found it difficult to follow the students' ideas in their poorly-organized essays. Therefore, he was repeatedly seen to exhort missing links from the students during writing conferences. The following excerpt is an example.

Extract 9-4

I: Well, here, what is the relationship of this to this? What is the relationship of Kahun? Was it a pyramid or a town? What is the relationship of that to the Great Pyramid?

J: Because the Great Pyramid builders, they live in the . . .

I: Where does it say that?

J: They live in this town.

I: Where does it say that?

J: (NERVOUS LAUGH)

I: It's not here. So how do I know that this has anything to do with this?

J: Oh, I got it.

I: I'm beginning to think this is something else! So you just have to connect this to this. (I/J/3)

This excerpt illustrates the students' problem with tight organization. They often failed to provide necessary links between ideas to keep the reader on the track. In this case, Jack introduced the place-name Kahun, without explaining why it was incorporated in the paper and how it was connected with his topic, the Great Pyramid. Therefore, we saw the instructor exhorting the missing link from Jack by leading him to consider the connection between the two seemingly unrelated ideas, the construction of the Great Pyramid and the workmen's town, Kahun. This weakness of loose organization was, again, attributed by the instructor to the influence of the Chinese language, as the following remark in a writing conference shows:

Extract 9-5

You're going back to Chinese again. This is the poor influence of your native language onto English writing. That is that you can just go from one thing to another without clearly explaining it. And the reader is supposed to follow. [...] So all I'm showing you now is the specific example of how easy it is to have your Chinese language influence your English writing. And this is why my job is so difficult. (I/H/2)

Several points were implied in the instructor's remark. Firstly, Chinese writing is not usually well-organized, at least not in the Western conception of organization. Secondly, the students were under the influence of their native language, so their writing showed the poor organization that was characteristic of their native writing. They jumped from one idea to another without providing links or explanations for the reader to follow. Thirdly, teaching English writing to the Chinese students was like wrestling with the whole Chinese literary tradition. In other words, the students were so used to writing in "the Chinese way" that the instructor's job of converting their writing into "the English way" was rendered more difficult.

The students seemed to agree with their instructor in this characteristic of Chinese writing, though they interpreted it in slightly different ways. While the

instructor characterized Chinese writing as “just go from one thing to another without clearly explaining it,” for this group of native-Chinese-speaking students the beauty of Chinese writing was the “freedom” of “going where your heart wanders.”

Extract 9-6

If it is Chinese writing, you can just write. You can go where your heart wanders. (R/K/1)

Helen held a similar opinion concerning the organization of Chinese writing. When reflecting on her writing experience in her previous college, she contrasted Chinese writing with English writing:

Extract 9-7

R: Basically you were free to write in any way you liked [in your previous composition class]?

H: Yes. It was like writing Chinese essays. It's not so strict when it comes to Chinese writing. We used to write English essays in the way we wrote Chinese essays. We only sort of translated them into English.

R: Translate?

H: I mean, we wrote English essays in the Chinese way. (R/H/1)

Though Helen did not elaborate on the specificity of “the Chinese way”, it was clear from the contrast that Chinese writing, in her opinion, was a far cry from “strict” English writing.

9.3.3 Writer-Responsible vs. Reader-Responsible

An implicit principle that distinguished English writing from Chinese writing was the issue of responsibility. Many researchers have pointed out that Chinese writing is more reader-responsible than writer-responsible. The Chinese writer likes to hint or “suggest” (Connor, 1996) rather than state directly his/her intentions, while the reader is responsible for decoding messages hidden between the lines. Moreover, the Chinese reader is patient with temporary diversion from the topic in the belief that jigsaw parts will eventually be pieced together. In English writing, on the contrary, the writer is supposed to take responsibility for getting the idea across to the reader. For example, a text should be signposted clearly so that the reader can quickly go through it and get the information needed.

In this case, the instructor applied accordingly the expectation of an English reader to the texts composed by this group of Chinese students and found great disappointment. He was frustrated, as a reader, by the seeming disorder and pointlessness in the students' writing:

Extract 9-8

And this is what's so difficult with English writing that I have to teach them to ask themselves the questions, so they can answer it for the reader, so that the reader doesn't read it and say, what's this supposed to be talking about? [...] There's a point to English writing. Somebody is telling something for a very specific point. And the point is to be made very clear to the reader at the very beginning. And it's up to the writer to prove that point, or to explain the point, to show the point, to something. (R/I/2)

In the instructor's opinion, when the students were learning to write for English speakers, they should answer for the need of the reader. Therefore, they had to be coached to take responsibility for their own writing.

9.4 WHEN TWO CULTURES MEET

In the previous section we looked at the differences between Chinese and English writing from the perspectives of the instructor and the students. It seems that both parties saw their differences in rhetoric and in thinking as a result of different cultures. A question thus ensues: what happens when an American teacher and Chinese students meet in the writing classroom? It has been widely recognized that "second language learning is often second culture learning" (Brown, 1980). In what shape did the learning of a second culture take place? How did the students interpret the cultural differences in the acquisition process of "a second identity"? Would there be conflicts between the two parties? I would like to address these questions in the next section.

9.4.1 The Acquisition Process of a New Norm

According to the students' self-report, they went through several phases in the acquisition process of a new model of writing. At first, most of the students did not feel comfortable about the instructor's imposed rules of writing, such as three examples in each paragraph and the TBER model. Over the months, they gradually internalised the rules and learned to appreciate them, as Bob's recollection shows:

Extract 9-9

[Mr. James] values the format of an essay, which was very strange to me at the beginning. When I was in a cram school for the College Entrance Exam, the teacher taught us to approach the topic indirectly. So, when [Mr. James] taught us the format, I felt uncomfortable with the hierarchy of ideas. Then, gradually, I felt I had internalised the format. Now, with something to follow, I can write more at ease. It's nothing like before. Before, it seemed that I could write at will, but I would produce something incoherent at the end of the day. (R/B/1)

It can be seen that the students experienced some difficulties when they were adapting to the new norm established by the instructor. Firstly, they had to make sense of the new norm and its significance. Then they might have to question the authority of the instruction that they had received in other institutions or from other teachers. It was likely that they had to downplay or even “de-learn” the values which they had acquired previously to make way for the new norm. As a matter of fact, regardless of their evaluation of the different norms, they did not really have options other than accepting Mr. James' approach to writing. Bob's compliment of Mr. James' format, therefore, can be interpreted as a strategy to reconcile with the conflict that surfaced on the acquisition process of the new norm.

9.4.2 The Instructor's Teaching Experience

Having looked at the students' efforts to adapt to a new writing culture, I would like to turn to the instructor to examine his interpretation of his teaching experience in the Chinese culture. Having lived and taught in Taiwan for more than five years, the instructor had some knowledge of Taiwanese students and Chinese culture. As I have discussed in the previous sections, he often attributed the problems in students' writing to the negative influence of Chinese language and culture. Furthermore, he felt that he had to change the way of thinking in the students so that they could really learn to write for people who read English. However, he fully understood how difficult the task was:

Extract 9-10

So I have to change the path of this river, which is their Chinese writing style which is in their head. And it's very hard to break them of that. Extremely hard. (R/I/2)

“Changing of the path of the river” is an apt metaphor to describe the almost impossible mission of changing the writing “habits” and patterns that are rooted deep in the cultural tradition. Not surprisingly, frustration can be felt in the instructor’s reflection of his teaching experience.

9.4.3 Cultural Conflicts in the Classroom

With a gap as wide as the differences between Chinese and English writing, various degrees of cultural conflicts are sometimes inevitable. In the following sections, the issue of cultural conflicts will be examined from three aspects: students’ concerns in writing, the influence of the previous writing experiences and reserve and puzzlement on the part of the students.

9.4.3.1 Students’ Concerns in Writing

Perhaps because of the different rhetorical traditions that the instructor and the students came from individually, it was obvious that their focus in this composition classroom was different. The instructor concentrated more on areas such as organization, ‘logical thinking,’ and ‘being specific.’ In order to meet the instructor’s requirement, the students grew consciously attentive to these points. Sylvie, for example, expressed the wish to learn what advice the instructor would give her concerning ‘the logic of [her] writing’ (R/S/1). Helen also emphasized that what the instructor had been asking them to do during the whole academic year was to be “more specific” in their writing, so that the reader (though the sole reader was the instructor, as in most of the school writing) could draw a ‘picture’ in his/her mind.

When probing into the students’ words, on the other hand, we can find that the students seemed to have concerns that were different from the instructor’s. For example, when Bob asked for advice to “smooth” his paragraph, the instructor could not sympathize with him. He even wondered aloud where Bob got the idea about “smooth”:

Extract 9-11

I: SMOOTH? What is this? Where did you get the SMOOTH?

B: (NERVOUS LAUGH)

I: It’s a paragraph, you know. Is it rough that you have to SMOOTH? I

don't know. Where did you have this idea about smooth? I don't know.
(I/B/3)

Bob proceeded to explain to the instructor his concern about the undesirability of “something come out of the blue sky”, i.e. something that would strike the reader as coming out of nowhere. He wanted to avoid abruptness by “harmonizing” and “smoothing” any jarring notes in his writing. However, his concern was not shared by the American instructor. This instance alerts us to the possibility of cultural differences between Chinese and English rhetorical traditions. It further suggests the influence of different rhetorical traditions on the learners’ writing.

When I looked elsewhere for further evidence, I found that Kevin’s comment on the Chinese writing struck a similar note as Bob’s.

Extract 9-12

Chinese is our native language! You produce a smooth text and express your ideas clearly. That’s all. (R/K/1)

For Kevin, the quality of “smoothness” was even elevated to one of the two characteristics of good writing in Chinese, in addition to clear expression of ideas. This attitude shows a strong connection with the Chinese essay tradition, as Ballard (1996) points out in her discussion of Japanese and Chinese students’ writing experience:

Where essays are required [in the students’ native languages], they tend to be literary works of art rather than arguments based on the critical analysis of selected evidence. (p. 161)

In other words, the students’ training in writing in their native languages might be for essays that aimed to be pleasant and entertaining, instead of for essays used to persuade or to argue critically. Inevitably, when they wrote in English, they would use the criteria that were familiar to them to evaluate or to revise their own writing. It would sometimes mean a conflict between the instructor’s and the students’ perceptions of good writing.

Let me illustrate the conflict with another example. While the instructor expected the students to use his class to focus on the organization of the paper (R/I/1), some of them worried about grammatical problems and wording.

Extract 9-13

H: I think I will need to take care of grammatical problems as well as wording. When I write, I always try to find synonyms or antonyms to avoid repetition. I also need to pay attention to my sentence structure.

R: Are these out of your own expectation? Some of your classmates think that [the instructor] values the form more than the grammar or the wording.

H: That's right. He doesn't pay special attention to it.

R: So what you have just mentioned is your own expectation?

H: Yes. Anyway, it shouldn't be too boring. When words are repeated too often, they look redundant and offending to the eye. (R/H/1)

Though Helen knew very well that the instructor did not emphasize the grammar or the wording, she clung to the idea of beautiful wording and correct grammar. I argue that the student's obsession with the grammar and the wording results from the influence of her previous language learning experience as well as the Chinese rhetoric tradition. On the one hand, grammar has been given priorities in most of the EFL classrooms, where writing instruction often equals grammar correction (Mohan & Lo, 1985). On the other hand, a large proportion of the literacy instruction in Taiwan, and perhaps in a major part of the Chinese-speaking world, is based on reading and appreciating classical Chinese texts. In addition to learning the biographical information of the authors, emphasis in a Chinese reading classroom is often placed on deciphering sentences that are constructed in a language different from the modern use. Furthermore, the practice of reading aloud from memory in olden-time China and the pictorial characteristic of Chinese characters are believed to contribute to the Chinese students' tendency to search for beautiful words to embellish the writing.

9.4.3.2 The Influence of Previous Writing Experiences

While essay traditions are provided to explain why the instructor and the students had different interpretations of writing tasks, it is argued that students' previous writing experiences in either L1 (Chinese) or L2 (English) had a strong influence as well. In many Taiwanese students' and in the researcher's experiences, L1 (Chinese) writing class means two hours set aside every week to write on a topic designated by teachers, with minimum instruction, if any. The feedback that students get from their teachers is mostly a mark plus a general comment, which is usually composed of a few rather conventional phrases, such as "fluent writing" and "interesting contents".

The underlying assumption is that there is no real need to teach and to learn Chinese writing, because, as one of my informants stated repeatedly, “Chinese is our native language” (R/K/1). On the one hand, students do not have to rely on classroom instruction to learn to write in their native languages. Input can come from various sources in their daily life, such as the newspapers. On the other hand, students seldom feel any difficulty in producing a readable essay when they can fully command their native languages. As a result, both teachers and students take a rather easy attitude towards the teaching and the learning of L1 writing. This attitude eventually leads to a conviction that there is no strict rule in Chinese writing as in the English counterpart, as Kevin’s observation of composing in Chinese shows:

Extract 9-14

You only have to write! My impression is that you begin with some ideas. Then you just write, from beginning to end. (R/K/1)

In Extract 9-15, Kevin explained further how he composed a Chinese essay:

Extract 9-15

I think it’s because Chinese is our native language. When you digress from your subject, you can always bring it back. You can’t have irrelevant sentences in English writing. [In Chinese writing,] sometimes when the inspiration comes, you write. Then you can always bring it back to the subject. You can create something out of nothing. Then it’s done. (R/K/1)

As can be seen in Extract 9-15, Kevin thought that he did not need rules or even instruction in writing in Chinese, because “Chinese is [his] native language.” He could always bring the digression back to the main theme and the reader would generally be satisfied.

9.4.3.3 Puzzlement on the Students’ Part

Generally speaking, the instructor was satisfied with the students’ performance, while the students showed their appreciation of Mr. James’ teaching. However, reserve and puzzlement on the students’ part can still be detected. For example, Kevin wondered why “foreigners” could not understand his writing which his fellow classmates did not have any problems with:

Extract 9-16

my feeling is that English writing seems to be very rigid. If you write it in a strange way, it will look incomprehensible to some foreigners. However, if it is our own people, it seems that we can always understand it. (LAUGH) It's Chinese-style English! It's funny. I once wrote something, which my friends or my classmates could understand, but not my foreigner teacher. Our ways of thinking are quite different. (R/K/1)

It bewildered Kevin that his instructor could not understand the texts where he and his peers found no problem with. In the end, he gave himself an answer. His explanation was that his way of thinking and that of his instructor's were different.

Similar puzzlement can also be found in Cortazzi and Jin's study (1996), where students were reported to feel frustrated with the seeming lack of communication with teachers due to "different ways of thinking." While Cortazzi and Jin (1996) suggest that this confusion might result from the lack of awareness on Western teachers' part of "differences in discourse patterns and the organization of writing" (p. 192), I would argue that this explanation inadequately addresses the problem. The instructor in the present study was conscious of the differences between Chinese and English writing. However, he did not seem to recognize the legitimacy of the organization that was not English. In other words, being aware of cultural difference is not enough. Rather, it is necessary to learn to appreciate the difference so that true communication can begin.

On the other hand, Kevin's reflection on the different ways of thinking can be regarded as the beginning of culture learning. Though our language use and our thinking are largely shaped by our culture, we are not "prisoners of the cultural meanings offered to us by our language but can enrich them in our pragmatic interactions with other language users" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 14). Furthermore, the acquisition of a new culture often entails the adoption of a new identity. It does not mean that we have to abandon our old identity, though. On the contrary, we can balance the new identity with the old and add "a new dimension" to the old self (Shen, 1989). Such enrichment, I maintain, is the value contained in the learning of a second culture.

9.5 DISCUSSION

This chapter has so far presented examples and extracts from the writing classroom to illustrate the impact of cultures on the learning of writing. The data in this study can not adequately address the questions of "actual" difference between

Chinese and English rhetoric. However, human beings perceive the cultural environment through the filters of their own worldviews and act up on that perception (Acton, 1979, cited in Brown, 1980). Therefore, it is still valid to argue that both the instructor and the students perceived differences between the two rhetorical styles and they acted upon their perception.

On the students' part, they recognized the difference between Chinese and English writing, either through their own observation or through the instructor's explicit or implicit instruction. In order to succeed in or, to say the very least, to survive the project, they did not have much choice except to adopt a new way of writing or even a new way of thinking. To adopt a new way of thinking is, to a certain degree, to assume a new identity. However, I argue that the old identity does not have to be abandoned, as Shen's (1989) experience of learning to write in English demonstrates. Rather, the new identity can be regarded as a new dimension added to a writer's repertoire. In the current study, this attitude seemed to be just the strategy adopted by the students. On the one hand, they acknowledged the value of "logic," for example, in English writing; on the other hand, they appreciated the "freedom" accompanying the experience of writing in their native language.

On the instructor's part, his perception of the contrastive cultures of writing in English and in Chinese may have contributed to the formulation of his teaching methods. For instance, the instructor's views of Chinese learners seem to provide a rationale for his adoption of the TBER formula in the writing classroom. As noted earlier, the TBER formula was a feature of significance in the writing classroom. It seems that the reason why the instructor adopted the formula can be found in his belief in the influence of the native language and culture on the acquisition of second language writing. The instructor assumed that the loose organization reflected in the students' writing was a "poor" influence of their native language (see Extract 9-5), and his job was to "change the path of this river". The instructor's attitude here may remind the reader of Kaplan's (1967) essay on the teaching of composition, in which he analysed ESL students' essays and found that rhetoric was "a culturally coded phenomenon" (p. 15). In order to help students improve their writing, his suggestion was that writing teachers should provide or even impose "a series of models" to be imitated by students. Furthermore, according to Kaplan (1967), students "ought to begin the study of paragraphs by simply copying models or by manipulating carefully controlled models" (ibid). It is unknown if Mr. James was familiar with Kaplan's

(1967) work, though, judging from his TESOL background, it was very likely he was. It was also very likely that Mr. James adopted the TBER formula as a response to Kaplan's suggestion.

9.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have examined the differences between Chinese and English writing from the perspectives of the informants. It was found that both the instructor and the students attributed certain writing problems to the influence of culture, such as "the Chinese way" of writing. To determine if these phenomena were indeed the products of their respective cultures is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, from their explicit acknowledgement of the influence of culture on their writing or on their ways of thinking, we can be sure that they were aware of the cultural differences and the conflicts that the differences brought about. This awareness can certainly be taken advantage of. For example, teachers can empower students by raising their awareness of the difference. They can make students do their own research and compare their native and the target cultures. Students can then determine for themselves how much of the difference is cultural, how much of it is instructional, and how much of it is individual. If it is cultural, students should be granted the right to decide whether they want to adopt a second culture, or to what degree they want to.

CHAPTER 10

EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

Having discussed the consecutive stages of the research project, I will turn my attention to the evaluation of the research project from the perspectives of the students and the instructor. In this chapter several facets of the research project will be addressed. First, the students' knowledge of the genre of research writing will be examined, and their attitudes towards the research project investigated. Secondly, the instructor's evaluation of the students' learning outcomes will be reported. Thirdly, special attention will be paid to the difficulties that arose during the implementation of the research project. Some of the difficulties have been mentioned in earlier analysis chapters. The reiteration in this chapter, however, serves to highlight the problems and to anticipate some of the possible solutions which will be brought up again in the final chapter.

10.1 PERCEPTIONS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE PROJECT

This section will begin with an investigation of the students' understanding of the genre of research writing. It is argued that this understanding would affect their interpretation of the writing task as well as their expectations of the research writing project. Next, the students' expectations and attitudes towards the research writing project will be reported on.

10.1.1 The Students' Knowledge of the Genre of Research Writing

Among the seven student participants, three of them had written research papers in their previous colleges, while the other four had not. All of them mentioned collecting information as a distinct element of research writing, which indicates that they knew what a research writing project would involve.

Those who had been involved in research writing before had a reasonably clear idea of what a research paper looked like. They were able to enumerate the characteristics of a research paper, such as a cover page, an abstract, a table of contents, the introduction, the main body, the conclusion and the bibliography. However, it was clear that they still had some questions in mind that needed to be answered in the process of learning and writing. For example, Jack believed that he

should not write his opinions in a research paper:

Extract 10-1

To my knowledge, in the research paper, you just need to combine the information you've found. You can't write your opinion, because it's a research paper. It's not a diary. You have to find evidence, find proof and examples, from someone else's articles, lots of information. So, what you need to do is to well arrange these information. I don't think I have to write too much about my own opinions, or my ideas. (R/J/1)

His ideas of "no opinions in the research paper" may be traced to his previous experience, when he was writing one of the essays for this composition course:

Extract 10-2

[Mr. James] would say, when you're writing an article, don't write too much about your opinion. Cause readers don't like to read your opinion, cause that's what you think, but perhaps the others don't think so. So you have to find evidence, to find proof. (R/J/1)

Obviously, the instructor was saying that opinions should be supported by convincing evidence. They need to be well argued before being accepted by the reader. However, it seemed that Jack misunderstood the instructor's points and decided that a research paper was only an arrangement of information, devoid of "opinions", "ideas" or "arguments".

Similarly, Bob wondered if a conclusion should be drawn in a piece of research writing. He seemed to hold the opinion that a research paper should be written in an "objective" way, meaning that it should only report or give facts like in the newspapers:

Extract 10-3

I have to avoid writing in a subjective style like I used to. I should try to write it like in the newspapers or magazines. This is my personal opinion. (R/B/1)

Schwegler and Shamoons (1982) survey study shows that American college students generally see the research paper as "informative in aim," designed to display "knowledge of library skills and documentation procedures," rather than argumentative or analytical (p. 819). It seemed that the students working on this project interpreted the task in a similar way. Both Jack's goal to "arrange these [sic] information" and Bob's determination to steer away from "a subjective style" indicate

that they also took knowledge arrangement and display as the main function of the research paper. Penrose's (1993) study found that different interpretations of the same writing task resulted in a paraphrase, a summary and a personal essay respectively, because writers invoked different strategies and focused on different parts and levels of the source text according to the interpretations they made. Consequently, they obtained varied types of learning from the task.

Therefore, it is argued that students' knowledge and interpretation of research writing will sway influence over how they approach the writing task and what they learn from it. If they interpret research writing as an "information-arranging" task, they most probably will not develop the ability of critical thinking. Neither will they learn to argue their informed opinions.

10.1.2 The Students' Attitudes Towards the Research Project

Generally speaking, the participating students held a positive attitude towards the research project. Those who had written research papers before reported that they felt a sense of achievement when they finished their research projects. For example, Sylvie designed a questionnaire and analysed the results for her previous research project. She reflected on the experience:

Extract 10-4

The process was enriching, though running the data and collecting the questionnaire sheets were a laborious job. However, I felt happy when I saw my own products. (R/S/1)

In addition to the sense of accomplishment, Toby saw the potential for intellectual growth in a research project:

Extract 10-5

You have to get a lot of information [for your research paper], which might help you understand your thinking or even change your ideas. Besides, you will have a sense of accomplishment when you see your own products. (R/T/1)

For those who had never written a research paper before, it presented a daunting job. Yet, they were looking forward to the task for two reasons. On a psychological level, the students associated research writing with a higher level of writing, which needs good skills and excellent language proficiency. Bob, for

example, was looking forward to the writing task because

Extract 10-6

it's something for adults. It's better writing. (R/B/1)

From a more practical perspective, the students recognized the importance of research writing in their academic careers. Bob knew for certain that

Extract 10-7

It will be very useful if I study for a master degree later. (R/B/1)

Similarly, Helen envisioned a need for this kind of training, should she pursue a master's degree in the near future. She enumerated the skills that might be obtained from a research project:

Extract 10-8

I will learn how to approach a problem, where to find the sources, and what kind of form I should follow. I think it's extremely important. (R/H/1)

In summary, the students held a positive attitude towards the research writing project for various reasons. This positive attitude should have helped them take the challenges brought about by the project. It was also likely that they would be willing to spend more time working on it and to benefit from it as a result.

10.2 THE INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION

In this section, the instructor's evaluation of the students' learning of research writing will be reported. In his opinion, most of his students did well on the project. He did his utmost to help the students succeed in the project, though it was still their responsibility to complete the papers on time.

10.2.1 Successful "to Some Degree or Other"

Basically, the instructor held a positive attitude towards the students' learning outcome. The key elements that made a good research paper, said the instructor, were a clear thesis, clear organization, and proper use of language. Each of his students, according to Mr. James' end-of-term evaluation, did a successful job "to some degree or other" (R/I/3). However, the success did not come by chance. It

came through careful planning and proper intervention on the part of the instructor. He produced a “suggestive” schedule for the students to follow and held regular writing conferences with the students to guide them through the process of multiple revisions. He pushed and motivated them until they did what was required. He checked with them at different stages to make sure they had accomplished something. Not surprisingly, the instructor was quite confident that all the students would succeed in the project to a certain degree.

10.2.2 Students’ Responsibility

While Mr. James was willing to use every resource to help the students succeed in their learning, he did not intend to deprive them of the responsibility that they should assume. For example, when students were troubled with indecisiveness about choosing a topic, he gave them advice. At the same time, he warned them of the possible consequences if a decision was not made in time:

Extract 10-9

I told him that was his decision, that he has to assume the responsibility for this. I will help him, but obviously, if he wants to wait until the seventh week to figure out his topic, that’s his choice. (R/I/3)

Obviously, this responsibility, together with the control over time, was also part of the learning. In a way, success in a research writing project involves not only writing and research skills, but also time management skills. In other words, students will have to learn to make numerous decisions along the process, such as, how much information is enough and when to start writing. After all, most research papers have both time and space constraints, which must be dealt with throughout the process of planning and writing.

10.3 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE STUDENTS

This section will report on the difficulties encountered by the students during the implementation of the research project. Some of these difficulties were perceived by the students even before the project began, while others only arose after they started working on it. These difficulties include external factors, such as time and resources, and internal factors, such as writing skills, which include problems with using sources in Chinese, with synthesizing information from multiple sources, with paraphrasing,

and with plagiarising. The others consist of factors more pertinent to research writing, such as choosing a topic and reading strategies.

10.3.1 Time Constraint

Most research projects take place over a substantial period of time. However, time was a more acute factor for the research writing project in this study. It will be remembered that the project spanned eight weeks, during which the students were expected to collect information, read materials, organize and compose a paper. Furthermore, this project was possibly only one among seven or eight assignments that the students had to juggle at the same time. This time constraint, coupled with limited resources in the university library, might have affected the learning outcome and the quality of the papers. Bob, for example, appeared to feel disappointed with his research paper:

Extract 10-10

R: In our first interview, you said you were looking forward to this research writing project. What do you think of it now?

B: I didn't do as much as I'd have liked to.

R: Why?

B: I didn't know there would be so many assignments at the end of the semester. (R/B/3)

Bob seemed to imply that he would have done better if he had not so many assignments to compete for the limited time at his disposal.

Bob's experience was certainly not unique. The time factor is a constraint that influences students' motivation in the writing of the research paper (Mo, 1997). Therefore, the importance of time management skills, as mentioned earlier, is even more prominent.

10.3.2 Limited Resources

When students do research, college libraries are usually the place where they can find the most resources. The students in this study reported that they borrowed books and searched electronic databases for information in the university library. However, some of them complained of the limited resources in it (see Section 6.4.2).

Helen and Jack chose to travel to libraries at neighbouring universities, while others tried to make the best out of the limited resources.

10.3.3 Problems with Using Sources in Chinese

To remind the reader, these students were working on an English-language paper in a Chinese-speaking context. Many of the sources that the students could obtain were in Chinese. These Chinese-language materials could have saved them reading time when they were doing research. They could scan through the readings for useful information with ease and at a good speed. However, when they began writing, they would need to overcome two potential problems. First, they would have to spend extra time figuring out how to say something in English. This situation was particularly applicable to papers of specialist subjects, such as medicine. Reflecting on her reading and writing practice in the research project, Cathy came to a conclusion that reading in English was necessary, if only for the use of specialist terms in English in her paper.

Extract 10-11

C: I think it's better to read both Chinese and English stuff.

R: Why?

C: Because what I'm writing is medical stuff, with a lot of specialist terms in English.

R: So if you only read Chinese materials, you won't know how to use those terms in English when it comes to write reports in English?

C: That's right. (R/C/3)

Another potential problem was the accuracy of translation. Since many of the students used a large quantity of Chinese-language sources, they would need to translate passages to use in their papers. However, they were usually unsure if they had done the job properly, as Sylvie recounted:

Extract 10-12

I think most of the information I will get is in Chinese. I'm not sure if my translation will be loyal to the original source. (R/S/1)

Another student, Bob, was also troubled by the translation problem. Bob was

working on a topic of local nature, the national defence policy in Taiwan. Understandably, his sources were predominantly written in Chinese. Therefore, from the very beginning, he was aware of potential problems inherent in translation:

Extract 10-13

There are no related foreign reports about this kind of topic. I'm not sure if I can translate their words into English properly.

[...]

I fear that the paper will turn out quite superficial. Some people's words are difficult to translate. (R/B/1)

Apparently, problems with translation were unique to this group of students writing papers in English with sources in Chinese.

10.3.4 Synthesizing Information From Multiple Sources

Synthesizing information from multiple sources is an important element in writing a research paper, because a research paper is based on "a thorough review of sources" on a particular topic, instead of a personal interpretation of a text or condition (Slade, Campbell, & Ballou, 1994, p. xiv). The task of text synthesis concerns organizing, selecting and connecting content (Spivey, 1990). It involves not only including, technically, the previous authors' words or ideas in one's own paper but also constructing one's own argument with the results of reflection and judgement on the existing discourse of the subject matter. This process of analysis and synthesis constituted a big problem for these undergraduate students. For example, Bob considered synthesizing information the most difficult part of research writing:

Extract 10-14

Synthesizing information is difficult. One source says one thing and another source says another. (R/B/1)

As shown in the extract, Bob had difficulty with managing and synthesizing information from sources with different, or even opposite, viewpoints, particularly when the topic he was working on was rather controversial. Researchers have found that background knowledge (i.e., familiarity with the topic) and task representation were significant factors that affected the quality of the "synthesis essays" composed

by either English L1 students or ESL learners (Flower, 1990; Ackerman, 1991; Johns, 1991). However, more studies need to be carried out to determine what factors make the synthesis of information difficult for Chinese students working on a research paper.

10.3.5 Problems with Paraphrasing

Many ESL/EFL students tend to use direct quotes in their research papers because they do not think their paraphrases can better the original passages. However, they are also told that it is inappropriate to have too many quotations in a single essay because the essay will look like a string of quotations with a few phrases linking them. To paraphrase is to rewrite source passages either by changing the sentence structure or by replacing the vocabulary. Simply put, it is to write “in one’s own words”. Yet, as Pennycook (1996) observes, many ESL students feel that they do not have ownership over English. Therefore, the prospect of writing in their own words is daunting, if not unattainable. Cathy’s statement summarises the difficulty that was felt by many of her peers:

Extract 10-15

It seems that 95 percent of a research paper is other people’s words. No matter what you read, either in English or in Chinese, you have to paraphrase it [before you can use it in your paper]. But, if the reading is in English, the sentences are beautiful. No matter how hard you try to paraphrase it, you just can’t match it with the original. I find it very difficult to find words with similar meanings without plagiarising the original author. How to paraphrase is an agonizing process. (R/C/2)

Cathy’s telling comment fully captures the anxiety that ESL students feel when paraphrasing. On the one hand, they may have learned to avoid plagiarising by paraphrasing the sources; on the other hand, they do not feel they have the ability to paraphrase other peoples’ words and ideas in a language other than their own. The difficulty of paraphrasing and summarizing has also been reported in Leki and Carson’s (1997) study on the writing experiences of ESL students in US university courses. As the students’ experience indicates, the ability to express ideas in original sources accurately in one’s own words will play a significant role in the writing of the research paper.

10.3.6 Plagiarism

As shown in the analysis of conference data (Chapter 7) and of the students' revision (Chapter 8), plagiarism was often on the top of the agenda. On the one hand, the issue of plagiarism can be related to the students' problems with paraphrasing, as discussed in the previous section. As Angelil-Carter (2000) reports, a developing writer may copy word-for-word, due to "a lack of confidence in the adequacy and legitimacy of [his/]her own means of expression in writing, and in [his/]her own understanding of the original text" (p. 96). Moreover, a student writer's attempt at paraphrase may become plagiarism, particularly in the case of second language learners, because their language proficiency does not usually allow them to do more than changing some of the words and replacing them with synonyms. Such closeness in paraphrasing may be seen by writing instructors as having breached the code of plagiarism.

On the other hand, the students' plagiaristic tendency may be attributed to the lack of explicit instruction on plagiarism and its detrimental effect on the rights of the original authors and the students' own learning and integrity. As Deckert's (1993) study of ESL students in Hong Kong shows, the first-year college students in his study were not acquainted with the Western notion of plagiarism due to the lack of explicit instruction. As a result, they had poor ability to recognize or prevent it.

In the current study, the instructor made it explicit to the students that plagiarism was undesirable in a piece of academic writing. He also made up a rule against plagiarism that the same source could not be used more than twice in a paragraph. However, as demonstrated in the discussion in Section 8.2.2.2, a mechanical rule may have been observed by students and yet its spirit ignored. This instance suggests the difficulty of sorting out plagiarism, while at the same time it calls for more instruction to help students understand why a rule is imposed and what to learn from it.

10.3.7 Choosing a Topic

As delineated in Chapter 6, choosing a topic constituted the first formidable task in this research writing project. The students were told to find a topic that interested them. A three-hour session was spent on helping them to finalize the topic. Points to be considered included the specificity of and the feasibility of the topic. In terms of specificity, the students had to limit their research questions so that they could be

answered in a paper of six to eight pages. In terms of feasibility, they had to consider the availability of sources. Whether they could obtain the reading materials needed for their research should be a primary concern in their choice of a topic.

However, after the first session, some of the students still felt unsure of their topics. As reported in Chapter 6, the main points of consideration were availability of sources, familiarity with the topic and the “academic” quality of the topic. Some of the students stayed with their topics while others switched to a different one. The instructor reported that one of his students (a non-participant of my study) kept changing his topic two or three times. By the time the student was happy with the topic, he was already behind the schedule. He was not even able to submit his first draft on time.

According to the instructor, only two of his 19 students changed their topics, while the others stayed with their first choices. However, most of the students who stayed with their topics also experienced an intense decision-making process, during which they weighed the possibility of an alternative topic. Bob, for example, considered switching to another topic, but later in the week, he decided to stick to the first one (see Section 6.3.2 for details).

10.3.8 Reading Strategies

Reading strategies were another factor that influenced the quality of the research paper. At the research stage, students usually have to search in libraries and databases to find useful sources. They need to be able to utilize textual information, such as abstracts, indices, and tables of contents to decide whether the source is worth pursuing. If it is worth reading, they need to be able to choose and read the parts pertinent to their topics. Without the ability to select useful reading, students are easily overwhelmed by the vast quantity of readings. If this lack of reading strategies is coupled with slow reading speed, it is likely that students will not be able to finish what is needed for their research. Reflecting on her performance towards the end of the research project, Helen, for example, noted that she would have liked to do more reading for her topic, if it had not been prevented by her slow reading speed. This indicates her belief that more research and reading could have improved her paper quality.

On the other hand, students may not know when they should read carefully and

when to scan for information. Cathy seemed to feel guilty for not having read her sources “thoroughly” before she started writing. She recounted how she did the reading for her research:

Extract 10-16

Many of my readings were in Chinese, so I didn't read them carefully. I just browsed through them. There were so many sources, so I couldn't possibly read the whole thing. I would read for the gist first. Then I would locate the sections I needed and read the sections, nothing else.
(R/C/3)

As a matter of fact, what Cathy did for her research was a sound and effective reading strategy. It is indeed improbable and unnecessary to read everything thoroughly. Therefore, applying scanning and skimming strategies and locating the most pertinent information are normally recommended for reading for research purposes. However, Cathy seemed to be strongly influenced by her peers and began to doubt her own reading practice:

Extract 10-17

C: I didn't finish the reading before I started writing. It seemed that everyone else started writing only after they finished their reading. I was the only one that started writing without reading thoroughly first.

R: Was that because you felt that you had got what you needed for the paper?

C: Could be.

R: What would you do next time?

C: I would finish reading before I start writing. I would read very carefully.

R: From the beginning to the end?

C: Yes. (R/C/3)

It seemed that these students still needed more exposure to research writing tasks to find out the best reading practice.

10.4 CONCLUSION

Most of the difficulties reported in the study are encountered in other contexts.

For example, Capossela (1991) reported that general writing problems of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics, as well as issues of documentation, attribution, and plagiarism had long been the concerns of North American freshman composition classrooms. In this study, however, problems such as translation and paraphrasing are found to be unique to this group of Chinese students. Therefore, it is suggested that when implementing a research writing project in an ESL/EFL context, teachers should take these difficulties into consideration and prepare students so that they know what to expect from the project and how to get the most benefit out of it.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapters, interview, conferencing data and student papers were used to examine different facets and different phases of the research writing project. The issues addressed were the preparatory steps for the research papers, writing conferences, multiple revisions between drafts, cultural issues as well as the difficulties encountered by the students. The current chapter begins with a summary of the major findings derived from my analysis. In Section 11.2, a model of implementing a research writing project is presented. The model serves two purposes. First, it synthesizes the research findings and shows the causal and the temporal relationships between different variables that function in such a writing project. In other words, it is a representation which attempts to incorporate the essential features of the particular writing event. Secondly, the model may serve as a tool of reflection, with which practitioners of the field, that is, research writing instructors, may use to evaluate the context in which they are working. The limitations of this study are discussed in Section 11.3. Several recommendations concerning the implementation of a research writing project are offered. Finally, directions for future research are suggested.

11.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Many important points have been raised in the discussion in the analysis chapters. However, I would like to summarise the main findings in order to answer the research questions that were raised in the Introduction. The purpose of the summary is to refresh the reader's memory of the research questions and to provide a succinct account of how this study has addressed them.

11.1.1 How Is the Research Writing Project Implemented?

This research question is mainly dealt with in Chapters 6 and 7. It is found that the project consisted of planning, writing and editing stages, which coincide largely with the usual division of the composing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Flower and Hayes (1981) argue that composing is a recursive process and that writers may revert to an earlier stage at any time of composing. However, most of the student

writers in this project went through the consecutive stages in a unidirectional fashion, due in large part to the teacher-prescribed schedule.

In the planning stage, the project featured small group brainstorming for research topics, individual library research, and outlining. Some class time was spent addressing the skills of note-taking and outlining, while most of the library research had to be carried out outside of class. Similarly, the actual writing was undertaken in the students' free time. Conferencing was the most important activity of the editing stage. At the same time, it is observed to have exerted great influence on the students' acquisition process of the genre of the research paper and on the eventual written products.

It is also found that the instructor tended to quantify his instructions for the students. For example, he made it a rule that the sources from the Internet can not exceed half of the sources used. Another example is that the students were not allowed to quote from the same source more than twice in a row. These injunctions were supposed to simplify the subtle and implicit conventions for the students, so that they would not become disoriented in the unfamiliar domain of academic discourse.

11.1.2 How Do the Students and the Instructor Perceive the Project?

This research question will be answered in two parts. First, the nature of the students' research papers in this study will be examined. Secondly, the status of the research writing project in the writing curriculum will be considered.

The research papers in this project did not conform to the usual definition of research articles. The instructor made it clear that he did not want the students to do original research. In other words, no surveys, experiments or other forms of field research were demanded. Instead, the students were requested to go to the library and utilize the resources within, be it books, journal articles, or electronics databases. This mode of research is adopted widely in school curricula mainly because it can train students in the basics of academic research without taking too much time and specialty research skills as might be needed in a piece of field research. Moreover, the instructor's view of the research writing project as an opportunity for students to learn to "organize larger pieces of writing" (R/I/1) also implies that "research training" was definitely secondary to "writing training" in this project.

On the other hand, the research writing project was perceived as an integrated as

well as an independent part of the composition curriculum. This case study focused on the implementation of the research writing project, which spanned eight weeks. The project was independent in the sense that it had a clear-cut beginning and ending. It began with choosing a topic for the research paper and ended with submitting the papers for evaluation. It incorporated some elements which were not used in the other essays that the students had written for the composition course, such as sub-introductions, in-text citations, and reference lists. The efforts that the students undertook for this project were unprecedented compared to their previous writing experiences.

At the same time, it was difficult to draw a clear line to divide it from the other parts of the composition course. First, both the instructor and the students perceived the research paper as a longer version of the essays that they had been familiar with. The message was clearly transmitted by the instructor, who intended the project to serve as a piece of work that contained and demonstrated what had been taught and learned in the composition course up until then. Though new concepts such as “sub-introduction” were introduced, old elements such as the TBER model continued to be emphasized. Furthermore, the research paper was a part of assessment of the course. The scores that the students would get for the composition course did not depend solely on the final versions of the papers, but on the progress that they made during the whole semester. In this sense, the research paper in this composition class can be regarded as the final destination of the learning of academic writing.

This perception coincides with an informant’s expectation of the research paper in US freshman composition programmes:

The research paper ..., which culminates the freshman composition course, also draws together the various writing skills stressed throughout the course: forming a thesis and discovering sufficient evidence to support it, marshalling and organizing that evidence so as to argue persuasively to a clearly identified audience, and marshalling a tone appropriate to the subject and the audience. (Ford & Perry, 1982, p. 830)

Although how much of the scholarly disciplines as trumpeted above was taught and learned in the Taiwanese case is arguable, the status of the research paper as an integrated part of the curriculum was clearly perceived by both the instructor and the students.

11.1.3 What Features Can Be Found in the Outcome of the Project, i.e., the

Students' Research Papers?

Multiple drafting was adopted in the research writing project with the instructor's intervention through both written feedback and writing conferences. Therefore, the focus of investigation concerning the students' research papers was on the contents of revision, which can be claimed to be the direct product of writing conferences and written feedback. From an analysis of two students' drafts in depth as well as general observation, it was found that organization, documentation, and the mechanics were the main focuses of revision. These focuses reflect the context of research writing in two aspects. First, they reflect the fact that this research writing project was a part of the writing curriculum, which emphasized writing skills with the organization as the instructor's priority.

Secondly, revision in the aspect of documentation shows that the students were learning an important element in academic research, which was to build one's own research on the foundations laid down by previous researchers and to acknowledge one's debt to them. Related to documentation is the concept of plagiarism. The students were seen to receive constant warnings from the instructor to avoid plagiarism. However, setting rules for quoting sources as it was done in this case did not guarantee that plagiarism could be rooted out. The analysis in Chapter 8 reveals that some of the students did not understand or appreciate the spirit that was contained in these rules. An outcome was that the practice of documentation was at the risk of being merely carried out in a mechanical way.

11.1.4 What Important Features Can Be Found in the Project as a Whole?

While I was trying to build a picture of the context of the research writing project, there surfaced a particularly important feature that was worth attention, that is, cultural confrontation. This finding supports the claims made by a number of studies (Cai, 1999; Kachru, 1999), which argue a strong relationship between writing, rhetorical styles and cultural identity. The teacher and the students in this study came from two different cultural traditions: Anglo-American and Chinese. The analysis shows that the instructor was aware of the cultural traditions that the students brought to the classroom. However, his perception of this cultural influence was negative, not in the sense that Chinese culture was bad or inferior, but in the sense that it was an obstacle in the way of the students' learning of English writing, which sat

squarely in the Anglo-American academic tradition.

11.2 PROPOSAL FOR A MODEL OF RESEARCH WRITING PROCESS

Based on the present study, a model of the research writing process (Figure 11-1) is proposed here. This model attempts to capture the whole process of research writing at the undergraduate level. It incorporates and summarises the important elements that I have observed in the present case. This model consists of the important stages of writing a research paper: planning, writing, and editing. It also shows the interaction between the research writing project and variables such as the teacher, the textbook, external factors, academic culture and students' indigenous culture. I shall first give a holistic explanation of the diagram. Each of the variables will then be elaborated on.

This model shows the research writing project in the central focus with the influence coming from several variables as represented in the boxes. The arrows indicate a direct influence. The academic culture exerts an impact on teachers. Teachers, through their lesson plans, intervene directly in all the stages of a research writing project. Therefore, teachers serve as a medium to transmit the academic culture to the students. On the other hand, the three stages of writing are influenced by both internal and external factors as well as students' indigenous cultures.

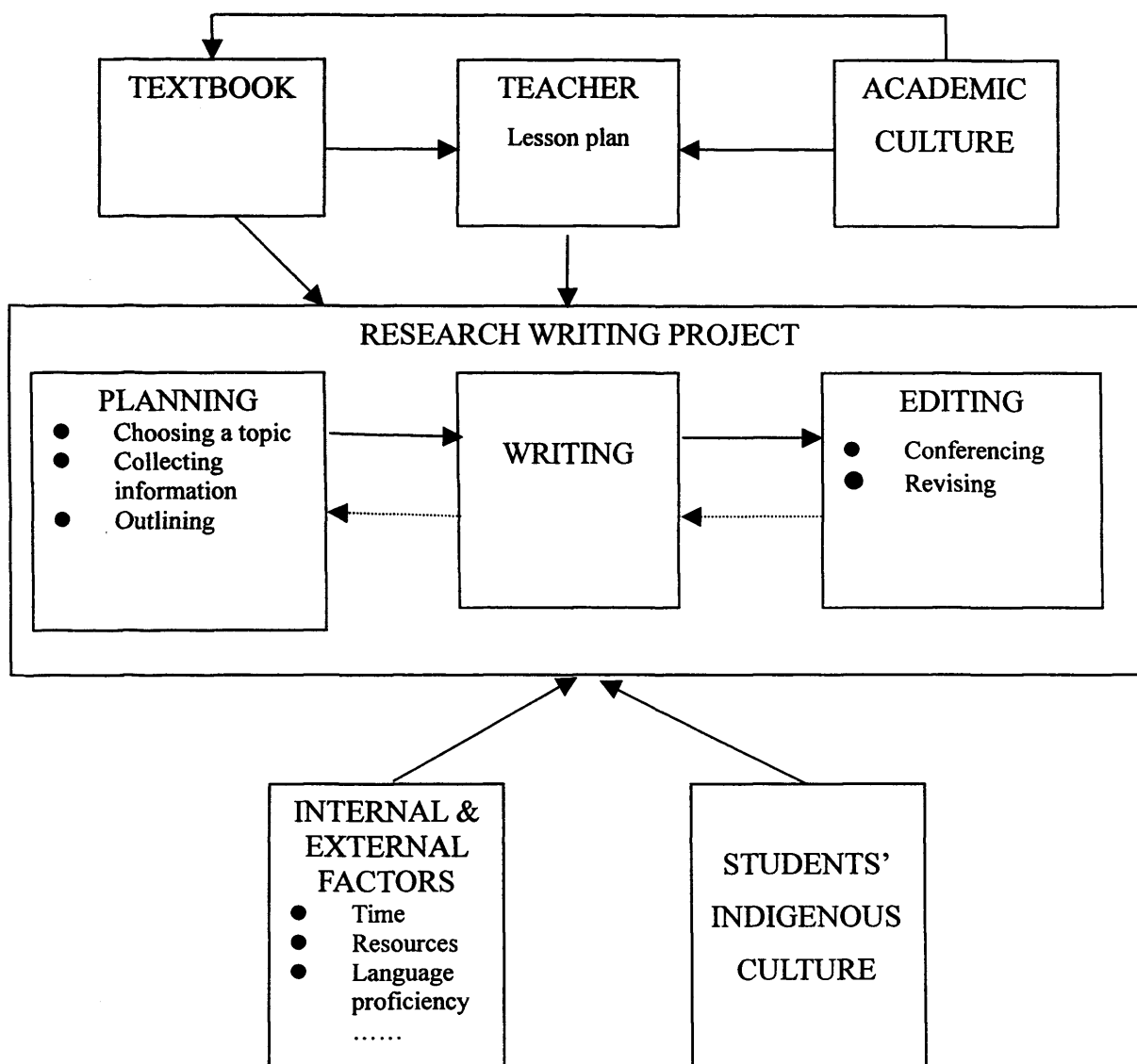


Figure 11-1: A Model of Research Writing Process

Academic culture

By academic culture, I refer to the conventions and the practices in the academic community. The textbook, the research writing handbook in this case, usually extrapolates general advice to students from these conventions and practices, which the teacher acts as an agent to transmit. For example, citation rules followed in the academic culture are prescribed by the textbook and reinforced by the teacher through direct instruction.

Teacher

Teachers play a central role in the implementation of a research writing project. For one thing, teachers usually enjoy considerable autonomy in adopting a textbook for use in the classroom and in designing lesson plans for the implementation of a writing project. However, in the process of decision-making teachers are influenced by various factors, such as their personality, their experience of writing instruction both as students and instructors, their assumptions of student abilities, and their belief in the process of language learning.

Textbook

A textbook may be used in a research writing project and exerts a direct influence on the teaching and the learning of research writing. It usually embodies the academic culture in the sense that it transmits the values of the academic community through their description of the conventions and the practices. Moreover, when a textbook is chosen by teachers to use in the classroom, it inevitably reflects the teachers' teaching beliefs in some way. It may also influence or even dictate the teacher's lesson plan. In the current study, for example, the instructor used *Form and Style* as the textbook and produced his lesson plans using the chapter structure of the book.

Research writing project

In this model, three stages, PLANNING, WRITING, and EDITING, are identified in a research writing project. In the planning stage, three main activities are involved: choosing a topic, collecting information, and outlining. In the editing stage, the activities of revising and conferencing are involved. I do not specify the activities in the writing stage because they are beyond the scope of the study. Note that the lists of activities are not intended to be exhaustive. Teachers and students may develop and employ different strategies and activities to approach a research writing task.

The arrows indicate temporal sequence, that is, the planning stage precedes the writing stage, which is followed by the editing stage. While writing processes are recursive in nature (Flower & Hayes, 1981), the stages as listed in the research writing model tend to be one-directional. The main reason for this tendency is that students usually have to follow a schedule (the teacher's) in a research writing project, where a fixed length of time is allocated to each consecutive stage. Therefore, time

constraints do not allow students to revert to earlier stages.

While most writers follow the order of planning, writing and editing, exceptions do exist. Some of the writers may revert to the planning stage when they proceed to the writing stage and encounter various difficulties, which force them to choose an alternative topic and to undergo the planning stage once again.

Internal and external factors

Factors such as time, resources, and students' language proficiency also bear on the project to a certain degree. For instance, students may adapt themselves to time constraints and make suitable adjustment in their approaches to the research writing task. They may be inclined to ignore the cyclical nature of research. In other words, they will tend to follow the writing stages, i.e., planning, writing and editing, in a unidirectional way, because reverting to the previous stages will need extra time, which is, however, limited in most projects.

Students' indigenous culture

Students' writing will be influenced by their indigenous cultures to a certain degree. In addition, the bigger the difference between the academic culture and students' indigenous culture, the more conflicts in the learning process there will be. However, this indigenous cultural influence may vary among students in the same class (Holliday, 1994). All the different urban, rural, regional, ethnic, religious, generation, family or class factors have to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, students' learning backgrounds may differ. In the present study, a few examples have been given to demonstrate that the students had different experience of, and most probably, different concepts towards, learning the English language or English writing (see Section 9.2). However, while allowing for the difference, it is reasonable to assume that there are dominant traits in a particular cultural tradition and that people coming from the same cultural tradition might share certain beliefs and exhibit similar thought patterns and rhetorical styles. In the case of writing, for example, I agree with Bloch and Chi (1995) in their finding that Chinese rhetoric is "as complex and ever changing as is Western rhetoric" (p. 271). Nevertheless, during my years' contact with Chinese learners of English writing, I have found that people trained in the Chinese tradition prefer to take a circumlocutory route and reach the thesis at the end of their writing, while people trained in the Anglo-American tradition introduce

their thesis in the beginning of an essay.

The model proposed above emerged from a single case. I can not and do not intend to claim generalizability from the model, which is firmly situated in the particular context. Moreover, it is regarded as an initial model, which can be tested, amended and expanded by incorporating knowledge from more studies. The revised model can certainly be applied to similar contexts and serve as a tool to examine the complex relationship between various variables present in such a writing project. Several points of adjustment may be considered. For example, what would become of the model when the writing instructor came from the same cultural background as the students? Would it affect the interaction of different stages of the research writing project if the project was allocated a longer period of time, for example, 16 instead of 8 weeks?

11.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study has several limitations, some of which were recognized prior to the beginning of the study, while others only surfaced during the course of the investigation.

1. This was a single case study with a very small sample. The decision to restrict the scope of the study was deliberate. Though the research design conforms to my ideal of in-depth investigation, it was, nevertheless, not subject to generalizability. On the other hand, the research is valuable precisely because it is a study of a unique case, situated in a particular context. In order to investigate the context in depth, it is crucial to limit the scope of the study to a single case so that it could be handled within the time and space constraints.
2. Though the data collected for the study were rich enough for me to build a picture of the students' learning, it may have been beneficial to the study if class or tutorial observations had been made. However, as explained in Chapter 5, my request to observe classes was denied by the instructor on the grounds that my presence would be disturbing to the students. With my belief in the principles of the naturalistic inquiry, I agreed to adjust my research design to maintain the normal functioning of the classroom as much as possible.
3. During the course of my investigation, I realized that although this research writing project had a clear boundary in time, it was actually closely related to the previous

part of the writing class. The instructor in this study had a number of principles imposed upon the students from the early lessons in the academic year. Therefore, it may have been useful to incorporate their previous lessons into the study, so that the students' writing development can be examined in a wider context. However, with the time and space constraints, it was not deemed feasible. Instead, interview techniques were used to probe into this part of background information.

11.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RESEARCH WRITING PROJECT

There are several important implications from this study for the implementation of a research writing project. First, it is suggested that specific writing skills pertaining to research writing such as paraphrasing be incorporated into the project. Secondly, reading skill training may be combined in the instruction of research writing. Thirdly, students' enthusiasm for the Internet should be well exploited. Fourthly, whenever possible, more time should be allowed for students to familiarize themselves with available resources and to refine their topics of investigation. Lastly, research logs can be introduced to encourage students to reflect on their research practices constantly. In addition, they can also serve as a contact point for better communication between teachers and students.

In most of the writing classes, students are often assigned to write about their personal opinions or to express their original ideas. They are seldom equipped with the kind of writing skills needed for research writing, such as referring to the work of a previous author and paraphrasing it in an adapted form. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers spend some class time explaining how and why paraphrasing is important in a piece of academic writing. Exercises can also be created to illustrate some of the basic principles of paraphrasing, such as keeping the meaning while shortening the length, and changing the sentence structure.

Research writing, as well as most academic writing, involves a lot of reading. As a matter of fact, reading is an integral part of the writing process. Therefore, it is necessary that reading instruction be incorporated in a writing curriculum. Lessons should be given about how to approach a text for different purposes. If time is limited, teachers can at least remind the students to use strategies that are suitable for reading for information, such as starting with the index of a book and locating the

parts that appear the most relevant and important to one's own research topic.

Internet research skills have become a requirement stated in many universities' assessment criteria of report writing. Students are also observed to be highly enthusiastic about exploring and utilizing the resources on the Internet. This keenness can surely be taken advantage of. Therefore, it is important that students are taught skills so that they can make an informed judgment of the value and the credibility of on-line resources.

Time is a crucial factor for the implementation of a successful research writing project. Students need time to acquaint themselves with resources, such as libraries and electronic databases, particularly when they do research for the first time. Teachers may consider expanding the project into an undertaking of a whole semester (about 16 weeks in Taiwan). In the first half of the semester, teachers can announce the project and explain what it involves. More time may be, thus, allowed for students to discover a topic of interest and to locate available sources.

Teachers may check what students have achieved by assigning research notes or logs. These research logs can serve several functions. First, teachers can encourage students to record the process of their research in the logs, for example, what motivates them to research a particular topic, how they approach their chosen topics, and what resources they have identified. Students may, through the act of recording, constantly reflect on their methods and make suitable adjustments. Moreover, they can be encouraged to share research logs with their classmates and discuss and compare the strategies that they adopt and the resources that they have found. Secondly, research logs can also serve as a contact point where students ask questions emerging from their research process and teachers offer assistance to individual students. This real-time support will not only help solve problems but also promote interactions between teachers and students.

11.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has focused on a small group of Taiwanese students and their American instructor in a newly-founded department of English. Clearly, more research needs to be carried out to examine different combinations of teachers and students. For example, we need to look at the situation where a Taiwanese teacher is in charge of the research writing course. According to several informal interviews

conducted by the researcher with graduates of English departments, most English departments in Taiwan offer research writing courses, though sometimes under different course titles, such as “Report Writing”, or “Research Methods and Bibliography”. However, the contents of the courses are not always the same. Variation includes requirement of a complete research paper based on student-chosen topics, a paper based on three or four source readings provided by instructors, and an introduction of methods to document sources. These different approaches are informed by beliefs about what should be taught about research in undergraduate programmes and how it should be taught. Therefore, a survey to investigate the beliefs and practices among teachers of research writing in Taiwan should be conducted. More case studies to examine the implementation and the context of research writing courses in different universities should also be carried out.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, it would be useful to develop some of the issues that have been raised but not probed in detail due to the time and space constraints. For example, given the increasing importance of the Internet on both students’ personal and academic life, it may be interesting to examine the strategies that are used to search for on-line information. The broad impact of the Internet on student research is also worth in-depth investigation.

Another direction of research which might be worth following is to trace the development of the student participants, particularly if they pursue a higher level of study. It is clear that most of the students saw the practicality of the research writing project as immediately useful in their future postgraduate study. Therefore, further studies may be carried out to investigate the influence of the project on the students’ academic careers.

11.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this thesis, I have adopted the case study approach in an attempt to understand a research writing project from different angles and on different levels. The study is based on the tenet that research on writing should not be limited to individual approaches that either focus solely on the text or the cognitive process of the writer. Rather, within the constraints of time and resources, a researcher should attempt to include a sufficient quantity and variety of data, which is nevertheless relevant to the investigation. Based on this belief, I have looked at the perceptions of the student

writers towards the research writing task, the context, where the students interacted with their immediate writing environment as well as the larger social-cultural contexts. Finally, I have also examined the students' written products, with a particular focus on the revision process.

To conclude, this thesis is a first step towards an overall understanding of an important writing event – a research writing project - in an EFL context. The study is undertaken in the hope that it will stimulate more research on students' acquisition of English academic writing in Taiwan, while contributing to the other EFL contexts where research writing is taught and learned.

(52987 words)

Appendix A: Research Paper Syllabus

Week 1 – May 10 Introduction:

- Choosing a Topic
- Preparing a Working Bibliography – Resources for your paper.

Week 2 – May 17 Collecting information:

- Working Bibliography
- APA format

Week 3 – May 24 Outlining the Paper:

- Organization
- Types of outlines
- Outline formats

Week 4 – May 31 Outline Conference

- Hand-in Outline – Beginning of class
- Conference on Outline during class

Week 5 – June 7 First Draft Conference

Week 6 – June 14 Second Draft Conference

Week 7 – June 21 Continue Revising Second Draft

Week 8 – June 28 Get Final Draft Ready

Appendix B: Transcription Conventions

I	The instructor
R	The Researcher
K, J, B, T, H, C, S	Student Kevin, Jack, Bob, Toby, Helen, Cathy, Sylvie (see Table 5-1 for their profiles)
CAPS	Extra loudness/emphasis
()	Non-verbal, paralinguistic, prosodic and contextual information
[...]	Words or lines omitted from transcript
Er	Hesitations
...	Pause
[words]	Words inserted by the researcher for providing background information
“words”	Words from the students’ papers, read aloud by the instructor during writing conferences
[??]	Uncertain or impossible transcription

Appendix C: Interview Schedules (Students)

First interview (May 12)

1. How many years have you learned English?
2. How many years of English composition courses have you taken? What do you think of them? What did you learn from those courses?
3. Do you practice writing in English regularly? Journals, letters, e-mails? Do you think regular practice help your writing quality or quantity? Why?
4. Have you undertaken any research projects before? If yes, please describe. Do you think learning to write a research paper can help you in any way?
5. What do you think you can learn from this upcoming research project? Why do you think so?
6. In the end of the course, eventually you will have to produce an 8-page research paper. How do you find the task? Do you expect any difficulties, in terms of research or writing?

Second interview (June 8)

1. Please describe the process of searching for information and deciding on your topic.
2. After you decided on your topic, did you make any adjustments when writing the outline?
3. Do you think you will make any further adjustments in the following three weeks? Why? (time)
4. Can you transform the source material you have read into something you can use in your research paper? Please give examples.
5. What influences your research writing the most? Encouragement and supervision from the teacher, discussion with or suggestions from your classmates, the resources (books or the Internet), or others?
6. Before you submitted your first draft, did you revise your own essay? If yes, did you revise it sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, or did you revise it as a whole? What aspect did you make the most revisions, wording, sentence structure, organization, content, or the use of reference?
7. How much time did you use in finding your topic, outlining, reading the source material, drafting, and revising?
8. What do you think is the nature of research writing?
9. What do you think are the criteria and the expectations of Michael concerning your research paper?

Final interview (June 28)

1. How did you use the book '*Form and Style*'?
2. Please describe the biggest differences between your first, second and third drafts.
3. What impressed you the most at your conferences with Michael?
4. Most of you pointed out that the format is the focus of your writing class. Do you

think there are differences between the format of the research paper and that of the essays that you've written during this year? What do you think of that?

5. Are you satisfied with your research paper? What do you think you have learned from writing research paper? What do you think you can do better at your next research paper?

Appendix D: Interview Schedules (Instructor)

First interview (May 10)

1. Please describe your academic background.
2. How many years have you taught English as a second language?
3. How many years have you taught English in Taiwan? What level of students? What courses?
4. How many years have you taught composition courses in this university?
5. What do you think the students should learn in your composition course?
6. What do you value the most in students' writing? (vocabulary, punctuation, grammar, organization, critical thinking, rich contents, etc.)
7. Why do you ask students to write research paper? What do you think students can learn from learning to write research paper?
8. What are the difficulties you perceive in teaching students to write research paper?
9. What difficulties do students encounter when learning to write research paper?

Second interview (June 7)

1. You mentioned in our last interview that you wanted your students to use your writing class to focus on the organization of the paper. What is your idea of 'organization'? You emphasize the importance of the writing skills, because 'without the writing skills, no matter how good their research skills are, nobody can understand their writing.' What kinds of student texts are incomprehensible? In other words, what are the main problems in the student texts that make them incomprehensible?
2. In your understanding, what is the difference between the writing in English and the writing in Chinese? Do you think Chinese students will be influenced by their previous Chinese writing habits when they're writing in English?
3. Do you have a theory of writing? How do students learn to write, according to your personal experience as a learner or a teacher?
4. What do you think is the nature of research writing? What are your criteria and your expectations for the students' research writing?
5. When do the students need your help the most during their research writing process?
6. What are the problems you've detected in students' research writing?

Final interview (June 28)

1. Where did you get the idea of TBER?
2. How did you use the book '*Form and Style*'? Was the book chosen by you? If yes, why did you choose the book? Did you give the students any instructions concerning using the book?
3. In our last interview, you mentioned their biggest problems were the organization and the documentation. After several feedback sessions with you, have the

students got the organization and the documentation right?

4. Could you give an example of the most successful research writing in your class?
What exactly has the student accomplished?
5. Are there any students failing to learn research writing in your class? What exactly did they fail to do?

Appendix E: Jack's First Conference

I: Do you have any questions for me today?

J: Sure. A lot. I don't understand what is this.

I: OK. A thesis statement. A big T and S. OK. This is about the site that they chose. Right? But you don't have, here, I think this is your thesis statement. Is that correct?

J: Maybe not.

I: OK. Then that's a problem, because your thesis statement is trying to tell the reader what's coming up. Right? So this is about the site that they chose, and that is not listed here. So...

J: So I have to write a new thesis statement?

I: Your thesis statement is supposed to show what is coming up. Your thesis statement is your main idea, and should have supporting ideas.

J: How many supporting ideas...?

I: However long your paper is. Where's your outline?

J: I don't bring it.

I: OK. Whatever. Doesn't matter. You have four here. As far as I can tell. Each building, available tools, assumptions and [??] method. There is about [??] and building construction. I guess it's why or how it was built. Right?

J: Uhuh.

I: So you're also missing all your references. You put that in your second draft. Let me take a look at how you did that. OK. There's a problem here. You have three from the same person. It looks like that person is writing your paper.

J: Ya.

I: OK. So then next one you have Marks, Marks, Marks. Marks is writing this section. Marks is writing a lot of your paper. (turning the page) Marks is writing all your paper. OK. This is very bad. You can't do that. Now you come to David. Are you sure Marks is last name, his family name? You have your references? No. David, that looks like a first name. Right? So you should be using the family name.

J: Marks is the last name.

I: OK. But the last name is the family name. I don't want to confuse you with the Chinese last name. Let's just say, the family name. Right? David? Are you sure that's a family name?

J: His name is Rosary David.

I: Something David? Are you sure? OK. That's fine. I just want to check. I suppose it can be a person's family name. Anyway, you can't do that. It's plagiarism. You're stealing their order of writing. That's listed in your book. And as I wrote here, you're doing this correctly. That seems to be right.

J: so I can't use.. I mean, in a paragraph, I can't use only one writer?

I: You should not use three in a row. I'm saying that, because the size of your paper, it seems that in the paper of this size, which is rather small, if you're using three in a row, you're using too much information taken from the person. Therefore, the person is going to look like you're following his order, his outline. OK? I don't need more of Marks. There's [??]. So there's no rule for this. I will accept two. Two in a row is fine.

J: Two? You mean, two...

I: Two references by the same person in a row. But then it must be followed by another person.

- J: I think I can do paraphrase about the [??]. Can I do part of his lines and paraphrase, change it into my words?
- I: Well, I think you already did that here. There's no quote here, right? But still, you can not have three in a row, whether it's a direct quote or paraphrase. Even two in a row is probably not good.
- J: So only one?
- I: I will accept two. I will stay by that. And here, beware what I wrote here. You're supposed to paraphrase, not copy. I can tell what's your word and what's not. So you don't want to make a mistake of copying. You can't do that.
- J: So the [??].
- I: Yes, this is just a note to me saying that you're again talking about the site. But here, the same thing here. You're talking about the choice of the site. And, is this true, "far superior to those today"? The Egyptians must have been the world's best geologists. So the geologist today is worse than the geologist from, when was Egypt, when was that, three thousand years ago, four thousand years ago?
- J: Four thousand years ago. That's what the book says. Maybe it's a kind of description, but not true.
- I: Well, think about that. You're stating it as a fact. And I'm questioning. It just doesn't seem logical to me. (LAUGH) Surely, the geologists today know a little bit more than they did four thousand years ago. I don't know. Again, I mean, if you say yes, then I believe you. Or if you say the book says yes, then I believe you. I don't think you would make that up. But I do question it, just seems counter-intuitive. Ya, I think this is good detail. It gives you...how to solve this. OK? So you're not giving the details here. They should have used equipment. What equipment did they use? Anyway, I think the problem you need to work on right now is a big problem. That is, A, not using other people's words. You paraphrase and not copy. And, two, not using their order of writing about it. You can't just take one whole section from this book and one whole section from that book and put them together like this. You can't do that.
- J: So...but I think the steps of the building the pyramid is the same. The first step is find a base and then find some rocks, and how to transfer the rocks.
- I: So that's your challenge.
- J: How...
- I: Your challenge to find that information from other sources.
- J: You mean I have to find some other sources and combine these different sources together, not just using one person?
- I: That's exactly what I'm saying. That's illegal. That's plagiarism.
- J: But I still put some of [??] words inside.
- I: Doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It's not my rule. It's in your book. Here if you want, I can find it. I'm sure it's under plagiarism when he talks about copying somebody's words.
- J: Some of the writers, they write different steps about building pyramids. So I think it's impossible to combine their ideas. Cause their ideas are different.
- I: Your purpose is to show different ideas, not just show one idea.
- J: Different ideas?
- I: OK, I can't really find it now.
- J: I can look it up myself.
- I: Ya, anyway, believe me...
- J: I trust you.

- I: You can not take the order of the person who is writing... [??] is to gather information. So this person has a different way of doing steps, and this person has a different way. You can trace them throughout your description of how they did it. This person thinks this way is [??] the exact way and you go home like that. In fact, that could become part of your paper, the fact that these two people argue about which way to do it. I think those are the two things you should focus on, cause that's quite important. Also then you're supposed to have TBER, right? So each topic sentence is supposed to have examples listed in it.
- J: So each paragraph...
- I: Well, the introductory paragraph is different.
- J: So the following paragraphs...
- I: The body paragraphs...
- J: Has to follow the TBER rule?
- I: Of course, why have we spent, you know, the whole year learning TBER and forget it in the research paper? That doesn't make sense. The thing is, the research paper which is longer, you can have this sub-introductory paragraph that are just about one section. In that area about that one section, you could just have a short introduction and then the following paragraphs will have the main idea and should have a few examples. And then you talk about these examples. Now if you have a lot of details about one example, that could be one paragraph. And that kind of paragraph, the example would just be the main idea. And then all would be details about that. So, I'm a little contradicting myself because I'm saying that you don't really need to have TBER if one example has a lot of details and that could be just be one paragraph.
- J: So that example can become a paragraph?
- I: Correct. If there's a lot of detail about that, and you do have a lot of detail. But each paragraph, no matter what, needs to have a topic sentence, with one main idea clearly stated and the paragraph is about that. Even if, for example, with the pyramid, you can say, there are different ideas about how the stones were moved down the river to the site. And then you say, this guy thinks this, this guy thinks that. You give the detail about moving stones by the river. OK? Are there any other questions?
- J: No. I guess not.
- I: OK. If you want, you should put the next draft in my mailbox by Thursday at one o'clock and I can look at it over the weekend and give you more information.

Appendix F: Kevin's Paper (Draft 1)

Tokyo, known to its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area, has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer. Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard especially its high commodity price; therefore, how to travel this wonderful paradise is the main points of this paper and in fact, there are many ways to save some exoense in some aspects.

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of ur travelling expense. Travel agency is a good way to go. In it, they provide a lower price to customers especially when one buys the round tickets. It might cost less two thousand NT dollars than the orginally offered price. There are still another economical tip to save more money. One can buy such kind of tickets called "group tickets", which should be purchased by the group of people but this group of people should gather together in the airport and when they arrive at Tokyo, they can separate from each other but on the day to return their country, they should gather together again on the last due day. If one don't follow the rule, they stay more few days instead. They can't share the discount and have to spend some extra money dduring their stay. But if they follow it, it might cost them less three thousand NT dollars than the orginally offered price.

Going directly to airline company seems to be not a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. Make sure not to pick the time during winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad with more frequency than other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of ur travelling expenses. And at the "light season" moment, some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its orginally offered price. It's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo. If one would like to have long term stay in Tokyo, the suggestion is to go to the travel agency.

Once arriving in Tokyo, the first thing is to find a place to settle down. Japanese style homestay is quite different from American style's. Travellers don't have to live together with landlord. It's somewhat like the hotel run by the resident who owns the house. The point is that the cost in lodging in the private-run house is its pretty low cost, which is slightly expensive than the cost in some three-star hotel by several hundred NT dollars. Still, most of traveller from Taiwan can accept its price. In the Japanses style homestay, most of them share the kitchen and the bathroom. For those who don't mind sharing some facilities in the homestay, it's a good method for them to lodge because of its low cost and convenience close Tokyo.

Another good way for travelling Tokyo more economocally is to apply to be a member of International Youth Hostel. If u are still a student, u can apply to I S I C (Internation Student Identity Card) or if u are not a student, one can apply to I Y I C (International Youth Identity Card). Because this kind of card offers a variety of services and bebefits for those who enjoy travelling around the world. With YH membership, you can use YH over the world and should also join Hostelling

International Association in one's country; however, if you have not had the chance to do this, you can purchase a one-year Hostelling Card in Japan, too. This only costs 2800 yen (about 930 NT dollars). And most of Youth Hostels are either near Tokyo or not far away from it so it's very cheap and convenient to make use of the Youth Hostel and to enjoy its services but for non-members, there are ways for them to stay at Youth Hostels. Non-members can purchase so-called "welcome stamp" for 600 yen (about 200 NT dollars) per night. It means that during the daytime Youth Hostels are closed (10:00am to 3:00 pm) so that one can't stay at a youth hostel until after 3:00 PM. We can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom.

Pension, so-called European style homestay with its gorgeous architecture, is also an alternative option for travellers' long term stay in Tokyo. Travellers can live with the landlord and his or her family. Those who live in the pension can save some money from it. For example, they don't have to spend extra money on food if they would like to eat with the pension family. At least, they can use the equipment available in the house as freely as they at their house. The price is also very low

too. For a one-month stay, the average cost is about two thousand yens or so; thus, for those who enjoy lower lodging and want to stay more safely and comfortably, the pension is also another nice choice for them to stay.

Foods in Japan especially in Tokyo area are usually more expensive several times than foods in Taiwan. For those travellers, the high price on food is a pain on their neck because the high price also takes up large proportion on their travelling expense. For the purpose of money-saving, one can temporarily put the eating quality aside especially as a traveller or a backpacker. Going to supermarket when travelling in Tokyo is an option to save money. For example, if one stays in Japanese style homestay or pension, he or she can go there to buy some simple food to cook on his or her own because cooking by oneself can save a lot of money if one has a long-term stay in Tokyo. Therefore, making best use of the surrounding source during their lodging. By the way, there is also a common special offer in Japan's supermarket. If the food is going to expire, the food will be given the special lower discount two or three days earlier. Be patient with waiting for the special discount can be of benefit to save some extra money.

Convenient stores in Tokyo is another way for those traveller or backpacker to spend less money on the food, too. The food offered in the convenient store is just slightly more expensive than the convenient store in Taiwan. But basically, it won't cost the traveller too much money. For example, the bread offered by the convenient store such as 7-11 is much lower than other bakery in Tokyo. Therefore, sometimes for those travellers, they can just purchase simple food like bread or sandwich to get through one day's trip. And the emergence of the convenient stores often comes in handy for those travellers to deal with eating problems.

Fast-food restaurants in Tokyo also provide the lower price which almost as the same as Taiwan's. For example, "McDonald" is a way for those travellers to save money because the price of the food served by McDonald is much lower than the food served by any restaurant in Tokyo. Thus, they can resolve their eating trouble through such American fast-food restaurant. Trying this way might make the travelling more economically. And they can save some extra money for other purpose to their trip.

If the traveller pay a visit to Tokyo, they can't move a little bit without taking transportation. For the travellers who for the first time fly to Tokyo and don't know

very much about Tokyo ,they can take the bus so called "Hato Bus",which is a famous bus in term of the arrangement of the better schedule for tour trip and the quality of service .Because in the big city like Tokyo,there are still some beautiful place or spots that transportation can not be reached.If one rent a car to ride,with his unfamiliarity to Tokyo it not only costs him extra money but waste lots of time circling the unknown place with the complex map.In order to save the money and time,taking "Hato Bus" is a alternative option for travelling Tokyo.This bus can include almost all the trip that travellers or backpackers would like to go but it's not easy to deal by themselves.This tour bus trip divided into two route.One is to show around the Tokyo city.By joining this tour bus,it could save extra money.It means that the travellers could pay the lower cost to join the tour bus than going by themselves.The other route is to go to some beautiful spots near suburbur tripn in Tokyo.Most of the trip this company made is for one-day trip with the price ranging from 1000 yen to 3000 yen.This company also offer the two to three day trip with the most economical cost.Travellers can also pick the different route they like because it might be more lower in cost.

The developement of rail system in Japan is very convenient and systematic.Thus,making best use of the rail system is good for those who like to passing around the Tokyo. Basically,Tokyo area is rounded by the yamamoto line.In the line are situated eighteen spots in counterclock:Harajuku ,Shibuya,Ebisu,Maguro, Shinagama,Hamamatshcho,Shimbashi,Yurakucho,Tokyo,Akihabara,Ueno,Nippori,Su gamo,Ikebukuro,Mejiro,Takadababa,Shinokubo,Shinjuku.There are also some tips for saving some money.One is to buy a'round tickets' .If u only focus on two of eighteen spots ,it's a economical way to purchase it.For example,if u only like to pay a visit between Harajuku and Shinjuku,u can use this kind of tickets.If u might not stay in different spots,u might purchase "spot unlimited round tickets".The rail station also provides the special offer that one buys eleven tickets and they only charge u for the cost of ten tickets.The other is so called "Tokyo City one-day Free ticket".It means that once you purchase this sort of ticket,u can go to any spot in the single day by showing this tickets.It only charges u 765yen(220NT dollars).For those who like to go on dofferent spot at on the same day.Using this ticket can save you lots of money.

There many ways to make ur trip tp Tokyo more economically.Ur focus on

lower airfare,lodging ,food, and transportation in Tokyo could cut off much expense u expected to spend.For the purpose of saving money,we can make a start from the four aspects to see whether how much money could be saved and used for adding something u lack during the trip to Tokyo.

Appendix G: Kevin's Paper (Draft 2)

Tokyo, known to its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area, has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer. Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard especially its high commodity price. How to travel this wonderful paradise more economically is the main points of this paper. In fact, there are many ways to save some expense in some aspects. The travellers can focus on low-cost airline tickets, low-cost lodging, low-cost food, and low-cost transportation in Tokyo.

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of ur travelling expense. There are two main places, travel agency and airline company, for travellers to purchase the airline tickets. Travellers can obtain some benefits or discounts from these two places.

Travel agency is a good way to go for saving money. There are some economical ways offered by the travel agency. "In it, they provide a lower price to customers especially when one purchases the round tickets. It might cost less two thousand NT dollars than the originally offered price" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p. 17). There are still another economical tip to save more money. One can buy such kind of tickets called "group tour tickets", which should be purchased by the group of people but this group of people should gather together in the airport and when they arrive at Tokyo, they can separate from each other, but on the day to return their country, they should gather together again on the last due day. (Zhangyang House, 1996, p34). "If one don't follow the rule made by airline companies, they stay more few days instead. They can't share the discount and have to spend some extra money during their stay. But if they follow it, it might cost them less three thousand NT dollars than the originally offered price" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p35). Thus, taking a try on the travel agencies is economical.

Going directly to airline company seems to be not a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. "Make sure not to pick the time during winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad with more frequency than other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of ur travelling expenses" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p35). "And at the "light season" moment, some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its originally offered price" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p35). It's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo.

Once one arrives in Tokyo, the first thing is to find a place to settle down. As a traveller or a backpacker, a simple place for lodging during their stay in Tokyo should be enough in order to saving money on other purpose. Low-cost lodging of course should be taken into consideration. There are three types of low-cost accommodation: Homestay, International Youth Hostel, and Pension. Each of them is quite economical for the travellers to stay when just arriving in Tokyo.

Choosing homestay is a good way for those travellers or backpackers. The homestay offered in Japan is also quite economical. It is called the Japanese style homestay. "The Japanese style homestay is quite different from the American style's. Travellers don't have to live together with their landlord. It's somewhat like the hotel run by the resident who owns the house" (Hwang, 1997). The point is that the cost in lodging in the private-run house is in its pretty low cost, which is slightly more expensive than the cost in some business hotels in Taiwan by several hundred NT dollars. Still, most of travellers from Taiwan can accept its price because the price is quite similar to that in Taiwan (Hwang, 1997). "In the Japanese style homestay, most of them share the kitchen and the bathroom. For those who don't mind sharing some facilities in the homestay, it's a good method for them to lodge because of its low cost and convenience close Tokyo" (Hwang, 1997).

Another good way for travelling Tokyo more economically is to apply to be a member of International Youth Hostel. Making use of International Youth Hostel is the tips to save the money. "If you are still a student, you can apply to I S I C (International Student Identity Card) or if you are not a student, one can apply to I Y I C (International Youth Identity Card). Because this kind of card offers a variety of services and benefits for those who enjoy travelling around the world." (Hwang, 1997). "With YH membership, you can use YH over the world and should also join Hostelling International Association in one's country; however, if you have not had the chance to do this, you can purchase a one-year Hostelling Card in Japan, too. This only costs 2800 yen (about 930 NT dollars)" (Hwang, 1997). And most of the Youth Hostels are either near Tokyo or not far away from it so it's very cheap and convenient to make use of the Youth Hostel and to enjoy its services, "but for non-member, there are ways for them to stay at Youth Hostel. In addition, Non-member can purchase so called "welcome stamp" for 600 yen (about 200 NT dollars) per night. It means that during the daytime Youth Hostel is closed (10:00am to 3:00 pm) so that one can't stay at youth hostel until after 3:00 PM" (Hwang, 1997). "We can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom, too" (Hwang, 1997). Thus, the International Youth Hostel plays an important part in an economical trip.

Staying in pension is also a good way to go. Pension is very convenient for those travellers and backpackers. For the money-saving way, "pension, so called European style homestay with its gorgeous architecture, is also an alternative option for traveller's long term stay in Tokyo. Travellers can live with the landlord and his or her family. Those who live in the pension can save some money from it" (Hwang, 1997). For example, they don't have to spend extra money on food if they would like to eat with the pension family. At least, they can use the equipment available in the house as freely as they at their house (Hwang, 1997). "The price is also very low too. For a one-month stay, the average cost is about two thousand yens or so per day." (Hwang, 1997). Thus, for those who enjoy lower lodging and want to stay more safely and comfortably, the pension is also another nice choice for them to stay.

Foods in Japan especially in Tokyo area are usually more expensive several times than foods in Taiwan. For those traveller, the high price on food is a pain on their neck because the high price also takes up large proportion on their travelling expense. For the purpose of money-saving, one can temporarily put the eating quality aside especially as a traveller or a backpacker. Some places like supermarkets, convenient stores, and fast-food restaurant might not cost one a lot of money and also can also fill one's stomach.

Going to supermarket when travelling in Tokyo is an option to save money. Supermarkets are the main tip to save some money. For example, if one stays in Japanese style homestay or pension, he or she can go there to buy some simple food to cook on his or her own because cooking by oneself can save a lot of money if one has a long-term stay in Tokyo. Therefore, making best use of the surrounding source during their lodging. By the way, "here is also a common special offer in Japan's supermarket. If the food is going to expire, the food will be given the special lower discount two or three days earlier" (Lin, 1998). Be patient with waiting for the special discount can be of benefit to save some extra money.

Convenient stores in Tokyo are another way for those travellers or backpackers to spend less money on the food, too. Eating in the convenient stores in Japan can solve the problem of choosing lower-cost foods. The food offered in the convenient store is just slightly more expensive than the convenient store in Taiwan. But basically, it won't cost the travellers too much money. For example, the bread offered by the convenient store such as 7-11 is much lower than other bakery in Tokyo (Lin, 1998). Therefore, sometimes for those travellers, they can just purchase simple food like bread or sandwich to get through one day's trip. And the emergence of the convenient stores often comes in handy for those travellers to deal with eating problems.

Fast food restaurants in Tokyo also provide the lower price which almost as the same as Taiwan's. The price of fast food restaurant in Tokyo is much lower than other restaurants in Tokyo. "For example, 'McDonald' is a way for those travellers to save money because the price of the food served by McDonald is much lower than the food served by any restaurant in Tokyo" (Lin, 1998). Thus, they can resolve their eating trouble through such American fast-food restaurant. Trying this way might make the travelling more economically. And they can save some extra money for other purpose to their trip.

If the traveller pay a visit to Tokyo, they can't move a little bit without taking transportation. The ticket fare in each transportation is quite diversified. It might range from lower price to higher price. Thus, it is of great importance for the travellers or backpackers to know the way to their destination. There are two common and economical ways that most experienced travellers take. They usually leave it for a certain tour bus or take the economical tip to rail system around Tokyo to save some expenses more efficiently.

For the travellers who for the first time fly to Tokyo and don't know very much about the big city. A certain tour bus can come to their convenience. "Travellers can take the bus so called HatoBus, which is a famous bus in term of the arrangement of the better schedule for tour trip and the quality of service" (Xu, 1998, p40). Because in the big city like Tokyo, there are still some beautiful places or spots that transportation can not be reached. If one rent a car to ride, with his unfamiliarity to Tokyo it not only costs him extra money but waste lots of time circling the unknown place with the complex map. In order to save the money and time, taking "Hato Bus" is a alternative option for travelling Tokyo. This bus can include almost all the trip that travellers or backpackers would like to go but it's not easy to deal by themselves" (Xu, 1998, p41). This tour bus trip divided into two route. One is to show around the Tokyo city. By joining this tour bus, it could save extra money. It means that the travellers could pay the lower cost to join the tour bus than going by themselves. The other route is to go to some beautiful spots near suburban trip in Tokyo. Most of the trip this company made is for one-day trip with the price ranging from 1000 yen to 3000 yen (Xu, 1998, p42). This company also offer the two to three

day trip with the most economical cost. Travellers can also pick the different route they like by Hato bus because it might be more lower in cost.

The development of rail system in Japan is very convenient and systematic. Thus, making best use of the rail system is good for those who like to passing around the Tokyo. Basically, Tokyo area is rounded by the Yamamoto line. There are also some tips for saving some money. One is to buy around tickets. If you only focus on two of eighteen spots, it's an economical way to purchase it." For example, if you only like to pay a visit between Harajuku and Shinjuku, you can use this kind of tickets" (Hari, 1999, p18). "If you might not stay in different spots, you might purchase spot unlimited round tickets" (Hari, 1999, p18). The rail station also provides the special offer that "one buys eleven tickets and they only charge you for the cost of ten tickets." (Hari, 1999, p19). "The other is so called Tokyo City one-day Free ticket. It means that once you purchase this sort of ticket, you can go to any spot in the single day by showing this tickets. It only charges you 765 yen (220 NT dollars)" (Hari, 1999, p19). For those who like to go on different spot at on the same day. Using this kind of ticket when you are to take the rail system can save you lots of money.

There many ways to make your trip to Tokyo more economically. Your focus on lower airfare, lodging, food, and transportation in Tokyo could cut off much expense you expect to spend during your stay in Tokyo. For the purpose of saving money, we can make a start from the four aspects to see whether how much money could be saved and used for adding something you lack during the trip to Tokyo.

Appendix H: Kevin's Paper (Draft 3)

Tokyo, known for its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area, has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer. Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard, especially its high commodity price. How to travel this wonderful paradise more economically is the main points of this paper. In fact, there are many ways to save some expense in some aspects. The travellers can focus on low-cost airline tickets, lodging, food, and transportation in Tokyo.

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of your travelling expense. There are two main places, travel agency and airline company, for travellers to purchase the airline tickets. Travellers can obtain some benefits or discounts from these two places. Travel agencies often offer some low-cost tickets especially like round tickets and "group tour tickets". For airline companies, their ticket fares might vary according to the "light" or the "boom" season or the period of their promotion for air tickets.

Travel agency is a good way to go for saving money. There are some economical ways offered by the travel agency. "When one goes to the travel agency to book the ticket, the suggestion is that he had better purchase the round tickets, instead of choosing one way ticket to go. Because it might save him at least two more thousand NT dollars than the originally offered price." (Chou, 1999, p198). There are still another economical tip to save more money. One can buy such kind of tickets called "group tour tickets", which should be purchased by the group of people but this group of people should gather together in the airport and when they arrive at Tokyo, they can separate from each other, but on the day to return their country, they should gather together again on the last due day. (Zhangyang House, 1996, p34). "Those who use the "group tour tickets" had better follow the rule not to delay their stay in Tokyo can spend less three thousand NT dollars on the air tickets that originally offered by the airline company" (Gostelow, 1996, p 88). Thus, taking a try on the travel agencies is economical.

Going directly to airline company seems to not be a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. "Make sure not to pick the time during winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad with more frequency than other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of your travelling expenses" (Chou, 1999, p 200). "And at the "light season" moment, some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its originally offered price" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p 35). It's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo.

Once one arrives in Tokyo, the first thing is to find a place to settle down. As a traveller or a backpacker, a simple place for lodging during their stay in Tokyo should be enough in order to saving money on other purpose. Low-cost lodging of course should be taken into consideration. There are three types of low-cost accommodation: Homestay, International Youth Hostel, and Pension. Each of them is quite economical for the travellers to stay when just arriving in Tokyo. Homestay is a nice place for the travellers or backpackers to stay because of its low cost and

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Another good way for staying in Tokyo more economically is to apply to be a member of International Youth Hostel. Making use of International Youth Hostel is the tips to save the money. "If you are still a student, you can apply to I S I C (International Student Identity Card). Because this kind of card offers a variety of services and benefits for those who enjoy travelling around the world. (Chou, 1999, p 220). "With YH membership, you can use YH over the world and should also join Hostelling International Association in one's country; however, if you have not had the chance to do this, you can purchase a one-year Hostelling Card in Japan, too. This only costs 2800 yen (about 930 NT dollars)" (Hwang, 1997). And most of the Youth Hostels are either near Tokyo or not far away from it so it's very cheap and convenient to make use of the Youth Hostel and to enjoy its services, "but for non-member, there are ways for them to stay at Youth Hostel. In addition, Non-member can purchase so called "welcome stamp" for 600 yen (about 200 NT dollars) per night. It means that during the daytime Youth Hostel is closed (10:00am to 3:00 pm) so that one can't stay at youth hostel until after 3:00 PM" (Chou, 1999, p 221). "We can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom, too" (Gostelow, 1996, p 86). Thus, the International Youth Hostel plays a important part in an economical trip.

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supermarkets, convenient stores, and fast-food restaurant might not cost one a lot of money and can also fill one's stomach. The supermarkets in Tokyo is an economical place for travellers to explore. And the convenient stores also have been a low-cost place for them to go frequently. As to the fast-food restaurants, the price in Tokyo is almost the same as that in Taiwan.

Going to supermarket when travelling in Tokyo is an option to save money. Supermarkets are the main tip to save some money. For example, if one stays in Japanese style homestay or pension, he or she can go there to buy some simple food to cook on his or her own because cooking by oneself can save a lot of money if one has a long-term stay in Tokyo. Therefore, making best use of the surrounding source during their lodging. By the way, "here is also a common special offer in Japan's supermarket. If the food is going to expire, the food will be given the special lower discount two or three days earlier" (Lin, 1998). Be patient with waiting for the special discount can be of benefit to save some extra money.

Convenient stores in Tokyo are another way for those travellers or backpackers to spend less money on the food, too. Eating in the convenient stores in Japan can solve the problem of choosing lower-cost foods. The food offered in the convenient store is just slightly more expensive than the convenient store in Taiwan. But basically, it won't cost the travellers too much money. For example, the bread offered by the convenient store such as 7-11 is much lower than other bakery in Tokyo (Lin, 1998). Those who prefer rice can go to Family Mart. because "the lunch box served by Family Mart. is also offered an economical cost for the customers from time to time" (Gostelow, 1996, p 66). Therefore, sometimes for those travellers, they can just purchase simple food like bread or sandwich to get through one day's trip. And the emergence of the convenient stores often comes in handy for those travellers to deal with eating problems.

Fast-food restaurants in Tokyo also provide the lower price which almost as the same as Taiwan's. The price of fast-food restaurant in Tokyo is much lower than other restaurants in Tokyo. "For example, "McDonald" is a way for those travellers to save money because the price of the food served by McDonald is much lower than the food served by any restaurant in Tokyo" (Lin, 1998). From the money-saving point of view, it is quite economical to eat in Tokyo. Furthermore, "the teenagers in Tokyo area especially prefer to eat in such fast-food restaurants because they can afford it for their low-price" (Gostelow, 1996, p 70). Thus, they can resolve their eating trouble through such American fast-food restaurant. Trying this way might make the travelling more economically. And they can save some extra money for other purpose to their trip.

If the traveller pay a visit to Tokyo, it would be much easier and more convenient for them to take transportation. The ticket fare in each transportation is quite diversified. It might range from lower price to higher price. Thus, it is of great importance for the travellers or backpackers to know the way to their destination. There are two common and economical ways that most experienced travellers take. They usually leave it for a certain tour bus or take the economical tip to rail system around Tokyo to save some expenses more efficiently. A certain tour bus can not only save money but also save time for the travellers. By taking rail system, it also very convenient and economical for traveller to go around Tokyo.

For the travellers who for the first time fly to Tokyo and don't know very much about the big city. A certain tour bus can come to their convenience. "Travellers can take the bus so called HatoBus, which is a famous bus in term of the arrangement of the better schedule for tour trip and the quality of service" (Xu, 1998, p 40). Because in the big city like Tokyo, there are still some beautiful places or spots that

transportation can not be reached. If one rent a car to ride, with his unfamiliarity to Tokyo it not only costs him extra money but waste lots of time circling the unknown place with the complex map. In order to save the money and time, taking "Hato Bus" is a alternative option for travelling Tokyo. The purpose of this kind of bus is to meet all the trip that travellers or backpackers would like to go around in Tokyo but it's not easy to handle by themselves" (Chou, 1999, p 62). This tour bus trip divided into two route. One is to show around the Tokyo city. By joining this tour bus, it could save extra money. It means that the travellers could pay the lower cost to join the tour bus than going by themselves. The other route is to go to some beautiful spots near suburban trip in Tokyo. Most of the trip this company made is for one-day trip with the price ranging from 1000 yen to 3000 yen (Xu, 1998, p 42). This company also offer the two to three day trip with the most economical cost. Travellers can also pick the different route they like by Hato bus because it might be more lower in cost.

The developement of rail system in Japan is very convenient and systematic. Thus, making best use of the rail system is good for those who like to passing around the Tokyo. Basically, Tokyo area is rounded by the yamamoto line. There are also some tips for saving some money. One is to buy around tickets. If u only focus on two of eighteen spots ,it's a economical way to purchase it." For example, if you only like to pay a visit between Harajuku and Shinjuku, you can use this kind of tickets" (Hari , 1999, p 18). But if the travellers want to visit more spots, " for those who might not stay in different spots, the suggestion is that they had better purchase spot unlimited round tickets" (Chou, 1999, p 201). If the travellers would like to focus on one spot for a long while, they can purchase "Tokyo City One-Day Free Ticket". The so called Tokyo City one-day Free ticket means that once you purchase this sort of ticket, u can go to any spot in the single day by showing this tickets. It only charges u 765yen (220NT dollars)" (Hari, 1999, p 19). For those who like to go on different spots at on the same day. Using this kind of ticket when you are to take the rail system can save you lots of money.

There are many ways to make your trip to Tokyo more economically. Your focus on lower airfare, lodging ,food, and transportation in Tokyo could cut off much expense your expect to spend during your stay in Tokyo. For the purpose of saving money, we can make a start from the four aspects to see whether how much money could be saved and used for adding something u lack during the trip to Tokyo. Thus, if the travellers or backpackers are able to grasp the tips on the four economical aspects ,their short or long term stay in Tokyo will, more or less, come to the minimum in term of the cost they planned to spend on.

Appendix I: Kevin's Paper (Final Draft)

Tokyo, known for its up-to-date fashion culture and modernization in Asian area, has been a favorite place which travellers very much prefer. Yet many of them have been suffering its high living standard, especially its high commodity price. How to travel this wonderful paradise more economically is the main points of this paper. In fact, there are many ways to save some expense in some aspects. The travellers can focus on low-cost airline tickets, lodging, food, and transportation in Tokyo.

Generally speaking, airline tickets take the most of the travelling expenses. If one wants to save more money, choosing the right outlet to purchase airline tickets is the only key to cut off some of your travelling expenses. There are two main places, travel agency and airline company, for travellers to purchase the airline tickets. Travellers can obtain some benefits or discounts from these two places. Travel agencies often offer some low-cost tickets especially like round tickets and "group tour tickets". For airline companies, their ticket fares might vary according to the "light" or the "boom" season or the period of their promotion for air tickets.

Travel agency is a good way to go for saving money. There are some economical ways offered by the travel agency. "When one goes to the travel agency to book the tickets, the suggestion is that he had better purchase the round tickets, instead of choosing one way ticket to go. Because it might save him at least two more thousand NT dollars than the originally offered price." (Chou, 1999, p.198). There are still another economical tip to save more money. One can buy such kind of tickets called "group tour tickets", which should be purchased by the group of people but this group of people should gather together in the airport and when they arrive at Tokyo, they can separate from each other, but on the day to return their country, they should gather together again on the last due day. (Zhangyang House, 1996, p. 34). "Those who use the "group tour tickets" had better follow the rule not to delay their stay in Tokyo can spend less three thousand NT dollars on the air tickets originally offered by the airline company" (Gostelow, 1996, p.88). Thus, taking a try on the travel agencies is economical.

Going directly to airline company seems to not be a good idea because tickets sold in the airline company seldom offers the discounts. The tip to save more money is to pick the right moment to Tokyo. "Make sure not to pick the time during winter vacation, spring break, and summer vacation. Because it is the high time that a crowd of people travel abroad more frequently than they do in other months. Just skipping these crowd moment might cut off some costs of your travelling expenses" (Chou, 1999, p.200). "And at the "light season" moment, some of airline company will provide some special trips in lower cost. For example, EVA airline used to offer some short-term trip to Tokyo with round tickets which cost less three to four thousand NT dollars than its originally offered price" (Zhangyang House, 1996, p. 35). Thus, it's a good way for those who would like to have short-term trip to Tokyo.

Once one arrives in Tokyo, the first thing is to find a place to stay. As a traveller or a backpacker, a simple place for lodging during their stay in Tokyo should be enough in order to save money for other purpose. Low-cost lodging of course should be taken into consideration. There are three types of low-cost accommodation: Homestay, International Youth Hostel, and Pension. Each of them is quite economical for the travellers to stay when just arriving in Tokyo. Homestay is a nice place for the travellers or backpackers to stay because of its low cost and

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Another good way for staying in Tokyo more economically is to apply to be a member of International Youth Hostel. Making use of International Youth Hostel is the tip to save the money. "If you are still a student, you can apply to I S I C (International Student Identity Card). Because this kind of card offers a variety of services and benefits for those who enjoy travelling around the world. (Chou, 1999, p. 220). "With YH membership, you can use YH over the world and should also join Hostelling International Association in one's country; however, if you have not had the chance to do this, you can purchase a one-year Hostelling Card in Japan, too. This only costs 2800 yen (about 930 NT dollars)" (Hwang, 1997). And most of the Youth Hostels are either near Tokyo or not far away from it so it's very cheap and convenient to make use of the Youth Hostel and to enjoy its services, "but for non-member, there are ways for them to stay at Youth Hostel. In addition, non-member can purchase so called "welcome stamp" for 600 yen (about 200 NT dollars) per night. It means that during the daytime Youth Hostel is closed (10:00am to 3:00 pm) so that one can't stay at Youth Hostel until after 3:00 PM" (Chou, 1999, p. 221). Travellers or backpackers may go out for their trip and return after 3:00 PM. By applying to be one of members of the YH, "we can see that the Youth Hostel offers the most lowest cost in lodging and provides many services such as a complete set of equipment for the use of the kitchen and the bathroom, too" (Gostelow, 1996, p. 86). Thus, the International Youth Hostel plays a important part in an economical trip.

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If the travellers pay a visit to Tokyo, it would be much easier and more convenient for them to take transportation. The ticket fare in each transportation is quite diversified. It might range from lower cost to higher cost. Thus, it is of great importance for the travellers or backpackers to know the way to their destination. There are two common and economical ways that most experienced travellers use. They usually leave it for a certain tour bus or take the economical trip by rail system around Tokyo to save some expenses more efficiently. A certain tour bus can not only save money but also save time for the travellers. By taking rail system, it also very convenient and economical for traveller to go around Tokyo.

For the travellers who for the first time fly to Tokyo and don't know very much about the big city, a certain tour bus can come to their convenience. "Travellers can take the bus so called HatoBus, which is a famous bus in term of the arrangement

of the better schedule for tour trip and the quality of service"(Xu.1998, p. 40).Because in the big city like Tokyo,there are still some beautiful places or spots that transportation can not be reached.If one rent a car to ride,with his unfamiliarity to Tokyo ,it not only costs him extra money but waste lots of time circling the unknown place with the complex map.In order to save the money and time,taking "Hato Bus" is a alternative option for travelling Tokyo. The purpose of this kind of bus is to meet all the trip that travellers or backpackers would like to go around in Tokyo but it's not easy to handle by themselves"(Chou, 1999, p. 62) . This tour bus trip divided into two routes.One is to show around the Tokyo city.By joining this tour bus,it could save extra money.It means that the travellers could pay the lower cost to join the tour bus than setting out by themselves.The other route is to go to some beautiful spots near suburbun area in Tokyo.Most of the trip this company made is for one-day trip with the price ranging from 1000 yen to 3000 yen(Xu, 1998, p. 42). This company also offer the two to three day trip with the most economical cost.Travellers can also pick the different route they like by Hato bus because it might be more lower in cost.

The devepment of rail system in Japan is very convenient and systematic.Thus,making best use of the rail system is good for those who like to passing around the Tokyo. Basically,Tokyo area is rounded by the yamamoto line.There are also some tips for saving some money.One is to buy around tickets .If u only focuus on two of eighteen spots ,it's a economical way to purchase it." For example,if you only like to pay a visit between Harajuku and Shinjuku,you can use this kind of tickets"(Hari , 1999, p. 18) .But if the travellers want to visit more spots, " for those who might not stay in different spots,the suggestion is that they had better purchase spot unlimited round tickets"(Chou, 1999, p. 201). If the travellers would like to focus on one spot for a long while,they can purchase "Tokyo City One-Day Free Ticket"." The so called Tokyo City one-day Free ticket means that once you purchase this sort of ticket,you can go to any spot in one single day by showing this tickets.It only charges you 765yen(220NT dollars)"(Hari, 1999, p. 19) . For those who like to go to different spots on the same day.Using this kind of ticket when you are to take the rail system can save you lots of money.

There are many ways to make your trip to Tokyo more economical.Your focus on lower airfare,lodging ,food, and transportation in Tokyo could cut off a lot of expenses your expect to spend during your stay in Tokyo.For the purpose of saving money,we can make a start from the four aspects to see whether how much money could be saved and used for adding something u lack during the trip to Tokyo.Thus,if the travellers or backpackers are able to grasp the tips on these four economical aspects ,their short or long term stay in Tokyo will,more or less,come to the minimum in term of the expenses they planned to spend on.

Appendix J: Cathy's Paper (Draft 1)

Risk Factors of Osteoporosis

Constructed from protein called “collagen” and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones keep a renewing process continually that attain a peak bone mass when one is at the age of 25 to 30 (Trisha Macnair, 2000, p. 1). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, and which may easily develop into osteoporosis or porous bone. “Osteoporosis, characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue is the most common type of metabolic bone disease, leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost the entire skeleton (National Institute of Health). According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, eight million American women and two million men has osteoporosis, and 18 millions more have low bone mass. A statistics by Center for Osteoporosis and Rheumatology Education also indicates that in the U.S. today, one in two women and one in eight men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Because porous bone occurs without any evident symptoms, it is often called a hidden disease. People may not notice that they get osteoporosis until their bones become so delicate that they may not withstand a sudden strain, bump, or fall, and quite possibly which may result in serious fractures or collapsed vertebra. Therefore, it is important to get to know some risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis. Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the non-preventable and the preventable (Li, 1998, p. 59).

Non-preventable factors can be categorized into three sections—genetics, maternity, and hormonal changes (Li, 1998). People who expose to these risk factors have more chance to develop bone loss and vulnerable bone structure (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Genetic tendencies are inborn risks that may be easily neglected by those who have the most disease-prone genotype. Since calcium is the most important substance for human body to construct bone mass and enhance bone density, maternity period during which massive demands for calcium are made by the growing fetal and neonatal skeletons has been considered another culprit responsible for bone loss (Eisman, 1998, p. 1). In addition, hormonal changes of all genders and all ages, including abnormal estrogen secretion in women and androgen in men, are also leading causes of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998, p. 38 and p. 43).

The genetic aspects of osteoporosis can be divided into two different facets: heredity and ethnic groups (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Family medical history is an important indicator of the incidence of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998, p. 61). If any family member had bone loss symptoms or any other fractures before, one has a greater risk of developing osteoporosis in his/her lifetime than others. (1998, p.61) In *Could You Inherit Osteoporosis from Your Parents*, “There are some data suggesting that a woman's bone density may actually resemble her parents, so we have to assume that the risk is there,” said Michael Heerkoper, MD, the director of Bone and Mineral Metabolism and Gerontology Research at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit. Different ethnic groups affect the incidence of porous bone (National Institute of Health). A research by the institute shows that Caucasian and Asian are the target group for getting osteoporosis, followed by African

Americans and Hispanic Americans. Both the white and the yellow race have high level of "T allele" that is an independent risk factor for the genetic susceptibility to osteoporosis, since "T allele," a gene that can trigger the development of gradual bone loss (Miyauchi, 1998, p.23). Osteoporosis is largely determined by an individual's genetics.

Massive bone loss during maternity results from pregnancy, and lactation (Eisman, 1998, p504). Human bodies go on a moderate bone loss gradually after peak bone mass. Once a woman gets pregnant, the process of bone loss is accelerated because of the increased demand for calcium from the fetus (1998, p.504). Pregnancy keeps undermining the maternal skeleton and bone density if dietary calcium supply is not increased. The effect of lactation on the occurrence of osteoporosis is also evident. On the average, a healthy woman body normally has about 700g to 800g of calcium (Chao, 1998, p.40). A clinical research shows that during lactation, the body will lose about 200 mg of calcium every day. As this speed, if breastfeeding period lasts one year, the mother will lose 84g of calcium; that is, about 10 percent of the total storage of calcium in the body (Chao, 1998, p. 41). This bone-mineral loss pose a threat to the mother's health, if not completely restored 6 to 12 months after weaning, with the return of normal menses (Eisman, 1998); and which will deteriorate into first-stage osteoporosis in the future. Maternal bone loss accounts for a main aggravation of bone mass in women.

The relationship between hormonal changes and porous bone can be discussed according to different genders—males and females (International Osteoporosis Foundation). For women, estrogen, a female sex hormone, plays a important role in strengthening bone density (Shiraki, 1997, p. 40). According to Dr. Shiraki, women are the most frequent sufferers of the disease, due to the loss of ovarian function and subsequent reduction in estrogen production that occurs around the time of menopause. Although menopause is associated with the excessive estrogen reduction in women, in fact, women of all ages may confront bone loss, since the unstable mood or being under great pressure can also cause the low estrogen level in the body (Pai, 1995, p.40). Besides, amenorrhoea (absence or cessation of menstrual periods) is also considered another of cause of osteoporosis, because amenorrhoea may disrupt or even break down the normal secretion of estrogen. (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Men, over 40, are also more likely to be struck by porous bone (China Post, 2000, p. 19). For men, testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone density; however, as men's getting older, the volume of testosterone secretion is declining and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (Chao, 1998, p. 43). Testosterone is a major substance that slows down the depletion of bone mass and thereby sustains bone density (Shiraki, 1997). "After andropause, also known as male menopause, the condition is even worse, because the level of testosterone secretion could reduce at the appalling rate of one percent each year as men age," said Dr. Jaap de Boer, a Dutch physician familiar with the study of andropause. Hormonal factors do have an adverse effect on the overall bone health.

The preventable risk factors of osteoporosis include having abnormal lifestyle and contracting disease (International Osteoporosis Foundation). People with unhealthy lifestyle such as unbalanced diet, lack of exercising, and bad habits have more chance to get osteoporosis (National Health Institute). A research by the institute shows that low bone mass and osteoporosis may result from an unbalanced diet, whether it is insufficient intake of dietary calcium or inadequate dietary supplement of protein or mineral. Calcium and phosphate are two important elements that are essential for normal bone formation (Chao, 1998, p.25). If the

body does not absorb enough calcium from the diet, bone tissues may suffer, and develop into brittle and fragile bones, since calcium and phosphate keep been reabsorbed back into blood from the bones (Chao, 1998). In addition, massive intake of protein at one time can also affect the absorption of calcium in the body and increase the incidence of osteoporosis (Li, 1998). Nowadays, there are lots of dietary supplement on the market featuring calcium plus iron. This kind of products seems to be a perfect choice for modern people in terms of health orientation and economical concepts. However, the fact is totally different. "Taking high dose of calcium and iron at the same time will lead to suppressive absorption between the two substance in the body and trigger preliminary bone loss" (Chao, 1998). People who lack of exercising are more likely to get porous bone than those who do exercise regularly. Lots of studies show that exercise requiring muscles to pull on bones causes the bones to retain and maybe even gain density. A lack of exercise and prolonged immobilization link with the likelihood of miscellaneous bone fractures (Li, 1998). One who doesn't exercise regularly or hold a sedentary job may have weak blood circulation. Impaired blood circulation prevents bone from getting sufficient nutrients, quickens the aging process of bone tissue and undermines the overall skeletal structure (Chang, 1995, p. 235). Furthermore, prolonged immobilization hinders the growing of new bone tissue reducing the bone density. Bad habits such as smoking and drinking are also related to the osteoporosis indirectly (Chao, p. 79). Nicotine and tar in the burning cigarette as well as alcohol can weaken the absorption of calcium in the intestine (Li, 1998). A medical research by National Health Foundation shows that with the existence of the harmful substance in the body, the function of calcium absorption in intestine reduce up to 60 percent, compared with health people. Moreover, heavy drinker are more disposed to be affected by bone loss, since alcohol has negative effect on liver and which may influence the function of liver to decompose calcium from various nutrients. The association between osteoporosis and one's unhealthy lifestyle is obvious.

Contacting diseases like diabetes, endocrine problems, and digestive organ disabilities can trigger osteoporosis (Li, 1998, p.69). People with diabetes have higher risk of suffering from porous bone, because of the decreased secretion of insulin hormone from their pancreas (Li, 1998). Insulin hormone is a major substance that promotes bone formation. Once it fails to maintain at a normal level, people's bone will began to degenerate and may go on the development of osteoporosis. Endocrine disease also connects with bone loss. Different endocrine gland produces certain kind of hormone to maintain a normal metabolic function of bone cells. Unbalanced secretion of hormone will hinder the process of bone formation and affect original bone structure negatively. When bone erosion keeps deteriorating, people may suffer from osteoporosis and other related bone fractures. Digestive organ illness also has a lot to do with potential bone loss. Although Calcium serves an indispensable material to sustain bone health, it can't make it with the aid of vitamin D that has the function of promoting calcium absorption in the body (Pai, 1998). "Gastrointestinal disease predispose patients to bone disease as a result of intestinal impaired absorption of calcium and vitamin D," said Dr. Pai. When one has the inflection in the digestive organs, especially in small intestines, the absorption of the nutrients can be break down and which will put one in danger of getting osteoporosis in the long run (Li, 1998).

The information about some risk factors including the non-preventable and the preventable can help people know about the disease and thereby, take some precaution measures to avoid the occurrence of the disease. Since osteoporosis is a silent

disease, people usually are not aware that they have been attacked by the porous bone until serious bone injury or fractures taking place. The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk.

Appendix K: Cathy's Paper (Draft 2)

Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

In most countries, the number of people who suffer from osteoporosis or porous bone keeps growing. The disease becomes so prevalent that it has already posed a threat to the public health (Chang, 1995). While the disease is often neglected by most people, "in the U.S. today, 10 million individuals already have osteoporosis, and 18 million more have low bone mass, placing them at increased risk for osteoporosis" (National Institute of Health). The appalling figures reflect the seriousness of the problem. Besides, the cruel fact that "one in two postmenopausal women and one in eight men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their life time" (National Institute of Health) also conveys an important message-- It is important for the public to get to know something about the disease including what osteoporosis is and who's at a high risk of developing low bone mass. Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the "non-controllable" and the "controllable" (Li, 1998). Non-controllable factors for osteoporosis refer to the circumstance in which low bone mass and debilitating bone density are inevitable or one has inherent tendency to develop porous bone. The controllable, on the contrary, are "environmental" which can trigger osteoporosis.

The occurrence of osteoporosis has a relation with bone remodeling (Chao, 1998). "Characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, osteoporosis is the most common type of metabolic bone disease leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost to the entire skeleton" (National Institute of Health). Constructed from protein called "collagen" and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones attain a peak bone mass from the age of 25 to 30 (Macnair, 2000). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, because the "remodeling process" is accelerated. "Bone remodeling" involves a continuous breakdown and reconstruction of bones (Li, 1998). The "breakdown" is carried out by "osteoclasts," a cell in the bone that continually erodes the surface of bones (Li, 1998). On the other hand, osteoblast, a "bone forming cell," is responsible for restoring bone density, said Li. However, as one passes peak bone mass, here comes the big problem: "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). This accounts for the formation of osteoporosis and the occurrence of various bone fractures. "People may not notice that they get osteoporosis until their bones become so delicate that they may not withstand a sudden strain, bump, or fall, and quite possibly which may result in serious fractures or collapsed vertebra (International Osteoporosis Foundation).

Non-controllable factors can be categorized into four sections—genetics, maternity, hormonal changes, and contracting diseases (Li, 1998). People who expose to these risk factors stand more chances to develop bone loss and vulnerable bone structure (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Genetic tendencies are inborn risks that may be easily neglected by those who have the most disease-prone genotype. Since calcium is the most important substance for human body to construct bone mass and enhance bone density, maternity period during which massive demands for calcium are made by the "growing fetal" and "neonatal

skeletons” has been considered another culprit responsible for bone loss (Eisman, 1998). Hormonal changes of all genders and all ages, including abnormal estrogen secretion in women and androgen in men, are also leading causes of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998). In addition, people suffering from illness, especially problems with digestive organs, are more vulnerable to bone loss, because calcium and vitamin D absorption can greatly drop.

The genetic aspects of osteoporosis can be divided into two different facets: heredity and ethnic groups (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Osteoporosis has its relation with an individual’s genetics. Family medical history is an important indicator of the incidence of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998). If any family member had bone loss symptoms or any other fractures before, one has a greater risk of developing osteoporosis in his/her lifetime than others. (Chao, 1998). “There are some data suggesting that a woman’s bone density may actually resemble her parents, so we have to assume that the risk is there,” said Michael Heerkoper, MD, the director of Bone and Mineral Metabolism and Gerontology Research at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit (Minkin, 1999). Ethnicity affect the incidence of porous bone (National Institute of Health). Research by the institute shows that Caucasians and Asians are the target group for getting osteoporosis, followed by African Americans and Hispanic Americans. Both the white and the yellow race are more likely to have “T allele” that is an independent risk factor for the genetic susceptibility to osteoporosis, since “T allele,” a gene that can trigger the development of gradual bone loss (Miyachi, 1998). One part of non-controllable risk factors for osteoporosis is genetically determined.

Massive bone loss during a woman’s maternal years results during pregnancy, and lactation (Eisman, 1998). Human bodies go on a moderate bone loss gradually after peak bone mass. Once a woman gets pregnant, the process of bone loss is accelerated because of the increased demand for calcium from the fetus (Chao, 1998). Pregnancy keeps undermining the maternal skeleton and bone density if dietary calcium supply is not increased. The effect of lactation on the occurrence of osteoporosis is also evident. On the average, “a healthy woman’s body normally has about 700g to 800g of calcium” (Chao, 1998). Clinical research shows that during lactation, the body will lose about 200 mg of calcium every day. At this speed, if breastfeeding period lasts one year, the mother will lose 84g of calcium; that is, about 10 percent of the total storage of calcium in the body (Chao, 1998). This bone-mineral loss is harmful to the mother’s health, “if not completely restored 6 to 12 months after weaning, with the return of normal menses” (Eisman, 1998); and which will deteriorate into first-stage osteoporosis in the future. The impact of pregnancy and lactation on women quickens bone loss and aggravate low bone mass.

Hormonal changes in males and females are associated with osteoporosis. For women, estrogen, a female sex hormone, plays an important role in strengthening bone density (Masakata, 1997). According to Dr. Masakata, women are the most frequent sufferers of the disease, due to the loss of ovarian function and subsequent reduction in estrogen production that occurs around the time of menopause. Although menopause is associated with the excessive estrogen reduction in women, in fact, women of all ages may confront bone loss, since the unstable mood or being under great pressure can also cause the low estrogen level in the body (Chao, 1998). Amenorrhoea (absence or cessation of menstrual periods) is also considered another cause of osteoporosis, because amenorrhoea may disrupt or even break down the normal secretion of estrogen (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Men, over 40, are also more likely to be struck by porous bone (China Post, 2000). For men,

testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone density; however, as men get older, the volume of testosterone secretion declines and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (Chao, 1998). Testosterone is a major substance that slows down the depletion of bone mass and thereby sustains bone density (Masataka, 1997). After andropause, also known as male menopause, the condition is even worse, because "the level of testosterone secretion could decline gradually at the rate of one percent each year as men age," said Dr. Jaap de Boer, a Dutch physician familiar with the study of andropause (Andrew, 2000). Hormonal factors do have an adverse effect on the overall bone health.

Contracting diseases like diabetes, endocrine problems, and digestive organ disabilities can trigger osteoporosis (Li, 1998). People with diabetes have higher risk of suffering from porous bone, because of the decreased secretion of insulin hormone from their pancreas (Li, 1998). Insulin hormone is a major substance that promotes bone formation. Once it fails to maintain at a normal level, people's bone will begin to degenerate and may go on to develop osteoporosis. Endocrine disease also causes bone loss (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Different endocrine gland produces certain kind of hormone to maintain a normal metabolic function of bone cells (Chang, 1995). Unbalanced secretion of hormone will hinder the process of bone formation and affect original bone structure negatively. When bone erosion keeps deteriorating, people may suffer from osteoporosis and other related bone fractures. Digestive organ illness also has a lot to do with potential bone loss (Li, 1998). Although calcium serves an indispensable material to sustain bone health, it can't make it without the aid of vitamin D that has the function of promoting calcium absorption in the body (Masataka, 1997). "Gastrointestinal disease predispose patients to bone diseases as a result of intestinal impaired absorption of calcium and vitamin D," said Dr. Masataka. When one has the inflection in the digestive organs, especially in small intestines, the absorption of the nutrients can break down and which will put one in danger of getting osteoporosis in the long run. Some diseases have indirect connection with osteoporosis.

The controllable risk factors for osteoporosis are determined by one's lifestyle such as diet, the amount of spending on exercise, and habits. Unhealthy lifestyle influences bone health in a negative way. More and more people turn to eat fast food and microwave package food and neglect that they may not get enough nutrition. This can contribute to calcium deficiency as a result. People who lack of regular exercise are at an increased risk of porous bone, because inactivity can weaken bone density. Bad habits like smoking or drinking is also detrimental to one's bones.

Research by the institute shows that low bone mass and osteoporosis may result from an unbalanced diet, whether it is insufficient intake of dietary calcium or inadequate dietary supplements of protein or mineral. Calcium and phosphate are two important elements that are essential for normal "bone formation" (Chao, 1998). If the body does not absorb enough calcium from the diet, bone tissues may suffer, and develop into brittle and fragile bones, since calcium and phosphate keep been reabsorbed back into blood from the bones (Chao, 1998). In addition, massive intake of protein at one time can also affect the absorption of calcium in the body and increase the incidence of osteoporosis (Li, 1998). Nowadays, there are lots of dietary supplement on the market featuring calcium plus iron. This kind of products seems to be a perfect choice for modern people in terms of health orientation and economical concepts. However, the fact is totally different. "Taking high dose of calcium and iron at the same time will lead to suppressive absorption between the two substance in the body and trigger preliminary bone loss," said Dr. Chao and which

implies that it is better to take dietary supplements according to doctors. Unbalanced diet is a controllable risk factor for osteoporosis which people can easily take steps to avoid.

People who lack of exercising are more likely to get porous bone than those who do exercise regularly. Lots of studies show that exercise requiring muscles to pull on bones causes the bones to retain and maybe even gain density. A lack of exercise and prolonged immobilization link with the likelihood of miscellaneous bone fractures (Li, 1998). One who doesn't exercise regularly or hold a sedentary job may have weak blood circulation. Impaired blood circulation prevents bones from getting sufficient nutrients, quickens the aging process of bone tissue and damages the overall skeletal structure (Chang, 1995). Furthermore, prolonged immobilization hinders the growing of new bone tissue and reduces bone flexibility. Lack of exercise can put one in danger of getting osteoporosis.

Bad habits such as smoking and drinking are also related to the osteoporosis indirectly (Chao, 1998). Nicotine and tar in tobacco as well as alcohol can weaken the absorption of calcium in the intestine (Li, 1998). Medical research by National Institute of Health shows that with the existence of the harmful substances in the body, the function of calcium absorption in intestine reduces up to 60 percent, compared with health people. Moreover, heavy drinkers are more disposed to be affected by bone loss, since alcohol has negative effect on liver and which may influence the function of liver to decompose calcium from various nutrients. The association between osteoporosis and one's unhealthy habits is obvious.

Non-controllable and controllable factors are two major causes of osteoporosis. Except one's genotype that is prone to low bone mass, for non-controllable factors like sex hormone deficiency, or bone loss during pregnancy, people still can take some measures to prevent the condition from deteriorating. Controllable factors exhibit an important fact that having a healthy lifestyle is the best precaution. Since osteoporosis is a silent disease, people usually are not aware that they have this condition until serious bone injury or fractures taking place. The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk and arouse the publics' awareness of osteoporosis.

Appendix L: Cathy's Paper (Draft 3)

Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

In most countries, the number of people who suffer from osteoporosis or porous bone keeps growing. The disease becomes so prevalent that it has already posed a threat to the public health (Chang, 1995). While the disease is often neglected by most people, "in the U.S. today, 10 million individuals already have osteoporosis, and 18 million more have low bone mass, placing them at an increased risk for osteoporosis" (U.S. National Institutes of Health). The warning figures reflect the seriousness of the problem. Besides, the cruel fact that "one in two postmenopausal women and one in eight men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their life time" (U.S. National Institute of Health) also conveys an important message-- It is necessary for the public to get to know something about the disease including what osteoporosis is and who's at a high risk of developing low bone mass. Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the "non-controllable" and the "controllable" (Li, 1998 p.69). Non-controllable factors for osteoporosis refer to the circumstance in which low bone mass and debilitating bone density are inevitable or one has inherent tendency to develop porous bone. The controllable, on the other hand, are environmental factors that can trigger osteoporosis.

The occurrence of osteoporosis has a relation with bone remodeling (Chao, 1998). "Characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, osteoporosis is the most common type of metabolic bone disease leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost to the entire skeleton" (U.S. National Institute of Health). Constructed from protein called "collagen" and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones attain a peak bone mass from the age of 25 to 30 (Macnair, 2000 p.1). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, because the "remodeling process" is accelerated. Bone remodeling involves a continuous breakdown and reconstruction of bones (Li, 1998). The breakdown is carried out by osteoclasts, a cell in the bone that continually erodes the surface of bones (Li, 1998). On the other hand, osteoblast, a "bone forming cell," is responsible for restoring bone density, said Li. However, as one passes peak bone mass, "bone remodeling" can become a troublemaker, because "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). This accounts for the formation of osteoporosis and the occurrence of various bone fractures. "People may not notice that they get osteoporosis until their bones become so delicate that they may not withstand a sudden strain, bump, or fall, and quite possibly which may result in serious fractures or collapsed vertebra"(International Osteoporosis Foundation).

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massive demands for calcium are made by the “growing fetal” and “neonatal skeletons” has been considered another culprit responsible for bone loss (Eisman, 1998 p. 504). Hormonal changes of all genders and all ages, including abnormal estrogen secretion in women and androgen in men, are also leading causes of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998). In addition, people suffering from illness, especially problems with digestive organs, are more vulnerable to bone loss, because calcium and vitamin D absorption can greatly drop.

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testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone density; however, as men get older, the volume of testosterone secretion declines and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (Chao, 1998). Testosterone is a major substance that slows down the depletion of bone mass and thereby sustains bone density (Masataka, 1997). After andropause, also known as male menopause, the condition is even worse, because "the level of testosterone secretion could decline gradually at the rate of one percent each year as men age," said Dr. Jaap de Boer, a Dutch physician familiar with the study of andropause (Andrew, 2000 p. 19). Hormonal factors do have an adverse effect on the overall bone health.

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The controllable risk factors for osteoporosis are determined by one's lifestyle such as diet, the amount of time spending on exercise, and habits. Unhealthy lifestyle influences bone health in a negative way. More and more people turn to eat fast food and microwave package food and neglect that they may not get enough nutrition. This can contribute to calcium deficiency as a result. People who lack of regular exercise are at an increased risk of porous bone, because inactivity can weaken bone density. Bad habits like smoking or drinking is also detrimental to one's bones.

Research by U.S. National Institutes of Health shows that low bone mass and osteoporosis may result from an unbalanced diet, whether it is insufficient intake of dietary calcium or inadequate dietary supplements of protein or mineral. Calcium and phosphate are two important elements that are essential for normal "bone formation" (Chao, 1998 p. 25). If the body does not absorb enough calcium from the diet, bone tissues may suffer, and develop into brittle and fragile bones, since calcium and phosphate keep being reabsorbed back into blood from the bones (Chao, 1998). In addition, massive intake of protein at one time can also affect the absorption of calcium in the body and increase the incidence of osteoporosis (Li, 1998). Nowadays, there are lots of dietary supplement on the market featuring calcium plus iron. This kind of products seems to be a perfect choice for modern people in terms of health orientation and economical concepts. However, the fact is totally different. "Taking high dose of calcium and iron at the same time will lead to suppressive

absorption between the two substance in the body and trigger preliminary bone loss,” said Dr. Chao and which implies that it is better to take dietary supplements according to doctors’ advice. Unbalanced diet is a controllable risk factor for osteoporosis which people can easily take steps to avoid.

People who lack of exercising are more likely to get porous bone than those who do exercise regularly. Lots of studies show that exercise requiring muscles to pull on bones causes bones to retain and maybe even gain density. A lack of exercise and prolonged immobilization link with the likelihood of miscellaneous bone fractures (Li, 1998). One who doesn’t exercise regularly or hold a sedentary job may have weak blood circulation. Impaired blood circulation prevents bones from getting sufficient nutrients, quickens the aging process of bone tissue and damages the overall skeletal structure (Chang, 1995). Furthermore, prolonged immobilization hinders the growing of new bone tissue and reduces bone flexibility.

Bad habits such as smoking and drinking are also related to the osteoporosis indirectly (Chao, 1998). Nicotine and tar in tobacco as well as alcohol can weaken the absorption of calcium in the intestine (Li, 1998). Medical research by National Institute of Health shows that with the existence of the harmful substances in the body, the function of calcium absorption in intestine reduces up to 60 percent, compared with health people. Moreover, heavy drinkers are more disposed to be affected by bone loss, since alcohol has negative effect on liver and which may influence the function of liver to decompose calcium from various nutrients. The association between osteoporosis and one’s unhealthy habits is obvious.

Non-controllable and controllable factors are two major causes of osteoporosis. Except one’s genotype that is prone to low bone mass, for non-controllable factors like sex hormone deficiency, or bone loss during pregnancy, people still can take some measures to prevent the condition from deteriorating. Controllable factors exhibit an important fact that having a healthy lifestyle is the best precaution. Since osteoporosis is a silent disease, people usually are not aware that they have this condition until serious bone injury or fractures taking place. The risk factors are good indicators that can exactly point out the group who are at the high risk and arouse the publics’ awareness of osteoporosis.

Appendix M: Cathy's Paper (Final Draft)

Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

In most countries, the number of people who suffer from osteoporosis or porous bone keeps growing. The disease becomes so prevalent that it has already posed a threat to the public health (Chang, 1995). While the disease is often neglected by most people, "in the U.S. today, 10 million individuals already have osteoporosis, and 18 million more have low bone mass, placing them at increased risk for osteoporosis" (National Institute of Health, p. 1). The appalling figures reflect the seriousness of the problem. Besides, the cruel fact that "one in two postmenopausal women and one in eight men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their life time" (National Institute of Health, p. 1) also conveys an important message-- It is important for the public to get to know something about the disease including what osteoporosis is and who's at high risk of developing low bone mass. Susceptibility to osteoporosis results from two key factors: the "non-controllable" and the "controllable" (Li, 1998, p.69). Non-controllable factors for osteoporosis refer to the circumstance in which low bone mass and debilitating bone density are inevitable or one has inherent tendency to develop porous bone. The controllable, on the contrary, are "environmental" which can trigger osteoporosis.

The occurrence of osteoporosis has a relation with bone remodeling (Chao, 1998). "Characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, osteoporosis is the most common type of metabolic bone disease leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility not only to fractures of the hip, spine, wrist, but almost to the entire skeleton" (National Institute of Health, p.1). Constructed from protein called "collagen" and strengthened by calcium salts and other minerals, human bones attain a peak bone mass from the age of 25 to 30 (Macnair, 2000, p.1). Dr. Macnair said, after that period, one's bone tissue is weakening and bone density is going downhill gradually, because the "remodeling process" is accelerated. "Bone remodeling" involves a continuous breakdown and reconstruction of bones (Li, 1998). The "breakdown" is carried out by "osteoclasts," a cell in the bone that continually erodes the surface of bones (Li, 1998). On the other hand, osteoblast, a "bone forming cell," is responsible for restoring bone density, said Li. However, as one passes peak bone mass, here comes the big problem: "the osteoblasts are less efficient making bones than the osteoclasts are at removing it" (International Osteoporosis Foundation). This accounts for the formation of osteoporosis and the occurrence of various bone fractures. In most cases, people always neglect that they have the disease until some serious bone damage takes place (International Osteoporosis Foundation).

Non-controllable factors can be categorized into four sections—genetics, maternity, hormonal changes and contracting diseases (Li, 1998). People who expose to these risk factors have more chance to develop bone loss and vulnerable bone structure (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Genetic tendencies are inborn risks that may be easily neglected by those who have the most disease-prone genotype. Since calcium is the most important substance for human body to construct bone mass and enhance bone density, maternity period during which massive demands for calcium are made by the "growing fetal" and "neonatal skeletons" has been considered another culprit responsible for bone loss (Eisman,

1998). Hormonal changes of all genders and all ages, including abnormal estrogen secretion in women and androgen in men, are also leading causes of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998). In addition, people suffering from illness, especially problems with digestive organs, are more vulnerable to bone loss, because calcium and vitamin D absorption can greatly drop.

The genetic aspects of osteoporosis can be divided into two different facets: heredity and ethnic groups (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Osteoporosis has its relation with an individual's genetics. Family medical history is an important indicator of the incidence of osteoporosis (Chao, 1998). If any family member had bone loss symptoms or any other fractures before, one has a greater risk of developing osteoporosis in his/her lifetime than others. (Chao, 1998). "There are some data suggesting that a woman's bone density may actually resemble her parents, so we have to assume that the risk is there," said Michael Heerkoper, MD, the director of Bone and Mineral Metabolism and Gerontology Research at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit (Minkin, 1999). Ethnicity affects the incidence of porous bone (National Institute of Health). Research by the institute shows that Caucasians and Asians are the target group for getting osteoporosis, followed by African Americans and Hispanic Americans. Both the white and the yellow race are more likely to have "T allele" that is an independent risk factor for the genetic susceptibility to osteoporosis, since "T allele," a gene that can trigger the development of gradual bone loss (Miyauchi, 1998). One part of non-controllable risk factors for osteoporosis is genetically determined.

Massive bone loss during a woman's maternal years results during pregnancy, and lactation (Eisman, 1998). Human bodies go on a moderate bone loss gradually after peak bone mass. Once a woman gets pregnant, the process of bone loss is accelerated because of the increased demand for calcium from the fetus (Chao, 1998). Pregnancy keeps undermining the maternal skeleton and bone density if dietary calcium supply is not increased. The effect of lactation on the occurrence of osteoporosis is also evident. On the average, "a healthy woman's body normally has about 700g to 800g of calcium" (Chao, 1998 p.39). Clinical research shows that during lactation, the body will lose about 200 mg of calcium every day. At this speed, if breastfeeding period lasts one year, "the mother will lose 84g of calcium;" that is, about 10 percent of the total storage of calcium in the body (Chao, 1998 p.39). This bone-mineral loss is harmful to the mother's health, "if not completely restored 6 to 12 months after weaning, with the return of normal menses" (Eisman, 1998 p. 504); and which will deteriorate into first-stage osteoporosis in the future. The impact of pregnancy and lactation on women quickens bone loss and aggravate low bone mass.

Hormonal changes in males and females are associated with osteoporosis. For women, estrogen, a female sex hormone, plays an important role in strengthening bone density (Masakata, 1997). According to Dr. Masakata, women are the most frequent sufferers of the disease, due to the loss of ovarian function and subsequent reduction in estrogen production that occurs around the time of menopause. Although menopause is associated with the excessive estrogen reduction in women, in fact, women of all ages may confront bone loss, since the unstable mood or being under great pressure can also cause the low estrogen level in the body (Chao, 1998). Amenorrhoea (absence or cessation of menstrual periods) is also considered another of cause of osteoporosis, because amenorrhoea may disrupt or even break down the normal secretion of estrogen (International Osteoporosis Foundation). Men, over 40, are also more likely to be struck by porous bone (Andrew, 2000, p.19). For men, testosterone serves the same function as women's estrogen in maintaining bone

density; however, as men get older, the volume of testosterone secretion declines and which may lead to osteoporosis indirectly. (Chao, 1998). Testosterone is a major substance that slows down the depletion of bone mass and thereby sustains bone density (Masataka, 1997). After andropause, also known as male menopause, the condition is even worse, because "the level of testosterone secretion could decline gradually at the rate of 1 percent each year as men age," said Dr. Jaap de Boer, a Dutch physician familiar with the study of andropause (Andrew, 2000, p. 19). Hormonal factors do have an adverse effect on the overall bone health.

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